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Special Issue: Electoral Politics in Africa



Guest Editor: Kwame Ninsin

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AFRIQUE ET DÉVELOPPEMENT**

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Special Issue on Electoral Politics in Africa

**Guest Editor
Kwame A. Ninsin**

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Introduction: The Contradictions and Ironies of Elections in Africa

Kwame A. Ninsin*

Abstract

This introduction interrogates the popular meaning attached to elections in a liberal democracy, where they are generally regarded as expressing the political and civil rights of the citizens. It argues that contrary to this popular view, elections in Africa have become arenas where the elite contest for the consent of the people to exercise state power. The people on their part perceive elections as the entry for securing development projects to improve their material conditions. To this end, the elite employ various mechanisms such as intimidation, election fraud, and primordial identities like tribe and religion to bend election outcomes in their favour. Added to these is poverty, which is employed by the elite to reduce the people to dependency within the framework of clientelism. The result is that elections in Africa tend to confer popular consent on the exercise of state power, but only in the formal sense; in reality elections produce ‘choiceless democracies’.

Résumé

Cette introduction s’interroge sur le sens populaire attribué aux élections dans le contexte d’une démocratie libérale, où ces dernières constituent généralement une forme d’expression des droits politiques et civils des citoyens. Cet article affirme qu’en Afrique, contrairement à cette conception populaire, les élections sont devenues une arène où les élites se disputent le consentement des populations, dans le but d’exercer un pouvoir étatique. Les populations, quant à elles, perçoivent les élections comme une opportunité permettant de bénéficier de projets de développement susceptibles d’améliorer leurs conditions matérielles. Pour arriver à ses fins, l’élite déploie divers mécanismes tels que l’intimidation, les fraudes électorales et les identités primitives (tribu et religion), afin d’influencer les résultats électoraux en leur faveur. S’y ajoute la

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pauvreté, utilisée par les élites pour rendre ces populations dépendantes à leur égard, grâce à un réseau de clientélisme. Le résultat est qu'en Afrique, les élections ont tendance à attribuer au pouvoir étatique un statut de consentement populaire, mais ceci n'est fait qu'à titre officieux, car dans la réalité, les élections engendrent des « démocraties sans choix ».

Since the last decades of the twentieth century political scientists have been making references to the Third Wave of Democracy in the World, implying a succession of democracy projects globally. This claim may be true of other parts of the world, but for Africa the current wave of democratisation may be described as the second, the first having occurred as part of the independence movement. However, like the first, the current wave is also dominated by elections; but while the first was the symbol of the transition from a colonial status in which Africans were a subject people to independent nations in which the people became citizens, the second has become a symbol of the birth of democracy. In the first instance, the idea of the nation embodied the emergence of people who claimed unqualified entitlement to full citizenship through the struggle for independence. The received wisdom during the period of the anti-colonial struggle was that the nation embodied the collective right of self-determination; therefore, it was only within the framework of the nation that a person could realise the rights of a citizen – that is, be free 'from economic, social and political exploitation and in some cases, down-right slavery' (Mamdani 1995: 43-62)¹ and be equal to all in rights and dignity. Hence the demand for citizenship was expressed as a demand for independent nations, and the sense of belonging to actual nations was amplified in the struggle for self-determination.

Elections epitomised this maturity for self-determination, and linked the claim to citizenship to the attainment of independent sovereign nationhood. The extension of the franchise to all adults was the ultimate act that conceded the people's claim to citizenship. These were epochal demands; because colonialism had denied the people their citizenship – including their basic social, economic, cultural and political entitlements. The denial of the right to national self-determination was the highest expression of the people's subjugation to foreign rule and exploitation. In another sense therefore the struggle against servitude was also a struggle for universal equality (Mazrui 1970: 11–40).

By the 1970s the nationalist project had been compromised and the people were again subjected to conditions of virtual servitude. The continent's political class had been driven by their iconoclastic propensities to destroy the new institutions for self-government that the people had built during the struggle for independence. With the complicity of the so-called development

partners as well as the kleptocrats that had colonised the state bureaucracy, they had allowed their insatiable appetite for power and wealth, and their ineptitude, to plunder their countries. In the process they had reduced the continent to a Fourth World status where the crises of poverty, disease, civil wars, famine, illiteracy and ignorance were rampant. And for the second time the people rebelled against the state in a struggle for freedom and citizenship. Once more elections became the means by which the people would struggle for their birthright.

In this essay I explore the essence of elections in the current wave of democratisation in Africa. I argue that, in contrast to the popular meaning of elections as a struggle for liberation from the harsh economic and social conditions which have become their daily experience – a struggle for citizenship – the political class has reduced elections to an intra-class contest to exercise legitimate state power based on the consent of the people expressed through free and fair elections. They have ingenuously developed mechanisms for appropriating it to advance their long-standing project of political and economic domination of the majority.

Elections as the pursuit of citizenship

In most African countries voter turnout is usually higher than the world average or what prevails in developed democracies. The reason is simple. Elections are not about civil and political rights even though an election affirms the existence and enjoyment of such rights. The preservation of civil and political rights is normally associated with the security and judicial organs of the state. It cannot be assumed that in Africa elections afford citizens the possibility of affirming their political and civil rights: the anti-colonial struggle was the moment for affirming such rights. Rather, the current wave of elections provides an opportunity for citizens to advance their economic and social rights, either through the election of an executive president or parliamentary representatives, or both. The indubitable fact is that even under current liberal regimes, the state controls enormous economic resources for social distribution. The citizens therefore turn out in their numbers on polling day to secure representation in the central theatres of power – the executive and legislature – two organs that participate directly in deciding the distribution of public resources. The needs that citizens use the ballot to secure could range from food security, the assurance of a stable and reasonable income, access to health and education, as well as other economic and social services and factors. Such needs may be determined by the interest of a community, social class or group, or individual. When these social and economic rights are violated, in addition to violations of civil and political liberties, the people

resort to civil disobedience of various kind and degree to reassert their sovereignty.

A number of questions arise from this. For example, do democratically elected governments have the capacity to meet the basic material needs of their people? Also, are the people sufficiently organised and autonomous to make sovereign choices – for example, to choose and change their government? The first question concerns the economic capacity of the state, and poses a serious dilemma. The persistent economic crisis facing most African countries and the ineffectiveness of the IMF/World Bank sponsored economic reforms have reduced the capacity of governments to provide the people's material needs, and cast dark clouds on the stability and institutionalisation of democracy. The danger stems from the hard fact that the people may perceive poor economic performance and the failure of elected governments to deliver on their promises as the failure of democratic institutions to address their basic rights. This could impair popular commitment to democratic norms and attitudes which determine popular political action. The dilemma lies in the fact that, unlike civil and political rights, the courts cannot compel governments to meet or respect the social and economic rights of the people. The value of democracy lies in the manner in which rules and procedures are applied to ensure the orderly and legitimate transfer of power. Where democratic institutions fail to meet the material expectations of the people, instilling the norms and procedures that govern democratic action becomes problematic and a convenient justification for some leaders to exploit popular disenchantment to corrupt democratic institutions or subvert them. The challenge therefore is to ensure that the pursuit of equity and justice forms an integral part of market reforms in order to strengthen popular commitment to the ideals, norms and attitudes that sustain democracy.

Elections as sovereign choice²

This dilemma leaves political action as the only option available to citizens for exercising their sovereign right to participate in their governance and hold their governments accountable. It leads us to the next question which is about the capacity of the people to make sovereign choices. In a democracy elections are the most effective means for exercising such sovereignty. They are based on the presupposition that the ordinary men and women possess the ability to make free and rational decisions or choices. The essays contained in this issue contest any such optimism about the degree of rationality and freedom exercised by citizens in participating in their government. The essays caution against hasty and festive conclusions about the democratic credentials of African countries on the grounds that second or third elections have been held.³ An objective study of elections reveals that a number of structural,

ideological and political factors impose severe limitations on the choice exercised by the electorate and thereby compromise the integrity of competitive elections as the ultimate political means employed to choose or change their leaders, as well as effect changes in policy.

In theory elections are a method for choosing and legitimising a government. The truth is that in most African countries elections provide opportunity for manipulating the prevailing ethnic, religious and regional divisions to achieve victory. As happened recently in Ethiopia, a party may win a majority of seats in parliament and yet fail to represent the whole country. Or the victorious party may form a government and yet lack nationwide legitimacy. In Ghana's 1969 elections, for example, the successful party lost all the parliamentary seats in one region on ethnic grounds. In the 2000 and 2004 elections, the same party (under a different name) lost the same region (and secured just a few votes in three other regions) also for reasons of ethnic politics. In effect, primordial identities like ethnicity and religion have become part of the ideology of domination by which the political class manipulates the electorate to enhance their electoral fortunes. The power of the ideology of tribalism is clearly illustrated in Wanyande's paper on Kenya. He argues that it is not just the political class that seeks to manipulate ethnicity to bolster its chances in the power contest; the electorate have also accepted the definition of elections as a contest for ethnic hegemony. Accordingly, they do not just expect to see a member of their own ethnic group contest either as a presidential or parliamentary candidate; they also mobilise to vote for such a candidate.

Political parties are often formed on the basis of tribe. If, as in Nigeria, elections produce sharp ethnic alignments, the results could be potentially destabilising. The aggrieved ethnic group could play the secession card. The Côte d'Ivoire crisis illustrates the worst scenario in electoral politics that feeds on the manipulation of ethnic solidarity – which is civil war or the threat of it. Whether it is in such extreme cases as Nigeria or others like the situation prevailing in Kenya and Ghana, one thing is clear: elections fail to provide an opportunity for choosing a government that represents all the people or enjoys the consent of the national electorate. Therefore the claim that elections confer either full legitimacy or assure stability is questionable.

A classic case of electoral politics that is bereft of salient canons of democracy is represented by Nigeria. The chapter by Agbaje and Adejumobi puts the point beyond the pale of doubt that Nigeria's elections have been taken over by political barons or godfathers who, with the complicity of the political class, rape elections and steal the people's verdict in the name of democracy. They argue that even before elections are held the faction of the political class that controls state power for the time being ensures that the

results are rigged through various strategies of manipulation, falsification, control, intimidation and, in some cases, through the use of violence or threat of it. Various factions of the political class, comprising retired military officers, retired bureaucrats, career politicians and tribal and religious ideologues have constituted themselves into cabals controlling the structures that produce such political banalities. They systematically undermine the political capacity of the people through tribal and religious ideologies, and through poverty, ignorance and illiteracy. In the end the masses have become mere instruments for legitimising the power of the powerful rather than democracy.

Apart from the fact that elections do not provide the electorate with the opportunity to consent to who should govern them, they also create a dilemma of power for the political elite. The dilemma stems from the exercise of power without full authority to govern, especially where the threat of instability or civil disobedience becomes real. The felt collective grievance that there has been a denial of choice in an election is one of the factors that underpin the widespread post-election conflicts and other forms of civil disobedience which have characterised the return to democratic politics. Where a regime's authority is uncertain, 'the maintenance of authority is the immediate problem'. The solution to the problem of legitimate authority is sought through the use of the institutions of law and order: the bureaucracy, the police and the military (Rose 1978: 211). The recent situation in Éthiopia where the regime tried desperately to impose its authority, especially on the capital city, Addis Ababa through violence is a clear illustration of this power dilemma.

Africa's political class greatly appreciates the value of elections as a legitimising institution in so far as the exercise of political power is concerned. This is why elections were held religiously even under one party regimes. In the current conjuncture when democratisation has become a global ideological project, the need to secure international approval has placed a much greater premium on elections – especially elections that will be certified by the international community as having met the criteria for exercising free choice. Consequently, in many countries diligent steps are taken to give elections the façade of free choice even when in reality the choice of the people is manufactured by the political class itself (Rose 1978: 263). The articles on Egypt (by Thabet) Kenya (by Wanyande), and on Nigeria (by Agbaje and Adejumbi) show clearly how ruling parties solve the power dilemma in the name of free and fair elections. Such parties have developed sophisticated techniques for manipulating and influencing the electorate to vote for them. In some cases they resort to intimidation and coercion. The armoury of instruments for manipulation, influence, intimidation and coercion include a

combination of state agencies like the bureaucracy, the police, the military, and the state-owned media. Grassroots political entrepreneurs and opportunists are also actively employed in some instances to secure the vote of the electorate.

In countries such as Egypt (in the article by Thabet), Zimbabwe (in the article by Makumbe), and Cameroon, it is clear that the claim by the ruling parties that they organise competitive elections in which the electorate are able to freely choose who should govern them is questionable. In reality the regimes in such countries have imposed tight controls over the system to ensure that elections would confer *legitimate authority* on them to govern. In Egypt the various electoral laws enhance freedom of choice only in the formal sense; in practice the ruling party takes it away by other means; in Zimbabwe the institutions established by law to manage elections and ensure democratic choice are firmly controlled by the regime and used to manipulate and distort the choice of the electorate. And in Nigeria, the law, political parties, regulatory bodies like the electoral commission, and many others (including informal structures of power – like the political patrons) are employed to steal the people's verdict. Such hegemonic controls tend to produce 'exclusionary elections'⁴ in the sense that they limit competition and exclude other elites. The other effect of such controls and manipulations is that they remain 'consent elections'⁵ only in the formal sense. In reality, the outcome of such so-called competitive elections is a 'choiceless democracy': (Mkandawire 1999: 122-30) the electorate are not free to determine who should rule them. In the words of Gaetano Mosca, 'The representative is not elected by the voters but, as a rule, has himself (or herself) elected by them'.⁶

The postulate that elections produce choiceless democracies casts grave doubt on the autonomy of the electorate. In developed countries like the USA, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, where the electorate can exercise a good measure of autonomy, the choices people make in the political arena have considerable weight as well as meaning: the people can make real choices at the polls. That is, their vote can determine who wins or loses an election. Their vote can even change or influence the course of public policy. In between elections their opinion counts in the public spaces where the political class makes decisions. Because of the weight carried by the vote and opinions of the electorate, the political class is compelled to actually compete for their vote and/or pay close attention to their opinions. In Africa, a combination of underdevelopment, poverty and hegemonic controls exercised by the state over society have the effect of rendering the electorate dependent on the political class, and more especially on the state. The electorate are easily subjected to manipulation and influence by the political

class through political parties but generally through the state both of which express the hegemony of the political class.

Ethnicity and other primordial identities provide ready frameworks for elite manipulation, control and domination of the electorate. They are complemented by other vertical forms of the elite–mass relations that are based on economic considerations whereby the elite exploit the poverty and underdevelopment of the masses for political advantage. In many African countries the patronage networks involve powerful ruling politicians or parties and communities who exchange votes for development projects. In South Africa, according to Habib and Naidu (in this collection) the electorate tend to vote on the basis of socio-economic status – to be more specific, on class basis. Granted that this is a valid postulate, it could also be argued that in a country where low socio-economic status coincides more or less with race/tribe, surely race/tribe cannot be an irrelevant or insignificant factor in determining the overwhelming vote that the African National Congress, a political party formed largely by Black South Africans for their liberation and domination of the national political space, has been garnering at the polls since 1994.

I have earlier described ethnicity as an ideology of domination. I must include poverty and underdevelopment in the ensemble of this hegemonic ideology exercised by the political class over the society in general. There is a massive literature on African politics of the 1960–70 period which describes such vertical relationship between Africa's political class and the masses as clientelist. The social, economic and political environment in which clientelism was constructed has persisted. In a number of countries poverty has become acute, and identity politics centred on ethnicity and religion have become a marked feature of national politics. Clientelism is intrinsically a relationship of unequal partners – a relationship between a patron and client. Therefore even if the relationship is reciprocal, the client is a weaker actor in this partnership. Poverty and underdevelopment have emaciated the political capacity of the clients much further. In fact the resurgence of ethnic and religious identities is, in many cases, linked to a sense of injustice and marginalisation. Further, acute poverty and underdevelopment explain why the relationship between Africa's electorate and their political classes has become grossly instrumental. Thus in the same country communities, groups and individuals compete with one another to support and vote for politicians in exchange for development projects – potable water, schools, health posts or clinics, roads and bridges for communities, and jobs for the youth. I have argued elsewhere that poverty diminishes the capacity of the citizen to exercise effective citizenship.⁷ Ineffective citizenship is underpinned by the people's

lack of autonomy which has enabled the political class to manipulate, divide and retard the growth of the former into a political force.

Concluding remarks

Does the crucial fact that the people do not make a sovereign choice or decision at the polls make elections irrelevant to the political process and its development? On the contrary, the purpose of this Introduction has merely been to highlight the contradictions and ironies embedded in elections as a vital instrument for the attainment of democracy, and not to denounce them. It must be emphasised that the value of elections in the current democratisation process does not lie in their classical function of ensuring an orderly choice of who is to govern, and conferring legitimacy on those chosen to govern. In the first wave of democratisation elections were the instrument for asserting the full citizenship of Africans who had lived under the bondage of colonialism for centuries. In the current wave of democratisation elections occupy a fundamental position in the struggles against autocracy and slavery such that each successful election marks a vital step in the politics of liberation. Richard Rose has argued optimistically in these words: 'The very fact that an election is held, even without choice, is a tribute, however hypocritical, to the idea of government by consent' (Rose 1978: 211). I will argue that the optimism about elections lies rather in the determination of the people to struggle till they secure social and economic liberation, and political freedom.

There is also one value attached to elections in th. For peoples who have lived under undemocratic regimes of various kind, suffered oppression and other forms of brutalities, the freedom that democracy epitomises is priceless despite all its limitations. The freedoms that democracy embodies become manifest during an election: the freedoms of association, choice, speech, movement; the right to participate and differ, the right to peaceful assembly and other latent fundamental human rights are brought alive and exercised by the citizens, including the franchise itself which expresses the fundamental equality of the citizen. In a very real sense therefore elections are not a mere celebration of the fundamental rights of the citizen to be free. They affirm a commitment to the rule of law which is a venerated icon of democracy, and a battle cry which rallies the oppressed people to the battle front to struggle against their oppressors (Cohen and White 1997). Elections in a democracy have this hidden value; and it is this embedded power that excites and mobilises both the political class and the masses to renew their commitment periodically. By reaffirming their commitment to the rule of law they affirm their own freedom.

Notes

1. Mamdani (1995) has critiqued contemporary democratic struggles for also bearing this agenda that the nation is the sole platform for realizing citizenship.
2. The following analyses have benefited immensely from Hermet, Rose and Rouquie (1978).
3. See for example Diamond and Platter (1999), especially Michael Bratton (ibid) where it is suggested that second elections put a country past the threshold of democracy, and assure sustainability.
4. S.P. Huntington and C.R. Moore (1970: 15), quoted in Guy Hermet (1978: 5).
5. Ibid: 7.
6. Quoted in Hermet (1978: 2).
7. I have argued elsewhere that the market reforms have precipitated the growth of poverty into an intractable social crisis. See my chapter 'Markets and democracy' in K. Bofo-Arthur (ed.) *Ghana: A Decade of Liberalism*, Dakar: CODESRIA (forthcoming). The situation in a number of African countries is similar to that which prevails in Ghana.

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Egyptian Parliamentary Elections: Between Democratisation and Autocracy

Hala G. Thabet*

Abstract

The dissolution of the 1987 and 1990 parliaments, following two Supreme Court rulings that the 1984 and 1987 general elections were unconstitutional, and the transfer of the power to supervise elections from the police to the judiciary signalled an impending political opening, leaving the impression that there was political will to renew the rules governing elections and make them more transparent and equitable. The paper uses the 2000 elections to the People's Assembly to assess the democratisation process in Egypt. It examines the extent of inclusion of all social forces and political parties, and of changes in popular participation. It argues that the 2000 elections bore the marks of electoral anomalies and manipulations which were characteristic of previous elections. Notwithstanding its flaws the 2000 elections marked a significant step in Egypt's transition to liberal democracy.

Résumé

La dissolution des parlements de 1987 et 1990, suite à deux décisions de la Cour Suprême, selon lesquelles les élections législatives de 1984 et 1987 étaient inconstitutionnelles, ainsi que le transfert du pouvoir de supervision des élections, de la police vers le pouvoir judiciaire, sont autant de signes d'une ouverture politique imminente, ce qui laisse penser qu'il y avait une certaine volonté politique de renouveler les règles régissant les élections et de rendre celles-ci plus transparentes et équitables. Cet article s'inspire des élections 2000 à l'Assemblée du Peuple pour évaluer le processus de démocratisation en Egypte. Il cherche à établir le niveau d'intégration de toutes les forces sociales et des partis politiques ainsi que les changements intervenus au niveau de la participation populaire. L'auteur affirme que les élections de 2000 comportaient des signes d'anomalies et de manipulations électorales qui ont caractérisé les élections précédentes. Malgré ces quelques manquements, les élections de 2000 ont

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constitué une avancée remarquable dans le processus de transition de l'Égypte vers une démocratie libérale.

The first parliamentary elections in Egypt were held in November 1866. It was not until 1976 that the first multiparty elections were held. Since then, five parliamentary elections have been held – in 1979, 1984, 1987, 1990 and 1995. Ironically, these elections served only as a safety valve for managing the pressures for participation; because they were never truly competitive. For although political forces range from left and liberal to Islamist, political power has remained tightly controlled by the executive, which uses the ruling party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), the bureaucracy and security organs, to implement and enforce its policies (Ebeid 2001). In 1976 when President Sadat permitted multiparty competition it was anticipated that it would be a major step on the road to a more open political process. But government harassment and fraud derogated from this process of political

liberalisation. To further undermine the process of political liberalisation the president dissolved the 1976 Assembly and called for new elections as MPs increased their opposition to the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty signed on 26 March 1979 (Abdalla 1996: 15-16). In 1981, after the assassination of Sadat, the Emergency Law was promulgated and has been in force ever since. This law effectively ended Egypt's pioneering experience with democratic politics because, among other things, it allows the authorities to restrict basic freedoms such as the freedom of assembly. Democratic elections under such conditions were therefore rendered impossible (Ahmed 2000).

After that, the system of a political party list was introduced in the 1984 elections as a response to opposition demands to strengthen political diversity. However, as this provision discriminated against independents, the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) issued a ruling that led to the amendment of the electoral law, the dissolution of the 1986 parliament, and the conduct of new elections in 1987, which favoured independent candidates.

The 1987 elections brought more than 100 opposition representatives into the assembly, giving the opposition the highest percentage of representation in Egypt's parliamentary history. However, the low turnout in the elections (47 percent according to official figures) indicated that many Egyptians were unconvinced that voting under the prevailing conditions would make any difference to electoral outcomes. Again, this assembly would not complete its term; for the SCC ruled that the amendment accommodating the party list and independents did not fulfill the constitutional requirement of equal opportunity for all candidates. Yet, the 1984 and 1987 elections were the most transparent and competitive since 1952. More parties contested those elections because candidates or parties that had been excluded by the Sadat government were

able to engage in open electoral competition. The Muslim Brotherhood was also allowed to sponsor individual candidates who contested the elections under the auspices of an allied secular party. Campaigning was freer and more intensive than ever.

However, the 1984 Election Law had a hidden agenda. It was intended to exclude smaller parties from parliament. Under this law any party that received less than 8 percent of the popular vote had its votes added to the party which received the highest number of votes (Nafie 2000). Despite such constraints, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as the largest single opposition bloc in the 1984 and 1987 assembly, but its revolutionary ideology and the use of assassinations as an instrument of struggle against the government, which characterised its politics in the early 1990s, were used as a justification for the imposition of tighter security measures.

In 1990, elections reverted to the system of individual candidacy. However the opposition's decision to boycott the elections deprived them of the gains they had made in the past. Many NDP members had withdrawn from the party to run as independents, thereby limiting voters to ruling party candidates and breakaways (Helal 1992). In 1995 the opposition's performance in the elections was very weak. But the NDP used President Mubarak's image (as the head of the party) to increase its own strength, claiming that voting for the NDP was equivalent to voting for Mubarak. It also resorted to poaching winning independent and breakaway candidates. These strategies boosted its standing in the assembly (El-Monoufy 1996).

Many of the allegations of electoral fraud in past elections related to irregularities at the sub-polling stations. The SCC issued a ruling on 8 July 2000 declaring unconstitutional Sections 3 and 4 of Article 2 of Law 38/1972 (the current legislation governing the electoral process); because it allowed civil servants to supervise balloting at such polling stations while judges only supervised at the principal polling stations. In its view the discrepancy ran contrary to the provisions of Article 88 of the Egyptian Constitution. That decision gave the judiciary full responsibility for monitoring the elections held in 1990 and 1995 for the People's Assembly, thereby declaring those two elections invalid (Ebeid 2001). Following this ruling, the government issued Presidential Decree No. 167 of 2000, Law 38/1972 of the People's Assembly, amending provisions of Law 73/1956 regarding the exercise of political rights. This law introduced changes to procedures regulating the identification of registered voters and the responsibility for the vote-counting process (Mustafa 2001: 60), thereby confirming the judiciary as the supervisory authority for the electoral process.

The 2000 elections: Policies and dynamics

The year 2000 witnessed the first parliamentary elections in the country's history to be held under full judicial supervision. The Interior Ministry's election plan divided the country's twenty-six regions into 222 main constituencies, and 15,250 sub-constituencies, with a total of 10,718 ballot stations supervised by 9,000 judges as principal election officers. The electoral process ran in three stages. The first began on October 18 through October 25 in nine regions; the second began on October 29 through November 5 in nine other regions. The third and final stage opened on November 8 through November 15 in the remaining eight regions. Voting was organised over three weeks to allow for judicial supervision of all polling stations. Each phase entailed a preliminary vote and a runoff vote, so that there were actually six different polling dates (Ministry of Interior 2001). Three main players participated in the election: the candidates, the voters, and the government. The next part of the paper analyses the various roles of these three principal actors.

Candidates

The People's Assembly has 444 members elected for a five-year term. As a conscious attempt to draw the lower classes into the electoral process, half of the members of the People's Assembly come from workers and farmers groups. Another 10 members are nominated by the President, usually to increase the representation of women, Copts, and opposition groups who do not do well in the elections.

According to the Ministry of Interior, 4,116 candidates contested the elections in 222 constituencies – an average of nine candidates per seat. Some 1,262 candidates competed in the first stage of the election; 240 candidates contested in the second stage involving 67 constituencies, and 1,368 candidates in the third stage comprising 67 constituencies (Ministry of Interior 2001). Only 876 of them were candidates of the 15 political parties that contested the elections. The major parties were the NDP (the ruling party) with 443 candidates, including 224 workers and farmers, three Copts and 17 women among whom were seven who contested the elections for the first time. The NDP was the only political party with a higher percentage of workers and farmers than the constitutionally prescribed 50 percent. The NDP also nominated six incumbent ministers, the Presidential Cabinet chief, and four former ministers (*SIS*, September 18, 2000). There were also the opposition parties; namely; al-Wafd al-Jadid (New-Wafd, Centre Party) with 272 candidates, including eight women and 12 Copts; al-Tagammu (Progressive National Unionist, extreme left party) with 58 candidates including four women and four Copts, the Arab Nationalist Nasserite Party (extreme left party) with

33 candidates, al-Ahrar (Liberal Party, centre party) with 37 candidates including seven women; and nine other parties with a total of 58 candidates (Nafie 2000). One noteworthy aspect of the 2000 elections is the overwhelming 3,240 candidates who contested as independents – more than half of the total number of candidates, compared to 3,160 independents in 1995 (Abdel-Aal 2000: 9-10). The large number of independents (of whom 90 were Islamists) reflects the restrictions placed on some opposition groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood and the Socialist Labour Party.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the few political organisations which has a nationwide infrastructure and the ability to rally support, it is not a legal party; because the state sees it as a serious threat to political stability, and has therefore banned it from political life since 1954. As a result it participated in previous parliamentary elections only by forging alliances with other political parties and sponsoring candidates under their banner. In the 1984 elections, it first formed an electoral alliance with the Wafd Party which won 58 seats, mostly by Brotherhood candidates. Then in the 1987 elections, it allied with the Labour Party which won 78 seats, 36 of them belonging to the Brotherhood. Yet, a series of boycotts excluded the Brotherhood from the last assembly, as only one Member of Parliament sponsored by the Brotherhood actually served (Nafie 2000). To further restrict the activities of the Brotherhood the Political Parties Committee, on May 20, froze the activities of the Labour Party, an Islamist opposition group, for maintaining links with an illegal organisation – the Muslim Brotherhood; and for recruiting supporters from an illegal organisation, receiving unauthorised funding, and ‘working against national unity’. Needless to say that none of these charges involved the use of violence (HRW 2000).

An equally remarkable feature of the 2000 elections was the strong impetus it gave to the participation of women and Copts. Although female participation in political life has become one of the major concerns of society in general and women in particular, it was hitherto insignificant. Currently the belief is that women’s role in politics should not be confined merely to voting in general elections or vying for a seat in parliament; they should actively participate in all spheres of the national development process. Yet, the participation of women in national politics was lower than that of men, due to historical, cultural and social factors. Moreover, the restrictions imposed by the state on civil society organisations working in the field of human rights and women consumed the energy of these organisations and prevented them from working at the grassroots to promote women’s participation in public affairs (EOHR 2001). Out of a total of 4,116 candidates, only 120 were women. The National Council for Women (NCW) supported all the women candidates in the elections whether they stood as independents or as candidates of

political parties (*SIS*, 14 September 2000). Seventy-four Coptic candidates also participated; and it was the first time that three Christian candidates secured parliamentary seats through the ballot box rather than by appointment. Not only did some of the most prominent intellectual and cultural figures in Egypt rally their forces behind Christian candidates in a significant manifestation of national unity to confound their rivals' allegations of religious fanaticism; but also the Muslim Brotherhood announced a list of candidates which included a woman and a Coptic Christian (*SIS*, 10 September 2000).

Voters

Because ideologies and issues played a limited role in the elections, many voters either lacked political consciousness or were unconvinced of the purpose and efficacy of voting under an authoritarian regime. In the circumstances, the personal prestige and candidates' capacity for patronage played a major role in determining how the electorate voted. In general, most urban voters, especially those belonging to the middle and working classes, voted on the basis of issues. On the other hand, most people in the rural areas voted for those for whom they worked; or they voted for those who had good connections with government and were able to extend favours to them. The government benefited from the effect of the voters' perception of candidates' potential for patronage while it weighed heavily against the votes of the minority of the politically conscious classes (Rabea 2001).

Patronage could range from the distribution of chickens at election time, to the promise of government jobs, construction of roads, and the extension of utility services to villages. Voters were also influenced by the prestige conferred by wealth and profession, and by well-known family names (Ebrahim 2000). To further corrupt the electoral process, many candidates flouted the law regulating the funding of electoral campaigns which pegged campaign funding at not more than 5000 Egyptian pounds. Elections observers witnessed candidates and their supporters openly giving money to citizens either on election day or in the weeks preceding it in exchange for their vote.

The Government

The government was keen on appearing impartial and objective in the elections. The state institutions started to facilitate measures for the elections, ensure an atmosphere of freedom, and provide equal chances for all parties and independents to introduce their electoral programmes to the electorate through the media. Official newspapers, such as *Al-Ahram*, allowed the various parties and candidates to broadcast their views and played a significant role in presenting and critically analysing the political programmes of the various opposition parties. The radio and television were used to increase the participation of citizens in the elections, and give candidates in the elections

a full chance to acquaint the citizens with their programmes. In addition to informing voters about their polling stations to minimise the enormous confusion experienced by voters searching for the place to cast their ballot, regional channels repeatedly published a list of the names of independent candidates who contested the election for the first time, their designations, and their respective symbols. On the day of the elections, television and radio stations gave detailed reports on the elections, and hosted local as well as foreign personalities to discuss the electoral process. They also interrupted their regular programmes to announce the results confirmed in the elections (Kamal 2000). In 1995, the NDP was accused of using images of mosques to advantage (*SIS*, 30 September 2000). The Minister of Religious Endowment therefore decided not to allow any person, either government or non-government, to use the image of a mosque as a symbol in the electoral campaign, so that both Muslim and Christian candidates would have equal chances.

The 2000 Elections Results

The NDP, as usual, won an overwhelming majority in the People's Assembly – 388 of the 454 seats. This amounted to 87.8 percent; down from 94 percent of the outgoing assembly. However, only 175 of these seats were won by the party's official candidates; the other 213 were either members of the NDP running as independents (against official NDP candidates) or independents who, after winning the elections, announced that they would join the NDP. Thus while the NDP has an overwhelming majority in the assembly, the majority of the NDP parliamentarians got there by defeating the party's own official candidates. This was an unprecedented feat.

The al-Wafd, whose goal was to win 100 seats, won only seven seats compared to six it held in the old Assembly; al-Tagammu won six seats compared to five seats in the old assembly, and the Nasserites won three seats, in addition to four or five of the independents who were allied with it, compared to just one seat in the outgoing assembly. The al-Ahrar, on the other hand, won one seat, the same number as it had won in the old assembly (Rashad 2000: 40). The advocates of women's rights made a strong impact on the elections. Seven women won parliamentary seats, plus another four appointed by the President. Also Copts won three seats, while four others were appointed by the President (Nafie 2000). These presidential nominations were made to ensure that both women and Copts would increase their representation in the assembly. Independents, excluding those who joined the NDP, won 37 seats compared to 31 seats won in 1995. Of these, 17 were candidates of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is estimated that the others would include two non-Brotherhood Islamists and five Nasserites (Rashad 2000: 43-44).

It is significant that the number of seats won by the Muslim Brotherhood was equal to those won by the legal opposition parties. Thus the Brotherhood, in spite of the restrictions imposed on it by the state, showed that reports about its impending demise were greatly exaggerated by the state-owned media. In fact, its candidates formed the real opposition in the new assembly. The other opposition parties varied in their attitudes towards the government: some opposed the government while others like the Tagammu supported it (*The Estimate 2000*).

But were the 2000 elections democratic? In other words, did the results reflect the will of the Egyptian electorate – namely, the freedom to express their opinions and preferences? If not, how far can we consider them a step forward, a step on the path of democratic transition? The remaining part of this paper addresses these issues.

The 2000 elections and democratisation

The presence of judges at polling stations has considerably minimised the incidence of election malpractices that had previously characterised voting, and had tainted the whole electoral process (Zahry 2000). However, the 2000 elections, like previous ones, bore many features that could impact negatively on the democratisation process in Egypt. The following are some of the outstanding problems in the electoral process.

The weak performance of political parties

The results of the election reflected the absence of political discourse, and real competition between political programmes. Parties were fragmented on a regional or family basis; candidates were chosen according to personal relationships with their party bosses, or on the basis of material considerations. As a result, many of the elected representatives of the various political forces were not the most qualified persons for the responsibilities they assumed (Rashad 2000: 111-112). The NDP, for example, has maintained its dominance of the Assembly, although not as heavily as in the past. In the elections some of the party's strong candidates were defeated, either by opposition candidates or by party dissidents running as independents. Also, more than half of the seats won by the party were won either by dissident party members, or by independents who joined the party after their victory (Ebeid 2001). Even the semi-official Egyptian press has recognised that the ruling party did not do as well as it might have hoped. On the one hand, the NDP's continued hegemony affirmed that the Egyptian government still controlled and managed a number of social forces contrary to the President's avowed commitment to democracy. On the other hand, this underscored the fact that the vote is an expression of confidence in individual candidates rather than the party - either the ruling party or opposition parties (EOHR 2001).

The weakness of opposition parties was due partly to a tacit understanding between government and opposition: the latter knew that if it went too far in challenging the regime, it would invite repression while the former was aware that it risked anti-system mobilisation if it imposed a monolithic order on the polity. Surely, the opposition never had the power to bloc legislation because parliament itself was not powerful. It lacked power in many key areas, and the ruling party dominated it through the executive arm of government. Crucial issues such as the defense budget were not even debated. These notwithstanding, it is also true to speculate that with a larger contingent of opposition party members in the assembly, government ministers would be more likely to find themselves questioned more closely than in the preceding parliament which was overwhelmingly NDP-dominated (Aly 2000). Also, the return of the Muslim Brotherhood to parliament with a significant bloc of MPs confers considerable legitimacy and authority on the legislature, and may encourage it to be more diligent and independent in its transactions with the executive.

Electoral violence

Security forces helped greatly in securing the electoral process; and with only 10 people killed in electoral violence and 60 injured. Compared with the 1995 elections in which violence left about 80 people dead and 1,500 wounded, voting was certainly peaceful (*The Estimate* 2000). However, the police were violent in dealing with protests and gatherings near polling stations. There were many instances where security agencies harrassed candidates and their supporters (EOHR 2001). Most of the violence that took place came from clashes between Islamists and police in some towns. About 400 people were arrested in the first round of the elections; and 1,400 in the second round. Among the latter were more than 1,000 supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood who were arrested to prevent them in many areas from getting closer to polling stations. A striking example of such acts of intimidation involved the election campaign team of Jihan al-Halafawi, the only female candidate linked to the Muslim Brotherhood who was contesting the elections as an independent candidate (HRW 2000).

Also, many complaints were received from media representatives of having been subjected to harassment by the police while they were covering the electoral process. Human rights activists and journalists who denounced such human rights violations became targets to prevent them from covering the elections (EOHR 2001). Before the elections, the Interior Minister had assured the general public that the role of the security forces was to 'ensure that the elections were conducted with integrity' and to secure the electoral process outside the polling stations. Yet there was so much intimidation and violation

that the opposition parties felt obliged to appeal to President Mubarak to 'stop security forces from manipulating the elections in the NDP's favour'. Needless to say, this is not healthy for the growth of a young democracy and for ensuring a credible and transparent electoral process.

The Integrity of the judiciary

Many Egyptians, including opposition political figures, welcomed the ruling of the SCC which gave the judiciary the authority to supervise elections. But, according to several senior members of the judiciary and constitutional law experts, the separation of powers between the judicial and executive authorities regarding the supervision of elections is not sufficiently clear. In spite of the law, government officials continued to intervene in the discharge of election monitoring functions of the judiciary. Final decisions concerning the selection of members of the judiciary involved in the supervision of elections rested with the Minister of Justice instead of the Supreme Judicial Council. The Council's role was limited to nominating individuals for consideration by the Minister of Justice, who had the final say as to which judge was appointed to a polling station. Also, members of the judiciary appointed to head both principal and auxiliary polling stations were government employees attached to the ministries of Justice and Interior, the Judicial Inspection Department, and the Prosecutor General's office. Surely executive control over the appointing process will not guarantee the independence of judicial officers in the discharge of their supervisory functions (El-Feky 2000).

Furthermore, the staff of the judiciary is already inadequate for the normal functions of the authority. They certainly cannot cover all the electoral circuits at the same time. This is one reason why the elections were held in three stages. Apart from the shortage of qualified or trained judicial staff to carry out the supervision of the elections, there is also the problem of insufficient funds to cover the transportation and living expenses of judicial officers during the election period (Rashad 2000: 63-64).

The Emergency Law and restrictions on political parties

Egypt continued to operate laws that limit the freedom of expression and association. Among the laws are the Emergency Law and the Political Parties Law. The Emergency Law No. 162/1958 directly threatens the conduct of free and fair elections. It restricts the freedom of assembly, movement and residence; and allows the arrest of those believed to be a risk to public security and order. It also permits the search of places and individuals without availing them of protection under the criminal law. It permits the censorship of letters and a wide array of publications (EOHR 2001). Clearly, the Emergency Law contradicts the rights of the citizen stipulated in Article 62 of the Egyptian

Constitution which gives citizens the right to vote, nominate and express their opinions in referenda, as well as the right to conduct their electoral campaigns through free assemblies, free movement and the distribution of election materials, and so on.

Furthermore, the Political Parties Law imposed major restrictions on members of the opposition parties during the elections. For example, the Political Parties Committee, which is controlled by the government, could freeze the activities of any political party, suspend its publications, and prevent it from contesting in the elections. Admittedly, the Presidential Decree guaranteed judicial supervision of elections; but it came into force barely three months before the elections. Consequently, political parties, including the NDP, had very little time to campaign freely for the votes of the electorate (EOHR 2001). In short, the two laws, among others, had the effect of creating an environment quite at odds with what is necessary for free and fair elections.

Administrative intervention

The government machinery, operating at various levels of society, intervened freely in favour of candidates of the NDP - for example, by assigning symbols of the crescent and the camel, as well as the first and second spots on the ballot, to candidates of the NDP, although the candidates of other parties might have filed their election applications before the NDP candidates. Such manipulations did not accord an equal chance to all candidates. Administrative intervention also took the form of control of the electoral list by the Ministry of the Interior, and manipulating them through the addition of fake names and the deletion of others. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior gave NDP candidates the new electoral list but refused to give it to opposition candidates (Zaki 2000). Some local governors and local authorities also used public sector employees to vote for NDP candidates regardless of residence. Government vehicles were also used to campaign for NDP candidates and transport local government employees to vote for them. And strategic locations and squares in cities, towns and villages were reserved for pro-government candidates to display their posters (Wafd 2000).

Conclusion

The 2000 elections were not democratic by international standards; but they marked a positive step towards greater democracy in the Egyptian polity. They were fairer than the ones held in 1995. The ruling of the SCC which gave the judiciary supervisory authority over the elections (instead of the police and Interior Ministry as was the case in the past) eliminated some of the more blatant abuses. With the implementation of full judicial supervision for the first time in the history of parliamentary elections, voters felt that their

ballots could make a difference. Voters' confidence in a free and fair electoral system operating within a multiparty environment also increased. Hence, unprecedented numbers of voters trooped to polling stations, determined to exercise their constitutional right to choose their representatives. In the 2000 elections the electorate voted out some powerful candidates from the ruling party, while the Muslim Brotherhood scored its largest victory since 1987 with an increase in parliamentary seats. The Brotherhood's enhanced representation in the assembly made it the largest among the opposition parties. Though the increased representation in the People's Assembly did not have a drastic impact on the legislative process, it gave the Brotherhood considerable political legitimacy.

The relatively democratic nature of the 2000 elections made Egyptians expect that they would bring about real changes to the country's authoritarian political system. It is still premature to predict the magnitude of their impact, and the direction in which they would take the country. The elections were nonetheless important because they marked the beginning of major political developments in the transition to a democratic form of government. Their import was bound to manifest itself not only in future legislative elections, but also in all governing assemblies selected through the ballot. Any future increase in electoral competition would be one of such manifestations and a vindication of the growing public expectation that judicial supervision of elections would guarantee the integrity and openness of the institution of election. Admittedly, democracy is not merely about free and fair elections. However, electing a representative is an enlightened political practice that encompasses key democratic values such as free competition and the freedom of choice and expression which encourage a high degree of participation in the political process. Ultimately, the success of the democratisation process in Egypt requires strong political parties with the dynamism to secure grassroots support, and a vigilant civil society. Elections are held in all systems (democratic or non-democratic), and merely holding elections does not guarantee a functioning democracy.

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Do Votes Count?¹ **The Travails of Electoral Politics in Nigeria**

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Abstract

This paper examines contemporary dimensions of electoral politics in Nigeria against a backdrop of historical experiences. It details issues, events and developments before, during and after elections. Its central argument is that Nigeria has suffered from both institutional (organizations + values /rules/norms) and experiential deficits in regard of required ramparts for electoral politics conducive to democratic renewal and consolidation. Organisations have been bereft of values required for turning them into effective institutions while dominant values have been toxic to democratic politicking. While years of dictatorship under colonial, military and civil rule partly account for the parlous state of electoral politics in Nigeria, the nature of political leadership, its shortsightedness as well as its lack of commitment to and experience in the democratic management of diversity in the context of restrained governance, have devalued politics and elections in Nigeria, reducing the latter literally to an instrument of warfare by other means. Electoral merchants or better still political barons have hijacked the electoral process marginalizing the people, discountenancing their voices and choices and steadily sliding the fourth republic on the path of systemic collapse. Engendering a functional and transparent electoral system will require revaluing institutional capacity and political ethos by the political elites in Nigeria.

Résumé

Cet article étudie les dimensions contemporaines de la politique électorale au Nigeria, dans un contexte historique. Il procède à un détail de diverses questions, événements et développements survenus avant, pendant et après les

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élections. L'argument central posé est que le Nigeria a souffert de déficits institutionnels (organisations+valeurs/règles/normes) et empiriques concernant les garde-fous nécessaires à une politique électorale favorable au renouvellement et à la consolidation démocratiques. Les organisations ont été privées de valeurs indispensables leur permettant de devenir des institutions efficaces, tandis que les valeurs dominantes produisaient, elles, un effet nuisible sur la politique démocratique. Si les longues années de dictature sous un régime colonial, militaire et civil expliquent en partie l'instabilité de la politique électorale au Nigeria, la nature de la gouvernance politique, son manque de prévoyance ainsi que son faible engagement et son expérience insuffisante en matière de gestion démocratique de la diversité dans le cadre d'une gouvernance raisonnable, ont contribué à dévaluer la politique et les élections au Nigeria, réduisant ainsi littéralement ce dernier élément à un simple instrument de guerre. Les marchands électoraux ou mieux, les barons de la politique ont détourné le processus électoral en marginalisant les populations, désapprouvant les voix et choix de ces dernières, conduisant ainsi progressivement la quatrième république vers une chute systémique. La mise en place d'un système électoral fonctionnel et transparent nécessitera une réévaluation de la capacité institutionnelle et de l'ethos politique par les élites politiques nigérianes.

It is bad for people to rig elections. But life in Nigeria is a rigged life. The electoral process, the political parties, the governance structure, the entire system, everything is decidedly rigged against the ordinary person. It is, in fact, almost absurd to talk of rigging here when that is what the entire system is all about.

Bolaji Abdullahi (2003).

Rigging is almost synonymous with Nigerian elections just like advance fee fraud or 419 crimes are associated with Nigerians the world over.

Ahmadu Kurfi (2005: 101).

