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Global Funds: Lessons from a not-too-distant past?

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Abstract

This paper suggests parallels between earlier attempts to address poverty through integrated rural development and current institutional arrangements for combating HIV/AIDS through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). The paper suggests that there are a number of lessons that can be learned from the integrated rural development (IRD) debacle if the current initiatives are to avoid some of the problems that plagued the IRD. The errors included top-down management, application of a standardised institutional template in different contexts, overburdened local institutions, internal brain drain and non-sustainability of initiatives.

Résumé

Cet article effectue une comparaison entre les premières tentatives de lutte contre la pauvreté à travers un développement rural intégré, et les dispositions institutionnelles actuelles permettant de combattre le VIH/SIDA à travers les *Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).* Cet article affirme qu'un certain nombre d'enseignements peuvent être tirés de l'échec de l'IRD, afin d'éviter que le même sort n'advienne aux initiatives actuelles. Parmi les erreurs notées figurent un système de gestion par le haut, l'application à différents contextes d'un modèle institutionnel standardisé, des institutions locales surchargées, la fuite interne de cerveaux ainsi que la non pérennisation des initiatives.

Introduction

The 1990s witnessed the establishment of global funds to address specific issues such as environment and health. Many factors accounted for these

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initiatives: globalisation and a growing awareness of interdependence and the existence of 'local public goods' solidarity informed by political and moral values and driven by transnational civil societies; the emergence of private foundations with a global reach; and changes in the perception of the efficacy of existing international organisations as agents in the pursuit of global agendas. The new initiatives have often produced new institutional arrangements at both global and national levels that have had far-reaching consequences for both global and national governance. Perhaps the most prominent of these new institutions is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), which is an independent organisation governed by an international board that consists of representatives from donor and recipient governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector (including businesses and philanthropic foundations) and affected communities. The focus on GFATM is neither intended to suggest that the institutional model is its brainchild nor that it is the only global fund that exhibits the kinds of problems touched upon in this paper. The focus is justified by the much greater institutional footprint that the GFATM seems to have.

Partly because such initiatives are dealing with new issues such as HIV/AIDS or the environment, they have tended to be isolated from wider developmental debates and institutions despite the general recognition that both the factors driving them and the capacities to deal with them are closely intertwined with the complex social, political and cultural environments underpinning poverty and development. I will illustrate my arguments with the historical experience of integrated rural development (henceforth IRD), which, while different in some significant aspects, may have important lessons for the current practice. I recognise the changed international and national circumstances within which new initiatives are taking place, but I will suggest that there are enough parallels to justify drawing lessons from earlier IRD initiatives, and that unless some of the lessons of the past are learned, there is the danger of repeating some of the earlier errors. I also cite some preliminary evidence suggesting that my fears are not merely alarmist.

The IRD was largely introduced in the 1970s in response to the realisation that the 'trickle down' of growth in gross domestic product (GDP) had done little to alleviate poverty. While the 1960s and 1970s were decades of rapid growth in a large number of countries, poverty remained stubbornly prevalent. There were thus calls for new strategies that would meet the 'basic needs' of the poor or that would ensure 'growth with equity'. One factor driving the new style project was the sense of urgency about poverty that Robert McNamara brought to the World Bank, and his ability to convince the donor world that something could be done. Under McNamara, the World Bank was to initiate a direct 'assault on poverty' without waiting for

growth to 'trickle down'. One instrument pushed by the World Bank and adopted by several bilateral donors was the so-called area development programmes. With the adoption of IRD, donors shifted attention from earlier functional projects, such as national agricultural credit or extension projects, to vertical projects involving the promotion of agricultural production as well as social services. Between 1974 and 1982, 59 per cent of all projects in East Africa and 63 per cent in West Africa were in area development. Many other donors were bought in as well, so that in Tanzania, for example, four donors were involved in four integrated rural development schemes. In total $136.5 million was committed to these projects (Stein 2003).

IRD lasted only a decade, and by the early 1980s its projects were abandoned as policy reverted first to national agricultural policy and later to structural adjustment programmes in which agricultural policy was largely reduced to liberalisation of product and input markets. By the World Bank's own measurement, undertaken by its operation evaluation department, the IRD projects were a failure. In East and Southern Africa, twelve out of fifteen projects failed; in West Africa, 43 per cent did so.[1] A number of studies were commissioned by the World Bank and bilateral donors to find out what went wrong.[2] These studies brought out a number of lessons, some of which I will highlight.

The technocratic fix

One of the reasons given for the failure of IRD was insufficient attention to building political coalitions in support of a continuing commitment to rural development (De Janvry and Sadoulet 1999). Although IRD was driven by political imperatives to address what was perceived as an issue of great social and political urgency – poverty – and for all the perfunctory recognition of the importance of 'political will', the actual institutional arrangements set in place were technocratically driven and somehow sought to circumvent politics. This penchant for technocratic solutions seems to plague the fights against HIV/AIDS today, even though in this case there has been a more pronounced recognition of the importance of political will. Here, too, the technocratic imperatives seem to overwhelm the political dimensions. Thus, although it is widely recognised that in the two most touted 'success' stories in Africa (Senegal and Uganda) the institutional arrangements set up sought to exploit the political clout of the presidency in combating HIV/AIDS, and the leaders of the central state took initiatives to rally the nation behind the fight against the pandemic, there have been attempts to replace these institutional arrangements with the new model. The consequence is, as Putzel concludes in his study, that '... the establishment of supra-ministerial bodies effectively ends up in inadequate attempts to reinvent government

and to replace what is essentially a political challenge of prioritizing HIV/ AIDS in government and non-government sectors with an organizational fix' (Putzel 2003: 28).

A number of factors have accounted for the propensity towards a 'technocratic fix' to both IRD and GFATM. First have been the huge amounts of money involved for both initiatives. At the World Bank, McNamara presided over a huge increase in the volume of lending to rural development, which put pressure on country and project staff to get enough projects approved. As Carl Eicher observes, the 1970s turned out to be a 'Golden Age' of donor aid to agriculture (Eicher 2003). Interestingly, for all their insistence on technical efficiency and cost-benefit analysis to developing countries, the donors themselves ignored these analytical tools, as pressures to spend the money simply overwhelmed the rationale for economic calculus, making demands for more complex analysis unwelcome (Little and Mirrlees 1990). In addition, there was an enormous temptation for donors to use programme aid budgets to protect their own project lending activities. To ensure success, some donors poured millions of dollars into a particular rural development project in order to turn it into a 'successful project'. Thus in the case of Malawi, the World Bank insisted that there was recurrent under-funding of its IRD, although alternative evidence suggested that the social sectors suffered even more from recurrent under-funding than the agricultural sector (Harrigan 2001). Many 'successful' projects were so loaded with vehicles and experts that they could not be replicated on a regional or national basis without a continuous infusion of foreign aid (Eicher 2003). Throwing money at flawed projects came to be known as the 'McNamara Effect', and the outcome in many cases was 'rusting tractors'. There are some indications that the funding of HIV/AIDS may suffer from the same 'bang for buck' syndrome that vitiated IRD. The GFATM is one of the best financed global health initiatives and faces enormous pressure to disburse its funds. The motto of the Global Fund, says Executive Director Richard Feachem, is 'Raise it, Spend it, Prove it' (cited in Scalway 2003).

A second factor contributing to the technocratic thrust of both initiatives was the major technological breakthroughs that not only provided the wherewithal for doing something but also accounted for the sense of optimism and euphoria. In the case of IRD, the core instrument was the technology of the Green Revolution which was welcomed as 'the missing piece' in the failed community development movement of the 1950–1965 period (De Janvry and Sadoulet 1999). The 'roaring success' of the Green Revolution in Asia added to the lustre of the new technology and the sense of urgency in bringing it to other parts of the world, especially Africa (Eicher 2003). Similarly,

in the case of HIV/AIDS, the dramatic fall in the cost of antiretroviral therapy has played the role of technological stimulus.

In both cases the 'bang for the buck' attitude and the technological break-throughs conspired with the sense of urgency to nourish 'short-termism'. Too much emphasis on 'proving it' creates pressures to perform in the short term, possibly at the expense of a longer-term vision. Scalway, in a Panos report, notes 'As a result, short-term planning and rushed processes of strategic development have so far typified the Fund's work' (Scalway 2003). This is despite the fact that both in the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS, it is widely recognised that policy must take on a long-term perspective since results only emerge over long periods of time.

'Institutional monocropping'

One practice that is now widely recognised as having vitiated aid has been the 'one-size-fits-all' institutional model or what Peter Evans calls 'institutional monocropping' (Evans 2003), which often involves the imposition of an idealised version of whatever is considered 'best practice', stripped of its historical origins and context specificity. One argument for the institutional arrangements behind IRD was that rural development was multifaceted, involving not only increases in agricultural production, but also improved access to other social services such as health, education and infrastructure. As a World Bank report summarised the argument:

> The basic idea underlying the integrated development programme was simple. Agricultural development requires not only investment in particular projects but also a series of complementary investment in other areas to enhance the projects effects. Moreover administering these projects as entities separate from the formal government apparatus could avoid difficulties in coordinating the activities of different ministries (Pryor 1990).

National bureaucracies and ministries of agriculture were deemed too specialised to handle a multifaceted problem, and too slow and rigid to act rapidly and flexibly. In addition there was the belief that, given both the magnitude of the problem and the urgency of its resolution, it was necessary to act quickly. Rather than waste time reforming existing institutions and engaging political actors, it was better to start from scratch with new institutions that were shielded from local politics and bureaucratic traditions (Van de Laar 1980). Thus it was deemed necessary to set up separate entities that would cut across ministries, circumvent national bureaucracies, provide more flexible and autonomous ways of using donor funds, and allow for a more focused approach that would bring together the various aspects of IRD that went beyond the brief of individual ministries.

These arguments were even more compelling in contexts where local capacity was deemed inadequate. In the case of IRD, this produced the paradoxical situation in which the complexity of donor programmes was greater in Africa than in Asia, for example, precisely because Africa had poor capacity to implement complex projects (Lele 1987) What was ignored in all this was that weaker domestic capacity would make it difficult to deal with 'imported' complex arrangements, which, in some cases, simply drowned all national initiatives. One outcome of IRD was that it often destroyed or weakened existing agricultural development systems by undermining the principal role of national ministries of agriculture.

In a similar vein, the GFATM has found it necessary to set up new institutions. The arguments given for these new arrangements are reminiscent of earlier ones about IRD. Furthermore, by the time the GFATM was set up, many governments and international organisations had succumbed to the fashion of New Public Management (NPM), which sought to change traditional bureaucracies into result-oriented and transparent structures by bringing private management styles to the public sector. Indeed, a number of programmes from which the GFATM learned or flowed had already experimented with NPM. Attempts at setting up institutions that would handle multisectoral or cross-cutting problems had already been made by other international organisations; thus the GFATM cannot be blamed for inventing this particular form of organisational set-up.

Although the GFATM insists that the framework it proposes is not a requirement but a recommendation, given its financial leverage and the hurry to get approval, most governments are unlikely to depart too far from its explicit or implicit preferences. Although the GFATM eschews conditionality and avoids being prescriptive, its guidelines have become increasingly detailed. One immediate effect is that, because of the funds involved, governments have felt it wiser to simply copy whatever the GFATM has accepted or indicated as 'best practice'.[3] Brugha and associates cite a Zambian official saying 'The CCM (Country Coordination Mechanism) was formed in response to the dangling of dollars' (Brugha et al. 2004). And not surprisingly, the emerging institutions are uncannily alike. In addition, the nature of the GFATM itself has dictated its institutional preferences. At the national level, partly as a reflection of its own institutional hybridity, it insists on new institutional arrangements that bring in new actors other than the ministry of health. It is thus not surprising that the GFATM has given birth to local institutional arrangements that mirror its own structure. In each country, funding applications are coordinated through the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM), country-level partnerships formed to develop and submit grant proposals to the GFATM and designed to include broad representation from

governments, NGOs, civil society, multilateral and bilateral agencies and the private sector.

Just as IRD tended to reduce the role of the ministry of agriculture, under the new 'organisation template', to use Putzel's expression (Putzel 2003, 2004), the ministry of health is undergoing the same experience as the new arrangements challenge its position in relation to national initiatives on health. This has been true even in countries, such as Senegal and Uganda, where locally devised institutions had played a successful role. As Putzel observes:

> In reaction to over-reliance on the health sector in the past, the model has tended to secondarise medical expertise, by treating ministries of health as just one among many co-equal (bureaucratic and incompetent) government ministries and the medical dimension of the fight against the epidemic as just one among many co-equal aspects of what must be a multi-dimensional effort (Putzel 2003: 28).

The problem of the imposed organisational template was not limited to Uganda and Senegal. The *tabula rasa* approach to national initiatives has basically meant riding roughshod over national institutions. While the Ugandan ministry's programme was strong enough to survive the imposition of a revived Uganda Aids Commission in 1999, the AIDS control programmes of other ministries of health, like that in Malawi, had virtually collapsed due to the establishment of a similar commission.

One source of failure of IRD projects was that they fostered conflicts between donors and local authorities. This tension may have contributed eventually have to their failure, as they were unable to leverage capacities in other public institutions. By treating them as corrupt or incompetent, the new institutional arrangements often merely produced sworn enemies who would actively or passively resist the incursion of their turf. One of the ironies of the attitude towards new bureaucracies is that it has tended to be self-fulfilling, in part because the shortcuts adopted have deprived aid funding of the protection provided by local bureaucracies and attracted individuals of dubious professional integrity. It is common knowledge that aid funding transferred outside regular government channels is the easiest to target for corruption. Such funding is a 'sitting duck' unshielded by national administrative systems that, while cumbersome, have often served as a brake on corruption and that donors have sought to circumvent.

Overburdening national institutions

One effect of IRD was to tie up national resources in servicing special projects. This was done by (a) demanding costly counterpart services from the government in terms of oversight and reporting; (b) attracting local skilled

personnel from the government to these new projects; and (c) compounding coordination problems among national institutions and between these and external institutions. The incorporation of non-agricultural components into the projects overloaded management, and implementation suffered as a result. As van de Laar notes, all this is well documented and fully acknowledged in donor circles: what was not always fully acknowledged was that this could lead to institutional sclerosis or outright destruction of national capacities (van de Laar 1980). Writing about IRD, Uma Lele notes: 'The multisectoralnessnes of these projects has added enormously to the difficulty of administration, diverting attention from the most basic agricultural development problems, such as the inadequacy of profitable technical packages or the unavailability of the right package'. The World Bank itself noted, in the case of Malawi, that the intense attention focused on its four projects led to the neglect of other areas.

Based on precisely the same logic, the GFATM has led to new institutional arrangements which involve a 'multisectoral approach' taken to mean both 'mainstreaming' HIV/AIDS in all government activity – for example, all departments incorporate an assessment of the impact of the epidemic on their work and design mitigating measures as well as action to combat the epidemic in their domains – and 'full involvement of non-governmental sectors' – religious, voluntary and private – in planning and implementing HIV/AIDS campaigns.

One point made in a DFID evaluation of IRD was that the approach appeared to be:

> based on the misconceived assumption that it was necessary to have all the components in the development of a particular area not only under one particular project but also under one management umbrella. While non-agricultural components should be planned and implemented concurrently if interrelated, this need not be under a single project management, or indeed within a single project (DFID 2004).

Similar concerns have been expressed about the 'multi-scaleness' of GFATM and it has been suggested that some of the elements included in the model are excess baggage that reflects the zeitgeist and global institutional arrangements more than other real needs of combating HIV/AIDS. Tying down medical staff in matters of 'good governance', 'partnerships', and so forth may actually be counterproductive, as the real work of combating HIV/AIDS is overwhelmed by a cumbersome model that insists on having everything in place before moving on. Serious problems have already emerged as already overstretched government staff in recipient countries have to respond to myriad expectations from donors, and both donors and recipients are

being overwhelmed by the massive paperwork and reporting that come with these institutional arrangements (Brugha et al. 2004; Heimans 2002).

Recurrent costs and reintegration

One lasting effect of IRD was the financial burden that failed projects left behind, partly because of the failure to recognise that projects not only entailed high recurrent costs but also tended to tie up an inordinate share of national government funds as counterpart funds. Under IRD, national governments were urged to increase their headquarter capacity in order to interact efficiently with donors, or to use their own counterpart funds more efficiently. This led to a dramatic extension of staff at headquarters to provide 'counterpart' services to IRD projects, and later to absorb some of the people who had been attached to the projects. When the projects were abandoned, countries were saddled with costly administrative structures. In some cases operation and maintenance problems of particular non-agricultural components were so severe as to lead to their partial abandonment after being handed back to the ministries (Pryor 1990: 75). And in many cases, top bureaucrats chose to reduce the number of field workers rather than downsize the bloated bureaucracy that had been created in response to the exigencies of donors. All too often, the result was a drastic reduction of extension services at the end of IRD projects.

The problem of recurrent costs with respect to GFATM is widely recognised and has been highlighted by attempts to reconcile the additional assumption of GFATM (i.e. its funding must be additional to the current health budget) and the budget ceilings that are part of stabilisation measures, under which any foreign grant for health would be accompanied by a corresponding reduction in the amount of money that the sector receives from the government. This conflict is well illustrated by the case of Uganda where the government first announced that GFTAM money would not lead to an increase in health expenditure in line with its commitment to budget ceilings to the Bretton Woods Institutions. The ministry of finance had predetermined a budget ceiling for the health sector and to maintain the ceiling. Finance officials argued that lifting the ceiling would destabilise the economy (Wendo 2002b). Some of the NGOs placed the blame squarely on the IMF. Thus a report published by four NGOs categorically stated:

> Despite the fact that the global community stands ready to significantly scale-up levels of foreign aid to help poorer countries finance greater public spending to fight HIV/AIDS, many countries may be deterred from doing so due to either direct or indirect pressure from the IMF. The IMF fears that increased public spending will lead to higher rates of inflation, but there is an open

question in the economics profession about how high is too high, and what is an appropriate level of inflation (Rowden 2004).

The IMF denied putting pressure on Uganda. After standing 'firm' on this position, the government was compelled to yield to GFTAM threats to withdraw its funding (Wendo 2003).[4]

Coordination failures

Integrated Rural Development (IRD) was characterised by serious coordination failures among government agencies in the delivery of expected complex packages of 'integrated services' because most IRD projects required inputs from numerous central ministries (agriculture, health and education), which often did not delegate implementation authority to local ministry representatives (De Janvry 1982; Eicher 1986, 2003). World Bank officials tended to place the blame on poor state policies and institutions rather than design problems (Stein 2003). The case of Malawi illustrates the point when World Bank states:

> In retrospect, the government underestimated the administrative and coordination difficulties inherent in the basic concept of the complementarity of agricultural investment (which is closely related to the 'big push' in development). The administrative separation from the ministerial structure of the government did not prove to be the expected cure-all for such coordination problems; indeed such gimmicks can seldom overcome administrative constraints on government. In addition, turning completed projects back to particular ministries was difficult (Pryor 1990: 75).

GFATM seems to be witnessing the same problems with respect to coordination. And given the diversity of actors, we are likely to witness more serious coordination problems than was the case under IRD. At a meeting of the Commonwealth Ministries of Health in Africa in Entebbe at the end of 2002, there was heated discussion about the problems all ministries had encountered. In summing up priorities for action at the end of the meeting, the first priority was set as follows: 'There is need for clarification of roles, functions, coordination and implementation mechanisms of National AIDS Councils and MoH AIDS Control Programmes'. The first resolution noted 'the need for distinction between the implementation and coordination roles' of commissions and ministries of health, saying, 'the arising ambiguity could reverse progress of national responses to HIV/AIDS', and called for consultations between the national commissions, ministries of health and donors to 're-examine and further clarify roles and functions and redefine mechanisms for co-ordination and implementation' (cited in Putzel 2004: 13).

The literature on health systems is replete with arguments for embedding disease-specific initiatives into national health systems at the pinnacle of which

is the ministry of health. Indeed, this has attained the status of a mantra in international policy statements as most donors recognise that developing countries' health systems are fragile yet central to the delivery of drugs and vaccines (Brugha and Walt 2001). The GFATM's policy documents suggest an awareness that the success of its programmes will depend on the effectiveness of the entire health system, and on the need for mechanisms to avoid distortion of health-sector funding potentially created by substantial new money for the three diseases (Global Fund To Fight Against Aids 2004). The GFATM's stated intention is to 'address the three diseases in ways that will contribute to strengthening health systems'. It aims to support proposals which 'build on, complement and coordinate with existing national policies, priorities and partnerships, including Poverty Reduction Strategies and sector-wide approaches'. It will thus have to tackle the question of balancing vertical, disease-specific 'product support' against horizontal health systems support.

However this is more easily said than done. For one, embedding the GFATM into these Sector-Wide Approaches has not been an easy political and administrative task as the 'verticalisation imperative' has proved overriding (Brugha et al. 2004). GFATM is already caught between conflicting perspectives among donors – on one hand a preference for vertical programmes with a specific disease focus and run centrally (on grounds that such structures ensure efficiency and accountability), and on the other, adhesion to more horizontal approaches to health as expressed in Sector-Wide Approaches (Brugha et al. 2004). New financing mechanisms have made the integration of programmes with each other more difficult, because the funding and rationale of such programmes have brought pressures to establish vertical management structures, and monitoring and evaluation systems, to satisfy donors for 'evidence of impact'.

Internal 'brain drain'

One consequence of IRD was 'internal brain drain'. This often took two forms: directly hiring experts away from the government; and, less conspicuously, either through the secondment of local staff or simply by tying them to an IRD project, as the state had to provide counterpart support and was thus compelled to concentrate its best human resources at headquarters, a factor which often leads to a crowding out of any of other crucial tasks.

The new HIV/AIDS funding initiatives are already producing similar effects. In Uganda, the new structure came along with salaries that far exceeded those in any national institution. The leadership of the Uganda AIDS Council was initially formed of expatriate Ugandans who earned foreign-level salaries.

And according to a *New York Times* report (Dugger 2003), the president of
Botswana and Ernest Darkoh, operational manager for Botswana's effort to
expand treatment with antiretroviral drugs, have both complained that the
non-profit groups, foreign governments and international organisations that
have come to help Botswana cope with its AIDS crisis have hired away
many skilled health professionals in the country's public health system,
offering salaries of five to ten times those of the government. And this is a
country with fairly decent wages for its public sector. In Zambia, the proposed
salary of the donor-funded HIV/AIDS secretariat was set at $6,000 per month
– this in a country where the president's salary was reported as $700 a
month (Dale 2003) and that of a civil servant with university education at
$206 a month.

HIV/Secretariat – Selected Salaries from the Proposed Staffing and
Staff Emoluments (in US $)

Position	Monthly Salary	Annual Total
Director	6,000	72,000
Head of Programmes	4,000	48,000
Various Officers	2,000	24,000
Manager of Information systems	2,500	30,000
Driver	150	1,800
Office messenger	100	1,200

Source: Mwikisa (2002).

Important differences
All comparisons always run the risk of either exaggerating or downplaying
similarities and differences. So far I have stressed the similarities between
the two initiatives. However, there are a number of differences in both con-
tent and context that need to be highlighted if the lessons of the past are to be
relevant to the current situation.

Weakened states
The first difference is the greater economic muscle of donors in the recipi-
ent countries, especially those in Africa. In the era of IRD, donors were
mostly focused on their projects and did not demand wide-ranging reforms
as conditionalities. Not as deeply indebted as they are today, nation states
had much more room for policy choice. In addition, concerns over national
sovereignty were a constitutive part of the dominant ideologies of the time.

The situation today is quite different, as the state's role is circumscribed by a wide range of conditionalities regarding 'good governance', 'accountability', etc. The new institutional arrangements reflect the weakening of state structures at the national level, the emergence of new actors in the service delivery sector, including NGOs and the private sector providers, and donors' mistrust of the state. They also reflect a jaundiced view of local elites as 'partners'. The rationale given for these new arrangement was often oblivious to the sensitivities of local bureaucracies. Not surprisingly, the proposed institutions are often aimed at circumventing states through creation of 'autonomous' bodies for the managements of projects.

Second, the problems of imported institutional arrangements have been compounded by the fact that the new initiatives emerged after 'decades of under-funding that have taken their toll in terms of derelict infrastructures, poorly motivated staff, chronic shortages of drugs, etc., and when the national health systems in most countries had been subject to severe and often chaotic reduction under pressures of structural adjustment' (Lambert and Stuyf 2002: 558).

Third, there has been a re-ordering of power and influence among ministries within government, with ministries of finance playing a decisive role in a wide range of policy issues, essentially by bringing the voice of donors to bear in any national deliberations.

Democratisation

The second significant difference is the greater democratisation of many recipient countries today. As a consequence there are more open debates about HIV/AIDS and heightened political pressure on governments to do something than there ever was on government policies with regard to IRD. Unfortunately, this has occurred at a time when there has been the trend to remove as many institutions as possible from the oversight of elected governments in the name of giving greater 'autonomy' to these institutions (UNRISD 2004). And for all the talk of participation and democracy, the conventional view is that 'good governance' involves insulation of policies from the demands of politics and acceptance of 'external agents of restraint'. A preference for technocratic forms of governance has thus spilled over to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Conversely, civil society is often viewed in a much more positive light in the donor world; more resources are channelled through them as a result which exacerbates the tensions between representative and participatory governance. Central governments have had constantly to assert their pre-eminent position in the country against attempts by donors to deal directly with lower levels of government or NGOs. In the context of democratisation, elected bodies may find it difficult to accept that

unelected partners have the same political legitimacy and moral position when discussing long-term national goals such as development. A dramatic example of such conflicts is provided by South Africa, where Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang criticised the GFATM for bypassing the national government when it allocated R600 million ($60 million) directly to Kwa-Zulu Natal, the worst hit of the country's nine provinces.

> 'The Global Fund was trying to bypass the democratically elected government and put it (the money) in the hands of civil authorities', she told the youth gathering in Johannesburg, adding: 'Perhaps this is because the Fund does not trust governments elected by the people' (Agence France-Presse 2002).

In an earlier statement, GFATM Executive Director Richard Feachem told South African media that 'it's intolerable that the money gets stuck in Pretoria and if Pretoria can't move it for any reason, we will simply withdraw it and establish direct relationships with the people actually doing the work'.[5] This statement has angered the South African government and provoked bitter remarks from the South African president.[6] Mr Feacham had to issue an apology for the misunderstanding his remarks may have produced (News24 2004).

The private sector and NGOs
The third significant difference is the greater involvement of non-state actors in HIV/AIDS programmes. Based as it was on the view of pervasive market failures for smallholders, IRD accepted a central role for the state which was to coordinate and usually subsidise the delivery to smallholders of services complementary to the new technologies, particularly credit, technical assistance, access to markets and crop insurance (De Janvry and Sadoulet 1999). In contrast, the GFATM was born in the context of a more jaundiced view of both the intentions of political actors and state capacity in the developing countries.

The GFATM has emerged during a period of active civil society engagement at both global and national levels. Indeed, there is in the new institutional template 'an implicit assessment of the inability of organizations within the state, or public authority, to implement HIV/AIDS programmes and an implicit, virtually ideological belief, that NGOs, religious organizations and private sector organizations will be able to do better' (Putzel 2004: 21). This has influenced the inclusiveness of management structures and the process of selecting who is to be included. The GFATM was conceived in the spirit of 'partnership' between the public and private sectors. This was inevitable. Contributions by the private sector have dwarfed those of many states and have earned it a seat in decision-making organisms of the fund. This is not to

suggest that the private sector and NGOs were absent from earlier initiatives. IRD relied on agribusiness to provide some of the critical inputs, and there is a considerable amount of literature on the relationship between IRD and agribusiness. The big difference seems to be that while there was an arm's length relationship between national governments and donors on one hand and agribusiness on the other, the new relationship is more intimate, based on notions of 'partnership', 'stakeholder accountability' and corporate social responsibility.

In addition, although 'popular participation' was one of the cornerstones of IRD it never attained the iconic status of NGOs today. In most cases 'community participation' in IRD was largely manipulative and meant to help the management of the projects (for example, in debt collection). IRD was unsuccessful in part because of the failure to decentralise decision making to the community level and to enlist the participation of beneficiaries in project definition and implementation (De Janvry and Sadoulet 1999). HIV/AIDS has had the unique quality of mobilising a well-organised constituency.[7] The GFATM is more aware of the importance of participation by various stakeholders, including local communities. It has insisted on NGO participation in governance structures, but in most cases this has not faced up to the complex issues of capacity and representativeness of NGOs. That NGOs should be represented is not as simple as it is made out to be: For example, who decides what NGOs should be represented, and how is their legitimacy and representativeness determined? In the case of Senegal, for instance, the list has excluded NGOs who have played a major role in the combat against AIDS (ENDA Tiers Monde, Sida-Services, Synergie pour l'Enfance, Africa Consultants International [ACI]). Indeed, given the huge amounts of money at stake, there is evidence that the GFATM has driven the emergence of a certain type of NGO. NGOs often serve three roles: representative, advocacy or service delivery roles. External funding has increasingly tended to reinforce the last function, often at the expense of the other two.[8] As a result, the view that civil society consists of autonomous actors able to speak truth to power is compromised by their dense linkages to those who hold power. Similar fears have been expressed in countries such as Brazil where NGOs clearly played a major role in raising awareness of HIV/AIDS and in eliciting a response from the government. The older, more activist, NGOs feel their autonomy threatened by the emergence of new NGOs around the funding for HIV/AIDS which are more inclined towards service delivery than activism and compromise their relationships with their clientele.[9] In many cases the older NGOs have had to 'partially relinquish their autonomy to maintain their doors open and sustain activism, abiding by funding norms and submitting to government rules' (see, for instance Ingles 2004).

More complex international links

The final significant difference is the emergence of major new non-interstate institutions of 'global governance' with which governments have to interact. More significantly, there has been a tendency to reduce the authority of institutions based on state membership and on the 'one country, one vote' principle that has driven policy-making in many international organisations.[10] Global health funds have been created partly in response to the perceived inefficiencies and wastefulness of large global and national donor agencies (Heimans 2002). One of the decisions made about the GFATM has been about its institutional location and its relationship with other institutions whose global mandate within the UN system is health. This location has enormous implications on how funds are managed and disbursed at both the global and national level. It also has implications for the channels through which national governments relate to the outside world.

Re-ordering of chairs at the global level seems to have not paid attention to existing linkages. National-level institutions tend over time to develop special relationships with international organisations, and a kind of division of labour – formal or informal – emerges in which certain parts of the state are delegated with certain tasks for dealing with the outside world. Over the years, skills are developed in dealing and responding to international institutions. In the case of health, ministries of health have developed relationship with the World Health Organisation (WHO), and over the years these ministries have cooperated on a wide range of health issues and campaigns. Now governments are having to learn how to deal with and to make the necessary institutional arrangements to access the resources of the GFATM.

Conclusion

There are some striking parallels between the earlier experience of integrated rural development and the present fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. One feature of IRD projects was that they introduced ambitious and complex institutional arrangements, often with scant regard to local circumstances and few links to local government structures. The institutions pushed by donors are more a reflection of their own organisational proclivities, their view of partner states and perceptions of local politics, rather than of the institutional needs of the recipient countries. Not only did IRD projects fail in terms of output, let alone poverty alleviation, they also undermined state capacity to promote agricultural development. Although there is much greater awareness of the dangers of isolated and vertical systems, the danger remains that the fencing off of HIV/AIDS institutions will militate against the much-touted principles of country ownership and keeping decision-making close to developing countries. Conversations with local officials and other

anecdotal evidence suggest resentment against these schemes and genuine concerns that GFATM projects will run in parallel to existing health systems and will divert scarce human resources and simply compound existing problems.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic poses serious challenges for the international community, and there can be no doubt that increased resources and innovative institutional arrangements are urgently needed. Huge projects such as the IRD and GFATM, by the sheer magnitude of the resources they mobilise, have huge system-wide effects, many of which have unintended consequences. Although again there is an awareness of the potential impact and the need to ensure a good fit between the disease-specific focus and health care systems, the GFATM emphasis on efficient and rapid disbursement and the institutional options chosen are already showing signs that if care is not taken, the GFATM could produce similar results to those of the IRD.

Finally, the fight against HIV/AIDS in the developing countries will have to pay close attention to the experiences and lessons from development efforts in general if it is to avoid reinventing the proverbial wheel and mindlessly borrowing problematic concepts and practices from other fields of development. Because of its isolation from the larger developmental debates and experiences, there is the risk that 'solutions' that have either been discarded or are known to be unfeasible, and ideas whose organisational efficacy has been debunked elsewhere, will circulate in these circles, unencumbered by all the battering inflicted upon them elsewhere. To avoid such areas, the campaign against HIV/AIDS will have to draw liberally from the vast knowledge on managing projects in the developing countries.

Notes

1. In Malawi, one of the most showcased experiments with IRD, which had 'attracted worldwide attention and emulation' (Duncan 1997), the projects proved to be costly flops:

    > They obviously had little effect on gross crop production of the smallholder sector as a whole, which at best has grown slightly faster than the growth of the population. An evaluation of the Lilongwe project shows no sustained increase in maize yields and perhaps a decrease in groundnut yields. In the Shire Valley project, the hectare productivity in cotton (the major crop) fell; for other crops it rose only slightly. The scattered data for Karonga also show no remarkable results. No evaluation of the lakeshore project is readily available (Pryor 1990: 73).

2. These were the MADIA (Managing Agricultural Development in Africa) studies, the major findings of which were summarised by Uma Lele (Lele 1990).

3. This problem of 'pre-emptive compliance' is not particular to HIV/AIDS. As one African minister stated, 'We do not want to second guess the Fund. We

prefer to pre-empt them by giving them what they want before they start lecturing us about this and that' (cited in Cheru 2001).

4. The apprehension that choices are being forced on poor countries has also been expressed by government officials. Thus speaking at the World Bank in November 2003, UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot stated, 'When I hear that countries are choosing to comply with the budget ceilings at the expense of adequately funding AIDS programs, it strikes me that someone isn't looking hard enough for sound alternatives' (cited in Results 2004). Head of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) office in Uganda, Michael Hamond said Uganda should be given an opportunity to make decisions, and is quoted as saying 'If we come and change their priorities then it becomes a dictatorship, not a partnership' (cited in Wendo 2002a).

5. What compounds matters is that the GFATM has itself taken what are obviously political positions in the funding of individual countries. Richard Feachem said Zimbabwe's application was turned down for many reasons, among them concerns about government accountability – 'Yes, the politics of a nation plays a role when we determine the country's application'; 'It does not help the people of Zimbabwe to pass money through channels which are not well worked out' (Mafundikwa 2004).

6. The South African President weighed in, stating that while South Africa might depend on goodwill to fight diseases such as AIDS, this must not be an excuse to condemn the nation to 'perpetual subservience' because of its poverty. Mbeki said:

    Our country faces many challenges whose resolution requires large resources, among other things. We deeply appreciate the assistance extended to us by many governments and non-governmental organizations to enlarge our capacity to respond to these challenges ... It is true that we are poor and need the support of people of goodwill ... It is, however, also true that we would betray those who sacrificed for our liberation, and corrupt our freedom, if we succumbed to the expectation of some of those more richly endowed than ourselves, that our poverty should condemn us to perpetual subservience. This we will not do (Mbeki Speaks Out on AIDS Funds', News24, 28 May 2004).

7. The Gay Movements have made enormous contributions to this fight.

8. As noted by Scalway in a Panos paper (Scalway 2003),

    Most of these organizations (64 per cent of NGOs we surveyed) get their funding from a Northern source or from governments whose health budgets are derived from the donor community. More NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that Panos surveyed said their work was determined by their donors than by the communities most affected by HIV/AIDS ... The donors these NGOs were referring to were mostly Northern based. A quarter of all these organisations reported that they were not sufficiently accountable to the communities they served. And in a separate question,

those same NGOs were asked to what extent they felt that their activities were led and 'owned' by those most affected: 28 per cent answered 'a small amount', 'a very small amount' or 'not at all'. Only one in five NGOs surveyed thought that communities affected by HIV/AIDS were adequately represented in general decision-making.

