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Lessons to Africa from Africa:
Reclaiming Early Post-Independence Progressive Policies**

**Numéro spécial du projet sur le post-colonialisme aujourd'hui
Leçons à l'Afrique par l'Afrique :
Reprendre les politiques progressistes au début de l'après-indépendance**

Guest Editors / Rédacteurs invités

**Tetteh Hormeku-Ajei & Adebayo Olukoshi
(Post-Colonialisms Today)**

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Post-Colonialisms Today is a research and advocacy project recovering insights from early post-independence Africa, and mobilizing them through a feminist lens to address contemporary challenges. Launched in 2017, it is a collective undertaking of a working group and advisory group of African activist-intellectuals, supported by a substantive secretariat, and featuring this inaugural group of researchers across the continent.

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Introduction: Early Post-Independence Progressive Policies – Insights for our Times

Tetteh Hormeku-Ajei*, Aishu Balaji**, Adebayo Olukoshi***,
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If Africa's history is understood according to the continent's shifting relationship with the global economy, then the early post-independence era largely stands apart, in retrospect at least, as a time when policy and leadership were centred on the assertion and pursuit of political and economic agency from the hegemonic imperatives of the global North. The broad nationalist and emancipatory orientation that defined this period stands in contrast with the contemporary neoliberal era, which is characterised by a determined effort to reassert colonialist impulses, processes and policies in African countries.

Buoyed by the independence struggles, early post-independence leaders invested themselves in the task of securing the newly-won freedom of their countries through policies that were designed, among other things, to promote autonomous development processes anchored on the demands and needs of a home market. They shared a resolve to grow the home market in their quest to reduce dependence and overcome underdevelopment. They also committed themselves to empowering and increasing the social mobility of their citizens where it had been denied or constrained under colonialism.

The contrast between the political and policy thrust of the early post-independence period and the neoliberal phase ushered in in the 1980s

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is captured by Tanzania's independence leader, Julius Nyerere, when he recalled at a meeting at the World Bank in 1999:

The first question they asked me was 'how did you fail?' I responded that we took over a country with 85 percent of its adult population illiterate. The British ruled us for 43 years. When they left, there were 2 trained engineers and 12 doctors. This is the country we inherited. When I stepped down there was 91-per-cent literacy and nearly every child was in school. We trained thousands of engineers and doctors and teachers. In 1988 Tanzania's per-capita income was \$280. Now, in 1998, it is \$140. So I asked the World Bank people what went wrong. Because for the last ten years Tanzania has been signing on the dotted line and doing everything the IMF and the World Bank wanted. Enrolment in school has plummeted to 63 per cent and conditions in health and other social services have deteriorated. I asked them again: 'what went wrong?' These people just sat there looking at me. Then they asked, what could they do? I told them 'have some humility' (Bunting 1999).

Embedded in Nyerere's account is one of the issues at the heart of the neoliberal project: the deliberate attempt to discredit the experience of the first two decades of post-independence development in Africa by casting it as an unmitigated failure. The World Bank even proclaimed those post-independence decades 'lost years'. The narrative of failure was constructed in a manner that sought to question the foundational principles of autonomous and autochthonous development, which was the overarching framework for the policy choices made by post-independence political leaders. The narrative was also spun as part of the neoliberal campaign against state interventionism on the simple logic that if the early post-independence development experience was delegitimised, then, ipso facto, the quest for the promotion of the so-called free and untrammelled market would be easier to legitimise. The structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and the IMF were packaged and presented, when they began to be rolled out, as the remedy for the alleged failure of the early post-independence years.

In the articles that follow, six African activist-intellectuals, working under the auspices of the Post-Colonialisms Today (PCT) project, examine the policies and thinking of early post-independence African governments and their relevance for Africa's contemporary development challenges. They show, through their findings, that the narrative of uniform and all-round failure opportunistically promoted by neoliberals is a deliberately misleading one, not founded in evidence or grounded in historical context. Indeed, compared to the massive economic and social reversals that followed structural adjustment, the first two decades of independence were far more promising for the progress of the continent. In rolling back most of the early post-independence policies producing marked improvement in

socio-economic indicators – even if at an uneven and unequal pace – the adjustment years failed to deliver on the promised market-driven progress and became veritable lost years of African post-independence development (Mkandawire 2015; Mkandawire and Soludo 1998).

At the dawn of independence, leaders like Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Sékou Touré, Modibo Keita, Ahmed Ben Bella, Kenneth Kaunda, Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Kamuzu Banda and more were confronted with profound problems of political, social and economic fragmentation, and primary commodity export dependence, all inherited from colonial rule. By every definition, Africa, after decades of colonial rule, was in a state of acute underdevelopment and extreme dependence that required all the commitment, skills, goodwill and good luck to manage and reverse. The post-independence leaders rightly saw Africa's subordinate position in the global political-economic system as the abiding issue of Africa's economic structures, and securing the continent's political and economic agency as the critical and urgent task on the path towards a more autochthonous process of development.

Although the early postcolonial period saw a diversity of approaches to stemming dependence, all the governments shared a broad commitment to development and nation-building, industrialisation, economic and agricultural diversification, pan-Africanism and the construction of a new international order. And as Nyerere outlined to the World Bank, in retrospect, despite the discontents associated with them, the policies of this period produced better outcomes for African peoples than the subsequent neoliberal period, including in terms of 'growth' and capital accumulation, social provisioning, and national cohesion and inclusion (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998; UNCTAD 2010b: 123–5).

The imposition of neoliberalism, through the structural adjustment programmes, was further entrenched into the unequal global political-economic system via trade and financial liberalisation, conditional loans, privatisation and austerity. This resulted in political and economic capture by the powerful states and corporations of the global North; the externalisation of policymaking; stalled industrialisation; hollowed out state and public services; and the continued extraction of Africa's wealth and resources to enrich global North economies. This contemporary rearticulation of colonial relationships represents the reproduction of a problem that early post-independence leaders had begun to grapple with in their times. Nkrumah, in *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, warned that 'the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside' (1967: 1).

Today, over four decades of neoliberalism in Africa have obfuscated the fundamental issues at the heart of the continent's economic and political realities. Even in the face of its manifest failure, neoliberalism continues to dominate, with policymaking constrained by the notorious Thatcherite claim that 'there is no alternative'. Today, neoliberal assumptions even act as the point of departure in the search for policy alternatives. As Julius Nyerere observed in his earlier quoted interview, the 'independence of the former colonies has suited the interests of the industrial world for bigger profits at less cost. Independence made it cheaper for them to exploit us. We became neo-colonies' (Bunting 1999).

The articles in this collection challenge the continued hegemony of neoliberalism in policymaking in Africa. They do so by offering insights from the early post-independence period as an alternative point of departure, when a generation of Africans were grappling with the role of economic dependence in development. The articles represent a timely excavation of the policies and thinking of that period, asking what worked; what their limitations were, including with regard to the inclusion of women; and how they can be adapted through a feminist lens to bolster the contemporary search for alternatives.

This introductory article unpacks the profound economic, social and political impacts of primary commodity export dependence (PCED) whose foundations and workings were violently established under colonialism. The article also revisits the approaches adopted by the early post-independence governments and leaders towards development and nation-building, industrialisation, economic and agricultural diversification, and pan-Africanism and constructing a new global order; the gains and limits of these policies, which sets an agenda for their reimagining; the current context of neoliberalism and neo-colonialism; and finally the PCT project, which shaped the research and analysis presented in this issue.

Primary Commodity Export Dependence

PCED is one of the fundamental driving features of the majority of contemporary African economies, one that sharply distinguishes them from most economies on other continents. The key characteristics of PCED, described by Third World Network-Africa (TWN-Africa), centre 'on the export of (a narrow basket of hardly processed) primary mineral and agricultural commodities, with little or no domestic manufacturing industrial capacity, and the stagnation of the rural economy ... [leaving] Africa with the low-value end, while the high values are captured outside these economies' (TWN-Africa 2015: 9–12).

The consequences of primary commodity dependence are wide and far-reaching: with primary commodity exports ‘done in exchange for imported manufactured products, this sets up exchange relations characterised by imbalanced terms of trade and losses ... [and] the domination of foreign investment ... With this goes further externalisation of the economic surplus that is generated in Africa’s economies.’ Fragmentation between regions and major economic sectors like agriculture and industry ‘is in turn expressed in the small, narrow and shallow nature of domestic markets.’ And ‘the combined effect of all these is undermining the fundamental conditions of domestic resource accumulation. Such externalisation of accumulation undermines the availability of resources of the scale and type needed for investment in building the domestic economy and its capacities’ (*ibid.*; Ake 1981).

The defining impact of primary commodity export dependence as a key determinant of the developmental fortunes of African countries is no longer in doubt. PCED is now widely acknowledged as a key hurdle to development, both by more progressive-leaning policy institutions like the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and, in more recent years on the face of things, even by neoliberal institutions like the World Bank and IMF. Overcoming its adverse consequences for development has even attained the status of official policy in intergovernmental agreements: in January 2015, African Heads of State adopted Agenda 2063, which seeks to build ‘shared prosperity ... through social and economic transformation of the continent through manufacturing, value addition and science and technology-driven innovation’ (African Union Commission 2015: 6).

Naturally, however, there is disagreement between neoliberal and progressive-leaning policy actors as to what moving away from primary commodity dependence constitutes and how this ‘structural transformation’ must be delivered. For the World Bank/IMF and other proponents of neoliberalism, the market is the main motor, so the problem of PCED is framed narrowly as the need for African countries to move up the value-chain using, for example, market-based ‘solutions’ centred on ‘sunshine industries’ able to plug into local comparative advantage. This has obscured the fact that escaping PCED requires active public policy and economic interventions to, for example, foster new industries, develop intermediate inputs, and generate economic linkages between sectors.

Additionally, the ultimately superficial market-based ‘solutions’ favoured by the neoliberals mask how the global North has an immense interest in keeping Africa dependent on primary commodity exports as this benefits their own accumulation and development, for example by providing cheap raw material inputs for the North’s industrial production, and dependent/

captive markets where they can export their high-value goods – something Samir Amin (1974: 20) understood as ‘a single process which is at once a process of development at the centre and a process of underdevelopment [at the periphery].’ These neoliberal initiatives, as such, work to preserve and reproduce the power imbalances between Africa and the global North, as well as the extractive relationships underlying it.

On the other hand, progressive-leaning policy actors like UNCTAD and bodies such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) have long-championed the need for structural economic transformation driven by the manufacturing industry and the development of domestic productive capabilities via state-driven public policy (see UNCTAD 2008; 2010b; 2006; 2010a; 2015; UNECA 2013a; 2013b; 2014; 1980; 1990). Suggested mechanisms include, among others, the smart use of tariffs, exports, interest rate and exchange rate policies to foster domestic processing of raw materials, the provision of enabling infrastructure, the creation of development corridors and industrial parks, the establishment of public enterprises to steer the commanding heights of the economy, the creation of joint venture industrial projects, the encouragement of the growth of a domestic investment and business class, investments in the development and supply of skilled labour, the deepening of domestic markets, incentives for fostering inter-sectoral linkages, the introduction of basic foundational social policies for the citizenry, and the nurturing of a broad research and development base.

Both neoliberal and mainstream progressive approaches are fundamentally limited by narrow understandings of the far-reaching nature of PCED in the socio-economic and political formation of African countries. They tend to share an operative definition of structural economic transformation where the following is typical:

Four essential and interrelated processes define structural transformation in the economy: a declining share of agriculture in GDP and employment; a rural-to-urban migration underpinned by rural and urban development; the rise of a modern industrial and service economy; and a demographic transition from high rates of births and deaths (common in underdeveloped and rural areas) to low rates of births and deaths (associated with better health standards in developed and urban areas). Economic and structural transformation is also associated with rising agricultural productivity, an integrated economy and rising per capita growth rates (UNECA 2013a: 3).