Introduction

In liberal democratic theory, an election is a viable mechanism for consummating representative government. Apart from facilitating leadership succession, it promotes political accountability, citizens' participation and gives voice and power to the people. In other words, elections are an expression of the people's sovereign will. John Stuart Mill, in his treatise on representative government (Mill 1948: 161-74) noted that:

The meaning of representative government is that the whole people or some numerous portions of them, exercise through deputies periodically elected by themselves the ultimate controlling power, which in every constitution,

must reside somewhere. This ultimate power, they must possess in all its completeness.

On the other hand, Claude Ake (2000) argues that elections are a perversion of democracy because they connote popular but not delegated power. The reality however is that the nostalgia of direct democracy which Ake recounts is problematic in a complex and complicated post-modern society. In any case, liberal democracy is in crisis in many countries, developed and developing (Adejumbi 2002). In the developed countries the level of citizen participation in the electoral process is dwindling, largely because real choice is limited and the people feel a sense of powerlessness rather than satisfaction. In developing countries, especially in Africa, elections are riddled with tension, conflicts, crises and fraud such that it is difficult to use them as a barometer of the people's choice. Hence, the euphoria of the second wave of democratisation in Africa is fast receding. Yesterday's icons who led civil society in the struggles for democratic renewal have been transformed into the images of those against whom they fought. They have assumed dictatorial postures; they manipulate elections and tend towards sit-tight regimes. In a nutshell, elections are fast becoming a shadow of democracy (Adejumbi 2000).

In spite of such generally worrying trends in electoral politics and the democratic project in Africa, there are points of encouragement. Countries like South Africa, Ghana and recently Liberia, have conducted very successful elections, generally acclaimed to be free, fair, and transparent. Nigeria is in the league of less successful countries in the area of election management and outcomes: the electoral rules are either unclear, ever changing, or easily subverted; the electoral body is structurally weak and perennially ineffective; the political actors and agencies are like gladiators in their conduct; while the people are often powerless in an environment of political and electoral misdemeanour. To use Claude Ake's words, 'voting does not amount to choosing' in the Nigerian environment, as electoral choices are made by political barons outside the orbit of electoral norm, rules and procedure. In such circumstances, 'winners and losers have often been determined before the contest, and voters merely go through the charade of confirming choices already made' Fawole (2005: 150).

This paper reviews Nigeria's electoral practices. It argues that institutional weaknesses arising from a complex interaction of historical and contemporary forces and structures of the Nigerian state system account largely for the normlessness and lack of civility in electoral politics in Nigeria. The unrestrained conduct of the leadership in governance, and the deployment of cross-cutting but resilient issues of ethnicity, religion, regionalism, violence and corruption which reduce electoral politics to a theatre of war by other

means are all related to the way in which the state and political power in Nigeria have been constructed.

The state, political culture and elections

The state is a central agency in regulating citizens' conduct, setting rules and procedure, and ensuring fairness in social interactions and bargaining amongst the people. Although the state may be embedded in the social structure, it has the capacity not only to influence but also transform the social structure. It is the locus of power, and the determinant of social values. As such, a strong interface exists between the nature and character of the state, the dominant political culture, and the nature of elections.

This is why the African state has been the object of much social theorizing. The African state has earned various epithets ranging from 'dependent', 'neo-patrimonial', 'prebendal', 'entrepot', 'rentier', 'rogue', 'soft', 'expired', 'criminal', 'peripheral', etc. An analysis of two theories on the African state may give some insights into the strengths and biases of those frameworks.

Jean François Bayart's in his theory of the criminal state in Africa draws a parallel between Africa's history and traditional political values and the criminal conduct in the political arena which has implications for the crisis of elections and political legitimacy in Africa. Africa's history of state formation, which is located in the mercantilist era, is one predicated on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and rents, conducts transferred to the post-colonial era. As mercantilist trade declined in importance, its global networks were adapted for criminal activities.

According to Bayart et al., 'the relationship between accumulation and power is henceforth situated in a context of internationalization and growth of organized crime on a probably unprecedented scale' (Bayart 1999: 9). Criminal gangs seize control of political power and the state becomes a machinery for organised crime, especially drug trafficking.

The criminalisation of politics and of the state may be regarded as the routinisation, at the very heart of the political and governmental institutions and circuits, of practices whose criminal nature is patent, whether as defined by the law of the country in question, or as defined by the norms of international law and international organisations or as *so viewed by the international community, and most particularly that constituted by aid donors* (Bayart et al. 1999: 16).

They further argue that 'the rise in Africa of activities officially classed as criminal is aided by the existence of moral and political codes of behaviour, especially those of ethnicity, kinship, and even religion, and of cultural representations, notably of the invisible, of trickery as a social value, and of cer-

tain prestigious styles of life, even of an aesthetic, whose capacity to legitimize certain types of behaviour is considerable' (Bayart et al. 1999: 15). In essence, elections become a criminal activity in which 'bandits' and 'criminal gangs' hold sway because such modes of political practice are reified by popular culture and social values. Ake explains the same problem from a materialist perspective. He argues that the underdevelopment of the productive forces in a developing country like Nigeria creates limited autonomy for the state and hampers its capacity to mediate class and political struggles. He notes (1989: 45):

What needs to be kept in view is that limited autonomization means that the African state is extremely weak to perform adequately the essential functions of the state. The African state hampers the realization of the law of value and the development of the productive forces... The state in post-colonial Africa is unable to mediate the struggle between classes and even within classes particularly the hegemonic class. The net effect of this is that politics, essentially the struggle for control and use of state power becomes warfare. Power is overvalued and security lies only in getting more and more power. There is hardly any restraint on the means of acquiring power, holding it or using it. Might is coextensive with right.

We examine Nigeria's electoral politics, which seem to have been hijacked by forces of wealth and power for purposes that are entirely predatory and subversive of democracy, from a theoretical prism of the latter.

Political culture refers to the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to the political process and further provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system (Yaqub 2001; Pye 1972: 218). It is the aggregated experience of a people over a period of time, particularly in its recent history, which shapes their psychological and subjective disposition in politics. It is both a cumulative and contemporaneous engagement of the people, especially the elite, with the political process – their values, orientations, perceptions, understanding and meaning of the political power and processes in the country. A national political culture, as Pye argues, comprises elite and mass subcultures; the relationship between both is crucial in determining the performance of the political system (Pye 1972: 220).

The nature of Nigeria's federal system and the legacy of military rule, are enduring factors that influence the extant political culture and electoral practices, especially as constructed by the political elite. The state is a centralised federal system in which power and resources are concentrated at the centre; there is a disconnect of power from responsibility, and between citizens' material obligation to the state and state responsibility for sound institutional conduct and ethical behaviour.⁵ The base of national accumula-

tion, which is oil rather than taxation, imposes little restraint on state conduct, performance and accountability. Within the context of political centralism the tendency is for the struggle over state power especially at the centre to be fierce, lawless, and extremely consuming. The logic of political and economic centralism peculates from the national to sub-national political units where state authorities also form critical centres of power, control and accumulation. Years of military rule have accelerated this drift toward hegemonic politics at the expense of democracy. As noted by Atiku Abubakar, a prominent member of the post-military political class and the Vice President of Nigeria,

Nigeria has experienced decades of military and authoritarian rule which has left deep imprints in our political culture. Consequently, our political elite have become used to centralization, concentration and personalization of political power the central defining elements of modern despotism. The consolidation of democracy, however, requires the institutionalization of political power in which due process and rules and regulations replace the exercise of personal power (Abubakar 2005: 8).

For the mass political sub-culture, there is a contradiction in attitudes, beliefs and political conduct. In the midst of excruciating poverty and illiteracy, which exposes large sections of them to material vulnerability, ethnic and religious manipulations, the masses nevertheless value democratic norms and practices. In its summary report on the 2003 general elections the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) noted: 'There can be no doubt that Nigerian citizens value a voice in their own government in and of itself, and that they still see the ballot box as the way to address the huge variety of problems which face them, is a tribute to their patience with a system so loaded against the interests of the powerless' (CDD 2003: 3). However, the masses have also been victims of long years of military rule. Their capacity to demand accountability has been drastically reduced, leaving them transformed into passive actors in governance even under civil rule; the object of manipulation and elite mobilisation for the pursuit of their class project of domination. Consequently, mass political subculture is converging with that of the political class.

Structures, processes and electoral trepidation

The interplay of power structures and processes is central to electoral outcomes. Public confidence in electoral outcomes is determined by the extent to which structures and processes are institutionalised and non-partisan. An examination of these structures and processes will expose the nuances of electoral politics in Nigeria.

Electoral institutions

The primary responsibility for election management in Nigeria resides in an electoral body. This body has the responsibility for constituency delimitation, registration of voters, registration of political parties, organisation of elections, and the declaration of election results. Over the years, the autonomy and capacity of this body has been suspect. This is reflected in its endless renaming and restructuring by successive governments. In the Murtala/Obasanjo political transition programme, a Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was constituted, while under the Babangida regime it was renamed the National Electoral Commission (NEC). Sanni Abacha replaced NEC with the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON), while General Abdusallami Abukakar, Abacha's successor, rechristened it the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The problems of legitimacy and credibility are embedded in this institutional history. INEC was established by Decree No.17, 1998 (Independent National Electoral Commission Establishment Decree) and the amendment Decree No. 33, 1998. Like its predecessors INEC has not been able to engender public confidence in the electoral process or organise transparent and credible elections (see Anifowoshe and Babawale 2003; Lewis 2004; Kurfi 2005). As Ogunsanwo (2003: 15) remarked on the conduct of the 2003 elections, 'one thing was unique in the 2003 elections. The Independent National Electoral Commission was genuinely not in control of activities on election days'. Extra-INEC forces (often working in tandem with INEC officials) used unconstitutional methods to determine the outcome of many of the elections conducted by INEC.

There are several issues that impinge on the autonomy of the electoral commission and its efficacy. First is the composition and mode of appointment of the electoral body. How are its members selected, what should be its numerical strength, the tenure of members, and under what circumstances can they be removed from office and how? (Jinadu 1997: 6). Second is the legal framework of its powers. How is its autonomy guaranteed concretely in the constitution? In other words, what institutional autonomy does it have from the executive and the legislature? How is the electoral commission funded? To whom is the commission answerable? And with what freedom does it conduct its activities like voter registration, and the actual voting processes?

The composition of Nigeria's electoral body is at the behest of the president. The commission is just one of the executive organs of the state albeit recognised by the constitution as independent. INEC is composed of a chairman, twelve national commissioners, and thirty seven resident electoral commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the federal government, and thereby rendered vulnerable to the manipulations of the president and the federal authorities (Kurfi 2005). Although members of the electoral

commission are to be screened by the National Assembly, this has become a mere formality as the ruling party has an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly. Hence, the recent practice by the president has been to appoint people without credible professional or intellectual competence in electoral matters to chair the electoral commission.⁶

The federal electoral commissioners have tenure of office, but they do not have security of tenure. They can be removed by the president without any prime facie case of misconduct made against them. For instance, under the Babangida regime, two successive electoral commission chairmen (Professors Eme Awa and Humphrey Nwosu) were removed from office in 1989 and 1993 respectively in questionable circumstances – the former for his uncompromising stance in the management of the electoral commission, and the latter following the military government's decision to annul the 12 June 1993 presidential elections contrary to the position of the electoral commission. Up to date Nwosu has maintained a stoic silence on the annulment issue, ostensibly for fear of his personal safety. The implication is that electoral commissioners would easily succumb to the whims and caprices of the political leaders in order to protect their positions. This often makes them compliant and soft accomplices in election rigging.

The funding of the electoral commission is the prerogative of the executive, which determines how much it is provided for it in the national budget. Finance is a major means through which the autonomy of the electoral commission is compromised. The funding of the electoral commission assumes a seasonal affair in which shortly before the election period that the ruling party needs the commission, the government appropriates a large chunk of resources for it, and when election is over, the commission is de-prioritised, and its budget allocation shrinks. Planning for elections is therefore not a systematic and continuous process. The exigencies of electoral politics determine its funding needs.

The electoral process

The electoral process includes voter registration, political campaigns, voting, the declaration of election results, and post-election petitions and complaints. It also includes the electoral law itself. Many of these processes have been very controversial. Two major examples are instructive. In 2001, the INEC proposed an Electoral Bill to the National Assembly for consideration and passage into law. The bill was very controversial and elicited diverse negative reactions from civil society. On 21 July 2001, thirty-five civil society organisations formed the Electoral Reform Network (ERN) to 'coordinate their legislative advocacy on the draft Electoral Bill 2001 and to ensure that a level playing ground for the 2002 and 2003 elections is created' (ERN

2001). In a Memorandum to the National Assembly on the Electoral Bill, the ERN (ERN, 2001: 1) noted:

INEC draft Electoral Bill in its present form will definitely stultify the electoral process, instead of opening up the democratic space. Apart from the excessive powers conferred on INEC, there are many provisions which will not engender popular participation. It is with a view to liberalizing the process that the following memorandum was arrived at.

Apparently, INEC did not undertake any consultations with civil society organisations and other stakeholders before proposing the Electoral Bill.

In any case, some provisions of the Electoral Bill and the politics that surrounded its passage exposed the plans of the power elite to limit democratic space, and pursue a narrow political agenda at the expense of the Nigerian people. Three controversial issues based on the recommendations of the Senate Committee on INEC emerged. First is the order of elections. The recommendation was that presidential elections should be held first, followed by the National Assembly, Governorship and Local Government elections. The politics behind this was that both the President and the National Assembly wanted to secure their re-election before the turn of the governors; because the state governors have become very powerful and if elected first might use their local political machines to thwart the political ambitions of the National Assembly members and the President for re-election. The second controversial issue was the attempt to extend the life of local government assemblies from three years to four by amending Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution which gave the states exclusive power to legislate on local government matters. The essence of it was to remove the control exercised by the states over local governments, and thereby open the local political arenas to political contestation and control by national level political actors (for example, members of the National Executive and National Assembly) given the crucial importance of local government structures as instruments for mobilising grassroots support for the electoral success of all politicians.

The third issue centred on Clause 80(1) of the Electoral Bill. This clause was meant to limit the space for party registration. The draft provision reads 'at the close of nomination for the general elections, any political party which fails to sponsor at least fifteen percent of the candidates for the councillorship, council chairmen, and state Houses of Assembly respectively throughout the federation spread among two-thirds of the states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory, shall not participate in general elections'. This provision was bad enough; however, before signing the bill into law the President unilaterally amended it to read as follows: 'A registered political party must win at least fifteen percent of the chairmanship and councillorship

positions in the federation, spread among two thirds of the states and federal capital territory to participate in general elections'. This provision set new rigid conditions that virtually disqualified new political parties; because local government elections were to be held last; therefore setting performance criteria as condition for participation in higher level elections (Presidential, National Assembly, Governorship, and State House of Assembly) automatically disqualified most new parties from contesting the elections in 2003. It took a Supreme Court judgment in October 2002 to free the political space for new political party registration which immediately saw twenty-seven new parties register. Evidently, parochial political interests dictated the passage of the Electoral Act 2001, (and its subsequent amendment in the form of the Electoral Act 2002) rather than genuine political commitment to enhance the electoral process and the growth of democracy in Nigeria.

Voter registration, as Jinadu (1997: 9) has observed, is a crucial phase in the electoral process which political parties in countries like Nigeria view as a first step in positioning themselves to win elections. Consequently, they go all out to mobilise their cadres for the exercise. Indeed, the manipulation of the voter registration process either through multiple registrations, registration of underage persons, and denial of registration to opposition supporters or inflating the voters' register constitute a major step in election rigging. In Nigeria voter registration exercises have often been utterly flawed. In September 2002, and January 2003, INEC conducted a computerised voter registration exercise which was riddled with poor organisation and serious malpractices. According to LeVan, Pitso and Adebo (2004: 33), 'voter registration suffered several setbacks that affected overall enfranchisement and therefore confidence in the electoral process. Problems included logistical delays, insufficient staff training, the lack of security at registration centres, poor voter education campaigns and other flaws'. Malpractices were rampant, including cases of hoarding of registration forms and cards with the aim of selling them to politicians, and creating artificial scarcity of registration materials. This situation was admitted by then Information Minister, Jerry Gana, who remarked that the exercise was plagued by 'serious malpractices' (ibid). After the registration exercise the voters' list was not published as required by the Electoral Law, thus denying many Nigerians the opportunity of verifying their names. It was therefore strange, according to Peter Lewis (2003: 141) that 'The commission finally claimed to have registered 61 million voters, thereby crowning a glaringly troubled and tangled process with a success rate of 100 percent – improbable, to say the least'. It became obvious later that the voter registration exercise was a prelude to the grand electoral fraud that characterised the 2003 general elections.

Political parties

Political parties constitute another important institution in the electoral process. Historically, Nigeria's political parties have been ethnicised, with the major parties having strong ethnic support. The Action Group (AG), Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) which had emerged in the first republic, metamorphosed in the second republic as the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), and the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) respectively. However, in 1989 the Babangida regime dissolved all the political parties that had applied for registration under his transition programme, and imposed a two party regime – the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) on the country. When that political transition programme collapsed with the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential elections, the cloned political parties followed suit.

Subsequently, three political parties emerged from the General Abdusalam Abubakar political transition programme launched in 1999: the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP), which was later renamed All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). Significantly, these three parties reproduced the political tendencies of the two defunct parties that preceded them. The PDP turned out to be a party for retired military and police officers, buccaneer capitalists, old politicians of the conservative NPN stock and former technocrats. The AD is led by remnants of the UPN, who are mostly ethnic ideologues and erstwhile pro-democracy activists, all of whom make claims to the Obafemi Awolowo political dynasty. The ANPP on the other hand, has its origins and support base in the north; it relies on ethnic and religious symbols for political support, and has in its leadership apologists of the Abacha regime, retired soldiers and religious irredentists. The nature of all three main political parties is captured by Lewis (Lewis 2003: 134):

The nebulous party system has little to do with any distinct ideologies, strategies, or sectional appeals. The major parties are relatively diverse in their leadership and constituencies, but remain focused on elite contention and patronage. Ethnicity is still a crucial vehicle for political mobilization. Personalities and clientelist networks predominate; internal discipline is weak; internecine battles are common. Politics is 'winner-takes-all' because public office is still a high road to personal enrichment by dubious means.

The lack of internal democracy in these parties is most subversive of democracy in Nigeria, especially elections. Atiku Abubakar, a prominent member of the political class and the nation's Vice President, apparently suffering from the torrents of 'war' and marginalisation in his own party, lamented the

lack of internal democracy in Nigerian political parties generally, and within his own party in particular. He noted (Abubakar 2005: 4):

An essential element in promoting free and fair elections in the country is the free and fair conduct of party nominations. *Most elections are 'rigged' before they occur because candidates are eliminated through various methods.* These include subverting party constitution and rules, the use of thugs, corrupting party officials to disqualify, or annul the nomination of some candidates and other illegal methods of distorting the wishes of the electorate (Emphasis ours).

Above all, Nigeria's political parties are riddled with internal strife and multiple crises. The situation in the PDP exemplifies a general tendency. A manifestation of the crisis within the PDP is the high turnover of the party chairmanship. In six years, the party produced four party chairmen. The president is apparently the sole power in the party, and is referred to as the 'party leader', a position not provided for in the party's constitution. With his position as the president of the nation and party leader, he could remove party chairmen at will. The October 2005 congress of the PDP amply demonstrated the perfidy that characterises the internal organisation of the party. In an unprecedented but questionable manner, a non-elective national executive committee of the party dissolved the membership of the party and directed all members to re-apply. Evidently, the re-registration exercise was a power game by the president and the national executive committee to seize control of the party. Some members of the PDM (Peoples Democratic Movement – a caucus of the PDP), including the Vice President, were denied registration in the party. With a dubious party membership list, the party proceeded to organise a party congress which was characterised by rancour and violence in virtually all the states of the federation (see *Guardian*, 21 October 2005; Madunagu 2005). Obi summarises the picture that emerges of the PDP from its national congress (Obi 2005: 56):

In the PDP of today, all known rules of democracy have been thwarted. The party does not care a hoot about the processes of election or selection. It violates them at will. In the party, it is not the people that make choice; it is the few who have seized the instruments of power that impose their will on the people. If democracy is to throw open the polity for mass participation in political affairs, the PDP has shrunk the political space, thus making democracy look like a closed shop. The sins of PDP against democracy are legion.

The *Guardian* newspaper, Nigeria's most authoritative national daily, summed it all up in an editorial when it noted that 'if the PDP cannot submit itself to the rule of law and due process, then it cannot be entrusted with the country's constitution' (*Guardian*, 21 October 2005).

Flawed elections

In the context of a weak electoral body, a perverted electoral process and undemocratic political parties, the stage is set for flawed elections. Thus, the 1999 and 2003 elections, like virtually all the preceding elections in Nigeria's post-colonial history, were classic cases of electoral fraud. In broad terms, there have been two kinds of elections in Nigeria's post-colonial history. These are the 'transition' and 'consolidation' elections (see Onuoha 2003: 49). The transition elections are those organised by a departing political authority, which include those organised by the departing colonial authorities in 1959, and those organised by military regimes in 1979, 1993 (aborted) and 1999. Consolidation elections are those organised by a civilian regime and are intended to consolidate civil rule. These include the 1964/65, 1983 and 2003 elections. While virtually all these elections have been contested, the elections of 1983 and 2003 stand out as the most corrupt and fraudulent. The shared characteristics of all elections in Nigeria, as noted by (Iyayi 2005: 2) include massive electoral frauds, the conception and practice of politics as warfare, the lack of continuity in the political platforms used by members of the political class, high levels of opportunism and thus a low level of commitment to the different variants of right-wing political ideologies that characterise the political class, the objectification of politics, and the mobilisation of ethnic identities as the basis for defining the legitimacy of claims to political power.

'Consolidation elections' are more complicated to manage in Nigeria. This is because the interests and forces with a stake in the consolidation process are more diverse, with some of them controlling the election machinery. Consequently, the process reproduces some of the tendencies associated with transition elections, including a deliberate attempt by the ruling party to contrive and monopolise the electoral space, engineer grand electoral fraud, as well as hatch a deliberate plot to move the process towards a one party dominant democratic order in favour of the ruling party. In 1964/65, the NPC's desperate manipulation of the electoral process to monopolise political power in western Nigeria, using the NNDP as its proxy, resulted in the political chaos that eventually collapsed the first republic. In the 1983 elections, the NPN which hitherto controlled seven of the nineteen states wanted to expand its dominion from seven to twelve states through electoral fraud. This manipulation collapsed when the scheme backfired in Ondo State. In his memoirs, Ahmadu Kurfi, a former Secretary to the Federal Electoral Commission gives an insight into the electoral conspiracy in Ondo State and how the process was quickly reversed when the state exploded into political violence. According to him,

I was attending a meeting at the Cabinet office, Lagos in my capacity as the permanent secretary, ministry of internal affairs, which was presided by the secretary to the Government of the Federation, Alhaji Shehu Musa, and attended by the Inspector General of Police, Sunday Adewusi and top officials representing other security departments, *when a message was flashed that Ondo had been 'delivered'*. Some of us at the meeting could not believe our ears regarding this message and were apprehensive of its security implications. Our fears were confirmed later when another message was relayed to us that serious disturbances had erupted in Akure and that several lives were lost and properties destroyed. At the end of the day, NPN had to concede Ondo governorship slot to the UPN, the ruling party in the state (Emphasis ours) (Kurfi 2005: 100).

The presence of the security chief and top officials of government at the meeting where the message was 'delivered' reveals that the electoral fraud was a well organised plan involving the government and key institutions of the state, including the police.

In the 2003 elections a more sophisticated version of the 1983 electoral fraud was staged. The PDP moved into the states hitherto controlled by the AD in western Nigeria, and managed to capture four of the five states controlled by the AD. A simple statistical analysis of the declared voting figures suggests that the election results were in many cases fixed (see *Analysis Magazine*, No. 5, May 2003). A Commonwealth Election Observer, Stuart Mole who monitored the elections in the Niger Delta reveals how the election results were fixed. He notes that while voter turnout for the April 2005 elections was very low in many polling stations, with some polling booths not opening till 2.00 p.m. and closing before 5.00 p.m., the election results declared for most constituencies indicated a 90–100 percent voter turn-out (Mole 2003: 427). Furthermore,

Most extraordinary of all, this apparently phantom election recorded extraordinary high turnout figures generally in excess of 90 percent. In Tai district, where we had seen few voters and where the polls had only opened for a few hours, turnout was recorded at an incredible 99.6 percent (and the PDP share of the vote at 99.2 percent). Clearly, widespread voter intimidation had accompanied massive electoral fraud.

Referring to elections for higher level political offices, Mole (ibid.) commented:

However, the story in Rivers a week later, at the Presidential and Governorship polls, was if anything, worse. We came across pre-marked ballot papers, already thump-printed, being issued by electoral officials. There were stuffed ballot boxes and I watched a youth who casually attempted to empty his bulging pockets of marked ballots into the ballot box. Later, as I watched

over two ballot boxes, waiting for them to be collected and counted, a gang of about 30 youths, high on booze, burst in and seized the boxes, rifling through them as they drove away.

The incidents documented by Mole were not isolated. All the major political parties were actively involved in the rigging process. The PDP simply excelled in this electoral fraud, making it possible for it to increase its share of the federal states it controlled from 21 in the 1999 elections to 28 in the 2003 elections. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), a coalition of over 90 civil society groups, in its report on the 2003 general elections, gave a vote of no confidence in the elections. The group declared (TMG 2003):

While the voters waited and persevered in the polling stations to cast their votes, the political class and the political parties had different ideas. The voters wanted their votes to determine the winner of elections while the political class wanted to corrupt the process and rig their way into elective office... On the whole, the results can be said to marginally reflect the choice and will of the Nigerian people.

Political barons, clients, and the fallacy of elections

The informalisation of politics is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria's electoral process. Historically, Nigeria's political party formations have been characterised by mobilisational leaders, who as founder-leaders, exercise tremendous influence. Notable examples of such leaders are Obafemi Awolowo of the AG and UPN, and Nnamdi Azikwe of the NCNC and NPP in the first and second republics (1960–1966, and 1979–1983), respectively. Also Sir Ahmadu Bello and Tafawa Balewa were the icons of the NPC in the first republic, who though not alive by the second republic, nonetheless commanded a mythical presence and inspiration within the NPN in the second republic. Such leaders influenced party nominations and other internal party processes to the extent of compromising internal party democracy.

After the second interregnum of military rule (1983–1999), the nature and texture of party politics changed. Political parties were no longer guided by an ideology or specific focus; they were not led by a mobilisational leader who could drive and guide their actions and policies, and inspire internal cohesion and discipline. Political parties assumed the character of electoral machines, whose sole aim was to win political power through the ballot. Aspiring election candidates were mostly individual actors sponsored by some powerful individuals; because the cost of electioneering has now become astronomical. A senator of the Fourth Republic, Femi Okurounmu, has noted, for example, that a candidate would need one billion Naira (about US\$74 million) to run for a senate seat in some parts of the country; and that even

running for a council seat required a huge financial outlay (Okurounmu 2003: 45).

The immediate consequence of a monetised electoral politics is the emergence of 'political barons' - political entrepreneurs, who invest in election candidates for higher financial and political returns. Political barons hold neither elective political offices nor party positions. They often constitute informal leaders, who are more powerful than the party chiefs and formal office holders. They sponsor candidates, control the internal party nomination process, finance electoral campaigns, rig elections on behalf of their candidates, corrupt election officials, and sometimes change the names of candidates after elections have been concluded. They are virtual kingmakers. Jubrin Aminu, a professor of medicine turned politician once lamented on how political barons create elected political representatives.

This business about the 'man on the street' ... he does not really feature too much in these things, I am very sorry to say. This has to wait until after three, or four or five elections. When the man in the street becomes the centre, then democracy will be assured. Right now, what seems to happen is that so long as the big political barons and baronesses can agree at the top, that's it. This is what matters (Aminu, 2003, cited in http://allafrica.com/specials/Nigeria_elections2003/).

The logic of the market is reproduced in the political sphere: there is a political market, and there are investors, sellers, and consumers or buyers interacting to make the market functional.

In Nigerian parlance, the political barons are 'political godfathers', who deploy a vast array of resources—financial and political contacts, and networks, and even traditional social capital - to support their preferred candidates. In return, those candidates when elected are expected to do the bidding of their 'godfathers'. In Kwara State, the former governor, Commodore Lawal, was beholden to his political godfather, Olusola Saraki, who is widely regarded as the most powerful political personality in that state. In Enugu state, Jim Nwobodo was the acclaimed political godfather of the governor, Chimaroke Nnamani. In Anambra state, Chris Uba, a young poorly educated but unquestionably rich person, is the political godfather of the governor of the state, Chris Ngige, who holds a degree in medicine. The list is infinite. The godfathers desire not only to participate in the sharing of the spoils of office; they also control it.

However, this political baron-client relationship is inherently conflictual, and sooner than later unravels. While the client in power seeks to assert himself or herself, and establish some independence, the baron insists on retaining control and recouping his earlier investments. This dialectic unleashes

conflict which could destabilise the political order. The greatest danger however lies in the crudeness with which wealth triumphs over the rule of law, and powerful people employing wealth and political power to subvert the sovereign will of the people. The conflict that raged in Anambra State between Chris Uba, the godfather, and the governor of Anambra state, Chris Ngige, is a classic reminder of how the power of wealth in politics could easily corrupt and undermine democracy, especially where wealthy people are allowed to act in public affairs with impunity. In this case, President Obasanjo's reaction to the struggle for hegemony in Anambra state, which let the culprits off the hook, rather than bringing them to order, is striking. To quote the President (Obasanjo 2004):

Theirs was like the case of two robbers that conspired to loot a house and after bringing out the loot, one decided to out-do the other in and the issues of fair play even among robbers became a factor... the two robbers must be condemned for robbery in the first instance and the greedy one must be specially pointed out for condemnation to do justice among robbers.

The incident in Oyo state is similar to that of Anambra. Lamidi Adedibu, the Oyo State political godfather, was in conflict with his protégé, Rasidi Ladoja the governor of the state. In December 2005, hired hoodlums from the camp of the godfather sacked the governor from office and took over the state House of Assembly in a triumphant show of money power over the sovereign power of the people. Again the federal government looked on apparently unconcerned as anarchy unfolded and unelected people violently seized control of the state. The two governors, Ngige and Ladoja have since lost their positions due partly to power politics with their godfathers.

Conclusion

What are the implications of the above? First, the culture of impunity is growing wild, as cases of political assassination, intimidation, violence, and general disorder ostensibly perpetrated by powerful political forces spread, placing Nigeria's nascent civil rule at grave risk. The height of criminality in public affairs was the assassination of the former Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Bola Ige. The riddle behind Ige's death is yet to be uncovered; but it remains a serious blight on Nigeria's democracy. Second, the rule of law and due process are being subverted. This is antithetical to the growth of democracy. Third, elections in Nigeria are rapidly becoming shams - mere political rituals in which the people have neither voice nor power, and their mandate is freely stolen by the political barons and their clients.

Elections and democracy can only survive where institutions are strengthened, relatively independent, functional and efficient, and procedures and

processes are consensually reached, transparent, and adhered to. In the situation such as we have reviewed in this paper, democracy cannot flourish. Unfortunately, what prevail in Nigeria is a constant erosion of institutional capacity and the subversion of rules and procedures. As Agbaje has warned, if the erosion of institutions that should strengthen Nigeria's current democratic experiment is not addressed, the 'country could gradually substitute electoralism and democratism for a properly functioning electoral and democratic process, a replacement of substance with appearance. Left unchecked, the republic will end up with elections that are highly inadequate and a democratic process emptied of much of its democratic content and credentials' (Agbaje 2004: 219).

Notes

1. This is the title of the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) report on the 2003 general elections in Nigeria. The TMG is a coalition of over seventy civil society groups involved in election monitoring. This title, 'Do Votes Count?', expressed the dismay and disaffection of the organisation with Nigeria's electoral process.
2. For observations on the Liberian elections of October 2005, see ECOWAS Preliminary Statement on the 11 October, 2005 General Elections (Press Release).
3. For a discourse on the Nigerian federal system and its deformities see Adejumbi (2004: 211-231); also Amuwo, A. Agbaje, R. Suberu, and G. Herault (1998).
4. The former INEC Chairman, Dr Abel Gobadia, studied physics, while the current Chairman, Dr Iru, studied chemistry.

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Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe: Authoritarianism Versus the People

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Abstract

The majority of Zimbabweans are now accustomed to electoral fraud as practised by the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) led by President Mugabe. Elections are generally not conducted in a manner that can be deemed to be free, fair and transparent. The major electoral malpractices include lack of transparency in the electoral procedures, lack of information on electoral regulations among both the electorate and the contestants, numerous amendments to the laws, most of which are aimed at disenfranchising sections of the electorate who are suspected of supporting opposition political parties, and fraudulent tallying of the votes at counting. Political violence also plays a major role in Zimbabwe's electoral politics. The chief perpetrators of political violence are by far elements within the ruling ZANU-PF party. Human rights groups in Zimbabwe report that the majority of the victims of political violence during election times are members of opposition political parties. Apart from control of the state media for partisan political purposes, the whole electoral machinery is also effectively controlled by President Mugabe himself through direct appointments to them. Even the law-enforcement agencies are loyal to the President and the party. These have created a grossly uneven political playing field, pose a severe security dilemma for political dissenters, and render elections a farcical exercise in democracy.

Résumé

La majorité des Zimbabweens est à présent habituée aux fraudes électorales pratiquées par le parti au pouvoir, l'Union Nationale Africaine du Zimbabwe – Front Patriotique (*Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front -ZANU-PF*) dirigé par le Président Mugabe. Les élections ne sont généralement pas menées de façon libre, juste et transparente. Les principales pratiques électorales

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frauduleuses incluent le manque de transparence au niveau des procédures électorales, le manque d'informations relatives aux régulations électorales aussi bien pour l'électorat que les adversaires politiques, une quantité innombrable d'amendements à la législation dont la plupart consistent à priver du droit de vote des parties entières de l'électorat, suspectées de soutenir les partis politiques de l'opposition ;enfin, ces pratiques incluent également un décompte irrégulier des bulletins de vote. La violence politique joue également un rôle crucial dans la politique électorale au Zimbabwe. Les principaux acteurs de cette violence sont pour la plupart des éléments internes au ZANU-PF. Certains groupes de défense des droits de l'homme affirment que la majorité des victimes de la violence politique perpétrée durant les élections, sont des membres de partis politiques de l'opposition. Outre le contrôle des médias étatiques pour des raisons de politique partisane, l'ensemble de la machinerie électorale est également effectivement sous la mainmise du Président Mugabe lui-même, qui agit à travers un système de désignations directes. Même les organes chargés d'appliquer la législation obéissent au Président et au parti. Ceux-ci ont contribué à la formation d'un terrain politique extrêmement inégal, et posent un sérieux dilemme sécuritaire aux dissidents politiques, tout en transformant les élections en une grotesque caricature de la démocratie.

Introduction

In democratic political systems, elections are an important feature of public participation in choosing the individuals and groups that will rule them. In some, if not many, African countries, the ruling party has mastered and perfected the art of manipulating electoral systems with the primary objective of deceiving the people into believing that they govern themselves. For the most part, the incumbent party elites are able to thwart the people's choice and desperately hold on to political power. This paper is an appraisal of electoral politics in Zimbabwe since the attainment of political independence in 1980. The paper proceeds from the premise that dictators and authoritarian regimes are not easily removed from office through democratic means. Indeed ruling political parties only succumb to transparent, free and fair elections under severe political pressure from both internal and external forces. A further premise is that the stronger the opposition political parties in a given country become, the more manipulative, vicious and violent the ruling party becomes in order to perpetuate itself in power.

Basic requirements for democratic elections

The handling of democratic elections requires that certain minimum standards be met if the elections are to be judged free and fair. Transparency in the procedures followed in handling all aspects of the electoral process is a key requirement. Makumbe and Compagnon observe:

Transparency necessarily means that the various rules, regulations and procedures are adhered to throughout the exercise of elections. In other words,

they are not changed willy-nilly or at the behest of some officials or some of the contestants (2000: 15).

Further, transparency in the electoral process requires that these rules, regulations and procedures be made known to both the voters and the contestants well in advance of the actual elections. Civil society organisations are usually keen to undertake voter education activities in most African countries. In Zimbabwe, the Mugabe regime has recently amended the Electoral Act (1990) restricting voter education to approved civic organisations, and those that will have submitted their voter education syllabi to appropriate government authorities for approval (Government of Zimbabwe, 2004). It is generally believed that this move by the Mugabe regime is aimed at curbing the civic activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) suspected to be sympathetic to the opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

To be free and fair, democratic elections should always be conducted in accordance with the national constitution, and by an independent election authority. In most Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states, an independent electoral commission conducts elections. To date Zimbabwe remains an embarrassing exception. The Mugabe regime has firmly resisted the appointment of an independent commission. Instead, elections in Zimbabwe are conducted under the supervision of the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC). As I will demonstrate below the ESC suffers from several structural and functional deficiencies. It will also be shown that both the Zimbabwe Constitution and the Electoral Act (1990) have been amended several times to suit the interests of the ruling ZANU PF party.

The third requirement for free, fair and democratic elections is the existence of a peaceful and stable political environment. This is an environment 'where contestants are free to campaign for voter support, free to express themselves and make their views known to the electorate without fear of intimidation, suspension or expulsion from their party, or victimisation of one kind or another' (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000: 15-16).

The fourth requirement for transparent, free and fair elections is the provision of equal opportunities for all the contestants. This is usually ensured through legislation that guarantees a level political playing field. Contestants should be accorded adequate and equal access to both the media and the voters whose support they seek to attract. The previous parliamentary and presidential elections in Zimbabwe vividly demonstrate that such a level political playing field does not easily become available. As will be discussed in detail below, the Electoral Act (1990) has been amended several times to create a political playing field that favours the ruling ZANU-PF party at the expense of all opposition political parties. Opposition political parties have

filed numerous petitions in the High Court, and several election results have been nullified by the High Court as a result of these petitions (Makumbe 2003: 5). Nevertheless, the ruling political party has intensified its assault on democracy by instituting further and even more draconian changes to the Electoral Act (see below for details) as a desperate measure to strengthen its hold on political power.

The violence and intimidation that has become ZANU-PF's trademark of electoral politics has produced a sense of political tension, fear and despondency among Zimbabwe's electorate. Commenting on the parliamentary elections of 2000, one monitoring mission noted:

The political environment did not accord the eligible voters their basic freedoms. These freedoms of movement, association and expression are essential if individuals are to make personal, independent political decisions. In many parts of the country, due to the unsettled political situation, people are restrained from discussing political issues, especially those who are on the opposition side (Transparency International Zimbabwe [TIZ], 2000: 17).

Indeed, the situation in some parts of the country was such that opposition political parties regarded some rural areas where the ruling party was strongest as 'no-go areas'. Political activists that supported opposition political parties ran the risk of losing their lives should they venture into those areas. In 2001, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum published a report that showed that by far the majority of the victims of political violence during the parliamentary elections of 2000 were members and supporters of opposition political parties. Table 1 provides the details.

Table 1: Political Affiliation of Victims who reported to the Human Rights NGO Forum

Political Affiliation of Victims	Number of Victims
MDC	609
Unknown + None	63
United Parties	21
ZANU-PF	5
Zimbabwe Union of Democrats	6
Total	704

Source: Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, July 2001, p. 4.

The pervasive political violence which characterised the 2000 parliamentary elections was repeated during the 2002 presidential election. What was interesting in the presidential elections was the fact that President Mugabe's party was not able to hold any election campaign rallies in urban areas which were generally considered to be the opposition, MDC's strongholds. The MDC was also unable to hold campaign rallies in those rural areas that were ZANU-PF strongholds. This situation deprived the electorate the opportunity to hear at first-hand the views of the contending candidates in order to decide how best to vote. It was apparent that ZANU-PF avoided urban venues for its campaign rallies because it was afraid that the urban voters would not attend in numbers, thereby embarrassing the party's leadership.

Closely related to the problem of equal opportunities is the requirement that all contestants have equitable and adequate access to the mass media and other forms of mass communication. The mass media have the task of effectively and impartially informing the electorate on the character, views, policies and other relevant details of candidates and/or their parties. This obviously calls for more than just reports on campaign rallies, speeches and slogans. The media need to undertake thorough investigations into the platforms of the contestants for the information of the public, and be able to do so without fear or favour. In Zimbabwe, where the government has total control of the electronic media and the major segments of the print media, such impartiality in reporting on electoral politics and guarantees of equal access to the media are rare. During the 2000 parliamentary elections, for example, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) severely restricted the appearances of opposition political party candidates on both radio and television while the ruling ZANU-PF's candidates were more than adequately covered each time they held campaign rallies. The so-called Ten Golden Rules devised unilaterally by the ZBC effectively made it impossible for opposition political parties to advertise their campaign materials through ZBC channels – both radio and television. The Media Monitoring Project (ZMMP) report, covering the first week in February, noted:

ZANU-PF continued to dominate ZBC's coverage of political parties' campaign activities. During the week ZTV reported 11 campaign stories. Of these, nine (82 percent) were about four ZANU-PF events, while two (18 percent) were MDC campaigns. Radio Zimbabwe carried a total of 30 campaign stories (including the four ZANU-PF rallies) and 28 (93 percent) were favourable to ZANU-PF, while two (7 percent) were of MDC events. On 3FM, 26 (93 percent) stories out of 28 were favourable stories of ZANU-PF activities, while two (7 percent) were about MDC events. The total amount of airtime allocated to rallies held over the weekend shows that ZBC is still not willing to allocate equitable airtime to contesting parties, contrary to its

own 'Golden Rules' and its duty as a public broadcaster. ZTV's News Hour devoted a total of 26 minutes 40 seconds to rallies held between 1 and 3 February. ZANU-PF's four rallies were allocated 24 minutes (91 percent), while the two MDC rallies were only allocated a total of two minutes 40 seconds (9 percent). The fact that other MDC rallies had been disrupted and were prematurely ended only appeared in the private press (Zimbabwe Media Monitoring Project, Report # 2002/4, 28/01 03/02/2002).

The opposition MDC made several futile attempts to get the High Court to compel the state-owned media to accord equal coverage to their activities. State agents rather harassed the independent print media which covered the campaign activities of opposition political parties.

Tolerance and respect among citizens and the contesting political parties are crucial for the conduct of free and fair elections. Mutual tolerance and respect ensures that the right of individuals and groups to express their views and exercise their choices is safeguarded. As stated by Makumbe and Compagnon (2000: 78):

A climate of tolerance and respect among citizens and political parties, or even among the various factions within a party, necessarily strengthens democracy and facilitates peaceful political competition. Lack of political tolerance leads to mud slinging, violence and intimidation. These are all enemies of democratic elections.

The past two national elections in Zimbabwe witnessed high levels of intolerance of opposition political parties and their supporters by elements within the ruling ZANU-PF. As shown in Table 1, only a few members and supporters of ZANU-PF reported that they had been victimised by those of opposition parties, while the overwhelming majority of the victims of political violence were from opposition political parties, with most of them being MDC members. Several election observer teams, local and foreign, concluded that both the 2000 parliamentary and the 2002 presidential elections were not free and fair. One of the saddest observations made about the 2000 parliamentary elections, for example, is that the lack of political tolerance sometimes emanated from the highest office of the ruling party.

... Mugabe, as executive president, was inciting his party's supporters to terrorise white people and make them tremble with fear because they were the enemies of the nation. He also urged Zanu PF supporters to crush the MDC, which he regarded as a puppet of the whites. This presidential call to violence resulted in widespread mayhem as government supporters and self-styled war veterans attacked white commercial farmers, occupied their farms, beat up farm workers and supporters of the MDC, pillaged and raped their way throughout the country at will (Mlambo 2003).

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2001: 3) made the following observation in its report cited above:

The President made his intention and strategy clear in a statement in March 2000, at a ceremony for the opening of the water pipeline between the Pungwe River and Mutare. He said, 'Those who try to cause disunity among our people must watch out because death will befall them' (*Daily News*, 17/3/2000).

Perhaps the final tenet essential for free and fair democratic elections is the need for such elections to be so organised that all eligible voters will be able to exercise their franchise without coercion. Electoral officials and those who have the responsibility to run elections should ensure that none of the eligible voters is unable to participate in the elections because of reasons such as ignorance of the legal requirements – for example, the need for personal identification, the need to register as a voter in the prescribed electoral district or constituency, and the need to register before the expiry of the stipulated registration period. Zimbabwe exhibits a higher incidence of voters being turned away from the polls for some of these situations which could have been avoided weeks before polling day. It has also been established that in those parts of the country where opposition political parties are known to have strong support, election officials have been inclined to deny some voters the ballot often for very frivolous reasons. For example, during the 2002 presidential elections, the Registrar General of Elections deliberately reduced the number of polling stations in urban areas and increased the number of rural polling stations. As a result, thousands of voters in urban areas, particularly in Harare and Chitungwiza, were unable to vote when the polling stations closed on the second and third days.

Electoral politics and the election machinery

The paper now examines key components of Zimbabwe's election machinery in relation to the political considerations and practices that have significantly influenced elections and election results. The Electoral Act (1990) and the Constitution of Zimbabwe (1980) together provide for the establishment of an election machinery. Major elements of the Zimbabwe's election machinery are the Delimitation Commission, the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), the Registrar General of Elections (RGE) and the Election Directorate. Over the past twenty-four years these laws have been amended primarily to suit the interests of the ruling political party.

The Delimitation Commission

The Zimbabwe Constitution makes provision in section 60 (1) for the creation of the Delimitation Commission with the objective of determining '...

the limits of the constituencies into which Zimbabwe is to be divided' (Linington, 2000: 125). The President appoints all the four members of the Delimitation Commission every five years prior to the holding of parliamentary elections. The Chief Justice or some other judge is normally appointed to chair the Commission. If a judge other than the Chief Justice is appointed, and indeed, in the appointment of the other three commissioners the President is required to consult with the Chief Justice. The obligation to consult the Chief Justice '... does not [however,] imply that the views expressed by the latter must be complied with' (Linington 2000: 125).