9. One of the unfortunate new features of NGO activities is the introduction of what, in Malawi at least, is referred to as 'sitting allowances' whereby people are paid a fee for attending meetings. A GFATM report on Ghana found that, overall, the CCM had been working not only because of the commitment of officials and development partners, but also because of the 'somewhat controversial and ... not particularly effective' payment of an attendance fee of $23 per member for each meeting (Global Fund To Fight Against Aids 2004). In Senegal some organisations received 'indemnité de representation', apparently without the knowledge of other members of the committee. In Malawi, the president has condemned the proliferation of 'workshops' around HIV/AIDS and the 'per diem culture' it has spawned. In addition, since GFATM activities have become the locus for important resource allocation decisions, they could jeopardise the collaboration and coordination among parties contending for the funds.

10. The case of the World Health Organisation is discussed in Horton (2002).

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The Silences in the NGO Discourse:
The role and future of NGOs in Africa*

Issa G. Shivji**

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to examine critically the role and future of the NGO in Africa in the light of its self-perception as a non-governmental, non-political, non-partisan, non-ideological, non-academic, non-theoretical, not-for-profit as-sociation of well-intentioned individuals dedicated to changing the world to make it a better place for the poor, the marginalised and the downcast. It is the argument of the paper that the role of NGOs in Africa cannot be understood without a clear characterisation of the current historical moment.

On a canvas of broad strokes, I depict Africa at the cross-roads of the defeat of the National Project and the rehabilitation of the imperial project. In the face of the avalanche of 'end of history' diatribes, I find it necessary, albeit briefly, to reiterate the history of Africa's enslavement from the first contacts with the Europeans five centuries ago through the slave trade to colonialism and now globalisation. The aim of this historical detour is to demonstrate the fundamen-tal antithesis between the National and the Imperial Projects so as to identify correctly the place and role of the NGOs in it.

I locate the rise, the prominence and the privileging of the NGO sector in the womb of the neo-liberal offensive whose aim is as much ideological as economic and political. I argue that the NGO discourse, or more correctly the non-dis-course, is predicated on the philosophical and political premises of neo-liberal-ism/globalisation paradigm. It is in this context that I go on to discuss the 'five silences' or blind-spots in the NGO discourse. I draw out the implications of these silences on the contemporary and future role of the NGO sector in Africa.

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At the outset, I must make two confessions. First, the paper is undoubtedly critical, sometimes ruthlessly so, but not cynical. Secondly, the criticism is also a self-criticism since the author has been involved in NGO activism for the last fifteen years or so. And, finally, I must make it clear that I do not doubt the noble motivations and the good intentions of NGO leaders and activists. But one does not judge the outcome of a process by the intentions of its authors; one analyses the objective effect of actions regardless of intentions. Hopefully, that is what I have done.

Résumé

Cet article tente de faire un examen critique du rôle et de l'avenir des ong en Afrique, qui se veulent être des associations non gouvernementales, non politiques, non partisanes, non idéologiques, non académiques, non théoriques et à but non lucratif, composées d'individus bien intentionnés, ayant pour ambition de changer le monde afin, de le rendre meilleur pour les pauvres, les marginalisés et les groupes opprimés. Cet article affirme que le rôle des ong en Afrique ne peut être compris sans une caractérisation bien claire du moment historique actuel.

Je dépeins l'Afrique comme étant au carrefour de la défaite duProjet National et de la réhabilitation du projet impérialiste. Face à l'avalanche de diatribes « catastrophistes », je considère qu'il est nécessaire de rappeler l'histoire de l'asservissement de l'Afrique, de ses premiers contacts avec les Européens il y a cinq siècles à l'actuelle mondialisation, en passant par l'esclavage et le colonialisme. L'objectif d'une telle digression historique est de démontrer l'antinomie fondamentale entre les Projets Nationaux et Impérialistes, afin de bien identifier la place et le rôle des ong au sein de ceux-ci.

Je situerais le développement, l'importance et la place privilégiée des ong dans les entrailles mêmes de l'offensive néolibérale dont la finalité est aussi bien idéologique qu'économique et politique. Je soutiens que le discours des ong, ou plus exactement leur non-discours, est fondé sur les hypothèses philosophiques et politiques du paradigme du néolibéralisme/de la mondialisation. C'est dans ce contexte que je poursuis, en discutant des « cinq silences » ou zones d'ombres décelées dans le discours des ong. Je dégage ensuite les implications de ces silences sur le rôle futur et contemporain des ong en Afrique.

Dès le départ, j'aimerais me livrer à deux confessions. Premièrement, cet article est sans nul doute critique, parfois impitoyablement critique, mais jamais cynique. Deuxièmement, cette critique est également une auto-critique, car l'auteur s'est livré à l'activisme des ong au cours des quinze dernières années. Enfin, j'aimerais préciser que je ne doute pas des bonnes intentions et de la noble motivation qui animent les dirigeants et activistes des ong. Mais l'on ne peut juger du résultat d'un processus à travers les intentions de ses auteurs. L'on analyse l'effet objectif des actions menées, sans tenir compte des intentions. J'espère que c'est ce que j'aurai réussi à réaliser ici.

The national project and its impediments

The slicing of the African 'cake' (1885)

By 1885, when European kings, princes and presidents sat in Berlin to slice up the African continent with their geometrical instruments, the African people had already been devastated by the ravages of the West Atlantic slave trade. On the West and Central Africa, the indigenous civilisations from the sophisticated Saharan trade routes, with Timbuktu as its centre, to the Empires of Angola, lay in ruins (Davidson 1961:197). On the eastern seaboard, the European invasion led by the Portuguese defeated and destroyed the city states of Swahili civilization (Davidson 1961, Sheriff 1987: 15 et seq.). All in all, some fifty million souls are estimated to have perished in the triangular slave trade which lasted for roughly four centuries (1450–1850).

The development of the European and North American industrial revolution and the global lead that this gave to Europe and America was in no small measure built on the backs of Africans (Williams 1945). The colonial episode was thus the tail end of the long and destructive contact between Europe and Africa. The slave trade tore apart the very social fabric of African societies, destroying the internal processes of change and imposing on the continent a European world view in which the peoples of Africa belonged to the lowest rung of the so-called civilised order. No other continent, including those that suffered formal European colonisation, had their social, cultural and moral order destroyed on this scale.

The dominant European historiography, at best, recounts the colonial episode while ignoring four centuries of pre-colonial contact. Yet the present cannot be fully understood and grasped nor the future charted without constantly keeping at the centre-stage the centuries-old processes of what Rodney called 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa' (Rodney 1972).

The pre-colonial and colonial legacy of Africa is thus a continuing saga of domination, exploitation and humiliation of the continent by the imperial powers of Europe and America. It is the thesis of this paper that the imperial relationship continues, notwithstanding the brief period of nationalism. In the next section I briefly recapitulate the salient features of the colonial legacy and the abortive national project.

The colonial legacy

From its very inception, the most important feature of colonialism was the division of the continent into countries and states cutting across 'natural' geographic, cultural ethnic and economic ties which had evolved historically. First, there was the artificial drawing of boundaries literally with rulers reflecting the balance of strength and power among the imperial states. The

boundaries divided up peoples, cultures, natural resources and historical affinities. On top of that, the newly created countries became subjects of different European powers with their own traditions of political rule, public administration, cultural outlooks, languages and systems of education. Africa was never Africa; it was Anglophone, Francophone, or Lusophone.

Secondly, colonial economies answering to the needs and exigencies of metropolitan powers were disintegrated and disarticulated. The notorious export-oriented, vertically integrated economies, based on the export of raw materials and import of manufactured goods, were the result. The internal processes of specialisation and division of labour with mutual interdependence (craftsmen and cultivators, producers and merchants, industrial and agriculture, etc.), a possible harbinger of future industrial development, were deliberately destroyed and systematically discouraged (Kjekshus 1977, 1996). Within and between countries, there was extreme uneven development.

The underlying economic logic of the colonial economy was of course the exploitation of its natural and human resources. Colonies became the sites of generating surplus while metropoles were the sites of accumulation, resulting in the development of the centres and the underdevelopment of the peripheries. The processes of production relied heavily on coercion, rather than the apparent consensus of contract for its reproduction–forced labour, forced peasant production, forced cash crop sales, restrictions on organisation and association, criminalisation of 'civil relations' (for example, breach of employment contracts led to penal sanctions so did non-cultivation of minimum acreages of cash/food crops), etc. Thus force was imbricated in the process of production (Mamdani 1987; Shivji 1987; Shivji 1998).

Thirdly, people were divided along ethnic, religious and racial lines. Some tribes were labeled martial and therefore a recruiting ground for soldiers; others were condemned to be labourers and their areas became labour reservoirs; still others were supposed to be chiefly to provide the political henchmen of colonial state apparatus. Missionary education became the means to spread Christianity and save the souls of pagans while producing the future educated elite. Indigenous religions and world views were condemned as paganism while Islam, one of the oldest religions to enter and be internalised in Africa, was systematically discriminated against.

Fourthly, condemned as lazy and indolent, incapable of learning and entrepreneurship, to be perpetually ruled and disciplined, the internal social division and stratification of the African society was suppressed and muted. Instead, traders and craftsmen and skilled labour was imported; South Asians in East Africa, Lebanese in West Africa. Thus a hierarchy of racial privileges was constructed, the epitome of which was the settler colony. The middle

classes that developed in the interstices of the colonised social order were
stunted at best, or caricatures, at worst (Fanon 1963).

Fifthly, religion and education were the vehicle for reproducing the colo-
nial racial and cultural complexes–white was superior, black was inferior.
The white man's beliefs were a religion; the black man's, witchcraft/'black
magic'. The white man's means of communication was language; the black
man's, dialect. As Fanon puts it:

> The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the ab-
> sence of values, but also the negation of values... The customs of the colo-
> nized people, their traditions, their myths–above all, their myths–are the very
> sign of that poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity. That is why
> we must put the D.D.T. which destroys parasites, the bearers of disease, on
> the same level as the Christian religion which wages war on embryonic her-
> esies and instincts, and on evil as yet unborn... The Church in the colonies is
> the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the na-
> tive to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the
> oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen
> (Fanon 1963: 32.).

The 'few chosen', the colonised elite, were thus a caricature, alienated from
their own people and yet not fully accepted by their master. Sartre sums it up
well:

> The European élite undertook to manufacture a native élite. They picked out
> promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the
> principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sound-
> ing phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay
> in the mother country they were sent home, white-washed. These walking lies
> had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed. From Paris, from
> London, from Amsterdam we would utter words 'Parthenon! Brotherhood!'
> and somewhere in Africa or Asia lips would open '...thenon!...therhood!' It
> was the golden age (Sartre, Preface to Fanon 1963: 7).

Sixthly, the colonial state was an implant, an alien apparatus imposed on the
colonised society. It was an excrescence of the metropolitan state without
the latter's liberal institutions or politics. It was a despotic state. It did not
have 'its' civil society in the colonial social formation. 'Its' civil society was
the metropolitan civil society, or, at most, the narrow European settler com-
munity in the colony. The colonised society was a subject-society ('a collec-
tion of heathens/natives') governed by coercion and regulated by custom,
not a civil society (constituted by persons/citizens) governed by rights and
duties and regulated by law (Mamdani 1996).

The governance structures of the colonial state reflected and reinforced
the racial, ethnic, and religious divisions and fragmentations of the colonised

society. For the subject-society, the state was represented by the policeman and the tax collector and the district commissioner who also doubled up as a magistrate, not by the legislative councilor or a judge. To resolve a dispute with a neighbour, the 'native' man went to a chief; to be punished for murder or non-payment of tax or theft of master's property, he was dragged to the magistrate or a judge to be hanged or imprisoned.

We may sum up then by stating the obvious. On the eve of independence, African nationalists faced a formidable task; the task of transforming the brutalised colonial societies into national societies. The National Project thus called for an African Revolution in every sense of the word.

The nationalist challenge and the defeat of the national project

Pan-Africanism vs. territorial nationalism

The colonial divisiveness, both within and between African countries, seriously undermined the national project right at its inception. The colonial infrastructure was an exact antithesis of a *national* economy. The only reason for individual African countries as loci of national independence was the fact that each one of them fell under the jurisdiction of a different colonial power. In sum, the colonial rationale thus became the rationale of the national project, a contradiction in terms and a paradox.

This paradox was acutely felt, if not always clearly understood, by the first generation of African nationalists. Tutored in the ways of their European counterparts, African nationalists coined and crafted the demands of their peoples in the European idiom of human rights and national self-determination within the international context of the rise of national liberation in the post-Second World War period. Yet, the ideological genesis of African nationalism lay in Pan-Africanism. The locus of Pan-Africanism was the continent itself, not the artificially created spaces bound by colonial borders called countries.

Literally, therefore, Pan-Africanism begot nationalism, rather than the other way round. Pan-Africanism preceded nationalism by almost half a century. Logic and history neatly coincided. The founding fathers of Pan-Africanism were African-Americans, the African Diaspora, whose only identity could be African, rather than Nigerian or Congolese or Kenyan. The leading lights of the independence movement, like Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, themselves were incubated in the Pan-African movement, conceived, propagated and organised by the likes of great George Padmore, W.E.B. DuBois, C. L. R. James and others (see generally Legum 1965).

When Nkrumah returned to the continent his vision was one of West African federation rather than the independence of Gold Coast. At the threshold

of Ghana's independence, Nkrumah, with great foresight, undertook such historical initiatives as organising the All Africa People's Conferences bringing together independence parties and trade unions. Some leading African nationalists like Nyerere realised and repeated often that there could not be African nationalism outside Pan-Africanism. 'African nationalism is meaningless, is anachronistic, and is dangerous, if it is not at the same time Pan-Africanism' (Nyerere 1963a in Nyerere 1967:194). Nyerere was prepared to delay the independence of his country to facilitate the East African federation. He argued that once these countries became independent with their own flags, and national anthems and presidents and prime ministers it would be that much more difficult to dissolve individual sovereignties in a larger sovereignty. History proved him right.

Nkrumah constantly and vehemently argued that left on their own, independent African countries would become pawns on the imperialist chessboard. He too was tragically proved right in the then Congo. Under the guise of United Nations, Western imperial powers led by the United States conspired in the assassination of the great nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba. Since then Congo has descended into the cycle of violence from which it has yet to recover.

As African countries became independent one after another, Nkrumah's All Africa People's Conferences dissolved into the conference of Independent African States which eventually formed the Organisation of African Unity. Nkrumah continued his battle-cry for the Union of African States to the chagrin of even his own friends. Nyerere, who advocated a gradualist-cum-regional approach to African unity, clashed with Nkrumah who believed that the regional approach to African unity would in fact become an obstacle to political unity of the continent and that regionalism would inevitably play into the hands of imperialism (see generally Shivji 2005a). Logic was on the side of Nyerere but history and political economy proved Nkrumah right.

Nkrumah with great foresight wrote *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* for which imperialism never forgave him. He was overthrown in 1966 by a CIA-sponsored coup. Nyerere's own practical attempt at uniting Zanzibar with Tanganyika in 1964 was much more a pragmatic response to intense cold-war pressures rather than an example of Pan-African unity (Wilson 1989). The OAU itself was bedeviled by imperial machinations making Nyerere, one of the founding fathers, angrily condemn it as a 'trade union of African leaders/states'!

In the hands of the state, the national project inevitably and inexorably became a statist project and nationalism resolved itself into various ideologies of developmentalism and nation-building in the process undermining Pan-Africanism (see Wamba-dia-Wamba 1991 & 1996; Shivji 1986). Ironically,

territorial nationalism, born of Pan-Africanism, became the latter's grave-digger. While paying fulsome tribute to Nkrumah's great vision at the 40th anniversary of Ghana's independence in 1997, Nyerere lamented the failure of the first generation of African nationalists to unite Africa:

> Once you multiply national anthems, national flags and national passports, seats at the United Nations, and individuals entitled to 21 guns salute, not to speak of a host of ministers, Prime Ministers, and envoys, you would have a whole army of powerful people with vested interests in keeping Africa balkanized (Nyerere 1997).

Developmental state vs. democratic development

The independence movement in Africa was essentially led by proto-middle classes, or petty bourgeoisie, consisting mostly of the educated elite. No doubt it was a mass movement in which the African was reasserting his/her African-ness after five centuries of domination and humiliation. Tom Mboya called it 'the rediscovery of Africa by Africans' (Mboya 1963) and Amilcar Cabral defined national liberation as the process of 'becoming Africans' (Cabral 1980). Yet, as some African nationalists had predicted and others painfully realised, 'territorial nationalism' was an anachronism and that is what it eventually proved to be. But African nationalists like Nyerere, who took the reins of the state on the morrow of independence, had to work within the constraints imposed by 'territorial nationalism'. In the process they ended up making a virtue of necessity as the authoritarian logic of the colonial state reasserted itself.

The independent state, Nyerere argued, had the twin task of development and nation-building. The state in Africa, he asserted, preceded the nation (Nyerere 1963a & 1963b). Ironically though the state that was supposed to build the nation was the inherited colonial state – despotic, divisive, and in every respect antithetical to the tasks of nation-building. Nationalism in the hands of the post-colonial state degenerated into statism, politically authoritarian, economically rapacious, internationally compradorial and nationally dictatorial. The ideology of nationalism resolved into various ideologies of developmentalism at best, or ethnicism, at worst. The liberal constitutional order bequeathed by the departing colonial masters was a tragic joke because it was superimposed on a despotic apparatus also invented, strengthened and bequeathed by the colonial master. The despotic infrastructure endured while the liberal superstructure blew off in the winds of factional political struggles or the so-called development imperatives (Shivji 2003).

'We must run while others walk', Nyerere declared. In the hurry to develop, he added, 'we' cannot afford liberal checks and balances. Justifying

the executive, or 'imperial' presidency, as it is branded in the African juris-
prudence, Nyerere wrote in the *London Observer*:

> Our constitution differs from the American system in that it... enables the
> executive to function without being checked at every turn... Our need is not
> for brakes to social change... our lack of trained manpower and capital re-
> sources, and even our climate, act too effectively already. We need accelera-
> tors powerful enough to overcome the inertia bred by poverty, and the
> resistances which are inherent in all societies (quoted in Mwaikusa 1995: 105).

Independence had raised people's expectations. To maintain their legitimacy,
the new regimes had to deliver both on the development and social front. As
we have seen, the colonial state had deliberately suppressed and undermined
the development of a middle class which would have taken on the task of an
agency of development. That fell to the state. Regardless of the ideology,
whether capitalist or nominally socialist, of whatever variety, the state be-
came the site of accumulation, private and public. The public sector in Afri-
can countries, from socialist Tanzania to capitalist Malawi, played the domi-
nant role. Nyerere justified his nationalisations more on grounds of 'economic
nationalism' than on the principles of socialism (Nyerere 1968:262). What-
ever the pundits of neo-liberalism may proclaim today, the fact remains that
the Bretton Woods Institutions, the so-called 'donor community' and the
multinationals, all in concert, used the African state in their own interest
while closing their eyes to mismanagement and corruption when it suited
them.

During the first one-and-half decade of independence, the African
economies showed modest growth rates; modest in comparison to other
continents but impressive given the initial conditions at the time of independ-
ence. Investment and savings ranged between 15 to 20 per cent of the GDP.
Primary and secondary school enrolment was expanded. Tertiary education,
which in many countries literally did not exist during colonial times, was
introduced. Medical and health statistics also showed improvement. But this
growth and development was unsustainable. It was predicated on the rein-
forcement of colonial foundations.

Growth in agriculture production was based on extensive cultivation rather
than a rise in productivity through chemicalisation, mechanisation and irriga-
tion. It depended heavily on exports of a few primary commodities traded on
a hostile and adverse international market. The growth in the manufacturing
industry was heavily of the import-substitution type with little internal link-
ages and dependent on import of intermediary inputs. Investment was largely
public while domestic private capital was stashed away in foreign countries.
One estimate has it that by 1990, 37 per cent of Africa's wealth had flown
outside the continent (Mkandawire & Soludo 1999:11). To top it all, foreign

capital concentrated in extractive industries which simply hemorrhaged the economy rather than contribute to its development.

During this period, the developmental state also borrowed heavily whether for productive or prestigious projects. Petro-dollars accumulated by international banks during the 1973 oil crisis were off-loaded in the form of cheap loans to developing countries. By the end of 1970s, cheap loans turned into heavy debt burdens. By this time, the limits of the early growth were reached and the economic shocks of the late seventies plunged the African economies into deep crisis. Numbers fell, growth rates became negative, debt repayments became unsustainable, fiscal imbalances went out of control, and so did inflation. Social services declined, the infrastructure deteriorated and one after another African governments (including the radical nationalist) found themselves at the door of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Paris Club pleading for mercy (Cambell & Stein 1991).

The 1980s, described by economists as Africa's 'lost decade', were also the transitional decade which marked the beginning of the decline of developmentalism and the rise of neo-liberalism, euphemistically called globalisation. The 'lost decade' signaled both the decline of the developmental state and the loss of its political legitimacy. African people seem to have lost out both on development and democracy. Thus the internal situation began to witness political stirrings and rethinking, both practical and ideological. But as the African political economy has again and again demonstrated, the continent is firmly inserted in the imperialist web. Instead of the space opening up for internal struggles of the people, the opportunist imperialist intervention derailed it by imposing the top-down approach, the so-called multiparty democracy and good governance, etc. Western powers took the opportunity to reassert their political and ideological hegemony and recover the ground lost during the nationalist decades. Let us quickly recapitulate that trajectory.

Nationalism vs. imperialism
Colonialism left by the front door and returned through the back door in the form of what Nkrumah called neo-colonialism. Radical nationalists were overthrown in military coups (Nkrumah, Ben Bella) or assassinated (Lumumba, Pio Gama Pinto, Sankara) in adventures sponsored by Western imperialism (see generally Blum 1986 & 2001; De Witte 2001). A few who managed to survive had to compromise and play 'hide-and-seek' with imperial powers (Nyerere, Kaunda); others became paranoid and despotic at the apprehension of being overthrown or assassinated (Sekou Toure) and many simply became compradors doing the bidding of imperial masters (Kenyatta/ Moi, Houphouët Boigny, Senghor etc.).

Harking on the need to build nations out of fractious ethnic groups and the need for rapid development, the post-independence ruling classes and governing elites centralised and concentrated power in the executive arm of the state on the one hand, and hegemonised autonomous expressions of civil society, on the other (see essays in Shivji 1991). Elsewhere, ruling factions resorted to whipping up ethnic divisions to keep themselves in power.

Yet, it is also true that during this period, imperialism was ideologically on the defensive. The movement of the newly independent countries (non-alignment, UNCTAD, new economic world order, right to development, etc.), the successful Chinese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan revolutions; the defeat of the US superpower in Vietnam, and the student and youth anti-imperialist movement all over the world, enhanced the prestige of national liberation movements. This was what Samir Amin calls the period of 'Bandung excitement' (see Amin 1990).

In Africa, the triumph of the armed struggle in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau represented, ironically, both the high point of radical nationalism and its precipitous decline in the next decade. Portugal was the weak link in the imperialist chain. It was defeated by the national liberation movement supported by much of the rest of Africa. But imperialism was not destroyed. The national liberation movement in power embarked on an alternative, anti-imperialist, path of development. The struggle between nationalism and imperialism found its most concentrated expression in southern Africa. Imperialism, through its proxy, the apartheid South Africa, showed its true colours by supporting terrorist organisations like RENAMO in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola. These organisations caused havoc in these countries leading to compromises on all fronts, change in direction of development and loss of the national liberation vision. The national liberation elites were utterly compradorised, disowning their own past and slavishly echoing the rising neo-liberal rhetoric.

Again, as history would have it, the 'success' of one of the longest and most militant national liberation movements in Africa, the South African, was not so much the high point of radical nationalism against imperialism, but rather the beginning of its end. By the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, the nationalist era, particularly its territorial variant, was coming to a close. The defeat of actually existing socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union further narrowed the space for the expression of radical nationalism and anti-imperialism. Imperialism took the offensive, initially on the economic front with structural adjustment programmes, followed by an undisguised political and ideological offensive, ridiculing and humiliating nationalism while rehabilitating imperialism. Douglas Hurd, the then British Secretary of State, could say in 1990 that 'we are slowly putting behind us a period of

history when the West was unable to express a legitimate interest in the developing world without being accused of "neo-colonialism"' (quoted in Furedi 1994:99). And a British historian, John Charmley, launching his book *Churchill: The End of Glory,* could unashamedly declare:

> The British Empire vanishing has had a very deleterious effect on the third world. Look at Uganda under the British and look at it now. And you didn't get famines quite as frequently in Africa then as you do now (quoted Furedi 1994: 98).

The neo-liberal package is, and has been, far more an *ideological* offensive than simply an economic programme. But let me not jump the story. In the next section I quickly retrace the beginnings of the neo-liberalist phase in Africa.

The imperial project and its succours

The neo-liberal offensive

On the heels of the defeat of the National Project came the imperialist offensive to destroy and bury it, which, by definition, is the immanent dream of imperialism. On the economic front, the neo-liberal package boiled down to further deepening the integration of African economies in the world capitalist system, thus reproducing the essentially colonial and neo-colonial economic structures.

In 1981 the World Bank published its notorious report, *Accelerated Development for Africa: An Agenda for Africa.* It was certainly an agenda for Africa set by the erstwhile Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs) with the backing of Western countries but it had little to do with development, accelerated or otherwise. The report and the subsequent structural adjustment programmes concentrated on stabilisation measures: getting rid of budget deficits, bringing down rates of inflation, getting prices right, unleashing the market and liberalising trade. According to the World Bank, the villain of the declining economic performance in Africa was the state; it was corrupt and dictatorial, it had no capacity to manage the economy and allocate resources rationally, it was bloated with bureaucracy, and nepotism was its mode of operation. The BWIs would not bail out the crisis-ridden economies unless the governments adopted structural adjustment programmes to get stabilisation fundamentals right.

Balancing budgets involved cutting out subsidies to agriculture and spending on social programmes, including education and health. Unleashing the market meant doing away with the protection of infant industries and rolling back the state from economic activity. The results of SAPs have been devastating as many studies by researchers have shown. Social indicators like

education, medical care, health, nutrition, rates of literacy and life expectancy all declined. De-industrialisation set in. Redundancies followed. In short, even some of the modest achievements of the nationalist or developmentalist period were lost or undermined (Gibbon 1993 & 1995; Adedeji 1993).

As the international situation changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western imperialist powers regained their ideological initiative. The neo-liberal package of marketisation, privatisation and liberalisation now became the policy for, but not of, the African states. Good performers would be praised and rewarded with more aid while the insubordinate and recalcitrant would be parodied and left to their own devices. While aid had always come with strings, now there was no attempt to disguise it. Political conditionalities – multi-party, good governance, human rights etc. – were added to economic conditionalities. Political decision making and policy making slipped out of the hands of the African state as Western-financed policy and governance consultants[1] in their thousands jetted all over the continent with blue prints on Poverty Reduction Strategies and manuals on good governance on their computers, gobbling up some four billion dollars annually (Mkandawire & Soludo 1999:111). In 1985, to give just one example, foreign experts resident in Equatorial Guinea were paid an amount three times the total government wage bill of the public sector (Mkandawire & Soludo 1999: 137).

National liberation ideologies have been rubbished and national self-determination itself has been declared passé. Africa is told it has only one choice: either to get integrated fully into the globalised world or be marginalised. The specter of marginalisation is so rampant that even progressive African scholars dare say that 'Africa may be graduating from being the region with "lost development decades" to becoming the world's forgotten continent' (ibid.:xi).

The former US ambassador to my country, Tanzania, speaking to the country's law-makers was blatantly clear on what the superpower expected of African states:

> The liberation diplomacy of the past, when alliances with socialist nations were paramount and so-called Third World Solidarity dominated foreign policy, must give way to a more realistic approach to dealing with your true friends – those who are working to lift you into the twenty-first century, where poverty is not acceptable and disease must be conquered.[2]

African leaders are left with few options: 'you are either with globalisation or doomed!' They have fallen in line one after another even if it means disowning their own past. Blair's Commission for Africa report, which consisted of prominent Africans including one president and one prime minister, castigates the whole of last three decades, which virtually means the whole of

post-independence period, as 'lost decades' (for a critical appraisal see Graham 2005). The primary responsibility is placed on the African state for bad governance and lack of accountability, totally ignoring the role of imperialism in both the exploitation of African resources and the support for non-democratic states when it suited their interests. Africans are told they have no capacity to think and African states are told they have no capacity to make correct policies. As the Blair's Commission for Africa declared with a straight face: 'Africa's history over the last fifty years has been blighted by two areas of weakness. These have been *capacity* – the ability to design and deliver policies; and *accountability* – how well a state answers to its people' (p. 14, emphasis in the original).

So policy-making, an important aspect of sovereignty, has been wrenched out of the hands of the African state. In policy-making, the state is placed on the same level as other so-called stake-holders, including NGOs, as we shall see.

The fundamental premises of globalisation or neo-liberalism

Globalisation in Africa manifests itself in the neo-liberal economic and political package which centres on liberalisation of trade, privatisation of national assets and resources, commodification of social services and marketisation of all goods and services, tangible and intangible.

In sum, the underlying thrust of the neo-liberal and globalised development 'discourse' is deeper integration of African economies into the global capital and market circuits without fundamental transformation. It is predicated on private capital, which in Africa translates into foreign private capital, as the 'engine of growth'. It centres on economic growth without asking whether growth necessarily translates into development. It banishes the issues of equality and equity to the realm of rights, not development. And 'rights' are within the purview of advocacy NGOs, not a terrain of people's struggle. 'Human-centered and people-driven' development which were the kingpin of African alternatives, such as the Lagos Plan of Action, are pooh-poohed into non-existence. Development is within the purview of development practitioners and development NGOs, which, following fashion, advocate rights-based development.

The African people, who were once supposed to be the authors and drivers of development and liberators of their nations, are reduced to 'the chronically poor' who are the subject matter of papers on strategies for poverty reduction, authored by consultants and discussed at stake-holders workshops in which, the 'poor' are represented by NGOs. The 'poor', the diseased, the disabled, the AIDS-infected, the ignorant, the marginalised, in short the 'people', are not part of the development equation, since develop-

ment is assigned to private capital which constitutes the 'engine of growth'. The 'poor' are the recipients of humanitarian aid provided by 'true friends' (thanks to the American ambassador for the phraseology), and dispensed by non-partisan, non-political and, presumably non-involved, non-governmental organisations. In these societies, where stake-holders never tire of policy-making on the poor, there isn't its twin opposite, the rich. These societies apparently do not have *producers* and *appropriators* of wealth; they only have *the poor* and *the wealth creators*.

In the neo-liberal discourse, the African state is villainised and African bureaucracies demonised as corrupt, incapable and unable to learn. They need globalised foreign advisors and consultants, who are now termed development practitioners, to mentor, monitor and oversee them. Among the mentors and monitors are of course NGOs. After all, the so-called advisors and consultants move freely between the 'Triad Family' – the DONs (donor organisations), the INFOs (international financial organisations) and the NGOs, including GoNGOs (government-organised NGOs) and DoNGOs (donor-organised NGOs).

In this 'discourse' the developmental role of the state is declared dead and buried. Instead, it is assigned the role of a 'chief' to supervise the globalisation project under the tutelage of imperialism, now called, development partners or 'true friends'.[3] The irony of the recent Commission for Africa was that it was convened, constituted and chaired by a British Prime Minister, while an African president and a prime minister sat on it as members. This symbolises the nature of the so-called 'new partnership'. The message is clear: African 'co-partners' in African development are neither equal nor in the driver's seat.[4]

It is true that the neo-liberal discourse has not gone without being challenged, both intellectually and practically. African people have fought on the streets against SAPs; they have protested in their own ways in their villages and towns and neighborhoods. African intellectuals have written and argued and shown the fallacy of the underlying assumptions of neo-liberalism and globalisation. Yet, it is also true, that at least for the time being, neo-liberalism seems to hold sway. Virtually the whole of the African political elite and establishment (unlike, for example, in Latin America) has fallen in line, whether for pragmatic reasons of survival or to defend their own vested interests. A large part of the African intellectual elite too has been co-opted and accommodated within the neo-colonial discourse.

It is the argument of this paper that the sudden rise of NGOs and their apparently prominent role in Africa is part of the neo-liberal organisational, and particularly ideological, offensive. We turn to this argument next.

NGOs or the so-called 'Third Sector'

At the inception of the neo-liberal offensive in the early 1980s, the rise and role of NGOs was explained and justified within the conceptual framework of the problematic of civil society. The concept of civil society came into vogue in the 1980s with the impending collapse of the Soviet and East European systems and the democratisation drive in Africa. In Eastern Europe, following the collapse of bureaucratic socialist regimes (or actually existing socialism, as they were then christened), the construction of civil societies was seen as returning to 'normal society' on the 'Western model' (*Journal of Democracy*, January 1996, 'Civil Society after Communism', p.11). In Eastern Europe itself, the term has been used in as many different ways as contexts (see Shivji 2002:101-118).

The discourse on civil society in Africa too used the term with all kinds of meanings from associational connotations ('civil societies') to all-virtuous, harmonious social space (see, for instance, the International Peace Academy Publication 'Civil Society and Conflict Management in Africa', 1996). But it is in the meaning of free associations, 'independent' of the state, that the term has stuck and very often the term civil society organisations (CSOs) is used interchangeably with NGOs.

Influenced heavily, as always, by US based Africanists, it is the false bipolarity or dichotomy between state and civil society that has predominated. Within the neo-liberal ideologies, as we have seen, the state is demonised and the civil society, often conflated with NGOs, is privileged. NGOs are presented as the 'third sector', the other two being the state (power, politics), and the private sector (capital, economics). This ideological presentation of NGOs is also the dominant self-perception of the NGO world. Yet it is based on utterly false historical and intellectual premises with serious political implications (see Shivji 2002).

The concept of civil society in European history represented the transition from medieval feudalist to capitalist society. This was part of the bourgeois revolutions. In that context civil society was, both for Hegel and Marx (and even perhaps Weber), for example, an ensemble of free, equal, abstract individuals associating in the public sphere of production as opposed to the private sphere of the family. For Marx, civil society was synonymous with bourgeois society. The concept is developed in opposition to feudal relations where the public and the private are merged and statuses are determined by birth and privileges, where politics is direct 'that is to say, the elements of civil life, for example, property, or the family, or the mode of labour, were raised to the level of political life in the form of seignory, estates, and corporations' (quoted in Sayers 1991:75).

At the same time for Marx (and this is directly relevant to our conceptual debate on civil society), whereas civil society presents itself as an ensemble of free individuals and as a separate sphere from state/politics, it is, as a matter of fact, the soil from which arises, and in which is embedded, state power. For our purpose, it is necessary to highlight two conclusions. First, that the so-called civil society, in the sense of the public sphere of production, is not a harmonious whole but rather a terrain of contradictory relations between classes – the two poles being the producer class and the appropriator class. Second, the separation between state and civil society, between economics and politics, is ideological; that is how the bourgeois society *appears* and *presents* itself. The reality rather is that those who command and control the sphere of production also wield political power, that is, the state.

When applied to colonial society, we find that the colonial sphere of production is essentially controlled by imperial capital. The colonial mode of production is characterised by extraction of surplus from non-capitalist classes through the use of (state) force. The national bourgeois project promised by the independence movement is aborted and defeated, as we have seen. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a great debate among third world intellectuals as to whether a national bourgeois project could at all succeed in the third world, particularly in Africa, in the era of imperialism (see Amin 1990; Tandon 1982; Mahjoub 1990).