As well as the ‘neutral’ technical terms in which it is couched, behind this conception of structural economic transformation – like the narrow processes of inter-sectoral economic changes with accompanying changes

in productivity and demography – is a similarly economistic definition of primary commodity dependence as inter-sectoral compositions of outputs and exports and so on. Hidden, therefore, are the broader, economy-wide relations among people as producers and as occupants in different territorial spaces, and the distribution of resources and power. So too are the issues that arise from the fact that the totality of production and exchange within a political economic space is geared towards, and subordinated to, external needs, demands and tastes, specifically of Western industrial societies. It equally excludes the concerns of nation-building, inclusion, national pride, and identity, which concerned early post-independence policymakers as legitimate matters of development (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998).

The PCED economy, constructed through colonialism, and then reproduced and sustained through neoliberalism, is a product of the brutal disruption and dissipation of pre-existing socio-economic and political systems and processes across Africa that were driven by their own internal dynamics, including production arrangements that functioned to meet their material and ‘spiritual’ needs. The reconfiguration of these formations – as fragmented parts of globalised ‘value-chains’ that are external to them and beyond their control, and which serve to advance European industrialisation – carried profound implications for forms and patterns of production and consumption. Immediate post-independence governments understood the multiple dimensions of the development challenges posed by PCED and committed themselves to tackling the challenges.

Historicising PCED: Pre-colonial African Economies

To grapple with the pervasive impact of PCED in Africa, it is critical to historicise and politicise it. In pre-colonial Africa, societies were producing mining and agricultural outputs at a level comparable to other ‘civilisations’ at the time. According to Lanning and Mueller (1979), the production of minerals on the continent took place ‘by Africans for other African societies’, and ‘the scale and techniques of mining and metal working in Africa were clearly comparable with those both in Europe and in the great civilisations of India and China – at least until towards the end of the seventeenth century’.¹ Even in the nineteenth century, David Livingstone reported that the African iron ore workers of Mozambique considered English iron ‘rotten’. He took some hoes back to England; and they were ‘found of such good quality that a friend of mine has made an Enfield rifle out of them’ (see also Graham 2010). As Graham noted, even after many years of influx of European products into Africa, most African societies still produced their ‘own iron or obtained its products from neighbouring communities through

local trade.' In fact, up until 1904, there were as many as 1,500 iron smelting furnaces still in production in Yetenga, in modern day Burkina Faso (ibid.: 1–2; Rodney 2012).

Pre-colonial African economies were also not defined by production for external imperatives. Production based on highly developed technological capacity was exchanged across geo-ecological zones via 'intra-continental trade along the well-established routes which criss-crossed the continent' (Lanning and Mueller 1979: 27) and even international trade (Rowan University n.d.). These trade routes carried a variety of mineral products, from gold to salt, as well as agricultural and pastoral produce, all of which constituted the vibrant intra-African economy (Davidson 1972: 84–9; Rodney 2012; Davidson 1992).

Most importantly, the purposes and object of production, the organisation of labour and labour relations, and cultural practices and procedures, comprised the total system of production. Minerals were not simply dug up and carted away into trade, as would become the case later under colonialism, they were formed into products for use in other spheres of the local economy. They became spears and arrow-heads for hunting; axes and cutlasses in agriculture; ornaments whose decorative function combined with the religious dimension of relationship with the gods, which have an active presence in the daily travails of the societies. The attendant skills and crafts of farmers, hunters, iron smelters and blacksmiths were, on the one hand, part of the processes of economic diversification and specialisation that thereby increased the productive capabilities available to the societies and formations, and at the same time part of the totality of the community economy (Rodney 2012: 33–48). Mining related activities, hunting and agriculture involved specific functions with skills, however they often went hand in hand, sometimes as complementary seasonal activities.

The actual exercise of labour combined – in different ways across different contexts – the skills and capacities of a wide range of human resources available across genders and age-groups, from the production of iron (Graham 2010: 2) to agriculture (Rodney 2012: 33–48). With colonisation and specialisation however, these complementary functions and skills were separated and dissociated under primary commodity production. Some became associated with commercial processes while the rest remained in the domestic sphere. This enhanced the separation between commercial and domestic work, and with this separation the domestic became associated with women and unpaid labour while men provided wage labour. This holds clues to the evolution of modern-day gender roles like the relegation of women to unpaid care work, and the attendant

multiple burdens of oppression. Fused with this were the cultural practices that regulated the cycles and (daily) routines of production. This included weeks-long annual end-of-season festivals to honour ancestors and deities, to settle accumulated kinship matters, and recuperate from the year-long drudgery of work. There were daily observations, for example, in different communities in Ghana, in honour of a river goddess responsible for the whole community who required them to abstain from farming on Mondays and fishing on Tuesdays, duly becoming days of rest.

Helping to coordinate this labour and production complex were various forms and structures of ‘political’ and ‘territorial’ governance that held the networks and communities of kinship groups, clans and ethnicities together, and differed across the continent. Highly centralised state systems with specialised armies and bureaucracies existed alongside less centralised structures, for example where the High Priest of a particular deity exercised authority in the ‘political’ affairs of the society while being equally revered as a brave war-time leader (Davidson 1992). These governance structures impacted production by, for example, organising craft and occupational groups, nurturing rules of entry into different trades, building and regulating local markets, facilitating exchange, supporting external trade, and absorbing new populations to, *inter alia*, expand the pool of labour. These variegated state forms with their rising and dwindling fortunes over time existed side by side, cooperated with each other, and also fought wars, until the colonial intervention when the imperial powers, seeking to extend the reach of their authority, and copying from their adventures elsewhere, (re)created chiefs, who duly became agents for primary commodity economies (Davidson 1992). In just the same way, missionaries of the various Christian sects, side by side and in the shadows of European trading companies, delegitimised priests and their deities as primitive fetishism, including even drumming and dancing at festivals.

Violent Colonial Reconfiguration of Africa’s Economies

Colonialism was at heart an extractive project. It sought to extract as much value from the colonies as possible for the consolidation of the industrial revolution and the economic power of empire. Towards this end, the colonial destruction and re-composition of African societies occurred along several interrelated axes. First, what was once exploited and developed as inputs into complex and complementary ‘activities firmly located and integrated in a local economy’ was radically (UNECA 2011: 12) reconfigured as sources of wealth to be extracted and exported out of the local economy. This began with minerals, where the rapacious demand of capitalist industries of the

North for these resources outstripped the scale of extraction. The high scale of investment required to meet the scale of extraction, together with capitalist competition for profit, led to the domination of colonial capital at the expense of African enterprise, creating the conditions in which even today 'foreign-owned mining enclaves [dominate] most colonial African economies' (*ibid.*).

Agricultural crops were introduced under colonialism as cash-crops for export, and they became a means for extracting the wealth of cheap labour employed in farms or plantations, appropriated by Europeans, and which dominated the export trade. This disruption of erstwhile economic activity in the service of the new export economy introduced the gradual process of decline of peasant-based agriculture and the rural economy that was previously the predominant source of livelihood.

Closely aligned with these processes is the construction/configuration of the colonial state, with 'the centrality of mining influenc[ing] the way ... the colonial state developed' (*ibid.*: 13). The colonial state was active in providing political and legal security for the mining firms; supporting these firms to acquire and/or control the requisite African land, labour and infrastructure; and suppressing African mining enterprise, even where conditions and tradition favoured such enterprise (*ibid.*). The procurement of labour for the mines involved the extensive use of state power to compel African men off their land and the economic activities based on them, and into the mines. Taxes were imposed in order to force people into wage labour in mines, cash-crop farming, and plantation work, with whole communities and their economies turned into labour reserves for economies elsewhere. The resulting disruption and dislocation of households penalised women and relegated them to a care role that served a function of subsidising the labour costs of men to the colonial economy. Where the colonial government could not dispossess Africans of their land, they imposed such stringent regulations on the use of land so as to serve the needs of the mining companies and restrict African use. In the former Gold Coast (now Ghana), the colonial authorities made 'it even a crime to declare land for which a certificate was granted, or was subject to enquiries for such grant, as fetish land' (Hormeku-Ajei 1982: 26).

These processes by which land and labour were secured for mining and plantation agriculture not only disrupted the pre-existing economy but also had a direct political purpose and effect. Relations with the land and 'ownership' in whatever form were the basis of both community and power, as demonstrated in the Akan saying *tumi nyinaa wo asase so*, or 'all power is in the land' (Hormeku-Ajei 1982: 17). Where the land was expropriated outright, it destroyed the basis of the political power of pre-colonial

authorities. When, as in Ghana, they were unable to expropriate the land outright, the colonial authorities managed to circumscribe the power of traditional authorities in relation to land by redefining and incorporating them into the colonial state administrative apparatus. As a part of this process, disparate, hitherto autonomous political entities were brought forcibly under the common authority of the colonial state, in some cases within common boundaries where none existed previously, and, in other cases, through the cleaving in half of communities that were before one.

Alongside these economic and political disruptions was the emergence of new social-economic constituencies that found themselves pitted against each other in the emerging colonial economy over access to resources. In addition to this were the emerging wage workers in the mines, railways and docks, and urban workers in shops and offices, all created on the back of the essential sinews of the colonial export–import economy. While men were engaged as wage workers in the formal economy, women, who were working side by side with them in the rural areas, were prevented from coming to urban areas and participating in wage labour. Women either stayed in their villages or when they came to urban centres ended up doing informal or domestic work to support the meagre incomes of their households.

What started as the rapid decomposition of the local economy through a colonially-driven process of commercialisation – with men compelled to work as forced labourers or wage workers – was reinforced by women being prevented from leaving rural areas or, when they did come, being prevented from getting jobs in the formal sector therefore having to engage in the informal sector. This differentiation is the precursor of the modern informal economy where women continue to be predominantly in the informal sector (Parpart 2001; Tsikata 2009). The profound disruptions caused by colonialism continue to circumscribe the scope and character of Africa's economic and political systems and social configurations. Transforming PCED in the contemporary period must therefore encompass policies that go beyond narrow economic interventions, a fact that was uniquely understood by early post-independence governments.

Early Post-independence Development Projects

African governments in the immediate post-independence period, many of which were brought into power through popular struggles of varying intensities, sought to address the limits imposed by Africa's colonial experience and fulfil the material, cultural and spiritual aspirations that drove the independence movements. Development was one of the key galvanising forces around which the various nationalists' efforts could unite, whether

they were moderate or radical. In contrast with the contemporary period – in which policy has been externalised to Northern-dominated multilateral institutions like the World Bank/IMF and the WTO, and bilateral donors via conditionality-based financing – governments responded to domestic development imperatives and the aspirations of the masses of ordinary people like farmers, workers, women traders, and teachers who drove the independence movements. These imperatives were captured in the desire for national independence underpinned by a determination to recover lost ground and ‘catch up’ economically and socially. Buoyed by their legitimacy in the eyes of their populace, which – in contrast with subsequent crises of legitimacy manifested, for example, in the pervasive anti-austerity IMF riots – gave them the confidence to drive a popular mandate, setting out ambitious plans of transformation and rallying the populace behind them.