The Delimitation Commission has been criticised for being dominated by civil servants, and for failing to be impartial in the determination of constituency boundaries (Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000: 53-54). The fact that it is appointed by, and reports directly to, the President makes the commissioners vulnerable to the influence of the ruling party. In the past some of the commissioners were appointed as non-constituency Members of Parliament by the President soon after the election results were published. Opposition political parties have also accused the Delimitation Commission of gerrymandering in the drawing up of some urban constituencies. This practice was most pronounced during the 2000 parliamentary elections after the ruling party had noticed that most urban voters had become hostile to it, while the opposition MDC commanded strong support in such areas. In previous elections, the Delimitation Commission had also been accused of being used by ZANU-PF to ensure that the Zezuru-dominated provinces (from which Mugabe comes) would always have more seats in Parliament than the Karanga-, Manyika- and Ndebele-dominated ones (Linington 2000: 77-78). Furthermore, the Delimitation Commission has been accused of failure to utilise accurate demographic figures in determining constituency boundaries. For example, in several urban constituencies the population figures used by the Commission have differed significantly from those used by the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC). Opposition political party and civic leaders have argued that such practices show clearly that the Delimitation Commission is far from being impartial.

The Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC)

Greg Linington discusses the main functions of the ESC as including supervision of the registration of voters, supervision of the conduct of elections, and considering any proposed legislation pertaining to voter registration and elections that may be referred to it. The Zimbabwe Constitution stipulates in section 61 (6) that in exercising its reporting and supervisory functions, the ESC '... may not be subject to the direction of any person or control' (Linington 2000: 127). The law thus gives the impression

that the ESC is an autonomous body. In practice there have been numerous incidents indicating that the President and the ruling ZANU-PF party have overwhelming control of the ESC, and dictate what it should or should not do.

The major weaknesses of the ESC include the fact that it is appointed by the President who, though he is required to consult the Judicial Service Commission and the Speaker of Parliament, does not have to take their views into account (ibid.). Makumbe and Compagnon (2000: 46) note as follows:

This understandably gives rise to concern about the independence of the appointees. It would be better if the President were obliged to accept the advice of bodies like the Judicial Service Commission, although the latter is hardly saved of the influence of the Executive, since the President nominates a majority of its members.

Generally appointed every five years, the ESC has not been able to adequately supervise the registration of voters. The result has been that both civil society organisations and opposition political parties have made numerous complaints about its work. Further, the membership of the ESC is too small for the task it has to perform. As a result it is heavily dependent on civil servants seconded to it by the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. Civil servants tend to feel highly intimidated by their political bosses, and perform their tasks in a manner that is likely to favour their employer, the government. The size and legal status of the ESC has also rendered it weak and incapable of asserting its authority on the managers of the electoral process. In other words, the ESC is clearly '... a mere consultative and weak body' (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000: 47). This explains why, despite the numerous allegations of electoral fraud against the ruling ZANU-PF party, the ESC has always certified elections as free and fair. Most Zimbabweans therefore receive the ESC reports with a pinch of salt. The majority of players in Zimbabwe's politics now regard the ESC as a rubber stamp, or an agency for legitimising the electoral misdemeanour of the ruling party. Civil society has therefore made numerous calls for the creation of an independent electoral commission along the lines of what exist in other Southern African Development Community member countries; but to no avail.

The Election Directorate

This is another component of the election machinery that is firmly under the control of the ruling ZANU-PF party. The composition of this Directorate clearly shows why it cannot be autonomous or impartial in the handling of the electoral process:

The Election Directorate appointed in 1994 comprised Dr. Mariyawanda Nzuwah, who is also the chairman of the Public Service Commission, as chairman; the Commissioner of Police, the Registrar-General and the

Permanent Secretaries of Home Affairs, Information, Justice, Local Government, Public Service, Transport and Finance make up the rest. Since the appointment of the Permanent Secretaries is de facto a political one (as much as the ministers, deputy ministers and chairmen of parastatals) the Election Directorate can hardly be seen as an independent body (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000: 48).

In the past, some public servants appointed to the Election Directorate were sanctioned when allegations of being too sympathetic to opposition political parties were levelled against them. Some in fact lost their jobs in the civil service shortly after the elections. As a result all civil servants are now fully aware that if they should be appointed to the Election Directorate they must comply with the wishes of the ruling party.

The primary task of the Election Directorate is to ensure that all government ministries and departments co-operate fully and effectively in the discharge of tasks that are related to the conduct of elections (Government of Zimbabwe [GoZ] 1980; Linington, 2000 129). This requires that the Directorate operate in a transparent and impartial manner. Welshman Ncube has however observed that:

... in practice it is difficult to have an impartial and entirely free election directorate considering that the [many] years of ZANU-PF rule have seen the creation of a highly political and partisan civil service most of whose senior members are also senior ZANU-PF officials in various capacities within the party (1994: 24).

The Electoral Act (1990) concedes what amounts to significant discretionary powers to the Election Directorate, which effectively gives the Directorate considerable latitude in the management of elections and places the Election Directorate in a strategic position within the election machinery. The Election Directorate's crucial location in the election machinery guarantees the ruling party the necessary political protection and electoral victory should opposition political parties become strong enough to challenge ZANU-PF at the polls. In the presidential elections of 2002, for example, the Directorate was heavily criticised for allegedly rigging the elections in favour of Mr. Mugabe. The MDC has since filed a petition at the High Court challenging those results. To date the High Court has been dragging its feet about hearing the case in a desperate attempt to bring the damage under control; because the hearing of that petition is likely to expose some of the tactics used by ZANU-PF to steal the elections.

The Registrar General of Elections (RGE)

The RGE is probably the most hated component of Zimbabwe's election machinery, and for good reason. The current holder of the office of Registrar

General of Elections (RGE) has been in this position for the past twenty years, and has served President Mugabe and ZANU-PF faithfully over that period. There are several allegations by civic and opposition party leaders that the RGE is a senior member of the ruling party. The RGE has never publicly denied this. It is generally believed that the RGE has been highly instrumental in facilitating ZANU-PF victories at the polls. The RGE's office is part of the Public Service, which makes him a *de facto* senior civil servant who owes allegiance to his employer – the state, and more especially to the ruling party and the President. There were numerous calls for his resignation from office after the High Court nullified several election results in the wake of the 2000 parliamentary elections; but such calls went unheeded by both the President and the RGE himself.

The law governing the office of the RGE concentrates electoral power in the hands of this officer (GoZ, 1990). This arrangement has enabled the RGE to practically dictate matters pertaining to the electoral process, much to the chagrin of opposition political party leaders and candidates. Citing Margaret Dongo's affidavit presented in the High Court in 1995, Makumbe and Compagnon (2000: 52) wrote:

Out of caution, I would mention that the [Electoral] Act and the election procedures as defined in the Constitution are defective and open to manipulation, particularly by a capricious and undemocratic Government such as the current one. What one gleans from the Constitution is a feeling that the drafters intended that the ESC conduct and run elections. Yet in terms of the Act, the power to conduct an election is vested in the [Registrar-General] who is basically not answerable to anyone except his Executive Masters.

The ZANU-PF regime has strenuously resisted calls by the opposition political parties and civil society organisations to amend the Electoral Act to reduce this concentration of power in the hands of the RGE. The ruling party is fully aware that the RGE is its strategic weapon for ensuring its success at elections, and will hesitate to do anything that will diminish its power over the conduct of elections. Thus the RGE has remained a major obstacle to fair play and the conduct of democratic elections.

Violence in electoral politics

Since 1997, Zimbabweans have been demanding a change in the manner the country is governed. This demand has been spearheaded by the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a grouping of more than forty civic groups and opposition political parties, which has acted in '... series of nation-wide strikes and stay-away movements which demonstrated that people were ready for action...' The crux of its demands is constitutional reform. The state's

response was to appoint a Constitutional Commission under the chairmanship of Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku, then President of the High Court, and a well-known apologist of the Mugabe government. The rejection of the Commission's draft constitution in a referendum held in 1999 alerted the Mugabe regime to an impending political disaster at the 2000 parliamentary elections.

To forestall this political calamity the regime, from March 2000, employed the tactic of invading white-owned commercial farms throughout the country. On the one hand, the farm invasions were a reprisal against white Zimbabweans, including commercial farmers, who had joined or publicly supported the opposition MDC party. On the other hand, they were used to win the support of landless black peasant farmers for ZANU-PF.

Having lost most of the support of its youth and women's wings to the MDC, ZANU-PF enlisted the services of its former freedom fighters, generally referred to as war veterans, to spearhead its presidential election campaign. The war veterans had been instrumental in the violent farm invasions that began in March 2000 after the 'No' verdict in the constitutional referendum. They had been placed on the government payroll in 1998 after they had demonstrated against the Mugabe regime for neglecting them. They had each been paid a lump sum of Zw\$50,000, plus a monthly pension till death. Further, their children's education and health requirements were to be met by the state, and 20 percent of all lands acquired by the state was to be allocated to them. They were therefore indebted to President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF government. Their resolve to repay their indebtedness was shown in their zealous pursuit of the land invasion programme of the Mugabe government.

ZANU-PF further recruited and trained several thousands of unemployed youths to work hand in hand with the war veterans. The youths were recruited under the pretext that they needed to be trained in patriotism and in the history of the liberation struggle. Investigations, however, revealed that those young people were trained in military tactics of mass control, torture and violence. The war veterans and youth militia perpetrated most of the violence that the supporters of the MDC experienced during the presidential election.

Meanwhile, the police were unable to enforce the law; or ignored the pervasive violence of the moment. At best, the law was selectively applied, with known and suspected MDC supporters being severely punished for alleged acts of violence while ZANU-PF activists were not arrested for similar acts. In the heat of the political violence, an MDC Member of Parliament (MP) made a passionate appeal for an impartial enforcement of the law against perpetrators of violence. An independent daily newspaper commented on the issues in the following words:

On occasions too numerous to recount, others both in and outside this country have made equally impassioned calls upon the government, as personified by President Mugabe, to desist from its selective approach to the administration of justice, turning a blind eye to offenders from within the ranks of the ruling ZANU-PF. The government has consistently and studiously ignored those appeals with the contemptuous arrogance that has become the trademark of its style of governance. In the forlorn hope that a miracle might happen this time around to make the government listen, we would like to warn that continuing to ignore these appeals could have very unfortunate and far-reaching consequences for all of us, not least for the ruling party itself (*Daily News*, Harare, 24/08/01).

Questioned on this selective enforcement of the law, the Commissioner of Police argued that the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) would not involve itself in political fights. This was an interesting development since the same Commissioner of Police had previously stated publicly that he was a senior member of the ruling party, and that he would resign his position as Commissioner of Police if an opposition political party won the elections. The Commissioner of Police is also one of the six chiefs of staff (generally called service chiefs in Zimbabwe) who had issued a public statement warning that they would not salute or support a presidential candidate whose liberation war credentials were questionable, a thinly veiled threat to the MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai. Part of their threatening statement reads:

To this end, let it be known that the highest office in the land is a 'straitjacket' whose occupant is expected to observe the objectives of the liberation struggle. We will, therefore, not accept, let alone support or salute anyone with a different agenda that threatens the very existence of our sovereignty... (*Zimbabwe Independent*, Harare, 11/01/02).

This statement was viewed by most analysts as '... a serious breach of the laws of the country...', '... an indicator of the grave erosion of the rule of law...', '... treasonous and careless...', '... irresponsible utterances' (*Daily News*, Harare 11/01/02). It was obvious that the service chiefs had been pressured to make the 'blood curdling declarations' (ibid.) when it became evident that the MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai was heading for a landslide victory in the presidential election. The statement was also severely criticised by the SADC leaders who argued that it should have been made by politicians and not by service chiefs. A communiqué issued by the SADC after a summit in Blantyre, Malawi stated in part:

The summit expressed serious concern on the statement made by the Zimbabwe army on the election and urged the government of Zimbabwe to ensure that, in accordance with the multiparty political dispensation prevalent

in SADC, political statements are not made by the military, but by political leaders (*Zimbabwe Independent*, Harare, 18/01/02).

The SADC has, however, been largely ineffective in its attempts to resolve the Zimbabwe crisis. Despite the widespread violence and the use of repressive legislation in the run up to the presidential election, the Blantyre summit of the SADC leaders expressed confidence in Mugabe (*Ibid.*) period. For some time, Zimbabwe's civil society had actively lobbied the SADC to apply pressure on the Mugabe government to end violence, and restore the rule of law. Four representatives of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition were deported from Malawi hours before the Blantyre summit of SADC leaders commenced (*Daily News*, Harare, 17/01/02). An independent Zimbabwe newspaper aptly commented on the Blantyre summit of SADC leaders:

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has degenerated into a club of dictators and apologists for tyranny... The problem is that most of them are involved in the same game of authoritarianism to varying degree,' said political scientist Masipula Sithole. 'They are generally inclined towards repression' (*Zimbabwe Independent*, Harare, 18/01/02).

Meanwhile President Mugabe had promised the SADC leaders that his government would respect human rights, reinstate the rule of law, ensure the autonomy of the judiciary and safeguard press freedom and civil liberties as well as hold free and fair elections (*Zimbabwe Independent*, *ibid.*). The reputable International Crisis Group (ICG) criticised the SADC for failure to enforce its own protocols: 'SADC has a poor record of enforcing its own rules for members because so many (of them) are in violation at any given time' (*ibid.*). By and large, analysts view the SADC as an accomplice in President Mugabe's repression of his people.

The breakdown of law and order in Zimbabwe resulted in other forms of violence against the people. For example, rape, abduction, kidnapping, arson, and murder became rampant. At least 100 people, mainly supporters of the MDC, are known to have been murdered for political reasons during the election campaign and soon after the polling days (*Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Political Violence Report 20–30 April 2002*). In the run up to the election, many ordinary citizens found it difficult to travel in the rural areas without valid ZANU-PF party cards. Those found to be without these cards were beaten up or tortured; or ZANU-PF militia and war veterans, who had set up illegal roadblocks in many parts of the country, refused them permission to proceed on their journey. Further, in many rural areas, schoolteachers bore the brunt of the ZANU-PF violence: many of them had to flee to urban areas for safety. In the Masvingo province, for example, thirty-five schools were closed because all the teachers had fled for personal

safety. The Human Rights NGO Forum's January, 2002 report put it as follows:

Although spontaneous incidents of political violence do occur between groups of party supporters, it is of great concern to the Human Rights Forum that carefully orchestrated violence is still prevalent as part of a *modus operandi* to crush opposition party support. The attack on schoolteachers, whose recognised competence to influence and inform their communities has long been considered a threat by the government, continued unabated. It is lamentable that this violence that also affects school children has been allowed to continue without redress. At times government ministers and officials have been at the forefront of the onslaught which has not only disrupted schooling but has also displaced numerous teachers and their families who have been forced to flee the areas in which they were being prosecuted... The Zimbabwe Teachers Association (Zimta) has also condemned this relentless attack on teachers who are real or perceived MDC supporters (Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, 19-31 January 2002).

The accusation that most of the violence was state-sponsored was confirmed by the use of state vehicles to ferry war veterans and youth militia from place to place. Indeed, the state provided the youth militia with uniforms, food and places to stay during the election campaign. Further, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, in a report titled *Who Was Responsible?* identifies six government ministers and several ZANU-PF senior officials indicating the specific acts of violence and human rights violations that they were alleged to have committed (*Daily News*, Harare, 31/08/01). The Forum's report substantially confirms the reported cases of violence, torture and other human rights violations.

Out of the 704 victims who reported to the compilers of the report, 609 were MDC supporters, 65 were of unknown political affiliation, 21 belonged to the United Parties, five to ZANU-PF, and six were from the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, *ibid.*).

Both the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) and the ZRP were also involved in serious acts of violence against innocent civilians in several parts of the country (*The Standard*, Harare 03/02/02). In a 58-page report on violence and impunity in Zimbabwe, Amnesty International observed:

In an attempt to escape accountability for human rights violations through 'deniability', the Zimbabwe government continued to use its 'militias' to abduct and torture individuals who were publicly identified as polling agents during the 2002 presidential election. The evidence in cases documented by Amnesty International and local human rights organisations shows a clear link between the 'militia', the government and the ruling party (Amnesty International, Zimbabwe 2002: 32).

Although Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC condemned the violence and dissuaded his supporters from retaliating, President Mugabe declined to do the same until much later in the campaign. Ironically, the wanton use of violence as a political weapon against the people was counter-productive as civic organisations began advising the electorate not to vote for those who committed violence against the people. Zimbabweans were shocked by the reality of a liberator turned oppressor. The majority of the electorate therefore became even more determined to rid Zimbabwe of the Mugabe regime. The MDC slogan: 'Change your ways' became the battle cry in both urban and rural areas.

Conclusion

Electoral politics in Zimbabwe carries high stakes. Contestants who belong to the ruling ZANU-PF party experience fewer problems and are more likely to win an election because the whole election machinery is designed and operated in such a manner that it accords them an uneven playing field. On the other hand, opposition political parties and their supporters find themselves at a grave disadvantage and bear the brunt of the government-controlled election machinery. The citizenry is also robbed of its legitimate right to choose its political leaders. Violence is a major instrument for ensuring this electoral outcome. The ZANU-PF, a militant and authoritarian liberation movement that has failed to transform itself into a democratic political party, has been inflicting on the people of Zimbabwe political violence of various forms – beatings, illegal arrests, rape, murder arson, kidnappings and torture. It has further employed electoral fraud to perpetuate its hold on political power. If such political and legal environment should persist, it will be problematic for Zimbabweans to experience free, fair, and democratic elections in the foreseeable future.

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Electoral Politics and Election Outcomes in Kenya

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Abstract

Kenya has held presidential, parliamentary and local government elections every five years since independence in 1963 in accordance with the country's constitution. For most of the independence period the country operated a one party system of government. This was brought to an end in 1992 when the country reverted to multi party democracy following an amendment to the relevant section of the presidential and National Assembly Elections Act. The change from one party to multi party system affected both the administration and legal environments in which elections occurred. Other factors that affected elections include ethnicity, clanism, nature of political parties, personality of individual politicians and in some cases religion. Voter turn out has been particularly high during multi party era and particularly more during the elections of 2002. This was due to two factors. First was the opposition unity prior to the elections and secondly the fact that Kenyans had the opportunity to elect a new president after 24 years of rule by President Moi. Moi had served his last term in accordance with the changes made to the relevant provisions of the presidential Elections Act in 1992, which for the first time limited presidential term to two five-year terms. Future elections are likely to be influenced by similar complex factors discussed in this paper.

Résumé

Le Kenya a toujours tenu des élections présidentielles, parlementaires ainsi que des élections de renouvellement du gouvernement local tous les cinq ans depuis l'indépendance en 1963, conformément à la constitution du pays. Durant la majeure partie de la période d'indépendance, le pays a adopté un système gouvernemental à parti unique. Cette situation a changé en 1992, lorsque le pays s'est remis à la démocratie multipartite suite à l'amendement de la section concernée de la Loi sur les Elections présidentielles et celles de l'Assemblée

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Nationale (*Presidential and National Assembly Elections Act*). Le passage d'un système à parti unique à un système multipartite a bouleversé l'environnement administratif et juridique au sein duquel se déroulaient les élections. D'autres facteurs ont également exercé une certaine influence sur les élections, tels que le clanisme, la nature des partis politiques, la personnalité des hommes politiques au niveau individuel, et dans certains cas, la religion. La participation aux élections a été particulièrement forte durant la période d'élections multipartites, particulièrement lors des élections de 2002, ce qui s'explique par deux facteurs. Le premier est l'unité de l'opposition avant la période des élections ; le second est le fait que les Kenyans aient eu l'opportunité d'élire un nouveau président après 24 ans de règne du Président Moi. Moi venait d'achever son dernier mandat, conformément aux modifications des dispositions de la Loi sur les élections présidentielles (*Presidential Elections Act*) de 1992, qui, pour la première fois, limitait le mandat présidentiel à deux mandats de cinq ans. Les élections futures risquent fort d'être influencées par les mêmes facteurs complexes précités dans cet article.

Introduction

This paper discusses electoral politics in Kenya with the focus on the factors that have shaped and influenced the country's elections and election outcomes. The discussion is confined to presidential and parliamentary elections and takes into account the wider socio-political environment in which elections have been held. The political environment includes the constitutional and legal framework that governs elections as well as the administrative environment, which includes the rules and regulations governing the management and conduct of elections. These elements in the political environment are bound to impact on the way electoral politics occur (Cowen and Laakso 1997), voter turn out, voter choices, as well as the functions performed by elections. They also shape the forces – the type and quality of actors in the electoral process. The paper examines elections held in the postcolonial period, under both the single party and multiparty regimes. First, I argue that in a political environment where the electoral playing field is even and facilitates free and fair elections the results may be regarded as an expression of the wishes of the voters. Second, when the elections are inefficiently and incompetently managed their validity and credibility are always contested. Indeed poorly managed elections cannot pass the test of being free and fair. Finally, I argue that a combination of factors have shaped electoral politics and election outcomes in Kenya.

Elections and democracy: A theoretical framework

There is considerable body of theoretical and empirical literature on elections (Hogan 1945; Lakeman 1974; Mackenzie and Robinson 1960; Macpherson

1966; Hume 1975; Moyo 1992; Cowen and Laakso 1997; Oyugi 1997; Wanjala 2002; Mittullah 2002; Wanyande 2002) covering elections in both the developed and developing democracies, and which identifies several functions performed by elections in liberal democracies. In general, the literature on elections in Africa pays scanty attention to the factors that influence voter turnout though this is very important for understanding any election. In this section of the paper I sketch the theoretical framework for discussing the functions of elections and the factors that influence voter behaviour and turnout.

Competitive elections are the most democratic means for recruiting leaders to represent the electorate in governance institutions. According to Hogan (1945), Western Europe adopted elections to recruit political leaders in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the method has since been institutionalised as a means to legitimise leaders and governments in liberal democracies (Moyo 1992; Lakeman 1974). Of equal importance is that elections provide the electorate with an opportunity to participate, even if only indirectly, in governance or influence the way they are governed. Dye and Ziegler (1990: 209-211) It is assumed that the mere knowledge that one can be voted out in a future election is enough to make representatives responsive and accountable to the electorate. In countries like Kenya, where the unofficial roles of MPs are accorded greater prominence than their official legislative functions, auditing the performance of an MP becomes quite tricky. Some voters may give priority to subjective and mundane considerations – such as how generous the representative might be – more than substantive issues regarding the MP's representative role. Many others may not even be aware that the effectiveness of a representative may be affected by the political regime in which he or she operates. Surely there are other functions such as facilitating the capture and consolidation of state power (Oyugi 1997: 48), but these are closely related to the legitimation function of elections. Because state power confers many advantages, Kenyan elections even under one party rule were hotly contested and are usually characterised by accusations of rigging and unfairness in the electoral process. The election petitions that are lodged in the courts of law by those who lose the contest (see Table 1) attests to the numerous election petitions that were lodged after elections held between 1969 and 1992 when multiparty politics was re-introduced in Kenya

Table 1: Election petitions between 1969 and 1992

Year	Petitions	Allowed	Rejected
1969	6	1	5
1974	21	5	16
1979	7	4	3
1983	11	4	7
1888	20	3	16
1992	40	4	29

Source: IED *Election Data Book*, 1963-92¹

For elections to serve their democratic functions they must be free and fair. The extent to which elections are free and fair is of central concern particularly to countries struggling to democratise political life and establish multiparty political and electoral systems (Mitullah 2002: 121). Indeed contemporary election observers have the tendency to use the extent to which elections are free and fair as a yardstick for measuring whether or not and the extent to which elections are democratic. Free and fair elections can be achieved in situations in which the various civil liberties commonly associated with liberal democracy are respected and protected (Mackenzie 1958; McPherson 1966). There should also be an independent judiciary, an honest, competent and non-partisan electoral body, a well developed multiparty system, and a general acceptance within the political community of certain rules of the game without which there would be no democratic elections. One of the best ways of creating an efficient administrative system for delivering free and fair elections is to establish an electoral commission that will enjoy a large measure of autonomy and independence from the central government (Mackenzie 1958; Hogan 1945 Lakeman 1974). Of course this is possible only in a conducive legal environment. The cumulative effect of a positive political, institutional and legal environment is manifested by the diligence with which the electorate participate in the electoral process.

Elections in Kenya

Kenya has held nine presidential, parliamentary and local/municipal elections since attaining independence in 1963. In between these elections the country has also held a number of by-elections occasioned by the loss of a seat by a sitting MP or councilor for a variety of reasons. In 1966 for instance, the country went through what is referred to as the 'Little General Election',

which was occasioned by the resignation of several MPs from the then ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), to form the first opposition party in independent Kenya, the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU). The then vice-president Jaramogi Oginga Odinga led the defections. The 1963, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984 and 1988 elections were conducted under one party rule. The 1992, 1997 and 2002 elections, on the other hand, were conducted under a multiparty regime.

Under the one party regime, the ruling party sponsored all the candidates. Nomination of candidates was also controlled and conducted by a clique of powerful party politicians who ensured that only those politicians acceptable to the regime were nominated and subsequently elected. Voters therefore did not have much influence on who was nominated and who became a candidate for election to parliament. There was the widespread belief that in some constituencies, the election was rigged in favour of pro-establishment candidates. Consequently elections turned out to be a mere formality conducted periodically to serve basically three functions. First they were instrumental in confirming ruling political elites in power and facilitating their bid to consolidate their power. It must be admitted however that on the whole the nominated candidates always engaged in a fierce electoral contest. The elections were thus mainly a selection exercise in which individuals considered to be politically acceptable to the regime were given the mandate to represent the people. The choice was even more restricted in the case of presidential elections. Only one presidential candidate was presented to the electorate. This was in line with the practice by which the party president would also be the party's presidential candidate. There were no primaries for presidential candidates. No wonder that President Jomo Kenyatta was elected unopposed throughout his presidency and relinquished power only upon death in 1978. Second, one party elections served to legitimise what was to all intents and purposes an authoritarian rule: the leaders used the elections to claim legitimacy. This point ought to be understood against the background that every government irrespective of how it comes to power seeks to gain some legitimacy in the eyes of both the domestic and international community. Third, the regularity with which Kenya held elections was often cited by the pro-establishment politicians as proof of how democratic the country was. It did not matter that the elections were neither free nor fair as they were managed by civil servants on behalf of the government. As the Institute for Education in Democracy (IED) observed:

By 1969, the role of the Electoral Commission had become blurred. Most of its functions, such as registering voters and supervising the conduct of elections, were placed under the control of the non-constitutional post of

Supervisor of Elections in the office of the Attorney General. The Electoral Commission was renamed the Electoral Boundaries Review Commission and restricted to the role of reviewing electoral boundaries and determining the number of constituencies and their names. It is not clear how these changes emerged, but they had the effect of bringing the supervision of the electoral process under the control of the government.

Because of the undemocratic nature of elections under a one party regime, voters did not use elections to determine the quality of their representatives in terms of their performance. Thus even though several politicians lost their seats in various elections, there is no clear evidence that this was caused by voters' voluntary decision to vote them out. Some of the losers may have been rigged out by the ruling party because they were considered no longer useful. In this regard I find plausible the observation by IED that 'the use of the state's administrative apparatus introduced partiality into the electoral process, especially against those considered by the government to be anti-establishment' (IED 1997: 11). The KANU government's refusal to allow Oginga Odinga and his former KPU colleagues to contest the 1983 and the 1988 elections is a good example of how the voters' right to choose was limited under the single party regime. Yet these politicians were very highly regarded in their constituencies but were barred from contesting the elections on the pretext that they had been disloyal to the Kenyatta regime. This was so despite the fact that Jomo Kenyatta had been replaced in 1978.

Voter turnout in Kenyan elections

Voter behaviour in Kenya has been influenced by a variety of factors. As Table 2 shows, under the one party regime, voter turnout was quite low while it was quite high in the multiparty elections of 1992, 1997 and 2002. Two factors could account for this. First, in the case of the 1992 elections, there was considerable excitement with the return to multiparty elections. The country had just reintroduced multiparty politics after almost 30 years of one party authoritarian rule and after a very intense struggle by pro-democracy forces. Kenyans were thus determined to express their newly won political freedom in a massive turnout at the polls. Second, Kenyans were hopeful that the elections would be free and fair, and that their vote would influence the outcome of the election. In the case of the 1997 elections, however, there was a large voter turnout because the electorate was determined to vote out the KANU regime which they blamed for the worsening economy and poor governance. Furthermore, the constitutional amendments on the conduct of elections that had been successfully negotiated by the Interparties Parliamentary Group (IPPG) in that year assured the electorate that the elections would be free and fair.

Table 2: Presidential voter turn-out in the 1992, 1997 & 2002 elections

Province	Year	Reg. Voters	Voted	% Turnout
Nairobi	1992			
	1997	720305	375616	52.1
	2002	884135	371371	42
Rift Valley	1992			
	1997	2145505	1661546	77.4
	2002	2383586	1463597	61.4
Eastern	1992			
	1997	1344511	1065626	79.3
	2002	1642454	1067241	65.0
Coast	1992			
	1997			
	2002	879807	376603	42.8
Nyanza	1992			
	1997	1334827	932990	69.9
	2002	1555986	900621	57.9
Western	1992			
	1997	1019455	721483	70.8
	2002	1202104	695517	57.9
N. Eastern	1992			
	1997	165782	93398	56.3
	2002	216336	125859	58.2
Central	1992			
	1997	1340186	1012551	75.6
	2002	1611590	1033339	64.1
National	1992			
	1997	8773177	6278932	71.6
	2002	10375998	6034148	58.2

Source: Compiled from records of the Electoral Commission of Kenya.

The high voter turnout in the 2002 elections may also be explained by the same set of factors. As early as 1992 Kenyans had called for the unity of the opposition as the most effective strategy for removing KANU from power. However, the opposition remained divided until the 2002 elections. The achievement of opposition unity in the run up to the 2002 elections encouraged the electorate to turn out in large numbers. Second, it was clear that the incumbent president was barred from seeking another term by a constitutional amendment in late 1991 which restricted presidential tenure to two five years terms. The voters were thus determined to influence who would become their next president. Third, prior to the 2002 elections, the leading politicians from a number of major ethnic communities had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by which they agreed to form a coalition government if they won the elections, and also equally share cabinet positions between the two major political groupings in the coalition, namely the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK)² and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).³ This is the arrangement that gave birth to the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) which went on to win the 2002 elections. The MoU also provided that the President, the Vice President, second and third Deputy Prime Ministers would come from NAK, while the LDP was to get the positions of Vice President, the Prime Minister, the first Deputy Prime Minister and Senior-coordinating Minister.⁴ This power-sharing arrangement, based on ethno-regional representation, generated considerable excitement and interest among the electorate as it gave each of the major ethnic groups a stake in any future Kenya government. The high voter turnout was to ensure that this arrangement bore results.

A few observations about Table 2 are necessary. First, even though the figures are for presidential elections they also reflect votes cast for the parliamentary and local elections, because presidential, parliamentary and local elections are held simultaneously. The second observation is that even though the turnout for 1997 is higher than that of 2002, the figures for both elections are quite high by international standards.

Factors influencing Kenyan elections

Electoral behaviour is a function of a variety of factors. The factors that influence the electoral process differ from country to country. Voter behaviour in a multiparty environment also differs from voter behaviour in a single party environment. Also the influence of such factors may be more pronounced in some constituencies than the others.

Elections in Kenya are highly politicised. They are the occasion when virtually every adult Kenyan shows keen interest in the country's public affairs, thereby exposing themselves to a wide range of influences. This segment of

the paper focuses on ethnicity, clanism, religion, party affiliation, gender, the management of elections, corruption including the use of money, level of political awareness, and the constitutional and legal environment in which elections are conducted.

Ethnicity and political party support

There is consensus in the literature on the influence of ethnicity in Kenyan politics. (Oyugi 1997; Jonyo 2002, 2003). According to Jonyo, the reference point in Kenyan politics is ethnicity disguised as party politics (Jonyo 2002: 96). Oyugi (1997) who has conducted several studies on ethnicity and elections in Kenya observes that: 'Many Kenyans believe that tribalism (read: ethnicity) is a canker which is deeply lodged in the Kenyan body politic. Yet the same people are usually reluctant to make it a subject of discussion across ethnic boundaries because of its emotive force: it is always other people's problem and not ours' (Oyugi 1997: 41). The effect of ethnicity on voter behaviour and consequently election outcome is most evident in presidential elections, in parliamentary elections held in constituencies encompassing settled areas,⁵ and in urban constituencies. Ever since the restoration of multiparty politics in 1992 virtually every major ethnic group⁶ has fielded a presidential candidate and gone on to vote for one of their own. This has been driven mainly by the belief that having one of your own as president increases the community's chances of attracting more public resources for development. As Jonyo (2003) observes:

The ethnic elites from the president's ethnic group are assured of plum jobs from which huge kickbacks are drawn and lucrative government contracts won. Moreover, these elites can borrow big loans from state owned banks and other friendly banks without the threat of penalties for defaulting on the repayment, since they enjoy protection against drastic recovery mechanisms. (Jonyo 2003: 166).

It is important, however, to note that not everybody or even the majority of people from the president's community benefit from the patronage politics associated with the presidency. In most cases it is a few individuals from the community who are appointed to high public offices. Selected elites from other ethnic groups are also given appointments to public positions out of political expediency. Yet each ethnic group tends to vote for one of their own, especially for the office of the president. Significantly, whenever a person from an ethnic group outside the president's own is sacked from public office, the dismissal is interpreted as punishment for the whole ethnic group and a loss of access to development projects or presidential patronage.

The power of ethnicity in Kenyan elections was perhaps best demonstrated in the ethnic clashes that rocked parts of the country in the run up to the 1992 and 1997 elections. In 1992 members of the Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya communities living in some parts of the Rift Valley Province were violently evicted from their settlements by the Kalenjin and Masai communities who claimed to be the indigenous and therefore rightful owners of all lands in the Rift Valley. The rhetoric notwithstanding, that action was a politically strategic move designed to displace the so-called alien communities so that they would not register for the elections scheduled for December 1992. Rift Valley was home of the then President and also a KANU stronghold. By contrast, the target communities were mainly supporters of the opposition parties. They had to be disenfranchised lest they voted against KANU's Daniel Arap Moi to deny him the 25 percent of the votes cast in the Rift Valley province.⁷ One report indicates that 'at least 300,000 Kenyans were displaced in the so-called KANU zones in the rift Valley... and that most of them were not able to participate in the elections' (IED Report 1997 Election : 181). The clashes in the Coast province in the run up to the 1997 elections targeted the upcountry people, primarily Kikuyu and Luo residents. These communities were viewed as opposed to KANU, and residing in an area which was then considered a KANU stronghold. As in 1992, the regime hardliners were behind the attacks, a fact that was underscored by orders to the army not to intervene (Chege and Barkan 1999: 189).

Closely related to ethnicity in shaping electoral behaviour and election outcomes is party politics. The importance of political parties in Kenya's electoral process is underscored first by the fact that to be a candidate for elections one has to be a member of a political party. The current constitution has strengthened the role of political parties by not recognising independent election candidates. Nationwide political parties were first formed in Kenya during the dying years of colonial rule.⁸ The dominant parties were KANU and KADU. In the first elections held in 1963, KANU won and was able to retain power until 2002, when it was voted out by a coalition of parties known as the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). The colonial political movements that later transformed themselves into political parties were ethnic-based, at least at two levels. First the political parties were conglomerates of district-based political and welfare parties and associations, each of which had a tribal membership. It was these ethnic associations and organisations that came together to form the then two dominant political parties, namely KANU and KADU in 1960. As a consequence, KANU drew the bulk of its support from the Luo, Kikuyu and Kamba tribal political organisations. KADU on the other hand drew most of its support from the Luhya, Kalenjin and Maasai tribal political organisations or welfare associations. The ethnic character of

political associations in the pre-independence period has continued to influence party politics even after independence. This influence is very visible during election time when each party enjoys open support from members of a particular ethnic group, usually the group whose son or daughter leads the party or founded it.

Ethnic-based party formations have often been employed as a strategy to bargain for power. In the run up to the 2002 elections, for example, ethnic groups used their parties to bargain with regard to the power-sharing formula that led to the signing of the now infamous Memorandum⁹ of Understanding (MoU) among the different political parties that make up the National Rainbow Coalition. The Luo community used the LDP to bargain with the other NARC member parties while the Luhya used Ford Kenya. The Kalenjin have recently stated publicly that they wish to form a party of their own in readiness for the next general elections scheduled for 2007, having concluded that their political fortunes would be enhanced if they had a party of their own. Other regional politicians appear to have been inspired by this bold declaration by the Kalenjin to give serious consideration to the possibility of forming their own political parties in readiness for the 2007 elections.¹⁰

There is clear evidence, especially since the restoration of multiparty elections, that Kenyans vote along ethnic lines – that Kenya's ethnic communities tend to vote for the political party they consider their own. This was evident in the 1992 and the 1997 elections. In the 1992 elections all Luo MPs won on the ticket of FORD Kenya, a party that was then led by Oginga Odinga, a Luo. In 1997 all but two¹¹ Luo MPs won on the ticket of the National Development Party (NDP) led by Raila Odinga, also a Luo. By this time Oginga Odinga had died and the leadership of FORD Kenya had gone to Michael Wamalwa, a Bukusu, after a fierce leadership struggle with Odinga's son, Raila. The Bukusu occupy Bungoma. As a result of this most MPs from Bungoma district were elected on a FORD Kenya ticket while, as already mentioned, the Luo had shifted their support to the NDP led by one of their own. KANU obtained most of its support from the Rift valley province where Moi, its chairman, originated. The Democratic Party (DP) led by Kibaki on the other hand, got most of its support from Central Province, Kibaki's home province.¹² The ethnicisation of party support is due partly to the fact that elections in Kenya have, on the whole, not been issue-based.

The influence of ethnicity was again evident in the 2002 elections, but in a different manner from the dimension it had taken in the previous elections. As explained above, the MoU was the framework for ethnic bargaining. On the basis of the agreements reached between leaders of the various ethnic-based political parties, and spelt out in the MoU, the electorate was willing to vote for the presidential candidate chosen to lead the NARC of the united

opposition irrespective of the candidate's ethnic background. It was on the basis of this that Kibaki was able to get overwhelming support as the opposition presidential candidate. It is also significant that the Kalenjin voted overwhelmingly for Moi's proxy candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta, who contested the elections as the KANU presidential candidate. The Kalenjin must have hoped that they would be able to control Uhuru Kenyatta should he win the elections. Also, the Kikuyu from Kiambu district voted overwhelmingly for Uhuru Kenyatta precisely because he was a Kikuyu from that district. All the MPs from Kiambu, except one, also stood on a KANU ticket. Furthermore, all the Kisii MPs, for example, were from FORD PEOPLE; a party led by Simeon Nyachae, himself a Kisii. Nyachae was a presidential candidate and the Kisii had hoped that he would win the presidency; hence their solid support for him and the candidates on his party ticket. They must have considered that he would mobilise enough political leverage for bargaining even if he lost the polls. The ethnicisation of party politics explains why candidates sponsored by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by Raila Odinga, a Luo, represent all the 18 parliamentary constituencies in Luo Nyanza. Odinga is regarded as a champion of Luo interests at the national level. The Abagusii too have all their MPs from the Ford People's Party. Similarly virtually all the Kalenjin MPs are from KANU, the party that ruled the country for almost forty years, twenty four of which were under Moi, himself a Kalenjin.

In very rural constituencies a combination of ethnicity, clanism, religion and the influence of individual politicians shapes the choices made by the electorate. A candidate from a particular clan will tend to get votes from his or her clan. In some constituencies members of a particular religious group or sect tend to support the candidate who belongs to their group. Although the influence of such factors is not easy to determine, it is an open secret that some candidates base their decision to contest particular seats on the prospect of securing the support of members of their clan, religious group or sect, etc. This is usually the case where a candidate hails from a large or the largest clan in the constituency. In the run up to the 2002 elections, for example, the mainstream daily newspapers in Kenya gave such primordial identities as a major factor that would favour or disadvantage certain candidates in particular constituencies.¹³ In Ugenya constituency, the current MP enjoys almost total support from members of the Legio Maria sect of which he is the Archbishop.

In many cases other factors combine with religion, clanism and ethnicity. In Luoland many MPs were elected mainly because of the support from the influential Raila Odinga, who is highly respected in the Luo community. He has been able to use this support to sponsor candidates in different constituencies in Luoland just as his late father Jaramogi Odinga did.

The MP for Ugenya, for example, won the election due largely to the perception that Raila supported him. The alternative candidate, Nyamodi, has had a history of false starts and so would not be trusted. Personality is however not a major factor in many constituencies or regions of the country.

Gender and elections

Gender did not become a significant factor in Kenyan elections until the 1990s. Up to that time it was probably assumed by all and sundry that politics was an exclusive male domain. Many considered the few women that ventured into politics in the 1960s and even 1970s as an aberration. Also, there is no evidence that such women engaged in electoral politics on a gender platform: they simply considered themselves as politicians like their male counterparts. Since the late 1990s however, a combination of factors has brought gender to the forefront of Kenya's electoral politics.

One of the factors that brought gender to the fore of electoral politics is the activities of women's organisations that became prominent following the opening up of the political space in the early 1990s. Maria Nzomo has argued that until then 'Kenyan women's struggle for... empowerment has (been)... constrained by the absence of a strong women's movement... Women should therefore, strengthen their organizations and intensify their effort to bring about substantial changes'. (Nzomo 1993: 14-15) The women's organisations that have effected changes in Kenyan politics include the National Commission on the Status of Women, (NCSW), the Women Political Caucus, and the Gender Forum. They sensitised women to the need to participate in electoral politics as a way of enhancing their influence on public affairs. Through their effort women demanded affirmative action. For example, they demanded that 30 percent or one-third of all parliamentary seats be reserved for women, which has now been incorporated in the draft constitution that is being debated at the National Constitutional Conference. As a result of these efforts gender has become a major electoral issue since the 1980s, with many more women venturing into electoral politics. Further, many women have been attracted to local government elections. Table 3 shows the number of women who have vied for parliamentary elections and those who have been elected to parliament since independence in 1963.

A few observations must be made about these data. First, apart from the sudden drop in 1983 and 1988, the number of women candidates elected to parliament has generally been on the increase since 1969, when the first woman parliamentarian was elected. The number of successful women candidates picked up again in 1992 and has continued to rise since then, reaching its peak in the 2002 elections when eight women were elected to parliament from among the forty-four who contested. Their ranks increased by one in

January 2003 when another woman was elected in a by-election in Naivasha constituency, following the death of the incumbent MP who was her husband.

Table 3: Number of women candidates and those elected to parliament since 1963

Year	No of candidates	No Elected
1963	0	-
1969	6	1
1974	13	2
1979	15	3
1983	7	2
1988	6	2
1992	18	6
1997	48	5
2002	44	8

Source: Adopted from IED National Elections Data Book 1963-1997 and 2002 Electoral Commission records.

The first woman to be elected to parliament was from an urban constituency. In that year (1969) only one out of the six women candidates contested in a rural constituency. This may be due to the dominant patriarchal values in the rural areas that regard politics and public life in general as a male domain. Voters may also have found it difficult to vote for women candidates on the same grounds. By 1997 the participation of women in electoral politics had gained momentum: one woman, who is currently the Minister for Health, contested the presidency in that year and came fifth out of ten presidential candidates.

The following factors account for the increase in women parliamentarians. First, the success of the first candidate in the 1969 elections encouraged and inspired other women to contest subsequent elections. Second, many more women had been sensitised about their capacity to engage in public affairs equally with men. The restoration of multiparty politics gave them additional impetus. Civic education about gender equality was especially effective during the 2002 elections due largely to the work of NGOs such as the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), faith-based organisations such

as the Catholic Church, and the National Council of Christians of Kenya (NCCCK) which began in earnest in the 1990s. Political programmes such as Engendering the Political Process (EPP) were also sponsored by a number of donors including DFID under its political empowerment programme just prior to the 2002 elections. This led to a fairly high level of voter awareness in the general public and particularly among women, and considerably influenced many women to contest the 2002 parliamentary elections.¹⁴

The greater involvement of women in elections is also the result of the aggressive media campaigns that supported civic and voter education. The media contributed to civic education in at least three ways. First, they disseminated information and sensitised the public about their political and civil rights as well as civic duties, including the need to contest elections and vote a party of their choice into power. Second, the media exposed the weaknesses and failures of the incumbent party, and enabled the electorate to make judgments about the performance of their government. Finally, the media helped foster the growth of a discursive realm in which issues of national and local concerns were debated in an open and free manner (Hyden and Leslie 2003: 12).

Management of elections

The quality and outcome of Kenyan elections have been influenced greatly by the manner in which the entire electoral process was managed. The management of Kenya's elections is the responsibility of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK). The establishment of the ECK as a statutory body was premised on the assumption that an independent electoral body would ensure the conduct of free and fair elections. This assumption has, however, turned out to be false as complaints about election irregularities have continued under its aegis. The major complaint was that the election playing field was tilted in favour of the ruling party KANU and its candidates. Reports of administrative incompetence in the conduct of elections have also been common. In short, an independent electoral body is crucial for the conduct of free and fair elections; but it does not guarantee that the elections will at any cost be fairly managed.

An equally critical factor is the administrative competence of the electoral body itself. Competence is a function of several factors, including the level of training of election officials, adequate financial resources for the electoral body, and adequate administrative arrangements for handling elections. In short, for the ECK to be efficient it must have adequate human and financial capacity.