Be that as it may, in Africa the transformation from colonial subject society to a bourgeois civil society is incomplete, stunted and distorted. What we have is the continued domination of imperialism – a reproduction of the colonial mode – in different form, the current one being labeled globalisation or neo-liberalism. Within this context NGOs are neither a third sector nor independent of the state. Rather they are inextricably imbricated in the neo-liberal offensive which follows on the heels of the crisis of the national project. Unless there is self-consciousness on their part of this fundamental moment in the struggle between imperialism and nationalism, the NGOs end up playing the role of ideological and organisational foot-soldiers of imperialism, by whatever name called.

In the next section we will demonstrate how the five silences in the NGO discourse contribute to the mystification and obfuscation of the role of NGOs.

The five silences

What are NGOs?
We quickly state without much argument the salient features of NGOs in the African setting.

First, a large number of African NGOs were born in the womb of the neo-liberal offensive which began to open up some space for freedom of association. One of the features of the statist period was the organisational hegemony of the state. In the first flush of the opening up of organisational space, NGOs proliferated without critical examination of the place and role of NGOs and their underlying ideologies and premises. The anti-state stance of the so-called donor community was the real push behind the upsurge in NGO activity.

Secondly, NGOs are led by and largely composed of the educated elite, located in urban areas and well-versed in the language and idiom of modernisation. Broadly, three types of NGO elite may be identified. First is the radical elite that was previously involved in political struggles with an explicit vision for change and transformation but which found itself suppressed under the statist hegemony. Many of these elites took the opportunity to express themselves politically in the NGOs. They saw NGOs as a possible terrain of struggle for change. This section of the elite is essentially politically motivated without being necessarily involved in partisan, party-politics. The second category includes well-intentioned individuals driven by altruistic motives to better the conditions of their fellow human beings and compatriots. In other words, they are morally motivated. Third, is the mainstream elite, not infrequently even former government bureaucrats, who shifted to the NGO world once they found out that that is where the donor funding was directed. The motivation of this elite is quite simply careerist. It is driven by material gains rather than any altruistic motives. It is personally motivated. This category keeps swelling as jobs in the state and private sector become more and more competitive or difficult to come by.

Thirdly, an overwhelming number of NGOs are donor funded. They do not have any independent source of funding and have to seek donor funds through the usual procedures set by the funding agencies. In this respect, the degree of independence they can exercise in relation to donor agendas varies from NGO to NGO depending on the perspectives of its leadership. In practice, though, as would be readily acknowledged by even the most radical among them, their scope of action is limited. This does not necessarily mean that a few may not exercise greater autonomy in their outlook and ideology and be still accepted; exceptions are necessary to prove the rule.

While some NGOs may be quite involved and appreciated by the people whom they purport to serve, ultimately NGOs, by their very nature, derive not only their sustenance but also legitimacy from the donor community. In the current international conjuncture, even political elites located in the state or political parties seek legitimacy from the so-called 'development-part-

ners' rather than their own people. Not surprisingly, there is a fair amount of circulation of elite between the government and the non-government sectors.

Fourthly, by far the greatest number of NGOs are advocacy groups focusing on particular areas of activity such as human rights, gender, development, environment, governance, etc.[5] While there are always NGOs set up by politically or morally motivated individuals with a genuine desire to 'do something', and which are genuinely meant to respond to the need of the people, it is also true that a substantial number of NGOs are set up to respond to what is perceived to be in vogue among the donor community at any particular time. Donor-driven NGOs, I would guess, are perhaps the most dominant.

Besides advocacy tasks, NGOs are also increasingly commissioned by donors, or the state or even the corporate sector, to do consultancy work for them or to be their executive agencies to dispense funds or services. Thus NGOs have come to play a major role in the 'aid and development industry'. In the NGO world, it is not at all ironical that a *non-governmental* body is assigned by the *government* to do a *governmental* job funded by a donor agency which is an outfit of a *foreign government*. Thus USAID may fund a gender NGO to raise awareness among women on the new land law whose terms of reference are set by a government ministry. To complete the picture, one may find that the same USAID may have recommended and sponsored a consultant who drafted the land law for the government in the first place.

Fifthly, while most NGOs may insert in their charters a vision or a mission statement, these are vague, amorphous ('poverty-reduction'!) and often meaningless. In any case, they are quickly forgotten and what takes over are the so-called strategic plans and log-frames which can be tabulated, quantified and ticked for triennium reports and proposals for more funding. The 'success' of an NGO is measured by how efficiently it is managed and run and the criteria for measuring efficiency are borrowed from the corporate sector. Training NGOs are set up to train NGO managers in 'strategic framework analysis', in charting 'inputs' and 'outcomes' tables, in setting indicators and in methods and techniques to log the vision and the mission and the strategy in logframes! As Brian Murphy observes in a pithy article he wrote for Oxfam's *Development in Practice* series (Murphy 2001:74):

> This ethos has been embraced by and is now aggressively – sometimes ruthlessly – promoted by senior managers in many of our leading NGOs, convinced that restructuring our organisations along corporate lines is the ticket to successful integration in the new trilateral global order that sees the public, private, and voluntary sectors some how as partners in development... .

Increasingly the model for the 'successful' NGO is the corporation – ideally a transnational corporation – and NGOs are ever more marketed and judged against corporate ideals. As part of the trend, a new development scientism is strangling us with things like strategic framework analysis and results-based management, precisely the values and methods and techniques that have made the world what it is today (ibid., 80).

Finally, the rise, role and features of NGOs which objectively situate them within the imperial project are reinforced by certain 'silences' in the NGO discourse. I discuss these next.

Privileging activism or changing the world without understanding it

During the revolutionary moment of the 1960s and 1970s, when the national liberation movement was at its height, it used to be said that we should think 'globally and act locally'. This summed up four fundamental ideas. One, that imperialism was global and oppressed all peoples worldwide. So we must understand it in its global context. Second, that imperialism would have to be fought at its local manifestations. The concrete analysis of the concrete situation was underlined. Thirdly, the slogan expressed the international solidarity of all peoples across the globe against imperialism. Fourthly, that imperialism and national liberation had to be clearly understood and correctly described in all its aspects so as to conduct an organised and conscious struggle against it. This was the basis of the profound intellectual debates on the theory and practice of imperialism and national liberation. As Amilcar Cabral, one of the foremost leaders of the African liberation movement, put it in his *weapon of theory*, 'every practice produces a theory, and that if it is true that a revolution can fail even though it be based on perfectly conceived theories, nobody has yet made a successful revolution without a revolutionary theory' (Cabral 1969:73-90, at 75).

What is interesting about that period is that the radical intellectual discourse was integrated with militant activism; the two were mutually reinforcing. The NGO discourse in the current period of apparent imperial 'triumphalism' eschews theory, and emphasises and privileges activism. In the African setting in particular, whatever is left of critical intellectual discourse, largely located at universities, runs parallel to and is divorced from NGO activism. The requirements of funding agencies subtly discourage, if not exhibit outright hostility to, a historical and social theoretical understanding of development, poverty, discrimination etc. Our erstwhile benefactors now tell us, 'just act, don't think' and we shall fund both!

The inherent bias against theory is manifested at various levels. We may mention a couple. First, the penchant for project funding which is supposed

to be operated and completed within a given time – triennium for example –
does not admit of thinking the underlying premises of the so-called project.
Second, the managerial techniques of monitoring and evaluating projects
through log-frames etc., by its very nature, compartmentalise and slice up
life such that invariably one not only loses sight of the whole, but even the
capacity to think holistically.

Secondly, the projects are issue-based and are supposed to be addressed
as issues. The issue itself is identified as a problem at the level of phenom-
enon; its underlying basis is not addressed but assumed. The issue is isolated
and abstracted from its social, economic and historical reality; therefore, its
interconnectedness to other issues and the whole is lost.

Thirdly, issue-oriented and time-limited projects do not admit of any long-
term basic research based on solid theoretical and historical premises. If at
all, the so-called research by NGOs or consultants (rather than researchers)
relates to policy, not to social, economic and political interests which under-
lie the phenomenon under investigation nor to how these interests reproduce
themselves. The 'research' by consultants degenerates into rapid appraisals
(some kind of 'opinion-polls').

In sum, the NGO activism is presented and based on 'act now, think
later'. Theory, and particularly grand theory, is dismissed as academicism
unworthy of activists. Yet, we know, that every practice gives rise to theory
and every action is based on some theoretical/philosophical premise/outlook.
The NGO action too is based on certain theoretical premises and philosophi-
cal outlook. This however is assumed as 'common sense' and therefore not
interrogated.

I believe I have shown sufficiently that the 'common sense' theoretical
assumption of the current period, and which underpin NGO role and action,
is neo-liberalism in the interest of global imperialism and fundamentally con-
trary to the interests of the large majority of the people. Taking for granted
the fundamentals of neo-liberalism and financial capitalism, or challenging
them only piece-meal on specific issues (debt, environment, gender dis-
crimination etc.), as a matter of fact draws in the NGOs as protagonists of
the imperial project. Brian Murphy argues that many mainstream NGO lead-
ers have internalised the assumptions and ways of neo-conservatism and are
convinced that globalisation/neo-liberalism is inevitable and irreversible and
have thus joined 'its acolytes, ironically without much critical analysis of
what "it" actually is or means'. He continues: 'What the corporate PR man-
ager understands implicitly as economic propaganda, NGO people often re-
peat as articles of faith' (Murphy 2001: 81).

The permanent present

Of recent, African poverty has been brought to the centre stage of the NGO world, ironically by the likes of imperial leaders such as Tony Blair. The African NGO world echoes and repeats the slogan generated by their Northern benefactors: 'Make Poverty History'. But how can you make poverty history without understanding the 'history of poverty'? We need to know how did the poverty of the five billion of this world come about as we need to know even more accurately how did the filthy wealth of the 500 multinationals or the 225 richest people was created (Peacock 2002). We need to know even more precisely how this great divide, the unbridgeable chasm, maintained, is reproduced and increasingly deepened and widened. We need to ask ourselves: What are the political, social, moral, ideological, economic and cultural mechanisms which produce and reinforce, and make such a world not only possible, but *apparently* acceptable?

Yet, the NGO discourse seems to have internalised the thoughtless idiocies of right-wing, reactionary writers such as Fukuyama who propagate the notion of the 'end of history' in which the present – that is, of course, the present global capitalism under the hegemony of the imperialist North – is declared *permanent*. Any historical understanding of our present state is ridiculed and dismissed, or tolerated as a token to create the illusion of 'diversity'. In the African setting, any discussion on colonial history invariably elicits the standard response: Let us stop blaming the colonialists! How long shall we continue lamenting about colonialism? Thus history is reduced to, and then ridiculed as a 'blaming exercise'.

And yet, as I have traced only in a sketch here, the colonial and imperial history is at the heart of the present African condition. History is not about assigning or sharing blames nor is it about narrating the 'past', which must be forgotten and forgiven or only remembered once a year on remembrance, heroes or independence days. History is about the *present*. We must understand the *present as history* so as to change it for the better. Perforce, in the African context where the imperial project is not only historical; it is the present. Just as we cannot 'make poverty history' without understanding the history of poverty, so we cannot chant 'another world is possible' without accurately understanding and correctly describing the existing world of five billion slaves and two hundred slave masters. How did it come about and how does it continue to exist? And to answer these questions we have to understand history as much as the philosophy and the political economy that underpin the existing world and the vested interests – real social interests of real people – that ensure and defend its existence.

Society as a harmonious whole of stakeholders

Much of the NGO discourse is based on the following premises inherent in the liberal capitalist world outlook and its new variant, globalisation. (i) The separation of Self and Society, where society is seen as an aggregate sum of atomic individuals. (ii) The liberal goal is to privilege individual interests which are knowable and ascertainable (individual self-determination in the language of post-modernism), assuming that social interests would thus have been taken care of. In the post-modernist variant, social interests are in any case unknowable. (iii) The social sphere is presented as a harmonious whole in which there is a variety of diverse interests, more or less on par. The premise that social interests are not all at the same level and that some are dominant and in conflict with others is eschewed. (iv) The neo-liberal model of development based on private property and accumulation, the market as the motor of society and the commodification of resources, services and basic needs is taken as 'common sense' requiring no further proof. In Africa this translates into further and deeper integration of the economies into the global capital and market circuits, opening up of natural wealth and resources for the exploitation of voracious transnational corporations, outlawing resistance as aberrant or outdated at best and 'terrorist' at worst.

Thus is derived the basis of the so-called triad of stake-holders – the state, the private sector and the voluntary sector. The state is presented as the neutral referee, the guarantor of law and order, whose main function is to provide stability and an enabling environment for private capital. Private capital is the main engine or motor of growth, which growth will eventually trickle down to the whole of society. In this drive for inexorable growth and progress, it is acknowledged that some would inevitably be left behind, marginalised, or simply unable to cope, the so-called 'poor', and therefore you need the voluntary sector to take care of them. Social welfare and the provision of basic needs and services to the community are no longer the responsibility of the state or the private sector; they are assigned to the NGOs. Thus is completed the 'holy trinity' of development partners: the state, the capital and the NGO, who are supposedly the major stake-holders in the 'participatory' development enterprise. The net effect is that the so-called NGO sector, which is presented as pro-poor and morally driven, legitimises the essentially exploitative capitalist system while the progressive agenda of people-driven development (radical, populist agenda of the nationalists of yesteryear) is co-opted. In effect, therefore, we see a re-enactment of the missionary positions of the colonial time where the church, charity and catechists played the legitimising role for the colonial enterprise, duping the colonised and damning the freedom fighters. The role assigned to NGOs

is in principle not very different, whatever the secular language in which it is articulated and however universal the platitudes of globalisation ('global neighbourhood', 'global village', 'global citizenship', etc.) it is clothed in (Manji & O'Coill 2002).

Just as the colonial enterprise assumed the garb of a civilizing mission and used the church as its avant-garde, so the globalisation pundits put on the clothing of secular human rights and use the NGOs as their ideological foot soldiers.

The international and national orders within which we are functioning are unequal with conflicting interests. To pretend that society is a harmonious whole of stakeholders is to be complicit in perpetuating the status quo in the interest of the dominant classes and powers. In the struggle between national liberation and imperialist domination and between social emancipation and capitalist slavery, NGOs have to choose sides. In this there are no in-betweens.

Non-Governmental = Non-Political?
The separation between politics and economics, between state and civil society, is how the bourgeois society appears and presents itself. But that is not its real essence. In reality, politics is the quintessence, or the concentrated form of economics. The sphere of politics is built on the sphere of production and there is a close relationship between those who command production and those who wield power. Yet, the NGO sector which by its own proclamation stands for change, accepts the ideological myth that it is the third sector, that it is non-political, not-for-profit, that is, it has nothing to do with power or production. This bourgeois mythology mystifies the reality of capitalist production and power, thus contributing to its legitimisation. NGOs by accepting the myth of being non-political contribute to the process of mystification and therefore objectively side with the status quo contrary to their express stand for change.

Ironically, the non-political NGOs are taken on board in the process of so-called policy making. They participate in, or are made to feel that they participate in, policy making and policy dialogue among stake-holders. This has several implications. First, policy making which is an attribute of sovereignty for which the government of the day is supposed to be accountable to its people, is wrenched from the state and vested in the amorphous coterie of 'development partners' or stake-holders. Every one knows who the determining stake-holder really is – the old adage applies, one who pays the piper plays the tune. Second, that NGOs really participate in policy making is an illusion, which in this day and age of donor-driven policies applies equally to the African state itself. Third, it is presumptuous on the part of NGOs to

pretend that they represent the people in the process of policy making. Fourthly, the whole process undermines the supposedly democratic/representative character of the state as the state abdicates its responsibility for 'its' policies, ceases to be accountable to its own people and becomes accountable to the so-called development partners.

Finally, the process of policy making, a political process par excellence, is presented as if it were a neutral non-political exercise in which the non-political NGOs may participate without losing their non-partisanship! Needless to say, policy making is a terrain of intense conflict of interest and there is nothing neutral about it. The question always is which interest is being served by a particular policy, a question on which an NGO cannot plead either neutrality or non-partisanship.

'What is a better or an alternative world?'

'A Better World is Possible' goes the NGO slogan, but to build a better world we must understand the world better. This then has been the message of this paper. 'An Alternative World is possible', goes another saying of the NGOs. The question that this paper has been trying to raise is: What would be an alternative world in the current African context? I have tried to argue that Africa is at the cross-roads of the defeat of the national project and the reassertion of the imperial project. The national liberation struggles of the sixties and seventies which put imperialism on the ideological defensive have aborted. Imperialism under the name of globalisation is making a comeback while refurbishing its moral and ideological image. NGOs were born in the womb of neo-liberalism and knowingly or otherwise are participating in the imperial project, or at least in the process of refurbishing its image. No doubt, there are very fine and dedicated people in the NGOs who are genuinely committed to the struggle to better the world. But there are serious blind spots and silences in the NGO discourse which objectively result in the NGO world participating in the imperial, rather than the national, project. For NGOs cannot be pro-people and pro-change without being anti-imperialist and anti-status quo. So I argue that NGOs must engage in a critical discourse and *political* activism rather than assume a false neutrality and non-partisanship. In this perspective, African NGOs need to build bridges with African intellectuals and scholars where there is a serious debate, albeit on the fringes of the mainstream, on the 'alternative African world'. Currently, under another false dichotomy between activism and intellectualism, the critical intellectual discourse runs parallel to the NGO discourse. We need therefore to bring together African activism with African intellectualism in which we critically interrogate both 'our' compradorial states and their

imperial masters. In the next, concluding, section, I briefly sketch some of the thinking that is emerging among critical scholarship in Africa.

Towards Pan-African liberation, social justice and human emancipation: Where do we stand?

Firstly, we must record that the neo-liberal project in Africa has not been accepted without practical and intellectual resistance. In a preface to a book by African scholars significantly sub-titled 'Beyond Dispossession and Dependence', Nyerere observed: 'Africa's history is not only one of slavery, exploitation and colonialism; it is also a story of struggle against these evils, and of battles won after many setbacks and much suffering'(cited in Adedeji 1993: xv).

Just as the African people have struggled and opposed SAPs in the streets, African intellectuals have critically scrutinised its neo-liberal underpinnings and exposed globalisation as a new form of imperialism. African NGOs must creatively appropriate these intellectual insights. African NGOs must learn from the actually existing struggles of the people before evangelising on awareness-creation on donor-fads of the day – gender, human rights, 'fgm' (female genital mutilation) good governance, etc. The educators must be educated.

Secondly, critically interrogating the national project, African scholars have noted the resurgence of nationalism and observed both its positive and negative aspects. The first lesson to be drawn is that the African national project located at the territorial level is bound to fail. African nationalism, as some of the fathers of African nationalism realised, is and must be Pan-African. Pan-Africanism, they argue, is the nationalism of the era of globalisation. Only Pan-Africanism can carry forward the struggle for national liberation in Africa. Without a Pan-African vision, there is the danger that the resurgence of nationalism as a reaction to the new imperial assault can degenerate into narrow, parochial, national chauvinism and even ethnicism and racism (Shivji 2005a & 2005b; Yieke 2005).

But this new Pan-Africanism must be bottom-up, people's Pan-Africanism, not a top-down statist Pan-Africanism. In the hands of the African state and its 'leaders', Pan-Africanism degenerates into NEPAD-ism or a phony African renaissance (Landsberg & Kornegey 1998). NEPAD, or the New Partnership for African Development, as the very name suggests, is a donor-dependent programme seeking more aid and assistance from the erstwhile 'international community' predicated on further integration of Africa in the unequal global structures (see Anyang' Nyong'o et. al, 2002). Calling it a 'feudo-imperial partnership', Adebayo Adedeji says, the objective of NEPAD

is 'for the African canoe to be firmly tied to the North's neo-liberal ship on the waters of globalisation' (ibid., 36).

Thirdly, a fundamental transformation of African societies, an African revolution, if you like, is very much on the agenda. The nature of this revolution is very much debated. It is suggested though that it has to be a revolution that is thoroughly anti-imperialist and consistently pro-people; a revolution based on popular power, fighting for and defending popular livelihoods and predicated on popular participation (Mafeje 2002; Shivji 2000).

Fourthly, that the actually existing states in Africa are essentially compradorised, that is, they are neither democratic nor pro-people. The states themselves have to be restructured and reorganised with roots in the people and seeking legitimacy from the people rather than from a consortia of G8 ('the global gobblers') imperial powers called the 'international community'.

Fifthly, the African people have to recover their sovereignty and self-determination, their right to think for themselves, albeit in genuine solidarity with the oppressed people of the world.

All in all, I am submitting that there is a need to integrate the intellectual and activist discourse. Only thus can the NGOs truly play the role of catalysts of change rather than catechists of aid and charity. Indeed, the potential of the NGO sector to play such a role is demonstrated, albeit in its infancy, in such struggles as the Seattle street fights against the world's foremost imperial institutions and in the demonstrations condemning the invasion of Iraq against the world's foremost and most brutal superpower.

If the NGOs are to play that role they have to fundamentally re-examine their silences and their discourses; they must scrutinise the philosophical and political premises that underpin their activities; they must investigate the credentials of their development partners and the motives of their financial benefactors, they must distance themselves from oppressive African states and compradorial ruling elites. NGOs must refuse to legitimise, rationalise and provide a veneer of respectability and morality to global pillage by voracious transnationals under the guise of creating a global village.

I dare say that if in the NGO world we did understand well the history of poverty and enslavement in Africa; if we did scrutinise the credentials of the so-called development partners, if we did distance ourselves from the oppressive African state, if we did refuse to lend our names to 'poverty reduction polices and strategies' which are meant to legitimise the filthy rich; if, indeed, we vowed to be catalyst of change and refused to be catechist of charity, we would have been toyi-toyi-ing at the doorsteps of Blair and his commissioners beating our tom-toms and singing 'Make Imperialism History' instead of jumping on the bandwagon of Sir Bob Geldorf's Band Aid.

Notes

1. Sometime ago, the World Bank assigned Marti Athissari to advise the Tanzanian president on governance.
2. Press Release, US Embassy in Tanzania, 29 July 2003.
3. Incidentally, in a different context, Chama Cha Mapinduzi's (the ruling party in Tanzania) statement reacting to adverse comments made by the US on the Zanzibar election also called 'development partners' 'our true friends'. (See *The Citizen*, 9 Semptember 2005.) 'We call upon our true friends not to issue statements which will encourage or incite bad-intentioned people, political parties or any group to cause chaos or conflict among Tanzanians'.
4. The irony of Blair's Africa Commission turns cynical when it is recalled that one of Blair's commissioners, President Mkapa, comes from the same country whose first President, Nyerere, in retirement, chaired the South Commission which was conceived and financed by the South!
5. There are also many humanitarian NGOs as well answering to various disasters to which many of our countries are prone. I do not directly deal with these in this paper. They have to be treated differently.

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Responding to Poverty in the Light of the Post-Development Debate: Some insights from the NGO Enda Graf Sahel[1]

Sally Matthews*

Abstract

How can we take on board the many valuable insights of post-development theory without seeming to advocate indifference and inaction in the face of the misery that many people in the world experience daily? In this paper, I provide a partial response to this question. I begin by looking at some of the alternative strategies offered in post-development literature and set out to show that while there are several problems with these alternatives, to read post-development theory as advocating indifference or inaction is to read it uncharitably. Secondly, I draw on the experiences of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Enda Graf Sahel in Dakar, Senegal to suggest some ways in which the insights of post-development theory, or some versions of post-development theory, can be taken into consideration without leading to inaction or indifference in the face of the suffering of those who occupy a less advantaged position in contemporary relations of power and privilege.

Résumé

Comment intégrer les nombreuses idées valables de la théorie du post-développement, sans paraître prôner l'indifférence et l'inaction envers la misère qui affecte chaque jour un grand nombre de personnes dans le monde ? Dans cet article, j'apporte une réponse partielle à ce questionnement. Je commence par examiner certaines des stratégies alternatives qu'offre la littérature sur le post-développement et démontre que si même si ces alternatives posent un certain nombre de problèmes, il serait tout de même ingrat de considérer la théorie du post-développement comme une théorie favorable à l'indifférence ou à l'inaction. Deuxièmement, je m'inspire de l'expérience de l'ong Enda Graf Sahel à Dakar, au Sénégal, afin de proposer diverses façons de prendre en compte les

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idées de la théorie du post-développement ou certaines versions de cette théorie, sans pour autant que cela aboutisse à l'inaction ou à l'indifférence envers les souffrances des plus défavorisés par les relations contemporaines de pouvoir et de privilège.

Introduction

One of the most prominent debates in development theory over the last decade or so is that between the so-called post-development theorists and their critics. Post-development theorists provide a scathing critique of past development initiatives revealing several of the problematic assumptions underlying such initiatives and calling for their complete rejection.[2] Critics argue that this position is too extreme and that it is potentially politically irresponsible – by undermining current development initiatives without providing an alternative response to the problems such initiatives purport to address, post-development theory 'leaves only fragmented remains ... an agenda-less programme, a full stop, a silence, after the act of deconstruction' (Blaikie 2000: 1038–39). For those who are deeply concerned with the question of how to respond to problems such as poverty, inequality and oppression, this position may thus seem unappealing.

One of the concerns of the critics of post-development theory, is the question of how 'we' – the privileged – should respond to the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves.[3] Many development theorists and practitioners have a strong moral commitment to helping 'the poor' and are offended by post-development theory's suggestion that such 'help' often does more harm than good. However apt post-development theory's critique of the messianic presumptions of the 'developers' and of the arrogance of the whole notion of 'helping the poor' may be, it does seem that we need to respond in some way to the plight of those who are less privileged than ourselves.[4] How can we take on board the many valuable insights of post-development theory without seeming to advocate indifference and inaction in the face of the misery that many people in the world experience daily?

In this paper I provide a partial response to this question. I begin by looking at some of the alternative strategies offered in post-development literature and set out to show that while there are several problems with these alternatives, to read post-development theory as advocating indifference or inaction is to read it uncharitably. Secondly, I draw on the experiences of the NGO Enda Graf Sahel in Dakar, Senegal to suggest some ways in which the insights of post-development theory, or some versions of post-development theory,[5] can be taken into consideration without leading to inaction or indifference in the face of the suffering of those who occupy a less advantaged position in contemporary relations of power and privilege.

'Alternatives to development': supporting the 'local' and transforming power relations

While I agree that post-development theory has been stronger on critique than on construction, it does at the very least provide pointers to some ways to respond to the problems that it argues 'development' has failed to solve. Some of these responses can be seen as addressing the question 'What should be done?', while others address the more specific question of 'What should we – the privileged – do?' In this paper I would like to sketch some possible responses to the latter question in particular.

Post-development theory suggests at least two broad ways in which we may be able to respond to the suffering of the poor. Firstly, it suggests that we support the 'local' and 'new social movements' as it is argued that local 'grassroots' initiatives are best able to improve the lives of the communities of which they are an element. Secondly, it suggests that we ought to work to undermine oppressive and unjust power relations and that such work includes working within privileged societies. Each of these strategies holds more promise than some critics have allowed, but neither is without its flaws.

Much post-development theory suggests that what is wrong with 'development' is that it seems to involve outsiders deciding on behalf of others what these others need and how these needs can be met. Post-development theorists do not think that such 'outsiders' – such as NGOs, foreign or even national governments, and international financial institutions – can legitimately decide what is best for communities they little understand. Rather, we should look to 'the local', to 'new social movements' (NSMs) or 'popular organisations', as agents of desirable social change. These movements are not 'outsiders' and are thus more legitimate and effective actors within their communities. Members of advantaged societies should support such movements, both in their own and in other societies, but should guard against becoming involved with them in ways that entail paternalism or an imposition of foreign values.

Post-development theorists' optimism about the local and the popular has met with much criticism. Some of this criticism relates to the absence of any criteria for deciding which popular organisations to support.[6] Post-development theory does not say that only organisations which endorse x and y should be supported, but rather seems to imply that as long as the group is rooted in the community in which it works, its efforts are legitimate and likely to be beneficial. Critics rightfully point out that there is insufficient reason to believe that all new social movements will truly act in the interests of the poor and oppressed (see Nanda 1999, 2002; Storey 2000). Because some post-development theorists seem to place their faith in such move-

ments without providing sufficient criteria for judging which local groups really will advance the interests of the poor, post-development theorists have been accused of washing their hands of the fate of the poor and thus taking up a politically irresponsible position (see Kiely 1999).

A further issue that needs clarification is the question of *how* to support such local and popular organisations. How are we to provide them with our encouragement and support, while avoiding the paternalism and condescension of earlier 'development' initiatives? What kind of relationship should 'we', working for NGOs, academic institutions, governments and the like, have with these organisations and movements?

In addition to providing support for the 'local', post-development theorists suggest that one contribution that 'we' can legitimately make, is to recognise the complexity of the causal relations that lead to impoverishment and oppression and to seek to transform these relations, particularly by working to correct the ways in which 'our' societies contribute to the impoverishment and oppression of distant others. Ferguson (1990: 286) speaks of how teaching and advocacy in the West can help advance the cause of those negatively affected by Western governments' imperialist policies. Yapa (1996, 2002) points out that it is wrong to understand poverty as located 'over there' with the poor and thus to assume that in order to address poverty one needs to intervene in the poor community or region. Rather, we should see that poverty arises within a complex nexus of relations and that this nexus extends into non-poor communities and regions. It follows, then, that one can help to transform the relations that cause poverty and oppression without necessarily intervening in the poor community itself. Thus, argues Yapa (1996: 723) '"My solution" [to the problem of poverty] is aimed at fellow academics who, like myself, are deeply implicated in the problem and whose power lies primarily in our capacity to engage the discourse critically'. While writers such as Yapa and Ferguson speak particularly of the role that 'first world' citizens can play within the 'first world', similar comments can be made with regard to 'third world' elites – and by 'elites' here, I mean to refer to all those 'third world' citizens who have access to similar privileges as those of the citizens of the 'first world'. One way that such elites may be able to respond to poverty is through working within the privileged subsections of 'third world' societies so as to try to change the way that these sub-sections relate to the rest of their societies. More broadly, such elites can work at disseminating information and providing support to assist in the erosion of the complex network of causal relations from which impoverishment and oppression result. I should also stress here that to argue in favour of such a role is not to argue that this is the *only* role that such 'first world' citizens and 'third world' elites can play, but simply to stress that this too is

a legitimate way for the privileged to respond to poverty and oppression. Such a role could complement the work of 'local' movements and of those who provide support to such movements.

For those whose interpretation of misery and oppression emphasises material deprivation, the idea that an intellectual can 'fight poverty' from the comfort of an air-conditioned office, may not at first seem persuasive, but it is unfair to dismiss this strategy out of hand. Post-development theorists convincingly demonstrate how the non-material – discourse, knowledge, culture and the like – needs to be taken on board both in defining desirable social change and in thinking about how to bring about such change.[7] The role that Ferguson, Yapa and others propose 'we' can play is an important one if we are to change the relations that cause poverty and misery rather than just 'treating the symptoms' such relations produce.[8]

However, there is a problem associated with this strategy, especially in the version which stresses that 'we', the privileged, should work only or primarily within 'our' societies. Some post-development theorists seem to suggest something along the lines of 'culture A may only be legitimately criticised by members of culture A or according to the values of culture A' and thus that 'we' ought to confine our work to 'our' societies. This kind of position opens post-development theory up to accusations that it embraces a politically problematic relativism, as this sort of assertion implies that there are no values that hold at all times in all places, but rather that different groups have different but equally valid value systems. Such a relativist position leaves little space for any kind of 'forward politics' – if all value systems are equally valid, why fight in favour of some values – indeed why seek to be ethical at all? Furthermore, this approach sits uncomfortably alongside other elements of post-development theory such as its strident critique of the 'Western world' – it is incoherent to condemn the consumption levels and individualism of 'Westerners' and then to say that each culture ought only to be judged by its own values.

Clearly then, while post-development theory is not 'critique but no construction' (Nederveen Pieterse 2000: 188) as some critics aver, the construction on offer remains a little flimsy. In order to better theorise such alternatives it is useful to look at the experiences of those who have engaged in the difficult task of trying to respond to problems such as poverty, inequity and oppression, in the light of some of the insights of post-development theory. It is here that the experiences of Enda Graf Sahel are instructive.

The experiences of Enda Graf Sahel [9]

Enda Graf Sahel (EGS), as it is called today, has been around, in various forms and under different names, since 1975 and forms part of the larger Enda Tiers Monde (Enda TM) network.[10] It began as one of the first fields of experimentation for Enda TM and initially focussed its attention on Dakar, particularly Grand Yoff, a suburb on what was then Dakar's periphery. While its core remains in Grand Yoff, the EGS network now stretches across most of Senegal and reaches into several other African countries.

For thirty years, EGS has been involved in diverse efforts to improve the lives of disadvantaged people. Their ways of going about this have evolved over the years in response to much internal reflection and debate. Initially, their approach was a fairly typical community development approach, which drew on international discourses of aid and development prevalent at the time. They saw themselves as there to help the poor and they thought that fighting poverty entailed the transfer of money, knowledge, resources and other things external to the poor community (De Leener et al., 1999: 8). Today, the EGS team look back very critically on the approach they adopted when they began 'development work' in 1975. They sarcastically describe the way in which they whole-heartedly took to the game of 'victim, persecutor and saviour', presenting the poor as victims, the neglectful state as the persecutor and themselves as the 'good cowboys' heroically rescuing the poor (Enda Graf Sahel 2001: 230–32). After a few years, they were forced to recognise that the population did not view them in this way and in fact was at least as likely to turn to other 'saviours', such as religious leaders and even politicians, in times of distress. Looking back they say that during their first decade of existence they were little more than 'a transfer point in the development aid system' (De Leener et al., 1999: 7). While the community did not regard them as harmful, they were not particularly impressed by these would-be messiahs' attempts to 'rescue' them from unemployment and poverty, and certainly did not feel that their position in the community was an essential one. Eventually they were forced to admit that their projects had all failed and that they were marginalised within the community they had set out to 'save'.[11]

In many ways this period of crisis within EGS represents on a smaller scale the larger 'impasse in development' which seemed to be occurring at much the same time. They relate their change of direction to a broader crisis in development, saying that EGS's contemporary approach 'originates firstly in an assessment of [their] own experiences, but also in the failure of thirty years of development in most African countries' (EGS 1996). They were forced to admit that their 'development' initiatives had borne little fruit and that what was needed was more than small adjustments. Rather than aban-

doning their work, or continuing to blind themselves to the failure of their initiatives, they set out to transform their approach so that they could more effectively help to improve the lives of those living in the communities in which they worked. Many of the reasons they give for the failure of their previous initiatives touch upon themes in post-development theory, such as the inappropriateness of imported models and 'expert' knowledge, the insensitivity of most 'development projects' to people's own knowledge and creativity, and the arrogance of imposing the values and ideals of 'development workers' on the communities they claim to be helping.[12] This period of reflection led to a number of attempts to change the functioning of their organisation in such a way as to better respond to the expressed needs of the communities in which they were active. They evolved from an organisation which set out through various 'expert' interventions and projects to 'rescue the poor', to a network of groups, horizontally and fairly haphazardly related, which provide support for a variety of community initiatives.

I will not here at length describe the evolution of Enda Graf Sahel, but will rather try to draw on its experiences to make a few comments relating to the issues raised in the previous section of the paper.[13] As mentioned earlier, post-development theory suggests at least two alternative strategies for fighting poverty: supporting the 'local' and the popular, and working to erode oppressive and unjust relations. EGS's recent work provides some insights on how NGOs can play this role, and more broadly on how 'we' can to take on board some of the insights of post-development theory while continuing to respond to the problems of those less privileged than ourselves.