Various contextual factors across different countries, underpinned by structural imperatives that were a product of the colonial project, made certain forms of intervention by early post-independence governments inevitable. Regardless of the ideological coating they used to package their projects for citizens and the wider world, early post-independence governments enacted broadly similar development objectives, policies and programmes. The internally fragmented and externally dominated structures of their economies, societies and states inherited from colonialism imposed two interrelated challenges for meeting the material needs and social aspirations of their people. The first was to build a self-driven economy on the basis of domestically and regionally integrated national economies. The second was to build national societies that consolidated different socio-political, national and/or ethnic groups, brought together under colonialism, into a coherent nation-state with a common national identity. Governments adopted four broad approaches towards these ends, albeit with differences in the specific policies, implementation and framing.

Development and Nation-building

As outlined by Mkandawire and Soludo (1998: 28–9), post-independence governments were driven by the indivisible imperatives of ‘nation-building, legitimation, and development’, which shaped economic decisions far beyond today’s narrow neoliberal criteria of unilinear economic growth and market efficiency. As a counter to the divide and rule strategy of colonialism, the logic of economic development was tied to the logic of social cohesion and nation-building. As nation-building necessitated rebalancing internal asymmetries created between regions and ethnic groups as a result of colonialism, this included locating industries in regions that

ordinarily might not seem to make economic sense. For example, there was an understanding that if industry and services were concentrated in Nairobi at the expense of Kisumu, where the majority of the population are Luo, it would simply deepen the cleavages that colonialism exploited during the Mau Mau Rebellion.

Similarly, generating a sense of citizenship and belonging also involved the expansion of public services. Social goods such as education, health, water and electricity were important in themselves and a crucial part of the social contract between the newly independent states and their citizens; they were also a key mechanism to promote equity across internally fragmented geographical areas and communities. Given the denial of these services to the mass of citizens under colonial rule, and their reality as a form of discrimination and elite compact with the colonial state, the prioritisation of the availability and accessibility of these goods was a marker of legitimacy of the postcolonial order. Often, these services were organised through institutions that performed multiple tasks (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998). For example, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and Houphouët-Boigny constructed post offices in remote and, in some cases, sparsely-settled communities. The post office buildings tended to be the most modern, with electricity and a courtyard, and they served as meeting points and banks where people could save and carry out financial transactions, and acted as a way for governments to pay people for their commodities.

Additionally, the modern economy required a healthy and skilled population, so investment in social services tended to be coordinated with broader economic goals for developing industry and agriculture, and the management of the state. For example, in Ghana, this involved shaping the pre-university educational curriculum to emphasise technical and administrative skills, and establishing two new universities that largely trained students in critical subjects like engineering and architecture (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1975). Given the multiple crucial roles of these social goods, post-independent African governments all made considerable investments in social sectors, especially in education and health. As a result, early post-independence states saw ‘impressive improvement in levels of education and literacy ... [and] a cadre of professionals produced to administer the postcolonial states’ (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 16). In ‘Variations in Postcolonial Imagination’, the second article in this collection, Jimi O. Adesina contrasts the approaches of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah to questions of development and nation-building, finding similarities and differences in their efforts to construct macro-visions that coordinated their economic, social and political projects.

The making of development, for early post-independence governments, went beyond indicators of low inflation and austerity such as we know it today, the failure of which is perhaps evidenced by the resurgence of narrow ethnicity on the continent since the 1980s. As rural post offices were shut down during structural adjustment for supposedly being economically unviable, so too were the many functions of this institution that were integral to the fabric of these communities, and the overarching project of nation-building and citizenship. In recovering lessons from early post-independence experience, the various initiatives pursued cannot be understood in isolation from one another, but rather as interconnected components of a broader agenda of nation-building and development, something that does not exist today in many cases.

Industrialisation

Industrialisation was seen as integral to the transformation of Africa's predominantly agricultural economies. Unlike Japanese colonialism, which allowed manufacturing activities in places like Korea, European colonisation in Africa deliberately structured economies to supply European industry with raw material input and did not manufacture in any of the colonies. In fact, colonial policy deliberately undermined existing African cottage manufacturing activities through deliberate and discriminatory policies that rendered them unviable. In some of the worst cases, such cottage production was even declared illegal. Additionally, 'African countries, except for South Africa and Zimbabwe (then known as Rhodesia), had missed out during the import substituting industrialisation (ISI) that took place in Latin America and India under the 'natural protection' of the Great Depression and World War II' (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 11). As such, the post-independence industrialisation drive in Africa had to be started from scratch. In this context, the much-maligned import substitution approach became a sensible tactic that, as Hirschman (1958) and others argued, built upon the basis of known and existing markets. This tactic was linked with the quest to '[diversify] exports to abolish the inherited mono-cultural export structures' (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 12). There were both internal and external dimensions to this. Industrialisation was expected to dynamise the development of a 'firm and better articulated production base' for a diversified export product, especially manufactured products (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 12). As a result, 'the share of industry in the economy was expected to rise, generate opportunities for employment, raise levels of productivity, and raise the incomes and standards of living of the majority of the population' (*ibid.*).

Planning and other policy design institutions represented an important tool to coordinate the post-independence effort at transformation. The quest for transformation demanded a strong and active state capable of articulating and coordinating policies, playing catalytic functions, and pursuing a long-term vision beyond the immediacy of market imperatives. In the fifth article in the collection, 'Economic Decolonisation and the Role of the Central Bank in Postcolonial Development in Tunisia', Chafik Ben Rouine unpacks the developmentalist role charted for the Central Bank in Tunisia, which offered an important mechanism for the state to mobilise critical resources towards the national development plan, one that is largely not available under neoliberalism today. The limitations of this active and engaged state could be seen more in conjunctural terms of the mistakes that are made in the process of learning, that do not obviate the essential function of the state in the postcolonial setting.

On the basis of their commitment to a project of socio-economic transformation, early post-independence African governments of all ideological stripes launched or adopted a wide array of initiatives, including ambitious scientific research and technology development projects like the Center for Nuclear Research established by Nkrumah. They also took bold initiatives to expand the generation of electricity to power a rapid economic development process built on domestic industrialisation, like the Volta Dam initiative in Ghana and the aluminium plant associated with it. The Gezira Scheme in Sudan was probably one of the biggest and best known examples of deploying technology and engineering to irrigate vast areas of otherwise arid land in order to improve food security and expand output.

In the third article in this issue, 'The Rocket in the Haystack', Kareem Megahed and Omar Ghannam discuss Gamal Abdel Nasser's industrialisation project, which included the nationalisation of foreign and domestic assets. State enterprises were the predominant form, both for nationalist reasons and, more critically, because there was little domestic private capital capable of the scale of investment required to drive an agenda of transformation. Even as they ran into crises, the industrialisation agenda and projects produced key outcomes. These include the development of technological capabilities and skills through numerous and widespread learning mechanisms, as well as individual firms that were able to upgrade and venture into export markets. Indeed, much of the private manufacturing that was developed in the era of privatisation was built on the successful state enterprises established under ISI, to the extent they were not cannibalised by new foreign private owners.

Economic and Agricultural Diversification

Another critical post-independence policy intervention was investment in the 'modernisation' of agriculture, which was meant to involve a number of forward and backward linkages with the manufacturing industry (Ghana 7-year development plan; Ghana 5-year development plan). In relation to agricultural production for the domestic market, investment was to lead to the improved supply both for households and industry, while improvement in productivity also released labour for affordable employment in industry. In return, higher earnings in agriculture would create and expand markets for domestic industrial products, both in agricultural household consumption and production inputs. Even in relation to export agriculture, while it was expected mainly to continue its foreign revenue generation function, this was improved through initial steps aimed at achieving more processing along the 'value-chain' to enhance export value while also expanding and diversifying the base of domestic industry and employment. Ultimately, this feed-back interrelationship was to serve to improve the inter-sectoral linkages and deepen and expand domestic markets.

While the specific agricultural 'modernisation' policy measures implemented differed in material detail from country to country, the range included extension services, input subsidies and support, market support measures, rural financing, and the controversial price stabilisation mechanisms through marketing boards, which are today much maligned and completely misunderstood in neoliberal ideology. Measures that indirectly impacted agricultural production by targeting rural society included improvements in social services, road and transport infrastructure, and connectivity between 'town and country' beyond the colonial networks that connected mineral and agricultural export enclaves (Karshenas 1998; Delgado 1996). In the fourth article, 'Post-independence Development Planning in Ghana and Tanzania', Akua O. Britwum considers the range of measures adopted in Ghana and Tanzania as part of their development plans, including the establishment of cooperatives and state farms, the assertion of communal user rights to land and other public resources, the provision of grants for agricultural research, and resources and facilities for the storage and marketing of agricultural products. The overall impact was that investment in agriculture in the post-independence period increased and agricultural productivity improved, contrary to the contemporary narrative of agricultural decline in that period.²

Pan-Africanism and Constructing a New Global System

In order to pursue pro-development policies, African countries had to steel themselves against interventions and political encroachment from the North by coordinating regionally as a bloc. They did this through various regional integration schemes and the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity as their overarching continental political organisation, even as they continued their debates about the depth, breadth and pace of integration necessary to secure Africa's best interests. They also forged alliances outside the continent through such bodies as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 (G-77) countries that served as additional platforms for protecting their independence and making the case for a new world economic order that would support their quest for transformation.

Furthermore, still at the global level, they pressed the United Nations to declare two development decades in the 1960s and 1970s whilst pushing for the establishment of UNCTAD with a mandate to bring a development perspective to bear on the global trade regime under the GATT system. In 'Radical Regionalism', the sixth article in the collection, Sara Salem explores how sovereignty in the early post-independence period necessitated regional and international solidarity as the capacity of states to make policy, mobilise resources, and self-govern was constrained by the global North, including their former colonisers, via things like their dependency on foreign capital, aid, technical 'expertise', military security 'assistance', and colonial currencies.

Limits of Post-independence Policies

In discussing the gaps in early post-independence development experience, it is critically important to differentiate these critiques from the widespread mainstream misreadings of that period that were used to push structural adjustment in the 1980s and bolster contemporary neoliberal hegemony. This is an important point to make and emphasise from the outset, given that criticisms Africans themselves formulated about the performance of post-independence governance were systematically and tendentiously co-opted by international proponents of structural adjustment to promote an agenda of marketisation that was far-removed from the needs and priorities of the peoples of the continent for better government and an even more engaged and capable state.

For many Africans, amidst the broad post-independence development vision they shared, some dysfunctions became evident as the years wore on. These concerns include what most perceived as rising cases of nepotism, ethnicity and corruption, a worrying level of red tape that fed into bureaucratic

inefficiency and inertia, egregious abuses of human rights and the restriction of civil liberties following the onset of single party and military rule. Many of these challenges were captured in the writings of post-independence authors such as Ayi Kwei Amah, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Okot p'Bitek and Chinua Achebe. The essays in this issue contribute to unpacking how and why the various projects of post-independence transformation became vulnerable – including the challenges of financing economic transformation, strategic gaps in industrial and agricultural policy, and challenges related to gender, class and democracy – sharply diverging from the usual narratives that simply serve to justify and strengthen neoliberal policy.

The Paradox of Financing Economic Transformation

One of the fundamental questions in the early post-independence quest to transform Africa's PCED was how to generate the resources necessary to re-organise economic relations and productive capabilities. A more specific dimension of this question – which equally confronted economies in Africa and Asia, where the strategic entry point for broader economic transformation was the diversification of export structures from traditional to industrial products – was how to 'acquire the foreign exchange earnings needed to purchase machinery and technology' (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 32). The basic difference between African and Asian countries as they both pursued state-driven ISI strategies was that Asia met its foreign exchange needs through cheap labour-based exports, while African countries depended more on mineral and agricultural exports.