Administrative inefficiency in elections have taken the following forms: late opening of polling stations, late commencement of actual balloting, mix up of ballot papers, insufficiency of ballot papers at some polling stations,

missing names from the voters' register on election day, and mismanagement of election results (see various IED and ECK reports). Part of the ECK's problem stems from the fact that it relies heavily on the state to facilitate its work. It relies on the government to transport both election materials and some of the election officials. The Treasury funds its operations, including the conduct of elections and by-elections. The perennial complaint is that the government does not give the ECK adequate funds, and that it has to rely on the staff of the provincial administrations to carry out some of its duties. This has often raised doubts about the independence of the ECK, because the loyalty of such officials goes first to the president or government, and only secondly to the ECK. The ECK's reliance on the state police to maintain law and order and prevent election-related violence has also raised concerns about its neutrality. As evidenced by the numerous elections-related violent incidents and the failure by the police to take action either to prevent the occurrence of violence or punish those who engage in violence, the police have not always been able to sustain the confidence of the public regarding the maintenance of law and order during elections.

Constitutional and legal framework of elections

A number of scholars (Mwagiru 2002; Mulei n.d.; Wanjala 2002) have argued that most of the laws governing elections in Kenya do not facilitate free and fair elections. According to Wanjala (2002), the law cannot provide the normative and procedural framework for conducting democratic elections, because the concept of free and fair elections has never been part of the country's electoral jurisprudence. The current constitution gives the incumbent president too much power, which has been used to frustrate the opposition. Second, the constitution, from which the electoral laws are derived, is best suited to a one party system of government. There is therefore a need for far-reaching reforms of the electoral laws (Wanjala 2002: 115).

The agitation against laws governing elections reached their peak when in 1996 Kenya's civil society resorted to mass action to force the government to reform the constitution as a condition for supporting the 1997 elections. The government yielded by establishing the IPPG after persuading some members of the opposition to work with their KANU counterparts to institute minimum constitutional reforms. The reforms focused mainly on the provisions affecting elections. Despite these reforms KANU retained power in the 1997 elections albeit with a much smaller margin than was the case in 1992. The country is currently debating a new constitution, which, it is hoped, will be an improvement on the existing one and the source of electoral laws that will create an environment conducive to free and fair elections.

Conclusion

Kenya has come a long way in its efforts to institutionalise democracy and good governance. Elections have played an important role in this process. They have, at least, provided the masses with the opportunity to freely choose their representatives. Hence, since 1992 Kenyans have voted in large numbers in the hope that their vote would make a difference. This was not possible in elections held under the single party regime. The factors that influence voters' behaviour and electoral outcomes are varied and complex. Gender has become part of this complexity, and is bound to have a greater impact on future elections, especially with the incorporation of affirmative action in the proposed constitution (Wanyande 2003).

Notes

1. The discrepancy in the numbers in the Table is due to the fact that some petitions were withdrawn before they were heard. Secondly it is significant that mass petitions against KANU in 1992 were rejected.
2. NAK was made up of about 13 different political opposition parties and had settled on Kibaki, Wamalwa and Ngilu as their opposition presidential, Vice-President and Prime Minister respectively.
3. LDP was made up of KANU members of parliament including some cabinet ministers who abandoned the party to join the opposition NAK. The two parties teamed up to form NARC.
4. The MoU stipulated that these positions would go to the politicians named below in the order in which they appear: Mwai Kibaki, Kijana Wamalwa, Charity Ngilu, Kipruto Arap Kirwa, Kalonzo Musyoka, Raila Odinga, George Saitoti and Moody Awori.
5. Settled areas are those areas formerly occupied by Europeans who upon independence sold their farms to the government. The government in turn subdivided these farms and sold them to Africans from different ethnic groups. The settled areas are therefore multiethnic in composition.
6. These are the numerically large ethnic groups such as the Kikuyu, the Luo, the Kalenjin the Luhya and the Kamba, etc.
7. The current constitution requires that to be elected president, a candidate must obtain 25 percent of the votes cast in five of the eight administrative provinces into which the country is divided.
8. From about 1952, following the proscription of KAU, which was a nationwide political party, nationwide parties were illegal. No political party formation was allowed until 1955 and even then only at the level of the district. This obtained until the state of emergency was lifted after which countrywide formations were allowed. This is when KANU and KADU were formed in 1960. Central province was however not allowed to have district political parties even after 1955. The MoU was not honoured after the new government came to power, leading to current mistrust among the coalition partners.

9. Failure to honour the MoU has since caused a lot of tension suspicion and mistrust among the different parties that make up the coalition NARC.
10. In a conversation between the present author and a cabinet minister from the Coast province, the latter hinted that the people of the Coast region were also considering the formation of their own party to give them a strong bargaining power in national politics. This conversation took place on 6 February, 2004 as the minister and the present author were traveling from a retreat of the ruling NARC held at Mount Kenya Safari Club in Nanyuki. The minister was convinced that each region needed its own party.
11. Only James Orengo of Ugenya constituency and Joe Donde of Gem constituency were elected on a party ticket other than NDP. Orengo was elected because he, like Raila, was highly regarded by the Luo as a brave and courageous politician who could assist Raila at the national level. Donde on the other hand won due to a technical mistake made by NDP during nominations.
12. For details of how ethnic the voting for presidential candidates was, see reports of the 1997 elections by the IED, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the NCKK.
13. For detailed discussion on the factors that may influence elections in different constituencies see *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* newspapers. The discussion began in August 2002 up to the time of elections in December. The role of clanism was also given prominence by *The People* newspaper of 11/2/2004 in reference to the by-election in Kisumu West constituency to fill the vacancy left by the death of their MP Job Omino early in 2004.
14. This was the conclusion of an evaluation of the programme. The present author was also able to discuss the effects of the programme with the managers of the EPP.

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Race, Class and Voting Patterns in South Africa's Electoral System: Ten Years of Democracy¹

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Abstract

In the run up to South Africa's three national elections both academia and the media advocated that electoral behaviour would be informed by the race census thesis. This article challenges this dominant thesis by using evidence from post-apartheid South Africa's three general elections which suggests that the racial census thesis is not the only factor that determines and/or explains voter behaviour of the South African electorate. The indications are that significant sections of the electorate make rational choices during elections, and decide on the bases of information available to them that guides them to choose which party most closely represent their material and other interests. Therefore the article concludes that the link between racial/tribal identities and electoral behaviour is not strong enough and that opposition politicians who do not recognise this will continue to make the mistake of basing their electoral campaigns on crude racial assumptions about the South African electorate, resulting in failure to attract the support of a cross-section of the electorate. And the latter is bound to have negative consequences for the consolidation of democracy in the country.

Résumé

En Afrique du Sud, durant la période précédant les trois élections nationales, le monde académique et les media affirmaient que le comportement électoral de la population obéirait à la thèse du recensement social. Cet article remet en question cette thèse dominante en se servant d'exemples issus des trois élections générales

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de l'Afrique du Sud post-apartheid, qui montrent que la thèse du recensement social ne constitue pas l'unique facteur déterminant et/ou expliquant le comportement des électeurs sud-africains. Ces exemples indiquent que de larges portions de l'électorat effectuent des choix rationnels durant les élections et se prononcent en fonction des informations qu'ils reçoivent, qui les poussent ensuite vers le parti qui représente le mieux leurs intérêts matériels et autres. L'article conclut ainsi en affirmant que le lien entre identités raciales/tribales et comportement électoral n'est pas suffisamment fort et que les représentants de l'opposition qui ne reconnaissent pas ce fait continueront sur la mauvaise voie en basant leur campagne électorale sur de grossières hypothèses raciales relatives à l'électorat sud-africain. Le risque est qu'ils n'arriveront certainement pas ainsi à s'attirer le soutien d'un échantillon représentatif de l'électorat. En outre, ceci aura forcément des conséquences négatives sur la consolidation de la démocratie dans ce pays.

Introduction

The year, 2004, was South Africa's tenth year of democracy. The anniversary was an important moment for it enabled South Africans to reflect on where the country has come from and where it was going. This reflection was made even more urgent by the general election that was held in April 2004, which forced the ruling party and its opponents to contend over the track record of the government in the last decade. When the dust settled and the electorate had made its choice, South Africa's political landscape showed signs of continuity and discontinuity. The African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party, and the Democratic Alliance (DA), the official opposition, had consolidated their positions by increasing their electoral support by three to four percent. The New National Party (NNP), as a national party and the dominant party of the apartheid era, was almost extinguished, while the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) lost control of its power base, KwaZulu Natal (KZN), to the ANC. Above all, there was the new kid on the block, the Independent Democrats (ID), which made a surprisingly strong showing and signaled that it was going to be a thorn in the side of both the ANC and the DA.

In the weeks that followed, analysts attempting to account for the outcome of the election retreated to their time honoured explanation: race. Since the country's first democratic election, politicians, political scientists and commentators who have explained the voting patterns and behaviour of South Africa's electorate have concluded that South Africa's electoral outcomes are race-based.

The 'race census thesis' advances the view that voting patterns in South Africa resemble a prism of racialised politics because racial and ethnic political identities predominate among the citizenry, with blacks voting for 'black parties' and whites for 'white parties'. What this means is that South Africans

vote, not on the basis of their interests and opinions, but rather through the prism of ethnic and racial loyalties.

In the context of South Africa's history this thesis has gained considerable credence; but it is flawed on two principal grounds. First, the explanation is problematic for it treats race as an independent objective variable without considering that there exists strong overlaps between racial and class identities. Second it simply assumes that race is an independent causal factor in voting behaviour, entirely discounting the possibility that class or perhaps some intricate mix of race and class factors affect voting behaviour. In the light of these caveats, this article refutes the dominant thesis on the determinants of voting behaviour in South Africa using evidence from post-apartheid South Africa's three general elections.

The article begins with an analysis of the 1994 and 1999 general elections on the basis of two published articles, the first by Adam Habib and Rupert Taylor on political alliances and parliamentary opposition, and the second by Adam Habib and Sanusha Naidu on the character and significance of the coloured and Indian vote. We then analyse the outcome of the 2004 elections to confirm our claim that the race consensus thesis is tenable.

The 1994 and 1999 elections

The 1994 election was more of an exercise in political liberation. It seemed natural that the African National Congress (ANC) would emerge victorious since their credentials as liberators could not be challenged, especially among the black electorate and others who opposed the apartheid regime. What was also expected was that whites, especially Afrikaners, fearful of living under a black majority government, would safeguard their interests by either voting for the National Party or for conservative right wing parties like the Freedom Front. A similar pattern of voting was expected from the Indian and coloured electorate.

The 1999 election was underpinned by this racialised view of electoral behaviour. In the run-up to the elections political parties configured their electoral campaigns on the assumptions inherent in this racial census thesis. The opposition parties, particularly the Democratic Party (DP) and the New National Party (NNP)² 'prioritized... issues in relation to how particular issues correlated to the interests of their specific racial and ethnic group support as revealed in opinion poll data' (Taylor and Hoeane 1999: 133-44). What this led to was the racialisation of issues and a politics of exclusion along the following lines: the concerns of white South Africans were perceived to be mainly crime, policing, and public order while those of the Indian and coloured communities were seen to be 'not being black enough' and as a result not enjoying the benefits of the democratic dispensation. Such views led the DP

to advance the slogan: 'Fight Back', which was indicative of the party's desire to roll back the democratic gains which had been achieved so far. The DP's slogan and campaign strategy racialised politics and entrenched minority fears about the implications of Black majority rule.

The outcome of the 1999 elections saw white opposition parties, in particular the DP, gain most of its votes from minority groups. The DP's performance led to the unseating of the NNP as the official opposition party in the National Assembly; it thereafter tactically positioned itself as the party of choice amongst conservative Afrikaner, English, Indian and coloured voters. But, was the appeal of the DP among these groups, and its lack of support within the black community, the result of racialised thinking within the electorate?

Contesting the race census thesis³

Significant empirical evidence from public opinion surveys conducted after the 1994, and in the run-up to the 1999 elections tended to indicate that the attitude of South Africa's electorate was contrary to that assumed by this race thesis. In February 1998 the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA) released its first Public Opinion Service (POS) Report, which suggested that the South African electorate might not be as rigid and stagnant in its attitude as is conventionally assumed. Arguing that the mainstream assumption 'is partly based on the fact that most surveys only focus on voting intentions', the POS report distinguished between 'voting intentions' and 'partisan identification', and investigated the two in three surveys conducted in 1994, 1995, and 1997. IDASA continued the study in a series of opinion polls for the 1999 general elections. The overall results of the seven surveys, reported in Table 1, indicated that the proportion of the electorate that strongly identified with a party fell from 88 percent in 1994 to 43 percent in October/November 1998, and then climbed to 55 percent in April 1999. The number of independents increased from 12 percent in 1994 to 58 percent in October/November 1998, but fell back to 45 percent in April 1999. As at April 1999, 35 percent of African voters, 76 percent of white voters, 63 percent of coloured voters, and 83 percent of Indian voters saw themselves as independents. These figures were significantly lower compared to those registered six months earlier, particularly in the case of African voters, when some 50 percent saw themselves as independents.

Table 1: Party identification

	Sept-Oct 1994	Sept-Oct 1995	June-July 1997	Sept 1998	Oct-Nov 1998	Feb-March 1999	April 1999
Yes	88	58	58	45	43	50	55
No	12	37	37	53	55	46	41
Don't Know	4	4	3	3	3	3	

Source: Helen Taylor, Robert Mattes & Cherrel Africa, 'Party Support and Voting Intention (1V)', Press Release, 24 May 1999, in <http://www.idasa.org.za>

The results also indicated, as is reflected in Table 2, that the proportion of the electorate that strongly identified with the ANC decreased from 58 percent in 1994 to 34 percent in October/November 1998, and increased to 44 percent in April 1999. The NNP's support in the same period decreased from 15 percent to 3 percent.

Table 2: Party Identification over time

	Sept-Oct 1994	Sept-Oct 1995	June-July 1997	Sept 1998	Oct-Nov 1998	Feb-March 1999	April 1999
ANC	58	37	40	35	34	40	44
NNP	15	9	6	3	3	3	3
IFP	5	5	4	2	2	2	2
FF	2	1	1	<1	<1	<1	1
DP	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
PAC	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
UDM	NA	NA	1*	1	1	1	1
Other	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
Won't Say/ Confidential	3	2	2	<1	<1	1	<1
Independent	12	42	42	56	58	50	45

Source: Helen Taylor, Robert Mattes and Cherrel Africa, 'Party Support and Voting Intention (1V)', Press Release, 24 May 1999, in <http://www.idasa.org.za>.

* 1997 UDM figures refer to the combination of the scores for the National Consultative Forum (NCF) and the Process for a New Movement (PNM).

How do we explain the discrepancies between the electorate's party identification and voting intention, and what is the significance of the differences? The reduction in identification with the ANC and NNP between 1994 and 1999 suggests that these parties' electoral support is not as stable as was previously assumed. Support for the ANC among Blacks declined from 75 percent in 1994 to 45 percent in October/November 1998, and subsequently rose to 58 percent in April 1999. The NNP's support among whites dropped even more dramatically from 48 percent in 1994 to 5 percent in April 1999. The largest shift in voting patterns in both the African and white communities was in the direction of independent voters, with some 35 percent of Africans and 76 percent of whites declaring themselves as independents by April 1999. This fact, together with the slight drop in voting intentions for the ANC between 1994 and 1999 suggests that even though the electorate identified less with the ANC, it saw no serious alternative to it. As IDASA's Public Opinion Service report concluded, the stability in voting intentions was likely to continue in the short term; but the increase in the number of 'learners' and 'independents' created the potential for significant electoral shifts in the future.

Why, then, has this not happened? The primary reason for the lack of movement in this regard is that the major parliamentary opposition parties, because of their historical legacy and current election strategies, are identified with the interests of particular racial and ethnic groups. Rather than developing an electoral programme that attracts the support of diverse communities, the election strategies and programmes of these parties have concentrated on appealing to narrow sections of the electorate. The IFP, for instance, projected itself as the defender and representative of the Zulu people. By so doing, it reduced its appeal for non-Zulu independents. The NNP and Democratic Party (DP),⁴ historically seen as serving the interests of Afrikaner and English-speaking whites respectively, developed electoral strategies and programmes that targeted white, coloured, and Indian sections of the electorate. Furthermore, they denied themselves the opportunity to appeal to African voters who constitute, by far, the largest chunk of independent voters.

The racial census thesis can again be contested using evidence on voting patterns among the 'coloured' and 'Indian' electorate. Both groups of voters were the subject of much speculation in all three elections. The Indian and coloured voters were considered as a homogenous bloc, and therefore inclined to vote in clearly defined patterns. The most sophisticated expression of this view suggested that coloureds and Indians would be more comfortable voting for the DA, NNP, and Minority Front (MF) because of the need to 'secure their intermediate position in the racial hierarchy constructed by apartheid' (James, Calinguire and Cullinan 1996: 136) Accordingly, these parties played

Table 3: Voting Intention (%)

	Sept-Oct 1994	May-June 1995	Nov 1995	May-June 1996	Nov 1996	May-June 1997	Nov 1997	Mar 1998	July 1998	Sept- 1998	Oct-Nov 1998	Feb-Mar 1999	April 1999
ANC	61	64	64	63	61	62	58	54	57	51	54	59	60
NNP	16	15	14	13	13	15	12	10	9	10	9	8	7
DP	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	5	6	7	5	6	7
IFP	5	2	3	5	6	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	3
PAC	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	1
UDM	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	4	5	5	2	3	2	2
FF	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
FA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	+NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1
UCDP	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	>1	1	<1	1
ACDP	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	1	1	1
AZAPO	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
CP	<1	2	1	1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	0
Other	<1	1	1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	1	1
Don't know	12	10	8	11	11	12	12	16	14	21	19	17	15

Source: Helen Taylor, Robert Mattes & Cherrel Africa, 'Party Support and Voting Intention (1V)', Press Release, 24 May 1999, in <http://www.idasa.org.za>.

the race and ethnic card in the hope of winning Indian and coloured voters to their side. The DA promised to defend Indian and coloured interests against African ones, while the MF and the NNP promised to make a deal with the African majority so as to get minority communities to share a piece of the national pie. This race game was also played by the ANC in both 1994 and 1999 when its electoral campaign was based on attempts to demonstrate that it was the best party to cater for Indian and coloured interests (defined as cultural interests). There is a section within the ANC that is still disposed to playing this game by constantly alluding to cultural and language concerns of Indian and coloured voters.

A study of the 'Indian' and 'coloured' vote in the 1999 election (see Habib and Naidu 1999: 189-199), however, showed that these parties' assumptions about the electorate of these communities were not valid. The study introduced 'social status' as a variable into the analysis, and thereby exposed the significant heterogeneity among Indian and coloured voters. Tables 4 and 5, which show electoral support for parties in the 1999 elections in selected suburbs and townships with high proportions of Indian and coloured voters, reveal distinct correlations between different income groups and voting behaviour. Areas where the majority of residents have a monthly household income below R2,500 were in most cases decisively won by the DP and NNP, while more affluent areas or communities were won by the ANC. The only exceptions to this trend were Heathfield in the Western Cape, Reservoir Hills in KwaZulu Natal and Laudium in Gauteng. The deviation from the norm, as shown in the latter two cases, can be partly explained by the fact that both suburbs have large informal settlements with predominantly black African populations, which increased the proportion of poorer residents and simultaneously inflated electoral support for the ANC. In any case, given the fact that the vast majority of coloured and Indian households receive incomes less than R2,500, it should not be surprising that class patterns of voting would appear as racial.

In a study of the 1994 elections in the Western Cape, Robert Mattes, Hermann Giliomee and Wilmot James identified significant correlations between party support and social status or income. The Market Opinion surveys were conducted between December 1993 and February 1994, and concluded that 'among coloured voters the NP turned out to be the party of the unemployed and underemployed, with the ANC doing its best among fully employed workers'. (Mattes, Giliomee and James 1996: 36) Based on data from a survey conducted by the Institute of Democracy in South Africa in 1995, Mattes (1995) arrived at similar conclusions. He noted that over 60 percent of coloured people who earned less than R1,599 identified with the NNP, while the ANC narrowly eclipsed the NNP among those coloured voters

earning in excess of R3, 500 per month. Also, 60 percent of Indian households with an income of less than R1,000 identified with the NNP, while the ANC surpassed the NNP with 38.4 percent of support among middle-class respondents.

Conventional wisdom suggests that workers and poorer classes in society would support parties to the left of the political spectrum, while the middle class and more affluent strata would support parties on the right. The reasons are obvious. While the former have a material interest in fundamentally changing the political and socio-economic arrangements of society, the latter prefer the status quo. In South Africa, the effect of this logic would mean tremendous working class support for the ANC while the DA and NNP would benefit from middle and upper class vote. In practice the more privileged classes vote for the ANC while the disadvantaged tend to vote for white minority parties – the DA and NNP.

How do we explain this paradox? It would appear that the reluctance of lower income Indian and coloured people to vote for the ANC stems from their material vulnerability in the post-apartheid economy. Attitudinal surveys have demonstrated that the concerns of the Indian working class are exactly the same as those of the African working class: unemployment, crime, and lack of access to housing, water, electricity and social welfare. But the point of departure is that unlike the African working class who are more optimistic about the material future, the Indian and coloured working class is far less confident.

Two sets of policies tend to inform these negative attitudes among Indian and coloured working class voters. The first is affirmative action. Indubitably, affirmative action is necessary to equalise the playing field and correct past discriminatory policies and practices. Yet it is perceived to impact adversely on the low-income groups within the Indian and coloured communities. It is argued that these groups have become vulnerable because of their low levels of skills, education and training, which make them easily expendable when companies and institutions are confronted with the challenge of improving their racial profile through affirmative action. By contrast, affirmative action policies have much less negative impact on upper income persons in the Indian and coloured communities in particular; because such individuals are either self-employed or have sufficiently higher levels of skills and training to make them indispensable. In fact, affirmative action policies in the 1990s have expanded the commercial and professional opportunities available to these groups, resulting in exponential increases in their private income and wealth since 1994.

The consequences of affirmative action have been compounded by the application of a neoliberal macroeconomic policy. Prior to 1994, the ANC

advocated an economic policy, which promised a state interventionist programme that would expand jobs, narrow the levels of economic inequality, and increase the poorer communities' access to the provision of social goods (housing, education, health etc). These promises were dropped when the government adopted a neoliberal economic policy (set out in the policy document called GEAR), which had the effect of increasing unemployment, reducing economic opportunities available to the poor, and creating a crisis in the delivery of social services to the poor. The impact has been that working class communities across the racial divide have been pitted against each other over the issue of access to the dwindling economic and social opportunities in the country. The Indian and coloured working class feel the most vulnerable, which accounts for their reluctance to vote for the ANC.

The policy alternatives that are offered by the parliamentary opposition appeal to sections of the White, coloured and Indian communities, especially the working class, who are reluctant to support the ANC because of their material vulnerability in the post-apartheid society which is being restructured through the simultaneous application of affirmative action and neoliberal economic policies. In the dominant market environment where the logic is unbridled competition, the political parties have resorted to playing the *swart gevaar* tactic, promising in their different ways to protect minority interests.

Explaining the 2004 electoral outcome

Have the results of the 2004 elections in any way undermined our argument against the race consensus thesis? As Table 6 shows, the ANC achieved an even more commanding lead with almost 70 percent of the support at the national level, becoming the largest party in all nine provinces. A further analysis of the 2004 election results provides additional evidence to repudiate the racial census thesis. We cite two pieces of evidence from the 2004 elections. First the 2004 elections saw the ANC make significant inroads into the Indian and coloured communities in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) and the Western Cape. It must be noted that the racial census thesis assumed that the communities reflecting a racialised group interest, would vote against what is perceived as a black ANC party. But statistics drawn from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) suggest that this was not the case. In Phoenix, a large working class Indian township which is on the outskirts of Durban, the ANC was the biggest winner; it increased its performance at the polls from 8.9 percent in 1999 to 25.4 percent in 2004. The DA, on the other hand, which had significant support in the area during the 1999 elections of 38.5 percent, only managed to capture one of the 31 voting districts in 2004.⁵ Moreover, its overall support in the township fell from 38.5 percent to 25 percent. Similar trends were recorded in Chatsworth and other working class

'Indian' townships while the ANC consolidated its strength in more middle class 'Indian' suburbs where it always enjoyed support. In the Western Cape, a similar trend among the working class 'coloured' voters was recorded in favour of the ANC. The result is that the ANC remained the largest player in the province and, together with the NNP, constituted a comfortable majority there.

The second example, relates to the IFP. The IFP is, of course, a Zulu-based party appealing through Zulu nationalism for electoral support mainly in KZN. The outcome of the 2004 elections contradicts the view that the Zulus in KZN would vote overwhelmingly for the IFP. The ANC garnered more than 47 percent of the vote, which made it the largest single political party in KwaZulu Natal and further raised the spectre that the IFP, whose support base lies in the rural areas of the province, was a spent force. In any case, the elections show categorically that voter preferences in KZN were informed, as they were elsewhere in the country, by material and other national concerns; and not by race or tribe.

Conclusion

The dominant paradigm in political science in South Africa has, for much of post-apartheid history, explained political and electoral activity in racial terms. And this has informed the campaign strategies of many of the larger opposition parties. The foregoing analyses of attitudinal surveys as well as the 1994, 1999 and 2004 elections have established conclusively that the racial census thesis, as a paradigm for explaining the voting behavior of the South African electorate, is severely flawed. The indications are that significant sections of the electorate make rational choices during elections, and decide on the bases of information available to them. They are guided by such calculations to decide which party most closely represents their material and other interests.

This does not suggest that considerations of race do not play a role in South Africa's elections. It would be unreasonable to assume that they do not. But the link between racial/tribal identities and electoral behaviour is not strong enough. As long as opposition politicians do not recognise this, they will continue to make the mistake of basing their electoral campaigns on crude racial assumptions about the South Africa's electorate, resulting in failure to attract the support of a cross-section of the electorate. A weak opposition is bound to have negative consequences for the consolidation of democracy in the country. For, as long as there is no viable opposition party to keep the governing party on its toes, so long will the lines of accountability between state elites and the citizenry remain, at best, tenuous.

Notes

1. This paper was developed from two earlier articles; namely, Adam Habib and Sanusha Naidu: 'Election '99: Was there a 'Coloured' and 'Indian' Vote?', *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, November 1999 and Adam Habib and Rupert Taylor: 'Political Alliances and Parliamentary Opposition in Post-Apartheid South Africa', in *Democratization*, 2001.
2. The National Party renamed itself the New National Party in 1997 in the hope that such reinvention would shed its old apartheid image and enable it to garner more support among the electorate.
3. The following analysis is based on Adam Habib and Rupert Taylor (2001: 1).
4. In 2000 the DP formed an alliance with the NNP in order to consolidate their stance as the opposition. This coalition became known as the Democratic Alliance (DA).
5. Buddy Naidu, 2004, 'Why Indians ditched the DA?', *The Sunday Times Extra*, April 18.

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Political Representation in Africa: Towards a Conceptual Framework*

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Abstract

Political representation as a central component of democratic governance is a key challenge in the African quest for democratic development. Accordingly, this article reviews theories of political representation. On the basis of the review and subsequent critique of existing theories, I suggest some areas that require attention from African scholars, civil society, political leaders and policy-makers. I argue that the responsiveness of the political system and public policy to the needs and aspirations of the African people would be considerably dependent on an inclusive system that gives ordinary people a voice in governance and policy choices.

Résumé

La représentation politique en tant que composante centrale de la gouvernance démocratique constitue un défi majeur au processus de développement démocratique. Cet article analyse les théories de la représentation politique. Sur la base de cette analyse et de la critique qui est faite des théories existantes, je propose quelques domaines qui méritent toute l'attention des universitaires des universitaires, de la société civile, des dirigeants politiques et décideurs du continent africain. J'affirme par la suite que la réactivité du système politique et des politiques publiques aux besoins et aspirations des populations africaines dépend de l'instauration d'un système inclusif permettant au citoyen de se faire entendre au niveau de la gouvernance et des choix politiques.

Introduction and background

A distinguishing feature of democratic governance is that the electorate chooses leaders through regular, multiparty and competitive elections, which are seen as the primary mechanisms for political representation. In Africa,

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the success rate in achieving this has been mixed. Often military rule; one person rule; despotic rule; ethnic conflicts (due partly to marginalisation of minority groups); low participation of women, youth and the disabled; weak civil society, and patronage relationships are prominent features of Africa's political space. Africa's political elites use control of government for primitive capital accumulation – looting of the state coffers for personal gains and party political interest, especially by the incumbent party. As a consequence, the contest for political power has been marked by violence, intimidation, bribery and corruption.

The history of political representation in independent Africa has been characterised by election rigging and disputes over the outcomes of elections, leading often to political instability. This sorry state of affairs has been compounded by the absence of the institutions of horizontal accountability, such as independent electoral commissions, that are necessary conditions for proper political representation. And where such bodies exist, with few exceptions like South Africa and Botswana, they lack the capacity to conduct free and fair elections.

At another level, institutions of traditional rulers continued to exist side by side with institutions of elected representatives. This in some cases has led to an ambiguity in the roles of the former and conflicts between both institutions that see themselves as representative of their people. Some would argue that traditional rulers should become irrelevant in a democracy. Coupled with this is the view that they are not accountable and have hindered social and economic development. In fact they are described as parasitic, feeding on the wealth that would have been used for development.

The decentralisation of government in many countries in Africa has meant that regional and local governments have emerged as important arenas of political participation. These levels of governance are providers of basic social services and infrastructure. However, local government councillors and officials lack capacity to meet the new responsibilities being entrusted to them, as well as to represent their people effectively. They also lack the skills and knowledge to set implementable goals, undertake financial planning and human resource development, consult with local communities and promote sustainable development.

Across Africa, there is a low representation of women in decision-making structures and processes in representative organs. As a result, issues that affect women specifically are marginalised in public policy.

In postcolonial Africa, civil society organisations have mushroomed. But these organisations have not been able to fulfill their developmental and democratic roles due to several factors, such as a lack of internal democracy, lack of financial sustainability, inability to articulate their demands, limited re-

search skills and fragmentation. In addition, citizens and citizens' organisations are marginalised in the formulation and implementation of public policies. Hence there are very few deliberative mechanisms for government to dialogue with stakeholders to seek consensus on social and economic policies. Where these exist, they are ad hoc and often lack organisational and research capacities to facilitate consensus on social and economic policies. Consequently, there is an absence of a shared vision of national transformation and lack of credibility of adopted policies. This undermines the development potential of the continent.

Overarching all these issues are the additional problems raised by a currently dominant economic paradigm that is predicated on market liberalism, which conceives of citizens as users, consumers and clients. This paradigm recasts the nature of the social contract between elected representatives and civil servants, especially at local government level, and the electorate. The former basically see their role as that of ensuring economic competitiveness, hence access by citizens to basic services is all too frequently dependent on ability to pay, not on citizenship itself.

It is in recognition of these problems that there is a need by African scholars and policy-makers alike to focus on political representation, with the view of (1) monitoring the state of political representation in the continent, and (2) to engage in advocacy and capacity building to overcome weaknesses in political representation. These are intended to promote the goals and objectives of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) and its programmes, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

This paper therefore has the following two main objectives:

- To develop a conceptual framework on political representation;
- To derive operational indicators/variables as a basis for future research and implementation

In order to achieve these objectives, the paper will be theoretical in nature. Accordingly, the first section deals with the origin of the concept of political representation, the second section focuses on definitions, the third section covers the new forms of political representation, the fourth and fifth deal with elections and the nature of electoral system respectively. Section six covers the role of the legislature, the seventh deals with political parties and party funding, while section eight treats representative deliberation and participatory democracy. The ninth section focuses on unelected officials, especially traditional rulers, section ten discusses the political economy of political representation, and the last section summarises some key indicators of

political representation, which it is proposed should be the focus by African political leaders, policy-makers and scholars.

Origin of the concept of political representation

The origin of the concept of representation in western political theory dates back to the later centuries of Rome, when the prince was regarded as the representative of the Roman people as a collective (Dunning cited in Fairlie, 1940a). In the medieval period, both the monarch – that is, the King, the Emperor, the Pope and such bodies as the Cardinals in the Church – and assemblies and councils of qualified citizens in organised communities, were attributed the character of representatives. This meant that representatives were conceived in terms of single rulers and largely hereditary or property-qualified groups. The monarch was the trustee of the people. To a large extent, the trustees/representatives were free to act in a manner they deemed served the national interest. In this early conception, representation did not necessarily entail election of the representative, but either appointment, in the case of a public officer; or inheritance, with a single ruler acting on behalf of all the people and not particular constituencies.

As will be indicated in subsequent sections, the nature of the idea of political representation has changed fundamentally over the centuries. Before discussing the various conceptions of political representation, it is important to re-emphasise the fact that in early times, monarchs and chiefs were conceived as representative, chosen either by appointment or through inheritance. This point is important because, as I have noted earlier, in the first decade of the twenty-first century traditional rulers continued to play a major role in African political system. As a result, in contemporary Africa, traditional rulers and institutions of traditional rulership exist side by side with elected representatives and elected bodies. One key question therefore is what are the tensions and challenges this cohabitation poses for democracy.

Political representation defined

Like most concepts in the social sciences, there is no one definition of political representation. Political representation is a contested concept. There is, however, a consensus on the importance of political representation to democracy. It is seen ‘as a key activity, a lifeline or linchpin that connects the citizenry to the government’ (Zappala 1999). Some have described it as the hallmark of democracy (Chamberlin and Courant 1983).

Representation is generally recognised as a necessary condition for democracy in practice in an urbanised polity. Thus, J.S. Mill points out:

The only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state is one in which the whole people participate... But since all cannot, in a community exceeding a single small town, participate personally in all but minor portions of the public business, it follows that the ideal type of perfect government must be representative (Mill 1862: 80).

Representative democracy, in the view of Fairlie (1940: 456), is that system of government where the powers of sovereignty are delegated to elected representatives, who exercise them for the benefit of the whole nation. Viewed from this perspective, political representation can be defined as the machinery or process to make democratic government possible.

To a considerable extent, the different conceptualisations of political representation are based on the different interpretations of the relationship between the representative and his/her constituents, as well as the functions of an elected representative. Also, the disagreements centre around how representative institutions are to be composed, the conditions under which they act, and the scope of their authority. How any of these are conceived has different meanings and implications for representative democracy and political representation. These should be of interest in the African context.

One disagreement deals with the nature of representation. The two contending positions are the *politics of ideas*, that is the representation by proxy of citizens' opinions and policy preferences; and the *politics of presence*, that is the particular interest group being physically present in the legislature (Phillips 1995), so that its composition mirrors various groups in the general population.

The politics of ideas

Within the 'politics of ideas' – which one could also term the politics of absence – the different definitions can be categorised into two broad approaches: the trustee/independence approach, or the delegate/mandate approach.

The first school is termed the *trustee* conception of representation, and places greater emphasis on elite competence. The central thrust of this school is that the representative must exercise independent initiative and discretionary judgment about the public good without necessarily following the expressed wishes of constituents. One classical definition of political representation within this school is by Esmein (cited in Fairlie 1940), who defined

a representative as one who within the limits of his constitutional power, has been chosen to act freely and independently in the name of the people. He must have full independence of judgment and action in order to fulfill his mission.

The central argument of this school is that the electorate must elect their representatives. But the latter then vote and act freely in accordance with what they think is in the best interest of the society. In this conception, mass or popular participation is subordinated to elite rule, who are considered to be more competent on issues of governance. The role of the mass of citizenry is confined to periodic endorsement of the elites. In his early writings, J.S. Mill, one of the world's prominent political theorists, was a leading proponent of this conservative and elitist school. According to him,

[It] is not that the people themselves exercise political judgment, either directly or through the agency of instructed delegates, but that they assign this responsibility to the wisest and most virtuous among themselves, who will then serve as independent trustees of the public interest. The many must exercise their judgment 'rather upon the characters and talents of the persons whom they appoint to decide questions for them than upon the questions themselves' (cited in Krouse 1982: 524).

But as Fairlie further reminds us, the nature of political representation also usually involves extensive discussion (p.457). This is conceived as a secondary government in which citizens share in the deliberations indirectly, through the medium of their representatives (Barker 1906). (Deliberative representation will be the subject of detailed discussion in a subsequent section.)

He elaborated on the relationship between the representative and the voter as follows:

The representative is elected on the ground of general policy which he supports. The elector expresses his attitude towards that policy, not toward individual measures. Apart from such particular pledges as he may give, the representative is bound to a cause, a movement, a party, not to a whole series of individual projects. So long as he is faithful to the cause, he exercises his own judgment.

The argument goes, in representative democracy the principal form of political activity is voting (Krouse 1982: 529). By implication, the role of citizens is confined primarily to choosing political representatives in free and fair elections. In this perspective, because the tenure of the representative is limited, elections become the key mechanism of being held accountable by the electorate. In between elections, the representative can act on his/her judgment.

But this approach has been countered by a second school that is generally termed the *delegate or mandate* conception of political representation. The core position of this school is that the representative must act/vote as his/her constituents would vote if consulted, and therefore the representa-

tive serves as the mouthpiece of the constituents. Underlying this is the principle of instruction from the electorate to the representative. In fact, some political theorists, such as Hilaire Belloc and Cecil Chesterton (cited in Fairlie 1940), see this as the only democratic theory of representation.

This conceptualisation was criticized by McIver (1926) who argued that delegation is not synonymous with representation, a distinction he made on the basis of tenure, accountability and purpose of representation. According to him,

Delegation involves the choice of men, but representation involves also the choice of measures. Delegation in its completest form... assigns no limitation of tenure and no conditions of the exercise of power. Representation implies both direction and control. Delegation requires the consent of the governed, whereas representation requires the fulfillment of their will. (McIver, 1926 cited in Fairlie 1940: 463).

In contemporary everyday practices, these dichotomies hardly exist or at the very least, are fluid. A representative cannot practically obtain direct instructions on every matter to be decided. Consequently, it is quite impossible to draw a hard and fast line between agents with definite instructions or mandates and representatives empowered to attend to a general task. The mixed nature of responsibilities in practice are illustrated by Fairlie, who quoted Lord Bryce as spelling out the nature and functions of a representative as follows:

(1) to urge the local demands of his constituency, (2) to consult with other representatives on public affairs, while also in accord with the general views of his constituents, and (3) as a spokesman of his party which holds a majority of the constituency (Fairlie 1940: 462).

Legislative bodies may be composed of representatives who see themselves and act as both a set of agents chosen by different interest groups, and a representative group determining the common interest. At another level, legislative bodies might conceive themselves in mandate/delegate terms, but in actual practice act in the manner that supports the trustee thesis. In contemporary times, most legislative bodies act in this contradictory manner, which partly underlies greater voters' dissatisfaction across the globe, contributing to the apathy with respect to traditional institutions of political representation.

Symbolic representation or the politics of presence

Both of the two approaches discussed – the trustee and the delegate – have one thing in common. They both focussed on what I have termed the *politics of absence*. According to the trustee conception, the electorate vote for their representatives, who are then free to act independently irrespective of

the wishes of the constituents. Under the mandate/delegate conception, the electorate vote for representatives who must vote in accordance with the expressed wishes of the electorate. In neither approach is there an argument that different interest groups within the electorate should be physically present in the representative body. They depend on an assumed trust that a collection of men (or, today, women also) of integrity will be able to represent the will of the community as a whole. This trust in turn depends at least partly on a relatively homogeneous and consensus-driven society. This assumption has made these systems ill-suited as the only concepts of political representation in contemporary societies.

To fill this void, Phillips (1995) has introduced the useful concept of *politics of presence* or what Haider et al (2000) call *symbolic representation*. This means that previously marginalised groups – such as women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities – should be physically present in legislatures in numbers proportional to their share of the population at large.

Critics point out that direct representation of marginalised groups is mere tokenism, and that the numbers involved would be too small to make a significant impact. But proponents of the *politics of presence* or *symbolic representation* observed that not only does it give legitimacy to government policy and outcome but is also a more efficient and reliable means of achieving representation of minority interests in the policy process. Furthermore, it is argued that politics of presence makes a significant difference because representatives from previously marginalised groups are more aware, sensitive and better suited to represent the interests of their members/constituents than those outside the group. Similarly, they are likely to make legislative and policy agendas more responsive to their needs. As Zappala (1999) has argued in the case of gender:

... several studies suggest that gender does influence both representatives and their constituents' attitudes to representation, from style of doing politics to having greater empathy for policies that assist a better balance to work and female. Female parliamentarians are also more responsive to issues of concern to women constituents.

Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2001) have taken this debate further by arguing that the politics of presence enable minority groups to freely define their interests and to defend them publicly in deliberative arenas. In their view, any representative formulation that falls short of this might result in the neglect and dilution of their interests.

But what are the necessary conditions for politics of presence to be an important form of political representation, and also in a way that advances democratic governance? Zappala's study drew our attention to number of

important factors that are pertinent in this regard, which should be applicable to the African context. First, for representation of marginalised groups to make a difference, they need to be represented in sufficient number in order to critically influence the legislative and policy agenda. Second, the nature of the electoral system should be such that it enables them to represent their constituents above party political interests. And, lastly, strategies should be put in place to give them effective presence. The question therefore is in Africa, are marginalised groups such as minority ethnic groups, youth, women, the poor and people with disabilities represented in sufficient numbers in legislative bodies to make a difference. *If not, what factors contribute to ethnic minorities, youths and women not being represented in sufficient number to make meaningful impact in elected bodies?* In the same vein, there is a need to examine whether or not there are strategies in place to ensure effective representation of marginalised groups. For example, are there strategic targets or quota systems to ensure gender equity in parliament? Also, does the representation of women in parliament lead to the engendering of the legislative agenda? If not, what are the constraints? These are some of the questions that have to be addressed in the African context in our attempts to institute and consolidate democratic governance.

Identity politics and political representation

The globalisation of economic, social, cultural and political activities has major implications for how we conceive political representation. In its early conception, representatives represented territories. In other words, territories – constituencies with physical limits - were the basis of representation. But as globalisation has reduced the power of the state, it has engendered the reinforcement of alternative identities. Especially in Africa, where recently formed states attract little loyalty, citizens do not see themselves only in terms of the geographical location of their home, but also in terms of identity of the self. This is particularly reinforced by cultural globalisation. This self can either be in terms of culture, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, race and disability. Those identities which were previously discounted as a basis for political representation have consequently become significant. This development has recast the meaning of constituencies in Africa as other continents. Constituencies may no be longer conterminous with territories, since given territories can be composed of diverse citizens with different identities and interests. The consequence is that across the globe citizens are increasingly focusing their interests outside the traditional political spheres and are consequently seeking other channels of political representation. This among others has led to the formation of social movements – ranging from human rights to feminist to environmental movements – not only to advance

their interests but also to be symbolically represented in the traditional arena of political representation, including legislative assemblies.

These developments lead us to question how constituencies are being delineated. Is geographical consideration the main basis of delineating constituencies in Africa? Is identity taken into consideration and is it the basis of representation? In some African legislatures, seats are set aside for specific interest groups; such as for the disabled in Uganda. Should this be the rule?

This has other implications for the way we conceive political representation, leading to the question addressed in the next section: whether there are institutional mechanisms in place for citizens to engage directly in both the legislative and policy processes.

Free and fair elections and the professionalisation of politics

Increasingly, especially towards the close of the twentieth century, what is termed the liberal conceptualisation of democracy became dominant within these debates. In this view, a set of political institutions and practices that gives greater emphasis to elections and the conditions under which they are held, are generally regarded as being necessary to democracy. This means, as one of the leading political scientists of the twentieth century, Robert Dahl argued, that:

control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials; elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon; practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials and have the right to run for elective offices in government; citizens have an effectively enforceable right to express themselves on political matters broadly defined... they also have effective rights to seek alternative sources of information and to form relatively independent associations, including independent political parties and interest groups (Dahl 1994: 25-26).

This liberal conception of representative democracy places greater premium on elections and other broad political rights such as freedom of speech and press freedom. Therefore among social scientists and development agencies, it is today recognised that the primary mechanisms by which political representation is effected in modern times are through scheduled and regular elections in a context of media freedom.

According to one interpretation, which gathered strength with the end of the Cold War, a multiparty system is also argued to be central to democracy. Freedom House, an American non-governmental organisation that monitors the state of democracy in the world, defines democracy in the following words:

Democracies as political systems whose leaders are elected in competitive multi-party and multi-party processes in which opposition parties have a legitimate chance of attaining power or participating in power (Freedom House 1999).

The Freedom House conception and similar others have recast the meaning of political representation. Representative democracy is not effected by every kind of elections but by multi-party elections. Multipartyism is therefore one of the defining variables of political representation.

But what are the necessary conditions for an election to be free and fair, that is, credible? Igbuzor and Edigheji (2003) identified three conditions, namely: an independent judiciary; an independent, competent and non-partisan electoral body; and a developed system of political parties – all of which must be entrenched in the constitution. In other words, constitutional provisions for an independent electoral commission, an independent judiciary and the formation of political parties are keys to a credible electoral process and outcome. Another necessary condition is the institutionalisation of the role of independent election monitors. Election monitoring is an essential element in legitimatising the outcome of elections in Africa, as it provides a framework to judge an election as free and fair. The question therefore is, are these institutions provided for in Africa?

But this conception tends to give a greater premium to the *professionalisation of politics*, with a strong emphasis on political parties. This approach lost the insight that citizens make democracy. As a result, there is a global trend toward the replacement of citizen democracy by consumer democracy, with citizens conceived as consumers, clients and users. Government services are increasingly commodified, and access is based on ability to pay. Across the globe, civic identity is replaced by consumer identity, cooperation by sectarian conflict, the creation of commonwealth by fights over distribution of private wealth, citizen participation by apathy and disengagement, and everyday politics by career politics. Not surprisingly today, there is a worldwide trend toward a declining public interest in elections, and there is an increasing citizens' disengagement from public affairs and a distrust for government. Division of left-right characterise present days politics. The bitterness of this division limits the scope of citizens to work collaboratively, in partnerships with government, for common social goods. It fosters conflicts among citizens, communities, and organised interests, including political parties. Politics is also conceived only in terms of the struggle over the distribution of wealth rather than the creation of commonwealth.