Providing support for popular organisations

Enda Graf Sahel provides support for many groups and initiatives originating in the communities in which they work. Indeed, it is not possible to clearly distinguish between EGS, the NGO, and the larger network of community based organisations (CBOs) which are loosely affiliated with it. EGS describes itself as a 'network of actors' and many of these actors are drawn from CBOs. Rather than recruiting staff members through advertising for people with particular skills or qualifications, EGS tends to draw people who are already working in the community into their organisation. According to their vice-coordinator, Babacar Touré (2005), what is important in the choice of new staff members is their capacity to fit into existing social dynamics of change in the community. It seems that frequently EGS begins by working with those involved in community associations, and then sometimes draws these people into the organisation itself or into particular projects for which they have funding.

The evolution of one of the branches of Enda Graf Sahel, Enda Graim, demonstrates this nicely.[14] Enda Graim[15] is situated in Thiès, Senegal's second largest city, and works both in Thiès and particularly in the peri-urban and rural areas around Thiès. While Enda Graim is a relatively new organisation (it began in the late 1990s), it grew out of an already existing associative movement in the rural area of Fandène, just outside Thiès. Several of the current personnel of Enda Graim had been actively involved in various associative activities, particularly in associations providing a form of basic health insurance to people in the villages of Fandène.[16] These associations began to cooperate and were given support by Enda Graf Sahel, which was also active in Thiès at the time. In this way, Enda Graim gradually emerged, such that it is difficult to say whether Enda Graim is best described as an NGO or as a community-based organisation. One of its staff members describes it as a hybrid between the two.[17]

One of the most important ways in which EGS supports local initiatives is by putting different community groups in contact with each other and then facilitating ongoing contact between them. EGS is able to use their geographically broad involvement and their ability to communicate with people far away through access to telephones, the internet and the like, to facilitate greater contact between various community groups who can then go on to support each other in different ways.

An example of a network initiated and supported by EGS is that of the VAF network, with VAF standing for the *valorisation des activités des femmes* (valorisation of women's activities). This is a large network bringing together a number of smaller regional and professional networks and consisting of a total number of around fifty women's groups.[18] Most of these women's groups were associated with EGS before the creation of VAF, but in 2003 it was decided to establish a broader network for women's groups affiliated with EGS. The VAF network allows the women to better coordinate their activities and to learn from each others' experiences. They are also able to trade goods and skills – for example rural women farmers provide urban women who make fruit juices and jams with their surplus products. EGS also provides some training for the women, such as training on methods to improve their processing of local products. In addition, the VAF network helps the women's groups find new partners as they can refer each other to partners who can potentially provide technical or financial support.

The provision of funding is one of the most important roles played by EGS and is an important way in which outsiders can support popular initiatives. Small, locally-based initiatives are often unable to access funding because they are unaware of what funding exists, unable to write proposals to attract such funding, and do not meet the requirements of the donors. EGS,

with its many contacts and high number of educated employees, can be helpful here. For example, during my time at EGS, some EGS staff members became aware of French funding available for the promotion of informal professional training. The EGS network includes many people involved in such training, particularly within VAF and within an artisan network affiliated with EGS. On discovering this funding, EGS's vice-coordinator and one of the members of the artisan network arranged a meeting for various role-players in informal professional training, such as those supervising apprenticeships in artisan studios and those involved in sharing dyeing and fruit-juice making skills, and informed these people of this funding and discussed what could be done with such funding. EGS's staff members have many connections within the donor community and a staff member who knew the chairperson of the funding committee allocating this funding was called upon to present a proposal, which would be drawn up by some of the people attending the meeting, to the funding committee. If the funding was granted, several people within the artisan and women's networks would have access to money that, alone and outside of the EGS network, they would not have been likely to attain.[19] NGOs are generally better able to attract donor attention and so the provision of funding is an important way in which they can support popular initiatives.

The above suggested ways of supporting popular initiatives are fairly passive in that they mainly involve responding to the people's requests for training, funding or 'contacts' in similar organisations; however, there is a less passive way in which outsiders can support local organisations. They can expose them to ideas and information of which they would not otherwise be aware and provide a different 'take' on situations. In my discussions with EGS staff it became clear that one of the things that they thought they could do was to challenge local approaches by presenting local organisations with information of which they were not aware or by drawing their attention to extra-local causes and effects of their situations and their attempts to address these situations.[20] EGS's ability to get in touch with a variety of role players, including agriculturalists, town planners, neighbouring communities and so on, enables them to point out possibilities that particular local groups may not have considered on their own. An example of this is the *Écocité* research project in which EGS is involved which examines the impact that growing cities have on the areas surrounding them and encourages dialogue between urban dwellers and peri-urban and rural dwellers in the areas around cities.[21] The Senegalese branch of this research project has thus far focussed particularly on the cities of Thiès and Mboro, putting inhabitants of these cities in touch with inhabitants of nearby villagers. Through this project urban and rural-dwellers become more aware of interdependencies

between each other and how the evolution of cities affects the surrounding rural areas.

A related role played by EGS involves making the communities with which they work look upon their own strategies and belief systems differently. As a result of years of colonialism, neo-colonialism and other forms of domination, many of the communities with which EGS works have had their beliefs and way of life disparaged. Development projects too are not innocent in this respect as they often unintentionally encourage people to see themselves as incapable of solving their own problems and present models from outside as solutions to these problems. EGS believes that it has a role to play in revalorising people's own strategies, knowledge and beliefs. Because many disadvantaged communities have had their world views denigrated, it may be difficult for them to reject values and ideals which have effectively been imposed upon them and to reassert their own way of seeing the world. EGS sees its role as the facilitation of the reassertion of denigrated world views and value systems and also, importantly, the questioning of those that dominate (Ndione et al., 1994: 55-56). They can help members of such populations to look upon themselves and their communities differently and to 'emancipate themselves from the burden of received models' by questioning these models and the assumptions and power relations which undergird them (EGS 2001: 297).

This last role is perhaps one of the hardest to delineate in practice. How does one really go about revalorising denigrated value systems? Without having an initiative specifically aimed at doing just this, there are several ways in which EGS plays this role. An example is an initiative of Enda Graim to promote the Noon language which is spoken by some of the communities in the region of Thiès.[22] Until recently this language was not recognised as one of Senegal's national languages and was only a spoken language. Several of the Enda Graim staff members come from the Noon community and, working with the broader community, began advocacy in favour of greater recognition for Noon. Through their pressure and pressure from other language advocacy groups, Noon has now been recognised as a national language. In addition to this advocacy work, Enda Graim has begun literacy classes in *noon*. They provide basic literacy training for Noon-speaking adults who cannot read and write, as well as special Noon literacy training for literate people who want to learn how to read and write in the language. Radio broadcasts in Noon have also been arranged. Providing Noon literacy training obviously brings similar benefits to general literacy training, but Charles Wade of Enda Graim, stresses that these initiatives to promote the Noon language are particularly valuable in terms of the revalorisation of the cultural heritage of the Noon people. The speakers of Noon, who number around

35,000, used to be embarrassed about their language and those who could not speak other languages felt stupid and ashamed. By seeing their language being promoted, their assessment of the value of their cultural heritage has changed, and they are no longer ashamed of their language, and by extension of their culture and themselves.

There is no simple way to work out how those who are not poor and oppressed may be able to play a sincere and valuable role in the battles of those who are, just as it is not simple either to work out who is poor or oppressed and who is not. Enda Graf Sahel's recent attempts to support local initiatives and groups suggest some ways in which more privileged people may play some role in supporting the initiatives of those less privileged. In the section above I have shown how 'we' may be able to facilitate contact between different groups, to provide funding and training, to expose people to different ways of seeing things and to information of which they were not previously aware, and also to help people view their own communities and their own beliefs and strategies in a more positive light. Each of these approaches carries with it all sorts of risks, but I believe that they do indicate some promising ways in which those who do not belong to or are peripheral to poor or oppressed communities may be able to play some kind of positive role in the struggles of such communities.

Transforming power relations

As mentioned earlier, post-development literature suggests that another role that the relatively privileged can play is to try to transform the relations which cause others to experience poverty or injustice. When our focus is solely on 'helping the poor', we risk implying that poverty has its causes with the poor – that poverty is caused by the lack of knowledge, expertise, entrepreneurship, fertile land or perhaps even good fortune on the part of the poor. Post-development theorists suggest, rather, that we need to look at the relations between the rich and the poor to understand the origins of poverty.[23] Thus the problems of poverty and injustice are seen as closely tied up, as poverty is often the result of unjust relations. EGS's definition of poverty suggests something along these lines:

> Poverty is the result of a long process. For this reason we prefer to speak of impoverishment and of the mechanisms which create poverty in each of us. As far as we are concerned, we do not fight against poverty, but against everything that creates poverty in our lives (De Leener et al., 1999: 15).

By defining their struggle in this way, they suggest that their 'battlefield' is not just to be found among the poor and disadvantaged, but rather that they need to struggle against these mechanisms of impoverishment wherever they

may be found. Today, EGS has a branch in Belgium, Enda Intermondes, which contributes to some extent to this struggle. This organisation gives its objectives as the de-mystification of the North-South divide, the valorisation of popular expertise in both the South and the North, and the promotion of cooperation between popular organisations in the North and those in the South (EGS 2000: 63). By establishing a branch in Europe, EGS can be seen as acknowledging that their struggle is not one that is located only in Africa, as many of the causal chains causing impoverishment in Africa have their origins in Europe.

Relatedly, EGS is currently setting up a programme dealing with ethical trade issues.[24] They hope to contribute to attempts to change the kind of international trade relations which are skewed towards those in the 'first world'. This programme will work within West Africa to promote aware-ness of trade issues and disseminate information with regard to trade trea-ties, and is also likely to involve attempts to lobby those who are involved in determining trade relations, both in West Africa and further afield. It will thus contribute to attempts to fight against the structures which cause pov-erty, rather than simply alleviating poverty itself.

EGS has already had some involvement in ethical trade issues through Enda Diapol's participation in the Cancun meeting of the World Trade Or-ganisation in 2003.[25] Aware that much information and reporting on such meetings does not reflect the interests and concerns of those in the 'third world', Diapol sent three West African journalists to Cancun with the aim of assisting in the improvement of reporting about this meeting. Diapol also assisted in the dissemination of information on this meeting with the aim of increasing awareness among West Africans of the ways in which global trade relations, particularly with regard to cotton, are skewed against them. Such activities help exploited farmers to better recognise their position and the causes of this position, and thus facilitate growing solidarity among such farmers in order to resist such exploitation. NGOs, by having access to information and by having the skills needed to interpret such information, can play an important role in terms of disseminating information which can make those disadvantaged by exploitative trade relations more aware of the complexities of their situation and thus better able to respond to them.

Sensitivity to difference and the problem of cultural relativism

Post-development theory, like a lot of other contemporary social theory, is concerned with the need for sensitivity to difference, and very critical of the way in which many 'development' initiatives have imposed particular values and derided the values of those in the 'underdeveloped' world. It is this concern for sensitivity to difference that is behind their preference for local

movements and their caution about 'outsider' attempts to address poverty. Advocates of post-development theory hope that such strategies may make it possible to respond to poverty and related problems while avoiding the cultural imperialism that has gone hand-in-hand with many development initiatives. However, as mentioned earlier, this approach opens them up to accusations of cultural relativism and to the extent to which they do succumb to cultural relativism, their ability to construct a positive political programme is compromised.[26] How does one manage to maintain sufficient sensitivity to difference and resist cultural imperialism without sacrificing an adequately detailed positive programme? A related problem is that of deciding which local initiatives and movements ought to be supported. Earlier on I detailed ways in which 'we' can support local groups, but I said nothing about *which* of these initiatives and movements we ought to support. Critics of post-development theory are, as touched upon earlier, concerned that the approach of supporting the local and 'new social movements' may be politically problematic if no criteria are provided to determine which initiatives are worthy of support. This issue is related to the tension between the desire to be sensitive to difference and the desire to avoid cultural relativism – generally, is there any way that privileged outsiders can humbly and sensitively support the local and the popular without succumbing to cultural relativism?

Some of EGS's recent experiences vis-à-vis how to decentralise their institution without losing a sense of coherence and unity, provide some insights with regard to this question. During the 1990s, EGS began to promote their own organisational decentralisation. The motivation behind this decentralisation was a concern that centralisation tends to involve the imposition of a particular approach or way of doing things, and that if the various groups within the expanding EGS organisation were to be able to respond appropriately to their different contexts, such an imposition needed to be resisted. Hence, a strategy of decentralisation gradually arose as the various sub-units within EGS were given more and more autonomy and encouraged to develop their own approaches and strategies.

However, recently the organisation has felt the need to try to redefine what it is that unites them (see EGS 2005). They realised that while the various EGS staff did have a sense of belonging to the 'Enda Graf family', their sense of contributing to a common project was rather vague and impalpable. As a result, they initiated a research project on their own organisation in an attempt to define what it is that held them together and guided their diverse programmes. The tension experienced by EGS between the need for coherence within their organisation and the need for autonomy for the various components of their organisation, is in many ways the institutional equivalent of the tension discussed earlier between the need to

avoid cultural relativism and the need for sensitivity to difference. While EGS did not want to impose a particular approach – and thus a particular set of values – on its various components; without a sense of what held these components together, the organisation could not maintain its coherence.

EGS thus set about identifying some common values that united them as an organisation and that they sought to promote in the community in which they worked. A discussion session bringing together the broader EGS network led them to conclude that their intervention in the community, or indeed *any* intervention, could not be considered to be 'value neutral' and that they were promoting a particular set of values, even if only implicitly. In attempting to make explicit these values, they speak of values such as solidarity, equity, autonomy, respect for others and for shared goods, conviviality, reflexivity, and protection of the environment (EGS 2004b, 2005).

They also created some organisational structures and practices aimed at facilitating the further elaboration of a common set of values and orientations. A Coordinating Council was established in which the various sub-units within EGS should all be represented and which should meet fairly regularly – more or less monthly – to help coordinate the activities of EGS as a whole. Furthermore, they decided to organise a number of orientation sessions, called *boussoles* (compasses), which would bring together people working on a particular theme with the aim of finding a 'common north' which would serve as a lodestar to orientate their activities, but would still allow the various programmes a large amount of flexibility. The compass metaphor is meant to capture the idea of the existence of a general common direction, but many different paths as a result of the diversity of contexts in which the various people within the EGS network find themselves.[27] Over the last year and a half several such *boussoles* have been held on themes such as agriculture, the economy and communication. Each boussole is supposed to bring together all those involved in the programmes related to the theme of the boussole.

These recent developments at EGS are a recognition that on an organisational level decentralisation, and the sensitivity to difference and context it enables, must be balanced with some kind of unifying guiding orientation, or else the organisation will lose coherence. Likewise, in relation to post-development theory, it could be said that while post-development theorists are correct in wanting to present an alternative which is not overly prescriptive and which is sensitive to difference, in order for an alternative programme to be workable, there needs to be a broad guiding framework. There *are* several values which are implicit in much of post-development theory,[28] as in any other approach no matter how non-prescriptive, and making

them explicit will help to clarify the political project proposed by post-development theorists.

Of course, the balance between avoiding prescription on the one hand and incoherence and vagueness on the other is a difficult one. It is not yet certain whether EGS's attempts to achieve this balance within their organisation have been successful. The values defined as being in common to the organisation certainly avoid being prescriptive but it is not clear that they are sufficiently defined to really draw the organisation together. It is still too early to tell if the meetings of the Coordinating Council and the boussoles will be able to provide the organisation with sufficient coherence. Nevertheless, the recognition of the need to establish a sense of unity while avoiding prescription and insensitivity to difference, and the commitment to find a way to do so, is an interesting starting point.

Something should be said here about the related problem of deciding which local initiatives ought to be supported. If, as pointed out by critics of post-development theory, not all such initiatives will necessarily promote the broader interests of the communities in which they work, how is an NGO like EGS to decide which community organisations to support? Having a clearly defined set of values and objectives could function as criteria for making such decisions, but using such criteria could have the disadvantage of being experienced by the community as an imposition from outside. EGS's experience has taught them that when they insist that particular values be respected by the organisations with which they work, these organisations tend to present a 'front' of cooperation, while operating according to their own values behind the scenes. During their early years of existence, EGS strongly promoted democratic and egalitarian leadership structures, but while the people pretended to go along with these requirements, in fact leaders were chosen according to local social hierarchies. EGS also insisted upon strict accounting practices and that the money loaned be used in very particular ways, but in response the people presented 'too perfect' accounts which disguised the real ways in which they spent the loans given by EGS.[29] It seemed that insisting upon certain values did not lead the population to adopt these values, but did function as a barrier to openness and honesty between EGS and the community.

Nevertheless, providing support for any community organisation whatsoever could be seen as politically irresponsible. EGS professes to advance their values in their cooperation with community groups and acknowledges that not all community organisations work for the interests of the broader community, [30] but they avoid insisting on a rigidly defined set of values or practices. This is not a completely satisfactory response to the concern expressed by critics of post-development theory regarding how to decide

which 'local' movements should be supported, but EGS's experiences demonstrate the difficulty of finding a conclusive way to fit into and be relevant to the community without completely diluting one's own orientation and set of beliefs, and without being 'captured' by possibly unscrupulous community organisations. Currently, EGS does not support every community organisation that asks for their aid and does try to encourage certain values within the community, but at the same time is very cautious not to impose such values, nor to unintentionally encourage the population to 'pretend' to embrace the same values as EGS by making their support conditional on the acceptance of a particular set of values or the practices entailed by such values.

Conclusion

Looking back on the period of crisis that led them to change radically their approach to 'helping the poor', the authors of one of EGS's publications note:

> ... we asked ourselves if we ourselves had not in some way contributed to the impoverishment of some people through our practices, through the promotion of values and ways of seeing things which encouraged impoverishment, domination and exclusion and which strengthened this culture of 'development'. This interrogation was a key moment in our journey (Ndione et al., 1994: 17).

As with the post-development theorists, EGS began to feel very uncomfortable with the idea of 'development' and with many of the strategies and assumptions that came along with it. As an NGO working in a 'developing' country among a poor community, they could not simply criticise 'development', but had to decide whether their discomfort ought to push them to withdraw entirely from 'development' work or to radically reorient their approach. Opting for the latter option, they began to carve out a path that would allow them to continue to play a role among the 'poor', while distancing themselves from practices which while apparently 'helping the poor', actually strengthen relations of domination between the rich and poor. Their experiences, a small sample of which have been summarised above, can assist those who sympathise both with some variants of post-development theory and with some of the criticisms levelled against it, to think of ways in which we can reconcile key aspects of the post-development critique of 'development' with a continued commitment to respond to some of the problems which 'development' purported to address. If EGS is correct, it is possible for 'us' – the relatively privileged – to play some role in improving the lives of those less fortunate. There are ways in which we can provide support to community movements and there is a role for us to play in under-

mining the relations of power and privilege that are the distant causes of the suffering of many in impoverished communities. However, whatever role it is that we may play, it is one that requires continual self-interrogation and adjustment.

Notes

1. This paper is based on current research towards a PhD thesis in the Centre for West African Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK, under the supervision of Reginald Cline-Cole. Fieldwork was conducted with the NGO Enda Graf Sahel in Dakar, Senegal. I would like to thank Enda Graf Sahel for hosting me during this period of fieldwork and the Commonwealth Scholarship for providing the funding for the research.

2. The most often-quoted post-development texts are Sachs (1992), Escobar (1995) and Rahnema with Bawtree (1997), but several other authors, notably Latouche (1986, 1993), Rist (1997) and Esteva and Prakash (1996) are also often listed.

3. This division between 'us' and 'them' is a little crude, but I hope it will serve as shorthand for a more complex division between those who have typically been seen as the providers of some form of 'development assistance' and those who have been seen as the beneficiaries.

4. This is true even if, following post-development theory, we problematise notions like 'poverty' and question the desirability of the lives of those in 'developed' countries. Some people do live miserable lives and those of us who do not may well have some kind of moral responsibility to try to reduce this misery.

5. 'Post-development theory' is an umbrella term for a whole host of fairly diverse critical responses to development. Many critics have pointed out that some versions of post-development theory are more conducive to 'forward action' than others and, following such critics, I would like to endorse certain strands within post-development theory rather than all that has been associated with this term. Ziai (2004), for example, differentiates between neo-populist and radical democratic variants of post-development theory. It is principally the radical democratic variant that I draw upon here.

6. Another relevant form of criticism, which I will not be dealing with here, comes from those who see the state as a more likely agent of desirable social change. See for example Schuurman's (2001) discussion of 'emancipatory spaces'.

7. Post-development literature such as *The Development Dictionary* (Sachs 1992) draw on post-modern insights to show how discourse and knowledge are not 'neutral' but themselves play a role in the oppression and exclusion of some people by others.

8. I should also note that neither Ferguson nor Yapa argue that this is the only role 'we' can play. Both allow that 'we' may also play a more directly interventionist role, but they would like to stress that it is incorrect to view the academic working to change discourse on poverty as less involved in

responding to poverty than the practitioner 'in the field' trying to implement some or other solution strategy aimed at reducing poverty.

9. The information in this section is based on various Enda Graf publications (see bibliography) and on fieldwork done in Dakar, Senegal with the organisation itself. My understanding of the history and general evolution of the organisation is based on many helpful discussions with various members of the Enda Graf Sahel network.

10. Enda Tiers Monde's full English name is Environment and Development Action in the Third World. It is an international non-governmental organisation that was founded in Dakar, Senegal in 1972. Enda Graf Sahel was previously known as Enda Chodak and is sometimes also referred to as *Enda Sahel et l'Afrique d'Ouest* (Enda Sahel and West Africa).

11. Their own account of this period and the reasons for the failure of their various interventions makes interesting reading - see for example chapter 4 of *Pauvreté, décentralisation et changement social* (De Leener et al., 1999).

12. I should note here that while much of the literature and internal discourse of EGS makes similar points to those made in post-development theory, I would hesitate to call what EGS does 'post-development practice' as I am not quite sure what exactly this means and as this is not the way in which they would describe themselves. While some members of EGS, particularly the coordinator, Emmanuel Ndione (see Ndione et al., 1997 and Ndione 2002), have participated in the post-development debate, most of those affiliated with this network are not familiar with this debate, nor do they have a clear position with regard to it. Nevertheless, their current way of acting in the community takes on board many of the insights of post-development theory, although they have for the most part come to these insights independently of post-development literature and the broader post-development debate.

13. Enda Graf Sahel's own literature (see Ndione 1992, 1993; Ndione et al., 1994, De Leener et al., 1999, and Enda Graf Sahel 2001) provides several discussions of this evolution.

14. This feature of EGS was drawn to my attention by Mamadou Ndiaye and André Wade, who co-ordinate Enda Graf Guediawaye and Enda Graim respectively, but I will focus here on the experiences of Enda Graim.

15. 'Graim' stands for Groupe de Recherches d'Appui aux Initiatives Mutualistes – Research group for the support of associative initiatives.

16. Interviews with André Wade, Victor Tiné, Ferdinand Mbaye and Charles Wade, Enda Graim, 29-30 June 2005.

17. Interview with Charles Wade, member of Enda Graim, 30 June 2005.

18. The discussion of the functioning of this network is based on participation in VAF events and interviews with Hélène Diouf (2005), Yacine Diagne and Constance Tine (2005). Hélène Diouf is coordinator of ASFED (*Association Sénégalaise de femmes pour l'entraide et développement*) and vice-president of APROVAL (*Association des Professionnelles pour la Valorisation des produits locaux*), both of which are part of VAF. Yacine Diagne coordinates

the broader VAF network. Constance Tine coordinates RAP (Réseau des Apprentissages Populaires) which is a member of VAF.

19. All of the above comments are based on my own attendance of this meeting which took place in July 2005. I am not sure if the funding proposal, which had yet to be drawn up, was successful.

20. Discussions with Babacar Touré (2005) and André Wade (2005) were especially helpful here.

21. These comments are based on a discussion with Victor Tiné (2005), a researcher on this project, and Enda Graf Sahel's 2004 annual report.

22. Comments on the Noon language programme draw on a discussion with Charles Wade (2005) of Enda Graim and also to some extent on Enda Graf's 2004 report of activities (EGS 2005).

23. It should be noted here that post-development theorists also question the way in which poverty is understood in much development literature and some post-development theorists seem very sceptical about the value of the notion poverty at all. However, most would surely allow that certain people do live in a state of deprivation which they deem to be unpleasant and from which they yearn to escape. It is to this state that I refer when I speak of 'poverty' here.

24. Interview with Mariama Samb, coordinator of ComEthic, Enda Graf Sahel.

25. Enda Diapol (*Enda Prospectives Dialogues Politiques* – Prospectives for Political Dialogue) is a separate entity from EGS but it has its origins in EGS and works closely with EGS. The information that follows is based on the Enda TM 2003 report and Enda Diapol's 2004 report.

26. This is so because if all cultural values are equally good, there is little motivation for fighting for a particular set of values, and any positive political programme will have to be built upon certain values, even if these are only very broadly defined.

27. The idea of the boussoles became clear to me during discussions as part of one of the *boussoles* (on agricultural networks) which took place from the 13 to 15th June 2005 at Enda Graf Sahel's head office. This idea is also briefly explained in one of their publications (see Ndione et al., 1994:12).

28. Solidarity, conviviality, tolerance, frugality, humility, and respect for the environment seem to be values informing much post-development theory.

29. Early EGS publications discuss this problem - see Ndione (1992, 1993).

30. EGS lists the criteria of a 'good' community organisation - see De Leener (1999:47), which suggests that they believe it to be possible to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' community organisations.

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Interfacing the State and the Voluntary Sector for African Development: Lessons from Kenya

Fredrick O. Wanyama*

Abtract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the possibility of forging a complementary role between the state and the voluntary sector as an alternative framework for enhancing African development, given that none of these actors have proved effective on their own. Using a study of community-based organisations (CBOs) – as a component part of the voluntary sector – in Western Kenya, it is argued that though these organisations have been instrumental in providing services that the state has been unable to provide, their effectiveness has been impeded by some deficiencies. It is pointed out that such deficiencies in CBOs should form the basis for bringing back the state in the development process and have it forge synergies with these organisations rather than co-opting them into its machinery, as has been the case in the past.

Résumé

L'objectif de cet article est d'étudier la possibilité de construire un rôle complémentaire entre l'état et le secteur du bénévolat, en guise de cadre alternatif favorable au développement africain, étant donné qu'aucun de ces acteurs n'est parvenu à produire une action efficace, chacun de son côté. Sur la base d'une étude des organisations communautaires (CBO) – en tant que composantes du secteur du bénévolat – à l'Ouest du Kenya, l'auteur affirme que même si ces organisations jouent un rôle clé dans la fourniture de services que l'état est incapable de délivrer, leur efficacité a cependant été ralentie par certaines lacunes. Les lacunes des CBO sont la raison pour laquelle l'état devrait être ramené dans le processus de développement et amené à construire des synergies avec ces organisations, plutôt que de les coopter dans sa machinerie, comme ce fut le cas dans le passé.

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Introduction

The ongoing search for solutions to the development crisis in Africa has resulted in an ever-growing body of literature, suggesting a variety of prescriptions from different ideological and theoretical perspectives. For instance, whereas prescriptions in the 1950s and 1960s were couched in strands of modernisation theory that blamed the development problem on 'traditionalism' (Kennett 2001: 95) and suggested that the state take a central role to industrialise, educate people and provide social amenities associated with 'modern life' (Hyden 1994: 311; Leys 1996), dependency theory of the 1970s blamed the problem on capitalist accumulation and exploitation that resulted from the rise of 'neo-colonialism' (Frank 1969; Rodney 1972). Although these two theoretical standpoints espoused quite different orientations, the commonality is that both of them argued for 'state-led' development as the way out of the problem (Powell and Geoghegan 2004: 33).

However, the 1980s saw a dramatic shift in development ideology from this 'state-centred' framework to 'market-led' development following the rise of neo-liberalism. The latter school of thought conceptualised development in terms of individual freedom to realise his/her full potential (Sen 1999; Heywood 1998: 57) and argued for safeguarding the individual from social, economic and political constraints that crippled his/her freedom to obtain access to opportunities for self-actualisation. Neo-liberals held that equal opportunities for all would be the basic starting point in safeguarding individual freedom that was now associated with development and went on to argue that such opportunities could best be found in a market economy that was regarded to be more efficient than the state in allocating and distributing resources (Coburn 2003: 28). In a nutshell, neo-liberals argued for self-reliant individuals who take responsibility for their own development needs in a market-oriented society where the state only plays a minimalist regulatory role of providing an 'enabling environment' (Powell and Geoghegan 2004: 33; Heywood 1998: 57).

In the light of this ideology, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) attributed Africa's development crisis to an 'over-grown' state, which had not only stifled individual freedom, but was also corrupt, parasitic and inefficient (Leys 1996: 18). The prescription for this diagnosis was to 'roll back' the state from the development space in favour of private actors to spearhead economic growth at the national level, and voluntary initiatives to provide social services at the local level (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999: 41; Hyden 1994: 312). In other words, the neo-liberal call for the retreat of the state in the development process was viewed not only as a strategy for setting up a market economy, but also as a means of empower-

ing people to take charge of their own development through voluntary initiatives at the local level (Beckman 1992: 85-86).

This thinking witnessed a growing reallocation of development responsibilities to voluntary organisations, with donors bypassing the state to link up with the 'grassroots' through these organisations. This preference for voluntary organisations rather than the state tended to prompt a competition between these two institutions for donor funds and recognition in the delivery of social services. By the early 1990s, the state had steadily been retrenched from the development space. With the state in tow, the voluntary sector was regarded as the prime mover of African development at the local level.

Nevertheless, the development crisis in Africa has persisted or worsened in some countries. This raises questions about the viability of this neo-liberal institutional framework for development on the continent. Can voluntary organisations effectively shoulder development work in Africa? Is the state really redundant in African development? What role should voluntary organisations and the state play to stimulate development on the continent?

The purpose of this paper is to examine the possibility of forging a complementary role between the state and the voluntary sector as an alternative framework for enhancing African development, given that none of these actors have proved effective on their own. Using a study of community-based organisations (CBOs) – as a component part of the voluntary sector – in Western Kenya, it is argued that though these organisations have been instrumental in providing services that the state has been unable to provide, their effectiveness has been impeded by some deficiencies. It is pointed out that such deficiencies in CBOs should form the basis for bringing back the state in the development process and have it forge synergies with these organisations rather than co-opting them into its machinery, as has been the case in the past.

Data on CBOs were collected in a survey of these organisations in the region between 2001 and 2002. Four administrative districts were purposively sampled from the neighbouring Nyanza and Western provinces on the basis of ethnic identities and political affiliation in the region. Thereafter, a systematic sampling technique was used to select eight divisions, sixteen locations and thirty two sub-locations to constitute the area of study. Eighty CBOs were then randomly sampled from five different lists of respective types of these organisations, which had been created in a reconnaissance survey of the area of study. A total of 350 members of these organisations were interviewed using structured questionnaires. In addition, informal discussions were held with government officials and opinion leaders in the area of study. These primary data were supplemented with secondary data from published and unpublished sources.

To pave the way for the analysis of the findings, it would be helpful to clarify the key concepts that inform the discussion.

Conceptualising development and the voluntary sector

The concept 'development' has attracted a variety of definitions in the literature, but they tend to resonate with positive socioeconomic change among people, albeit using different indicators. For instance, whereas economists have used economic growth indicators like per capita income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP) to quantify this change, other social scientists have resorted to non-economic indicators like access to social services and resources for the same purpose (Ghai 1988; Ake 1996; UNDP 2002). This discussion follows the idea of the latter social scientists to define development as the process of improving people's livelihoods and enhancing their capacity for self-reliance in order to reduce absolute poverty (Kingsbury et al., 2004; Purvis and Grainger 2004; Rapley 2002).

By livelihood, we refer to people's access to assets that enable them to participate in activities which determine the living gained by the individual or household (Ellis 2000: 10). The range of assets that people require in this regard may be classified into natural, physical, human, social and financial capital. Briefly, natural capital refers to natural resources such as land, water, minerals, animals and trees that yield products used by human beings for their survival. Physical capital includes the assets that result from economic production processes, such as tools, machines, buildings and land improvements. Human capital refers to the educational and health status of individuals, while social capital refers to the interactive networks and associations in which people participate to derive support in their efforts to earn a living. Finally, financial capital includes the stock of cash and credit that can be accessed in order to purchase either production or consumption goods (Ellis 2000: 8). People's access to these assets tends to be mediated by social relations and institutions, some of which take an organisational form like the state, private enterprises or voluntary organisations.

The voluntary sector is defined as a network of organisations that are autonomous and independent from the state and the market - creating the third space after the former and the latter in the formation of society. The organisations in this sector are independent from the state in the sense that they are neither mandated nor run by state institutions, but spring from the everyday lives and activities of communities of interest (Young 2000: 158). These voluntary organisations are also autonomous from the market because they operate on a not-for-profit basis with a mandate of providing development services or advocating around development issues (Michael 2004: 3). Most of them participate in economic activities only as consumers

and fund-raisers. Some of their activities that involve providing goods and services for fees are not organised towards the objectives of making profit and enlarging market shares (Young 2000: 158), but raising the funds required for service provision.

This definition encompasses a variety of organisational forms, but the most salient ones are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organizations. As already pointed out, this discussion focuses on the latter. By community-based organisations, we refer to voluntary and self-help membership organisations that are endogenous to a community, operating at the level of the group, community or locality with established rules, regulations and procedures for the purpose of benefiting the members themselves or sometimes the wider community (Chitere 1994: 99; Koehn and Ojo 1997: 111-12; UNRISD 2000). In Kenya, the types of CBOs range from community-wide self-help associations with a large membership to small groups of a few individuals within a village. They can be further classified into five types: women's groups; savings and credit associations; welfare associations; youth groups; and communal self-help groups (Wanyama 2001: 57; 2003a: 24; 2003b: 46).

Whereas women's groups are self-help associations formed exclusively by women within a locality to address their interests, welfare associations bring together people of similar kinship ties (lineage, clan or wider ethnic bonds) in order to satisfy socio-cultural interests and the well-being of the members – which sometimes extends to the entire community. These differ from communal self-help groups in the sense that the latter are associations of local people formed through the initiative of leaders or ordinary members of the community in response to the felt need to accomplish a common goal for the good of the locality. The need, and hence the common goal, may be a school, bridge, church, mosque, health centre, and so on. Youth groups, as the name implies, are self-help associations formed exclusively by the young generation within a community to satisfy their interests, especially the need to start income-generating activities in the wake of increasing levels of unemployment among school or college leavers in the country. Then finally are the savings and credit associations. These are informal financial institutions for mobilising savings and lending to members. The associations take two forms of either rotating savings and credit schemes (ROSCA), where members contribute a fixed amount of money and give to one member in periodic turns; or accumulating savings and credit schemes (ASCRA) that mobilise savings into a fixed fund for lending to members or non-members as well as satisfying other financial needs of the members. These CBOs are the smallest organisations that one can find at the grassroots level, which

neo-liberals found most appealing to shoulder the burden of service provision for a variety of reasons that we now turn to.

The virtues of voluntary organisations in development

The rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980s finally confirmed the supremacy of the market over the state and brought to an end the longstanding state versus market debate that had characterised much of the development discourse since the 1960s (Fukuyama 1992; Van de Walle 2003; Powell and Geoghegan 2004). The triumph of the market was consummated with liberal democracy in the political realm, emphasising citizen freedom, respect for human rights and accountability as fundamental ingredients of 'good governance'. With donors linking good governance to development, the voluntary sector entered the conceptual scene as the natural counterpart of privatised markets and liberal democracies (Howell and Pearce 2001: 4). Besides being viewed as vehicles for democratisation, voluntary organisations also came to be considered as the alternative institutions to the state in spearheading development service provision at the local level (Van de Walle 2003: 5). Thus, these organisations were widely presented as the means through which development could be promoted, especially in Africa, for a number of reasons.