Compared to their 'labour-abundant' and 'land-constrained' Asian counterparts, Africa's land-abundant and labour-short economies faced difficulty rapidly mobilising workers for cheap labour-based industrial exports to generate the scale of foreign exchange resources needed to 'kick-start' industrialisation (short of adopting the kind of apartheid and/or colonial-based labour devices, which, even if acceptable, were not available to them; see Karshenas 1998). Given the abundance of mineral resources and agricultural exports that formed their export earnings, Africa came to rely on their 'comparative advantage'. For instance, Nkrumah's government, for which industrialisation was the cornerstone of economic policy, doubled Ghana's output of cocoa between 1957 and 1966 to increase foreign-exchange availability. The choice was based on existing capacity and projections of future prices for raw materials that, as it turned out, were wide of the mark (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 32). The global terms of trade were loaded against African primary commodity production; and they continue to penalise the continent to this day on account of the unequal exchange built into the international trading system.

The paradox of financing the restructuring of PCED economies through the export of mineral and agricultural commodities was stark given that one of the arguments for diversification was the volatility and decline of primary commodity prices against manufactured products and the long-term imbalance of the terms of trade (ibid.). With all the 'predictable' difficulties (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 31–5) of resource-based exports, the problems of this choice of initial path could have been countered with two strategic counter-measures. First was the development of mineral-based linkages with the rest of the economy, now widely recognised. For instance, the most relevant example of this is the Africa Mining Vision elaborated and adopted at the highest level by African heads of state (UNECA 2011; Morris, Kaplinsky and Kaplan 2011). This was not available as conventional economic thinking at the time did not favour it and commodity exports were dominated by transnational capital. The second was a strategic plan for improving labour-based exports, but this took too long in coming as it was only prioritised during the commodity price collapse in the 1970s.

The global commodity price collapse of the 1970s brought to bear the key problems of the choice to base the financing of industrialisation on commodity export earnings, and was the main context in which African industrialisation strategy began to unravel. This was exacerbated by the fact that rather than react with necessary internal adjustment and restructuring, most African countries, for a plethora of reasons, chose to finance their way out of the crisis by taking on what seemed at the time to be petrodollar loans, also subject to the same global economic declines behind the commodity price collapse. Debt accumulation was then piled onto existing structural problems. This allowed the Bretton Woods institutions, armed with a new and narrower type of neo-classical thinking and empowered by the anti-state agenda of conservative forces then in power across the Western industrial world, to foist a neoliberal programme of adjustment, further deepening PCED.

Strategic Gaps in Agriculture and Industrial Policy

In addition to the challenges of financing economic transformation through primary commodity exports, many of the expectations underpinning post-independence agricultural and industrial policy failed to materialise due, in hindsight, to key strategic gaps. Agriculture stagnated after the high point of 1975, particularly agricultural production for the domestic market. A key factor was that a disproportionate share of agricultural investment went to the export commodity sector. Even a fraction of the research and development, technological and input support, and public financing

that went into export crop agriculture could have improved agricultural production for the domestic market. Furthermore with better organised linkages and clustering, some of that support could have been organised on a broader basis to benefit other agro-allied activities (Karshenas 1998: 51–6). Secondly, the typically scattered nature of rural populations in the land-abundant agrarian societies in Africa meant that without inducing better concentration in rural/agricultural economies, investments undertaken were spread too thin (*ibid.*). Pan-territorial pricing mechanisms and commodity boards – very wrongly maligned for exploiting the peasantry – did have pumped surplus resources from the agrarian economy, but they also received considerable investment from other sectors, particularly the mining sector (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 15; Karshenas 1998). Additionally, agricultural investment was partially used to address intra-national distributional inequity, which partially contributed to the low-level impact of investment, but was critical to maintaining social conditions of production and reproduction (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998).

Strategic gaps in industrialisation policy included reliance on the import of related inputs and technology, and the associated problems of financing, foreign exchange, and balance of payments (*ibid.*: 11); reliance on existing imported product markets, reinforcing narrow consumption patterns rather than a broad market base with possible linkages to other sectors of the domestic economy (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998; Seidman 1974); and ultimately, the very process itself discouraging export diversification as producers stayed in the comfort and high profitability of the domestic space, however inefficient (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998). According to Mkandawire and Soludo, ‘this lack of strategy for export competitiveness, rather than import substitution per se, was the central problem of African industrialisation. What eventually penalised Africa was the naive expectation that industry would somehow transform itself to achieve export diversification without explicit measures to push industry in this direction’ (*ibid.*: 13).

The gaps could have been addressed if the industrial strategy had an ultimate export drive built on domestic diversification, inter-sectoral and wider linkage building, and capacity, but this was either absent or formulated too late. Nevertheless, neoliberal policymakers would focus on strategic gaps in agricultural and industrial policy to rationalise the dismantling of the entire development project, ignoring the integrated and multi-purpose nature of different initiatives, ultimately to the detriment of agriculture and industry in Africa.

Against all evidence, and for purely doctrinaire and propaganda reasons, the World Bank and others were to ignore all evidence and proclaim the

first two decades of African independence ‘wasted years’. At the heart of this waste, according to them, was the state-led model of development allegedly built on market-distorting interventionist policies that purportedly penalised the rural majority and the agricultural sector for the benefit of an urban minority of elites. Integral to the distortion of markets was a rampant system of patron-clientelism that governing elites institutionalised as a means of both bolstering their power and securing their legitimacy. In time, a neopatrimonial logic came to overcome the economy and policy processes, making it impossible for rational decision-making to take place. The solution? Dismantling the state-led model of development and launching a determined effort to replace it with an alternative built on the principle of free and unfettered markets. Ironically, the market-based approach favoured by the neoliberals turned out to become the source of more problems for the African continent, plunging its economies into a prolonged period of stagnation and decline on a scale never before witnessed since independence (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998).

Gender, Class and Democracy Deficits

The anti-colonial struggle that gathered pace after the Second World War involved women and youth as active participants. Indeed, without the mobilisation of women, the nationalist independence project might not have gathered traction as quickly and massively as it did. Both through the exercise of a direct role in resisting colonial oppression from an early stage (the Aba Women’s Uprising of 1929 is a good example) and in their role in the women’s wings of various anti-colonial organisations, women were torchbearers of the vision of a postcolonial world that could usher in a more just and equitable order.

Early post-independence investments in social policy (education and health) and agriculture, given their universalism, benefited women and girls as evidenced by the generalised improvements in the social indicators of women, alongside progressive changes in the broader indicators for society. However, as the social movements that helped underwrite the anti-colonial struggle gradually got demobilised after independence, including women’s organisations, their representation and participation in political processes also were rolled back to a point of becoming examples of routine marginalisation. Within the ambit of the single party state that came to predominate where the military was not already at the centre of power, women became decorative appendages in the political system, providing entertainment at rallies and reduced to ‘social’ portfolios in political parties and government.

Akua O. Britwum's two-country case study contribution in this collection notes correctly that though there were various affirmative action policies implemented in both Ghana and Tanzania, women were largely marginalised, which undermined how effectively post-independence plans addressed the specific challenges of women in this period and, consequently, the development outcomes they expected. The key mechanisms through which women were marginalised included the demobilisation of independent women's organisations through their absorption into the state machinery, and the de-politicisation or disempowerment of these women's sections and instruments by limiting their scope to very few issues. Similarly, as Kareem Magahed and Omar Ghannam point out, 'state feminism' in Egypt sought to promote women's liberation through policies that expanded women's employment and state responsibility for social reproduction (e.g. through paid maternity leave). Despite succeeding in many notable ways to facilitate the economic participation of women, it largely instrumentalised women for the industrialisation project and therefore reproduced many patriarchal patterns.

Class dynamics were also at play in the postcolonial period, building on class formation processes unleashed by colonialism. With the majority of the population immersed in the smallholder/peasant agricultural sector, post-independence governments, as part of their commitment to transforming the economies they inherited, advanced policies that gradually expanded the ranks of the urban working class even as measures were pursued to nurture a domestic private-sector business elite as part of efforts of indigenisation. With the state creating public enterprises and Africanising the civil service, a local middle class of professionals was also growing in numbers. Managing class dynamics in post-independence Africa, especially as contradictions built up, required more than an appeal to patriotism. Most governments attempted to manage increasingly militant workers' demands by either seeking to proscribe or co-opt trade unions. Peasant movements staking claims for better remuneration, though few and far-between, were often met with repressive responses. The failure of post-independence governments to put in place a stable and predictable mechanism for negotiating and reconciling competing class interests contributed to a gradual erosion of the anti-colonial coalition that struggled for independence and set the stage for oppositional challenges to the postcolonial state. Some of these challenges fed into the military coups d'état that were to take place during the 1960s.

The politics of consolidation of power by the nationalists who inherited state power was accompanied by spirited attempts at eroding political pluralism, undermining autonomous social movements, and concentrating

and centralising power and decision-making. The one-party state movement that gathered momentum soon after independence fed into the logic of the concentration and centralisation of power even if the original thinking behind its introduction may have been informed by a desire to consolidate national unity. Opposition became gradually delegitimised and in time, amidst real and imagined threats to regime survival, including externally-fomented machinations, state repression increased as security services were expanded and exercised their functions almost unchecked. Post-independence development, which was built on a foundation of popular participation and spirit of democratic inclusion, was eventually to become characterised by repression. In a large number of countries, military intervention became inevitable as internal contestations became violent, threatening systemic breakdown. Military rule itself was, by definition, anti-democratic and few were the soldiers in power who made any pretence at being guided by democratic values and ethos (see Olukoshi and Laakso 1996; Olukoshi 1998).

If the quest for rapid and comprehensive structural transformation was widely shared by various groups in the newly independent countries of Africa, disagreement and discontent were rife about the best way to achieve the goal. The system of one-party rule that eventually prevailed was justified on the grounds that it would avoid the fragmenting, attention-diverting and energy-dissipating effect and consequences of electoral pluralism and competitive politics. However, if on the face of things, the arguments for single party rule may have seemed attractive, the practice of the system was far from being satisfactory. Apart from the authoritarianism and repressiveness that became part and parcel of its practice, the system also rested on and reproduced narrow ethnic identities and nepotistic practices that did little to enhance national identity and a sense of belonging. Resistance propelled by the discontents of the one-party system aroused regime paranoia and created defensive insularity which translated into a dynamic of intolerance of opposition, demobilisation of popular forces and movements, erosion of legitimacy, and, ultimately, the coup d'état (*ibid.*).

Neoliberal Rollback

With the Bretton Woods institutions acting as a vehicle for Western governments and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet alternative for both financial support and ideological rationalisation, African governments found themselves confronted with an anti-state, pro-market agenda of reform. Insisting that their kind of 'reform was the only feasible alternative and better than any other conceivable option' (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 40), the

World Bank/IMF, in the form of policy conditionality, took various interrelated steps to enforce the now notorious Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). What came to be implemented was the wholesale dismantling of early post-independence development initiatives and their reconstruction in line with the imperatives and logic of the market as idealised in neo-classical theory of production functions. The global context in the early 1980s had also shifted from that of the 1960s and 1970s, which was favourable to state-led or facilitated frameworks of economic activity informed by various hybrids of economic theories from Keynes to Marx (1954). Instead, political attacks on big government combined with beliefs in the superiority of markets had powered the election of conservative governments in the major industrial countries of the US, the UK, Germany, Australia and Canada. Keynesianism had lost favour to neo-classical economics and its nostrums of market rationality and efficiency. Neoliberalism in Africa constituted a range of sectoral and economy-wide reforms.