This is how one of the US's leading political theorists, Harry Boyte, aptly captured the adverse implications for citizens. According to him,

When politics becomes a property of professional elites, *bureaucrats and consultants*, most people are marginalised in the serious work of public

affairs. Citizens are reduced to at most secondary roles as demanding consumers or altruistic volunteers. Moreover, with the transformation of mediating institutions – *such as civil society think-tanks* ... became technical service providers – citizens lost all stake and standing in public world (Boyte 2004: 4) (Emphasis added).

In the process, as Boyte correctly argued, 'Everyday politics', which refers to citizen efforts, sometimes in partnership with government and sometimes independent of direct ties to government, which renew older, practical ideas of politics as negotiation and work across lines of diverse views, ideologies, backgrounds, and values to accomplish public tasks for the collective good of society, is lost. By so doing the concept of 'politics' (from the Greek word, *politikos*, meaning 'of the citizen') that was dominant before the rise of modern parties becomes a thing of the past. One consequence of these developments is the *statisation* of politics, that is, a statist conception of politics has globally become dominant in current discourse and practices.

Against this critical analysis, in the African context it will therefore pertinent to try to bring *citizenship back-into politics*. This should place an emphasis on cooperative work and deliberative traditions by bringing people together across lines of different parties, racial backgrounds, class divides and other differences – for the common good. The argument therefore is to *destatise politics* in particular, and political representation in general. The point being made is not to do away with representative democracy but an attempt to recast the debate by placing a greater premium on the interaction between 'participatory democracy' and 'representative democracy'.¹ The *depoliticisation* of politics and its *professionalisation* have strong political economy implications that will be discuss later in this paper.

Electoral systems

Given the centrality of political representation to democracy, the nature of the electoral system becomes important. This is because to some degree it determines the effectiveness or otherwise of the representative to represent the electorate. Indeed, it helps to define the nature of the relationship between the representative and the electorate. There are basically three forms of electoral systems: proportional representation (PR), where the electorate votes for a party, and representatives then come from the single party list in proportion to the total national vote for that party. In single member districts the electorate in each district votes for one of a number of candidates and the winning candidate is elected either on a 'first past the post' or other majority system. The third system is a combination of both, with candidates selected both on a constituency and on a list basis. All of these have their merits and demerits, and their variations. Underlining the disagreements about

the electoral system is the degree of representatives' responsiveness and accountability to their constituents.

Proponents of proportional representation argue that as much as possible it enables the participation of all citizens in the activities of governing, and by so doing it generates deliberations and decisions as close as possible to direct democracy, when all the people in society gather such as in people assemblies to deliberate on particular issues. Thus, as Chamberlin and Courant (1983) argue:

Proportional representation... seeks to provide each voter with a representative who can genuinely represent his/her views in the deliberations and decisions of the representative body... Proportional representation is ideally constituted... for the representation of a wide range of viewpoints and insures that the deliberations about common purposes will be searching, and this in turn will strengthen the legitimacy of the outcomes of the process (Chamberlin and Courant 1983: 720).

Critics argue that PR obscures the link between a representative and his or her constituency. The argument is that voters do not know who they are voting for as they vote for parties rather than individuals to represent them, an argument that resonates in the new South Africa as an example. Under such circumstances, the loyalty and accountability of the representatives is more toward the political party and its leaders rather than the constituency. In fact, they vote according to party discipline rather than in accordance with the interests of specific constituents; and if they defy the party on grounds of conscience or because their constituents disagree with the party line, they can be removed.

Consequently, the argument is made for single member district representation on the grounds that it enables individual voters to know and vote for their representative and to hold them directly accountable. Because of this, the representative is more likely to identify more with his/her constituency. But single member district representation can lead to a situation where a party with fewer votes governs because it won more seats but not more votes. Thus rather than democracy being majority rule, minority dictatorship may arise; and rather than representative decisions, there are unrepresentative ones. Even if the winning party did in fact win more votes in every constituency, say 60 percent, the losers, with 40 percent of the vote, would have no seats at all in the legislature – though 40 percent is a sizeable minority whose views should be heard. Consequently, single member districts representation fail to promote the goal of representative decisions which is an essential element of representative democracy.

Chamberlin and Courant draw our attention to another shortcoming of the single member district, which is that it fails to approximate the ideal of direct democracy. They argued that:

[This] ideal is achieved by a system that maintains the presence of each individual, albeit indirectly, through all stages of the legislative process. With single member districts, the presence of voters who opposed the elected 'representative' of their own district disappears at the time of the election (Chamberlin and Courant 1983: 719).

But both electoral systems each have their strengths and weaknesses. In order to maximise the former while minimising the latter, a mixed system is advocated by some scholars, in which some representatives represent single districts, and others are chosen from a list to make up the party's representation in the legislature in proportion to the national share of the party's vote (This has been put to greater effect in countries like South Africa). The argument is that a mixed system will enable each voter to know and vote for their own representative, who in turn will be accountable to their constituency but at the same time ensure all interests are represented, leading to the promotion of representative decisions. But at the same time, it enables minority parties to be accommodated in government.

The role of the legislature

One of the important organs of political representation is the legislative arm of government. In fact some have erroneously argued that representative government is confined to the election of members of the legislature, whose role purpose is 'not to govern, but to watch and control the government' (Henry Jones Ford cited in Fairlie 1940: 463), which in this view comprises the administrative, executive and judicial officials. In modern times, however it generally acknowledged that the legislative arms of government perform three important functions - they represent the electorate, make laws, and oversee the executive. They also interact with constituencies and citizens. One area where the legislative organ performs its oversight role is in the area of fiscal management. In most countries, Parliamentary Public Account Committees are established to undertake this function.

The key questions in the African context are whether the legislatures are equipped to develop laws that promote democratic governance and economic development. Also, in the context of *chiocless democracies*, what is the role of the legislative arm in national fiscal management? Do African legislators have appropriate oversight ability (knowledge and skills) to assess policy implementation? Finally, do the African legislators interact with constituencies and citizens? Addressing these questions has been at the centre of

the controversy between the trustee and mandate/delegate conceptions of political representation.

Political parties and party funding

An important imperative for analysing political representation in Africa, as elsewhere, is the conditions for the formation and operation of political parties. For example, many of the imposed constitutions in Africa make elaborate provisions for the operation of political parties. This is clearly demonstrated in the 1999 Nigerian constitution. Although Section 40 of the constitution provides for the right of citizens to assemble freely and associate with others, it also contains a proviso that political parties have to be accorded recognition by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). This means that if INEC does not accord recognition to a political party, it cannot operate as one. This provision was actually misused by INEC in Nigeria. It refused to recognise several political parties that applied for registration in 2002. It only registered three political parties plus the already existing three making a total of six. The parties which were denied registration took their case to court and the Federal Appeal Court ordered their registration. That judgment was ignored by INEC. It needed a decision by the Supreme Court (the highest court in the country) before these parties were registered, bringing the number of political parties to thirty today.

Apart from the power given to INEC to accord recognition to political parties, there are other restrictive and stringent provisions on political parties in Sections 221 and 222 of the constitution, which are indeed a threat to political representation in particular and democracy in general.

Section 221 states that:

No association other than a political party, shall canvass for votes for any candidate at any election or contribute to the funds of any political party or to the election expenses of any candidate at an election.

Section 222 states that:

No association by whatever name called shall function as a political party, unless – the names and addresses of its national officers are registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission; the membership of the association is open to every citizen of Nigeria irrespective of his place of origin, circumstance of birth, sex, religion or ethnic grouping; a copy of its constitution is registered in the principal office of the Independent National Electoral Commission in such form as may be prescribed by the Independent National Electoral Commission; any alteration in its registered constitution is also registered in the principal office of the Independent National Electoral Commission within thirty days of the making of such alteration; the name of the association, its symbol or logo does not contain any ethnic or religious

connotation or give the appearance that the activities of the association are confined to a part of the geographical area of Nigeria; and the headquarters of the association are situated in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

These guidelines were similar to those issued by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) under the General Babangida transition. During that period, as part of the NEC guidelines, banned or disqualified politicians, that is those affected by the participation in politics or elections (prohibition) Decree No 25 of 1987 and amended by Decree No. 9 of 1989, were not eligible to hold an executive position in a political association seeking registration in a political party.² This way military regimes control who can and who cannot seek elective position, the latter being especially those with alternative political views and agendas from the regimes.

Commenting on the implications of these guidelines, Ihonvbere (1999) notes that:

Given the experiences of the past, what the 1999 constitution has done is to restrict the formation and operation of political parties to the wealthy. It is only this wealthy class that can afford the cost of such an exercise... For instance, during the last election, we saw a situation whereby only people who had money and who could afford to buy votes, were able to contest and win elections. In other words, federal government requirements for the formation and registration is a direct way of encouraging corruption, elite dominated politics and the continuing marginalisation of persons without connections with the wealthy in the political process. Indeed the electoral laws, disenfranchised majority of the Nigerian people, abrogating their rights to freedom of association that is provided for in the same constitution.³

These criteria for registration of political parties contrast sharply with those of South Africa, which are easy and aimed as promoting citizens' rights to form and belong to political party of their choice. Section 15 of the Electoral Commission Act sets out the conditions for the registration of political parties as follows:

The chief electoral officer shall, upon application by the party in the prescribed form, register such party in accordance with this chapter.

The form shall, inter alia make provision for the following:

The name of the party;

The distinguishing mark and symbol of the party in colour;

The abbreviation, if any, of the name of the party consisting of not more than eight letters;

And the constitution of the party.

No party not represented in parliament, provincial legislature or local government body may be so registered unless the application is accompanied by the party's deed of foundation which has been adopted at a meeting of, and has been signed by, the prescribed number of persons who are qualified voters; the prescribed amount, of any; and proof of publication in the Gazette of the prescribed notice of the application. The party's deed of foundation shall contain the prescribed particulars. After a party has been registered, the chief electoral officer shall issue that party with a registration certificate in the prescribed form and publish the prescribed particulars of such registration in the Gazette.

The South African laws are thus more suitable for competitive electoral politics, one of the core conditions of procedural democracy, unlike those of Nigeria that seek to bar competitiveness and electoral freedom.

What I have tried to show with these two examples is that the constitutional requirements for the formation of political parties could either impede or enhance political representation. This is because such provisions set the conditions for the formation and operation of political parties.

Again, in modern times, where money has become a major determining factor, single district representation could enable the rich to dominate the political landscape and by so doing subvert the democratic will of the people. This raises the issues of political party funding, especially in more recent times. Unregulated party funding and campaign finance provide a climate where special interests are more likely to capture elected representatives and subvert the public good.

This is a debate that resonates in Africa, where poverty is widespread, political parties weak and party membership low, and yet – just as elsewhere in the world – without money it is difficult to win elections, even at the local government level. Incumbent officials thus use state resource for party political interests, while at the same time denying opposition parties access to official finance. Commenting on the negative effects of monetisation of the electoral process in Nigeria for example, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) notes that:

Excessive or uneven use of money during electioneering campaigns will interfere with the possibility of all parties and candidates to convey their message to the electorate on an equal basis. Money also undermines democracy as a contest of ideas, because the influence of money on the democratic process can dilute or compromise the genuine expression of the popular will. Any government constituted from corrupted 'money politics' can deny the fundamental tenet of the electoral processes as the expression of the popular will, and cannot guarantee democracy, accountability and transparency.

Furthermore, in some quarters, it is argued that foreign donors and multinational corporations are buying political favours through the financing of political parties, some with the aim of ensuring their continued dominance of the African political economy. African individuals and interests groups also finance political parties, with the hope that if their favoured party wins in an election, they will be awarded government contracts or secure policy changes in their favour, and even secure political protection.

Hence, there are calls for party fund-raising and campaign finance reform. There are a number of proposals. One is that there should be a limit to which individuals and interests groups can donate to candidates and political parties, and to the amount candidates can spend in an election. Another such proposal calls for compulsory state funding for all political parties in order to overcome what Whitehead (2002) refers 'corporate predation', as well as creating an appropriate regulatory environment. It is also suggested that political parties should make the names of their donors public (strangely this is being resisted by most political parties in South Africa, including the governing party, the African National Congress and the main minority party, the Democratic Alliance). More general however, there is a need for an effective rule of law, and a well informed and vigilant electorate.

Another issue of crucial importance in our discussion of political representation is whether or not political parties in their manifestos actually promote the common good. It needs to be observed that seldom do modern political parties spell out their developmental agendas for citizens to make an informed choice between alternative policy agendas. This is coupled with the fact that it is only a very small number of people, mostly the elite, which find time to read and comprehend programmes of political parties. Increasingly, in the developed world there seems to be very little that separates the programmes of competing political parties such as the Republican and Democratic parties in the US, to the extent that one can refer to them as two branches of the same party. The developed countries are now being termed *dissaffected democracies* (Pharr and Putnam 2000) because of the decline of citizens' satisfaction with government performance. In an age of satellite television dominated by talk shows, career politicians have occupied and framed public discourse to the extent that voices of ordinary people have been marginalised. The decline in citizens' confidence in the established democracies, which in part has accounted for the low voters' turnout at elections, brings into disrepute the procedural approach to democracy. But even in context such as Latin America and South Africa with high voters turn-out, especially among the majority poor population, it has not translated their wishes into policy choices that privilege the majority of the population. This

is precisely because elections are not about the content of policy. In most developing countries, including most of Africa, voters make their choices on the basis of primordial factors such as religion, ethnicity, race and personality rather than choices made on the basis alternative developmental programmes.

Furthermore, for political parties to be so defined, they require basic organisational structures with a degree of independence for party officials. What this means is that political parties must have proper structures separated from governmental structures and not personalised by an incumbent prime minister or president, as was the case on the African continent during one-party rule. In other words, political parties to be so defined should not merely be an extension of the State President or Prime Minister's office as the current case in Nigeria where the governing party, People's Democratic Party is an extension of President Obsanjo's office. What is important here is that prime ministers and presidents are temporary compared to political parties that are more permanent and have more longevity.

Representative deliberation and participatory democracy

The limits to procedural forms of democracy, where the only contribution the electorate makes to politics is to vote once every four or five years, have been extensively discussed. 'Representative deliberation', the idea that voters and associations of voters must be allowed to participate in policy debates between elections, is consequently proposed as a necessary complement to proceduralism. J.S. Mill, though a late convert to the idea of mass participation, argued that, while elections were a necessary condition for representative democracy, they were not sufficient. He went on to spell out other conditions crucial for popular government. According to him, representative democracy requires that citizens must learn to participate on a direct and continuing basis. This participation requires a democratic constitution supported by 'democratic institutions in detail... representative democracy... must be supplemented by more participatory forms of political action' (cited in Krouse 1982: 529).

What are these participatory forms? To Mill, local democracy is the principal instrument of representative democracy, without which citizens have little or no opportunity of going beyond voting and political discussion. This therefore is an educative function as it becomes a training ground for citizens in understanding the act of governance. Hence, he argued, voting for representatives is not a sufficient condition for a properly constituted popular government. This tends to recast the debate on political representation from periodic voting for leaders by the electorate, a point I have elaborated upon in an earlier section of the paper.

Robert Dahl (cited in Saward 2000) has elaborated on this further through his emphasis on political equality as a central component of representative democracy. To Dahl, democratic citizens must have a right to a formal say on policies. In this respect, mechanisms are required for citizens to be able to express their preference not only over representatives but also over agenda or policy. He identified special initiatives such as referendums and recalls of representatives as examples. Accordingly, he advocated the constitutional provisions of recall of elected officials and the power to change policies of government as a way of enabling citizens to control the agenda.

As Charney reminds us, theorists of deliberative democracy 'emphasize the importance of a free public sphere separate from apparatus of state and economy, where citizens can freely debate, deliberate and engage in collective democratic formation' (Charney 1999: 1). Quoting Seyla Benhabib, Charney argues that it is through the manifold associational life that comprises civil society that deliberative democracy is made possible. According to him, '... the reason that deliberative model of democracy can dispense with the fiction of mass assembly is that it locates the public sphere within civil society. It through the interlocking net of these multiple forms of associations that anonymous public conversation results'. This approach to deliberative democracy tends to privilege civil society and move away from the dominant statist conception of political representation. It is the centrality of civil society to the understanding of political representation that is useful for our purpose in this paper.

More recently, institutional political economists, such as Evans (1996), have added networks or forums of participation as important variable of political representation. Through participatory structures such as deliberative councils, citizens are able to influence the policy agenda. The reasoning is that citizens and interest groups need to participate in policy making and implementation in order to enhance the quality of such policies and to respond to their needs. The strategic import of consultative and deliberative structures is that they enable competing interest groups to reach compromises and trade-offs on policy issues. It is important to note that deliberative structures can take binding decisions on government, or they can be merely advisory or provide the basis for information sharing. This is what determines their degree of importance. For example, structures that could take binding decisions are of more importance to stakeholders, especially civil society groups, than advisory bodies that can only make recommendations, whose acceptance is at the discretion of government.

Accordingly, African scholars should investigate whether or not there are participatory structures for consensus seeking and dialogue between the state and civil society. Where there are representative structures, are they

statutory and are they inclusive? Who are represented? What is the status of decisions reached at such structures? What is the nature of issues dealt with in such bodies? What are the dominant forms of consultative and deliberative councils in Africa? Can they take binding decisions or are they merely advisory?

Unelected representatives

As noted above, the cohabitation in Africa of elected representatives and traditional rulers poses interesting challenges for an analysis of representation. In Europe or Asia, where traditional leadership structures – monarchies and aristocracies – persist, their role is largely settled and limited. In Africa, the role and powers of traditional leadership are still highly contested, even where they are formally recognised in the constitution and represented in national assemblies. In a number of countries across the continent, such as South Africa, the role of traditional rulers is constitutionally guaranteed. In that country, there is even a constitutional provision for a House of Traditional Leaders, with a specific governance role. In addition, at the local level, especially in rural local governments, traditional rulers serve side by side in the local government council. Some critics fear that these could lead to re-tribalisation and re-tribalisation of the South African state and society (Fredrieck Ebert Foundation and African Institute of South Africa, 2003). Put differently, traditional rulers playing an active role in democratic dispensations could reinforce primordialism with its potentially adverse effects on democracy. The judgement of the Nebraska Supreme Court in the USA in 1909 provides some point of reflection about the co-existence of elected and appointed officials. In the view of the court,

‘representative form of government’ in a statute providing for the organisation of fraternal associations, required that all of the members of the governing body must be elected by the members of the association; and that an association whose constitution provided for the adoption and amendment of its laws by a body including appointed members of a committee, in addition to elected delegates and officers, did not have a representative form of government (cited in Fairlie 1940: 456–7).

The discussion above raises number of questions, especially regarding the challenges of such developments for democracy. First, what is the relationship between elected representatives and traditional rulers? Second, in the context where traditional rulers serve in elected bodies, whose positions should prevail over policy and legislature process and outcome? Should both have equal weight in policy decisions? Third, what mechanisms are there for traditional leaders and bodies to be accountable to citizens? What are the effects of these bodies for citizens? For example, where does the loyalty of citizens lie - to traditional leaders or elected representatives? Lastly, can we

term countries where elected and appointed officials serve side by side as representative democracies?

The political economy of political representation

Underlining the various conceptions of political representation, be it politics of ideas, politics of presence, identity politics or deliberative democracy, is the idea that elected representatives have relative autonomy over policy choices. Elected officials are said to have relative autonomy over social and economic policy. It is this notion that Johnson (1987) had in mind in his discussion of the role of the state in social and economic transformation. According to him, elected officials and technocrats *ruled* and *reigned* respectively. This means that elected representatives set the broad policy framework while the bureaucrats undertook detailed policy formulation and implementation.

But the relative autonomy of elected officials is now a thing of the past both in the developed and developing world. In the former, special interests have captured the political space and elected officials are expected to do their bidding. In the latter, the situation is worse, especially in the context of heavy foreign indebtedness, dependence on foreign aid and a globalising world where there is a tendency for the convergence of policy towards market fundamentalism. In fact, in the context of globalisation, international development agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund pressured developing countries to liberalise their economies in order to become globally competitive and to be integrated into the global political economy. This policy approach has dominated policy and discourse, especially in developing countries.

This approach tends not only to privilege technocratic efficiency over the relative autonomy of elected representatives, and by so doing constrain and limit the range of policy choices available to elected officials. As Swyngedouw has persuasively argued,

The propagation of this globalisation ideology has become like an act of faith. Virtually each government, at every conceivable scale of governance, has taken measures to align its social and economic policy to the exigencies and requirements of this competitive world (dis)order and the forces of a new 'truly' free-market-based world economy. In the light of the real or imagined threat of owners of presumed (hypermobile) capital that they might relocate their activities, regional and national states feel increasingly under pressure to assure the restoration of a fertile entrepreneurial culture. Fiscal constraint has to be exercised, social expenditures kept in check, labour markets made flexible, environmental and social regulation minimised, etc. This, then, is heralded as the golden path that would lead regional and national economies to the desired heaven of global competitiveness and

sustained growth... National political elite, both left and right, finds in these arguments an excuse to explain away their inadequacy to link political programmes with an increasingly disenfranchised and disempowered civil society (Swyngedouw 2000: 66).

In the African context, Mkandawire (1999) has authoritatively argued that these are *chioceless democracies* as African political elites are presented with a *fait accompli* over the policy path they have to follow. Consequently, in Africa, like elsewhere, elected representatives are unable to respond to the needs of citizens. Instead they are preoccupied with the provision of corporate welfare, creating conditions conducive for the investment community. The contention of Abrahamsen is appropos at this junction. According to this writer,

Although democracy may, at least initially, have expanded the room for political expression, particularly in terms of a more critical press and opportunities for social and industrial protest, the political influence of Africa's newly enfranchised citizens has been highly limited. In particular, demands for socio-economic improvements by the poorer sections of the population have been effectively ruled out a priori... In this sense, these are exclusionary democracies: they allow for political parties and elections but cannot respond to the demands of the majority or incorporate the masses in any meaningful way (Abrahamsen 2000: 133–34).

Hence, Abrahamsen described these as exclusionary democracies, which means that political representatives are unable to respond to the needs of the majority of the continent's population. There is no better way to express this than the fact that majority of Africans lives are mired in poverty, homelessness, diseases, and without access to basic physical and social infrastructure. The implication of the above is that Africa combines the characteristics of chioceless and exclusionary democracies. This policy framework has changed the balance of power over policy choices against elected officials in favour of bureaucratic elites. In the view of Mkandawire,

... in current practice, the formulation and implementation of policies is carried out completely oblivious of the demands of good governance and long-term economic development. Indeed policies are often introduced in isolation from the considerations of political stability or the legitimacy of the authority of elected bodies (Mkandawire 1999: 123).

In addition, this development has led to what I have described elsewhere is the *disembodiment* of the African state (Edigheji 2004). By this I mean that unlike in other contexts, where the political elites and bureaucratic elites share a joint project of national transformation, which accounts for their development success, in the African context the bureaucratic elites are more

loyal to international development agencies that dictate the policy paradigm than to elected officials. This has adverse implications not only for development outcomes but also for democratic governance in Africa. The technocratic approach makes elected officials accountable to bureaucrats rather than the other way round.

As Mhone and Edigheji (2003) have observed, market fundamentalism that has been the pervasive policy paradigm in the context in the last two decades, also conditions the scope and impact of deliberative democracy. This is because most policies, especially, macroeconomic ones, are ruled out of the purview of deliberative and consultative processes and structures.

The implication of this analysis is that the effectiveness or otherwise of elected officials is considerably determined by the political economy of political representation. Consequently, it is proposed that greater attention needs to be paid to the political economy of Africa and its consequences for political representation.

Conclusion

We can draw some conclusions from the foregoing discussion.

- A political representative is one who acts on behalf of the represented. The latter elect the former, who in turn is accountable to them.
- Elections, and more recently multiparty elections, are a key mechanism for effecting political representation.
- Other mechanisms for effective political representation, especially to enhance citizens' participation, include the constitutional provisions of special initiatives, including referendums, the right of citizens to recall, and the right to revise public policy.
- The nature of the electoral system is an important variable that impacts on political representation. The key factor here is an electoral system that ensures representative democracy. Among other things, it should balance the representation of minorities, combining both the *politics of ideas* and the *politics of presence*.
- The constitutional provisions for the formation and regulation of political parties can be very significant. As I noted earlier, political representation flourished in the context where citizens are free to join and form associations of their choice, including political parties.
- And closely related to the above, are constitutional provisions for an independent electoral commission and an independent judiciary as foundations for free, fair, peaceful and credible elections. Closely related to this point is whether or not a climate is created for independent election monitors to do their work.

- The regulation of party and campaign finance requires attention in any project that aims to strengthen political representation.
- The role and function of the legislative organ needs critical scrutiny.
- What informs the choice of elected representatives in Africa? Is it primordial factors, is it identity or is it programmatic? All of these factors require proper interrogation.
- Local participation, especially because of its educative role, needs to be examined.
- The roles and functions of civil society as a new form of political representation require critical interrogation.
- Traditional rulers and their political roles require critical examination. In addition, the relationship between elected representatives and traditional rulers in Africa requires an interrogation.
- The state of press freedom should be incorporated into the analysis.
- The role of the representative and his/her relationship to constituents require evaluation. For example, does the representative consult with the constituents and are the views of the latter taken into consideration in the legislative and policy arena?
- The existence of networks and processes for citizens and civil society organisations to participate in public policy is an essential component of political representation. This therefore takes the debate beyond proceduralism, which has been the focus of liberal democracy. Key issues to be explored here include whether or not there are structures and networks of participation between the state and civil society. Where there are structures, are they statutory? Who is represented, and are issues arrived at in deliberative forums influencing government policies? Do societal actors in those bodies have the capacity for meaningful and constructive engagement? These are all issues that require the attention of African researchers, political leaders, policy-makers and civil society activists.
- It is important to note that the context of the continent's political economy conditions the impact of political representatives. Consequently, in Africa, research needs to focus on the nature of this political economy, and how it impacts on political representation.

Notes

1. Thanks to Harry Boyte, whose interactions with me over the last two years have sharpened my understanding of these issues.
2. For details of the guidelines for the registration of political parties during the Babangida dictatorship, see Momoh and Adejumobi (1999).
3. Ihonvbere, 1999, cited in Falana (2000).

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When Is ‘Techno-talk’ a Fatal Distraction? ICT in Contemporary Development Discourse on Africa

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Abstract

The last two-and-half decades have seen a resurgence of neo-modernisation thinking, which is most evident in the imageries of modernity that infuse the dominant contemporary development discourse on Africa. The discussion on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a signifier of that development mindset and the alleged solution to Africa’s development problems. In this paper, we argue that while ICT offers tremendous potentials, its use in the current dominant development discourse tends to confuse the appearance of things with their essence. It fails to address the multidimensional nature of the development crisis and impediments that have developed in the last twenty-five years, and is in danger of reproducing elements of perverse growth identified in first two decades of post-colonial development experience. In failing to address how twenty-five years of neoliberal vivisection compounded Africa’s development crisis, the ICT techno-talk is in danger of becoming a distraction. It becomes a fatal distraction where its discourse diverts attention from the key elements of this vivisection and its consequences. Fundamental to rethinking Africa’s development, the paper argues, is connecting the dots: the relationship between development crisis and debt peonage, aid-dependency, the retreat from the public (social) policy domain, and the dissonance between the regional development objectives and current trade regimes. Critical to sustainable ICT, specifically, and development broadly is reinventing the public domain. We use the state of higher education on the continent to illustrate this, and the imperative of endogeneity.

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Résumé

Ces deux dernières décennies et demie ont vu la résurgence d'une forme de pensée caractéristique de la néo-modernisation, très visible à travers l'imaginaire de la modernité dont est imprégné le discours contemporain dominant sur le développement africain. Le débat sur les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC) est devenu un symbole de cette mentalité du développement ainsi que la supposée solution aux problèmes de développement de l'Afrique. Cet article affirme que même si les TIC offrent d'énormes potentialités, leur usage au sein de l'actuel discours dominant sur le développement conduit à un amalgame entre l'apparence et l'essence du phénomène du développement. Ils n'apportent pas d'explication appropriée à la nature multidimensionnelle de la crise de développement qui s'est accrue ces vingt-cinq dernières années. Pire, les TIC risquent de reproduire les mêmes éléments d'une croissance malsaine qui avaient été identifiés lors des deux premières décennies de l'expérience de développement post-colonial. En fermant les yeux sur les vingt-cinq années de vivisection néolibérale qui ont rendu plus aiguë la crise de développement de l'Afrique, le techno-discours sur les TIC risque fort de nous mettre de la poudre aux yeux. Les TIC sont en passe de nous distraire fatalement de l'essentiel, car le discours sur lequel ces technologies sont basées risque fort de divertir notre attention des éléments clés de cette vivisection et de ses conséquences. Afin de mieux repenser le développement de l'Afrique, il faudrait rassembler les pièces du puzzle: rétablir une relation entre la crise de développement et l'endettement, la dépendance envers l'aide extérieure, le retrait du domaine de la politique (sociale) publique et la dissonance entre les objectifs de développement régional et les régimes commerciaux actuels. Nous nous inspirons de la crise au sein de l'enseignement supérieur africain, afin d'illustrer ceci, de même que l'impératif d'endogénéité.

I. Introduction

The market-oriented 'development' discourse of the past two-and-half decades has not only been about the insistence on mono-economics¹ but the reinvention of the modernisation mindset. Development economics and sociology, in their early post-Second World War guise, were defined by their scepticism regarding the efficacy of neo-classical or marginalist economics and rational sociology for understanding the structure and dynamics of 'developing' societies. By contrast, since the 1980s, the dominant form of development thinking has combined mono-economics with Rostow's (1960, 1971) modernisation approach. The teleological reasoning in Rostow's approach is that the development track open to 'developing' countries was self-evident in the growth path of the countries of North America and North-western Europe. The end point was self-evident: to be developed is to be like the West – in institutional and behavioural terms. The difference between the old version of the modernisation paradigm and its current, neo-liberal, variant is in the latter's commitment to a market-oriented growth path. I refer to

this latter version as the neo-modernisation thesis, in which state involvement in productive economic activity or active social policy is considered inherently prejudicial to the efficient allocation of resources. The implications of neo-modernisation thinking are evident in the imageries of modernity that permeate much of contemporary development discourse on Africa. It is in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that the neo-modernisation thinking is most apparent: both as a signifier of development and as a solution to Africa's development challenges. By 'contemporary development discourse' I mean the set of conceptual and policy prescriptions rooted in the ontological assumptions of neo-liberalism (cf. Note 1). While there have been twists and turns in the presentation of neo-liberal discourse, including claims of a post-Washington Consensus within the Bretton Woods Institutions, I would argue that the ontological mooring remains largely the same. My concern is with this mooring. Further, there is little doubt that this discourse remains dominant – setting the policy boundaries in which most countries in Africa operate. While the neo-liberal discourse has been confronted by a counter-hegemonic agenda or what Krugman (1993) called the 'counter counterrevolution', this has been against the overwhelming weight of the political and institutional forces pushing the neo-liberal agenda.

In this paper, we argue that while ICT offers tremendous development potentials, much of the current discussions: (a) confuse the appearance of things with their essence; (b) fail to address the multidimensional nature of the development crisis and the impediments to Africa's development over the last twenty-five years of neo-liberal vivisection (Adesina 1994); and (c) are in danger of reproducing the structural weaknesses identified in most African economies in the 1970s. In failing to address the linkages between the policies that have produced the current endemic development crises and what it considers the weakness in Africa's ICT capabilities, the techno-talk of the 'ICT-savvy' is in danger of becoming a distraction. It becomes a fatal distraction when it diverts attention away from the fundamental issues in Africa's development challenges.

Fundamental to rethinking Africa's development and the value of ICT is 'connecting the dots'. In other words, the need to grasp the relationship between development crisis, on the one hand, and debt peonage, aid-dependency, the retreat of the state from active public social policy, the dissonance between the imperatives of regional development objectives and the trade regimes of neo-liberal globalisation, on the other hand. Finally, is the need to connect these dots to another: the imperative of reinventing the public domain, i.e., bringing the state back in – a state that is developmental and

democratic (Mkandawire 1995, 2001, 2004).² Two lessons to be learnt from the experience of Africa's immediate post-colonial decades are the need to avoid (a) 'perverse growth' and (b) the lack of intersectoral articulation that Samir Amin (1974, 1990) identified with 'peripheral capitalist formations'.

For our discussion in this paper, we will focus on a limited set of issues. First, that sustainable technological development (ICT or otherwise) depends on sustained public investment in education. Second, that the ability to do that has been undermined by two related elements: one is the neo-liberal discursive and policy frameworks; two is that the debt peonage under which many African countries labour continues to undermine social investment, generally, and in higher education, more specifically. The result of the neo-liberal mindset – which puts private capital at the heart of Africa's development – is in the re-emergence of 'perverse growth',³ and the ICT sector is the most obvious example. Going beyond neo-modernisation thinking requires overcoming the ICT hype that mistakes parody for development.

The discussion in the remaining part of this paper is divided into four sections. In Section Two, we outline the central elements of the ICT aspects of contemporary development discourse and the imageries of modernity inherent in them. We go beyond official documents like NEPAD in demonstrating the prevalence of this thinking. We show what is promised and the critical development questions that the discourse fails to acknowledge. We return to the argument (Adesina 2002, 2004) that the discourse is rooted in the neo-Washington Consensus framework. In Section Three, we examine in some depth some of the issues that the techno-savvy talk about ICT fails to recognise. In Section Four, we explore the links between endogeneity and sustained public financing of education, which ensure sustainable research and development. It is only in this context that the innovation that makes ICT such a promising venture is possible. The evidence, we demonstrate, points to the areas that the current neo-liberal discourse evades. Contemporary development discourse focuses on the consumption of technology rather than its production. In the context of the post-Uruguay Round global trade regime, the current absence of endogeneity is the antithesis of what the development discourse claims that it wants to achieve: sustainable, auto-kinetic development. We show how debt peonage undermines availability of resources for public investment. In Section Five, we make some concluding remarks and highlight the development options available to the continent-beyond the neo-liberal dead-end.

II. Imageries and discourse of modernity

In an advertisement that Telkom SA Ltd ran in South Africa between August and September 2004, we saw the ultimate promise of 'touching tomorrow',⁴

with the technology available today. We start our discussion with this advertisement because in several ways it demonstrates both the enormous possibilities that ICT offers and the poverty of analysis that surrounds much of the current discourse. The neo-modernisation prognosis and its limitations are demonstrated in the private sector focus of the UN Economic Commission for Africa's African Information Society Initiative, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) document. Both share several aspects of the imageries of modernity that inform the ICT discourse (cf. Adesina et al. 2006).

Against the background of the mournful sound of a Muezzin calling the Faithful to the afternoon prayer, the advert opens with a bird-eye view of an old Zanzibari town. The camera view pans to the entrance of a building in decay: this is the 'Julius Nyerere Hospital'. The camera view moves into the building and we see a very sparse hospital ward, with a row of hospital beds, and a nurse going behind a screen. We meet a young boy in a white cap and matching white kaftan. He is buttoning up his dress, with the help of the nurse. We get a glimpse of the surgical wound dressing covering his left chest. The camera moves us to another scene: to a good-looking white male driving a car through a tunnel: well lit and modern as they come. The car carries a plate number of South Africa's Western Cape Province. The camera returns to the young boy; now sitting on the hospital bed, arm over his small portmanteau; quietly waiting for someone or something. He seems ready to leave the hospital. The voice-over introduces us to the boy: a Tanzanian boy, who 'has just turned six. He would not have done so', we are told, 'without an emergency operation, performed by a Cape Town heart surgeon'. A brown-skinned hand, with a copper ring on the index finger, reaches for Jumah. Next we see him walking through a long, poorly lit corridor, with a tall female person who is dressed in an ankle-length dress and a scarf covering her head and neck. The camera cuts back to Cape Town; the surgeon is getting out of his car; he walks off a multi-storey car park. The voice-over informs us: 'After eleven exhausting hours, Jumah's fighting spirit and Anton's skill ensure he will enjoy many more birthdays'. Jumah walks out of the dark hospital doorway, with his female companion (perhaps his mother).

Across the concrete-paved, open space outside the hospital, stood Jumah's father and some relations, waiting. Arms stretched out, Jumah runs across the open space towards his relatives. A man, who passes for his father runs towards Jumah: arms stretched; he kneels to Jumah's level; the camera angles to his face, he embraces his son. A grateful father who has his son returned to him. He converses with his son, while the relatives mill around,

surrounded by run-down multi-storey buildings of a Zanzibari Kasbah, forming a small square space in front of the hospital. The hospital looks even more run-down on the outside. 'But the real miracle' the voice-over tells us, 'is that Jumah and Anton were three thousand miles apart' – stressing the 'three thousand miles'. We see Anton, in surgical dress, working a pair of joysticks in a theatre. He follows his arms movements and the image of the open surgery he is performing on the console of a machine: a main monitor and an LCD screen attached to the main equipment. We are taken outside the hospital; shown the entrance, which tells us that this is the famous Cape Town Groote Schuur Hospital. This was where Professor Christiaan Barnard pioneered heart transplant surgery in December 1967. 'Thanks to ISDN technology', the voice-over notes. 'From telephone to distant surgery...' – the screen fades to reveal the Telkom SA logo, on a lonely dark background: 'And this... is just the beginning!'

This is an outstanding piece of advertisement, with a most effective combination of images, ideas, message, executed in one minute and ten seconds. South Africa's largest and most profitable public-private enterprise invites us to imagine how the pursuit of profitability and global 'competitiveness' combine to deliver on a matter of urgent developmental and human interest. A determined six-year-old, saved by the skill of a brilliant specialist, Professor Anton Louw. Distance surgery delivering on the promise of technology in aid of a child's right to life, and a 'poor' country's healthcare deficiencies redeemed a considerable distance away. It is also one of the more seductive presentations of the neo-modernisation discourse. The 'tradition-bound' existence of a Muslim community comes in contact with the dynamism of the technology-bound versatility of a modern society. This is science in aid of humanity. A six-year-old will have many more birthdays because of the skills of a heart surgeon and the technology provided by a profit-ridden South African transnational corporation (TNC).⁵ This is the promise of modernity – embedded in classical development discourse – that the post-modern and post-development critics underestimate (Escobar 1995; Rahnema 1997).⁶ In spite of the exaggerated failure of the 'modernist' project – its production of weapons of mass destruction; its rationalist mindset going awry in Hitler's concentration camps, the pollution of the earth, and so on – modern science works more often than it fails.

Distance surgery, or telesurgery more appropriately, is a unique combination of skill, technology and how both can cohere in areas that previously were the domains of imagination. It promises to revolutionise medicine. Telesurgery is a branch of 'Telemedicine' and 'Telepresence'. The latter 'was spawned in the 1950s by the atomic energy industry's unique need for

the remote handling of dangerous isotopes' (Allen 1997). Scientists could remotely handle these dangerous nuclear materials, at a distance, using robotic arms. Video feeds allowed the scientists to monitor the movements of the robotic arms on television screens. Four decades later, there have been considerable developments in the technology of robotics and Telepresence. Robotic arms are not only capable of reproducing the movement of the human hands but much more. Where the human arm has seven degrees of freedom, modern robotics can produce more than twenty distinct movements (Allen 1997). This affords fine motor movements that are inconceivable in human terms: for example, a 360-degree turn of the 'arm' and surgical instrument, without the surgeon leaving the same spot. Computer-assisted control of movement has also made it possible to correct for sudden or jerky movements of the arms of the surgeon feeding into the remote robotic arms (Brower 2002).

Telemedicine broadly involves the use of communication technology in health care delivery from a distance. It ranges from using video and audio link-up to talking another surgeon or physician through an operation, as in the ground-breaking case at the US Antarctica research station in 2002 (NSF 2002),⁷ to telesurgery. The idea of telesurgery involved combining advances in robotics, optics technology, and the advances in high-speed data transmission (Brower 2002). The technology itself was inspired by developments in laparoscopy and endocrinology. If you could insert surgical objects into the human body and perform surgery by manipulating equipment through small punctures in the body why not take it a step further with the developments in robotics and communication technology? The original inspiration for remote surgery was for use on battle fields (Brower 2002). Being able to match the hand movements of the surgeon to the remote robotic arms or instruments requires high-speed data transmission that reduces the delay to less than 200ms (Brower 2002). The robotic technology and the data transmission provide the real life 'haptic feedback' to the surgeon (Allen 1997). The visual display that the surgeon needs to create a real-time 'presence' has improved significantly with the development of high-speed data transmission technology and bandwidth. In September 2001, the first transatlantic telesurgery was performed on a 68-year-old patient at a Strasbourg hospital (France); a gall bladder operation (BBC 2001; Brower 2002). The surgeon did the operating from a New York hospital in forty-five minutes, at a cost one million euro!

The promise of the Telkom advertisement goes to the heart of the seduction of 'techno-savvy' talks in contemporary development discourse, and the domain of imagined power of celluloid story-tellers. In this specific instance, the technology of telesurgery was delivering on something that President

Thabo Mbeki had previously requested in a different context. During a visit in 1999 to the Silicon Valley in the United States, President Mbeki envisioned a situation where US surgeons would use the power of the Internet to perform surgeries in a rural Ugandan setting (Bond 2004). Increasingly, embracing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is seen not only in helping Africa to overcome its 'marginalisation' but delivering on specific and urgent development needs. This is an idea that dominates the development discourse across a spectrum of African institutions and role-players.

If ICT is presented above in terms of its developmental impact from the point of view of health care delivery, the argument for embracing the technology has been at a much wider level of development discourse and aspirations. In 1996, the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) was created at the instance of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, to develop and coordinate 'a continental digital agenda' (Opoku-Mensah 2003: 2). Elaborate steps were taken to persuade the fifty-three member-states of the ECA to develop national ICT policies from the village level to the national level. The AISI, its official website argued, 'is not about technology. It is about giving Africans the means to improve the quality of their lives and fight against poverty'.⁸ While there is considerable pessimism expressed at the slow (or non-existent) speed of adoption of Internet technology (Opoku-Mensah 2003), the firm belief that ICT holds great prospect for 'ensuring (Africa's) prosperity' is dominant (cf. Ebam-Etta and Parvyn-Wamahiu 2003). Since May 1996, the AISI programme has been adopted by the OAU Heads of State (1996), the G-7 (1997), and a range of donor agencies, as the official African initiative for using ICT to address its development needs.

Around the same time that the AISI was taking off, the World Bank was piloting the African Virtual University (AVU) project in 1997. After a decade in which the World Bank had argued that higher education was too expensive for Africa; had insisted that market-led approaches should be found to reduce the 'burden' of public-provisioning of education; and that states should redirect public spending to primary education (World Bank 1986); the evidence of the devastating impact became too overwhelming to be neglected. The solution that the Bank offered was to harness ICT to provide higher education via distance learning. In place of the traditional institutions of knowledge production and dissemination that had been devastated by major cuts in public investment and funding allocation from national budgets, the Bank offered university education in cyberspace. The AVU was promoted as an initiative to harness ICT for development purposes.

The link between ICT techno-talk and neo-liberal discourse as inherently bounded solutions has been taken up since 1997 by a new class of Africa's

globalising modernisers. The NEPAD document and the globally-linked 'business community' have taken this distinct approach. In the NEPAD document Information and Communications Technology was identified as one of the sectoral priorities, under the broad spectrum of addressing infrastructure gaps that Africa faces. The document identified the salience of infrastructure for economic growth and in the context of finding solutions that would 'permit Africa to rise to the level of developed countries in terms of the accumulation of material and human capital' (para. 100). Bridging the 'digital divide' requires investing in ICTs in order to build 'the knowledge-based economy of the future' (para 107):

Rapid advances in technology and the diminishing cost of acquiring the new ICT tools have opened new windows of opportunity for African countries to accelerate economic growth and development. The goals of achieving a Common Market and an African Union can benefit immensely from the revolution in information technology. In addition to fostering intra-regional trade, the use of ICTs could also accelerate Africa's integration into the global economy (para. 107).

The value of embracing ICT ranges from bringing 'unprecedented comparative advantages to the continent' to providing 'an impetus to the democratisation process and good governance', using 'cultural diversity' to leverage Africa's 'integration... into the new information society', to 'conflict management', 'establishing regional distance learning and health education programmes to improve the situation in the health and education sectors' (para. 108).

In setting the specific objectives, the NEPAD documents envisaged doubling teledensity in Africa by 2005: from less than one percent (actually 0.16 percent) in 2001; 'achieve e-readiness for all countries in Africa'; create a pool of 'ICT-proficient youth and students from which Africa can draw trainee ICT engineers, programmers and software developers'; and develop local content software that is located in Africa's cultural milieu (para. 110). In achieving these objectives, the document laid out specific actions: working with several agencies, building regulatory capacity, connecting schools and youth centres, and 'establishing a network of training and research institution to build high-level manpower' (para. 111).

In elaborating the intersectoral linkages, NEPAD links 'bridging the "digital divide"' with 'bridging the education gap'. The objectives it sets are: achieving the universal primary education target set out in the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, improving access to ICT, expanding 'access to secondary education and improving their relevance to Africa's development', and promoting 'networks of specialised research and

higher education institutions' (para 120). Among the specific actions set out is creating a task-force that will 'accelerate the introduction of ICT in primary schools' (para. 121). Finally, it identified the 'brain drain' that the continent has experienced in the last twenty-five years, and seeks the objective of retaining skilled Africans on the continent and drawing on the skill of Africans in the Diaspora (para. 124). Among the specific actions for realising the objectives are the need to create the environment and conditions necessary 'to curb the brain drain and attract much-needed investment' and a database of skilled Africans for utilisation on the continent (para. 125). These and other issues within the document are set against the background of a private sector-led investment strategy and the support of the 'donor community' (both vital to its idea of 'partnership'). Compliance with current international trade regimes and the neo-Washington Consensus development discourse (Adesina 2002, 2004; Keet 2003, 2005) provide the discourse and policy settings.⁹

In September 2002, the e-Africa Commission was created within the NEPAD Secretariat as the instrument for driving the ICT initiatives (cf. www.eAfricaCommission.org). While little or no specific elaboration on ICT in original NEPAD document has emerged from the Commission, as at October 2004, the idea of 'e-Schools' has been presented as a top priority project to achieve the human development objectives of NEPAD with the focus on 'the application of ICTs to education' in Africa (Chasia 2002).