It was argued that unlike the state that tended to oversimplify or generalise local complexities in society for the mere sake of governing (Scott 1995: 29), thereby losing a myriad of informal practices, improvisations and forms of local knowledge that enable people to cope with adversities, voluntary organisations operated at the community level and dealt with specific characteristics of local societies. It was correctly observed that peculiar informal practices, innovations and improvisations at the local level in response to livelihood problems were, indeed, the basis of the formation of voluntary organisations. Consequently, these organisations were more in touch with the needs of ordinary people, had knowledge of local conditions and were more responsive to local needs than the state (Uphoff 1993: 619).

In the ensuing acknowledgement of the significance of voluntary organisations in the provision of development services, it was argued that these organisations were more efficient and cost effective than the state because they were smaller, flexible, participatory and less bureaucratic in their operation (Tripp 2003: 133). As participatory organisations, it was argued, voluntary organisations would 'empower' local people to express themselves with regard to their needs; explore possible alternatives for satisfying these needs; choose the most appropriate course of action; mobilise local resources to implement the chosen course of action; and evaluate the contribution of that action to their livelihoods (Blunt and Warren 1996; Koehn and Ojo 1997). It was against this background that these organisations were presented as

effective instruments for reaching the poorest and neediest of society more easily than would be the case with the bureaucratic state (Robinson and White 2001). This thinking actually saw donors prefer channelling their development assistance to the poor through these organisations rather than the state; thereby setting up a competition between these two institutional forms for donor funds in the development process.

Supporters of voluntary organisations in Africa went on to link the resurgence of these organisations to the revival of the cherished traditional society in the wake of the failures of state-directed development initiatives. They argued that the organisations were a manifestation of a return to collective action solutions that had existed in African traditional society for centuries before the 'modern' state displaced, constrained, and distorted them (Tripp 2003: 133). It was anticipated that such mutual aid initiatives would be better than the state in providing for local people's development needs.

More than a decade after this optimism and enthusiasm for voluntary organisations, the actual results in development were, unfortunately, not as clear. The development crisis seemed to persist or even worsen in some situations. This prompted analysts to raise questions about the viability of these organisations. Schmale (1993: 2, 12), for example, correctly observed that their potential had often been overestimated using the few success stories – such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh – that had been repeated again and again without evidence of their viability in different contexts. In other words, to what extent could the success of voluntary organisations in one region be replicated in a different region?

Furthermore, the diversity of voluntary organisations had not been taken into account while enumerating their virtues. Some were indigenous while others had been created from outside the communities or even countries; some had access to outside financial support while others did not (Holmen and Jirstrom 1994: 8). Besides such differences, these organisations also found themselves in varying social, economic and political contexts, with far-reaching implications for their existence and functioning. In short, careful attention had to be paid to the broad question of what type of voluntary organisation could effectively make a contribution to development and in which social, economic and political environment. The survey of CBOs in Western Kenya that forms the basis of this discussion attempted to respond to these questions with a view to generating empirical evidence concerning their contribution to development in the region. The next section of our discussion presents the findings of the survey.

Community-Based Organisations and development in Western Kenya

The formation, number and size of CBOs

The survey data show that community-based organisations in Western Kenya have their origins in socioeconomic scarcity, insecurity and risk that adversely affect local people's livelihoods. However, their formation finds expression in three different initiatives. First are local people's own initiatives, but occasionally as a result of the demonstration effect from outside the membership or community. Second, some external actors respond to situations of scarcity, insecurity and risk in local communities by initiating the formation of CBOs. For instance, NGOs have initiated the formation of some CBOs to be used as delivery mechanisms for their services to the local communities. Third, political actors, including the local elite, capitalise on development problems in local communities to initiate the formation of CBOs, not only to be used to channel development assistance to the communities, but also for use as mechanisms for exercising political control.

In the majority of cases, we found that either people themselves formed the organisations in response to socioeconomic scarcity, insecurity and risks that threatened rural livelihoods or local political actors and the elite worked with local people to form the organisations. It can, therefore, be said that most of the members of CBOs in Western Kenya took the initiative, or participated, in the formation of their organisations.

The registers of CBOs in the Ministry of Gender, Sports and Culture's Department of Social Services in the four districts surveyed indicated that there were over 7,500 CBOs. It should, however, be pointed out that these registers were hardly comprehensive since not all organisations had been registered by the Department. For example, in our survey, 19 per cent of the organisations that we sampled were not registered with the Department. The existence of some of the organisations was only known at the local grassroots level, yet a CBO was reported in each of the 124 villages that we surveyed. The implication is that this figure could as well be an underestimation. Given that the two provinces surveyed have a total of twenty districts, the region is likely to have over 40,000 CBOs. Going by this estimate, it follows that there could be a total of about 300,000 CBOs in Kenya's eight provinces.

The typical CBO in Western Kenya is small in size. Our survey data show that 65 per cent of these organisations have between eight and thirty members while another 20 per cent have between thirty-one and fifty members. The membership of these relatively small organisations cuts across gender,

age, marital status, level of formal education, occupation and levels of income in society. Thus, CBOs bring together people from all walks of life in the rural areas of the region in particular, and Kenya in general. The starting point in the appreciation of the contribution of these relatively small organisations to development in the region is to look at their activities.

Activities of CBOs in Western Kenya

The district registers of CBOs and annual reports of the Department of Social Services in the region show that CBOs are engaged in a wide variety of social and economic activities. They include subsistence crop farming; livestock farming; poultry; small-scale non-farm enterprises; marketing agricultural produce; savings and credit; pottery and handicrafts; primary health care and community pharmacies; bee-keeping; development and management of water sources; manufacture of roofing tiles; construction and maintenance of cattle dips; knitting and tailoring; HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns; medical insurance schemes; bicycle taxi (known locally as *boda-boda*, which literally means 'border to border' transport by bicycle, and was originally coined in Busia town where bicycle operators, for the first time, started ferrying people at this border town to and from the Kenya – Uganda border for a fee); building and equipping schools; running nursery schools and children's homes; among others (Department of Social Services 1999a; 1999b). This is corroborated by our survey data that reveal most of these activities.

It is evident that the activities of CBOs spread across the main economic sectors in the region, namely agriculture and non-farm small-scale enterprises. Even more significantly, some of the activities are intended to address deficiencies in the socioeconomic infrastructure, particularly finance, health, water, education, public transport, housing and agricultural marketing. This can be interpreted to mean that CBOs have largely chosen their activities in response to their members' livelihood challenges and the region's development needs that the state has been unable to meet over the years. The implication is that these organisations are indeed responsive to local people's needs and, therefore, quite relevant and useful in the development process. But what is their actual contribution to the livelihoods of individuals at the household level?

Intermediaries in rural livelihoods

To ascertain the extent to which the activities of CBOs have improved rural livelihoods, respondents were asked to identify the most significant asset that they had obtained through their organisations. Their responses are presented in Table 1, which also provides a pointer to the manner in which the

respective asset was utilised with a view to indicating the form of contribution to members' livelihoods.

Table 1: Assets obtained from CBOs by members

Assets to Members	Number	Percentage
Dividends and ROSCA fund for domestic use	80	22.9
Heifer to start dairy farming	38	10.9
Loan to pay school fees	33	9.4
Better farming skills for improved food production	25	7.1
Loan for enterprise working capital	19	5.4
Financial contribution to meet funeral expenses	19	5.4
Access to clean drinking water for better health	18	5.1
Social interaction/sharing information	15	4.2
Public health/domestic hygiene skills for better health	13	3.7
Learned and started pig farming	9	2.6
Improved school classrooms and toilets	8	2.3
Settlement of out-patient medical bills	7	2.0
Cattle dip eradicated ticks	6	1.7
Access to affordable medicine within the community	3	0.9
Assistance to build a house	3	0.9
Learned and started poultry farming	3	0.9
Bought a bicycle to start boda-boda business	1	0.3
None	50	14.3
TOTAL	350	100

Source: Survey data

Data in Table 1 show that CBOs are most conspicuous in facilitating members' access to financial capital. About half of the respondents (45.1 per cent) obtained access to financial resources in the form of dividends from the activities of these organisations; loans advanced to members; lump sum funds from rotating saving and credit schemes (ROSCA); monetary contributions towards meeting funeral expenses; and settlement of medical expenses. Nevertheless, most of the financial resources so accessed seem to have been utilised for direct consumption rather than engaging in productive activities that could enhance the sustainability of the livelihoods. Thus, of the 45.1 per cent of the respondents who had access to this asset, only 16.8 per cent invested the resources in small-scale enterprises, education of their children and medical services.

This low rate of investing resources in productive activities is reflected in the extent to which members of these organisations access physical assets. Only 16.1 per cent of the respondents reported access to these resources in the form of exotic heifers for dairy farming; construction of classrooms and toilets in primary schools; cattle dips for the eradication of ticks in livestock; assistance to build a house; and purchase of bicycles to participate in boda-boda business. It is, however, significant that these physical assets were essentially utilised to facilitate participation in activities for earning a living.

Human capital is equally important in rural livelihoods considering that individual development is the most important resource in a livelihood. Table 1 shows that 15.2 per cent of the respondents were able to improve their health and skills to command higher incomes. This is reflected in the form of better farming skills for improved food production; public health awareness and better skills to enhance hygienic practices in the household; skills in pig and poultry farming; and access to medicine within the community at affordable prices.

Natural capital and social capital were the least accessed assets by our respondents. Only 5.1 per cent of the respondents obtained access to natural capital through their organisations in the form of clean drinking water. Similarly, only 4.2 per cent of the respondents recognised social capital as a 'benefit'. These respondents valued social interaction facilitated by CBOs for the sharing and exchange of information regarding their livelihoods; learning how to tolerate each other in the community; and most importantly, developing trust in each other. Interestingly, most of these respondents viewed social interaction not as a means of networking to obtain support in their endeavour to improve livelihoods, but as a way of avoiding idleness by 'doing something'.

On the whole, it is evident that a total of 85.7 per cent of the respondents at least obtained access to an asset for improving their livelihoods. But how significant are these assets in the members' livelihoods? Put differently, how do members value the contribution of such assets to solving their household socioeconomic problems? To ascertain how members valued the contribution of CBOs to their livelihoods, we sought to understand if resources obtained from these organisations had helped to solve at least one of the most pressing socioeconomic problems in their households. Consequently, we asked the respondents to identify the main socioeconomic problem in their households, followed by how their organisations had helped to address them.

A wide variety of problems were mentioned, including the high cost of living in the midst of low incomes (48 per cent); inability to pay school fees (17.1 per cent); poor housing (8 per cent); unemployment (5.7 per cent); inability to meet medical expenses (5.7 per cent); food shortages and malnutrition (5.1 per cent); lack of good utensils and furniture (3.4 per cent); lack

of clean water nearby (1.4 per cent); among others. A summary of the solutions to these problems that were derived from CBOs is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: CBO Solutions to Household Socioeconomic Problems

Solution	Number	Percentage
Provision of credit	121	34.6
Organisation's activities a source of income	62	17.7
Medicine/cereals at low prices	15	4.3
Harambee fund raiser to assist	9	2.6
Made clean water available	7	2.0
Paid out-patient medical bills	5	1.4
Trained members in better farming skills	5	1.4
Counselled members with domestic disputes	4	1.1
Assisted to offset funeral expenses	2	0.6
Milk as a food supplement	2	0.6
Marketing members' milk and eggs	1	0.3
Public health/hygiene awareness	1	0.3
None	116	33.1
TOTAL	350	100

Source: Survey data

Whereas the solutions to individual household socioeconomic problems contained in Table 2 have a direct bearing on the assets accessed by the households through CBOs (see Table 1), a major difference between the two tables is in the frequency distributions. Though 85.7 per cent of the respondents reported to have accessed some assets through their organisations, only 69.9 per cent acknowledged that such assets helped to address the main socioeconomic problem in the household. In other words, one would have expected all 85.7 per cent of the respondents who obtained access to assets for improving their livelihoods to report that the assets had helped them to address their main socioeconomic problem, but only for this percentage to fall to a total of 66.9. Similarly, one would have expected only 14.3 per cent of the respondents who did not access any asset through their organisations (see Table 1) to report that they never obtained a solution to their main socioeconomic problem, but this percentage rose to 33.1 (see Table 2).

This can be interpreted to mean that some of the respondents (18.7 per cent) who did not find solutions to their household socioeconomic problems had actually accessed some resources through the activities of their organisations. However, such resources are likely to have been either inadequate or irrelevant relative to the main household socioeconomic problem at hand. This is a pointer to the possibility that the assets acquired through CBOs may not be sufficient or relevant to address some of the glaring household socioeconomic problems. Consequently, CBOs in Western Kenya may be making only a modest contribution to the improvement of the livelihoods of 33.1 per cent of the households. However, it is significant that the majority of the households have found the assets accessed through these organisations useful and probably adequate to address at least the major socioeconomic problem at hand.

It is also important to note the diversity with which the assets accessed through CBOs are put to use. A cross-tabulation between the main socioeconomic problem and the respective solution obtained from the organisations shows that different households use a given asset to address quite different problems. For instance, credit from CBOs was used by various households to solve problems of subsistence shortfalls; school fees; poor housing; and unemployment (in which case credit was used to start, or boost working capital for small-scale non-farm enterprises). Similarly, income from the activities of CBOs was used to address the problems of subsistence demands; unemployment; school fees; and medical expenses. Conversely, four different types of solutions were offered by CBOs to the problem of high and recurrent medical expenses. These were selling medicine within local communities at reduced prices; public health and hygienic practice awareness campaigns to prevent diseases; medical insurance schemes to meet outpatient treatment expenses; and clean water for prevention of water-borne diseases. This diversity is significant for sustainable livelihoods because it promotes greater flexibility by allowing more possibilities for substitution between opportunities that are in decline and those that are expanding their contribution to rural livelihoods (Ellis 2000: 235). In the process, households are likely to find at least a solution to their emerging livelihood problems from the diverse activities of their organisation. It is in this regard that the contribution of CBOs to development at the local level should be appreciated.

Problems encountered by CBOs in Western Kenya

It is evident that these organisations have attempted to cover most of the issues in the economic activities and the socioeconomic infrastructure, but not without some problems. During the interviews, we asked our respond-

ents to identify the main problem they perceived to be affecting their organi-
sation in carrying out their activities. A summary of their responses is pre-
sented in Table 3.

Table 3: Problems Affecting CBOs in Western Kenya

Main Problem Frequency		Percentage
Lack of funds & external assistance	195	55.7
Delay in remitting & defaulting on contributions	41	11.7
Embezzlement of funds by leaders	27	7.7
Unpredictable and unreliable rainfall	19	5.3
Lack of motivation/morale to participate	16	4.6
Competition from similar business ventures	14	3.9
Lack of transport facilities & poor roads	13	3.7
Lack of entrepreneurial/technical skills	7	2.0
Internal squabbles among members	6	1.7
Poor animal breeds and husbandry	5	1.3
Lack of proper operating premises	3	1.0
Illiteracy among members	3	1.0
High borehole maintenance cost	1	0.3
TOTAL	350	100

Source: Field data

The problems appearing in Table 3 clearly show that the lack of adequate
resources to finance the provision of services is the most outstanding prob-
lem facing the majority of CBOs in the region. But the fact that some of the
organisations tend to link the inadequacy of resources to the lack of external
assistance could be a pointer to the prevalence of a dependency syndrome.
It may be interpreted to mean that most of the CBOs in Western Kenya
expect or rely on external assistance to finance their activities and when
such assistance is not forthcoming or is not adequate, then that constitutes a
problem. The implication is that most of the CBOs initiate activities that they
cannot afford to finance on their own with a view to looking out for dona-
tions and other forms of external assistance like *harambee* (Kiswahili for
pulling together according to one's ability in order to accomplish the task)

fund-raisers, grants, revolving credit schemes and material support to sustain them.

This becomes more evident when we look at data in Table 4 on how these organisations finance the implementation of their activities. The table contains a summary of responses to the question of the main source of funds for implementing the main activity of the organisation.

Table 4: Main source of funds for implementing the main activities of CBOs

Source of Funds	Number	Percentage
Donations /grants	152	43.6
Members' contributions	107	30.7
NGO revolving funds/loans	40	11.4
Harambee fund-raisers	39	11.1
Income from business/labour	12	3.3
Total	350	100

Source: Survey data

Clearly, most of the activities of CBOs, including savings and credit schemes that have a long tradition of relying on internally generated resources, have been carried out using a substantial proportion of external resources. Indeed, of the seventeen activities in which the sampled CBOs were engaged, only seven had been implemented without external assistance, namely medical insurance schemes; marketing dairy produce; bicycle transport; provision of farm labour; breeding pigs; horticulture; and subsistence crop farming. This implies that about 60 per cent of the activities of CBOs in the region are carried out using a substantial proportion of resources obtained from outside the membership of the organisations. The main sources of external resources for these organisations include NGOs, government programmes and/or departments, harambee fund raisers and political leaders.

The NGOs that were specifically identified here include CARE-Kenya, Mazingira Institute, Family Health International, Heifer Project International Kenya, Bernard van Leer Foundation, Rural Outreach Programme (ROP), International Youth Exchange Organisation of Japan, and African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF). Mumias Outgrowers Company (MOCO) and Kenchic Ltd. are the private companies that extended credit facilities to these organisations. The government-funded programmes were the Kenya-Finland Livestock Development Programme, Kenya-Finland Co-operation

(KEFINCO) Water Programme, the National Women Development Fund and the National Youth Development Fund. It should be explained here that the last two were actually Funds established through mammoth harambee fund-raisers organised by the state and presided over by the President as political campaign tools for patronising all women and youth groups in the whole country in the run-up to the 1997 general elections. In any case, most of the donor programmes and organisations were reportedly linked to CBO recipients through some political initiatives. Thus, patronage forms the basis for linking donors to CBOs for development support in the region and probably the whole of Kenya.

Despite this assistance from outside the membership of the organisations, it is surprising that 'lack of external assistance' continues to be cited as the main problem facing the organisations. One interpretation for this is that a dependency syndrome seems to have crept into most of the CBOs. This probably explains why organisations that are originally formed around the virtues of mutual trust and mutual aid are reportedly under the leadership of untrustworthy leaders who embezzle funds (see Table 3). This is likely to be happening because most of the funds are not actually contributed by the members themselves, but 'handed out' to the organisations. As one respondent argued in one of our informal interviews in Butere division, the availability of external donations, particularly those through the initiative of politicians, might have created the impression that the funds are 'free' resources available for plunder by those who can get access to them. This kind of attitude among the leadership could be responsible for other organisational and management problems listed in Table 3, like embezzlement of funds; defaulting on repayment of loans and irregular contributions by members; lack of morale to participate in the activities of the organisations; and internal squabbles among members.

On the whole, the problems listed in Table 3 have adversely affected the effectiveness of CBOs in service delivery to the local people in the region. These deficiencies present a major challenge to the neo-liberal notion of voluntary organisations as a panacea to the development crisis in Africa. This is not to say that these organisations have nothing to offer in the search for solutions to the development problem, but they certainly cannot be effective in their current status and operation. Some of the problems that they face, like duplication of services and activities; lack of entrepreneurial and technical skills; and poor roads and transport networks requires that they forge synergies with the state to overcome them. To explore this point, we now turn to the nature of the relationship between the state and CBOs in Kenya.

The Kenyan state and CBOs in the development process

The point has already been made that patronage forms the basic framework for linking CBOs to donors and, by extension, the political realm. This form of interaction between politics (read the state) and CBOs in Kenya can be traced to Mzee Jomo Kenyatta's effort to address two main challenges that faced him at independence, namely developing the new nation and consolidating his power in the midst of a diffuse political environment. Responding to the high expectations for economic development in the midst of limited resources at the state's disposal, Kenyatta urged Kenyans to participate in harambee to mobilise local resources to supplement state provision for rural development. This harambee call was instrumental in institutionalising self-help initiatives that were part of traditional society into formal CBOs that henceforth became significant actors in the development process.

With CBOs helping to address the challenge of development, Kenyatta also went on to use these organisations to consolidate his authority in the political realm. By 1964, he had successfully established a unitary one-party political system using a combination of 'carrots and sticks' to woo members of the opposition Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) to join the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU), thereby introducing the politics of patronage in Kenya (Barkan 1994: 11). To strengthen his grip on local politics, Kenyatta introduced the notion of 'constituency service' for members, as well as aspiring members, of Parliament. It defined the role of aspiring and incumbent MPs as that of assisting self-help (read CBO) projects in their constituencies in order to legitimise 'practical politics' as opposed to the 'empty ideological and programmatic politics' that surrounded the capitalism versus socialism debate of the mid-1960s. Hence, the worth of a politician was to be measured in terms of CBO projects he/she initiated in the constituency (Okumu and Holmquist 1984: 54).

At the same time, Kenyatta encouraged local people to demand assistance towards completion of their self-help projects from their political representatives. For its part, the government pledged to assist completed self-help projects start or improve provision of services by, for example, posting staff to schools, health centres and dispensaries or donating the required equipment. The net result of these arrangements was to increase local pressure on politicians to help complete or start self-help projects in order to benefit from government assistance. Moreover, CBOs embraced the notion that they 'had the right' to be assisted by politicians to start or complete their projects.

As it turned out, CBOs would support political leaders during the semi-competitive regular elections in exchange for the assistance that such leaders had accorded the development projects of their organisations. In the

process, CBOs became major centres of electoral politics. Politicians jostled for space in the activities of these organisations, not out of their concern for local development, but in the quest to remain 'politically relevant'. Others made frantic efforts to join, or remain part of, Kenyatta's 'inner circle' in order to obtain resources to contribute to CBO self-help projects in their constituencies. Subsequently, CBOs became political levers with which local politicians edged into national alliances. They also became vehicles for the articulation of patron-client networks at the local level that were critical for exercising political control in the governance process (Barkan and Holmquist 1989: 360; Kanyinga 1995: 74).

On the other hand, these organisations were literally 'captured' by the state as the culture of dependency steadily crept in. As has already been alluded to, some of the organisations started projects without any vision of how they would be completed, but expected or hoped that political leaders would find a way of assisting them by either obtaining state resources; organising harambee fund raisers; or linking them to donor organisations (like NGOs) for support. Where such assistance was not forthcoming, the projects stalled; the effect of which was to reduce the enthusiasm of participating in similar endeavours, especially in the economically poor regions that ironically also lacked good clientelist connections to the state at the time (Oyugi 2002: 114). Thus, the politics of patronage and the resultant culture of dependency in CBOs would start to adversely affect the sustainability of the projects of most of these organisations.

In 1978, Moi took charge of the country following the demise of Kenyatta and coined the *Nyayo* (Kiswahili for 'footsteps') slogan to express continuity with his predecessor's policies. Subsequently, CBOs remained at the centre of the patron-client networks that continued to link the state to society. But unlike during the Kenyatta era where these organisations enjoyed relative autonomy to link up with any political leader and mobilise resources as long as they played into the clientelist networks that sustained the political system, Moi sought to consolidate his power by bringing all CBOs under his direct and personal control. This was necessary partly due to the imperatives of dismantling the Kenyatta state in order to redistribute development resources and services away from Central province to benefit his clients in Rift Valley province (Barkan 1994: 24; Muigai 1995).

The first step in his effort to patronise CBOs for the said purpose was the directive that all CBOs be registered by the Department of Social Services in the then Ministry of Culture and Social Services. This step would help to monitor the formation, activities and regional distribution of these organisations in the country. Secondly, the Provincial Administration was assigned

the duty of regulating the fundraising activities of these organisations, which politicians could use to build their independent political power bases, as had been the case during the Kenyatta era. All harambee fund-raisers, especially those where politicians would participate, had to be authorised by the Provincial Administration. The end result of this provision was that those CBOs perceived to be outside the president's patronage, or those that associated with politicians who did not toe the political line of the moment, were not allowed to conduct harambee. Indeed, efforts were made to isolate or de-link such CBOs from any form of external assistance to implement their projects.

In addition, the organisation of harambee for local self-help projects changed towards an effort to directly involve the president himself. The new framework was to organise large-scale fund-raisers for similar projects within an administrative area – like a division or district – presided over by the president himself or powerful ministers sanctioned by his office. The amount collected from the mammoth fund-raiser would then be shared out among the participating CBOs in proportion to their contribution (Barkan 1992: 186). Subsequently, CBOs that wished to benefit from harambee and state development resources had to participate in the larger fund-raisers and, by extension, become appendages of the patron-client networks that linked Moi to the locality.

Since these organisations were already accustomed to the idea of being assisted to implement their projects, and those that played into the new political rules were actually getting such assistance, most of the CBOs chose to be part of state patronage. This only served to enhance dependency among these organisations. With the repressive political environment, some of them went out to identify with the political elite 'in favour' at the moment, not only to obtain assistance, but also to survive. Nevertheless, some CBOs continued to operate from outside state patronage, but such organisations tended to be monitored and intimidated by local political clients of the state, with the result that some of them would remain dormant most of the time.

Thus, for the better part of the Moi era, CBOs ceased to be autonomous self-reliant development organisations for mobilising local resources to initiate durable livelihood activities. Rather, they assumed the role of mobilising support for politicians who were 'loyal' to the chief patron in exchange for development resources to implement their projects. This political environment enhanced the dependency of 'loyal CBOs' since they would, in one way or the other, get assistance as a result of their political affiliation.

The advent of multiparty politics in the early 1990s promised to end the politics of patronage, but in vain. Nevertheless, the form and content of patronage in the different regions of the country slightly changed relative to their political affiliation. Whereas its structure remained centralised and

coercive in the pro-government (then KANU) strongholds, where people at the local level were linked to the political elite or the president through patron-client networks oiled by state resources, patronage in the opposition strongholds may be described as 'decentralised' in the sense that state patronage was withdrawn, paving way for the emergence of new 'opposition' patrons in these regions. The emergent patrons did not necessarily link up the locality to the centre of state power. Rather, such patrons became the leading political figureheads of the regions and local political elites strove to establish allegiance to them for the purpose of winning elections.

For instance, in Nyanza province Oginga Odinga had established himself as the doyen of the opposition as well as the political patron of the region, and all Luo politicians wished to be identified with him if they were to win in elections. Nevertheless, Odinga's patronage did not entail absolute conformity of opinions and total loyalty to him as was the case with Kenyatta's and Moi's patronage. All that a politician needed was Odinga's approval to contest an electoral seat. When Odinga passed away in 1993, his son Raila Odinga became the patron of the Luo. But Raila's patronage was even further decentralised in the sense that he did not (and does not) directly control local politics. He only approved of local politicians who sought his patronage (for the sake of winning elections) on the basis of their personal popularity at the local level. Thus, the 'scaling-down' of the centralised state-sponsored patronage in Nyanza province served to decentralise the development space and also to stimulate competition in forging political alliances at the local level. This left local politicians with a free hand to build their political clout at the local level and use such clout to seek the patron's approval as a seal of their membership in the clique of Luo leaders.

This form of patronage in opposition strongholds saw politicians at the local level strive to patronise CBOs in order to build linkages to the people at the grassroots. We found a number of examples in the survey. In Awasi location of Nyando district, a councillor and a local political activist were reported to be instrumental in the formation of youth groups as a way of mobilising the youth to support their political cause. In Miwani division, a parliamentary aspirant, who allegedly won the nomination of the opposition National Development Party (NDP) for Muhoroni constituency during the 1997 general elections but was turned down at the party's headquarters in Nairobi, was reportedly engaged in several harambee fund-raisers for women's groups to revive his parliamentary ambition long before the 2002 general elections were called. By virtue of the popularity that he gained at the local level through these fund-raisers, he was accepted by the patron (Raila Odinga) and was eventually elected the Member of Parliament for Muhoroni when

the elections were held in December 2002. Similar patterns obtained in Siaya district.

In contrast, the centralised and monolithic form of patronage remained the norm in Western province that was largely pro-government. Accordingly, the role of MPs, councillors and local political activists was to build coalitions of all CBOs in their respective areas as a demonstration of their power to the president, who would then reward them with patronage resources in return for local support. For instance, in Funyula division of Busia district, the local MP initiated the formation of large coalitions of women's groups at the sub-locational, locational and divisional levels, to which all local women's groups at the respective levels in the constituency were affiliated. The divisional women's group, known as Sirindiro, was the largest, for it brought together all the sub-locational and locational women's groups. All affiliate groups were required to pay contributions towards the construction of a shopping complex as an income-generating venture, with the promise that there would be other benefits from the initiative. The effort was, however, meant for the MP to patronise all women's groups in the constituency in order to exercise political control and demonstrate to the president his political power. The MP for Butere in Butere-Mumias district took similar initiatives when he formed Butesero self-help group to operate a public service bus project and encouraged all CBOs in Butere and Khwisero divisions to buy shares in the organisation, promising that more benefits awaited the groups that joined the initiative.

Thus, whereas patronage in the opposition-dominated Nyanza Province consisted of politicians striving to identify with the local people through CBOs, the state-led patronage saw politicians simply dangle resources to attract CBOs into their fold as a demonstration of their power at the local level, and support for the president at the national level. It is in this regard that the content of the two variants of patronage differed. In the latter case, development resources were made available to the client CBOs by the state in exchange for political support while in the former, CBOs delivered local politicians to the regional patron in return for the resources contributed by the respective politician to the organisations. Moreover, CBOs in opposition areas identified with the regional patron, not only on the basis of the resources that they received, but also on the basis of other considerations such as ethnicity, demonstrated leadership ability and social standing.

It is in this regard that CBOs in Nyanza reclaimed their autonomy to seek assistance from leaders of any political persuasion and regained some influence over politicians, with the result that some of them were reporting their determination to successfully complete their projects with or without exter-

nal assistance. On the other hand, CBOs in Western province, where state patronage prevailed by virtue of being a pro-government region, continued to expect external assistance to implement their projects to the extent that those that did not receive such support tended to be mostly inactive or dormant.

The Moi era eventually came to a close on 30 December 2002 when the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) under Mwai Kibaki took the leadership of the country. Though the structure of government under President Kibaki has so far remained the same – centralised with the president as the focal point and with enhanced determination to maintain the status quo by circum-venting the constitutional review process - the approach to the exercise of power is relatively different. Unlike his predecessor who strode the political scene like a colossus, Kibaki has adopted a laissez-faire form of administra-tion. As much as this style has seen the president criticised for being indeci-sive on key national issues and subsequently labelled 'hands- and head-off', he has given his ministers room to run their ministries without interference from above, as was the case in the past regime (Masime and Kibara 2003: 23). Similarly, there is remarkable freedom of expression relative to the Moi or even Kenyatta era.

Although the impact of this relatively free political space on the activities of CBOs is not yet clear, it should be mentioned that the NARC government has already embarked on measures that may reduce the politics of patronage in these organisations. For instance, the Economic Crimes and Public Offic-ers Ethics Act of 2003 bars political leaders and public servants from presid-ing over harambee fund-raisers. This may serve to minimise corruption, but it will also reduce the prominence of CBOs as centres for political patronage. Moreover, the government is considering outlawing harambee altogether on account of its politicisation and abuse. If this happens, it could adversely affect CBOs that genuinely lack the capacity to mobilise adequate resources for their activities, but it will certainly rein in the culture of dependency in these organisations. At the moment, the extent to which the liberal political environment and the legal measures instituted by NARC will contain patron-age and the vice of dependency in CBOs remains to be seen.

Towards interfacing the state and CBOs in development

Although the state generally achieved commendable economic growth rates that translated into improved living conditions for the majority of the people during the first decade of Kenya's independence, this performance could not be sustained thereafter, resulting in a downward trend in the development process (Republic of Kenya 2002). The persistent poor economic perform-ance worsened the poverty situation over the years. The number of people living in poverty, for example, rose from 48 per cent of the population in

1990 to 56 per cent in 2001. The deterioration in the standard of living is well demonstrated by key social indicators, particularly over the last two decades: illiteracy rates increased while life expectancy and child mortality worsened. Inaccessibility to health services, partly due to affordability, was also made worse by the upsurge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Government of Kenya 2003). As the main development actor since independence, the state was correctly faulted for this development crisis.

It should be emphasised here that besides the inability of the state to provide social services to the people, it has not been in touch with the actual needs of the people. This clearly came out in the relatively participatory consultations that led to the preparation of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for the period 2001–2004. The few local people who had a chance to contribute their views appreciated the rare opportunity the government had given them to express their concerns for the first time and went on to enumerate a wide range of needs that the state had ignored over the years, to the extent that they were at a loss to prioritise them (Republic of Kenya 2001). The implication is that the state has been in contact with the people, not in pursuit of development goals per se, but mostly for purposes of exercising power and control. This has clearly been demonstrated in its interaction with CBOs: its intention has been to co-opt them into its political machine for exercising power.

As has already been alluded to, local people have responded to the resultant lack of services by forming CBOs to satisfy their needs. There is evidence in our study of these organisations that they have been instrumental in providing services that the state has been unable to provide. For instance, their innovativeness has seen them start local medical insurance schemes, albeit in a small way, to enable their members to afford health services. Similarly, saving and credit schemes have been a major source of financial services for meeting a variety of needs at the local level. CBOs have also been useful in the development of entrepreneurship as well as the provision of other social services like water (see Tables 1 and 2).

But like the state, CBOs have not been so effective in service provision despite the advantages that they enjoy over the state insofar as delivery of development services is concerned. This was attributed to a number of factors that have already been presented in this discussion (see Table 3). The extent to which the level of poverty in Kenya has been increasing is testament to the failure of both the state and the voluntary organisations to independently and adequately respond to the development crisis in the country. It is against this background that interfacing these two actors may make a

contribution to the development process. The pertinent question is: How can synergies be forged between the state and CBOs in Kenya?

Of the two institutions, it is apparent that CBOs have established a better infrastructure for service provision at the local level than the state. CBOs are found among the local people and operate at the lowest level of society where the individual is to be found. For this reason, the state ought to complement these organisations in the development process by addressing the problems that they have encountered. Thus, the problems that CBOs have faced in their effort to satisfy the needs of the local people should form the basis for the state to forge synergies with them in the development process.

Our survey data show that the lack of adequate resources is a key problem in CBOs. Although some organisations might have cited this problem due to their dependency on outside assistance, other organisations were genuine in this regard. The state could respond to this problem by providing supplementary resources to those organisations that genuinely need them to run specific activities. But the resources must be provided on the basis of what the organisation has raised on its own and for what specific service, rather than the common practice of giving hand-outs to CBOs to satisfy clientelist goals. Thus, state resources must build on what the organisation has achieved in order to cut out those CBOs that start activities as a way of soliciting external resources that are immediately shared out by members for personal use. For instance in 1997, several women's and youth groups were formed just to get a share of the National Women's Development Fund and the National Youth Development Fund. Most of these groups were dissolved after sharing the money that they received from the Funds (Wanyama 2003a: 205). It is this rent-seeking behaviour that must be discouraged in CBOs.

The Kibaki government has established a national development fund that could be ideal in supplementing the resource base of CBOs for effective delivery of services at the local level. This is the Constituencies Development Fund (CDF) that was set up through an Act of Parliament in 2003. An amount of money equal to 2.5 per cent of all ordinary government revenue collected in every financial year is paid into the Fund, which is then distributed equally to all parliamentary constituencies in the country to be spent on various development projects (Republic of Kenya 2004). Unfortunately, the Act vests in the relevant MP the power to constitute the Constituency Development Committee that administers the Fund at the constituency level as well as the power to determine which projects are to be funded. These powers have seen many MPs misuse the funds in various constituencies in the country. Ideally, the CDF could be channelled through selected CBOs that are viable in the provision of specific services.