Trade Liberalisation

Imports and exports were liberalised through the elimination of import and export restrictions, and import quotas were transformed into duties and were eliminated or reduced to a minimum. This was promoted using the idea that African countries should harness their 'comparative advantage' and focus on exporting primary commodities and importing manufactured goods rather than continue to pursue industrialisation via ISI. As a consequence, domestic enterprises were exposed to overwhelming, unequal competition from imports produced under far more favourable conditions, sometimes with state subsidies, killing off most of these enterprises. Export liberalisation did not provide a compensating balance. In export markets, African products faced a battery of protective mechanisms despite the WTO, including tariff peaks and escalations, abuse of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and subsidies, which the Bretton Woods institutions had no intent or capacity to remove.

So, while African countries experienced a surge in imports, they could only increase the export of primary commodities like agricultural crops and minerals, the prices of which were volatile, resulting in semi-permanent trade imbalances and deficits. Together with industry, agriculture was a key sector on which the World Bank concentrated its indictment of state intervention. Unleashing the market to allocate prices meant the removal of input subsidies, price support mechanisms, pan-territorial pricing, commodity boards, and agricultural credit institutions. Forced to face the full force of the market, most small-scale agricultural producers, the main-

stay of production for the domestic market, collapsed, a situation that was reinforced by the upsurge in food imports. Four decades later, domestic agricultural production has yet to recover.

Financial liberalisation

Neoliberal reforms dismantled the finance policies through which African governments attempted to mobilise and direct resources to specific development targets such as industry and agriculture. This included liberalising interest rates; reducing or removing 'direct and indirect taxation of financial institutions through reserve requirements, mandatory credit ceilings, and credit allocation guidelines' (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 46); privatising state-owned banks particularly to encourage foreign-owned banks; and establishing financial markets, stock exchanges and markets for the range of financial instruments. While these reforms increased financial sector activity, they have not translated into better financing of production, as domestic producers in agriculture and industry still lack credit, which is skewed to the import and trade of manufactured consumables.

Additionally, reforms have opened channels for resource transfer outside economies. The World Bank sought to shift African governments towards 'maximising tax revenues from mining over the long term, rather than pursuing other economic or political objectives such as control of resources or enhancement of employment ... by focus[ing] on industry regulation and promotion and private companies taking the lead in operating, managing and owning mineral enterprises' (World Bank 1992). To attract foreign investment to the mineral sector and boost production, the fiscal approach emphasised minimal tax burdens, generous incentives, and minimal regulation, undermining early post-independent efforts to manage the difficulties of resource-based export financing of economic activity.

State Retrenchment

As the market replaced ISI as the key determinant of industrial activity, state enterprises were transferred into private hands and the policy regimes they operated in were dismantled. SAPs pushed for the retrenchment of the state in most of its previous functions except in 'law and order'. The focus on 'macroeconomic prudence' and expenditure cut back on the state's investment in social provision and thus undermined key aspects of the postcolonial social contract between the state and its citizens (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 75). The civil/public service bore the brunt of this through wage and salary freezes, leading to the drain of expertise and skills

to the private sector and international organisations. This reinforced the use of highly paid, mostly foreign consultants paid at competitive rates in foreign currency to execute tasks related to structural adjustment, bypassing local staff pay and remuneration (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 76–7).

Outcomes

African countries performed worse during the structural adjustment years than in the early post-independence period across most key indicators, including education, health, investment, capital formation and growth (World Bank 2005: 3 quoted in Mkandawire 2015: 9). When faced with the failures of privatisation and liberalisation despite the implementation of governance reforms, debt relief, high levels of aid, and a relatively supportive external climate, Bretton Woods institutions and Northern governments responded with a variety of different explanations that often attributed blame to the countries themselves. This included claims that the policies were not implemented correctly, to issues of institutions and institutional character, external environments, or geographical location. The importance of these factors has been denied by neoliberals and Bretton Woods institutions in their rush to blame the policy regime in Africa as the main culprit for the failure of African development (Mkandawire 2015: 5–7).³

While the World Bank/IMF were reluctant to examine the role of the policies they promoted in the bad outcomes observed, others were more straightforward. UNCTAD noted that among the ‘several reasons for [the] disappointing performance’ of African economies, ‘nearly all the countries pursued orthodox macroeconomic policies advocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, both of which played a major if not decisive role in their policy-making. During nearly half of the 1990–2009 period, the governments of 46 sub-Saharan countries were managing their economies with IMF assistance’ (UNCTAD 2010b: 122).

Through the imposition of neoliberal policies, African economies returned to the colonial economic relations that early post-independence governments were working to escape, characterised by fragmented economies dependent on exporting primary commodities to fuel the economies of the global North. Perhaps the most critical indicator has been the persistent inability to transcend the constraints imposed by this political–economic structure. Low output growth due to fluctuations in global commodity prices, stagnation in GDP growth and labour productivity, high unemployment, and manufacturing slump led UNCTAD to declare that ‘by the end of the 1990s the production structure of the subregion had become reminiscent of the colonial period, consisting overwhelmingly of agriculture and mining’ (*ibid.*).

Today, African countries are contending with the effects of this structure and its developmental constraints in a more hostile international political economy, more demanding domestic conditions, and new demands imposed by the imperatives of living in harmony with the planet. All of this is made even more difficult by the fact that neoliberalism has constituted a powerful ideological attack that has elevated its internal assumptions to the level of fact and fragmented progressive spaces of learning and action. For example, in the early post-independence period, the Cocoa Marketing Board in Ghana had a mandate to raise money and fund tertiary education through scholarships for students. The dismantling of this funding under neoliberalism coincided with pressures on universities to raise money from other sources, including private, which ultimately, over time, had an impact on defining the curriculum. With the additional reshaping of knowledge creating institutions like the Council of Scientific Research, originally established by Nkrumah, neoliberalism has been able to present itself as a common-sense way of understanding the world, replacing the spirit and hope of the early post-independence period through a process of depoliticisation. The PCT project seeks to unravel this ‘common sense’ by revisiting the immediate post-independence period in Africa as an anchor for alternatives.

Post-Colonialisms Today

PCT is a research and advocacy project working to bolster the contemporary struggle for progressive policy on the continent by recovering progressive policies of the immediate post-independence period – many of which have been dismantled and erased from the popular consciousness – and reimagining them through a feminist lens. PCT was born over four intensive meetings between June 2017 and June 2018 (in Addis Ababa, Rabat, New York and Santiago), in which a community of prominent African activist-intellectuals convened to engage present-day challenges by re-reading Africa’s past. Since then, the project has grown to include a Working Group, Advisors and researchers from across the continent, grappling with false, politically-driven narratives of the first two decades of independence that have allowed neoliberalism to cement its hegemony. PCT is housed in Regions Refocus, an organisation working to build cross-regional, cross-movement solidarity in the struggle for progressive and feminist economic policy.

This collection of articles is the product of a deeply collaborative process that is ultimately oriented towards challenging mainstream notions of the successes and failures of the immediate post-independence period, using the thinking and policies of that period as an anchor for research, activism and advocacy for alternatives to neoliberalism. The five research projects

were selected through an open call for proposals and guided by the PCT Working Group and Advisors to recover key policies from the immediate post-independence period. They cover topics such as development planning and the agricultural sector in Ghana and Tanzania; developmentalist central bank policies in Tunisia; pan-African and international conceptions of sovereignty; overlapping and contrasting ideological features; and industrialisation policies in Egypt. This research has formed the basis of an intergenerational dialogue in Dar es Salaam between older generations active in early post-independence social movements and policy processes and activists engaged in contemporary struggles on the continent; advocacy events on PCED, the Covid-19 crisis, industrialisation and monetary sovereignty; and articles in popular media outlets.

The articles here set out to explore the range of social and economic policies pursued by immediate post-independence African governments, the institutions constructed in support of the realisation of these policies, and the cultural initiatives and forms developed as part of the processes of giving expression to African agency and needs in national economic development. Together, they explore the challenges of structural economic transformation in the post-independence context (nationally, regionally and globally), and the different and contested strategies of various leaders in relation to the socio-economic and political structures inherited from colonialism.

Notes

1. As elaborated in Graham, with the seventeenth century began the disruptions by the slave trade of 'the normal circuits of production, knowledge sharing and technological development in many African societies' (2010: 1).
2. 'In fact, until 1970/71, the trend in per capita production was upward. Studies cited by Delgado (1996) showed that from 1965 to 1973, both labour and land productivity grew, with labour-productivity growth exceeding land-productivity growth. In all the subregions, total factor productivity grew in the 1960s by an average of 1.4% but began to stagnate in the early 1970s.' (Mkandawire and Soludo 1998: 14)
3. Mkandawire gives his usual masterful critique of the various ways in which these are in effect backhanded ways of admission of failure by the Bretton Woods institutions themselves.

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Variations in Postcolonial Imagination: Reflection on Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah¹

Jimi O. Adesina*

Abstract

This article aims to strengthen contemporary efforts to construct and pursue a pan-African agenda by interrogating the postcolonial imaginings of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah. To counter the present-day tendency to erase and flatten the diversity of this period, the article explores the variations and similarities of the three leaders' approaches to socialism, pan-African unity, nationhood, economic development, epistemology and democracy. Through this contrast, the article derives some broad lessons for the contemporary period, including the importance of cultivating domestic resources (human, material and financial) rather than being dependent on external forces; the need for countries to construct a macro-vision that coordinates their economic, social and political projects; and the importance of maintaining sovereignty of thought in policy thinking on the continent to effectively break free from the universal, market-based prescriptions that now dominate under neoliberalism.

Résumé

Cet article vise à renforcer les efforts actuels pour construire et poursuivre un agenda panafricain en interrogeant les imaginaires postcoloniaux de Léopold Sédar Senghor, Julius Nyerere et Kwame Nkrumah. Pour contrer la tendance actuelle à effacer et à aplanir la diversité de cette période, l'article examine les variations et les similitudes dans les approches de ces trois leaders en matière de socialisme, d'unité panafricaine, de nation, de développement économique, d'épistémologie et de démocratie. À travers ce contraste, l'article tire quelques grandes leçons pour la période contemporaine, notamment l'importance d'exploiter les ressources domestiques (humaines, matérielles et financières) plutôt que d'être dépendant de forces extérieures ; la nécessité pour les pays de construire une macro-vision qui coordonne leurs projets économiques,

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sociaux et politiques ; et, l'importance de la souveraineté de la pensée dans la réflexion politique sur le continent pour se libérer efficacement des prescriptions universelles basées sur le marché et qui dominent aujourd'hui sous l'ère du néolibéralisme.

Introduction

A prevailing take on the predicament that most African countries face is a turgid pessimism about the *postcolonial*¹ situation, with responses ranging from atavism to self-negation, from the street-level to academia. It is a take on the postcolonial conditions that has produced in a contemporary variant the borrowing, lock, stock and barrel, of the Latin American discourse of coloniality/decoloniality. Decolonisation, we are told, is an illusion, and colonialism remains vibrant and unchanged, manifesting in many forms of 'coloniality' – from coloniality of being to coloniality of power (Maldonado Torres 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a; 2013b). Decolonisation, in this view, is an impossibility, and the idea of postcolonialism an illusion.

However, decoloniality is not decolonisation. Despite claiming affinity with, and progeny of Anibal Quijano, the decoloniality discourse has drifted from Quijano (1971; 2000; 2007). The North American variant of 'coloniality/decoloniality' is more a variation on European 'critical theory'. While the acclaimed 'locus of enunciation' (Mignolo 2007) of coloniality discourse is Latin America, it is actually in the context of North America – and the status anxiety and ambiguity it creates in Latino/a scholars in North American academia – that we locate its locus of enunciation. The 'coloniality of being' (Maldonado Torres 2007) that underpins coloniality discourse, grounded as it is in Martin Heidegger's ontology, overstates the psycho-cultural effects of colonialism and fails to account for the endogenous modes of being and norms of sociality that underpinned resistance against colonialism. In and of itself, the totalising notion of 'coloniality of being' is unable to account for the resistance against colonialism, much less in the context of slavery. Remarkably, the 'decolonial' intellectual is able to escape the totalising impact of coloniality, to challenge coloniality and construct a 'decolonial epistemology' (Grosfoguel 2007). Yet, this escape is somehow impossible for everyday modes of sociality and the political project of decolonisation. 'Coloniality of being' overstates its case at the expense of its heuristic viability.