There is, however, a third leg to the development discourse that is our concern in this paper. The neo-liberal thinking of the NEPAD is often most eloquently articulated by the operators within the emerging South African transnational corporations. Kekana, a senior executive at Telkom, for instance, argued that realising the ICT vision in NEPAD requires 'among other things, embracing market liberalisation and competition'. Essential to using ICT for development objectives is 'firstly establishing the policy framework for action, then building the necessary infrastructure and lastly undertaking ground level projects' (2003: 6).

III. Imagining development: Beyond techno-talk

In several ways, the neo-modernisation discourse embedded in the different ideas of using ICT to leverage Africa's development, in Section Two above, shares much of the crisis at the heart of classical modernisation thinking. It is not so much that it is wrong as that it confuses the appearance of things for their essence. It projects a shared transnational class discourse of particular ideas of development for its essence. The idea that much of the NEPAD discourse, for instance, needs to be understood in terms of the fundamental transformation (the structural adjustment) of class politics in Africa, especially

of the new petty-bourgeois class, is something that has been argued elsewhere (cf. Adesina 2004a). In this sense, it shares the discursive framework of a set of new age modernisers that turned their backs on Africa's development path that is rooted in challenging the current neo-liberal, corporate, globalisation agenda. The development paradigm, in spite of the best intentions of its propagators, is driven by an insistence of market-transactional relations as the most efficient mechanism for achieving the desirable ends of development. That much appeal is made to poverty, the poor, and ending misery on the continent, is neither new nor sufficient for assuming that the agenda will, ipso facto, produce the desired outcomes. Much of the arguments of orthodox neo-liberalism of the 1970s and the 1980s were infused with a similar appeal to the poor and poverty. The insistence on rolling back the state was, for instance, based on such. The rampant populism of the Austrian economists gave neo-classical arguments seemingly progressive appeal, while the latter's scientism offered some measure of respectability to the Austrian economists (Chang 2001; Adesina 2004b). The result was neo-liberalism. Central to the emergence of the neo-liberal project has always been its claims to being on the side of the poor and offering the more efficient allocation of development resources to the benefit of the poor. Michael Lipton's clarion call in *Why Poor People Stay Poor* (1977), was driven by an ostensibly Gandhian mindset.¹⁰ What it produced, of course, was often the reverse of what it promised: unprecedented increase in poverty and misery in Africa in the post-1980 period. 'Urban bias', 'rent-seeking' behaviour, greed, self-interest, and corruption were imputed to the functionaries of the public domain and the state, while being remarkably silent about the same in the functionaries of capital!

The problem with classical modernisation thinking, as with the neo-modernisation discourse, is that it hides more than it reveals, and in the use of imageries and discourse driven by the naked use of power, imposes silences and amnesia. The significant thing about paradigms, broadly, is not that they shift. What is salient about paradigms is that they limit the discursive vision. To make sense of this, for our current discussion, we examine some of the silences and blind spots in the current discourses of ICT in Africa's development project, and argue what it hides is more important than what it reveals.

We return to telesurgery. This is a development in health care delivery that, as we mentioned above, holds great promise for sharing skill both within and across countries. The problem is obviously not with the availability of the technology. If development is about endogeneity; about the carrying power or capacity of a country or community to innovate and reproduce innovation, then the Tanzania advert raises several questions – similar to the ones

about the discourses embedded in AISI, AVU, and NEPAD conceptions of the role of ICT in development.

The imageries of the binary divide between the 'traditional' and the 'modern' raise the question of how and where Jumah's surgery was done. The Julius Nyerere Hospital (JNH) that we saw in the video had nothing close to the equipment that a surgical theatre needs for the operation. The complementarity of resources that makes telesurgery feasible requires a considerable amount of surgical equipment with robotics. It is through these robotic arms and equipment that the skilled surgeon in Cape Town interfaces. To sustain that, you need high-speed (broad-band) data transmission link-up and medical personnel on the Tanzanian side to support the telepresence of the Cape Town surgeon. We see no evidence that the JNH has any of these facilities. The questions that arise will include: how did JNH come to be so derelict and rundown? Where are the Tanzanian doctors and surgeons? Where is the infrastructural (communication) backbone that supported the bandwidth necessary for ensuring continuous data streaming extremely vital for successful telesurgery? The issue here is not whether the surgery took place – we know it did not. The main concern is that beyond experimental implementation to see what is feasible, and a Band-Aid approach to meeting development challenges, sustainable use of ICT in health care (here, telesurgery), more than in other areas, requires that we focus on endogeneity: the capacity for robust intersectoral linkages. It is possible to have specially rigged equipment, in specially designed ports, cabins or ships with self-contained satellite link-up facilities and robotics for surgery. Sustainable delivery of health care facilities, however, requires more than that. The use of telemedicine in many developing countries involves something less compelling than the telesurgery displayed in the advertisement. In Mozambique, telemedicine takes the form of doctors in Beira and Maputo (which has a higher density of more skilled health care personnel) sharing information on diagnosis and best options in treating patients (cf. Chetty 2003). In India, it involves the use of images fed through web cameras in village cybercafes to eye specialists in the Aravind Eye Hospital (BBC 17 June 2002).

The images of Jumah and his family raise the most pertinent questions in Africa's health care environment since the deployment of the policy instruments of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) for the provisioning of health care and education. Among others, these questions include: who pays for the operation? The Strasbourg telesurgery, mentioned earlier, was at the cost of one million euro. At the mid-October 2004 exchange rate, the cost of the surgery would be about R8 million (South African Rand) or TZS1.305 billion (Tanzanian Shilling); sustainable health care need, however, is about

affordability. The option of even a third of that cost in Tanzania (TZS435 million) would be considered preposterous, even in the private health care sector. You most definitely can treat ten Jumahs, by flying them to the hospital in Cape Town or renovate the JNH and re-equip it at that price.

One of the key lessons we have learnt about health care provisioning in development contexts, as with the approach to all aspects of development efforts, is that while hi-tech options can be seductive, there are always more cost-effective approaches to achieving the same objectives. Paying attention to primary health care needs at the village level will not eliminate the need for tertiary-level health care resources, but it will reduce the need for expensive surgery. While telesurgery may be seductive and demonstrate how much we have come to becoming like the West,¹¹ development that works and that is sustainable may require something less techno-savvy. It is this obsession with being like the West that reveals the self-loathing and schizophrenia at the heart of much of the current development paradigm. The fascination of Africa's new age modernisers with ICT will produce the same crisis of perverse growth and enclave social and economic life-style that precipitated the balance of payments crises of the late-1970s. There is enough evidence to support the claims that Amin (1974, 1990) made about how patterns of urbanisation and consumption exacerbated balance of payments crises in Africa. This obsession with western consumption patterns was characterised in the Lagos Plan of Action document as a situation where most African countries became 'producers of what we do not consume, and consumers of what we do not produce'. The pattern would seem to have worsened in the last two decades. This approach to ICT, without a wider understanding of the requirements of endogeneity, mistakes the acquisition of western consumption patterns for development.

Finally, the idea of a transnational corporation, like Telkom SA Ltd, becoming the backbone for sustainable and equitable health care provisioning raises the broader issue of commitment to a private-sector led development project in Africa. I will argue that there is nothing in the domestic behaviour of Telkom that suggests it as a development-partner for African people: local or on the continent. Indeed, nothing puts the contradictory imperatives of national development and valorisation of capital into more stark relief in South Africa than Telkom. While all its indicators of valorisation of capital have risen in many cases between 2000 and 2004, Table 1 shows that there are clear problems in areas that have more developmental impact and implications: 16,770 jobs lost; a 672,000 reduction in fixed line access, and an 18.75 percent drop in fixed line teledensity. By contrast, business-focused services (management of network sites) have grown by a factor of more

than six. If the pursuit of profit delivers on development objectives it is a matter of coincidence not intention.

Table 1: Telkom SA Overview of Performance (2000–2004)
(in ZAR millions)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Operating Revenue	27,015	31,243	34,087	37,507	40,795
EBITDA	8,082	10,315	10,044	13,012	16,337
Operating Profit	3,908	4,984	4,191	6,514	9,088
Net Profit	1,527	1,622	1,221	1,630	4,523
Fixed access lines (thousands)	5,493	4,962	4,924	4,844	4,821
Fixed-line penetration rate (%)	12.8	11.4	11.1	10.7	10.4
Fixed-line employees	49,128	43,758	39,444	35,361	32,358
Man Network sites	23,205	37,122	48,995	98,690	142,208

Source: Telkom SA Limited Group *Annual Report* 2004, p.50. EBITDA: Net profit before minority interests, taxation, finance charges, investment income and depreciation, amortisation, impairment and write-offs.

On top of the job shedding and reduction in fixed line access, members of the Board of Telkom awarded themselves performance bonuses of between R6 million and R11 million each in 2004. Yet the reduction in unemployment, as an important policy instrument for poverty reduction, is widely understood in development studies. The argument here is that there is nothing in Telkom's domestic behaviour that suggests that the imperative of equitable development rather than profit will define its behaviour on the rest of the continent. That the net wealth outflow will be in the direction of South Africa and its fiscus is cold comfort for Burundians or Tanzanians. While trade liberalisation and a common regulatory framework, which ensure that private capital will not be expropriated, may be comforting to TNCs migrating around the continent, they will exacerbate the crisis of uneven development (and perhaps underdevelopment) rather than reduce it.¹²

What the Telkom advertisement did not do, and could perhaps not have done, is ask and answer the question: 'Why?' Why is the JNH so decrepit and bare? Why are the Tanzanian doctors absent? These and other questions are what we expect more studied documents and programmes like AISI, AVU, and NEPAD to answer. The critical challenge for a viable development programme for Africa is not in describing the problem – that is almost trite. The problem is to answer the question 'Why?' The viability of a development discourse is in how well it answers the 'why' questions and the appropriateness of the policy instruments for achieving the desired ends.

Explaining the crisis: Higher education and sustainable knowledge production

Central to the discussion below are two things: first is endogeneity, and second is sustained public funding. Endogeneity is fundamental to sustainable production and the application of science and technology. Experience everywhere suggests that sustainable endogenous Research and Development (R&D) is driven by the higher education sector, and that this requires significant and sustained public commitment and funding. The crisis of the HE sector dates back to before the deployment of structural adjustment programmes in many countries in Africa – coinciding with the fiscal crisis that many countries experienced in the 1970s. What was a fiscal crisis took on an ideological and entrenched form under the neo-liberal policy regime, when social expenditure, broadly, became a soft target and higher education was declared a luxury that these countries could least afford. As we argue below, research in the HE sector suffered severe contraction. Even in the post-stabilisation phase of adjustment programmes, when some universities have been celebrated for their 'financial recovery', research is one area where the crisis has persisted or deepened. A central argument in this section is that efforts at deploying ICT – via virtual universities and libraries – were in reaction to the crisis but without a concerted effort at mobilising public re-investment in this aspect of the HE sector. To do one without the other, we argue, is a fatal distraction; to embark on the deployment of ICT in the education sector without understanding the historical context of the crisis is what we refer below as the crisis of historicity. Investment in R&D is important for local knowledge capacity in the ICT sector and avoiding the current account crisis that import-dependence on ICT resources will create.

Integral to the imperative of endogeneity is the need for intersectoral linkages: between basic research, production activities, and service provisioning. Development is about mutually self-sustaining inter-sectoral linkages. Rebuilding Africa's HE research capabilities, with a focus on national and regional challenges, creates a transmission belt between basic research,

applied research, and production and service activities. This is the second concern that this section seeks to underscore. We demonstrate some cross-national experiences in Section Four of this paper.

Crisis of historicity and market-centric logic

The NEPAD document, quite rightly, described a range of problems: from brain drain to the need to develop the human resources necessary for developing local content in ICT. Changing the environment that has driven so many African experts out of their countries is important; and none of these is new. However, we can identify two problems, *inter alia*, in this analysis.

First is the crisis of historicity. For instance, how did major universities like Dakar, Ibadan, Dar-es-Salaam or Makerere, that were major centres of research excellence, become shadows of their old selves? Only in answering the question can we begin to reconstruct such institutions in a manner that recreates the endogeneity of knowledge production (cf. Zeleza and Olukoshi 2004a, 2004b). Second is the over-eagerness in NEPAD to present itself as investor-friendly and not antagonistic to its benefactors in the G-8 countries. This eagerness reinforces the crisis of historicity. This sharing of a common discourse of development with the neo-Washington Consensus at the heart of Joseph Wolfensohn's Comprehensive Development Framework (cf. Adesina 2002/2006a), and commits NEPAD to the same idea of the role of ICT in development (the same narrow market-centric logic) that created the crisis in the first instance. These two weaknesses are endemic to the AISI, the AVU, and the e-Africa Commission. In a sense, having techno-savvy experts with limited understanding of the political economy of current global architecture can produce a very deterministic misreading of the linkages between technology and development. The tendency to confuse the nature of the relationship between ICT and development is something that Chetty (2003) noted about the NEPAD document. The search for one key that unlocks development is emblematic of modernisation thinking. It assumes that technology is causative of development: acquire it and you are on your way to development. As Chetty (2003) notes there is insufficient evidence for that conclusion: whether ICT is 'cause', 'consequence' or 'manifestation of economic growth'.

I will address the questions of historicity and the development discourse here. The notoriety of the World Bank's 1986 policy document, *Financing Education in Developing Countries*, is now widely recognised. As Zeleza and Olukoshi (2004a: 2) note:

It may seem like distant memory already that only about a decade or so ago, powerful international forces promoting a neo-liberal agenda and led in the African context by the World Bank had suggested, literally, that Africa had

no need for universities because the return on investment which it received from its expenditure outlay was both too low and unjustifiable... Rather than establish, maintain and invest in the university, Africa, it was argued, would be better served by investing in primary education and vocational education, while exploring more cost-effective foreign options for university-level training... In any case, continuing investment in the university system and doing so at the expense of needed investment in primary, secondary and vocational education was seen as unsustainable and African governments were called upon to re-consider their policies through pro-active remedial action.

In what had by then become the staple of neo-liberal language, the argument for divestment away from the university-level education was premised on equity, efficiency, and fiscal restraint. The funding pattern at the time was not only unsustainable but was generating social inequities (World Bank 1986: 13). Public investment in the HE sector was diverting resources away from basic education, which the poor need. Investment in higher education was not Pareto-optimal or sustainable given the resources available to developing countries (World Bank 1986, Ch 2). In what was the standard orthodox neo-liberal policy prescription, developing countries were asked to increase 'user fees', reallocate public spending away from the HE sector (World Bank 1986: 17), decentralise education offering through increased private provision of higher education and non-publicly funded community schools (World Bank 1986: 33-36). Public universities would be responsible for generating the funds they needed. The puzzle is that an earlier World Bank publication (Eicher 1984) had expressed scepticism about the efficacy of the statistical and methodological bases of much of what came out in the official 1986 policy document.

The World Bank arguments and policy options were presented at a meeting of African Vice-Chancellors in Harare in 1986: the now infamous 'Harare Declaration'. Djibouti, the Bank argued, had no university and was no worse off for it. As Mkandawire (2004) noted, the Vice-Chancellors were strongly opposed to the position. I will argue that this opposition made no impact on the conversion of policy options to instruments. Precisely because of the virtual stranglehold of the World Bank and the IMF in the African countries implementing the structural adjustment programmes, the Bank's policy recommendations became de facto public policy. The impact on the higher education landscape in Africa was horrendous. To cite one case, public spending on education in Nigeria declined from ten percent of the GDP in 1980 to 0.6 percent by the early 1990s. The massive decline in funding took two forms: direct cuts or stagnation in an environment of declining purchasing power, often the result of the devaluation of national currencies.

Previously vibrant science laboratories that produced world-class doctoral theses and staff research became empty. Ground-breaking research in the humanities and social sciences ground to a halt. The loss of earning power was so enormous that university teachers and researchers faced the options of emigrating, moonlighting in the non-formal sector, and doing tenuous consultancy work with little or no returns to fundamental contributions to knowledge. The hollowing out of the universities flew in the face of the optimism about the efficacy of the market. The argument is not that the 'World Bank caused the problem'. It did not. What its imposed policy options did, however, was to turn short-run fiscal crises into endemic tragedy for Africa's HE sector.

While there is no single narrative of the underlying problem that the HE sector (like other sectors) faced from the late-1970s, there are common strands to most of the cases. In most countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the funding crisis was a direct result of the budgetary and balance of payments crisis that the negative terms of trade precipitated in the mid to late-1970s. As the state faced these constraints, funding allocations to the HE sector (as with the broad education and other sectors such as health) were cut back to deal with the short-term fiscal problems. In very few cases such as Zaire and Uganda, the neglect into which the universities fell was inexorably linked to the hostility and crisis of the polity. In Zaire, for instance, the social science faculty of the University of Kinshasa was exiled to Lumumbashi. In Uganda, the decline of Makerere was a combination of the political crisis that intensified and became generalised terror, the murder of the Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University, the expulsion of people of Indian descent, and academics who fled into exile to escape the savagery of the Amin regime. But this was the exception rather than the rule. In a case like Kamuzu Banda's Malawi, state repression against perceived enemies of the regime was combined with diligent efforts to nurture the universities and maintain 'quality' of an English type. The HE sector in most of post-colonial Africa was seen as serving several objectives simultaneously: meeting the human resource needs of the countries development agenda, nation-building, and generating social cohesion. In almost all cases, bursaries and scholarships were provided to support bright students from poor backgrounds.

What is significant about the neo-liberal intervention is that in most countries the crisis became compounded. If the fiscal crisis was seen by most governments as short-run, the stabilisation component of structural adjustment had involved stiff cuts in the budgetary allocation to a wide range of areas of public spending, especially the social sector. This was before the Bank justify its policy on education in the 1986 document. In a sense, the

1986 document sought to justify existing policy position and budgetary practice. The Bank and the current development discourse share two characteristics. First is a failure to link the fiscal and balance of payments difficulties to Africa's mode of integration into the global 'economy'. Africa's integration into the global regime of accumulation was (and is still largely) characterised by excessive openness based on primary commodity production. The balance of payments and current account disequilibria that this mode of integration caused impacted on the higher education section, among others, in declining public funding and support.¹³ Demanding intensified integration into the global regime of accumulation misreads the origin of the crisis. This does not suggest that one exonerates the crisis of leadership and endogenous policy, but these are of an entirely different order from that suggested by the neo-liberal paradigm. Second, is the failure to link the deployment of the Bank's policy on higher education to tripping the fiscal crisis into the hollowing out of several institutions of higher learning, institutions that were previously acknowledged as centres of excellence in research and training.

Much of this hollowing out of the HE sector, of course, met the internal political agenda of the political class that emerged as the hand-maidens of structural adjustment. The suspicion with which intellectuals were held by military regimes in a country like Nigeria, for instance, played into this new agenda. The shifting of external funding away from state/public institutions generally came as part of the same neo-liberal ideological package. Much of this funding that had traditionally flowed into the university system was diverted to the 'emerging' civil society. The policy on education was increasingly driven by the discourse of commodity and market transactions. Ideologically, this shift was driven by the anti-State sentiments of the time. Grant-making bodies (that are now setting up consortia to 'rescue' African universities) were happy to invent a whole sector of private 'research and advocacy' bodies run by the same individuals who were supposed to be teaching in the public universities. It was a restructuring of the pattern of incentives that promoted an entrepreneurial approach less concerned with knowledge production than with going with the changing focus of the grant-making bodies – often with no relationship with local development concerns. It nurtured a patron-client relation with programme officers that would have been unimaginable if these officers were dealing with institutional agencies like universities.

While funding for basic and secondary education is fundamental, the crisis of the neo-liberal discourse was that it, as Tilak (2004: 2) notes, 'widely felt that basic education goals could be reached only if the public attention is diverted rather completely away from secondary and more particularly higher education'. This position was vigorously articulated by the World Bank in its

1994 publication, *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience*. The vigorous response from agencies such as UNESCO about the deleterious implications of the prevailing policy focus on higher education, at the time, had no impact whatsoever (Tilak 2004).

Either higher education was ignored in the policy planning exercises of the governments and of the international organisations, or special measures were initiated to reduce the intensity of public efforts in higher education, or both. Many policy and plan documents, and public discourses on education policy tended to pay, at best, some lip service to higher education and to focus on the preparation of plans for literacy and primary education. If at all the growing demand for higher education was recognised, it was assumed by the governments that such a demand could be met either by distance education programmes or by the private sector, in neither of which governments have to invest any substantial resources (Tilak 2004: 3).

An initiative like the African Virtual University (AVU) was conceived within this mindset; essentially outsourcing higher education provisioning to a range of second-rate US universities. That education of any kind is strongly situational is completely lost on the adherents. The current offerings of the AVU demonstrate the futility of assuming that the pedagogic process, inherent to a university environment, can be outsourced over the Internet (cf. www.avu.org). Initiatives such as the African Economic Research Consortium served an auxiliary objective of creating a new generation of African economists that could propagate the neo-liberal project, while the Bank and the Fund kept a tight grip on the programme and its research agenda! Internships at the IMF, which were built into the funding of research proposals, were driven by this auxiliary objective.

Much is often made of the World Bank's 2002 apparent U-turn over the salience of higher education for 'the knowledge society' and undoing the damage its imposed policies did over the 1980s and the 1990s. However, as the cases of Makerere University and the University of Dar-es-Salaam show, rebuilding the universities has not shifted in any way from the idea of private provisioning. The universities are expected to generate their own funds by taking in more private fee-paying students (cf. Obong 2004; Court 2000). By the 1999/2000 academic year, privately sponsored students at Makerere were 80 percent of the student body, from 32 percent in 1993/94 (Obong 2004: 111). The university was on a more viable budgetary basis, less dependent on state subventions, but even the most enthusiastic supporters of the project acknowledge the demise of research (cf. Musisi and Muwanga 2001; Court 2000). Equity of access that the neo-liberal agenda claimed as its objective has all but fallen off the radar (cf. Musisi and Muwanga 2001).

The idea that the public universities must find their own resources and compete with private universities continues to define higher education policy in countries like Nigeria, with the decline of the universities looking increasingly terminal.¹⁴ Again, while commercially viable courses flourish, research generally and especially those in the sciences continues to suffer enormously (cf. Zeleza and Olukoshi 2004a, 2004b). Contrary to what one would assume from the argument that funding for higher education will be diverted to the basic education sector, the experience of the last two-and-half decades is an acute decline in funding for primary education.

To reiterate the issues raised earlier in this section, several higher education initiatives involving the deployment of ICTs derive from the negative impact of the fiscal crisis and stabilisation policies on the sector: the neo-liberal policy regime of the last twenty-five years is strongly implicated in the damage done to higher education research capabilities in several African countries. The decline in R&D would require renewed public investment in the sector. Among other things this is important for endogeneity and sustainable ICT capacity in a wider developmental context. To deploy ICTs in a manner that fails to address public investment concerns risks becoming a distraction. As we demonstrate in the next section both a commitment to basic research and a robust public investment in national R&D capacity, via the HE sector, are widespread among countries that insist on the market-logic for Africa's HE sector.

V. When is techno-talk a fatal distraction?

What the AVU demonstrates is precisely a distraction. So much energy goes into claims about the efficacy of ICT that it distracts from the imperative of endogeneity in education generally, and research specifically, through sustained public resource provisions. While information technology is the public, user-friendly face of research in science and technology, the basis is in basic research in physics and mathematics. This constitutes long-range research that is funded not primarily because of immediate results but in the awareness that investments in these areas will produce spin-offs that will enter the consumer market at some stage in the future.

If there is a lesson that we can learn from successful producers of technology (ICT or otherwise) it is that sustainable development in this field rests on sustained support for higher education and research and development, and that much of the long-term support for research comes from public funding. Further, in several developed countries, commitment to the 'advancement of knowledge' qua knowledge is important for innovation and development. Data for 2000, from the US National Science Foundation (NSF 2000), show that the United States accounted for 41 percent of the year's

global spending on R&D of US\$686.9 billion. The share of non-OECD countries was twelve percent; 58 percent of which came from China. Until 1980 the bulk of R&D funding in the United States came from the public sector: this in a country that is supposed to be the exemplar of private capital dominance of society and economy. While defence spending in R&D in 2002 dominated total R&D expenditure in the US, this is an area that we know is least concerned with the immediate gratification of the consumer market, and is defined by state funding and the state's agenda. Indeed, much of today's ICT gadgets and facilities emerged as spin-offs from defence-related R&D in which the US dominates: cell phones, the Internet, and telesurgery!

The significance of this is not that African countries should parody the West in R&D spending or the share of the funding or devote enormous public funds to military ventures. Rather, the point is that much of the neo-liberal discourse is not supported by evidence in the G-8 countries. Strong public support for higher education is fundamental to research and development activities, which in turn are fundamental to the endogeneity of research competencies and innovation; which in turn are vital for sustainable endogenous intersectoral linkages. Development objectives may demand urgency regarding the 'relevance' of research. It is, however, in the areas of technology that an instrumental approach to research (for immediate gratification) is most inappropriate.

The fundamental failures of the current discourses of ICT are many. First is the continuing focus of public funding attention on basic (and sometimes, secondary) education. The Millennium Development Goal on education is restricted to basic education. Second, where the discussion comes to post-primary education and research, the mindset remains firmly rooted in the neo-Washington Consensus discourse. The failure to locate the source of the damage done to the higher education landscape in the neo-liberal mindset and the Bank's discourse and policies is a defining aspect of contemporary development discourse. In many ways, it explains the incoherence and timidity of the NEPAD document. To the extent that much of the 'Africanisation' of the ICT discourse deters from the fundamental task of a vigorous reconstruction and reformulation of the policy landscape, away from the Bank's neo-liberal logic, it constitutes a fatal distraction. Creating enclave e-schools or networks of specialist research centres, creating local content, and so on, without fundamentally addressing the basis for the reconstruction of the higher education landscape in Africa, away from the immediate gratification of 'marketable skills' or those who can use the ICT produced by others, is even more fatally so.

The salience of endogenous research and development capacity is perhaps more urgent today than it was forty or thirty years ago. In the context of the post-Uruguay Round global trade regimes, the instruments of technological development that were available to the late-industrialising countries like South Korea are no longer available. The trade regime, defined by the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreements, in particular, has put the options of reverse-engineering out of the reach of non-industrialised developing countries. The regime of copyright in everything from medicine to music to technological gadgets makes even more urgent the task of rebuilding the traditional institutions of knowledge production on the continent. In side-stepping these issues, much of the development discourse distracts from the fundamental development tasks and the threat of the global trade regime that NEPAD enthusiastically endorsed. The discourse is in danger of leading Africa down the path of 'perverse growth' again! This point raises the question of where the funds will come from. I will argue that fundamental to the crisis of public investment in Africa is debt peonage. It was precisely in the period that the Bank and the IMF had the most detailed control, micro-managing many of Africa's economies, that the debt crisis turned into debt peonage (see Table 2).

The impact of the burgeoning debt burden has been particularly harsh on public investment, and the inequity that makes the World Bank/IMF and the G-8 countries the beneficiaries of Africa's net resource loss. Here Nigeria well illustrates the point – more appropriately because it would seem to fit, at first glance, the case for rejecting debt cancellation. Between 1998 and 2002, the external debt stock, when denominated in the local currency, increasingly outstripped federal revenue. If the transition from a dictatorship to 'liberal democracy' is what African countries need to make them attractive on the grounds of good governance, the Nigerian experience shows the reverse.

In the period when African leaders are jumping through the hoop to convince their G-8 patrons that they have mended their ways, as the basis for a new partnership, the structure of Nigeria's external debt makes for interesting reading. For instance, 76.95 percent of the debt stock is bilateral, and 99.44 percent of the bilateral debt is owed to the Paris Club countries. However, 88.35 percent of the debt owed to the Paris Club (sovereign states rather than commercial debt) does not consist of new loans. It is made up of consolidation of arrears, penalties, capitalised moratorium, and interest (IMF 2001)! In 1999, the first year of its return to 'liberal democracy', interest payments on its debt stock consumed 45.6 percent of the total federal budget and 59.6 percent of recurrent spending. External debt service was eight-

and-a-half and eleven times more than the total spending on education in 1999 and 2000 respectively. In 2002, external debt service was thirteen times more than the total spending on health. In 1998, the year before the return to civil rule, the Paris Club countries’ share of the total debt service payment was US\$229.05 million, out of a total of US\$1.27 billion (or 18 percent). In 2001, three years into ‘liberal democracy’, the total debt service payment had risen to US\$2.128 billion, and the Paris Club’s share had gone up to US\$1.276 billion or sixteen percent (Central Bank of Nigeria, several years). Yet while the arguments at the OAU/AU were about campaigning for debt cancellation, NEPAD opted for using the World Bank and IMF enhanced HIPC instruments that took a contrary view. Even the clause in the MDG base document that argued for debt cancellation was neglected.¹⁵

Table 2 gives a wider picture of the escalation of the debt crisis across several African countries. Apart from applying to a minority of countries, the ‘debt deal’ announced at the end of the 2005 G-8 Summit at Gleneagles in Scotland coupled debt ‘forgiveness’ to the HIPC instruments which undermine the fiscal basis of the states. On the other hand, Nigeria’s debt negotiation with the Paris Club ended with the country being required to make an advance payment of US\$12 billion (or 1.62 trillion naira) in return for the cancellation of US\$18 billion of the country’s US\$35 billion external debt stock at the end of 2004!

Table 2: External debt stock of selected countries: 1980 to 2000 (current US\$ million)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	% Increase**
Côte d’Ivoire	7,462.40	9,659.00	17,251.10	18,898.50	12,138.00	62.66
Ghana	1,401.70	2,256.50	3,880.90	5,935.80	6,657.30	374.94
Kenya	3,386.80	4,181.30	7,058.10	7,412.40	6,294.90	85.87
Malawi	829.90	1,020.70	1,558.20	2,242.50	2,716.20	227.29
Mozambique*	67.50	2,870.50	4,649.70	7,458.40	7,135.40	10,470.96
Nigeria	8,921.40	18,643.30	33,438.90	34,092.50	34,134.30	282.61
Senegal	1,473.30	2,566.10	3,735.60	3,841.30	3,372.30	128.89
Tanzania	5,322.10	9,107.20	6,453.80	7,414.80	7,444.80	39.88
Uganda	688.90	1,231.90	2,582.90	3,572.50	3,408.50	394.77
Zambia	3,244.40	4,498.70	6,915.90	6,952.50	5,729.90	76.61
Zimbabwe	785.60	2,414.60	3,246.70	5,006.70	4,001.90	409.41

Source: 2002 *World Development Indicators*.

*Start data for Mozambique are 1981. ** 1980 to 2000; Mozambique is 1981

If the argument for the sustainable linking of technology and the development agenda is the re-construction of Africa's institutions of knowledge production, and to do that requires increased public investment, surely the debt burden is a major obstacle to realising the objective. A disembodied fascination with ICT that side-steps the core issue of the debt burden (without donor-dependency) qualifies for a distraction. It becomes a fatal distraction when there is no effort to connect the two: to engage in serious contestation of the argument for debt cancellation or to opt for a financing path that makes foreign investment and ODA-funds the premise on which to build this new African development edifice.

How the responses of critical agencies in Africa to the ICT initiatives are perceived by those directing the projects are particularly telling in the disconnection of the links between elements of the crisis. Opoku-Mensah (2003) expressed the frustration about how 'the African media are lagging behind in their coverage of Information Society issues'. A study commissioned by the ECA, she notes, reveals that:

with notable exceptions, the media in Africa are far from being a promoter of the Information Society in Africa... Most editors interviewed from the selected media underscored the fact that there is simply no real capacity for reporting in this particular area.

Opoku-Mensah expressed shock at the response of a national newspaper editor who said 'we have not reached the stage as a nation where IT matters would attract serious attention from our readers, despite their importance'. The media 'should be at the forefront, asking questions and seeking answers on how Africa can address its poor information infrastructure and what government and society at large are doing'. That the problem could be the failure of those designing these initiatives to connect with the real concerns of people, rather than the cyber-trekking modernisers, did not seem to enter the picture. It would seem reasonable that in the period when Malawi was facing basic problems of food security, popular despondency with the 'liberal democratic' regime, and crisis of infrastructure, cyber-trekking might not be the most urgent thing on the mind of an editor. A focus on ICT without connecting food insecurity with the policy instruments deployed by the Bank and the IMF, is a distraction.

Similarly, NEPAD set itself the priority of bringing connectivity to primary schools as part of its development objectives, which itself is not unimportant, but the issue of the appropriateness of the model for development thinking and programming could not be more pertinent. ICT connectivity for primary schools in Soweto or even the Northern Cape Province in South Africa may not seem such a disconnected idea. The available infrastructure

(electricity, standing school buildings, etc.) and a country with the resources to roll out such initiative would not be so out of place. When such model is transposed onto the rural border region of Cameroon and Nigeria, the crisis of appropriateness becomes evident.

The idea of private sector-led ICT initiatives highlights the difficulties at the heart of the discourse and targets that are set in initiatives such as NEPAD. Doubling Africa's telecommunication footprint (teledensity) between 2001 and 2005 (from less than one percent to two percent) seemed like a major target setting. However, at the end of 2003, mobile phone teledensity was 6.2 percent, with 51.8 million subscribers, while fixed line teledensity was three percent with 25.1 million subscribers (ITU 2004). Outside of South Africa and Egypt the growth has been mainly in the area of mobile phone, with 70 percent of all subscribers being mobile phone users (ITU 2004). In other words, the target was achieved through the expansion of cell-phone services in most parts of the continent, with South African telecommunication companies being major service providers, in an extremely profitable market.¹⁶ Indeed, between 1998 and 2003, Africa was the fastest growing mobile phone market in the world, with an annual growth rate of 65 percent, ahead of the 38 percent growth rate in Asia (ITU 2004). However, no-one with a serious understanding of the ICT sector will consider mobile phone technology an appropriate and affordable backbone. While there might have been a coincidence of objectives between private transnational firms (African or otherwise) and those promoting this 'development framework', the antinomies of what was achieved have more to do with the faulty assumption that development objectives can be achieved via economic entities driven by the profit motive. The expansion of this communication technology is without doubt beneficial in several ways, and the explosion in cell-phone uptake in several countries demonstrates the level of unmet pent-up demand for telephone connectivity. In the same way that the growth of cybercafes facilitated national and transnational communication, the cell-phone technology, voice and text-messaging, fundamentally altered the way people live their lives. The issue, from a sustainable ICT perspective, is that the ideological commitment to private capital may (as it did in this case) produce the most inappropriate mechanism for implementing an objective. It is growth, all right, but it is 'perverse growth'. Efforts to increase fibre optics connectivity, on both the West and East African sides of the continent, would suggest a more viable alternative that would depend on (a) significant local involvement in the various countries, rather than being incidental to Telkom's connection with Europe or Asia; and (b) significant public sector investment in the telecommunication sector. In this sense, the growth in mobile phone

technology may divert attention from the need to invest in and expand fixed line connectivity: either using fibre optic cables or high speed wireless technology.

The assumption that there is an inherent complementarity between capital valorisation criteria and the public policy objective (of equitable and poverty-reducing development) is difficult to justify. That the companies are South African rather than South Korean or French would also make very little difference. Again, it raises the question of conscious public investment in national infrastructure. Intra-national experience of the take-up and the location of access to ICT, that is private sector-led, shows an enormous concentration and clustering around major cities and wealthy neighbourhoods. For instance, all the core Internet service providers in Nigeria are located within an area of Lagos that is not more than two square kilometres wide. Teledensity in cities from Maputo to Dakar is reproducing the phenomenon of uneven development and the enclave economy that defined the typical post-colonial peripheral capitalist formations of the 1960s and the 1970s. Again, a disembodied commitment to ICT is in danger of being a fatal distraction, reproducing the same growth pattern that led to the disequilibrium of the 1970s.

Conclusion

I wish to return to the issues raised in the Introduction to this paper. Fundamental to sustainable development in Africa is the relationship between several issues. The promise of ICT is indeed enormous – from simple communication with distant relatives, to economic activities; from providing remote diagnosis for hospitals to sharing medical expertise; digitising rare manuscripts and e-book facilities for out-of-print materials to sharing the resources among libraries; to computer-based orthography for African languages, and so on. Understanding the nature of Africa's development crisis, the policy instruments and the forces that tripped the crisis into an endemic development morass is important for making sense of what is to be done. However, much of the current hype about ICT and its development implications suffers from policy and discursive problems.

To champion ICT for the purpose of improving 'Africa's competitiveness' as an investment destination risks being a fatal distraction when those concerned with the project fail to 'connect the dots with Africa's dependence on primary commodity markets – mineral and agriculture. Even as the mineral sector continues to be the primary destination of current investment, without the effort to internalise Africa's engine of growth we will remain locked into a sector that is not policy-responsive. This would represent a fatal distraction. Neither the price of oil for Nigeria nor that of coffee for

Uganda is a function of domestic policy in any significant manner. Arguing about reversing the brain drain in the absence of a critical engagement with the specific policies that undermined African academics and their institutions will be a distraction from understanding why a shift away from the current (neo-liberal) policy trajectory is fundamental to the reconstruction of the institutions and domains of knowledge production on the continent.

Rather than focus on a neo-modernisation inspired idea of ICT, what is required is an endogenously-driven framework. One can illustrate this argument with a simple and compelling urgent need: developing computer-based orthography for African languages that can be ported across operating platforms. African languages are in danger of becoming extinct by default largely because of the difficulty in generating characters that are specific to many of the languages on computer keyboards. This is a simple illustration of what can be done, but this requires an endogenously driven sense of development rather than the current neo-modernisation orientation. It requires a coherent effort, beyond the current efforts by individuals. The latter tends to privilege large language groups like Zulu, Yoruba, Amharic, Ki-Swahili or Hausa. It is the same endogenously-driven approach that is needed for addressing different dimensions of Africa's development challenges.

While NEPAD highlights infrastructure as a priority area, the understanding that underscores this important area of sustainable development remains trapped in a neo-liberal mind-set. Even after all the uproar around the paradigm that gave birth to it, NEPAD officials still see this important area in purely business terms. Infrastructure is seen predominantly as vital for 'the provision of an environment conducive to investment, particularly in reducing the costs and risks of doing business in Africa'.¹⁷ It was as if the latter was self-evident. To tie such infrastructure development to a private capital-led development, rather than a heterodox approach, is to become a slave to ideology. As we showed earlier, the result in the teledensity has been to reproduce perverse growth. There is more to infrastructure development than providing a platform for private investors. Contemporary neo-liberal discourse confuses trade discourse for development discourse!

Neo-liberal discourse and policy instruments, I wish to reiterate, are at the heart of Africa's development crisis. To engage in a debate about promoting ICT in Africa without engaging with the policy discourse and terrain will be a fatal distraction. Endogeneity is fundamental to sustainable technology use and production. Outsourcing Africa's higher education is a fatal for endogeneity and rebuilding local capacities. It distracts from the urgent task of rebuilding the continent's teaching and research infrastructure within the larger education sector. Central to this is a sustained and conscious public

investment in the sector. Finding the resources for this requires ending Africa debt peonage: it calls for complete cancellation of what are essentially odious debt. The leading protagonists of ICT have tended to shy away from prioritising unconditional and complete debt cancellation – doing one without the other is a fatal distraction. Techno-talk becomes counter-productive when it fails to premise itself on the fundamental developmental issues that need to be addressed before falling into the illusion that in the world wrought by the post-Uruguay Round trade regimes Africa can simply reproduce the East Asian ‘miracle’. Fundamental to rethinking Africa’s development concerns and the value of ICT is connecting the dots; connecting the dots requires an appreciation of the imperative of reinventing the public domain.

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Notes

1. Development economics, specifically, and development studies, generally, rested on the argument that the central assumptions of neo-classical economics (i.e. marginalist economics) are of limited relevance in the context of ‘underdeveloped’ or ‘developing’ countries: market structure or whether market, as understood within neo-classical economics, exists at all in these contexts; motivation for human (‘economic agents’) behaviour, etc. In other words, these characteristics of the countries require an approach to economic analysis that is quite different from the assumptions and logic underscoring neo-classical economics. The premise of the neo-liberal ‘counter-revolution’ (Toye 1987) is to dismiss all that and insist on a single (mono)economic paradigm. It seductively rests on the claim, quite apparent in Lall (1981), that all human beings respond the same way to the same structure of incentives, and that claiming a difference for developing countries is patronising on the part of leading development economists. However, the problem for neo-classical economics and neo-liberalism is more foundational. The ontological foundations of the counter-revolution are sociologically dubious: the market as understood by neo-liberalism is not primeval; foundational assumptions of how markets function are a delusion; human beings are essentially social; the

collective is not merely an aggregation of its constituent elements; and possessive individualism and greed do not explain a whole lot about what is uniquely human.

2. In the period in which so much has been written about the crisis of the state in Africa, it is quite surprising that the implications of the dissolution of the bonds of obligations and privileges that binds states and citizens in a polity is hardly theorised or appreciated. The legitimacy of any state is rooted in the strength of this mutual bond of obligations and privileges. What structural adjustment did was to deepen, and in many cases dissolve, this aspect of state/society nexus. If the weakening of this bond, in the pre-1980s, was a result of economic crisis and vagaries of the abuse of state power, adjustment provided a coherent theoretical justification for the withdrawal of the state from social policy provisioning. It is in that sense that it marked a qualitative break in the post-colonial state/society pact. As we will show later, in several cases this break was a conditionality of adjustment, and rammed down the throat of policy-makers; in other cases it involved extensive personnel changes in the state structures themselves (cf. Adesina 2004). If the state withdraws from social policy provisioning (education, health care, etc.), why would citizens accept its legitimacy or that it deserves their allegiance? Is it a coincidence, therefore, that the implosion of many of the states listed as 'failed states' happened around the same time that the adjustment programmes were being implemented? In some cases, latent differences were tripped into genocidal conflicts (cf. Mkandawire 2003).
3. Economic development is associated with quantitative growth in output and qualitative or structural changes in an economy. In the 1970s, 'perverse growth' was used to refer to economic growth without any appreciable structural change in the economies of most sub-Saharan African countries; changes away from primary commodities to manufacturing, both in domestic production and export. Urbanisation and economic activities (especially those driven by the static import substitution strategy) fuelled rapid growth in consumption – primary, intermediate, and capital goods. The export items (largely made up of primary commodities) suffered from fluctuations in earnings and a long term secular decline in terms of trade; imports by contrast rose steadily in monetary terms. The result was the balance of payments crises that became pervasive in the late 1970s and early 1980s.
4. This is the advertising claim that Telkom SA Ltd uses with its logo.
5. Telkom was forced to pull the advertisement off the air by the South African communications regulator (ICASA). It turned out that the claims made in the advertisement were completely false: there was no telesurgery on Jumah! My appreciation to Wilson Akpan, my doctoral student, for drawing my attention to this development.
6. For more on this see Pieterse (2000, 2001).
7. On 5 July 2002, a physician at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Research Station was assisted by a medical team in Massachusetts to perform an urgent

operation on a colleague at the research station, who had damaged his knee in a fall. This was considered a major breakthrough in medicine. Using a two-way audio and video link-up, via a satellite, the team of doctors in Massachusetts had guided the physician through the delicate surgical operation.

8. Cf. www.uneca.org/aisi.
9. What is interesting in the competing claims to speak for Africa is the deafening silence in the NEPAD document concerning the AISI project in UNECA. It is as if to acknowledge the AISI is to diminish the claims of those promoting NEPAD's monopoly of voice on matters that concern Africa's development. I have noted a similar tendency for silence and forgetting concerning other initiatives that may or may not offer alternative paradigms of addressing Africa's development challenges (Adesina 2003).
10. Which reminds one of Dr Frankenstein who wanted to save humanity but ended up creating a monster!
11. In the words of the authors of the MAP and NEPAD documents: to 'permit Africa to rise to the level of developed countries' (NEPAD para. 100).
12. What the current discourse has done (cf. the NEPAD document) is to impose neo-liberal trade regimes (WTO-type) on the idea of the regional market. Regional integration, economic communities, and markets in the 1991 African Economic Community Treaty have an entirely different intent and development discourse from those found in contemporary market-driven discourse.
13. The idea that Africa's problem is a result of insufficient integration into the global regime of accumulation reveals the intellectual poverty at the heart of the neo-liberal discourse. Using trade as a percentage of GDP to measure the openness of an economy, sub-Saharan Africa was between 1960 and 1992 the world's most open economy; and only became second to the East Asia and Pacific economy in the 1990s (cf. Adesina 2003/2006b).
14. In the Nigerian case, at the same time that the Federal Government is reducing allocations to the public universities, new private universities are being licensed. Two of these are owned by the President (Olusegun Obasanjo) and the Vice President (Atiku Abubakar). Conflict of interest for someone at the helm of NEPAD's implementation and its Peer Review Mechanism could not be more evident! The paradox is that the fiscus of the Nigerian state has never been more robust, given the level of the international oil price.
15. The position of South Africa's Finance Minister (Trevor Manuel) on this matter is quite instructive. In the documentary, 'The two Trevors go to Washington', Manuel dismissed the idea of debt cancellation with a measure of scorn. 'The problem about a call like big, big debt forgiveness', he argued, 'is that you need the consent of the people who are owed the money'! At the time, Manuel was the Chair of the Board of the World Bank and South Africa had no external debt burden. Both of these would seem to have created a lack of empathy with the countries that the proponents of NEPAD like himself claim they are leading. It was as if it was morally justifiable for the rest of Africa

to say in the 1980s that since the Apartheid regime was not about to give its consent to its own demise, the victims of Apartheid should get used to their oppression and stop resisting the regime!