The provision of supplementary resources by the state could also help to address the problem of duplication of activities and services in these organisations. We have noted that some CBOs have incurred losses in their businesses due to this problem. This occurs not only due to the lack of entrepreneurial skills, but also due to the lack of resources to invest in alternative activities that may require more capital than members can raise. The pegging of state resources to the type of services delivered by CBOs in every region may stimulate the diversification of activities and services by these organisations. In addition, the duplication of activities could be curbed through the registration of these organisations by the state. This has been going on since the 1980s, but the intention, as already noted, was to control and patronise the organisations instead of regulating their activities with a view to encouraging the diversification of service provision at the local level. The latter should be the sole purpose of registering CBOs by the state.

The other problems that CBOs have encountered include the poor roads and transport facilities and the lack of skills. Arguably, the cost of road maintenance is beyond the capital outlay of most CBOs. In the survey, we inquired about members' actual contribution to the financing of the activities of their organisations, which accounted for just 30.7 per cent of the resources. We established that their contributions were in the form of regular financial contributions (68.9 per cent); materials (19.7 per cent) and labour (11.4 per cent). However, the rate of financial contributions tended to be relatively low as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Rate of monthly financial contributions

Monthly Contribution (Kshs.)	Number	Percentage
Less than 50	135	38.5
51–100	70	20.0
101–200	38	10.9
201–300	31	8.9
301–500	12	3.3
501–1,500	16	4.6
Over 1,500	5	1.4
None	43	12.4
TOTAL	350	100

Source: Survey data

The reason why the rates were relatively low was to make the contribution affordable to the generally poor members of most of these organisations. At the time of the survey, one US dollar was equivalent to 75 Kenya shillings. Consequently, the data in Table 5 show that each member in more than half (58.5 per cent) of these organisations contributed up to just over one US dollar in a month. Given that the organisations are mostly small in size, the implication is that only small amounts of funds could be mobilised from contributions. For instance, the smallest organisation of eight members would raise just about eight US dollars per month, while the medium-size organisation of about thirty members would raise thirty US dollars in a month.

Clearly, these are not the resources to be committed to road maintenance if these organisations are to render any other service to the members or the community. This role must be played by the state. The state is also better placed to train members of these organisations in various fields, including business management; community health; home economics and hygiene; and crop farming and animal husbandry. It is with these skills that CBOs will be more effective in service delivery.

Above all, it is the politics of patronage that seems to be responsible for the better part of the problems that confound CBOs. It has been highlighted that patronage has largely contributed to the dependency syndrome in these organisations, which has not only discouraged efficient mobilisation of local resources for development, but has also enabled the embezzlement of funds by leaders who enjoy the protection of patrons. This has, in turn, demoralised some of the members from actively participating in the activities of the organisations. The way out of this predicament is to institutionalise governance rather than personalising it as has been the case in Kenya since independence. Kenyans expressed their desire for institutional politics in 2002 when they overwhelmingly voted for a conglomeration of political parties that coalesced in the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) that sent KANU out of power for the first time ever. The vote was not in favour of any personality, but the institutions that made up NARC.

Nevertheless, if cabinet and senior civil service appointments are anything to go by, the politics of patronage is still alive. The appointments seem to be Kibaki's reward to his loyal supporters from Central Kenya and his Democratic Party that is now part of NARC. Rather than discarding KANU's recruitment ethics that disregarded professionalism and merit as the criteria, Kibaki is increasingly using cronyism, ethnic balancing and patronage as the guiding principles for significant senior appointments. Old and retired civil servants have been recycled and given key government jobs; some of whom do not have the requisite qualifications (Masime and Kibara 2003: 13). If this patronage persists, it is likely to adversely affect the democratic political

environment that CBOs might have started to enjoy. Thus, the institutionali-sation of democracy is the most viable way by which the state can provide CBOs with what neo-liberals have termed an 'enabling environment' for their effective contribution to development. Such an environment may also help to check the predatory instincts of the state, which have seen it co-opt CBOs into its political mechanism for maximising the exercise of power.

Conclusion

This discussion has attempted to examine the effect of the institutional di-chotomy between the state and voluntary organisations, as propagated by neo-liberalism, on African development. The purpose has been to establish the possibility of forging a complementary role between the state and the voluntary sector as an alternative framework for enhancing African develop-ment, given that none of these actors has proved effective on their own. Using a case study of CBOs in Western Kenya, it has been illustrated that voluntary organisations have the potential to contribute to the development process given their innovativeness, flexibility and local outreach in service provision. It is in this regard that these organisations have been able to pro-vide some of the services that the state has been unable to deliver to the local population. However, these organisations have not been very effective in service delivery due to deficiencies such as the paucity of resources; the dependency syndrome perpetrated by the politics of patronage; the duplica-tion of activities and services; and the lack of technical skills.

It has also been argued that the inability of the state to effectively contribute to the development process requires that it exploits the deficiencies in voluntary organisations as the basis for complementing or strengthening them in service delivery. Recognising that this can be a delicate endeavour in view of the predatory nature of the state, some balancing acts have been suggested. Among these include the division of roles between the state and voluntary organisations in a complementary manner. Accordingly, the state should take over capital-intensive development activities (such as maintenance of infrastructure) as a way of providing an enabling environment for voluntary organisations to deliver services and also provide training services to these organisations to enhance their skills in development work. While encouraging voluntary organisations to mobilise their own resources to carry out their activities, the state ought to give supplementary resources only to those organisations that genuinely lack resources to diversify service provision in order to minimise the dependency syndrome. The state could also minimise the duplication of services by regulating the establishment of activities in

these organisations as opposed to the common practice of co-opting them into its political control network.

Nevertheless, the Kenyan example implies that this division of roles may hold better in a democratic political environment than under personal rule and authoritarian regimes. For instance, we observed that CBOs in the relatively liberal opposition regions were looking inward to carry out their activities while those in the pro-government areas continued to look out for assistance to get going and were subject to the directives of political entrepreneurs. The challenge in Africa, therefore, is to institutionalise democratic governance to enable the state and voluntary organisations to play their respective complementary roles in the development process.

Contrary to neo-liberal assumptions, it is clear from this discussion that the state is not redundant in the development process. Similarly, voluntary organisations themselves do not constitute a panacea to the problem of African development. This paper, therefore, submits that the future of African development lies in forging a complementary role between the state and the voluntary sector.

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World Bank Development Policies and Poverty Alleviation in Africa

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Abstract

This paper looks at how World Bank policies affect the outcomes of efforts at alleviating widespread poverty in Africa. It questions the repercussion of these policies on the stability of African economies by analyzing the survey of the literature. From the evidence gathered from Africa and specific countries on the continent, the paper shows that the World Bank-supported adjustment reforms exacerbate rather than reduce poverty as they deal with growth-related problems at the expense of human-centred or development associated measures; thus reinforcing the concerns that the reforms are an ineffective poverty alleviation instrument. Nevertheless, structural reforms could help push African economies forward on condition that poverty reduction and not accounting records is their point of reference. That way, human development, which is the key to unlock Africa's potential, would take its deserved place on the continent's agenda.

Résumé

Cette contribution examine l'impact des politiques de la banque mondiale sur les efforts de réduction de la pauvreté croissante en Afrique. Elle questionne les répercussions de ces politiques sur la stabilité des économies africaines en analysant la littérature existante. Des données collectées en Afrique et sur des pays du continent, la contribution démontre que les réformes préconisées par la Banque Mondiale accentuent au lieu de réduire la pauvreté, s'adressant plutôt à questions de croissance au détriment de mesures humaines ou axées sur le développement, et de ce fait renforcent les préoccupations d'inefficacité des réformes comme outil de réduction de la pauvreté. Néanmoin, les réformes structurelles pourraient bien propulser les économies africaines, à condition que la réduction de la pauvreté soit leur point de référence, plutôt que les docu-

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ments comptables. Ainsi, le développement humain, qui est lé clé du déblocage du potentiel africain, occuperait toute la place qu'elle mérite au sein de l'agenda du continent.

Introduction

In contemporary Africa, poverty is widespread and much effort has been devoted to its alleviation. The success of this endeavour depends on the speed of economic and social development on the continent. Unfortunately, development has not really permeated Africa, a situation that is compounded by global economic arrangements that have become more competitive and sophisticated than African economies can cope with (Ramakrishna 2001). For instance, in 2001 Africa produced the same types of commodities and exported them to the same markets as it did in the 1970s and 1980s (Onimode 2003). Thus, whereas Africa accounts for 12 per cent of the world's population, it boasts only one per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 1.5 per cent of world trade (World Bank 2003a).

This unenviable record has to do with the monoculture structure of African economies in contrast with the diversifications that occur in world production and trade. At the same time, developed nations no longer need much of the primary commodities like rubber and cotton, which Africa produces because of the discovery of various synthetic materials that have taken their place in the production process. Consequently, the importance of Africa in their raw material calculations has lessened and by implication export revenues have also dwindled, thereby creating obstacles on the path of growth and development.

Inaccessibility to social services, inequitable distribution of wealth, corruption, bad governance, civil strife, growing indebtedness, marginalisation in world trade and finance, and the accompanying socio-economic malaise which African countries are experiencing, are pointers to the root causes of Africa's poverty. Because conventional development models[1] appear suspect insofar as they have failed the African poor for whom development has become a mirage, it is imperative for Africans to rely more on their own initiatives for the economic recovery and hence poverty alleviation in the continent.

No doubt, the campaign against poverty has taken centre stage in Africa's development efforts. The huge resources that African governments commit to poverty alleviation programmes notwithstanding, donor agencies have also shown profound interest in the same cause. Yet, poverty in Africa persists. The persistence of poverty on the continent, therefore, elicits concerns over the policies being pursued in its alleviation. Specifically, the World Bank-supported [2] adjustment reforms have sparked considerable debate about

their effectiveness as a poverty alleviation instrument in Africa. The aim of this paper is to contribute to that debate.

The remainder of the paper adopts the following lay-out. First, conceptual issues on development and poverty in Africa are highlighted followed by the examination of the effectiveness of World Bank policies, particularly adjustment reforms on poverty alleviation on the continent. Lastly, the analyses are drawn together and conclusions summarised in section 4.

Conceptual issues regarding development and poverty in Africa

The controversy[3] surrounding the concept of development remains unresolved although its meaning in terms of improvement in the material and social aspects of life appears unexceptionable (United Nations 2000). Be that as it may, development entails increases in real per capita incomes of a country over a long period of time coupled with equitable distribution of the same in order to achieve improvement in the standard of living of the population (Meier 1989; Iwayemi 1993). This view is collaborated by Todaro (1992) and Stiglitz (2001) who assert that development involves the acceleration of economic growth and changes in structures, attitudes and institutions with a view to achieving the reduction of inequality and poverty.

Thus, development is modernisation with a human approach as the emphasis is on distributive justice as basic needs are satisfied through the income generated and the fruits of development shared equitably among the different segments of society. This humanitarian approach to development problems has compelled Harrison (1993) to regard development as a continuous and positively evaluated process of social and economic change that involves the totality of human experience. But development also needs to be sustainable, which leads Ake (1990) to argue that since people sustain development, it must be an integral part of their lives. This presupposes that sustainable development only occurs when the processes and the innovation are relevant to the aspirations of a people and are also assimilated and improved upon by them according to their desires.

In societies where development is absent, poverty is inevitable. This is revealed in the association between low levels of development and high incidence of poverty (for details, see Ajakaiye and Olomola 1999). This is without prejudice to the measurement of poverty, which is based on either income or expenditure parameters (United Nations 1997). Little wonder that Obadan (1996) refers to the poor as those people whose measured standard of living in terms of income is below the poverty line. Klugman and Braithwaite (1998) equally believe that poverty is the inability to maintain a minimum level of existence because an individual's income cannot purchase the basic

needs of life. On the other hand, Demery (1993) and Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2001) stress the expenditure-based measurement of poverty as that shows whether all outlays made by a household, consumption of own production and the imputed values of services derived from the ownership of consumer durables and housing, are enough to put it above the poverty line. Therefore, although poverty manifests itself in conditions of low development, it is measurable by an income or expenditure level below which an accepted standard of living cannot be guaranteed.

As it is presented here, poverty is related to the inability to sustain oneself materially. But current thinking increasingly recognises poverty as multidimensional, involving, for instance, the lack of access to education, to health care and infrastructural facilities, the denial of opportunities and choices to take independent decisions, to command the respect of others and even remoteness to political power. Of course, deprivation in any one area reinforces, and is in turn, reinforced by deprivation in others. For example, because the poor lack access to good shelter and health care delivery systems, they are often ill. Because of illness, they produce less and consequently earn less, which denies them access to the basic needs of life (United Nations 1999a). This vicious circle of poverty, which encompasses illiteracy, insufficient feeding and inability to meet social and economic obligations, among other deficiencies, is well documented in Fishlow (1995) and Dipholo (2002). Therefore, poverty is not only materially inspired, but also entails inadequacies in other aspects of life.

In no other continent is poverty as severe as in Africa. There, the growth indicators are either weak or negative. For example, as world output grew from 1.4 per cent in 1993 to 4 per cent in 2000, Africa recorded a growth rate of 2.7 per cent in2000 as against 0.7 per cent in1993 (United Nations, 2002; UNCTAD 2002a). While global GDP per capita rose from 4,382 million dollars in 1980 to 5,218 million dollars in 2002, Africa's share declined from 577 million dollars to 503 million dollars over the same period (UNCTAD 2003).

The median annual growth rate of real GDP per capita in Africa also fell from about 2 per cent inthe 1970s to -0.3 per cent in the 1980s and to -1.3 per cent in the 1990s. Gross domestic investments (as a fraction of GDP) equally declined from 21 per cent in the 1970s to 17 per cent in the 1990s (Elbadawi and Mwega 2000). Africa has also failed to achieve improvement in external trade relations as its share of world exports declined from 4.62 per cent in 1980 to 1.86 per cent in 2001 (UNCTAD 2002b). These declines naturally contribute to the falling standards of living across the continent.

Furthermore, the share of people in Africa living on less than one dollar a day was 47.6 per cent in 1990. Although that figure fell to 45.7 per cent in

2002, the number of African poor actually increased from 242 million in 1990 to 350 million in 2002 because of population growth (African Development Bank 2000; World Bank 2003a). In other developing regions, the proportion of poor people in the entire population has been falling. For instance, in East Asia and Pacific, that proportion fell from 27.6 per cent to 14.7 per cent between 1990 and 2002. In Latin America and the Caribbean and South Asia, it also fell from 16.8 per cent to 12.1 per cent and from 44 per cent to 40 per cent respectively during the same period (World Bank 2003a). These data not only place Africa as the continent with the largest share of poor people in the world, but there is also a strong perception that poverty is becoming an African instead of a global problem.

But Africa has not folded its hands in despair. During the 1960s through to the early 1980s, efforts were made to industrialise the continent through the import substitution industrialisation strategy. Agricultural production and rural development also received a boost. The strong support, which the public sector attracted at that time, was consistent with the prevailing paradigm about the state being the advance guard of development. Unfortunately, these efforts yielded little success due to poor macroeconomic and sectoral policies. Indeed, over-valued exchange rates, large budget deficits, inward-oriented trade practices, nationalisation of enterprises and their conversion into state monopolies stifled competition vital for increasing productivity (World Bank 1994). In addition, inadequate human capital, civil strife, bloated bureaucracy, corruption and armed conflicts not only diverted scarce resources to unproductive ends, but also constituted obstacles to economic and political stability needed for growth.

Decades of colonialism and imperialism, worsening terms of trade, external indebtedness and marginalisation equally weigh against Africa's development. Globalisation reinforces Africa's peripheral role in the world economy as it ensures that the enrichment of the West is predicated on the impoverishment of the continent. These impediments sustain Africa's underdevelopment as they frustrate social, economic and political transformation, thereby solidifying the foundation that regenerates poverty among its peoples.

The interplay of these forces has meant that for the African, development is illusory. This is best illustrated by the Human Development Index[4] (HDI), which has relatively low values on the continent. In 2002, only South Africa, Botswana, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Kenya and Republic of Congo had an HDI of between 0.50 and 0.70. Other Sub-Saharan African countries had lower than 0.50, whereas most countries in Asia and Latin America posted values of between 0.51 and 0.80. In Europe and North America HDI values were much higher. In concrete terms, life expectancy presently in Africa is only 48.8 years as against more than 65 years in other regions.

Adult literacy is below 60 per cent when compared with over 80 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean and almost 80 per cent in Europe (UNDP 2003).

The prospects for African development, therefore, appear gloomy. Nevertheless, since development gives access to the instruments used in reducing poverty, Africans have given considerable attention to internal development measures. The support of development partners like the European Union and the World Bank among others has also been sought. The responsibility for the appalling results so far achieved must be shared by the enormity of the problems involved, the policy responses to development issues, and the global setting under which Africa is operating. The continent, however, remains a part of the world, as such its poverty is a threat to prosperity anywhere else. That is why more concerted efforts are required in the context of Africa's development in order to unleash the docile wealth of the continent for more effective poverty alleviation outcomes.

The effectiveness of World Bank development policies on poverty alleviation in Africa

The main mission of the World Bank is to help improve the living standards of people in client countries. In order to achieve this objective in Africa, the World Bank enters into development cooperation with countries on the continent. A fundamental feature of development cooperation is that it goes with a development policy. This policy influences the commitment by a donor to invest funds in financial and technical cooperation in a recipient country in order to contribute to efforts aimed at poverty alleviation (Gabas 1993).

The World Bank development policies in Africa are anchored on three pillars. First, they seek the transfer of financial resources and technical expertise to African countries in order to increase their productivity. Second, they favour rural and infrastructural development and third, they support the reforms of African institutions. But then, a pertinent question arises. This concerns the extent to which these policies influence poverty alleviation in the continent. The answer to this question rests on the assessment of their effectiveness in improving the quality of life of Africans.

The World Bank development cooperation with Africa began in 1951. From that time until the end of the 1960s, the World Bank's policy favoured infrastructure projects like ports, electric power and other public utilities. The evidence in support of this assertion is that between 1961 and 1965, 75 per cent of all lending was for electric power and transportation, while agricultural development received 6 per cent, and only 1 per cent went to social services. Thus, lending for industrial and agricultural production and expansion of social services received little attention; whereas growth in these sec-

tors is critical for poverty alleviation. The World Bank's policy in the 1970s changed to lending for rural development, basic education, health care delivery and housing. The result was that by 1980, the share of infrastructure projects had declined to 39 per cent while that of agriculture and rural development had increased to over 30 per cent of overall lending (Husain 1995).

Nevertheless, in the agricultural sphere, the concentration was on large-scale mechanised farming and on the development of River Basin Authorities and Agricultural Development Programmes. Although these projects reduced out-migration of peasants during the dry season through their engagement in perennial occupations within the project sites, the emphasis on large-scale capital intensive agriculture, as opposed to small-scale labour intensive peasant holding, forced peasants to evacuate their lands, which were in turn acquired by rich farmers. Moreover, the displacement of the peasants due to mechanisation without adequate compensation to enable them to resettle elsewhere encouraged their dispersal, which culminated in a disaster for them because of the loss of their source of livelihood and the resultant exacerbation of their poverty (Adelakun 1999).

Since the 1980s and sequel to the financial and economic crises which depressed many African economies, the World Bank has insisted on structural adjustment lending. This policy shift ties assistance to implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with support from the World Bank. Consequently, resources are focused on countries undergoing macroeconomic reforms that address stabilisation and economic management problems (Koeberle 2003). In actualising this policy, the World Bank asserts that since all public programmes affect the poor either directly or indirectly, assistance to reduce poverty must be comprehensive. Secondly, since the nature and depth of poverty varies across countries, the approach must be flexible enough to allow for country-specific solutions (World Bank 2002a). But Mkandawire and Soludo (1999) and Haque and Khan (2002) have made the case that the reform prescriptions are neither comprehensive nor country-specific, which explains the contradictory outcomes in poverty alleviation being recorded across Africa as the reforms proceed.

The key pillars of SAP include privatisation/commercialisation, trade liberalisation, deregulation of prices, withdrawal of subsidies and devaluation. An assessment of these policies shows that privatisation is succeeding in changing the ownership of public assets through transfers that have not only failed to stop the grabbing hands of the state, but that have also allowed resources to be diverted to the grabbing hands of the new owners of privatised firms (Dyck 2001), with grave consequences for equity and income distribution. Moreover, privatisation in economies with little independent capital

merely opens up the economy to foreign capital with national capital acting as a front. Besides, since such capital is concentrated in the urban areas, the policy has an urban distributional bias with the risk of income inequality between the urban and rural areas being accentuated.

Trade liberalisation and deregulation of prices cannot push the economies of Africa forward because of weak structures of production and trade. Subsidies on strategic goods are critical for mitigating the effects of high producer prices on poor Africans and in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia and Tanzania, fertiliser subsidies, for example, range from 50 to 100 per cent of their market values (Baffes and Meerman 1998). The withdrawal of such subsidies is shattering an important cushion for the survival of the African poor in the affected countries.

In Nigeria, inflationary pressures and social unrest have marked the withdrawal of subsidies, particularly on refined petroleum products, since the inception of reforms. In 1990, for instance, due to subsidy withdrawal, the price of premium motor spirit (PMS) rose to 60 kobo per litre while automotive gas oil (AGO) and household kerosene (HK) sold for 50 kobo per litre. By 1995, the further withdrawal of subsidy led to PMS being sold for 11 naira per litre, AGO for 9 naira per litre and HK for 6 naira per litre. In 1999, that same process ensured that the price of PMS went up to 22 naira per litre, while that of AGO and HK could not be increased due to stiff domestic opposition. By 2003, the price of PMS had gone up to 38 naira per litre and that of HK to 36 naira per litre (Central Bank of Nigeria 2002 and 2003).

The increases in the prices of petroleum products induce inflation consequent upon rises in the cost of transportation and other activities. For example, the 10 per cent rise in the price of PMS in 2000 from their 1999 level pushed up the consumer price index by over 17 per cent that year (Federal Office of Statistics 2000). Adversely affected are the prices of staple foodstuffs that keep the poor moving. The implication for their welfare cannot be over-emphasised as they grope under the weight of economic hardship. In its reaction, the Nigerian Labour Congress staged nation-wide strikes in 2003 and 2004 to protest about increases in the prices of petroleum products. The protests invited police brutality, leading to killings and the detention of union activists. The Nigerian government has not relented in its bid to completely deregulate the downstream sector of the nation's oil industry.

The incessant depreciation of the exchange rate of African currencies vis-à-vis the world's leading currencies has thoroughly weakened the former. For example, in 1980 the official exchange rate of the Ghanaian cedi to the dollar was 9.6. In 2002, that rate depreciated to 8,231.4. In Guinea, the dollar exchanged for 19.0 franc in 1980, but the franc depreciated to 1,971.0 in 2002. In Mozambique, one dollar was exchanged for 32.4 metical in 1980.

But in 2002 the same dollar attracted 23,346.5 metical. The dollar was exchanged for 0.8 naira in 1980, but in 2002 the dollar exchange for 128.8 naira. In Zambia, the dollar was exchanged for 0.8 kwacha in 1980, but the kwacha depreciated to 5,070.0 in 2002 (World Bank 2003b; World Almanac 2003).

This weakness in African currencies complicates the burden of planning and creates impediments to the procurement of materials required by local industries, leading to closures and underutilisation of capacities. Although no reliable data on unemployment exist for Africa, the rationalisation of public enterprises and the retrenchment of workers leads to a deterioration in the employment situation. The increasing number of unemployed and underemployed leads to the emergence of the new poor who swell the ranks of the chronic poor due to loss of jobs. With high unemployment, the faces of Africans are etched with greater sadness than they were before SAP, with a notable rise in violence and frustration-related crimes.

The African crises were caused by macroeconomic distortions coupled with exogenous shocks. The adjustment reforms address the distortions without effectively dealing with the external problems. Granted that African economies grew at some 3 per cent annually between 1990 and 2001, an achievement attributed to the reforms (World Bank 2003b), the increasing foreign indebtedness and deteriorating terms of trade have swamped that growth. For instance, the continent's debt stock rose from 228.3 billion dollars in 1990 to 334.3 billion dollars in 2000, while debt service stood at more than 16 per cent of export earnings in 2000 (United Nations, 1999b; African Development Bank 2001).

African countries spend over 14.5 billion dollars annually repaying their debts. A country like Nigeria originally borrowed about 20 billion dollars between the late 1970s and 2002. Due to high interest rates and reschedulings, the debt has multiplied over and over again to the extent that by 2002 the country has already paid back 38 billion dollars and still owes 28.6 billion dollars (Aluko 2004). In the case of Tanzania, the country spends nine times as much on debt repayment as on health care, and four times more than on education (Bentsi-Enchill 1999).

After improving somewhat during the commodity boom of the 1970s, Africa's terms of trade have continued their customary weakness and plunged by 0.5 per cent on average between 1980 and 1990 and 0.3 per cent between 1991 and 2002 (IMF 2003). The deterioration in Africa's terms of trade in 1994 alone was responsible for the loss of 34 billion dollars in export earnings that year (Jubilee 2000, 2000). Thus, adverse terms of trade fuel the drain of Africa's resources, which negatively affects its capacity for capital accumulation.

Neither foreign direct investments (FDI), official development assistance (ODA), the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, nor the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP), have been sufficient to offset the debt overhang in Africa. The destination of FDI is to healthier economies. This explains why Africa attracted only 17.1 billion dollars of FDI, representing 2.3 per cent of the 735.1 billion dollars FDI in 2001 (UNCTAD, 2002b). With private capital growing faster than official, the share of official financing has fallen from over 50 per cent in the 1980s to 20 per cent in 2000. Correspondingly, net ODA flows fell to 0.29 per cent of donors' gross national product (GNP) in 1994–1995 and fell further to 0.25 per cent of their GNP in 2000–2001 (Daouas, 2001).

At current levels of about 50 billion dollars annually, there is a large gap between the development ambitions of the international community and the resources being provided through ODA. The Washington Consensus[5] assumes that there is nothing wrong with the existing development assistance relationship. But from an African perspective, underfunding of ODA undermines the growth prospects, even if it helps fill the investment-savings gap (Manuel 2003). And the World Bank has not been active in canvassing for the transfer of the 0.7 per cent of the GNP of developed nations endorsed by the United Nations as a bench-mark for development assistance.

Admittedly, the HIPC of 1999 envisages that 100 billion dollars of poor countries debt would be written off through the World Bank and IMF. This could provide some succour as the 23 beneficiary African countries have so far received 25 billion dollars in debt relief. However, the affected countries still spent 1.7 billion dollars in debt repayments in 2002 although that amount was almost one billion dollars less than what they paid in 1998 (Links 2004).

Since 1999, PRSPs have become the dominant vehicle for World Bank development policy in Africa. They are prepared by affected member countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners. They tie assistance to poverty reduction (World Bank 2002b). By 2003, 30 African countries had committed to the PRSP process and 11 of them had completed the full PRSP (IDA/IMF 2003).

However, the PRSPs have several flaws. For instance, while all full PRSPs supported trade liberalisation, they are limited in addressing the negative impact of past trade reforms and do not clarify the link between those reforms and poverty reduction. Gender issues and the access of the rural poor to economic assets are equally under-emphasised. More importantly, they represent the perception of donors about what is good for Africa. And so, however well intentioned, these instruments are not optional but mandatory for access to the financial window of the World Bank. Moreover, the ownership of PRSPs is meaningless because no African country can conceivably prepare and

obtain financing for a project it deems appropriate for its development if the World Bank decides otherwise (Ohiorhenuan 2003).

Overall, the impact of SAP on poverty alleviation in Africa is controversial. The World Bank insists that SAPs have led to major gains being posted particularly in growth of GDP, which benefits the poor through the trickle down effect. It believes that structural adjustment is consistent with poverty alleviation in that the incomes of the economically active poor are raised as their productive capacity increases through their involvement in the adjustment process. Farmers in Ghana and Uganda are cited as benefiting from reforms as biases against agriculture in the two countries have been eliminated, thereby raising farm prices, rural incomes and consequently alleviating rural poverty (Christiaensen, Demery and Paternostro 2003).

But the experience of some other African countries suggests otherwise. In Nigeria, for example, SAP has tended to complicate the country's economic crisis as it exacerbates existing pre-adjustment problems, creates new ones specific to its own contradictions, whilst the state employs force to cow the people as it implements the unpopular policy. In the case of Egypt, Fergany (2002) stresses that in the absence of the institutional environment needed to ensure the declared capitalist efficiency and humanising distributive justice, SAP has resulted in increasing poverty and higher unemployment, leading to widening disparity in income and intensifying social and political polarisation, particularly between rural and urban Egypt. In Malawi, SAP perpetuates economic and social instability as people swallow the bitter pills of structural adjustment and the economy remains one of the poorest in the world after nearly two decades of reforms (Chirwa 2000).

Therefore, the performance of SAP, be it in the industrial sector, or with regard to employment and trade, has been disappointing. This is because SAP is basically a monetarist approach to economic management, hence demand management instruments dominate its pillars. Yet, the production structure in Africa is heavily import-dependent and subject to other rigidities, which should invite more structuralist than monetarist strategies in the reform process. This explains why SAP has not yielded the expected results.

And so, while policy reforms are necessary for economic growth, they are not a sufficient condition for poverty reduction. As the World Bank (2004) admits, success in poverty alleviation depends not just on growth, but on the ability to translate that growth into basic services. Unless growth is combined with increased investments in social services to attain improvement in living standards, poverty will remain, as Africa is witnessing. Consequently, we can argue as Rama (1997) has that those who criticise SAP on grounds of its human development cost have a point. By and large, the welfare cost of reforms has made the expression 'adjustment fatigue' very popular in

Africa as market fundamentalism continues its onslaught against Africa's economic recovery and poverty alleviation programmes.

Conclusion

The primary mission of the World Bank is poverty alleviation and so its development policies should be assessed on their results and impact on human welfare. People living in Africa are the most mired in poverty. As such, Africa has no choice other than to quicken the mobilisation of its domestic resources and seek external interventions in its poverty alleviation efforts. The World Bank has been supportive, but the elevation of adjustment reforms to the status of a long term development strategy instead of a short term emergency measure has dramatically exposed the adjusting states to the vagaries of the market. For sure, macroeconomic stability and growth have been restored in many African countries, thanks to reforms, but the human development cost has been heavy. This creates concerns that the reform process is an ineffective poverty reduction tool.

Adjustment reforms have not yielded the desired poverty alleviation dividends since real improvement has not occurred in the lives of Africans. However, they could help to push the economies of Africa forward on condition that poverty alleviation and not accounting records is their point of reference. The underlying message is that World Bank development cooperation with Africa needs to be strengthened with human-centred strategies and not inflexible reforms – all the more so given that the weak capability of African governments to sustain them makes for ferment in the political economy sense.

In this regard, the fallacy of the neoliberal imagination that the market and state can only exist in opposition to each other requires speedy rejection. What is more, the damage done to African economies by transforming them into a subcontracting position for more powerful political economies equally requires urgent correction. This calls for humane approaches to the adjustment mechanism in order to extend the reform processes beyond the confines of market efficiency. This would also enable the World Bank to adequately address the welfare of Africans in its development policies, since people are the ultimate end of development.

Notes

1. Economic growth is the basis of these models, exemplified in the works of Nurkse (1953), Rostow (1960) and Kuznets (1966) among others. Because these models are neo-classically oriented, resource allocation through the market and capital accumulation are central in their considerations. By way of

the trickle down effect, the benefits of growth are supposed to reach the poor. The high premium placed on price-led adjustment mechanisms inevitably underrates the strength of social and institutional factors in development (for details, see Castro 1983; Wallerstein 1987; Cheru 1993 and Isbister 2001).

2. The World Bank is an acronym, which mainly embraces the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association. Its main goals are promoting economic development and reducing poverty. Although it is a development organisation, it is equally a profit-making institution. Thus, its objective is not to maximise profit but to earn adequate income in order to sustain its development activities, which it finances through borrowings on the international capital markets.

3. The explanations offered in this paper about development do not in any way dislodge the controversy, which is deeply rooted in political economy. Western economic thought stresses that development has eluded the developing world because of low savings and the attendant shortage of accumulated capital for investments. The Marxian opposition to this view argues that underdevelopment is the result of colonialism, imperialism and unequal exchange. We have not attempted to wedge into this controversy. What is important for our analysis is that African economies are underdeveloped, which encourages poverty.

4. The Human Development Index ranges between zero and one and measures the arithmetic average of a country's achievement in longevity, educational attainment and per capita GDP (for detailed discussion, see Cashin, Mauro and Sahay 2001).

5. The Washington Consensus consists of the reform policies endorsed by the principal economic institutions located in Washington. It summaries the prescriptions contained in the reform packages, which centre on market fundamentalism. In essence, the Consensus rules that all income redistribution directed at reducing poverty is plunder as it lowers growth, which is required for development (for details, see Williamson 2000).

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How to Research the Changing Outlines of African Livelihoods

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Abstract

This paper examines how to research the changing outlines of African livelihoods in the present era of globalisation. After an analysis of the historical and theoretical context in which the modern livelihood approach developed, two trends in modern livelihood studies are discussed, i.e. its increased holistic features and the surmounting of its micro-orientation. Subsequently, the most pressing issues in livelihood research are reviewed: decomposition of households, and the increased diversification and increased multi-locality of livelihoods under globalisation. The next section focuses on two major theoretical and methodological challenges facing the livelihood approach at present. First, with respect to the problem of access, we will demonstrate that the livelihood approach can become more powerful analytically by improving its theoretical depth through incorporating valuable elements of sovereignty and power. Second, there is the access to livelihood opportunities in relation to decision-making. In this context, we review various relevant concepts, such as livelihood strategies and styles, in order to operationalise the improved theoretical depth. We then propose livelihood trajectories as an appropriate methodology for examining pathways of African livelihoods. In doing so, the paper also suggests an agenda for future research on African livelihoods.

Résumé

Cet article examine les aspects changeants des systèmes de survie africains dans le contexte actuel de la mondialisation. Après une analyse du contexte historique et théorique au sein duquel l'approche moderne aux systèmes de

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survie a été développée, nous débattons de deux tendances existant au niveau des études sur les moyens de survie, notamment l'aspect holistique grandissant caractérisant ces études et le dépassement de sa micro-orientation. Des questions d'actualité dans le domaine de la recherche en systèmes de survie sont ensuite évoquées : la décomposition des foyers, et la diversification accrûe ainsi que le caractère de plus en plus multi-local des moyens de survie dans le contexte de la mondialisation. La partie suivante porte sur deux principaux défis théoriques et méthodologiques auxquels est actuellement confrontée l'approche aux systèmes de survie. Tout d'abord, en ce qui concerne le problème de l'accès, nous démontrons que l'approche aux systèmes de survie peut avoir un contenu analytique plus percutant, en améliorant sa profondeur théorique à travers l'intégration des éléments de souveraineté et de pouvoir. Deuxièmement, il existe la question de l'accès aux opportunités donnant accès aux moyens de survie, en relation au processus de prise de décision. Dans ce contexte, nous passons en revue divers concepts, tels que les stratégies et styles de survie, afin de rendre opérationnelle cette amélioration de la teneur théorique. Ensuite, nous proposons des trajectoires de survie, comme méthodologie adaptée permettant d'examiner les voies de survie en Afrique. Cet article propose par la même, un agenda pour la recherche future en matière de systèmes de survie africains.