Decolonisation is fundamentally a project of sovereignty. The 'sovereign project' (à la Samir Amin) is one which we – intellectuals, civil society operatives, ordinary citizens, committed public servants and politicians, etc. – strive for. Often, we do not reach the target we set for ourselves. Sometimes we exceed some and fall short of others. But it is in the optimism

of pushing against the seemingly impossible, and the awareness that the world awaits those with the determination and capacity to shape it, that we set targets – personal, group, community, national – about what the nature of our tomorrow must be. A discourse of impossibility (especially political with a capital ‘P’) disempowers, *ab initio*. It vitiates the agency of peoples of (the former) colonial territories – for better or worse – in seeking their sovereign paths in the aftermath of formal colonial rule.

The claim of coloniality is pursued with splendid disregard for what anti-colonial/anti-imperialist activists and intellectuals have written and said about the nature of imperialism and neo-colonialism without suggesting that both conditions are the same (Nkrumah 1965; Nyerere 1962a; 1976; 1978). Indeed, it is the question of agency (without disregarding the enormity of the challenges of imperialism and neo-colonialism) that is at the heart of Kwame Nkrumah’s injunction to ‘seek ye *first* the political kingdom’ (1957: 164). Something he specifically stated was a precondition for other dimensions of the ‘kingdom’ – economic, social, knowledge – rather than an end in itself. As Mkandawire (2001: 5) notes:

In the post-World War II international regimes, underpinned by the Bretton Woods agreement, the nation-state could pursue a wide range of policies relatively autonomously. World trade increased while individual countries pursued their own national goals on employment and economic growth.

The discourse of coloniality erases the available space, *however constrained*, for the human agency of postcolonial subjects. Inspired by the dependency school, coloniality discourse shares the *dependentista’s* deep pessimism about the feasibility of the ‘colonial subjects’ charting alternative paths to national reconstruction, distinct from that of formal colonial domination, or the feasibility of ‘development’. Yet, even in countries that are seemingly trapped in the ‘colonial matrix of power’, formal independence was inspired by – and offered the space for – efforts to enact sovereign national projects. In a sense, ‘pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will’ became the pessimism of the intellect *and* the will.

Beyond agency is the importance of recognising the varieties of postcolonial imaginations of anti-colonial campaigners and activists. This is against the flattening of the African political imagination as unyielding subordination to coloniality. In this context, reflection on the thoughts of three of Africa’s most prominent intellectual-political leaders is useful. In doing so, I focus on the thoughts and statecraft of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah, who occupied different locations on the African broad left, and were self-referentially ‘socialist’. The reflection is organised into seven parts: visions of the postcolonial state and society, pan-African imaginations,

modalities of meeting the development challenges, the postcolonial 'nation-building' project, epistemic bases of postcolonial imaginations, conceptions of gender and democracy, and lessons for contemporary pan-African projects.

Variations in Postcolonial Imagination

The postcolonial imagination that we associate with Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah can be explored through a number of frames. Their visions of the postcolonial state can be understood in terms of ideational framing, the constitution of the state, and relations to its external environment. Related to this is the variation in their pan-African vision. Given the centrality of negating the adverse socio-economic legacies of colonialism, it is also important to explore their development visions. Finally, we explore their nation-building projects.

Visions of African Socialism

However differently articulated, Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah shared a common claim to 'socialism' as the constitutive premise for the postcolonial society and state they envisioned (Senghor 1964; Nyerere 1962b; 1967b; 1968; 1969; 1973; Nkrumah 1964; 1973). Senghor's idea of African socialism has its grounding in *négritude* and French socialist tradition in the spirit of Henri de Saint-Simon. The specificity of the African, which differentiates her from the European, and the divergence in material conditions, necessitate an African qualification of socialism, drawing more on the effervescence of sensuality and motions as definitive of the African (Senghor 1964: 71–4), rather than on a specific account of African modes of sociation. The old assertion, 'reason is to the Hellenic as emotion is to the African', is replaced with a contrasting of the African as 'a field of pure sensation' whose 'reasoning of the touch' is in contrast to the European's 'reasoning eye' (Senghor 1964: 73). Both in existential terms and modalities of enunciation, Senghorian *négritude* is legible within the context of French colonialism and its Republican values. Senghor (1998: 438) explains the originating existential elements of *négritude* as follows:

We have been taught, by our French masters at the Lycée, that we had no civilisation, having been left off the list of guests at the Banquet of the Universal. We were tabula rasa, or, better still, a lump of soft which the fingers of the white demiurge would mould into shape. The only hope of salvation you could hold out to us was to let ourselves be assimilated.

To understand the eviscerating effect of this condition, Senghor invited his audience² to imagine putting 'on a black skin for five minutes. I know you

find this hard to do but there is no other way to get the living feel of our situation' (*ibid.*: 439).

For Senghor, however, the civilisational erasure is tempered by the 'French master' inviting the 'negro' to sit at the table, saying that even if 'at the bottom of the table ... What matters is that we were invited, and we did come' (*ibid.*). Senghor would attribute to the French for him and others 'to seek the essence of Negritude, and who then showed us where it lay' (*ibid.*). The former in the enforced policy of assimilation and the despair it created in the mind of the object of assimilation. While they can 'assimilate' the French language and mathematics, they could not 'strip off [their] black skins nor root out [their] black souls' (*ibid.*). Against the official line on the denial of the contributions of 'negro' civilisation, Senghor argues that it was the works of several 'freelance [French] thinkers – writers, artists, ethnologists, and pre-historians' (*ibid.*) that pointed him and others to the 'negroid civilisations' ravaged by centuries of slavery and colonialism. 'That negroid civilisation had flourished in the Upper Palaeolithic Age, and that the Neolithic Revolution could not be explained without them' (*ibid.*). Embedded in this emerging discourse would be a central point in Senghorian Negritude – the contrast of Hellenic 'reason which only sees' to the 'negroid' 'intuitive reason, *the reason which comes to grips*' (*ibid.*). This would flower in Senghor's hand into a distinction in fundamentally different modes of reasoning and actuation between the European and the African. This, he would indicate, following Sartre in *Orphée Noir*, was 'an anti-racial racialism' (*ibid.*: 438).

However, Senghor would suggest that this variant of *négritude* (henceforth Negritude) was driven by the passion of youth; it was uncompromising in its rejection of European ontology and epistemological reasoning. A shift away from this initial variant of Negritude came from the lessons, Senghor claims, they learnt from anthropologists: there is no pure race. From here, Negritude came to embody a 'black' civilisational contribution to universal values: 'the Civilisation of the Universal' (*ibid.*: 440). 'Negro-Africans' and Europeans, Senghor argues, 'have a common interest in fostering our specifically native values, whilst remaining open to the values of the others' (*ibid.*). Hybridity is a defining element of second wave Senghorian Negritude. The 'essential [human] idiosyncrasy', he argues in his 1961 lecture at Oxford University, 'is the tendency for all peoples, nations, and races to merge' (*ibid.*: 446). The essence of Senghor's Civilisation of the Universal is that it is not a European civilisation imposed by colonial force, but 'a *sybiosis* of the different civilisations' (Senghor *ibid.*: 447).

It is in this context that Senghor would define Negritude – or, at least, his take on Negritude – as:

The whole complex of civilised values – cultural, economic, social, and political – which characterise the black peoples, or more precisely, the Negro-African world. All these values are essentially informed by intuitive reason. Because this sentient reason, the reason which comes to grips, expresses itself emotionally, through that self-surrender, that coalescence of subject and object; through myths, by which I mean the archetypal images of the Collective Soul; above all, through primordial communion, the gift of myth-making, the gift of rhythm, such are the essential elements of Negritude, which you will find indelibly stamped on all the works and activities of the black man (*ibid.*: 440).

A key to understanding Senghor is to read him as a person of his primary vocation: a poet. His poetic vocation explains his predilection for the effervescent language of the communion of souls, the spiritual rhythm, the primacy of emotion, and reasoning as feeling and being in communion with nature. The ‘corrective’ to ‘scientific socialism’, which defines Senghor’s idea of African socialism, is in imprinting norms of mutuality with the spiritual. It is how Senghor reconciles ‘the imperative of modernity – social and economic development in Western terms –with an African ethos’ (Irele 2003: 157). The African cultural norms to which he appeals are largely in the abstract, and, at the initial phase of Negritude, defined in opposition to Cartesian *cogito*. It is on this, as Irele (*ibid.*: 136) argues, that Senghor erects ‘the epistemological foundation of the African world-view and connective ethos.’ But the diverse strands that Senghor weaves together often derive from his readings of a variety of Western intellectuals. As Irele (*ibid.*: 137) notes, Senghor’s Negritude is ‘an African variation of Bergsonism: a verification in African form of the cultural expression of the idea of intuition as the sign of experience at the most profound level of consciousness.’ We will return to this later when we consider the epistemological issues in the contribution of Senghor and others.

If Senghor’s African socialism is derived from his take on Negritude and his wrestling with French intellectual tradition, Nyerere’s take on African socialism is derived more concretely from the norms of solidarity, generosity and care that mark everyday modes of sociality in the context of his birth (Nyerere 1962b; 1968). In a pamphlet of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), published in April 1962, Nyerere set out the historical and normative underpinning of African socialism (Nyerere 1962b). A premise of his discourse on socialism is that it is a ‘state of mind’ concerning how one relates to other humans and the community in general. A millionaire can be a socialist and a peasant may not be – although he is quick to argue that ‘a socialist millionaire is a rare phenomenon’ (Nyerere 1968: 1). He references the norms that defined his upbringing, in what he referred to as ‘an African

tribal society', in defining the 'traditional African society' on which he erects his thoughts on African socialism. It was a society shaped by four interlocking norms: mutuality, generosity, work and collective ownership of the primary means of production – land. The premise of this society is that all who can work must work and contribute to the common wealth. Linked to this is the idea that land, the primary means of production, is (and should be) readily and freely available to all for cultivation on a usufruct basis. The exploitation of one by another – which Nyerere associates with capitalism – is abhorred by such normative framing of sociality. It is within this context that the norms of mutuality and generosity gird social relations. As Nyerere notes:

For when a society is so organised that it cares about its individuals, then, provided he is willing to work, no individual within that society should worry about what will happen to him tomorrow if he does not hoard wealth today. Society itself should look after him, or his widows, or orphans. This is exactly what traditional African society succeeded in doing. Both the 'rich' and the 'poor' individual were completely secure in African society (*ibid.*: 3).

When Nyerere (1962b; 1968) speaks of socialism as 'essentially distributive', it is regarding the redistribution of the outputs of production. The basis of the 'great socialistic achievement [in which everyone has a sense of security, and the universal hospitality on which they could rely] was this ... that every member of society ... contributed his [/her] fair share of efforts towards the production of its wealth' (1968: 5). It is a normative undergirding of generosity and mutual support that abhors 'idlers'. Nyerere drew on a Swahili proverb to make the point: *Mgeni siku mbili; siku ya tatu mpe jembe!* which translates as: 'Treat your guest as a guest for two days; on the third day give him a hoe!' He argued that given the shared social norms, the guest would not wait to be given the hoe, he or she would ask for it.