16. For instance, in 2003 and 2004, 60 percent of the declared headline earnings by the South African company, MTN, came from its operations in Nigeria and Cameroon. Nigeria alone accounted for 50 percent of MTN's earnings (MTN 2004).
17. *NEPAD Newsletter*, 69(4) November 2004. That this was the colonial model for infrastructure development would seem to escape the NEPAD Secretariat officials.

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Les universitaires ivoiriens et Internet

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Résumé

Le développement des TIC, activant la formation de « la société de la connaissance », bouleverse l'université ivoirienne et la met en compétition plus accrue avec les autres systèmes universitaires. Le constat de retard technologique est tel que relever ce défi peut sembler une gageure. Mais les TIC s'insinuent dans le quotidien des acteurs, transformant déjà leur univers et exigeant d'eux qu'ils les utilisent pour produire et diffuser la connaissance. Cette étude sur échantillon limité d'enseignants-chercheurs à l'université de Cocody s'appuie sur des entretiens individuels. L'analyse porte sur une évaluation des difficultés rencontrées par les universitaires ivoiriens à recourir à Internet et aborde le problème, fondamental pour un chercheur, de l'accès aux textes et de leur production. Elle scrute et veut comprendre les logiques individuelles d'usage des TIC dans le cadre de la production de la connaissance savante.

Abstract

By promoting a 'knowledge society', the development of ICT has had critical consequences on Ivoirian universities, thus putting them in an even more severe competition with other university systems. The technological gap is so wide that it seems quite impossible to take up the challenge of filling it. However, ICTs have appeared in people's daily life, changing their universe and being used to produce and disseminate knowledge. This study has been carried out on a sample of teacher-researchers at the University of Cocody, and is based on individual interviews. The analysis is about the difficulties of Ivoirian scholars to use the Internet, and also deals with an issue which is fundamental in the life of a researcher, which is access to and production of scientific texts. The author is trying to understand the individual rationale behind the use of ICTs, in the context of scholar knowledge production.

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Introduction

Les technologies d'information et de communication (TIC) offrent des possibilités considérables de traiter, stocker, transmettre, diffuser, partager, l'information scientifique. Internet, qui a perturbé « la manière dont nous pensons la communication, l'information, le texte, les images, etc. » (Adebowale 2001), change fondamentalement l'économie de la distribution du patrimoine culturel et du savoir scientifique. Dans le monde universitaire, où la communication scientifique est de plus en plus médiatisée par la technique, l'expansion d'Internet change le rapport à la connaissance, à la production et à la transmission du savoir. L'enseignement supérieur ivoirien doit relever le défi de la compétitivité des systèmes universitaires mondiaux et des pratiques concurrentielles qui transforment le comportement des acteurs. Cette gageure advient dans le contexte d'une économie globale fondée sur le savoir et sur la maîtrise de la circulation des informations et des technologies congruentes.

Or, un constat s'impose rapidement dans les universités ivoiriennes: l'outil informatique y est peu disponible et les télécommunications fonctionnent mal ; les sites Web des universités sont surtout des portails¹ ouvrant sur des « terrains vagues » ; l'informatisation des fichiers est nulle et l'ébauche de connexion des bibliothèques est réduite. Vu la faiblesse de leurs « moyens financiers », la numérisation entraînerait un surcoût qu'elles ne pourraient pas supporter. L'édition universitaire ivoirienne, globalement faible, est « papyrocentrée ».² Précisons toutefois que l'insertion et les usages d'Internet dans ces universités a semble-t-il fait l'objet de très peu d'études. Dans la littérature locale, Internet, envisagé comme « outil de développement », est une chance pour l'éducation à condition d'être utilisé judicieusement (Blé 2000) ; cet outil tendrait déjà à transformer les modes usuels d'organisation de l'entreprise (Dayoro 2003). Le débat, qui reprend sans véritables enrichissements la controverse entre optimistes et pessimistes des TIC, a néanmoins le mérite de rappeler que la question du fossé numérique se pose avec acuité dans nos universités francophones d'Afrique de l'Ouest particulièrement concernées. L'insertion d'Internet dans les milieux de la recherche scientifique est lente. La faiblesse des infrastructures des universités ouest-africaines et le faible ratio enseignants-étudiants compromettraient leurs chances de participer à la « société de la connaissance ». En somme, le relatif isolement des structures d'enseignement supérieur ainsi que les problèmes du manque de documentation risquent de la marginaliser davantage sur le plan scientifique (Seck 2000:386-87).

Ce tableau, imprégné du discours dominant sur les nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication, reprend le « raisonnement

déterministe » de « l'ossature du discours sur la société de l'information » (Breton 2000:112). Il dépeint le monde scientifique universitaire comme un paysage apocalyptique. En outre, ces approches ignorent généralement les logiques individuelles d'action. Pour autant, les universitaires ivoiriens sont-ils des damnés du cyberspace scientifique ? *Nolens volens*, les acteurs de l'université ivoirienne sont déjà en contact avec les TIC dans leurs activités quotidiennes. La trentaine de cybercafés plus ou moins informels, dans le voisinage immédiat du campus universitaire, constitue pour les enseignants et les étudiants un véritable accès à Internet et au cyberspace, pallie bon an mal an les problèmes de connectivité, forme le vecteur d'un changement dans les habitudes individuelles (Bahi 2004a:74). Internet suscite un réel engouement chez les enseignants dont « les premiers contacts avec cet outil ont été si fructueux qu'ils revendiquent déjà auprès des autorités universitaires un accès effectif dans toutes les facultés » (Seck 2000:392). L'écrit sur écran, le multimédia et l'hypertexte, nouvelles possibilités de communiquer l'information scientifique et d'accéder aux réseaux internationaux, entrent dans l'univers du chercheur ivoirien. La communauté scientifique universitaire est déjà confrontée aux problèmes liés à cette nouvelle manière de produire et de communiquer l'information scientifique au sens d'« information–connaissance », rendue disponible « dans des banques de données qui peuvent être en libre accès, mais qui nécessitent souvent un paiement ou l'utilisation d'un code d'accès » (Wolton 1999:94), et qui participe du travail spécifique des chercheurs. La véritable question est donc de savoir comment les universitaires ivoiriens se servent-ils d'Internet ? Ce qu'ils en attendent et en quoi ces usages constituent-ils un changement pour eux ?

L'usage, manière de faire normalisée par l'ancienneté et/ou la fréquence ne constitue pas une règle impérative (Le Coadic 2001:19), est une notion élastique et ambiguë (Maigret 2003:262) relevant de la stratégie. L'usage est un construit social qui s'élabore autour de l'articulation de la logique technique et la logique sociale. La première structure la pratique et, en retour, « les mobiles, les formes d'usages et le sens accordé à la pratique se ressource dans le corps social » (Jouët 1997:293). L'usager construit un sens de l'usage dans lequel s'investissent des représentations et des valeurs (Chambat 1994:262) qui dans le processus d'insertion sociale sont aussi importantes que les performances techniques de l'objet. Comprendre les usages d'Internet suppose de tenir compte de la situation d'usage qui, selon nous, comprend le « cadre de référence socio-technique » (Flichy 1995), lieu physique de la pratique professionnelle et contexte socioculturel de son utilisation (Mille- rand 2002:199).

Dans cet article, nous scrutons les usages d'Internet dans la production et la diffusion des connaissances ainsi que les effets de ces usages sur le travail des enseignants-chercheurs³ et dans leur rapport à la connaissance. Tout en appréhendant les logiques d'action développées par les acteurs, il s'agit de comprendre le rapport qui se construit entre producteurs ivoiriens du savoir scientifique et Internet nonobstant son introduction récente dans les universités du pays. Cela revient à tenter de saisir la signification même des usages d'Internet selon les usagers universitaires et à cerner les incidences vécues de ces usages sur leurs activités professionnelles à travers la présentation et la discussion des résultats d'une enquête ponctuelle et limitée⁴ menée auprès de cette population rarement étudiée en Côte d'Ivoire.

Notre démarche est compréhensive et suppose une enquête qualitative auprès d'un nombre réduit d'informateurs (Bourdieu 1979:16-17). Un échantillon de convenance de 38 individus, âgés de 25 à 53 ans, comportant 31 enseignants-chercheurs dont 12 doctorants⁵ a été constitué à l'Université de Cocody.⁶ Les jeunes enseignants-chercheurs y représentent les deux tiers, et trois individus sur dix sont des femmes. Trois enquêtés sur cinq sont des enseignants-chercheurs issus des Lettres et Sciences Sociales. Hormis les doctorants, la plupart d'entre eux exercent depuis au moins cinq ans. Certains enquêtés cumulent souvent des responsabilités administratives et leur métier d'enseignant-chercheur. Les informations ont été recueillies par des entretiens individuels.⁷ L'échange en entretien contraint l'enquêteur et l'enquêté à co-construire un discours *in situ* et produit une parole sociale sur les pratiques de l'enquêté⁸ (Blanchet, Gotman 1992:9). Des emprunts à l'enquête ethnographique de terrain se justifient dans la mesure où les acteurs de l'université élaborent une culture et des représentations, et composent un milieu d'interconnaissance (Beaud, Weber 2003:8) nécessaire pour comprendre le sens des usages construits. Prendre en compte la spécificité du communicationnel implique de contextualiser les usages d'Internet. Toutefois, le faisceau des déterminations sociales-techniques ne saurait être réduit « à celles identifiables dans l'inter relationnel ou dans l'apport immédiat à l'objet technique, et même dans ce qui tend à dissoudre la différence entre le sujet et l'objet » (Miège 1999:8).

D'abord, nous traiterons des usages universitaires d'Internet en rapport avec l'organisation du travail des chercheurs en essayant de mettre en relief les changements vécus par les universitaires et les difficultés qu'ils rencontrent à recourir à Internet. Ensuite, nous considérerons les usages d'Internet dans la production du savoir scientifique ainsi que le problème fondamental de l'accès aux textes et à la production d'écrits dans cette université du Sud. Ce faisant, nous tenterons de comprendre les significations que les enseignants-

chercheurs donnent des usages qu'ils font d'Internet dans le cadre de leur travail.

Usages d'Internet et organisation du travail

Les représentations et les valeurs s'investissent dans l'usage et leur examen devrait permettre de saisir les dynamiques d'appropriation à l'origine des pratiques constatées (Millerand 2002 : 182). Dans le champ⁹ universitaire ivoirien, les connaissances voire les représentations des TIC semblent se résumer à l'équation suivante : « les NTIC,¹⁰ c'est Internet » et « Internet, c'est l'e.mail » ! Cet aphorisme simpliste renvoie au modèle linéaire de transmission du courrier postal ou, au mieux, au téléphone... Certes les représentations sont susceptibles d'évoluer au fur à mesure que s'installe l'usage. Pour la grande majorité des personnes enquêtées, Internet est un outil de communication. Pour ceux qui parmi les personnes enquêtées avouent n'y rien connaître, Internet, c'est l'ordinateur (et un ordinateur) c'est surtout une machine à écrire. Comme des leçons bien apprises dans les médias, les collègues savent presque tous réciter les enjeux des TIC : les publications électroniques permettent l'accès aux résultats de la recherche et la diffusion des travaux à un très grand nombre de chercheurs. Internet est incontournable puisque, aujourd'hui, « on ne peut pas ne pas » utiliser cet outil « sauf si l'on reste un enseignant du deuxième millénaire ». Ils savent aussi qu'on y trouve des textes, de la documentation car « c'est la plus grande bibliothèque du monde » qui catalogue toutes sortes de données. Le discours dominant sur les TIC construit une image positive de ces outils dans la conscience des individus. Certaines de leurs réponses ressemblent même à des couplets sur « ce qu'il faut savoir sur les NTIC et l'Internet ».

L'illectronisme : un effet générationnel ?

L'appropriation d'Internet et de l'ordinateur peut être appréhendée comme « l'usage relativement stabilisé, signifiant et ancré dans le quotidien » supposant une démarche volontaire et des choix d'utilisation spécifique. Ces utilisations particulières, révélateurs d'une certaine rationalité « ordinaire » régissant les conduites, constituent le lieu véritable où se joue l'appropriation des objets techniques (Millerand 2002:183-185). Si dans l'ensemble des personnes interrogées, l'usage de l'e.mail n'est donc pas tout à fait généralisé, il est tout de même largement dominant, et peut être considéré comme confirmé. Le plus gros du trafic des communications se fait avec des collègues étrangers à l'étranger (d'autres universités ou instituts de recherche dans des pays étrangers).

Les usages individuels d'Internet par les enseignants-chercheurs, dans le cadre de leur travail, témoignent d'un désir d'accomplissement individuel ou

d'épanouissement personnel. La messagerie électronique est le service le plus utilisé parmi les possibilités de communication qu'offre Internet. Mais là encore, on peut penser que beaucoup parmi les personnes interrogées ne s'en sont jamais servi, du moins « pas personnellement... », comme le précise un enquêté, maître-assistant en philosophie. Il explique qu'il avait un message très important à envoyer dans un délai très court et qu'il a été obligé d'utiliser Internet pour la première fois. Cela signifiait se rendre dans un cybercafé, créer une adresse et envoyer le message. « Un jeune (employé) du cybercafé » l'a aidé en se chargeant de toutes les opérations dont il était le commanditaire mais aussi un peu le spectateur.

Le secteur éditorial scientifique, intimement lié à la manière dont la science s'organise,¹¹ « trouve dans l'université et le monde de la recherche, auteurs, circuits de prescription, débouchés (les bibliothèques) et clients (les étudiants, les enseignants et les chercheurs) » (Cartellier 2000). Les enseignants et chercheurs qui en principe sont à la fois producteurs et consommateurs de contenus sont *a priori* concernés par les revues scientifiques électroniques. Rares sont les enseignants interrogés qui connaissent les publications électroniques. Le support de diffusion électronique peut-il constituer un palliatif à la « crise de l'édition et de la documentation » que connaît l'université ivoirienne ?¹²

Au cours de l'enquête, la plupart des enseignants-chercheurs rencontrés, jeunes comme chevronnés, avouaient ne pas savoir ce que l'on entend par publications numériques « je ne savais même pas que ça existait ». La majorité des vétérans déclarent ne connaître aucune publication électronique même s'ils disent qu'Internet « permet d'avoir beaucoup d'informations ». Cette méconnaissance de la revue électronique nous semble la chose la mieux partagée à l'Université de Cocody, aussi bien chez les jeunes enseignants et chercheurs que chez les plus âgés, quelle que soit leur discipline d'origine. Après quelques explications, somme toute difficiles, certains se rendent compte qu'ils ont déjà plus ou moins eu contact avec ces fameuses revues électroniques mais n'en savent pas le nom « j'utilisais ça mais je ne connaissais pas le nom ». Les doctorants, plus loquaces que les autres enquêtés, ont déjà tendance à aller sur Internet rechercher de la documentation.

Les enquêtés connaissent (très) peu les TIC et leurs attitudes vis-à-vis de celles-ci sont mitigées : entre un discours stéréotypé vantant les vertus de ces techniques et la peur de la nouveauté. Les employés des cybercafés en aidant voire en initiant de nombreux clients néophytes permettent aux individus de se familiariser avec l'ordinateur (Bahi 2004b:32). En effet, l'utilisation de l'ordinateur ne va pas de soi mais nécessite toujours un apprentissage

mais toujours réel de la part de l'utilisateur, car le fonctionnement de l'ordinateur reste somme toute opaque (Millerand 2002:188).

Il faut dire que même si l'interface électronique reste obscure, l'ordinateur connecté à Internet dépasse la simple fonction de machine à « faire de la saisie » et se voit associé désormais et clairement un usage communicationnel. De l'aveu même de certains collègues, « les étudiants sont plus calés que nous en matière d'Internet, de NTIC » et sont « au courant de choses que nous ignorons ». L'idée d'une certaine indépendance des étudiants qui semble se dégager nettement de tels propos ressemble au discours ancien sur les *mass media* comme école parallèle. Y aurait-il un effet générationnel dans cet illettrisme global ?

Jusqu'à une période très récente, il y avait une sorte de snobisme (à l'envers) chez les enseignants haut gradés et d'un certain âge : ne pas savoir utiliser ces nouvelles technologies donnait un caractère particulier à leur personnage et les ancrant dans une certaine orthodoxie universitaire. C'était être « de la vieille école », être plus proche de la science authentique et bénéficier d'un fort capital symbolique. Par ailleurs, à l'échelle mondiale, le déterminisme technologique présente les nouvelles technologies d'information et de communication comme des garantes de l'alphabétisme de demain. L'individu sachant s'en servir est devenu socialement valorisé. L'illectronisme, lié à une certaine appréhension de la machine, est donc devenu la traduction électronique de l'analphabétisme version papier. Les petites phrases telles que « je ne connais rien à cette histoire là... » ou « ce n'est pas évident (à mon âge) » traduisent une certaine réticence et une certaine crainte à l'égard de l'utilisation de l'ordinateur et d'Internet. Mais, beaucoup d'interviewés le savent déjà, Internet, par la célérité plus accrue, par le rapport à l'écrit et à la lecture, etc., renouvelle la communication scientifique et fonde l'actuelle utopie du nouveau monde scientifique numérique (Mounier 2003). En cela l'outil les fascine dans une certaine mesure. Internet offre de nouvelles possibilités de communiquer à côté des moyens classiques. On comprend pourquoi, beaucoup d'enseignants-chercheurs enquêtés se sentant en retard éprouvaient le besoin de nous rassurer (ou peut-être de se rassurer) : « je vais bientôt m'y mettre », « je vais prendre des cours »...

Mais chez les enseignants et chercheurs eux-mêmes, l'effort personnel d'apprentissage des TIC reste au stade de projet. Bien souvent, toutes ces nouvelles possibilités offertes par la technologie mettent un peu mal à l'aise les personnes interrogées. Certains enquêtés ont fait allusion au projet *Dragados*¹³ par lequel les autorités politiques ont essayé de « combler le fossé numérique » et grâce auquel bon nombre d'enseignants-chercheurs ont pu acquérir des machines. Un certain nombre de logiques individuelles surgissent

après coup.¹⁴ Certains les ont laissés à leur bureau « parce qu'ils n'ont pas de place chez eux », ou « parce qu'ils peuvent s'offrir mieux ». Une fois introduits à la maison, certains de ces ordinateurs « sont restés dans leur emballage » ; beaucoup d'entre eux seraient littéralement privatisés par les enfants qui en font leur affaire, leurs jouets. Les enseignants-chercheurs qui en témoignent sont littéralement subjugués par les aptitudes de leurs rejetons en matière d'informatique : « on dirait que c'est inné chez eux ». Mais ces ordinateurs tombent fatalement et prématurément en panne. Certains prétextent de ces pannes pour justifier le retard de leur abonnement à Internet. Par ailleurs, les témoignages recueillis auprès des enquêtés sur les utilisations à but lucratif de ces ordinateurs acquis grâce au projet *Dragados* sont concordants. Les enseignants les auraient loués ou vendus à des cybercafés des environs : « c'est plus rentable » ironisent les informateurs. En somme, conclut un enquêté, « l'Internet, les ordinateurs (de *Dragados*) c'est bien mais beaucoup ne s'en sont pas servi dans le sens que le gouvernement souhaitait ». La participation financière, fût-elle réduite, induit chez les enseignants un sentiment de propriété de cette machine et un droit d'en disposer à leur guise. Globalement, les enseignants-chercheurs ont détourné l'ordinateur *Dragados* l'usage prescrit.¹⁵ On comprend mieux pourquoi et comment ils peuvent servir à autre chose qu'à familiariser les enseignants-chercheurs avec les TIC et l'Internet aider directement au travail intellectuel et améliorer la connectivité dans le but de devenir des enseignants-chercheurs plus performants.

Un individualisme numérique

Certaines difficultés que rencontrent les enseignants-chercheurs dans les cybercafés nous semblent maintenant « classiques ». La lenteur des machines joue immédiatement sur le coût encore élevé de la connexion limitant le temps à passer devant un ordinateur (Bahi 2004b:31). Consulter un article sur Internet revient fréquemment à le lire « en diagonale » sur l'écran, à le télécharger,¹⁶ puis un tirage papier pour pouvoir y travailler : « ça revient cher... il y a des mots qui sautent à droite à gauche... on perd du temps ».

Les enseignants-chercheurs semblent peu utiliser Internet dans le cadre de leur profession. Pourtant, cet outil a des conséquences sur leur travail scientifique même si tous n'en ont pas vraiment conscience. L'application la plus connue et la plus utilisée est le courrier électronique. Elle influe nettement sur les activités de recherche plus au plan individuel qu'au plan collectif.

Au plan individuel, la communication au sein du travail scientifique leur paraît plus commode parce qu'« Internet facilite les contacts » et qu'ainsi les échanges sont simplifiés. De plus, le courriel met plus en confiance

qu'Internet et le téléphone cellulaire, « on est sûr que le correspondant a bien reçu le message ». Toutefois, aller dans les cybercafés, ne pas avoir de connexion à proximité, sur les lieux de travail est un sérieux handicap car, très souvent, « il faut aller lutter avec les étudiants » et cela est « gênant ». Certes, la plupart des enquêtés disent ne pas avoir le sentiment que leur travail a changé et beaucoup d'entre eux expliquent même de façon péremptoire que « la démarche scientifique reste la démarche scientifique » et que les TIC ou « les publications électroniques ne peuvent pas changer cela ». Par ailleurs, certains enquêtés estiment que la forme de correspondance est simplifiée aussi parce qu'elle est moins formelle. Cela correspond à « l'esprit jeune » nous explique ce jeune enseignant. En réalité les « cyber-relations » avec les collègues ne deviennent pas moins codifiées. Elles ne font qu'entrer dans le processus de construction d'une relation déjà engagée. De la sorte, la plupart des personnes ayant déclaré se servir du courriel pour du télétravail spontané l'ont fait après qu'un contact physique ait été pris. Pour l'heure, ceux qui utilisent l'e mail disent échanger plus avec leurs collègues étrangers qu'avec les collègues locaux (par ce moyen). Cela risque même de créer un gap entre ceux qui, déconnectés, en restent à leurs « vieilles problématiques » et leurs méthodes surannées, et ceux qui sont au faite des questions d'« actualité scientifique », des questions « chaudes » et qui, se « ressurcent » ainsi « se régénèrent »... les expressions utilisées par les enseignants chercheurs interviewés révèlent un certain dépit vis-à-vis de la situation qu'ils vivent : « On nous demande d'être au même niveau que les autres (les universitaires occidentaux) et on ne nous (en) donne pas les moyens. C'est ce qui nous tue ».

Les collègues connectés estiment en gros qu'Internet facilite leur travail et leur permet de gagner du temps. Chez les doctorants interrogés, le réflexe Internet semble être « acquis » pour réaliser leurs travaux (l'âge peut être un variable discriminante). Mais ils manquent de moyens financiers. Chacun se « débrouille » et fait son « bricolage ». En fait la recherche d'information s'est améliorée avec les formidables possibilités d'ouverture, la quantité, et surtout la rapidité avec laquelle il est possible de créer un texte. Les plus enthousiastes évoquent même une certaine « efficacité », le « gain de temps », et la possibilité de « collaboration avec d'autres » chercheurs. Internet permet d'échanger des informations, des articles, des commentaires, etc. avec des collègues chercheurs comme eux. Par contre des étudiants attirent notre attention sur les « risques de plagiat » : « c'est très facile de faire du couper coller » et ce d'autant plus que « les vieux sont dépassés » !

Concernant le travail en équipe, certains chercheurs interrogés estiment que les échanges s'intensifient grâce au courrier électronique, mais sont

extravertis. Considérant les activités de recherche au niveau local, nous sommes dans « une société où on peut encore se déplacer ». Affirmer que la communication médiatisée par ordinateur se renforce entre les chercheurs ivoiriens est peut-être prématuré. Un enseignant chercheur en Lettres qui déclare utiliser beaucoup le mail explique : « quand on sait utiliser (l'ordinateur, le mail), c'est plus facile qu'avant. On communique plus avec les collègues à l'extérieur (l'étranger). Mais au fond c'est la même chose. On se débrouillait autrement. Aujourd'hui, c'est plus rapide c'est tout ».

Si l'université ivoirienne n'a pas beaucoup de visibilité sur Internet, les individus en revanche sont très souvent en relation avec des partenaires (universités, instituts de recherche, ONG, organismes internationaux, etc.) grâce au courriel. Cet individualisme numérique, perceptible dans toute la communauté des chercheurs, ne semble pas propre à une catégorie spécifique d'acteurs et ne profite pas vraiment à l'université. En effet, l'individualité des usages est en rupture avec l'esprit collectif censé présider aux rapports de fraternité entre collègues et à la nécessité du travail en équipe.¹⁷ En outre, les retombées pédagogiques et scientifiques ne concernent pas directement l'université¹⁸ : les principaux bénéficiaires sont les individus et non leurs laboratoires, leurs facultés ou leur université.

À l'instar des jeunes, le besoin d'« être » et de « rester en contact », d'« avoir » et de « maintenir des contacts » est implicitement associé à celui de survie (Bahi 2004a). L'utilisation du mail ne peut donc pas renvoyer à des messages purement informatifs mais bien également à des échanges plus ou moins informels, en plus des sujets liés aux activités de recherche, surtout avec les collègues étrangers. Cette quête permanente des relations est aussi un invariant dans la sphère universitaire. La recherche du lien social est présente dans l'usage d'Internet faisant passer l'ordinateur du statut de machine à écrire perfectionnée à celui d'outil de communication et d'organisation... donc de dispositif avec lequel on va créer des liens sociaux.

L'étendue des relations et des correspondants ne se modifie pas complètement par la magie du courriel. Mais on peut légitimement chercher à comprendre quelles nouvelles manières de communiquer et de travailler résultent de ces usages des TIC sachant que, de toutes façons, nous sommes encore loin du concept de « collaboratoire » (Turner 1995) qui fait référence à ce renforcement des collègues invisibles par le développement de dispositifs technologiques, dans un contexte politique favorable et qui renvoie également référence à la prolifération des communications informelles que la messagerie électronique rend possible (Chartron 1997). Les chercheurs de l'Université de Cocody sont souvent en rapport avec des universités et instituts de recherche à l'étranger et *de facto* membres de réseaux. Ces connections

font d'ailleurs partie de leurs jardins « secrets » et entrent dans leurs logiques de réussite universitaire et donc de réussite sociale. C'est une autre raison de ce besoin de contacts. Dans un environnement où « pour évoluer normalement il faut se cacher pour travailler en paix », il ne s'agit pas de simples cachotteries. Un enjeu de l'Internet pour ces enseignants-chercheurs est de consolider leurs réseaux interpersonnels. Certains collègues enquêtés accusent leurs pairs de les « trahir » en leur cachant des informations (des tuyaux) utiles pour leur carrière. Cela va jusqu'à être assimilé à de la sorcellerie : « il y en a parmi nous (enseignants-chercheurs) qui utilisent les inventions des Blancs pour faire de la sorcellerie moderne ». Certes, la technologie apparaît bien souvent occulte, mais en serait-il des réseaux téléinformatiques comme il en est des pratiques sorcières ? Nous tenterons d'y répondre plus loin.

Internet et production du savoir scientifique

La production du savoir saisie comme « accouchement », suppose élaboration, problématisation, échanges d'idées, discussion d'approches théoriques et méthodologiques. Elle est liée à la fabrication de produits spécifiques de la connaissance scientifique qui sont autant des outils d'échange, de débats, de moyens de « transmission » tels que les essais, articles, communications, cours. La production du savoir scientifique est aussi articulée aux espaces publics physiques des débats scientifiques : conférences, colloques, séminaires, ateliers, amphithéâtres, laboratoires, etc. La communication est donc au cœur du processus de construction du savoir scientifique. Le courrier électronique, application d'Internet la plus utilisée des enseignants-chercheurs, permet cette communication, participe à l'organisation du travail de recherche et indirectement à l'élaboration des connaissances scientifiques.

Le processus de publication

En principe, un enseignant-chercheur doit consacrer 70% de son temps à la recherche. Dans cet exercice, il ne peut se passer des références aux travaux des chercheurs du Nord même si ces derniers peuvent se passer de faire référence aux travaux des chercheurs du Sud. L'usage d'Internet est censé remédier peu ou prou aux insuffisances de la documentation et des bibliothèques universitaires qui en principe devraient constituer des outils et même des ressources pour la recherche et donc pour la production du savoir scientifique.

Il était donc important d'explorer avec les enseignants-chercheurs enquêtés les sources d'information qu'ils prospectent lors de l'exécution de leurs travaux scientifiques. Des formes principales de recherche d'informations directement liées au travail scientifique se dégagent : recherche bibliographique

classique à la façon Internet ; recherche de documents à exploiter. Mais quelles informations recherchent-ils et quelle y est la place des publications électroniques ?

Internet ouvre des perspectives en matière d'accès aux données. Beaucoup évoquent la localisation de l'information grâce à Yahoo!, ou Google! comme une avancée notable due à la technologie et leur « entrée dans le 3^e millénaire ». Dès que l'on évoque les TIC, les réponses restent souvent stéréotypées : « j'y trouve beaucoup de choses » ; « tu introduis ton thème et ça te sort tous les documents qu'il y a dessus ». Bref, Internet est dit utile pour la documentation comme l'indique cet enquêté avec réalisme : « les classiques en sciences sociales, certains textes sont téléchargeables, d'autres pas. C'est pas encore les (textes des auteurs) contemporains. Il faut voir que s'il y en a trop (en ligne) les gens ne vont pas acheter (les versions papier) ». L'espoir que fait naître Internet est d'avoir accès à de la documentation qui fait défaut à l'université. Celle qui est recherchée servirait surtout à préparer des articles et des communications. Les enquêtés ont peu évoqué la préparation des cours. Il faut probablement lire en cela l'installation dans la routine.

Toutefois, cette ouverture cause quelques frustrations car ils disent surtout trouver des résumés. Ceux-ci les informent mais ils restent sur leur faim. Car la recherche bibliographique est une chose, l'accès aux textes scientifiques et actuels en est une autre. Les enseignants-chercheurs n'espèrent pas seulement d'Internet des contacts ou le repérage de références bibliographiques. Un embarras, celui du « manque d'information » qui, relativement à Internet, peut sembler paradoxal. Mais le paradoxe n'est qu'apparent comme le suggère cet enquêté qui dit utiliser la recherche d'information sur Yahoo ! et dit aller beaucoup sur Google ! : « Souvent il ya le titre du colloque mais pas les communication elles-mêmes. C'est seulement des résumés... ». Certains parmi les déçus s'énervent : « il y a Internet mais on ne peut même pas s'en servir ! on veut un article mais on ne peut pas l'obtenir ! Parce qu'il faut payer ! ». Il arrive un moment où n'avoir accès qu'à des résumés d'articles ou d'ouvrages devient « frustrant »... L'utilisation de l'Internet peut même devenir un leurre lorsqu'elle induit une confusion entre butinage et savoir et conduire au délitement de l'enseignement (Agbobli 2002).

Au demeurant, faire des recherches en ligne « revient cher ». Surfer de site en site, ne convient pas à tous les chercheurs. Le coût de la navigation dans les cybercafés, élevé pour le commun des chercheurs ivoiriens, constitue un frein important. Les machines sont jugées lentes et inefficaces¹⁹ rendant difficile l'accès à l'information scientifique. Ils veulent des moteurs efficaces, des adresses de sites précises, etc. afin de se retrouver : références, articles scientifiques, revues diverses, publications électroniques. Les

individus développent alors des ethnométhodes de portée restreinte, des « façons de s'y prendre » avec l'ordinateur, avec Internet, et au moyen desquelles les chercheurs fabriquent du sens partageable à l'échelle de leur communauté. Ces pratiques quotidiennes ordinaires sont foncièrement transmissibles dans la mesure où elles se développent dans un contexte d'usage, dans les tactiques, trucs et astuces que les uns apprennent des autres.

L'imprimé est central dans tout ce travail des chercheurs qui disent privilégier les livres et les revues papier. Le véritable problème est le manque d'ouvrages à jour. Il faut certainement relier cela à la faiblesse de la production d'écrits scientifiques et à la pauvreté des bibliothèques, au coût très élevé des ouvrages papier en librairies, etc. Certes, Internet n'est pas la seule possibilité de pallier le manque de documentation. « Si nous n'avons pas accès à la littérature, nous sommes intellectuellement perdus ! Nos évaluateurs ne se préoccupent pas des conditions dans lesquelles nous travaillons. Ce qu'ils nous demandent, c'est d'être au niveau international un point c'est tout ! Un bon moyen d'y arriver est de développer les contacts... ». Les enseignants-chercheurs autant que les étudiants, symptôme patent de la « fracture numérique », photocopient énormément d'ouvrages. Les « connectés » déploient des trésors de ruse et de patience pour se procurer des ouvrages. Chacun se débrouille car « c'est un sacrifice » concluent-ils en relatant les épreuves qu'ils surmontent pour se procurer des ouvrages récents. Personne n'évoque explicitement et spontanément des revues électroniques. Pour les rares d'entre eux qui l'ont fait, ils ne savent pas comment s'abonner à une revue en ligne et ne se renseignent pas non plus.

Les textes repérés à l'aide d'un moteur de recherche et effectivement trouvés sont souvent imprimés au cybercafé s'ils ne sont pas trop volumineux, ou enregistrés sur disquettes afin de les imprimer ailleurs à moindre coût. Certaines pages Web sont copiées et récupérées sous *Word* pour pouvoir être imprimées. Les personnes interrogées trouvent intéressant de trouver des textes au format Pdf. Ils les trouvent « très bien », « très propres ». Parfois, sur certains sites, les tirages ne sont pas satisfaisants. Alors, certains disent sélectionner des textes (format html) qui les intéressent, les copier, ouvrir Word, coller le texte et se servir du traitement de texte pour les arranger et en « faire des copies propres » qu'ils relieront par la suite et qu'ils mettront dans leur bibliothèque...

Chez la plupart des doctorants interrogés, les publications numériques et Internet, d'une manière générale, ne sont pas cités spontanément comme moyen de documentation. En fait, les avis des enquêtés sont encore mitigés sur les publications électroniques. Pour ceux qui savent ou osent s'en servir, Internet reste l'accès privilégié pour la consommation de la publication

électronique (non encore pour la production). Certains sont enthousiastes et estiment qu'Internet est rapide, facile et confortable. C'est ce qu'expriment ces enquêtés : « avant il fallait aller lire, recopier, faire des photocopies, etc. ». Ils voient en cela « un changement positif dans la manière de travailler ». De plus, beaucoup considèrent que la manière d'écrire a changé : « Avant, on écrivait, on gommait, on raturait, on reprenait. Maintenant j'écris directement sur l'ordinateur... ». Pour d'autres, échaudés par les fautes (d'orthographe, de grammaire et de construction de texte), les trouvailles sur Internet, y compris les publications scientifiques électroniques, sont progressivement accueillies avec méfiance : « Je me suis rendu compte qu'on peut balancer n'importe quoi sur Internet. A partir de ce moment là j'ai commencé à me méfier ».

Certains enquêtés, étudiants comme enseignants, ont évoqué le « danger du plagiat », regrettable pour tous les travaux universitaires, et facilités par la possibilité de « couper coller ». Ce risque est favorisé à la fois par la facilité à copier coller certains textes et par l'illectronisme des professeurs. Cette pratique n'est pas racontée comme un danger mais comme faisant partie des trucs et astuces pour se tirer d'affaire, éblouir les maîtres et réussir. Mais, dans le même temps, ils sont convaincus qu'ils peuvent utiliser voire plagier des textes sans être pris, et donc qu'ils peuvent abuser leurs professeurs et passer pour géniaux... Cette débrouillardise produit donc un effet pervers : un risque de dérive vers la mystification et la falsification, corollaire direct de ce manque d'information, touchant à l'éthique de la recherche scientifique. Il risque de se naturaliser et de se muer en habitus tant que les évaluateurs et examinateurs se diront « dépassés par la technologie »...

La logique utilitaire

Les jeunes collègues disent chercher des « appels à contributions » pour des revues, « appels à communications » pour les conférences. Mais aussi disent rechercher des opportunités : des informations sur les bourses post-doctorales, propositions d'emploi dans des ONG et organismes internationaux. « On ne sait jamais... », « Il faut avancer (dans sa carrière) ». Cela est présenté comme des « opportunités » à saisir.

Une certaine tendance à rechercher des informations sur les collègues se dessine également qui tend à modifier les rapports d'autorité et de pouvoir. Tel enseignant-chercheur enquêté affiche sur un mur de son bureau la bibliographie illustrée d'un sociologue célèbre obtenue sur Internet et qui à ses yeux représente « l'intellectuel véritable », le modèle, « le contraire » de ses collègues ivoiriens etc. Internet sert aussi à espionner les collègues, et surtout sur les aînés qui, dans l'espace universitaire, ont tendance à « mystifier » les cadets : sont-ils connus ? Qu'ont-ils publié ? Car « maintenant

(avec Internet) on ne peut plus se cacher ». Les étudiants, toujours prêts à tester les connaissances de leurs profs, agissent pareillement : « j'ai googuélisé et parmi mes profs je sais qui est qui ». Chez bon nombre de doctorants l'idée que leurs « maîtres », les « vieux », « ne comprennent rien aux NTIC » est très répandue. Internet permet de retracer les itinéraires intellectuels des enseignants-chercheurs et de préciser leurs identités et leur ancrage dans le cyberspace scientifique. Cela augure peu ou prou de changements dans les rapports interindividuels entre les acteurs du champ universitaire. Cette suspicion, voire ce parricide symbolique, suit une période de soumission aux aînés et amorce une démythification de leur autorité. Du côté des aînés, la facilité avec laquelle les étudiants se servent d'Internet fait craindre à certains que la relation verticale enseignants/étudiants ne s'atténue et ne constitue une diminution de leur domination. A tous, l'usage des technologies donne le sentiment de mieux connaître les uns et les autres et même de dominer la connaissance.

Chez certains enthousiastes, les publications électroniques sont meilleures que les publications papier parce qu'il y a « un gain de temps » et « une ouverture sur le monde » tandis que « les publications papier restent dans l'espace francophone ». En outre, elles facilitent « le parcours pour devenir professeur »... c'est-à-dire « le nombre d'articles à publier pour changer de statut ». Chez les jeunes enseignants-chercheurs, publier dans des revues « papier » disponibles ou signalées sur Internet est déjà un signe de notoriété et une raison de fierté. Les « vieux », les « grands frères » enseignants-chercheurs sont « sclérosés » et renforcent « le mandarinate (qui) ne rend pas service à la communauté savante ». A la question de savoir s'ils en utiliseraient pour leurs propres publications scientifiques, les enseignants-chercheurs rétorquent que cela dépend du caractère scientifique de la publication. Il faut en effet qu'elle soit reconnue par le milieu scientifique car « tout le monde va sur Internet » y compris les journaux de la presse écrite. Beaucoup de clichés apparaissant dans les propos des enquêtés construisent les représentations des revues électroniques, d'Internet et des TIC en général.

Les raisons techniques et économiques qui historiquement expliquent la prépondérance de la revue (papier) sur les autres médias de la science dans le champ universitaire sont connues (Adebowale 2001). Mais elles ignorent les logiques déployées par les universitaires eux-mêmes. En effet, l'évolution de la carrière des enseignants-chercheurs passe par la valorisation due à leurs publications nombreuses et de qualité. « Un chercheur, dans le monde académique, n'existe que s'il publie. Sa carrière suivra le nombre et la qualité de ses publications. Son laboratoire sera évalué aux publications de ses membres. Le financement général de la recherche est corrélé à ce processus »

(Chartron et Salaün 2000:32). Pour beaucoup d'« anciens » avoir publié ses articles dans les *Annales de l'Université d'Abidjan* est une référence solide. Les revues scientifiques des universités avec lesquelles leurs instituts ont des accords de partenariat leur « laissent quelques pages » pour leurs articles.

La procédure est très formalisée pour les revues scientifiques. Une publication cotée selon les évaluateurs obéira nécessairement à certaines normes. Mais beaucoup d'ignorance, de confusions et de craintes non fondées existent concernant la publication électronique qui, somme toute, demeure une inconnue. À son évocation, les collègues s'inquiètent immédiatement : le CAMES²⁰ reconnaît-il les publications électroniques ? Sont-elles connues, scientifiques et cotées ?²¹ « En termes de recherche d'information les publications électroniques sur Internet oui... mais publier... il y a encore un retard ici (en Côte d'Ivoire) ». L'interconnaissance favorise la diffusion de rumeurs persistantes dans la communauté universitaire. Les enseignants prennent leurs informations, non à la source, mais auprès d'un collègue promu quelques temps plus tôt, qui devient ainsi détenteur d'un certain pouvoir (et d'une certaine domination) sur son collègue...²²

La question de la publication scientifique électronique articule les critères de la publication scientifique d'une part et celui des représentations de la technologie d'autre part. Ensuite elle peut être envisagée soit comme moyen de documentation d'un travail soit comme espace de publication et donc comme moyen de publication du travail scientifique. Ce faisant, elle entretient des croyances de la communauté scientifique universitaire concernant les publications tout en y ajoutant celles plus prosaïques des nouvelles technologies dont Internet est le fer de lance. De fait, dans la conscience des chercheurs interrogés, pour ceux qui savent à quoi cette expression renvoie, les publications scientifiques électroniques c'est d'abord et avant tout les revues scientifiques sur Internet. Enfin, chez bon nombre d'enseignants-chercheurs rencontrés, prédomine la vision utopique d'un monde universitaire numérique marqué par l'effondrement des coûts de publications,²³ l'absence de la médiation de l'éditeur, la modification de l'écriture académique et la disparition de la formalisation. La véritable question en ce qui concerne les revues électroniques est : faire de la recherche et publier ont-ils encore un sens positif pour les acteurs du champ universitaire ?

Il faut dire que bien souvent le poste d'enseignant-chercheur est perçu par l'enseignant-chercheur lui-même comme un pis-aller, un poste « en attendant » une meilleure situation. La production d'ouvrages et d'articles scientifiques ne semble pas (ou plus) avoir de sens positif pour les acteurs sauf, lorsque ces derniers en espèrent un changement de grade et donc une promotion à court terme. De nombreux responsables de revues universitaires

déplorent le fait que « c'est au moment de présenter le dossier du CAMES que les collègues envoient des textes ». Chez les jeunes chercheurs confirmés, qui escomptent bien un changement de grade, et pourquoi pas une titularisation, l'idée de publier électroniquement est accueillie positivement. Mais leurs craintes tournent en fait autour des critères de validation scientifique et finalement de la « bonne pratique scientifique » : de telles publications sont-elles « cotées » et « reconnues dans les évaluations pour les promotions et les titularisations » ? Dans la conscience des collègues, la cote d'une revue est confondue à la visibilité et peut-être à la notoriété que lui confère sa présence sur la toile. Or, Internet devient un moyen d'évaluer la réputation d'un enseignant chercheur, à tout le moins son existence dans le cyberspace public scientifique. Cette donne transforme leur perception de la publication scientifique elle-même. Mais l'idée inavouée qui sous-tend leurs propos est celle de la publication utile, rentable immédiatement, celle qui rendra leur dossier d'évaluation solide et qui donc servira à la carrière. La publication électronique est encore suspecte. Les revues électroniques ne leur semblent pas *a priori* profitables, car ils croient que leurs évaluateurs n'en tiennent pas compte. C'est surtout pour cela qu'ils hésitent. La logique du calcul n'est donc pas absente de cette attitude. Les revues papier ont donc plus de prestige à leurs yeux et sont surtout moins risquées. Les paroles des enseignant-chercheurs masquent des questions de relation de pouvoir et de domination. C'est ainsi que la logique de l'utilitaire et de la réussite individuelle conduiraient certains à une rétention stratégique des informations. Seuls ceux qui en disposent en temps opportun multiplient ou conservent leurs chances de réussir, donc d'augmenter leur capital symbolique (Bourdieu 1997:199). Là se joue la compétition entre les acteurs pour occuper des positions dominantes dans le champ scientifique. L'enjeu fondamental est celui de la promotion individuelle qui passe par la reconnaissance par les pairs. Cette reconnaissance permet d'accéder légitimement à la catégorie dominante du champ universitaire et d'en contrôler les ressources.

Conclusion

L'usage d'Internet, surtout limité au courriel, est encore faible parmi les enseignants-chercheurs rencontrés. L'ordinateur multimédia connecté à Internet est néanmoins un outil de communication permettant d'acheminer des articles et plus accessoirement d'organiser le travail. L'usage encore hésitant et erratique de cet outil commence à produire des effets sur la recherche documentaire mais non réellement sur la technologie d'enseignement. Les publications numériques sont plus des moyens de documentation que de publication. Dans le contexte actuel de l'université, elles ne constituent pas un véritable palliatif à la défaillance des bibliothèques.