Introduction

In their attempt to understand inequalities in Africa, development scientists and practitioners are increasingly concerned with analysing prosperity and poverty from a livelihood point of view. Since the 1990s, the livelihood approach has gained momentum as a way of looking at development by putting people at the centre, stressing their active role in exploring opportunities and coping with change. Generally, poor people are the focal point of these studies. But as opposed to earlier approaches to poverty that tended to portray people as victims of structural constraints and focussed on the material aspects of life from the perspective of specific, locally bound interactions, the modern approach recognises that livelihood is multi-dimensional, covering not only economic, but also political, cultural, social and ecological aspects. Moreover, today's livelihoods are based on a range of assets, income opportunities, and product and labour markets which are located in different places and interact in turn with other places, meaning that livelihoods both depend on global forces and shape them. This paper examines how to research the changing outlines of African livelihoods in the present era of globalisation.[1] The paper is divided into four main sections.

Section one analyses the historical and theoretical context in which the modern livelihood approach developed. Modern livelihood studies found their intellectual inspiration in the general understanding of the lives of poor people advocated by Gordon Conway and Robert Chambers in an IDS Discus-

sion Paper in 1992. In their interpretation, livelihood refers to the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities; tangible assets, such as stores and resources; and intangible assets, such as claims and access (Chambers & Conway 1992: 9-12). Two trends in modern livelihood studies are identified. The first concerns its increased holistic features and the second the way in which its micro-orientation can be overcome.

In section two, the most pressing issues in livelihood research are reviewed. Livelihood research brought about a large number of case studies on the particularities and diversity of livelihoods. The section especially looks for trends in African livelihoods. The first part deals with the decomposition of households. It identifies a trend towards increasingly individualised livelihoods. The importance of this trend becomes clear in the next subsection about increased diversification of livelihoods under globalisation. We will show that the rise in livelihood opportunities runs parallel to the decomposition of households. In the final part of section two we will show that these trends also display important new aspects deriving from ideas about multilocal livelihoods and livelihood networks.

Section two provides the context for a discussion in sections four and four on the two major theoretical and methodological challenges facing the livelihood approach at present. In section three there is the problem of access that we believe is the key issue in the conceptualisation of livelihood and therefore, the key to unravelling poverty. We will demonstrate that the approach can become more powerful analytically by improving its theoretical depth through incorporating valuable elements from development sociology and gender studies, notably those concerning the issue of sovereignty and power. In section four, we consider access to livelihood opportunities in relation to decision-making. In this context, we review various relevant concepts, such as livelihood strategies and styles, in order to operationalise the improved theoretical depth. We then propose livelihood trajectories as an appropriate methodology for examining these issues.

I. The livelihood approach: Principal roots and substance

After the structural perspective of *dependencia* and the neo-Marxism of the 1970s and 1980s, a more productive actor-oriented perspective was adopted in development studies. Like its predecessor, it emphasised inequalities in the distribution of assets and power, but it also recognised that people make their own history and it even opposed the view that economic concerns are necessarily of primary importance. This new actor-oriented perspective was mostly interested in the world of lived experience, the micro-world of family, network and community (Johnston 1993: 229) and drew attention to

related issues like poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation. A micro-orientation became predominant, accompanied by a clear focus on local actors, often households.

Household studies

Increased attention was paid to household strategies as a means of capturing the behaviour of low-income people. The concentration on households was considered useful for its potential to bridge the gap between microeconomics, with its focus on the atomistic behaviour of individuals, and the historical-structuralist approach, which focussed on the political economy of development. The household also came into vogue in a more practical sense: it was considered a convenient unit for the collection of empirical data.

In contrast to the earlier tendency to conceive poor people as passive victims, these household studies and, more specifically, the concept of household strategies, highlighted the active or even proactive role played by the poor in 'providing for their own sustenance despite their lack of access to services and to an adequate income' (Schmink 1984: 88). Whereas Oscar Lewis introduced the culture of poverty in 1968 as 'a set of deprivations that were perpetuated across generations, continually undermining the capability of the poor to change their own situation' (Schmink 1984: 87), it was increasingly acknowledged that poor people were able to adapt or respond to changing circumstances. More specifically, household studies permitted the examination of differential responses to general structural conditions, as well as the analysis of changes specific to subgroups of the population. 'In response to the opportunities and constraints defined by broad historical and structural processes, the domestic unit is conceived of as mediating a varied set of behaviours (for example, labour force participation, consumption patterns, and migration) that are themselves conditioned by the particular makeup of this most basic economic entity' (Schmink 1984: 87).

Various types of household studies appeared in the 1980s. A large number of studies were conducted under the heading of new household economics, focussing on labour and land allocation and income strategies and using micro-economic household modelling as an explanatory tool. Subsequent household studies have used a variety of concepts, of which the most common were survival strategies, although Long (1984) was already calling them livelihood strategies. Survival studies were more sociologically than economically inspired and were mainly interested in the micro-social behaviour of poor people in coping with and surviving different types of crises, such as falls in prices, droughts and famines. Even though most of these studies started from the idea that households have a veneer of free choice, they argued that household decisions are often made within 'the confines of lim-

iting structural constraints, although families nevertheless operate with a degree of relative autonomy' (Humphries 1982, quoted in Schmink 1984: 95). In a special 1987 issue of the journal, *Development and Change*, Guyer & Peters (1987) arrived at the same conclusion. In their article they also made specific reference to power relations, which makes their judgement equally valid for the present livelihood approach, as we shall show below. They wrote:

> The major shortcoming of structural-functional and economic approaches to the household is the neglect of the role of ideology. The socially specific units that approximate 'households' are best typified not merely as clusters of task-oriented activities that are organized in variable ways, not merely as places to live/eat/work/reproduce, but as sources of identity and social markers. They are located in structures of cultural meaning and differential power (Guyer & Peters 1987: 209).

Livelihood studies

While many household studies ended in rather pessimist conclusions, showing how poor households were increasingly excluded from the benefits of economic growth, and thus marginalised, in the early 1990s a new generation of more optimistic household studies was conducted, which approached households from a livelihood perspective and showed how people are able to survive.

In its optimism the livelihood approach is an expression of the *Zeitgeist,* but it is also a direct response to the disappointing results of former approaches in devising effective policies to alleviate poverty, such as those based on income, consumption criteria or basic needs. According to Appendini (2001: 24) the central objective of the livelihood approach was 'to search for more effective methods to support people and communities in ways that are more meaningful to their daily lives and needs, as opposed to ready-made, interventionist instruments'. Robert Chambers (Institut Institut for Development Studies Sussex) and Gordon Conway (International for Environment and Development), themselves also drawing upon insights from previous research on food security and agro-ecological sustainability, are widely acknowledged for having put livelihoods, then usually called sustainable livelihoods, at centre stage (Chambers & Conway 1992). In a chronology of the development of the sustainable livelihoods approach, Solesbury (2003a) explains in a recent paper that the 1987 Brundtland Report, the Greening of Aid Conference at the International Institute for Environment and Development in the same year and the first Human Development Report in 1990 must be regarded as the direct predecessors of their paper. Interestingly, Arce (2003:

202) argues that Chambers brilliantly embraced the momentum of the environmental sustainability discussion, then peaking because of the UN Conference on Environment and Development in that year. He argues that it was not sustainability, but security and income that were Chambers's central issues for the development debate and he consequently turned the discussion on its head, re-interpreting sustainability as a matter of trade-offs for poor people between vulnerability and poverty. Whatever the original intention, environmental issues did take a more prominent role in the livelihood discussion in the 1990s than they do at present.

In the meantime, UNDP (see Hoon et al., 1997), Oxfam and CARE adopted the concept of sustainable livelihoods (Solesbury 2003a: 3). The Society for International Development (SID) in Rome also started a Sustainable Livelihoods Project. The project originated from SID's grassroots initiative programme and focussed on the question of how to increase the effectiveness of grassroots and other kinds of civil society organisations. What is most striking is the emphasis in the project on organisations rather than, households or individuals and on political arenas rather than 'making a living' (Amalric 1998). In view of our discussion below on access modalities and power relations, it cannot be denied that SID's Sustainable Livelihoods Project showed a degree of farsightedness.

Moreover, significant work on sustainable livelihoods continued at IDS. Important insights were gained from the study of environmental entitlements, focussing on access and institutions (Leach et al., 1999), which fed directly into the sustainable rural livelihoods framework (Scoones 1998). Other substantial contributions originated from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), starting with natural resources (Carney 1998; Farrington et al., 1999) and from the Overseas Development Group of the University of East Anglia, illuminating the diversification of livelihood activities (Ellis 1998).

A major impetus to the further development of the approach was brought about by the election of the New Labour government in 1997. According to Solesbury (2003b: 2), the pro-active, self-help image of the sustainable livelihoods approach in improving the lives of the poor fitted very well with the image the new administration wanted to project. Sustainable livelihoods became an important theme in the UK's development policy, while the Department of International Development (DFID) initiated a multitude of new research projects and policy debates on the subject. Generally, livelihood was defined in only a slightly modified version of the one originally developed by Chambers & Conway (1992). Sustainability was understood both as long-term flexibility and as ecological soundness.

A livelihood system comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a' means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Carney 1998: 2).

The sustainable livelihood frameworks used by various authors are

not intended to depict reality in any specific setting... (but) rather as an analytical structure for coming to grips with the complexity of livelihoods, understanding influences on poverty and identifying where interventions can best be made. The assumption is that people pursue a range of livelihood outcomes (health, income, reduced vulnerability, etc.) by drawing on a range of assets to pursue a variety of activities. The activities they adopt and the way they reinvest in asset-building are driven in part by their own preferences and priorities. However, they are also influenced by the types of vulnerability, including shocks (such as drought), overall trends (in, for instance, resource stocks) and seasonal variations. Options are also determined by the structures (such as the roles of government or of the private sector) and processes (such as institutional, policy and cultural factors), which people face. In aggregate, their conditions determine their access to assets and livelihood opportunities and the way in which these can be converted into outcomes. In this way, poverty, and the opportunities to escape from it, depends on all of the above' (Farrington et al. 1999:1).

The various frameworks are considered to be analytical devices for supporting poverty eradication.

The combination of a supportive political environment, ample resources and available intellectual capacity based on cross-linkages between researchers and research groups resulted in an overriding British DFID input into the livelihood discussion. There is a risk that this could result in a neglect of useful contributions from others who also either use livelihoods as a concept or study related fields. In the context of disaster analysis, Blaikie et al. (1994) elaborated an access-to-resources model, which proved extremely useful in explaining poor people's livelihoods and their coping mechanisms in periods of crisis. They partly built on Sen's (1981) 'entitlements', which were more appropriate for understanding poverty and famine, instead of just property. As a matter of fact, both Sen's entitlements and his later work on capabilities (Sen 1985) comprise major sources of inspiration to livelihood researchers. A range of studies working from a vulnerability and social security perspective has also deepened the understanding of the livelihoods of the poor. They focussed on the locally organised forms of social security, which were not embedded in state regulations or formalised in written rules and were always

context-specific and restricted to small areas (Ahmad et al. 1991; Von Benda-Beckmann et al. 1988; quoted in Kaag et al. 2004).

II. African livelihood dynamics in the era of globalisation

Up to now, livelihood research has resulted in the publication of a large number of case studies, bringing to the fore the particularities and diversity of African livelihood situations and practices. The authors stress the diversity of poverty situations and the multi-dimensionality of livelihoods, but make less effort to aggregate and generalise their findings. The following is an attempt to analyse the tendencies during the last ten years, especially considering 'livelihoods in globalisation' and the implications for and a view on local development.

With respect to globalisation we refrain from easy images such as financial flash capital driving up or pushing down share prices, as worldwide competition between firms, as uniformity of consumer goods, as information spreading as quick as lightning through television, mobile phones and e-mail. Instead, we define globalisation with De Ruijter (1997: 381-382) as technological innovations in transport, automation and telecommunications resulting in massive exchanges of people, goods, services and ideas. The result of this innovation is that globalisation is no longer a process of internationalisation, but rather the characteristic of a system spanning the globe, meaning that each particular entity has to be understood within the framework of the world as a whole. De Haan (2000: 354-357) suggests that next to the increased homogenisation of economy, society and culture, one is also inclined to recognise counter-forces leading to increased diversity, cultural fragmentation and increased importance of regionalism. The re-invention of local traditions and identities is seen as an answer to the loss of identity through cultural homogenisation. This so-called 'localisation' is not limited to the social and the cultural domain, but is identified in the economic and the political domains too. The latter concerns the restructuring of the welfare state with its privatisation and deregulation, or even clear-cut disintegration. So, we understand globalisation as the interaction between global forces and unbounded worldwide flows on the one hand and local contexts on the other hand, i.e. what Robertson (1995) called 'glocalisation'.

Social change: Decomposition of households

By putting people at centre stage, livelihood research has helped to open the black box of the household. While considering it as 'a single decision-making unit maximising its welfare subject to a range of income-earning opportunities and a set of resource constraints' (Ellis 1998: 12), households were usually defined as co-resident groups of persons, who share most aspects

of consumption, drawing on and allocating a common pool of resources, including labour, to ensure their material reproduction. The boundaries and functions of households were usually defined primarily in economic or material terms, and only secondarily in terms of cohesion, for example a set of social relations and mutual obligations defined by kinship or forms of reciprocity.

Yet contemporary livelihood studies like to stress that instead of being victims, people rather play active roles in achieving their livelihood. This focus on the active involvement of people in responding to and enforcing change also engendered an increasing awareness of diverging positions within the household. Rather than being 'harmonious' entities pursuing an optimal balance, individual household members are currently pursuing individual ways to improve their situation. Although it started as awareness for intra-household relations, one now tends to arrive at the conclusion that under globalisation the characteristics and functions of households have undergone rapid change. The old assumption of a nuclear or extended family – comprising a male breadwinner, his sometimes non-working wife, dependent children, and other family members – needs to be revised, just as is the case with traditional patterns of labour division. Individuals, rather than pursuing an optimal balance in a harmonious domestic unit, now pursue individual ways to improve their situation, for example by diversifying their livelihood or by moving to a new location in order to exploit new opportunities. In many cases, traditional solidarity-based principles of pooling incomes, consumption and labour force within households have diminished. Thus, although they remain members of the domestic units we call households, individuals are increasingly considered to act independently. Furthermore, next to the already well-known disintegration of extended families comes the disintegration of nuclear families. The single-person household is not limited to industrialised societies. Also, in many parts of the world, the number of female-headed households has increased. Besides, the elderly have increasingly become a separate and often isolated group, no longer cared for in extended families.

Along with the growing complexity of the division of labour, the interests of a household's individual members will not always be consistent with the family goal and vice versa. Variations in personal capacities and motivation affect the interrelationships among the various activities as well as the degree of internal cohesion. Conflict and competition may arise between activities and among members of the household. What benefits the individual need not benefit the family and vice versa.

The following example from northern Togo illustrates our argument (de Haan 1993). It also makes clear that the trends established do not come out of the blue. We consider globalisation only as a recent phenomenon in the sense that it should be regarded as the contemporary stage, perhaps even the tailpiece, of a historical process of internationalisation and growing interdependence that started with modern colonialism. Therefore, the changes in livelihood we observe often have colonial roots. Rather, it is the scale and intensity of the identified change that make it a characteristic of globalisation.

The case of northern Togo

At the eve of colonialism northern Togo was an agricultural society organised along lines of kinship in clans and lineage. Production was organised through the lineage and the power of its eldest based on spiritual relations with the ancestors and his control of the marital system. The eldest decided when it was time to offer one of the daughters of the lineage to another lineage in order to receive a bride for one of the young men in exchange. Marriage, and subsequently the birth of offspring, was the only way for a man to increase his social status. These rules gave the eldest in the society authority over the labour of the young men of their lineage and consequently over the most important livelihood activity, i.e. agriculture. Of course, intra-lineage tensions occurred, but the point is that in the end the young had to adapt to the decisions of the old, as women had to comply with decisions taken by men. There simply was no alternative to turn to in this closed society.

However, colonialism did offer that alternative by creating product and labour markets. The French colonial administration levied personal taxes to be paid by every able-bodied, adult man. Producing newly introduced ground-nuts and selling them to trading firms was the first way to pay them. As of the 1930s, and still continuing until after independence in 1960, gradually every men cleared a personal field to grow groundnuts, and later on, cotton. Sale of the produce, as well as the allocation of labour and other inputs on these personal fields fell beyond the authority of the lineage eldest. Growing monetary incomes from these commercial fields increased the independence of young men from the eldest. From the 1970s the same trend with respect to women became apparent. They started to grow vegetables, rice and cassava for the market on small personal fields, next to their traditional home gardens. As a consequence, since the 1960s the lineage as a residential and production unit comprising some fifty people, from the lineage head to his younger brothers, wives and children, gave way to the household consisting of about 12–15 persons, i.e. a man, his wife(s) and their children. But already in the 1980s also in these households agricultural decision-making

became a complicated process. Millet and sorghum, the staple foods, were grown on communal household fields under the supervision of the head of the household. However, merely in his organisation of inputs (fertiliser mainly) and labour for these grain fields, he had to compete with his own personal fields and those of his wives and older sons. And then we do not even touch upon the issue of whose income has to cover which expenditure.

At present, northern Togo itself only has a modest (urban and rural off-farm) labour market. However, the emerging colonial labour market that offered a second alternative to traditional livelihoods was situated in the cacoa producing export areas in southern Ghana. In the early days, these cacoa areas formed a temporary or even permanent way to build up an independent livelihood outside traditional society for thousands of young men from northern Togo. This position is now taken over by the main West African cities on the coast.

By now, due to the integration in larger wholes, households in northern Togo are no longer the solidarity-based residential and production units pooling incomes, consumption and labour. Even in nuclear households, members are increasingly acting independently. The single-person household is hardly found in this rural region; it belongs more to the world of migrated men in the big coastal cities. However, as a reverse of this, the number of female-headed households indeed increased. Moreover, a few elderly people now live on their own in poverty, sometimes with a little grandchild as housekeeper and often depending on charity.

This case exemplifies our argument that a trend towards increasingly individualised livelihoods, or at least individual decision-making concerning livelihood opportunities, can be detected. Its consequences for local development will became clear in the following sub-sections. Moreover, the case shows that local contexts, in this case both the cultural norms of authority and gender and the ecological potential for a particular kind of dry-season, cash crops, gave rise to a specific outcome in which both homogenisation and localisation can be recognised.

Economic fragmentation: Multi-tasking and income diversification
Livelihood studies have ascertained that during the last decade, increasing numbers of people have opted for a development path characterised by multi-tasking and income diversification. There exists a tendency towards livelihood diversification, 'a process by which ... households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standard of living' (Ellis 2000: 15). Today, few of the African poor derive all their income from just one source, for example, wage labour, or hold all their wealth in the form of just one single asset.

In livelihood studies, diversification is described as a structural phenomenon, which exists both in the urban and the rural context. In many cases, the bulk of income of the rural poor no longer originates from agriculture, and it is no longer realistic to classify the population as small farmers or the landless poor. At the same time, among the urban poor, part of the population is now involved in urban agriculture, which provides an additional food supply. Multiple motives prompt people to diversify their assets, incomes and activities. Multi-tasking is mentioned as a way to compensate for insufficient income or temporary crisis situations. It is a strategy to escape poverty, to cope with insecurity or to reduce risk. Ellis (2000) stresses that diversification is pervasive and enduring in the sense that the phenomenon occurs everywhere and does not seem to be transient. Diversification does not mean having occasional earnings besides a main activity: it means multiple income sources. Although many families derive their income from an ever-expanding range of different sources, this does not usually result in higher incomes. 'It is the maintenance and continuous adaptation of a highly diverse portfolio of activities that is a distinguishing feature' of the poor (Ellis 2000: 4). Poverty in particular induces households to intensify strategies for generating income, using available labour and resources as fully as possible. Of all people, the poor tend to be the most engaged in complex, multi-activity income strategies. They adjust, cope, create and re-create their livelihoods under the impact of macro-economic circumstances, climatic variability and institutional change.

> While both diversity and diversification may be taken overall to mean multiple and multiplying income sources, they are more invoked in the rural development context to imply diversification away from farming as the predominant or primary means of rural survival. Thus the expression 'highly diversified rural livelihoods' typically conveys the idea of livelihoods in which own account farming has become a relatively small proportion of the overall survival portfolios put together by farm families (Ellis: 2000: 14-15).

Even though livelihood research has contributed to a better understanding of how poor people maintain their lives by diversification, little is known about the mutual cohesion and interaction between their activities. The internal consistency of a portfolio of activities varies from case to case, and depends on seasonality, the division of labour and the availability of assets. Sometimes there is a facilitating relationship; that is, one activity is a necessary condition for the other. One example in Africa is the association between agriculture and animal husbandry through the exchange of feed, manure and animal traction. Other activities are much more complementary: they are related to each other by the principle of communicating vessels, for example

combining agriculture with non-agrarian activities in order to compensate for declining returns from farming. In other cases, activities are mutually exclusive, or they compete: for example, migration might be incompatible with spending sufficient time in farming.

In order to arrive at a conclusion, first and foremost it is important to note that globalisation has apparently boosted the range of livelihood opportunities even in remote corners of the globe, and that the poor especially try out as many of those opportunities as possible. This does not necessarily mean that prosperity increases, but it does mean the local development looks much more varied than ever before.

Secondly, it shows the significance of our findings in the previous subsection on the decomposition of households, because parallel to the diversification trend runs the individualisation trend. Partly households diversify because individual members are able to decide in relative autonomy about the allocation of resources they have access to. No longer can the household head decide what will be done, nor is there always some kind of a 'household boardroom meeting' about which income opportunities to explore or resources to allot. The same holds true for the pooling of revenues. On the other hand, we do not argue that the household will become an insignificant feature in globalisation. Decision-making on the household level still is a reality and, even more important, individual decision-making is better understood against the background of the characteristics of the household people belong to.

Spatial dispersion: Multi-local livelihoods

In addition to multi-tasking, there is another trend in which poor people are increasingly developing multi-local livelihoods (see also De Haan 2000: 354). In development geography much attention has been paid to regions as bounded space and to people being rooted to space. Concepts such as carrying capacity were applied to express a region's ability to support a certain population. But in current times, as a result of rapid urbanisation and the improvement of communications and transport technology, people's mobility has greatly increased. Greater numbers now live on the edge of urban and rural life, commuting from the countryside to the urban centres on a daily basis. Also, poor people supplement their income by travelling large distances to earn additional money as a temporary migrant. Finally, there is a considerable group of transnational migrants. Especially in such countries as Morocco, Ghana, Lesotho and Senegal, large groups are temporarily or permanently living abroad, where they work as agricultural labourers or as legal and illegal housekeepers.

Thus, persisting poverty under globalisation is reflected in the large numbers of rural and urban households now exploiting opportunities in different

places and therefore living on both agricultural and urban incomes. Old dichotomies such as urban-rural should therefore be reconsidered. Large numbers of people are no longer rooted in one place: although they maintain relations with their home community, they are also attached to other places. As a consequence, individuals are no longer organised as co-resident groups (that is, concentrated in space) but resemble individual nodes, connected to each other by social networks, along which flow remittances, information and food. Thus, people's lives become highly interconnected via global networks.

The potential power of these global networks, especially the ones created by transnational migration, is clearly demonstrated by De Haas (2001: 315-318) in his study of migration impacts on local development in the oases regions of Morocco.

In the Todgha valley migration has significantly contributed to improving many people's standard of living. Many rural families have now moved from absolute poverty to being able to afford better nourishment and living conditions ... remittances can be considered as a safety net for underdeveloped rural areas, and can substantially contribute to alleviating poverty. The analysis has also demonstrated that current and returned international migrant households tend to invest more than do non-migrant and internal migrant households ... (I)nternational migrant households do not generally spend excessive amounts of disposable income on conspicuous consumption ... (M)igration should be perceived as a livelihood strategy that aims to spread income risk through diversifying the household's income sources. Migration should be seen in the light of the general processes of income diversification and partial de-agrarisation and de-ruralisation of oasis livelihoods ... (M)igration can, in addition, be seen as a household strategy for overcoming local constraints on investments in the local economy ... In addition, through indirect multiplier effects, investments and consumption by migrants seem to have indirect positive effects on the economy of the valley. Investments by migrants create local income earnings possibilities for many non-migrants. Migration only seems a successful strategy for those families with relatives working abroad. Internal migrants often lead a difficult life, struggling to survive and leaving their families financially insecure. Their incomes ... are often unstable. Unlike the international migrant group, this group is seldom able to escape from poverty and (cannot) durably improve livelihoods by investing money in the local economy.

The analysis also pointed to the high spatial variability of migration impact. At the valley level, for example, local environmental conditions such as the availability of water and land clearly influence the intra-valley spatial allocation of agricultural investments ... Notwithstanding its positive impact, there is also reason to believe that the development potential of migration is not being fully realised.... (E)xcessive bureaucracy and widespread corruption tend to

> complicate and slow down administrative procedures like, for example, obtaining business permits or title deeds on land and property ... (M)ost inhabitants of the Todgha have a profound distrust of the central state and its local representatives.

Instead of defining their home in terms of boundedness, homogeneity and exclusion, people have to create new identities and find new social security mechanisms. Those who are living abroad are often inclined to cluster together in the same neighbourhood. Establishing and maintaining good relationships with others is of crucial importance for enhancing and maintaining a living (Kaag et al. 2004). Local development can no longer be explained without taking into account the remittances sent by family members who have decided to migrate, and the flows of information connecting local space with the outside. On the other hand, a proper understanding of the livelihoods of migrants in their area of residence can only be achieved by taking into account their linkages with the home area. Actors do not behave or make decisions isolated from their social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories they happen to occupy. Instead, their attempts and purposive action are instead embedded in concrete circumstances.

III. The question of access to resources and opportunities

In this section we focus on access as the key issue in the conceptualisation of the livelihoods of the poor. In order to arrive at a proper understanding of access, we will first review the holistic understanding of livelihood. Secondly, we will re-examine the most significant conceptual attempts to capture access. Thirdly, we will argue that the livelihood approach could become more forceful analytically if it improved its theoretical depth. Especially on power issues, it could learn from insights from development sociology and gender studies.

The holistic understanding of livelihood

According to Long (1997, quoted in Appendini 2001: 24-25), livelihood 'best expresses the idea of individuals or groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between different value positions...' In the latter, in particular, we find an indication that the understanding of livelihood has to go further than the economic or material objectives of life. Wallman (1984, quoted in Appendini 2001: 25) already noted that

livelihood is never just a matter of finding or making shelter, transacting money, getting food to put on the family table or to exchange on the market place. It is equally a matter of ownership and circulation of information, the management of skills and relationships and the affirmation of personal significance ... and group identity. The tasks of meeting obligations, of security, identity and status, and organizing time are as crucial to livelihood as bread and shelter.

This is not to say that livelihood does not concern material well-being, but rather that it includes material as well as non-material well-being. Livelihood should be seen as a dynamic and holistic concept, which is best illustrated by Bebbington (1999: 2002):

A person's assets, such as land, are not merely means with which he or she makes a living: they also give meaning to that person's world. Assets are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the capability to be and to act. Assets should not be understood only as things that allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation: they are also the basis of agents' power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources.

The improved understanding of the holistic meaning of livelihood and, subsequently, the multi-dimensionality of poverty, taking into account of how the poor perceive it themselves, is an important achievement of the livelihood approach. It reveals itself not only in its view on livelihood outcomes, but also in its attention to a variety of capitals upon which the poor draw to shape their livelihoods. Besides conventional assets like land, livestock or equipment, various elements of human capital are included, as well as social capital. The emphasis is on the flexible combinations of, and trade-offs between, capitals, i.e. if a countrywoman does not have land to cultivate, she will try to acquire a plot through her network of social relations, which is social capital; labour, which is human capital, becomes physical capital, once the irrigation canal is constructed, and so on. (See also Moser [1998] for the urban context).

Two layers of critique can be formulated in this respect. The first layer is that often in this inventive focus on capital trade-offs, many authors do not know how to go beyond material motives and aims. Arce (2003: 205-206) commented that the reduction of 'livelihood to the mobilization and deployment of social and organizational resources for the pursuit of economic and environmental goals' is questionable. Below this, as a second layer of critique, we raise the fundamental question of the flexibility of these interchanges of capitals. They are bound by property relations and configurations of power; very likely the same arrangements that induce poverty in the first place. Although transforming structures, mediating processes, institu-

tions and organisations appear in all livelihood frameworks, part of livelihood studies tends to downplay these structural features and focus on capitals and activities.

Social exclusion and political arenas

This way of looking at the issue portrays poverty as the result of a failed attempt caused by bottlenecks in the access to capitals. In a historical perspective, a pattern of social differentiation emerges between people who have succeeded in choosing successful trajectories of upward mobility and those who have not. The latter were left behind as others improved their position, and were excluded as a result (Gore 1994: 7). However, there is more going on. Failed access and the resultant poverty or social exclusion can also be the result of a mechanism by which some people exclude others from access to resources with the objective of maximising their own returns. In that way, social exclusion is a process in which groups try to monopolise specific opportunities to their own advantage. They use property relations or certain social or physical characteristics such as race, gender, language, ethnicity, origin or religion to legitimise this fencing in of opportunities. Social exclusion and poverty are then the consequences of social closure, a form of collective social action which gives rise to social categories of eligibles and ineligibles. To return to the example above, the countrywoman will never have a plot if others are able to deny her land, or she will never grow profitable vegetables on it when others deny her irrigation water. Livelihood activities are not neutral, but engender processes of inclusion and exclusion. We conclude that livelihood is organised in arenas of conflicting or co-operating actors. According to Olivier de Sardan and Bierschenk (1994: 38), these co-operating actors are not permanent social groups who present themselves irrespective of the problem posed. De Haan (2000: 352) summarises the situation as follows.

> They are rather groups of differing composition, which present themselves depending on the problem. Sometimes it is an occupational group, sometimes it is a status group like women or youths, sometimes it is a kinship group, sometimes a network of mutual assistance or clients of a patron, and sometimes a group of individuals with a common historical trajectory of livelihood strategies.

Conflicting interests exist between these groups, which are fought out in local and extra-local political arenas. Depending on their role and activity, individuals belong to different interest groups and, therefore, the dividing lines between individuals and between groups are never rigid, but variable and fuzzy. In fact, general categories such as the 'poor' do not exist; in the arena of livelihood, inclusion and exclusion may differ in each dimension.

Institutions

Access is not only an issue affecting the use or acquisition of capitals. It is also an issue associated with the beneficial exploitation of livelihood opportunities. For example, in order to qualify for the profitable urban vegetable market, the countrywomen above does not only need access to a plot and irrigation water, but also transparent market prices or a trustworthy trader to sell to.

Thus, access depends on the performance of social relations and these are sometimes far from harmonious. Fortunately, a number of livelihood authors have elaborated on this point. We will first discuss the work on 'environmental entitlements' at IDS that fed directly into the Institute's livelihoods work (Scoones 1998), after which we will turn to Ellis's (2000) view on institutions.

The IDS environmental entitlements approach (Leach et al. 1999) concentrates on people's access to natural resources by drawing upon Sen's entitlement approach and making use of his set of concepts: endowments, entitlements and capabilities. 'Endowments refer to the rights and resources that social actors have'. 'Environmental entitlements refer to the alternative sets of utilities derived from environmental goods and services over which social actors have legitimate effective command and which are instrumental in achieving well-being'. 'Capabilities ... are what people can do or be with their entitlements' (Leach et al. 1999: 233). Thus, entitlement means what people *can* have, rather than what they *should* have; the latter is a right. At first glance, endowments come close to capitals and entitlement to accessing them. However, on further consideration, the comparison is more complicated, as is demonstrated by the concept of 'mapping'. Mapping refers to how people gain endowments and entitlements; it is the process by which endowments and entitlements are shaped. Thus, 'mapping' rather than 'entitlement' equals access: both access and mapping relate to the process of inclusion. Thus endowment is the right in principle, and entitlement is what one actually gets. Moreover, the authors usefully extend the original understanding of endowments and entitlements by making it more dynamic. Besides stressing that livelihood also covers ways of gaining access beyond the market, such as through kinship, they make it clear that

> there is nothing inherent in a particular … good or service that makes it a priori either an endowment or an entitlement. Instead, the distinction between them depends on the empirical context and on time, within a cyclical process. What are entitlements at one time may, in turn, represent endowments at another time, from which a new set of entitlements may be derived (Leach et al. 1999: 233).

This is illustrated by the example of the gathering of remunerative leaves in Ghanaian forests. Before the leaves become endowments, people have to gain rights over them through 'endowment mapping'. This depends on their entitlements: village membership gives collection rights to leaves in commonly owned forests; household membership to leaves on one household's farmland – or through negotiations with other appropriate land-holding families; in forest reserves leaves can be gathered only with an official permit. Usually, women first set up a trade to finance these permits. Leaf gathering is again a mapping process, because of competition among gathering groups of women and between women within a group over leaves and sites. Moreover, the mapping also extends to competition with husbands over time spent and other household duties. Once the leaves have become endowments, the entitlements derived from the leaves include direct use, or cash income from their sale. But before the cash contributes to women's capabilities or well-being, a new cycle of endowment and entitlement mapping starts on how it is spent. The way the cash is spent is the result of the women's intra-household bargaining arrangements with their husbands and co-wives (Leach et al., 1999: 235-236).

> We find their endeavour extremely useful for two reasons. Firstly, it keeps an eye open for conflicting interests in organising livelihoods. Communities are not treated as static or undifferentiated; multiple identities and conflicting values and claims over the natural environment occur. Secondly, it shows how this political arena of livelihood should be analysed: through the working of institutions. Access is shaped by institutions; at the same time these institutions are repeatedly confirmed and reshaped by livelihoods.

Leach et al. (1999) expand their argument to all social, legal, formal and informal institutions at the micro, meso and macro levels which influence endowment and entitlement mapping and the final acquisition of capabilities. We agree with that, but find Ellis's (2000: 38, following North 1990) analysis ranging from general and abstract to specific and concrete into social relations, institutions and organisations more useful.

Instead of helplessly piling these up, as some others do, he clearly discerns and defines them. Social relations comprise gender, caste, class, age, ethnicity, and religion. Institutions are formal rules, conventions, and informal codes of behaviour, such as laws, property rights and markets. Organisations are groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives such as government agencies, NGOs, associations and private companies (Ellis 2000: 38 quoting North 1980: 3-6).

However timely and appropriate the manner in which both authors have given the livelihood approach the necessary conceptual foundation in contrast to the otherwise mechanical and a-political 'transforming structures

and processes', we believe that, in the final analysis, they have not yet managed to get to grips with power relations. They are hesitating to take the next step from institutions to power. We think this has much to do with the somewhat non-ideological stance of the livelihood approach. Now that it has outdistanced the constricted structural perspective of the 1970s and 1980s, emphasised the agency of actors and been embraced by New Labour-like administrations, which have in their turn stressed personal responsibilities even for the poor, in contrast to the prohibitive collective responsibility of the welfare state, the livelihood approach should now prepare to face power relations in order to complete its conceptualisation of access.

Power relations

Gender studies recognised years ago that a neglect of power relations in society would not bring the understanding of (and solution to) the deprivation of women's position in the development process any closer (Kabeer 1994). 'Gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power' (Scott 1991: 26).Gender studies therefore started analysing power as the critical mass upon which livelihoods depend and empowerment as the key to development or well-being. The classical notion of power – sovereign power in Foucault's terms – is the kind of power one often thinks of: the power one can possess, the power over people such as the power of the feudal lord over the labour of his bondmen. However, gender studies corroborate the view that disciplinary power merits ample attention. This is the kind of power that is normal to us, that is unquestionably accepted as truth, that cannot be possessed, but exists only when exercised. This is the power that makes the bondman accept serfdom or women accept a subordinate gender role; it is the power component of the institution called gender or of other informal institutions referred to in the preceding sub-section. Although Foucault maintains that individuals are both subjected to power mechanisms and are, at the same time, its creators, he sees less room for actors to induce change than Villareal (1994). The latter follows Giddens's idea of the continued interaction of agency and structure and the possibility that actors by their will deviate from discourses shaped by previous generations and thus induce change in structure. She speaks of the room for manoeuvre that women have. In the interaction between individuals, power never completely belongs to one of them. The outcome of the interaction is always the result of negotiation, taking into account each other's goals irrespective of the inequality at the outset. Power relations are re-created in interaction and thus constitute a dynamic process of wielding and yielding. The wants of the power wielder are influenced and shaped by the other in the subordinate position. From this point of view, women are not sheer victims, but also

have an active role in their subordination. However, this means at the same time that they not only have the possibility of rebelling, but also of improving their position within the wielding and yielding process, i.e. to use their room to manoeuvre (Villareal 1994: 8-14). Here empowerment starts. In our view, the livelihood approach should include an analysis of the wielding and yielding process as part of the institutional analysis explained in the preceding sub-section.