The new Tanganyika/Tanzania needed to be built fully cognisant of the need to sustain these norms of social constitution and sociality. It means, he argued, restoring the collective, rather than the private ownership of land; battling against the 'hoarding of wealth', which leads to the exploitation of one another; ensuring that everyone with the capacity is gainfully employed; and equitable distribution of the proceeds of economic growth. 'In our traditional African society', Nyerere (1968: 7) argues, 'we were individuals within a community ... We took care of the community, and the community took care of us.' The values of the new society that Nyerere (*ibid.*: 50) was concerned with creating is defined by the three principles of 'equality and respect for human dignity, sharing of the resources which are produced by our efforts, work by everyone and exploitation by none.'

If Senghor's rejection of 'scientific socialism' is on the grounds of its neglect of the cultural and the spiritual, for Nyerere (*ibid.*: 11–12), it was 'the doctrinaire European socialists' deification of class conflict that he found most 'intolerable'. While understood as the outcome of the agrarian and industrial revolutions, out of which European socialism emerged, it nonetheless characterised 'civil war' not as something unfortunate, 'but as something good and necessary'. Nyerere argues that African socialism, on the other hand, has no misfortune of such burden. 'The true African socialist does not look on one class of men [and women] as his [or her] brethren [or sisters] and another as his [or her] natural enemies' (*ibid.*: 11). While founded in the extended family, the norms of conviviality extend outwards to the nation, the continent and humanity. African socialism becomes the grounding for pan-Africanism:

For no true African socialist can look at a line drawn on a map and say, 'The people on this side of that line are my brothers, but those who happen to live on the other side of it can have no claim on me'; *every individual on this continent is his brother* [or sister] (Nyerere 1968: 12).

While affirming that socialism in the African context is anchored in 'the restoration of Africa's humanist and egalitarian principles of society' (Nkrumah 1973: 439), as early as 1964 (in *Consciencism*), Nkrumah signalled his disaffection with the term 'African Socialism' (Nkrumah 1964: 105). He distinguished between two broad types of African purveyors of socialism: those concerned with reconciling human values of egalitarianism and solidarity with modern technology, and those for whom African socialism is 'more closely associated with anthropology than with political economy' (1973: 440). The stylised pre-colonial Africa that was classless (with no rich and poor), Nkrumah contends, 'is a facile simplification' for which 'there is no historical or even anthropological evidence' (*ibid.*: 440). Even so, Nkrumah shares a lot with Nyerere in their conception of the motive force of their ideas of socialism. Both are grounded, materially, in norms of mutuality that they see as definitive of most pre-colonial African societies. In its contemporary form, the objective is to ground the new societies they seek to build in 'the cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society' (Nkrumah 1964: 79).

When Nkrumah, or more specifically the Convention People's Party (CPP), refers to African socialism, it is in the context of what they considered as adapting 'scientific socialism' to the 'Ghanaian condition' (Biney 2011: 87), similar to George Padmore's use of 'Pan-African socialism' (James 2015: 172). From 1964 onwards, and particularly in his writings between his overthrow and death, Nkrumah's take on socialism and revolution moved

more within the framework of Marxist orthodoxy. Nkrumah's affinity for Marxist socialism, even when he disavowed communism itself, goes back to his sojourn in the United States from 1935 to 1945. His enduring relationship with George Padmore and W. E. B. Du Bois would provide the reference point for his affinity to a mode of Marxist thought that is grounded in anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism (Afari-Gyan 1991; Biney 2011; James 2015). Even so, before the mid-1960s, Nkrumah's characterisation of intra-African social structure was closer to Nyerere's than the orthodox Marxist idea of class and class division.

If Nkrumah's preference in *Consciencism* (1964) and onwards is for 'scientific socialism', Nyerere would better fit the characterisation of socialism as an attempt to reconcile human equity with modern technology. Senghor's 'African socialism' is more akin to its characterisation by Nkrumah as anthropology. Nyerere's thoughts and modes of statecraft are suffused with a constant reaffirmation of the norms of egalitarianism and solidarity in a manner that is difficult to match in postcolonial Africa – indeed, not even by Nkrumah in the years he was in power. What socialist thought in Africa must retrieve is not 'the structure of the "traditional African society," but its spirit, for the spirit of communalism is crystallized in its humanism and in its reconciliation of individual advancement with group welfare' (Nkrumah 1973: 441). What it calls for is a philosophical, not an anthropological, approach.

Variations in Pan-African Vision

The choice imbued in the postcolonial state manifests in the obverse of colonial segmentation: the vision of pan-Africanism as the unity of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora.

Senghor's pan-African vision, it could be argued, is more cultural and aesthetic than political. While he pushed, in 1959, with Modibo Keita for the Mali Federation – understood as a prelude to a wider political and economic union of former West African French colonies with other Monrovia Bloc countries – he balked at an immediate or medium-term vision of a continental political union. Nkrumah (1962b; 1963a) would emerge as the most ardent advocate of African political union in the immediate future, in terms of both practical and metaphysical continental unity. For Nyerere:

Indissoluble African unity is the stone bridge which would enable us to walk in safety over [the] whirlpool of power politics, and enable us to carry more easily the economic and social loads which now threaten to overwhelm us (1963: 1).

However, Nyerere (1963: 3) was sceptical of Nkrumah's campaign for an immediate move towards a continental union government. For him, the objective of a United States of Africa was long-term, rather than an immediate project. Nkrumah was beset at home and abroad with loathing and suspicion for his campaign for a union government (Nyerere 2013a) – a pan-African vision that is immediately political. Senghor's more cultural vision manifested in the hosting of the First World Festival of Black (Negro) Art in Dakar in April 1966.

Yet, a minimal programme of consociation among African countries brought the different countries together to form the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa in May 1963. The OAU is often vilified as a failed institution, but in the limited objectives it set for itself, it was remarkably successful. Its commitment to ending formal colonial rule, with the establishment of the Liberation Committee, was brought to finality in 1994 with the end of White Minority rule in South Africa. Even when the liberation of Southern Africa was not considered feasible, the OAU, as an expression of the collective vision of liberation, stayed the course.³ At the same time, it is true that the Cairo Declaration of 1964⁴ declared the integrity of inherited colonial boundaries and non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states as sacrosanct. Senghor's vision of pan-Africanism that reaches to the diaspora is visible in the formal designation of the Diaspora as the sixth region of the AU.

Construction of Postcolonial Nationhood

'Independence and nation-building', Senghor (1964: 83) reminds us, 'require, first, along with self-determination, freedom of choice'. It is this concern for self-determination from colonial control that underpins much of the 'nationalist' drive for independence. But even here there are degrees of autonomy and constitution of the freedom to choose. In this sense, Senghor would be on one side of the continuum and Nkrumah and Nyerere on different points at the other end of the continuum. Senghor was profoundly francophile to a degree to which would be unimaginable for Nkrumah or Nyerere to be anglophile. Senghor explained the demand for independence in the same way in which a child, when fully grown, sets up a home separate from his/her family of orientation: 'When sons come of age they find a home; they loosen family ties but do not break them. To a considerable extent, we are the spiritual sons of France' (Senghor 1964: 23). The short-lived Mali Federation (1959–60), and Senegal's postcolonial future was firmly rooted in the French Community with a degree of monetary control by France, unimaginable in Ghana or Tanzania. The choice that Senghor remarked

on is a choice to remain attached to France. For Nkrumah and Nyerere, on the other hand, the postcolonial state they envisioned was one in which independence is a sovereign project to determine who one's friends are and the source of one's statehood and policy choices. Much more than Nkrumah, however, it was Nyerere who pressed home the reconstitution of the inherited colonial state. As Mamdani (2012: 3) notes, Nyerere's statecraft 'not only effectively decolonized the indirect rule state but in so doing provides us with a nonviolent alternative to a Leninist vision of "smashing the state."' From the dissolution of colonial chiefdoms to the adoption of Kiswahili as an official national language, the effort at dissolving the colonial state was probably more advanced in Tanzania than anywhere else on the continent. I explore the implications for the nation-building project below.

If the issue of continental unity and engagement with Western imperial powers represents an aspect of diverse visions of postcolonial statehood, equally urgent is the vision of nation-building. Colonialism was not simply about foreign domination, but also imposing internal fragmentation in its technology of indirect rule. What Senegal, Ghana and Tanzania shared, in contrast to countries such as Nigeria, were the national forms of the dominant independence movements with Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere as recognised national leaders of the movements. Additionally, Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah all shared a vision of trans-ethnic national identities that marked their contemporary national politics apart from countries such as Nigeria or Kenya. In each of the three cases, they had to contend with powerful pre-existing domestic forces. They vary in the manner in which each navigated these pathways towards creating some degree of coherent national identities.

The antecedent of Nkrumah's CPP would mean that the contestation to the legitimacy of national leadership was much more intense than in the cases of Senghor and the Socialist Party or Nyerere and TANU or Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). Much more than in Senegal and Tanzania, Nkrumah and the CPP confronted a virulent opposition that was as ethnic and religious as it was regional. At independence, the main opposition formation, the National Liberation Movement, was centred around the Ashanti region but sought to draw to itself disparate religious and regional opposition clusters, including the northern region and Togoland (Biney 2011; Killick 2010). Nkrumah's more Leninist conception of the state and party both provoked, and was in response to, an opposition that was not too reticent about the use of violence and assassination attempts. First in 1955 and then in 1962 (Biney 2011: 116), the January 1964 assassination attempt was the fifth on the life of Nkrumah (Reuters News Agency 1964). Yet, Nkrumah's vision and policy were pan-national and concerned with bridging regional gaps

in social and economic indicators. The self-conscious building of pan-national political parties, beyond and above ethnic or religious cleavages, was something that Nkrumah shared with Senghor and Nyerere. In part, it reflects their pan-Africanist commitment and internationalist orientation.

Nkrumah's path to the creation of a pan-Ghanaian identity, as noted earlier, perhaps faced more ethnic and regional opposition than Senghor and Nyerere. In Nkrumah's case, the opposition was driven, in large part, by an established colonial-era African middle class, a rich merchant class, and a predominantly Ashanti traditional leadership (Biney 2011; Killick 2010). Nonetheless, the pan-African vision that drove the CPP and Nkrumah involves a self-definition as pan-Ghanaian rather than sectional.

Confronting Senghor at independence were powerful religious brotherhoods and religious leaders much more than ethnic groups. For someone from a minority ethnic sub-group (Sere) and religion (Catholic Christian) in a predominantly Wolof and Muslim country, Senghor's mode of statecraft was to create a mutually beneficial alliance with the main Muslim Brotherhoods in Senegal (Diop 1993).

Nyerere's path to pan-Tanzanian nationhood is a combined product of value-based governance and the deliberate policy of the construction of national identity. The value-based approach to politics and nation-building was central to Nyerere's project in Tanzania. At the heart of this were the twin factors of affirmation of all human beings and fear of division – national and pan-African. The effect was a project of wielding a multi-ethnic, multi-racial country into one with a common identity. Nyerere and CCM's efforts ranged from the creative use of social policy (the design and implementation of education policy) for nation-building, abrogation of colonial chiefdoms (at least de-coupling them from local level exercise of political power), a shared endogenous official language (in Kiswahili), pan-territorial planning, and the political party as a national institution (Senkoro 2017; Bjerk 2015; Fouere 2014; Chachage and Cassam 2010). The creative use of secondary education placement for young Tanzanians – allocating them to schools in areas other than those of their birth and ensuring intensive interaction with the local communities – had the effect of obviating ethnic accretion (Senkoro 2017). As Mamdani (2012) reminds us, Nyerere's Tanzania is arguably Africa's most successful nation-building project.