En définitive, cette étude limitée nous procure trois enseignements majeurs. D'abord, les changements introduits par Internet pour les personnes interrogées consistent en une vision élargie mais paradoxale de l'univers de la Science. Pour l'heure, ces possibilités ne semblent pas procurer pas un meilleur accès aux auteurs, aux textes et aux débats scientifiques. Ensuite, la formation des usages d'Internet en milieu académique ivoirien, étant donné le contexte particulier de cette université d'Afrique de l'Ouest, est actionnée par une logique utilitaire, parfois même « carriériste » empreinte de logique de calcul. La logique utilitaire domine largement les préoccupations des enseignants-chercheurs rencontrés et détermine leurs stratégies éditoriales : il s'agit pour eux de trouver les bonnes références, les bons réseaux, les bons circuits d'éditions. Plus que jamais, les chercheurs doivent être attentif à la déontologie de leur métier. Enfin, S'il n'y a pas une volonté initiale de création d'équipes locales de recherche et de publication, l'usage d'Internet ne changera rien. Les échanges quasi nuls entre collègues ne s'intensifieront pas plus avec le courriel car de tels échanges « ne permettent pas de créer *ex nihilo* une communauté de recherche, mais de resserrer des liens existants » (Hert 1996:100). Les TIC sont l'objet de fréquentes méprises sur leurs possibilités alors qu'elles ne font qu'accompagner des changements. Pour qu'Internet change quelque chose à la situation, il faut que les différents acteurs institutionnels, collectifs, et individuels du domaine de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche s'investissent dans les nouvelles situations d'usages qui se profilent (Agbobli 2002:13).

De nombreux espoirs d'amélioration des performances de l'université ivoirienne reposent sur l'usage d'Internet pour la production et la diffusion du savoir scientifique. Même si le rôle de cet outil dans l'accès des universitaires ivoiriens aux informations scientifiques paraît encore timide, on peut estimer que des fenêtres s'ouvrent sur le cyberspace scientifique. L'universitaire ivoirien n'est donc pas un paria de la société du savoir. Certes, les sociétés africaines n'ont pas encore pleinement accédé à l'ère industrielle et même à la société du savoir. Toutefois,

elles partagent avec les sociétés industrielles « une élite technicienne », comme elle partage avec la société du savoir une élite intellectuelle. Cette élite est bien un pont entre le passé de la société africaine et son avenir immédiat qui est la société industrielle et son avenir plus lointain qu'est la société du savoir (Memel-Fotê 2002:63).

Le problème des stratégies des enseignants pour évoluer semble plus organisationnel que technique. En ce sens, Internet accompagne le changement comme, par le passé, les « anciennes » technologies de l'information et de la communication. Il est donc prématuré d'affirmer que l'utilisation d'Internet

change profondément la communication scientifique. Il est concevable que cet outil entre subrepticement dans le champ universitaire ivoirien en prolongeant et en amplifiant des usages existants. L'accès aux espaces intellectuels et scientifiques des pays du Nord, difficile aux collègues africains, n'est pas plus facile avec Internet.

Les TIC, qui suscitent toujours des « discours prophétiques ou programmatiques sur la supposée 'société de l'information' » (Miège 2004: 91), révèlent des inégalités nord / sud. Celles-ci sont d'autant plus importantes qu'aujourd'hui le dynamisme et la compétitivité d'une université tend à être évalués, pour ainsi dire, à l'aune de leur informatisation et de leur médiatisation, précisément de leur présence sur la toile. Cet ersatz d'utopie technicienne est un paramètre contextuel important. Plutôt que de reproduire des inégalités ou à produire de nouvelles marginalités, l'enjeu de l'utilisation des TIC est de construire une communauté scientifique locale forte valorisant les productions africaines et faisant de ses chercheurs moins des consommateurs que des producteurs de connaissances. Bref, l'immixtion d'Internet dans le champ scientifique universitaire ivoirien révèle sous un certain rapport la crise que vit cette communauté. L'université, très conservatrice, doit muer et changer profondément ses valeurs et sa culture, s'ouvrir davantage aux partenaires extérieurs ou, tout au moins, nouer des partenariats propices au financement et au développement des instruments de diffusion de la connaissance scientifique. A l'université ivoirienne de trouver sa voie et d'y mettre les moyens. Dans ce domaine, les bonnes idées sont plus abondantes que les bonnes volontés.

Notes

- 1 Voir Université de Cocody [<http://www.ucocody.ci>] ; Université d'Abobo-Adjamé [<http://www.uabobo.ci>].
- 2 Pour l'heure, aucune des quinze revues produites par les Editions Universitaires de Côte d'Ivoire n'a de version électronique ni d'accès en ligne partiel. Peu d'entre elles possèdent une adresse électronique.
- 3 Ce terme regroupe sans distinction les « chercheurs » et les « enseignants-chercheurs ».
- 4 Administrée de février à juillet 2004.
- 5 Les sept autres individus proviennent du Service informatique (2 personnes), des bibliothèques universitaires (3 responsables) et de l'édition (2 personnes) de l'Université de Cocody. Ces informateurs issus des autres catégories d'acteurs du champ universitaire sont indispensables au travail de recherche.
- 6 Elle compte environ 1200 enseignants permanents tous grades confondus (dont 18% de femmes), 500 personnels administratifs et techniques et 50000 étudiants (source : Vice-Présidence chargée de la Planification). Elle concentre

l'essentiel des acteurs concernés par l'étude. Elle préfigure l'université ivoirienne...

- 7 Nous avons articulé entretiens individuels semi-directifs, entretiens non structurés, et observations flottantes.
- 8 Thèmes des entretiens : description de leur travail, sources de documentation, les TIC et leur place dans leurs activités d'enseignement et de recherche, les changements qu'ils discernent dans leur travail quotidien. Nous présentons les termes des enseignants-chercheurs « *entre guillemets et en italique* ». Dans le cadre restreint de cet article ne nous permet pas toujours re-situer les enquêtés dans leurs statuts spécifiques.
- 9 Le champ est un système de positions se définissant les unes par rapport aux autres, dont l'existence est « corrélative de l'existence d'enjeux et d'intérêts spécifiques (...) L'intérêt est à la fois condition du fonctionnement d'un champ (...) en tant qu'il est 'ce qui fait courir les gens', ce qui les fait concourir, se concurrencer, lutter, et produit du fonctionnement du champ » (Bourdieu 1987 : 124-125). Le champ scientifique est, comme tout champ, un lieu de rapports de forces dont un des enjeux est le contrôle des ressources du champ (Bourdieu 1980:113-14).
10. Un seul enseignant-chercheur inclut nettement le téléphone portable dans l'ensemble des TIC.
11. Le marché ivoirien des publications scientifiques numériques est censé exister parce qu'on le calque sur celui des publications papier. Les revues scientifiques numériques ne retiennent également qu'un nombre limité de lecteurs avisés. Les bibliothèques (universitaires) et les éditeurs « indigènes », en tant qu'intermédiaires, constituent aussi des acteurs incontournables de ce marché complexe de l'édition électronique scientifique.
12. L'université d'Abobo-Adjamé propose quelques articles téléchargeables au format Pdf.
13. Dès 1998, le Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur de Côte d'Ivoire, dans une vision résumée par l'expression « un enseignant chercheur, un ordinateur » a tenté d'améliorer l'accès aux NTIC à l'université en initiant le Projet *Dragados*. Cofinancé par la Coopération espagnole et le Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur ivoirien, ce projet permettait aux enseignants-chercheurs, moyennant 100 000 FCFA de participation, d'acquérir un ordinateur et, à terme, de pouvoir se connecter. Le Service Informatique de l'Université de Cocody assurait le contrôle technique des machines ; le Syndicat national de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement supérieur (SYNARES) en établissait les critères de distribution. Ce projet, à notre connaissance n'a pas encore été évalué.
14. Il est donc urgent de procéder à une évaluation véritable de cette première phase du Projet *Dragados* même si, bien souvent au cours des entretiens, on peut estimer que les militants du SYNARES s'en disent satisfaits.
15. Les enseignants-chercheurs répondant aux critères établis par le SYNARES, au moment de l'achat, s'engageaient par écrit à ne pas faire un autre usage que celui prévu pendant au moins cinq ans.

16. Or, le débit souvent faible ralentit cette opération...
17. Cf. *infra* thème du jardin secret.
18. Cf. *supra* la location aux cybercafés des ordinateurs du projet Dragados remis aux enseignants.
19. La bande passante souvent faible ralentit la navigation les autres opérations.
20. Le Conseil africain et malgache pour l'Enseignement supérieur (CAMES), structure inter-étatique regroupant la quasi-totalité des pays du continent, veille à l'harmonisation et au contrôle de l'évolution de la carrière universitaire des enseignants et chercheurs.
21. Les enseignants-chercheurs interrogés ignorent en outre que des revues électroniques ont des comités de lecture, des numéros d'ISSN, tandis que des revues papier censées être cotées n'en possèdent pas...
22. Or les dispositions arrêtées par les Comités techniques spécialisés du CAMES évoluent, tenant désormais compte des publications électroniques... Les informations utiles à la constitution des dossiers sont disponibles sur le site [<http://www.cames.bf.org>] que par ailleurs aucun enquêté n'a évoqué.
23. Les optimistes tels que l'initiative Leland (USAID) ont largement contribué à répandre de telles idées.

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The 1913 Cut-off Date for Restitution of Dispossessed Land in South Africa: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract

Land is a vital resource whose ownership and control has been the most contentious issue in South Africa since the arrival of the white settler in the country. The early history of the country can, with some justification, be summed up as a gigantic struggle for land between the indigenous peoples and white settlers. The struggle for access to land remains a perennial problem in this country. This paper investigates the land restitution regime set up following the introduction of post-apartheid democratic constitutions of 1994 and 1996. It argues that the constitutional limitation on land restitution only to land dispossessed on or after the 19 June 1913 tilted the balance in the struggle over land between South Africans of African descent and those of European extraction, in the latter's favour. This defeats the indigenous South Africans' expectation that the ANC government will be committed to a new land policy that makes the unencumbered restoration of dispossessed land a human right.

Résumé

En Afrique du Sud, la terre représente une ressource vitale dont la propriété et le contrôle constituent un des plus épineux problèmes, depuis l'arrivée de l'homme blanc dans ce pays. Les premières heures de l'histoire de cette nation peuvent, à juste titre, être résumées par une lutte acharnée pour le contrôle de la terre, entre les populations indigènes et les colons blancs. La lutte pour l'accès à la terre reste toujours un problème permanent dans ce pays. Cet article analyse le régime de restitution foncière mis en place après l'introduction des constitutions post-démocratiques de 1994 et 1996. Il affirme que les limites constitutionnelles délimitant le principe de restitution aux terres ayant fait l'objet d'expropriation à la date du 19 juin 1913 ou après, a fait pencher la balance en faveur des Sud-

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africains d'origine européenne, au détriment des Sud-africains d'origine africaine. Cette situation met à terre les attentes des Sud-africains locaux, selon lesquelles le gouvernement de l'ANC mènerait une nouvelle politique considérant la restitution des terres expropriées comme un véritable droit humain.

The 1913 limitation date: A critique

The Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994¹ and Republic of South Africa Constitution Act 108 of 1996² both have identical provisions limiting restitution to the restoration of land dispossessed after the 19 of June 1913.³ This cut-off date of 19 June 1913 is significant because it is the date that the notorious Land Act 1913 came into effect. The Act set the foundation for subsequent laws and administrative fiats that saw whites appropriating eighty percent of the land in the country while squeezing the black majority constituting about eighty percent of the population into thirteen percent of mostly inhospitable land.⁴ This had a devastating impact on the rights of South African blacks to land and has influenced land policy profoundly thereafter.⁵ Miller and Pope⁶ have described the limitation of restitution claims to 1913 as a critical aspect of the process, resulting from a pragmatic compromise. These authors identified the basis of this compromise thus:

- (i) Aboriginal title should not form the basis of restitutionary claims because the countries in which they have been applied are historically and demographically different from South Africa;
- (ii) Aboriginal title is an inappropriate basis for land claims because (a) the ownership paradigm of ancient times is different from what it is now (b) some of the lands settled on by whites were *terra nullius*;
- iii) Fear that historical claims will create problems that will be impossible to solve as it may serve to awaken destructive tribal rivalries over land that have been possibly settled on by different ethnic groups.

B du Villiers⁷ equally agrees with the limitation of restitution to 1913 because 'it may be very difficult for many black tribes or ethnic group to demonstrate that their traditional title had not been extinguished through previous acts of government'. This paper concedes that the massive demographic shift, the absence of written record and the passage of time are formidable obstacles to any restitution claims.⁸ Despite this point, it is argued that this should not have led to the dismissal of the different views on the recognition of aboriginal titles.⁹ Bennett and Powell have indicated that aboriginal title can be a legitimate and working part of South African law.¹⁰ Reilly similarly stressed that on the basis of international and common law jurisprudence and practice, there are good reasons for South African law to support claims of aboriginal title.¹¹

It is in the light of the above unrealistic for the government to have assumed that fixing the cut-off date on the 19 June 1913 and thereby eliminat-

ing aboriginal title was the best way to go in the circumstances of the land history of South Africa. The historical and demographic differences in societies like Canada and Australia did not prevent South African courts from relying on precedents in these countries in support of constitutional interpretations in major decisions touching on significant areas.¹² Moreover, one only needs to turn to the Australian case of *Mabo v State of Queensland (No. 2)*¹³ to challenge the South African position in this respect. Firstly, the *Mabo* decision recognised aboriginal titles in the Murray Islands,¹⁴ in spite of the fact of the close similarities between the colonial histories of land in both countries. The Australian High Court, quite rightly, rejected the self-seeking contention that the lands in Australia were *terra nullius* before 1788.

The contention that some of the land occupied by settlers in South Africa was *terra nullius* and not appropriate for restitution is, with respect, not convincing. It seemingly reflects the tendency to devise exculpatory reminiscences by those who having unjustly enriched themselves with African lands, seek to frustrate its restoration. Although the passage of time may have blurred evidence of some acts of dispossession, a functional restitution of a historical claim is still perfectly possible in the country.

Klug¹⁵ has demonstrated that it is possible to identify land dispossession dating back to the 1880s. He gives three examples in which lands were dispossessed through a conscious process of corruption and fraud before 1913 and which are capable of forming the basis of claims for restitution. First in 1884, the Boers recognised two settlements and 95 farms as belonging by their own admissions, to Africans in the Thaba’Nchu area of the Barolong region of the Orange Free State. However, by 1900 only 54 of these farms remained in the hands of the Barolong landowners; the rest having been lost to whites through forfeiture as a consequence of dubious mortgages that the natives allegedly could not pay back.¹⁶

Second, the white settlers in Griqua land after the annexation of 1874 owned just 63 of the approximately existing 505 farms in the area. Subsequently these titles of the Griqua landowners passed into the hands of white merchants and speculators who insisted that debts be paid in land. This practice was so successful that the Griqua landowning community allied to the colonial administration became a community of landless people with a bitter grudge against their white allies.¹⁷

The third and Klug’s¹⁹ final example relates to lands lost to the lawyer and parliamentarian Va Fenner-Solomon. This lawyer claimed to have extended lavish loans including legal fees to the natives of the Kat River. Following the grant of titles to these natives after the Boedel Erven Act of 1905, he caused these natives to sign legal documents making their properties expropriable by him for any default. The natives were later to lose their lands en masse to

him because of so-called defaults in payment. It is obvious that had these victims been white, it would have been impossible for such fraudulent dispossession of their property to occur.

Limiting the restitution process to 1913 has clearly defeated claims to any of the above clearly identifiable dispossession. This is objectionable for two important reasons. The victims and their descendants are refused ownership of their land because ownership ought to include the right to reclaim one's thing from anyone who wrongfully retains it.¹⁹ This right should not be defeated by a mere passage of time.

The restitution process is based on the Aristotelian theory of corrective justice. Clearly, where as in the identified cases above, this could still be done; it would theoretically be unsound to foreclose it by an arbitrary limitation of time provision. This compels a re evaluation of the limitation of restitution process to 1913. The restitution claim through the LCC to the Constitutional Court in *Alexkor Ltd & Anor v The Richtersveld Community & Anor*²⁰ has introduced interesting insights on this issue. Although the case raised a claim based on the doctrine of aboriginal title, the LCC held that it did not have the powers to determine the issue of aboriginal title. It opined that the High Court could have the power to develop the common law to incorporate it. Equally interesting is the approach of the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA). Although the court discountenanced the doctrine of native title as not neatly fitting into South African common law, the SCA's approach to the role of custom 'and its focus on indirect discrimination, stress the importance of the decision with regards to recognising claims for aboriginal title and its incidences'.²¹

The Constitutional Court deliberately used the language of aboriginal title and drew heavily from countries that have recognised the title. It held that it could competently assume jurisdiction on aboriginal title because this comes within the contemplation of issues bearing on or having a logical connection to the claim of the community.²² The Court noted that its approach is justified because of the Court's broad jurisdiction to determine constitutional matters and the need to avoid an artificial fettering of its function when obliged to determine a constitutional matter.²³

Case for the amendment of the limitation clause

This writer contends that the issue should no longer be whether the courts could accommodate restitution for land dispossessed before the 19 June 1913. It should rather be the extent to which this provision, that short shrifts the rights of millions to repossess lands wrongfully taken from their forebears, should be revised. The writer has adopted this view in spite of the Constitutional Court's recent decision in the *Alexkor Ltd* case that:²⁴

in the light of the judgment in *du Plessis and Others v De Klerk and Anor* the drafters of the Constitution were aware of the general rule against retroactivity. They obviously applied their minds to this aspect in relation to the restoration of land and land rights, which has always been an issue of supreme importance... Had there been any desire for the provision of the 1996 Constitution to have retroactive effect beyond this date, one would have expected this to have been so enacted. It was not.

Although the Constitutional Court expressed the above strong views on the apparent finality of the limitation date, the judgment is nonetheless significant in so far as charting the future course for restitution is concerned. It seems plain from a careful reading of the entire judgment that the Court thinks the limitation of restitution for dispossession to 1913 ought to be subject to a reappraisal. This much is deducible from the court's statement that 'this does not mean that regard may not be had to racially discriminatory laws and practices that were in existence or took place before that date'.²⁵

It seems reasonable and safe to assume (from the language of aboriginal title used by the constitutional court) that the court felt called upon to pronounce on the effect of prior 1913 Acts on the land in question as an issue connected with a decision on a constitutional matter.²⁶ This much is borne out by the court's statement that:²⁷

A more difficult question is to determine whether this court has the jurisdiction to deal with all issues bearing on or related to establishing the existence of these matters. For example the question might be asked whether the issue concerning the existence of the community's rights in land prior to the colonisation of the Cape, or the content or incidence of such rights, constitute in themselves 'constitutional matters' the same might be asked concerning the continuous existence of such rights after the British Crown's annexation of the Cape in 1806, or after the 1847 Proclamation or the subsequent statutory and other acts thereafter.

It is imperative that the question of access to land through the restitution process that was characterised in this decision as 'of supreme importance' be viewed in relation to what has been achieved eleven years after democratic transformation. Recent comments on the *Alexkor* case by academics have suggested that the Constitutional Court employed the language of aboriginal title in the case deliberately. K Lehmann²⁸ has for this reason construed the decision as leaving open the possibility that 'the doctrine may yet at a future date find its way into the South African legal order, should an appropriate case come before a sympathetic bench'. Although Lehmann has criticised the doctrine as inappropriate for South Africa, he recognised that moving the restitution date backward represents at least for the proponents of the doctrine of aboriginal title a possible solution to the problem posed by the Restitution

Act as amended. Jeannie Van Wyk²⁹ was more categorical in her argument that the constitutional court is moving towards the recognition of aboriginal title. According to her, the court's finding that:³⁰

the Richtersveld's community had an indigenous law communal ownership of the land and minerals at the time of annexation in 1847, which was a separate form of ownership from the common law ownership we know today, should support the view that the doctrine of aboriginal title should be recognised in South Africa... the constitutional court decision begins to open the door to claims based on aboriginal title.

These views support the contention that on a reflective interpretation of the *Alexkor Ltd* decision one could reasonably attribute to it a justification for the amendment of the provisions of s 25(7) of the 1996 Constitution to accommodate the restitution of pre-1913 dispossession. Indeed, this writer agrees with AJ Van Wyk's interpretation of *Alexkor* as beginning 'to open the door to claims based on aboriginal title'.

That the judgement constitutes the green light for the extension of restitution to cover the restoration of land dispossessed prior to 1913 is also the reasonable inference to be drawn from the result attained by the two-pronged approach adopted in *Alexkor*. Firstly, by holding that it had jurisdiction to hear the case because it is an issue logically connected to a constitutional matter, it brought these acts of dispossession within the restitutionary framework contemplated by s 25(7) of the Constitution and s2 (1) of the Restitution Act as amended.

The second reason for this inference is based on the statement in the judgement that:³¹

For the same reason, this court has jurisdiction in relation to all intervening events in relations to which it could be suggested that the community had lost a right on land. This court likewise has jurisdiction to determine all issues relevant to the matters that has to be established under s 2(1) of the Act, whether anterior thereto or not.

This passage taken together with the writer's prior observations on the court's competence to determine the wider jurisdictional questions touching on what constitutes constitutional matters demonstrates the court's desire to see changes to the constitutional limitation date. This conclusion is irresistible because on the determination that a dispossession occurred before 1913 the consequential question of whether such a land should be restored falls within the definition of all the issues relevant to s 2(1) of the Act. Moreover, the question of the restoration of the land is anterior to a finding that a right in land had been lost. The court was, in this writer's opinion, clearly cautious

about the tendency to be schematic and artificially fetter its jurisdiction when it stated thus:³²

The wide construction is consistent with the purpose of the provision. It is intended to extend the jurisdiction of this court to matters that stand in a logical relationship to those matters that are primarily, or in the first instance, subject to the court's jurisdiction. This underlying purpose is to avoid fettering, arbitrarily and artificially, the exercise of the court's functioning when obliged to determine a constitutional matter.

Besides, the Constitutional Court's finding that the Lands Claims Court (LCC) has jurisdiction to develop the common law as it relates to native title can also reasonably be construed as a green light for amending the provision under reference. Otherwise to what effect is this jurisdiction when the various provisions dealing with the limitation for the restitution of dispossessed land are so clear and unambiguous? Put differently, why should the LCC have the jurisdiction to develop the common law as it relates to dispossession dating back to the British crown when as the Constitutional Court itself observed dispossession that took place before the 19 of June are not actionable? It is plain that the court had in mind the desire to draw attention to the limitation of restitution as it now stands because it seemingly fetters its functioning artificially. The current state of the law is a matter of grave concern because it continues to tilt the scale of justice disproportionately in favour of the dispossessor while the dispossessed continues to live in desperation.

The general slowness of the land reform delivery rate expressed by Cousins, Chigara and Lahiff are well founded. In the specific case of restitution, it failed to deliver access to the majority of South African victims of forced removals because of the constitutional limitation. Although it can be suggested that this limitation was necessary for post-apartheid reconciliation, reconstruction and development, it must be criticised for failing to prioritise justice for previously disadvantaged indigenous people. The limitation ignores the fact that the dominant context of the country's land history is a recognition that land was taken from indigenous people in circumstances that to this day are a source of pain and tension. It will appear that the government endorsed the contention that rectifying past injustice through a radical restitution scheme represents a superficial understanding of the historic realities of South Africa that for some is the fact that the restitution of dispossessed land is not the best way to go.³³ The writer not only recommends this amendment but also calls for a further consequential revision of the Restitution Act as amended extending the time for the lodgement of restitution claims.

The amendment of the Constitution to accelerate a rule of law-based delivery of restitution of land should not in principle be objectionable because it is

both feasible and legitimate. Reference may here be made to the fact that Canada that has a similar history of dispossession has had to amend its constitution to accommodate claims based on aboriginal title.³⁴ In proposing these amendments, one is not oblivious of the fact that the limitation of restitution to the 19 June 1913 was influenced by certain concerns. It was alleged that to extend restitution beyond this date would create a potentially explosive situation capable of precipitating violent intra- and inter-tribe conflicts because of past overlapping claims over land. Secondly, it was thought that it would be difficult for persons and communities to establish their claims for dispossession were it to be extended beyond the prescribed date.³⁵

In dealing with the first concern and the writer's recommendation that the constitution be amended, it is imperative for South Africa to draw the right lessons from events currently taking place in Zimbabwe, because the latter's land dispossession history is intimately connected to that of South Africa.³⁶ The limitation placed on restitution for dispossessed land in South Africa is the result of compromises reached with parties representing the interest of white privilege in the same way as the independent Constitution of Zimbabwe was circumscribed by compromises exacted in the Lancaster House Agreement.

It is necessary for South Africa to avoid a situation whereby it would be stampeded by pressure from the landless into haphazardly amending the Constitution as Zimbabwe did, particularly in 2000.³⁷ A crisis-induced amendment as happened in Zimbabwe has led to land invasions, deaths and major disruptions.³⁸ There are indications that some South Africans are increasingly becoming impatient with the perceived slowness of the land restitution scheme which they see as the result of a deliberate policy of appeasement of present landowners.³⁹

The land situation in Zimbabwe has also demonstrated that extending the land restoration process to incorporate aboriginal title need not necessarily awaken and or prolong destructive ethnic and racial rivalries⁴⁰ amongst the different ethnic groups in the country. While it is admittedly the case that the different ethnic nationalities in Zimbabwe such as the Shona, Ndebeles etc., had in the past fought over land, this has not in anyway resurfaced in the context of the country's policy of land restoration which does not have any limitation period.⁴¹ The Zimbabwean experience rather shows that the danger to be avoided is to allow frustration with perceived impediments created under the present structure of s 25(7) and the Restitution Act as amended to cause the people to take matters into their own hand.⁴²

The *Alexkor Ltd* case has shown that the anxiety over how to establish pre-1913 dispossessions for the purpose of restitution is unfounded. Without expressly saying so, the Constitutional Court demonstrated that it is perfectly

possible to establish a dispossession *ante* dating 1913. The Court was able to adequately answer the question whether the Richtersveld community had rights over land and the content of this right as at 1847 prior to the British crown acquiring sovereignty over the land. It was pointed out that in making a determination of this nature, the adjudicating tribunal must do so by reference to indigenous law rather than the common law.

The court's view that 'the undisputed evidence shows a history of prospecting in minerals by the community and conduct that is consistent only with ownership of the minerals being vested in the community'⁴³ is instructive. It shows that indigenous land rights and the manner in which this matter had been dealt with can be conveniently ascertained even when this occurred before the limitation period. It also stated quite graphically the way forward with regard to how this should be done.

Such evidence of what one might call the root of title and the subsequent dispossession of the indigenous people could be derived from witness testimonies and writers' accounts. The sources included in the particular case of the Richtersveld community 'a text describing the long history of copper mining in Namaqualand by the indigenous peoples'.⁴⁴ There is no reason why it should not be possible to amend s 25(7) particularly as the reasons for its enactment are untenable in the first place.

Conclusion

The specific issue of dispossession and access facilitation measures to land for the dispossessed through legislation is in a take-off stage. Scholars such as B. Cousins⁴⁵ and B. Chigara⁴⁶ have in recent studies criticised the country's land delivery rate as slow. Indeed, the former describes the reforms introduced by the property clause of which land restitution is a central part as 'minimalist'.⁴⁷ Cousins pointedly notes that there is a gap between legislation and implementation because of the compromises that were agreed upon in the negotiations preceding the 1994 elections.

Chigara for his part points to the frustration caused by the slowness of the reforms to deliver access to the dispossessed, and argues that this has potential risks for the country. Chigara observes in this regards that the Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA)⁴⁸ has considered the Zimbabwe style land invasion a viable option to the South African approach. It is difficult to dispute the conclusions of these studies because cumulative statistics of settled restitution claims from 1995 to March 2004 reveal that only 17,631 hectares of land have been restored to 662,302 beneficiaries so far.⁴⁹ The slowness of land restoration through the restitution mechanism makes the alternative of a disorderly people-driven land invasion tempting and appealing.

An amendment to broaden the restitution process in terms of the arguments in this paper will help dispel the misgivings of the landless that the ANC is pandering to white interests - the core of which is to ensure that dispossessed land was to remain white property forever.⁵⁰ Such an amendment would demonstrate that South Africa would have broken clean of a land policy which was expressed by the colonial administrator Sir Cradock in 1811 as requiring each white land owners to look upon it as his eternal estate, of which 'no future event can injure him, or render it unproductive but the want of industry or his own mismanagement'.⁵¹ This amendment will make the right to land through the restitution scheme look like one flowing from the ownership of the indigenous peoples rather than a benefice or handout generated by the Restitution Act as amended.

Notes

1. A publication of Human Awareness Programme, *Land in South Africa*, Grantpark 1989, p.1.
2. Geoff Budlender and Johan Latsky, 'Unravelling Rights to Land and to Agriculture in Rural Race Zones', 1990, SAJHR 150.
3. S 2(1) This Act also limited the lodgement of restitution claims to December 1998 but this restriction was subsequently extended to December 2000.
4. S25(7).
5. See also S 121-123 of the interim constitution of 1993.
6. H Mostert, 'Land Restitution and Development in South Africa', 2002, 119 SALJ 401.
7. Geoff Budlender and Johan Latsky, op cit., p. 150.
8. D.L.C. Miller and A. Pope, *Land Title in South Africa*, Kenwyn, Juta & Co Ltd, 2000, p. 428.
9. B. de Villiers, *Land Reform: Issues and Challenges; A comparative overview of experiences in Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa and Australia*, Johannesburg, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003, pp. 61-2. Although he accepts that native title may find fertile ground in South Africa, he believes that it can better be done through a rule of customary international law, Roman Dutch law or as part of the English common law.
10. Ibid.
11. Jeannie Van Wyk, 'The Rocky Road to Restitution for the Richtersvelders', 2004, 67, THRHR, p. 485.
12. Ibid. See Reilly, 'The Australian experience of aboriginal title: Lessons for South Africa', 2000, SAJHR, pp. 512-534; Bennett and Powell, 'Aboriginal title in South Africa Revisited', 1999, SAJHR, pp. 449-485.
13. Ibid.
14. See *S v Makwanyane* 1995 (3) SA 391 (CC), *S v Zuma* 1995 2 SA 642(CC).
15. 1992 175 CLR 1.
16. Ibid.

17. H. Klug, 'Historical claims and the right to restitution', in J Van Zyl et al., eds., *Agricultural Land Reform In South Africa: Policies, markets and mechanisms*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 394.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid
20. Ibid.
21. W. A. Joubert, *The Law of South Africa*, Durban, Butterworth, 2002, p. 218. One is conscious of the fact that a major consideration in the whole process is the fact that restitution should take place without major social disruptions. It is, however, the present writer's view that owners of dispossessed land should be paid compensation in lieu of actual restitution in circumstances where actual restoration will be disruptive.
22. 2003 12 BCLR 1303 (CC).
23. J. V. Wyk, op cit. at 486.
24. See Paragraph 16.
25. Alexkor case at paragraphs 24 and 30.
26. 'Alexkor Ltd and Another v The Richtersveld Community and Another', Supra at paragraph 40.
27. Ibid. See paragraph 40.
28. Ibid. See Paragraph 24.
29. Ibid. See Paragraph 24. Contrast this with the fact that it could well be construed as the court having to undertake a review of the historical background of the case so as to place the actual dispossession which occurred in the 1920s in perspective.
30. K. Lehmann, 'Aboriginal Title, Indigenous Rights and the Right to Culture', 2004, Vol. 20, SAJHR, p. 88.
31. J. Van Wyk, 'The Rocky Road to Restitution for the Richtersvelders', 2004, 67, THRHR, p. 486.
32. Ibid.
33. See paragraph 32.
34. See paragraph 30.
35. Ibid.
36. See s 35(1) of the Constitution Act 1982 of Canada.
37. D. Miller and A. Pope, 'South African Land Reform', 2000, 44, JAL, p. 178.
38. E. Lahiff and B. Chigara have made a connection between the two regardless of the distinctions in the property clauses of the two states. See E. Lahiff, 'The Politics of Land Reform in Southern Africa', Research Paper Series on Sustainable Livelihood in Southern Africa: Institutions, Governance and Policy Process <http://www.ids.ac.uk/slsa>. Accessed on 15 October 2004; B. Chigara, *Land Reform Policy: The Challenge of Human Rights Law*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, (2003, pp. 20-1.
39. S16A (1) of the Constitution (Amendment No.16) Act No. 5 of 2000. This amendment was purely for the political reason of winning the 2000 presidential election in Zimbabwe and reflects the regime's recognition that disaffection

- with land reform was widespread and could be tapped to achieve political goals in spite of the poor performance of the government. T. K. Chitiyo, 'Land violence and compensation', <[www:http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/9_1zimbabwe.html](http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/9_1zimbabwe.html)> Accessed July 2003.
40. T.K. Chitiyo, 'Land violence and compensation', <[www:http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/9_1zimbabwe.html](http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/9_1zimbabwe.html)> Accessed July 2003
 41. Land invasions are increasingly becoming a problem in South Africa. The National Landless People Movement identified 2003 as being the year of land occupations. See B. de Villiers, *op cit*, p. 71.
 42. Miller and Pope (note 2) *loc cit*.
 43. The Namibian land reform programme does not include the restoration of ancestral lands. But this has been criticised as reflecting political bias by SWAPO. It has been suggested that SWAPO was not interested in the restoration of ancestral land because ancestral lands were not dispossessed in Ovamboland, which constitutes its main base. Namibia presumably has the lowest land restoration scheme in southern Africa, probably because of its land reform approach. B. de Villiers, *op cit*, p. 35.
 44. See note 8.
 45. Alexkor Ltd case (*supra*) at paragraph 60.
 46. See paragraph 61 of the decision.
 47. Cousins, *op cit* at 2.
 48. Chigara *op cit.*, 20. See also E. Lahiff who also states that land redistribution has moved at a slow pace and attributes this to the preservation of a land structure driven by market forces. Lahiff, *op cit.*, at 5.
 49. Cousins, *op cit.*, at 1.
 50. A loose group which claims to represent those dispossessed during apartheid and farm workers who have been evicted after the introduction of democratic governance. Chigara, *loc cit*.
 51. Database of the Land Restitution Commission.
 52. Land leases granted to free burgers by the Dutch East Indian Company were made on terms that suggested perpetual ownership. T R Davenport and Hunt, *The Right to Land*, Lansdowne, Juta & Co, 1974, p. 54.
 53. L.C. Duly, *British Land Policy at the Cape 1795-1844: A study of administrative procedure in the Empire*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1968, p. 46.



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Book Reviews/ Notes de lecture

Tade Akin Aina, Chachage Seithy Chachage & Elizabeth Annan-Yao (eds.), *Globalization and Social Policy in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2004, viii + 339pp., US 20.95, ISBN: 2-86978-130-X (pbk.)

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As the blurb on its back cover indicates, *Globalization and Social Policy in Africa* ‘examines the different areas of significant contact between globalization and the lives of ordinary people in Africa’ through the use of ‘empirical and historical studies.’ The book contains fifteen chapters divided into four different parts that specifically address the following: economic and regional trends; poverty and social services provision; globalization, women’s work and citizenship; and higher education and globalization. Published at a time when globalization has become the buzzword for international development, this book adds an important voice to the growing critiques of the whole project of neo-liberal economic models often deemed the panacea for socio-economic development in the global south.

Contributors to this volume are aware of the failure of the ‘development’ project fifty years after it was introduced in Africa and other regions of the world.

The trouble with this kind of ‘development,’ as the authors note, is that it is simply another name for economic growth that is devoid of any consideration for the social. It has long been assumed that economic growth will get rid of poverty by creating wealth that in turn will be used to solve social problems. As contributors to the volume show, this has not been the case and the era of globalization (which has come to be associated with economic liberalism), has indeed hurt many African nations and communities. Globalization, for instance, has undermined the legitimacy and power of the state in Africa. Given that for a long time the state has been the primary provider of social services, this globalization agenda of trimming the state has had very negative effects on the lives of the vulnerable majority in Africa. A few examples from the book illustrate this phenomenon.

Analyzing globalization in the Maghreb, Hammouda highlights the tight-rope that has to be walked between citizenship and religion where the former allows for a process of secularization that almost undermines the latter. With the push for democratization came the need for the state to relinquish some of its grip and monopoly on politics and a greater focus on individual freedoms that sought to free people from their communal obligations and relations. Thus, a specific Western economic thought has been mobilized as a universal human condition devoid of any historical particularities and shoved down the throats of a culture where religion is inseparable from the everyday. In a related case, Gimode argues that globalization has redefined the role of the state and allowed Islam (which has always sought to step in and redistribute wealth among the poor) to offer social services especially in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya where even government services are hard to deliver.

What is emerging from the arguments raised in this volume is that there is a one size fits all model being applied indiscriminately to all African countries even though not all states have failed in Africa. As Magubane shows in the case of South Africa, the state is not only under siege from globalization through a push for downsizing, it is also being asked to supervise its own demise. Yet, as Magubane shows, the sectors in which South Africa has world class technological and export capabilities are those in which state intervention has been greater. This then makes nonsense of the push by globalization to reduce the state's participation in development and shows how the key players of global economic fundamentalism are imperialists clothed in the rhetoric of change for the common good.

In a chapter based on fieldwork in Nigeria, Yunusa shows that with structural adjustment programmes came the dwindling of social service provision that consequently led to reduced participation in social activities necessary for building relationships as well as the inability to even eat certain kinds of foods such as meat and fish. Thus, instead of people becoming more advanced through globalization they are regressing into more poverty. In response to this regression, development becomes a phenomenon that is seen as separate chunks of 'projects' that need to be addressed individually. Ndiaye shows in the case of Senegal that social policy changes and 'innovation' engender a 'project approach' where each sector is managed through specific projects that run as long as development partners choose to support them. This new way of seeing development, however, has disturbingly escaped the ire of local intellectuals as Chachage shows in an analysis of higher education. He argues that even academics and political thinkers have steered clear of debates on emancipatory politics. It is no longer fashionable to have debates that seek to liberate Africans from domination and exploitation.

Instead, many are talking about African nations becoming globalized, that is, losing themselves in the global.

In the larger scope of things we thus see that social policy is about people, their livelihood, their plans for the future, and their strategies for economic success. Unfortunately, just as economic solutions for Africa's woes have failed so have social policies generated through economic models. This has been well addressed in this volume. However, while the contributors clearly show how negatively globalization has affected social policy in Africa, there is a lack of articulation of actual everyday experiences. This is, to a large extent, due to the fact that many of these contributors have not used any field-based data that articulates the thoughts, voices, and experiences of the people most affected by these global challenges. Such data would have helped give the contributions a more informed view of the socio-economic realities that 'ordinary people in Africa' experience.

Abdou Maliq Simone & Abdelghani Abouhane (eds.), *Urban Africa: Changing Contours of Survival in the City*, Dakar: CODESRIA Books; London/New York: Zed Books, 2005, xi + 305pp. US\$25, ISBN: 1-84277-593-6 (pbk)

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Urban Africa reveals why Africa's urban spaces are increasingly attracting a lot of scholarly attention. There are many reasons for this. First, it is apparent that Africa's urban areas are the ones that by and large determine the political and economic trends, but rural Africa still holds sway in the social and cultural realm. Second, there is increased hybridity and multiculturalism that are leading to new questions, and new areas of inquiry. Third, interdisciplinary research, such as that deployed by the contributors to this volume, has allowed for new questions and answers, covering areas that urban anthropologists, geographers, historians and sociologists have not ventured before. Fourth, Africa is becoming increasingly urbanized, with many countries recording about 40 per cent urban populations. Thus, one is not surprised by the explosion of research in this realm and the interesting themes that these articles represent.

Most of the ten chapters in *Urban Africa* are quite impressive, with varying degrees of disciplinary and methodological emphasis, based on veritable

empirical research. While showing the spatial and cultural mosaic that urban Africa is, the book emphasizes the conflicting dynamics that African cities have displayed from the pre-colonial period to the present. Since AbdouMalik Simone's introduction is not easy to follow, the best place to start is perhaps the second chapter by Benedicte Florin, which is a compelling story. Florin seems to be interested in interrogating the relationship between urban policies and housing, and how people have perceived and received these policies. She uses satellite cities in Cairo as her case study. Although she wants 'to examine the relationship between the way some of the inhabitants of these new towns receive and interpret' (p.29) these policies, her chapter seems to lack the real voices of the people. Instead she presents the views of the government. It is supposed to be an engagement of peoples' experiences in an urban sprawl, but we end up with the role of policy planners and implementers, which should satisfy the segment of readers that is interested in that side of the equation. The third chapter by Anna Madoeff examines the role of *Moulids* in Cairo. It is the story of the city through public spectacle and rituals, an increasingly popular area for social and cultural historians. The chapter makes a great contribution to understanding how rituals can be used as vehicles for understanding city life, as people are paraded and objectified in their traditions and settlement pattern.

The fourth chapter by Jean Omasombo looks at Kisangani from the pre-colonial period to the present, highlighting issues of external hegemony, from Arabs to Europeans and how this city survived under the legacy of these pressures, seen in Islamic and Christian influences. It seems like Kisangani's strategic position has been its Achilles heel throughout history, but this does not undermine its role in the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) development even today. After reading this chapter, it seems worthwhile to include Arabs and Afro-Arabs such as the Tipp Tip family in Zanzibar in those to pay reparations to slavery and the slave trade. The other issue that the chapter clearly brings out clearly is that the dynamics of mining and the attendant problems, from Johannesburg in South Africa, Kitwe in Zambia, and Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, seem to be replicated in the DRC in a very interesting manner. Perhaps a comparative study of these dynamics, especially exploitation of the locals is overdue.

In chapter five, historian Bahru Zewde undertakes a historical analysis of Addis Ababa starting from Axum, through Gondar to Addis Ababa, from the imperial regimes to Mengistu Haile Mariam's revolution and the Derg to the present. At a certain point, there seems to be too much focus on the mundane such as the founding of Addis Ababa by Menelik II and the role of Empress Taytu in all this, which are already textbook material that should not appear in a specialized book such as this. But that does not deny the chapter

its potency, although it dilutes the focus on more juicy and avant-garde issues that the author raises, such as the Ethiopian exceptionalism where the bourgeois develop suburbs near airports and yet throughout the world, this class hates noise pollution even though it has helped to generate it. Through the development of suburbs near airports, we are given a rare glimpse into the contradictory bourgeois taste in Ethiopia, so that one wishes that Zewde had developed this issue more strongly, as it makes nonsense of the prevailing notion that the bourgeoisie hate noise and that is why they retreat to quieter suburbs. He also illuminates the Italian legacy in Ethiopia that many scholars have not engaged and which nationalist historians have always shunned.

Chapter six by Edgar Pieterse lacks a clear thesis – what does the author intend to convey? That is why twenty one pages down the line (on page 158) we now hear, ‘For my purpose in this chapter, I want to draw attention to the political potency of discourses about the identity of the city....’ The thesis comes just seven pages before the end! Secondly, the chapter does not belong to this book. There are more concrete issues about identity in African cities than just ‘discourse’, which has become such nebulous edifice. Mohammed-Bello Yunusa’s promise in the seventh chapter is interesting. The author promises ‘to make a link between spatial structure and characteristics of high-density areas on one hand and the lifestyle, livelihood and social fabric on the other’ (p. 203). There are some attempts to make these links in this suburb of Zaria city, known as Anguwar Mai Gwando, but the reader is frustrated by the chapter’s presentation style and structure, for it retains an irritating research proposal format that inhibits the free flow of ideas, which are boxed into too many tables.

In chapter eight, Victor Adetula revisits the old question of religious-ethnic rivalry using ‘burial societies’ such as Berom Progressive Union and Jassaw Development Association as windows to understanding sectarian tensions. He argues ‘that ethnic and cultural associations shape urban politics, provide platforms for competitions and struggle for space, opportunities and resources...’(p.206). Whereas this is true, these ‘burial societies’ are not anything new and are basically transplanted from rural areas and operate as centres of ethnic and religious identity. Nowadays, due to elitism and increased education among members, they often use fancy names such as ‘welfare’, or ‘development’ but remain largely similar to those in the 1960s throughout urban Africa. It is interesting to know that these associations still exist in Nigeria and are influencing politics and religious affiliation, at a time when scholars are talking about hybridity and multiculturalism facilitating eradication of ethnic and religious identities.

The last two chapters, nine and ten, address similar issues, which are not at all new in Africa's urban milieu. Mahamadou Abdoul's study on Pikine, a suburb of Dakar, Senegal, constitutes the ninth chapter. Pikine emerged as a suburb in 1952 and became an autonomous town from September 1996, covering sixteen district councils. The chapter speaks about common urban problems such as 'high population growth rate, overpopulation in the neighbourhoods, a high employment rate, [and] peculiar environmental problems (coastal pollution, periodic flooding in some areas, an inadequate drainage system), increased insecurity and violence....' (p.237-8), thus raising no new questions and therefore no new answers. Chapter ten is by Mohamed Gheris, and discusses housing in Marrakech, the capital of the Tensift El Haouz region in Morocco. His real analysis starts on page 264, paragraph 3, and not on page 261. The chapter highlights the chaos that accompanies scarcity of housing in any urban setting. Morocco, like other African countries, has an unresolved housing problem, for he says that 'The proliferation in recent years of the effects of unhygienic and clandestine housing is a clear indication of the failure of the low-cost housing policy [at Marrakech]' (p.286). But many of his arguments are also boxed in many tables that are spread throughout the chapter.

However, despite the versatility and great contribution of this book to our understanding of urban Africa, there are questions that still linger. There is the factor of ethnic pluralization and associational life in Africa, where, as in the case of Kenya, there are *Kisumu ndogos* (literally: small Kisumus) in every urban area occupied by the Luo and Kambi Somalis occupied by the Somali which are still being perpetuated by succeeding generations. This should be researched. Also, there seems to be an emerging middle ground created by the civil society in African urban spaces, often bringing together youths or women from diverse ethnic backgrounds, so that we can begin to wonder whether this is a new rebirth of urban Africa without the previous identities and tensions. Also, one wonders whether the democratic wave that has rocked dictatorships across the continent and spawned more democratic forms of expression such as riots and demonstrations in urban areas will bring about new changes in urban Africa. Nevertheless, this book adds an important new voice to the expanding and critical literature on research in Africa's urban spaces. It offers us an unusually powerful and passionate critique of the previous studies that have only addressed the role of the government, although we still want to hear more of often muted voices of the urban underclass that have not been articulated enough by some of the articles. This is an important study that deserves a wide audience in the academy.