Rowlands' (1997) conceptual framework of empowerment provides an effective analytical tool for examining this. 'Power within' refers to individual changes in the confidence and consciousness individual actors experience in shaping their livelihood. This kind of self-understanding does not necessarily result in individual (or collective) improvement of livelihood but, if it does, it is called 'power to', i.e. to transform lives, to improve capability as in skills, income and market or job access.

It is usually argued that this power to improve livelihood can be supported or even created by joint action. 'Power with' means networking with others for joint action to challenge and change the power relations. This ultimately leads to 'power over', overcoming subjugation. We argue that such an analysis, focussing on the various layers of power, would complete the conceptualisation of access as the key issue in the livelihood approach.

IV. Access and decision-making

In this section we examine the access to livelihood opportunities in relation to decision-making. The issue at stake finally boils down to developing an appropriate methodology to investigate decision-making regarding the allocation of livelihood capitals, the availability of opportunities, the acquisition of access qualifications and the utilisation of returns. In our search for such a methodology, we need to discuss consecutively the unit of decision-making, strategic or intentional versus unintentional behaviour, and the impact of more structural constraints or opportunities. This discussion leads to the examination of strategies, styles and pathways as concepts for disentangling strategic behaviour embedded in structural contexts. Lastly, trajectories are discussed as a suitable methodology.

Strategic versus unintentional decision-making

Contemporary livelihood studies focus on the active involvement of people in responding to and enforcing change. Their aim is to make clear that, rather than being victims, people play active roles in achieving their livelihood by continuously exploiting opportunities. Against this background, the idea of capturing behaviour in terms of strategies is understandable. For

example, a household was often regarded as 'a single decision-making unit maximizing its welfare subject to a range of income-earning opportunities and a set of resource constraints' (Ellis 1998: 12). Or households were usually defined as 'co-resident groups of persons, who share most aspects of consumption, drawing on and allocating a common pool of resources (including labour) to ensure their material reproduction' (Schmink 1984: 9). However, a number of trends have emerged which put in question the view of behaviour as strategic.

First, under the influence of gender studies, which draw attention to intra-household differences, the household is no longer considered as a homogeneous unit of corresponding interests. Second, contemporary individualisation only accelerates the breakdown of households: men, women and children are supposed to pursue different goals or, at least, are believed to have different interests. Third, and related to the foregoing, livelihood is becoming increasingly diversified. Today, very few people collect all their income from any one source, or hold all their wealth in the form of any single asset. Multiple motives prompt households and individuals to diversify assets, incomes and activities. Note that this does not necessarily result in higher incomes. Poverty, in particular, induces people to intensify ways of generating income, using available capitals as fully as possible. Of all people, the poor tend to be engaged in complex, multi-activity income generation for survival (Ellis 2000). Fourth, and again related to the foregoing, livelihoods are not necessarily any longer organised in one place. Despite the fact that mobility bears costs and risks, a phenomenon like labour migration increases the multi-locality of livelihood. Multi-locality diminishes coherent decision-making by households. It thus becomes clear from this enumeration that individual goals and household goals may diverge, so that the concept of household strategy is open to question. Moreover, more generally, although people constantly weigh different objectives, opportunities and limitations in response to external and internal circumstances that change over time, we know at the same time that household behaviour is not always intentional and conscious. In many cases, there is hardly a difference between a household's strategy and a household's history. 'The concept of ... strategy can lose its meaning to the extent that it becomes a mere functionalist label applied *ex post* to whatever behaviour is found' (Schmink 1984: 95). Livelihood research shows that human behaviour should not always be seen as conscious or intentional. Much of what people do cannot be classified as strategic. When discussing risk management, Devereux (2001) makes a distinction between *ex ante* and *ex post* strategies. In his view, *ex ante* strategies (for example, planting low-risk, but low-return, crops in dry areas) are forms of intentional behaviour. But he finds it debatable to call *ex post* behaviour

strategic. He thinks that cutting food consumption to one meal a day, as rural Africans, although already malnourished, routinely do during the annual *soudure*, cannot be called strategic (Devereux 2001: 512).

Livelihood styles and African pathways

Structural components with an impact on strategies and opportunities may have a geographical or demographic character. However, the emphasis in the following sub-section is on socio-cultural components. These are particularly important, because they are closely related to the key issues of access and power discussed above.

With the purpose of analysing the impact of socio-cultural components, both Arce and Hebinck (2002) and Nooteboom (2003) have elaborated the concept of styles. Arce and Hebinck (2002: 7) argue 'that a focus on organizational practices might take the livelihood framework beyond the unit of analysis of individual strategies...'. A style consists of a specific cultural repertoire composed of shared experiences, knowledge, insights, interests, prospects and interpretations of the context; an integrated set of practices and artefacts, such as crop varieties, instruments, cattle; a specific ordering of the interrelations with markets, technology and institutions; and responses to policies. Rather than being only an individual matter, a style is also treated as a group feature. Examining social security, Nooteboom (2003: 54) defines styles 'as distinguishable patterns of orientations and action concerning the variety of means to achieve security; these patterns are structured by an internal logic and conditioned by social, economic and personal characteristics of people involved'. Thus, the orientation of our argument about access, i.e. its dynamic nature and its regulation by social relations, institutions and organisations, is reflected in the concept of styles as defined above. To both authors, the styles, which are, in fact, emic classifications from their research findings, represent behaviour that reflects both 'long-term practices and institutions on the one hand and individual strategic choices on the other' (Nooteboom 2003: 55). In this way, the crude intentional-unintentional controversy acquires substantial analytical depth: individual strategic behaviour is acknowledged while, at the same time, it is bounded not only by structural constraints imposed by geography or demography, but pre-conditioned (a better term is probably embedded), as it were, by the available, historical repertoire. This repertoire grounds the behaviour which was called unintentional above. Nooteboom (2003: 207) distinguishes four livelihood and social security styles: enterprising people, money people, stingy people and village people. We consider the concept of styles to be an attempt to shift attention away from neo-liberal thinking to a more structural one or, better, from Giddens towards Bourdieu's *habitus*. Habitus is a system of

acquired dispositions, primarily defined by social class, which are acquired through socialisation. Through this internalised system of dispositions, or classificatory schemes, new situations are evaluated in the light of past experiences. However, the evolving set of structures is not static in the sense that it determines livelihood in a fixed way, but is generative and develops and changes over time because of the logic of practice (Bourdieu 1980). On the one hand, patterns in livelihood arise because persons of the same social class, gender or caste have similar dispositions and face similar life opportunities, expectations of others etc., resulting in a livelihood typical of their group. In so doing they develop a particular habitus, which distinguishes them from the others. On the other hand, adaptation of habitus may take place and life trajectories may occur in which actors change social position. This is why actors with different dispositions at the start may have developed, in the end, the same successful livelihoods. However, although the result may be the same, the pathway was different, and it is the pathway that shapes the habitus. According to De Bruijn and Van Dijk (2003: 1-2):

> A pathway is different from a strategy, because a pathway need not to be a device to attain a pre-set goal which is set after a process of conscious and rational weighing of the actor's preferences. Rather it arises out of an iterative process in which in a step-by-step procedure goals, preferences, resources and means are constantly reassessed in view of new unstable conditions. Individuals decide on the basis of a wide range of past experiences, rather than on a vision of the future, while these recollections of the past depend to a great extent on our intellectual concern in the present. Actors co-ordinate their actions with other actors. In this co-ordination process regularities arise which pre-structure subsequent decisions.

Following this discussion, we propose to use the concept of pathway for the observed regularities or patterns in livelihood among particular social groups and to use trajectories for individual actor's life paths.

These days, the term 'pathway' is used more often in livelihood studies, but unfortunately without much agreement on its precise meaning. Breusers (2001: 180), in a study of pathways to deal with climate variability in Burkina Faso, only rudimentarily describes pathways as decisions actors take in response to available options, environmental constraints or contingent events. This makes pathways synonymous with strategies.

A valuable step forward has been made by Scoones and Wormer (2002) in their study of pathways to crop-livestock integration in Africa. They criticise the unilinear evolutionary sequence view of crop-livestock integration with mixed farming as the most sustainable and efficient farming system at the highest stage. They re-explore diverse patterns of crop-livestock inter-

actions, called pathways of change, hitherto considered as uncompleted or as a cul-de-sac, avoiding normative assumptions about the desirability of one option over another. They examine various cases of African crop-live-stock interactions at the household, community and regional levels within the context of people's livelihoods. However, in doing so, they pay particular attention to social differentiation and power relations and institutional proc-esses, 'the social fabric that has intersected with technology, ecology and socioeconomic differentiation to create particular ... pathways' (Scoones & Wormer 2002: 27). Pathways show that people do make their own liveli-hood, but not necessarily under conditions of their own choosing. 'Liveli-hoods emerge out of past actions and decisions, are made within specific historical and agro-ecological conditions, and are constantly shaped by insti-tutions and social arrangements' (Scoones and Wormer 2002: 183).

We may conclude from this and the previous section that pathways are best defined as patterns of livelihood activities which arise from a co-ordina-tion process among actors. This co-ordination arises from individual strate-gic behaviour embedded both in a historical repertoire and in social differen-tiation, including power relations, and institutional processes, which both pre-structure subsequent decision-making. Scoones and Wormer (2002: 195) think that 'pathways of change are non-linear and appear non-deterministic inasmuch as various actors starting from different positions of power and resource endowments may have arrived at similar configurations by very different intermediate steps'. Thus both acknowledge the temporality of live-lihood activities, but seem to differ on the predictability of the orientation of the outcome. If different actors with different starting points, may arrive at the same outcome through different steps, i.e. very much in line with Bourdieu, then policies to support the livelihood of the poor face a gloomy future: in such a context it is very difficult to determine whom to support with what.

African livelihood trajectories

To shed more light on how livelihood activities in Africa give rise to the regularities of pathways, we propose employing the methodology of liveli-hood trajectories. We consider it to be an appropriate methodology for ex-amining individual strategic behaviour embedded both in a historical reper-toire and in social differentiation, including power relations and institutional processes, which both pre-structure subsequent decision-making. The analy-sis of livelihood trajectories makes use of life histories, but in contrast to the usual life histories (Francis 1992), which typically report on the outlines of behaviour – the chronology of the actors' lives – 'livelihood trajectories' try to penetrate into a deeper layer of beliefs, needs, aspirations and limitations and especially need to be put into the context of power and institutions. As

such, the livelihood trajectory is more an analytical construct, but it cannot be realised without an open rapport between researcher and informants. After all, the identification and discerning of income opportunities and constraints, which are taken for granted, of social norms, which are respected unconsciously or intuitively, and of undisputed power relations, are not routinely reported. Depicting livelihood trajectories can perhaps best be described as unravelling a historical route through a labyrinth of rooms, with each room having several doors giving access to new livelihood opportunities, but the doors can be opened and the room of opportunities successfully entered only with the right key qualifications. As a result, some doors remain unopened and rooms of opportunities not accessed; sometimes new rooms of opportunities are successfully exploited, but perhaps more often a person ends up in a room that very much resembles the room from which they have tried to escape a while ago. Informants may report accurately on the opportunities they successfully or unsuccessfully exploited, but it is much more difficult, yet indispensable, to understand why some opportunities were not even considered. After all, these are usually opportunities informants did not even think of for reasons of convention, i.e. elements of access like social norms, institutions, power etc. The only way to reveal them is through systematic comparison of actors' decisions in different geographical, socioeconomic, cultural or temporal contexts. Thus 'livelihood trajectories' should explicitly focus on matters of access to opportunities, especially the mapping of the working of power, i.e. starting with 'power within', via 'power with and to', finally to 'power over'. The livelihood approach allows for both the intentional, strategic behaviour of actors and the historical, sociocultural repertoire; and it represents a dynamic standpoint on livelihood, which takes into account successes and failures, as well as social and geographical mobility, instead of making rigid and static assumptions about class, gender etc. In current research, livelihood is usually analysed in relation to a single location, by understanding the geographical, socio-economic and cultural micro situation. More emphasis should be placed on comparative research – or a systematic comparison of livelihood decisions in different geographical, socio-economic, cultural or temporal contexts – so that patterns can be recognised as pathways, which go beyond the specific case.

Conclusion

After reviewing the roots of the livelihood approach, we have established in this paper that a new generation of livelihood studies emerged in the 1990s in direct response to the need to develop more effective policies to alleviate poverty. We then focussed on the dynamics of African livelihoods, which were becoming increasingly individualised, diversified and multi-local. Two

major challenges then faced the livelihood approach. First, we turned to the problem of access, which is increasingly recognised as the key issue in the conceptualisation of livelihood and the unravelling of poverty. We established that access to livelihood opportunities is governed by social relations, institutions and organisations and that it includes power as an important explanatory variable. Second, we discussed the relationship in livelihood between access and decision-making, noting the occurrence of both strategic and unintentional behaviour and the importance of structural factors, and discussed styles and pathways as concepts that try to disentangle regularities. We defined a pathway as a pattern of livelihood activities which emerge from a co-ordination process among actors, arising from individual strategic behaviour embedded both in a historical repertoire and in social differentiation, including power relations, and institutional processes, which both pre-structure subsequent decision-making. We then reached the conclusion that livelihood trajectories are an appropriate methodology for facilitating the analysis of pathways in Africa.

One such African pathway deserves our full attention for a livelihood analysis, and that is the multi-local networks of African livelihoods spreading like wildfire around the globe. To study the Senegalese brotherhood of the Murids, the Mazabits from Algeria, the Burhaniyya from Sudan or the Pentecostalists from Ghana as emerging diasporas, trading networks or transnational communities are all legitimate perspectives. However, these perspective pass over their most distinct feature: they constitute networks of African livelihood which seem more promising for strengthening African development than what has been achieved up to now. These multi-local African livelihood networks seem to have solved Granovetter's (1983) paradox: their success is explained by the 'the strength of strong ties'.

Note

1. In order to grasp the changing outlines of African livelihoods, this paper builds on two articles we wrote to improve the general conceptualisation of livelihood research: 'Development Geography at the Crossroads of Livelihood and Globalization', *The Journal of Economic and Social Geography* 94 (3): 350-362 (2003); and 'Exploring the Frontier of Livelihoods Research', *Development and Change* 36 (1): 27-47 (2005).

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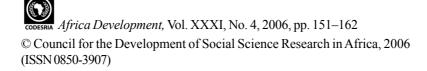Ahmad, E., J. Dreze & Hills, J., 1991, *Social Security in Developing Countries*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

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Book Reviews / Notes de lecture

Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization. By Messay Kebede. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004. 256 pp. Price: 52 euros, 70 USD.

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In this book, Messay Kebede attempts to unravel the fundamental problems of African philosophy by examining different trends in contemporary African philosophy. Walking us through the terrain of a rapidly growing field of study, Kebede's book uncovers, widens and enriches our understanding of African philosophy. He notes that European colonialists adopted the hierarchical notions of human races with its blunt promulgation of the superiority of the white race over all other peoples in order to justify slavery and colonialism. He persuasively demonstrates how the idea of the 'white man' was an invention, and the mental architecture of the postcolonial African the major cause of underdevelopment in Africa. He has a firm belief that philosophy has a role to play in understanding Africa and decolonising the African mind. According to Kebede,

> [t]he rethinking of philosophical concepts in the direction of deconstruction for the purpose of achieving mental decolonization teams up modernization with philosophical questions. Nothing can be accomplished in the direction of overcoming marginality unless Africa repositions itself by means of philosophical premises free of Eurocentric conditionings. Decolonization is primarily a philosophical problem, given that the emancipation of the African mind from the debilitating ascendancy of Western *episteme* is its inaugural moment (p. xii).

Kebede thus makes a strong case for his view that freedom and development presuppose prior decolonisation of the African mind. He believes that decolonisation is unthinkable so long as we endorse Eurocentrism, that is, the conception that there is a unlinear history and that the West is the driving force of that history while other cultures are either lagging behind or frankly inferior or primitive. Mental liberation requires the radical dissipation of Western categories. 'What comes first is thus subjective libera-

tion, the decolonization of the mind. The gateway to liberation is the prior and complete deconstruction of the mental setup, not the adoption of a revolutionary theory, as African Marxists believed wrongly. Some such dismantling alone is liable to initiate an authentic, unspoiled comprehension of African traditionality' (Messay 2004:125).

Kebede suggests that we must come up with a pluralistic notion of history in which each culture finds its own meaning. This bans the ranking of cultures as advanced or backward. It is called deconstruction of Eurocentrism with the intent of centering African cultures. Only when native intellectuals assume this pluralistic perspective can they counter cultural marginalisation. Thus, as Kebede credibly argues, we must resist the temptation to apply a 'one size/shape fits all' model to human history.

According to Kebede, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and romanticism had already challenged the haughtiness of the West. In particular, the romantic inspiration has exercised its influence right up to the twentieth century. Kebede notes that Henri Bergson had already recognised the irreplaceable role of intuition, which alone can go beyond the limitations of rational knowledge. 'Another important trend is the existentialist protest against the dominance of rational thinking. From Søren Kierkegaard to Sartre, the protest insists on the extent to which reason has little to say concerning the important questions related to the meaning of life' (Messay 2004:14). In this connection, Kebede makes a persuasive case to show the importance of mysticism in Western and African philosophy. For him, '[b]oth Africans and Westerners draw their inspirations from a mystical source, which becomes philosophy as a result of rationalization' (Kebede 2004:35).

Kebede contends that the best way to get out of the African dilemma is '[t]he recognition of the concomitance of myth and rationality, of traditionality and modernity' (p. 208). This would enable Africa, he said, to recognise its difference without succumbing to otherness. Each culture assigns a specific task to rationality and the role of rationality differs from one culture to another. Following Bergson, Kebede claims that myth has the noteworthy and distinct function of empowering people. Amplifying the connection that Max Weber establishes between capitalism and Protestantism, he maintains that a mystical inspiration enabled Europe to colonise the world. Arguing that what is at stake in the conflict opposing ethnophilosophers to professional philosophers is the role of myth, he considers the dialogue between myth and rationality as the correct path toward a liberating African philosophy. He writes: '[t]he discovery that mythical thinking has a different function challenges Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's evolutionist reading, and establishes the complementarity of myth and reason and their equal coexistence in non-

Western as well as Western peoples' (p. 216). Rationality itself is, he said, inaccessible without some idealism (p. 218). He concludes: 'unless the power to believe is liberated, I maintain that Africa cannot have the will to rise above its marginal existence' (p. 219). Accordingly, the emancipation of the African power to believe from Western objectifications is required to liberate mental colonisation. Such an argument is intriguing, nay provocative, and breaks away from the Western conception of philosophy. *Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization* is one of the few recently published books that dares to recognise the existence of philosophy in Africa, not through the revival of non-rationality, as advocated by the thinkers of Negritude, but through the rational recapturing of traditional beliefs.

Even if Kebede raises important problems of African philosophy, some critical remarks are apposite. In the first place, Kebede lumped Tempels, the thinkers of negritude, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius Nyerere together as ethnophilosophers without giving any explanation and justification. He did not clearly define ethnophilosophy and tell the readers why he did so although he stressed the opposition between ethnophilosophers and professional philosophers. The reader is not effectively armed with the tools to understand the difference between his views and the views of other philosophers. Henry Odera Orkua (1991) labeled African leaders as nationalist ideological philosophers. Parker English and Kibujjo Kalumba (1996) characterised them as liberation philosophers. Paulin Hountondji, the person who coined the term ethnophilosophy for the first time, did not consider liberation philosophers as ethnophilosophers.

On the other hand, Kebede shares the view that postmodernism has rediscovered the importance of 'difference' as a key value by denouncing Western universalism and the subsequent imposition of sameness. He also states that ethnophilosophy was given a strong backing by the discovery of relativism and pluralism. He believes that ethnophilosophy represents other way of knowing and being. Thus, he said, we should resist the characterisation of ethnophilosophy as an endorsement of colonial discourse (p. 21). Kebede criticised Hountondji for failing

> to appreciate ethnophilosophers' disrespect for the Western canons of philosophy and their subsequent rejection of the exclusion of philosophy from non-Western cultures … The claim to otherness denounces the illegitimacy of reducing the human essence to the Western model, and so pleads in favor of diversity by allowing peoples the right to define themselves as they think appropriate. The charge that ethnophilosophy is devoid of critical approach is thus not receivable (p. 90).

However, what Hountondji calls ethonophilosophers is different from what Kebede calls ethnophilosophers. Hountondji was referring to Tempels, Alexis Kagame, Makarakiza and others who claimed that all Africans have unanimous collective philosophy. It is not clear whether Kebede accepts the view that Tempels endorses the unanimous philosophy of the Bantu people. He did not criticise Tempels for doing so. In fact, I agree with Kebede that Hountondji and Marcien Towa favoured rationality and failed to acknowledge 'the considerable part mysticism and irrationality play in philosophical systems' (p.90).

On the other hand, Kebede endorsed Peter O Bodunrin's accusation of Odera Oruka. Bodunrin believes that Odera Oruka could not prove the existence of philosophic sagacity in Africa. Bodunrin doubts whether the method of interview and questionnaire can show the existence of sage philosophers. Its outcome involves the interpretative work of the interviewer and the ideas of the interviewee.

Odera Oruka had already responded to Bodunrin and other critics. According to Odera Oruka, a philosopher would in some ways help a sage to explicate or give birth to his/her otherwise implicit ideas by raising various questions. Thus, the philosopher and the sage can contribute to the articulation of the views of the sage. 'The trained philosopher, interviewing the sage, plays the role of philosophical provocation' (1991:51). In truth, all philosophy can be regarded as 'joint works with those philosophers who initially inspired or provoked them' (Odera Oruka 1991:51). It is in this manner that we should understand the philosophical content of 'philosophic sagacity.' Traditional wisdom or 'sagacity' is not in itself philosophy. Odera Oruka clarifies that sage research is aimed at looking for philosophy within sagacity rather than claiming, 'sagacity is, by definition, philosophy' (1991:41).

In spite of this, Kebede writes: 'Odera Oruka's use of Socrates, which is an important piece of his argument, hardly proves the point he is trying to make' (p. 93). Kebede implicitly suggests that writing is a necessary condition for the existence of philosophy.

> Without skeptical thoughts being communicated across time and space by means of script, a critical tradition can scarcely exist. Still less can these thoughts accumulate and grow if they are constantly undone by the lack of systematic recording. Stated otherwise, the absence of script may have in fact prevented sages from becoming really philosophers, that is, from developing a systematic critical thinking (p. 93).

Kebede further asserts: '[t]he emergence of such philosophers is rendered all the more difficult by Odera Oruka's persistent portrayal of philosophic

sages as exceptional individuals entirely at odds with their culture' (p. 93). Kebede concludes,

> [i]f a favorable social environment is thus necessary for the blooming of philosophers, then on top of repeating the colonial allegation of primitive Africa, the way Odera Oruka isolates the African thinker makes the appearance of philosophic sagacity extremely unlikely. Just as the antagonism between the individual thinker and the prevailing culture rules out the emergence of the sage philosopher from the traditional culture, neither does it allow the derivation of traditional beliefs from the critical thinking of individuals (p. 94).

This is a very bold conclusion that rules out the existence of philosophy in non-literate cultures. Unfortunately the author's conclusion about sage philosophy is based on one article by Odera Oruka 'Sagacity in African Philosophy' in Tsenay Serequeberhan's collection (1991). I doubt whether this work captures Odera Oruka's theory of sage philosophy. This in a way renders Kebede's study of sage philosophy incomplete and vulnerable to criticism. Odera Oruka developed his ideas and responds to his critics in various works (see Odera Oruka 1981, 1990, 1991, and 1997).

According to Odera Oruka (1991), there are two types of sage in Africa: folk and philosophic. Folk sages cannot go beyond the celebrated folk-wisdom. They don't have the ability to apply their own independent critical objection to folk beliefs. They are able to apply and interpret the wisdom of the community and apply it in unique circumstances, i.e. they are wise within the worldview's of their respective communities. On the other hand, philosophic sages are independent thinkers who can make an independent critical assessment of what the people take for granted. Thus, Odera Oruka labeled individualized critical reflection of sages as 'philosophic sagacity.'

As Odera Oruka and other scholars note, thoughts can be expressed in writings or as unwritten sayings and arguments associated with some individual(s). Thus, literacy is not a necessary condition for philosophical reflection and exposition and there is overwhelming evidence of a long tradition of critical independent thinkers who have guided their thought and judgments by the power of reason and inborn insight in Africa. The question today is how to bring various modern and written forms of philosophy together with non-written sources of philosophical insight in a way relevant to human development in the 21st century (see Kelbessa 2006).

Although Kebede used the title 'Stolen Legacy' (p.105), he did not refer to George G. M. James, Henry Olela, Martin Bernal (1987), Innocent C. Onyewuenyi (1993), and other Egyptologists who claimed that ancient Egypt had by far the greatest civilisation and culture, and served as the foundation

of Greek philosophy. He severely accused Cheikh Anta Diop of fabricating a non-existent theory. He writes: '[t]hese theoretical frictions together with the lack of factual supports assimilate Diop's work to a mythical enterprise' (p. 110). He considers Diop as the proponent of myth (p.150). Although Kebede identifies some of the weaknesses of Diop, he does not satisfactorily lay the basis for his critique. It should be noted that various scholars have attempted to show the African origin of Greek philosophy (see James 1954; Olela 1994; Onyewuenyi 1993; Obenga 2004).

Whilst I commend Kebede's appreciation of nonviolent resistance, what has been happening in the world cannot avoid making the picture more complex. In particular, Kebede doesn't accept the curative role that Fanon attributes to violence. He also writes,

> [n]onviolent resistance has the clear impact of denouncing the barbarism of the colonizer, thereby drawing a clear demarcation line between the values of the oppressor and the ideals of liberation. In demystifying and rejecting violence, nonviolence graciously prepares a bright and democratic future, the very one where force will have no say. Whereas the myth of violence ends up by valorizing violence as a legitimate resource, Gandhi's nonviolent option banishes forever the use of force from human society. Not even against the colonizer was violence used: such is the norm that nonviolence establishes (Messay 2004:103).

This is not always true. Sometimes force is important to liberate oneself. Can we say that nonviolent resistance can help solve the current problem of Palestine, Somalia, Iraq, and so on? Sometimes, nonviolent struggle should be backed by violent struggle. However, I do understand that violence alone cannot be a cure for all ills in the world.

Kebede also argues that pan-Africanism endorsed the colonial discourse by promoting the idea that all Africans belong to the same race (p. 166). For Kebede, 'pan-Africanism as much as ethnic separatism flows from ethnophilosophy' (p. 167). I don't think that ethnophilosophy as conceptualised by Hountondji served as the source of pan-Africanism. Kebede also says that pan-Africanism encourages the rise of ethnic politics (p. 167). Thus, Kebede underestimates the significance of pan-Africanism. I decline to agree with Kebede. As Prah notes, '[t]he pan-Africanist ideal is premised on the notion that the emancipation of, development and prosperity of people of African descent can be achieved only through the unity of the people. As a democratic and emancipatory movement it shares a common inspiration with the rest of humanity in its historical drive towards freedom, justice and self-determination' (1999:57). In this regard, I strongly suggest that for Africa's voice to be clearly and forcefully heard, Africans should transcend the

psychology of ahistoricity that has been imposed by racist, Western historical models and theories, and form much broader and deeper forms of intra-African cooperation. Such cooperation will in turn enable the people of Africa to take their destiny into their own hands. This implies the pan-Africanist ideal.

These shortcomings aside, Kebede produced an informative and provocative book. He has a very bold and interesting thesis of a general scope which can attract the attention of many African scholars and entice them to undertake thorough and systematic research on African philosophy.

I have found *Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization* a rich source of penetrating, incisive and painstaking research that dealt with different aspects of African philosophy. The contribution of articles, book chapters and books by contemporary scholars is given its due place. Making his way through such an intricate printed material is a credit to Kebede. *Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization* is indeed a significant contribution to African philosophy. It is a lively and engaging book, one which points the way towards future research on African philosophy.

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The Military and 'Democratisation' in The Gambia: 1994–2003,
by Ebrima Jogomai Ceesay, Oxford: Trafford Publishing, 2006, Price
£19.00.

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Two observations come to mind on reading this book. First, this is one of
the few comprehensive studies on any aspect of politics in The Gambia.
Indeed, compared to most other West African countries, major full-length
published works on the country are relatively scarce. More common are
articles in academic journals and in magazines, especially by researchers
associated with the Centre of West African Studies, University of Birming-
ham.[1] From this *optique*, the book fills a huge gap and contributes signifi-
cantly to the body of knowledge on Gambian politics.

The second observation relates to the domain of research, that is, the
military and democratisation. The era of the dominance of military rule in
Africa witnessed a massive volume of literature on diverse dimensions of the
phenomenon. Equally on the specific sub-theme of the military and democ-
ratisation. Only three countries in West Africa did not experience military
intervention since independence and by 1992 when the democratisation on-
slaught gained momentum only 18 out of the 47 Sub-Saharan states were
not under some form of military governance. The end of the Cold War and
the 'Prague Spring' of democratization and political liberalization of the pe-
riod did not altogether result in a 'wishing away' of the subject. Empirical
cases dwindled considerably but did not altogether disappear. As noted in the
book under review: 'It was in the mid-1990s, when many African nations
were moving away from military rule in a process of 'democratisation' that
The Gambia, paradoxically, was catapulted into military dictatorship.'(p.xxiv).
In the context of Huntington's 'third wave of democratization'[2] military rule
in The Gambia is viewed by the author as 'paradoxical' and 'a huge para-
digm shift', especially in that the pre-existing political order was universally
touted as a paragon of democracy. A thorough study of the Gambian experi-
ence is therefore timely.

Against these pointers the reviewer would like to highlight the following
selected issues which constitute the major preoccupations in the book. First,
why is it that whilst other African states were veering away from military
dictatorships and tending towards democracy The Gambia moved in the
opposite direction. Here, the author identifies and examines in depth the

background conditions leading to and the causes of the military takeover in July 1994. This leads to his critical assessment of the democratic culture in the First Republic, particularly on such variables as socio-economic conditions, the corruption cancer, the politics of personality, the conduct of elections, factionalism and moribund opposition groupings, neo-patrimonialism, weak civil society, freedom of the media and human rights, independent judiciary and public service, accountability and transparency, the rule of law and constitutionalism, and nepotism and clientelism. On each of these the author concludes that commendable performance levels were attained in the First Republic, more so when juxtaposed against the records of other African governments. Nonetheless, there were deficits, sometimes very glaring and massive, which the 1981 attempted *coup* was poised to exploit and from which the successful 1994 putsch was to benefit immensely.

The second issue is that of the planning and execution of the coup d'état, including the emergence of the Gambia National Army as a political force, grievances of the military, background to the coup, the *déroulement* of the event, the intricacies of power distribution among the main instigators, and marketing an aberrant act domestically and internationally. Theories on external and internal causal factors for military coups are presented as a backdrop for a detailed explanation of why the Gambian take-over was successful.

Third, the author states the 'fundamental concern' of the book as 'to determine whether it is possible to democratise under "military" rule' (p.xi). In order words, what is the nature of democracy as practiced in The Gambia during military rule? On this the discussion mainly involves a critical assessment of the military regime from 1994 to 1996 and of the 'quasi-military' regime from 1996 to 2003, using Amos Perlmutter' three models of praetorianism (autocratic, oligarchic, and authoritarian) as the theoretical framework.[3]

The pivot on which Ceesay's analysis hangs are the transition programme, and presidential and parliamentary elections of 1996/1997 and 2001/2002 (Chapters 6 and 8).The discussions on these are very exhaustive and very revealing; the author brings to bear to his arguments a wide range of facts to which only an observer-participant like him has ready access. Also receiving sustained attention are the quasi-military style of governance, the nature and extent of corruption, and the performance of the government of the Second Republic on the same variables against which he evaluated the governments of the First Republic as summarized above. In these and related areas the author is piercingly condemnatory of the post-1994 regime. He is also unequivocal as to the criteria for assessing the democratic credentials

of the political class in the Second Republic, that is, a democratic audit of the post-1994 governments (pages 241–46). His verdict is that 'it has not been possible to democratise under either "military" or "quasi-military" rule. The country is far from being democratic and the democratisation process has hardly begun' (p.xii). And, 'the evidence presented in this book demonstrates that The Gambia has a long way to go before meeting the requirements for a minimal democratic order.' (p.305). For Ceesay also, the prospects for the future appear to be 'bleak' (318) and 'it remains unlikely that a military or quasi-military government could ever initiate or lead a democratic transition or a democratisation process in the country' (p.323).

Fourth, this introduces the question of the prospects for a re-democratisation of politics and society in The Gambia, that is, the future democratic trajectory. On this score Ceesay is categorically pessimistic – and he adduces a wealth of evidence to support his position. For him, the Gambian experience is also replete with lessons both for the country and other African countries. Of particular consequence are his recommendations on how to promote civilian control of the military and modalities for restoring the democratic process in his country.

Other issues germane to the discourse on the military and democratisation explored in the book are the forces at work, domestic and external, in favour of the transition to multi-party political systems, correlation between democracy and economic development and, more broadly, the military as an agent of development. The age-old subject of the African state as an obstacle to development is also discussed, albeit tangentially.

Given the case under study and the subject of the study, *The Military and 'Democratisation' in The Gambia: 1994–2003* should attract a wide readership. It is very well researched, in terms of empirical material, theoretical findings and comparative experiences within and outside Africa, even if the author sometimes goes for the overkill. The book is focused and does not deviate much from its main remit. Most important, it opens up new vistas for further research. The reviewer would, for example, be interested in more research on how the policy decision was reached to set up a Gambian army in 1984. Apparently, there were camps vehemently in opposition in both state and party organs, based on the lessons of experience of other African countries. What were the other policy options and practical arrangements considered by the Government of The Gambia in the context of policymaking on defence and security within the Senegambia region after the suppression of the 1981 coup? In this regard, the decision-making framework developed by Fatma Denton in her unpublished doctoral dissertation may be of relevance, even though it is designed more for foreign policy

analysis.[4] Then also, given my own long-standing interest in regional integration I propose that further research be undertaken on the role of ECOWAS, especially in the light of its 1990 Protocol on Democracy. Interactions between the post-1994 regime in The Gambia and sub-regional governments are cited here and there in the book. Perhaps what is really needed is a separate study on ECOWAS and non-constitutional regime changes in West Africa, then and now.

Notes

1. The author is himself a product of the School of Historical Studies, University of Birmingham, and the book is a revised version of his doctoral dissertation submitted in October 2004.
2. Huntington, S.P., 1991, *The Third Wave of Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century,* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
3. Perlmutter, A., 1981, *Political Roles and Military Rulers,* London: Frank Cass, p.15.
4. Denton, F., 1998, *Foreign Policy Formulation in The Gambia, 1965-1994: Small Weak Developing States and their Foreign Policy Decisions and Choices*, University of Birmingham, unpublished.