All three African intellectual-leaders were driven by a robust rejection of the politics of ethnicity. The nation-building projects they embarked upon should be seen in the context of their varied pan-African agenda, continental and diasporic. It is remarkable how their three countries stand out for the vibrancy of their commitments to national rather than ethnic identity.

Variations in Modalities of Economic Development

The third pillar of postcolonial imagination was the negation of colonial underdevelopment. While Senghor's government persisted with the inherited colonial economy, significant efforts and investments were made (Sylla 1993). Nonetheless, export earnings remained largely dominated by groundnuts (Mbodj 1993), and the economic growth rate over that period was largely tepid, averaging 2.71 per cent per annum (Boye 1993). Ghana under Nkrumah represented the most ambitious industrialisation effort (Nkrumah 1959; 1962a) – from the construction of new ports (Tema) to the Akosombo Dam, which intended to provide electricity for domestic and industrial consumers, and the setting up of new manufacturing facilities. In both Ghana and Tanzania, significant social investment was made in the fields of education and healthcare services. Nkrumah's injunction to 'seek ye first the political kingdom' was in full awareness of the economic and social corollaries that political independence affords. As Nkrumah (1963a: 50) himself argued:

Seek ye first the political kingdom,' became the principal slogan of the Convention People's Party, for without political independence, none of our plans for social and economic development could be put into effect.

Nkrumah's injunction has been a subject of lampooning – something that dates to Ali Mazrui's (1966; 1999) gross misreading. Mazrui's misrepresentation is replicated in sources as diverse as Kanbur (2016), Oloruntoba and Falola (2018), and among 'decolonial scholars'. For the latter, it is to cast the injunction as evidence of the over-inflation of the political over the epistemic. Mazrui himself read the injunction as a failure to see the political as a necessary but not sufficient condition. It is as if Nkrumah assumed that 'seeking the political kingdom' was a disembodied end in itself. In *Towards Colonial Freedom*, Nkrumah (1962c: xv) had argued that 'the basis of colonial territories dependence is economic, but the basis of the solution to the problem is political. Hence political independence is an indispensable step towards securing economic emancipation.'

For Nkrumah, the 'epistemic', an insistence on one's capacity to think for oneself on one's terms, was as important as the economic and the political (Biney 2011). I return to the question of epistemic emancipation later below. It is important to note that the manuscript that became *Towards Colonial Freedom* was first published as a pamphlet in 1947. The arguments were similar to those Nkrumah advanced in his 1942 doctoral thesis, which had been rejected by the University of Pennsylvania (Biney 2011: 23). The 1947 manuscript was published in 1962 in its original form.

Right from his 1947 pamphlet, industrialisation was, for Nkrumah, the linchpin of economic development and the process of securing economic freedom. The CPP, in its 1962 programme, had argued that 'the aim of our economic development is to make Ghana free of alien control of its economy and thus support our political independence with economic independence' (Killick 2010: 44). The most prominent of the economic and infrastructural projects in Ghana under Nkrumah was the Volta River Project. The hydroelectric power project was intended to supply the electricity that Ghanaians require as part of the modernisation project and industry in the industrialisation project (Killick 2010; Biney 2011; Williams, Mul, Biney et al. 2016). However, export earnings – in the context of the limited timeframe for diversifying the economy – remained dependent on primary commodity exports.

If Nkrumah's aspiration was for the rapid industrialisation of Ghana as the basis for economic independence and modernisation, Nyerere took a different path. Nyerere's focus on rural development as the basis for Tanzania's development was based on his characterisation of Tanzania/Tanganyika as a predominantly rural economy. For him, the village would, for quite some time, be the location of most Tanzanians. As Nyerere (1967a; 1968: 51) argues, 'it is, therefore, the villages which must be made into places where people lived a good life; it is the rural areas where people must be able to find their material well-being and their satisfactions.' This was not to suggest that Nyerere was blind to non-rural development issues. As Chachage (2007: 91) notes, manufacturing grew at an annual rate of 7.5 per cent between 1965 and 1974, the share of the manufacturing sector in the economy grew from 4 per cent in 1961 to 11 per cent in 1975, and the share of agriculture in the economy declined from 42 per cent in 1965 to 36 per cent in 1975. Nyerere's reasoning about rural development derives from his idea that development is not about things but about enabling people to live 'a good life' and enhance their material well-being; it is about meeting people where they are. Nyerere's rural development thinking evolved through two distinct phases: the 'model farmer' phase based on the World Bank's advice, and the villagisation phase following the 1967 Arusha Declaration (Kamuzora 2010; Shivji 2010). The latter phase is itself divided into two sub-phases – the smallholder farmers voluntarily moving into villages and the *Vijiji* phase involving the compulsory relocation of the rural population into villages. The overall assessment of these forms of rural development is that they were unsuccessful and Nyerere himself would admit to the failures of the villagisation programme (Mkandawire 1999).

Whatever the successes and failures of the actual design and implementation of the efforts at diversifying the economies away from the inherited colonial political economy, Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere shared commitments to this objective to different degrees. In the case of Ghana, the reversal of the Nkrumah-era economic policies makes it difficult to determine what the impact of the industrialisation drive might be. In this instance, the IMF intervention in Ghana in the second half of the 1960s would signal what awaited the rest of the continent during the lost decades of neoliberalism.

On the Epistemic Dimensions of Postcolonialism

To return to the opening narratives of decolonial discourse, the casual dismissal of efforts at decolonisation and the constitution of the sovereign project in Africa stands in sharp contrast to the decolonial intellectual's capacity to apprehend the project deemed impossible at the political and social levels – decolonial epistemology. The caricature of Nkrumah's dictum of 'seek ye first the political kingdom' has, as indicated earlier, been the fodder for claims of the over-inflation of the political relative to economic and the epistemic freedom. It is within the charge for 'decoloniality' that the supposed neglect of the knowledge production basis of coloniality is most widely pressed in the claim concerning the deficiencies in 'nationalist' thinking and practice (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a; 2018). The political in the decolonisation project is not only presented as separate from the economic and epistemic, but as an inferior project that displaces the imperative of addressing the psycho-intellectual adverse impact of colonialism specifically, and coloniality broadly. The 'political kingdom' was pursued to the neglect of the epistemic, we are told. First, this broadside is often erected on a flattening of the African leadership space: 'African leaders' are generally presented in an undifferentiated manner.⁶

While we have focused so far on the state, society and economy, Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere were no less acutely aware of the colonial epistemological project and the need to transcend it. Indeed, Diagne's (2016) re-reading of Negritude as epistemology, especially the Senghorian version, is in the dissolution of the Cartesian binary opposition of subject/object. Whatever one's take on the specificity of Senghor's claims of Africa's modes of knowing, it was in the insistence on the interconnectedness of subject/object that he, self-consciously, sought to mark out what is deficient in modern European epistemology and what he sought to valorise in African systems of knowledge. This epistemological projection is erected on a distinct African ontological premise – a premise characterised as *African personality*.

Similarly, as argued earlier, the thoughts of Nkrumah and Nyerere around the idea of African socialism – whatever their limitations – are premised on specific ideas of African ontological locations and modes of sociality, which in turn inform the ethics of constituting the postcolonial society they imagined. In perhaps the most philosophical of his works, Nkrumah (1964: 78) insisted that while Western and Islamic sources coexist with the ‘traditional’ in shaping contemporary Africa, the earlier two ‘must be accommodated only as experiences of the traditional African society. If we fail to do this, our society will be racked by the most malignant schizophrenia. Our attitude to the Western and the Islamic experience must be purposeful.’ It is, after all, important to recollect that the subtitle of *Consciencism* is ‘philosophy and ideology for *de-colonisation*.’

Nkrumah and Nyerere were most acutely aware of the epistemic conditions of colonisation that required urgent displacement (Nyerere 1962b; 1967a; Nkrumah 1964; 1965: 239). In the case of Nkrumah, the most explicit expressions of the imperative of epistemic decolonisation were most forcefully expressed in the launch, in 1962, of the *Encyclopaedia Africana* project, under the directorship of W. E. B. Du Bois (Nkrumah 1968: 138; Contee 1971), and the setting up of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana (Nkrumah 1963b). Nkrumah’s speech at the launch of the Institute is particularly forceful in pinpointing the epistemic erasure at the heart of colonialism, and the link between political freedom and epistemic freedom. ‘It is only in conditions of total freedom and independence from foreign rule and interferences that the aspirations of our people will see real fulfilment and the African genius finds its best expression’ (Nkrumah 1963b: 5). If colonialism involves the study of Africa from the standpoint of the colonialist, the new Institute is charged with studying Africa from the standpoint of Africans. Its responsibility, Nkrumah argues, is profoundly epistemic: the excavation, validation, restoration and valorisation of African knowledge systems. The project is not about a fossilised past but essential for the constitution of the new postcolonial society under construction. The staff and students of the new Institute should ‘embrace and develop those aspirations and responsibilities which are clearly essential for maintaining a progressive and dynamic African society’ (Nkrumah 1963b: 3). The study of Africa’s ‘history, culture, and institutions, languages and arts’ is required to be done in ‘new African centred ways – in entire freedom from the propositions and presuppositions of the colonial epoch, and from the distortions of those Professors and Lecturers who continue to make European studies of Africa the basis of this new assessment’ (Nkrumah 1963b: 3). The Institute was not simply a national institution but pan-African in its reach and composition.

Nkrumah was acutely aware that the end of formal colonialism is not the end of imperialist control. *Neocolonialism*, Nkrumah (1965: 239) argues, is multi-dimensional: 'the methods of neo-colonialists are subtle and varied. They operate not only in the economic field but also in the political, religious, ideological and cultural sphere.' In other words, it is as much in the domain of the economy as it is in systems of knowing and modalities of reasoning. 'For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress' (Nkrumah 1965: xi).

Like Senghor and Nkrumah, Nyerere's thoughts were premised largely on African ontological conditions, the imperative of negating colonial subordination, and the ethics that would shape the new postcolonial society. Much is made about Nyerere surrounding 'himself with foreign "Fabian socialists"' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018: 177),⁶ yet the most profound intellectual influence on Nyerere's thoughts and practice was not the varieties of European 'socialisms', but the 'socialism' of the African village in which he was born and raised – with its norms of mutuality, convivial hospitality and shared labour. Nyerere's modes of sense-making (that, after all, is what 'epistemology' boils down to) were rooted in this ontology and these norms of sociality. For Nyerere, the ethics that inhere in these norms of sociality stand in sharp contrast to the colonial project. It was perhaps in *Education for Self-Reliance* (1967) that Nyerere most clearly set out the task of the educational system in postcolonial Tanganyika as not simply the production of technical skill but the contents of its pedagogy. It is a pedagogy that requires the transformation of the inherited colonial system of education (Nyerere 1968: 44–75). The purpose of education is inculcating critical human faculty (*ibid.*: 53) and social competencies relevant to a society concerned with self-reliance. The pedagogy of the education system in the new society will be anchored on the three principles of Nyerere's (*ibid.*: 50) idea of a socialist society: 'quality and respect for human dignity; sharing of the resources which are produced by our efforts; work by everyone and exploitation by none.' Whatever one makes of Nyerere's idea of the new society as socialist, the idea that it was politics devoid of sensitivity to issues of epistemology and pedagogy would be misguided.

Whatever the limitations of the thoughts and practices of Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere, the contemporary community of African intellectuals are the inheritors of the legacies of the anti-colonial struggle. Postcolonial Africa, with all its deficiencies, provided the space for a new generation of Africans to re-imagine modalities of thinking and sociality that take Africa as its locus. The Ibadan School of History, the Dar School, or the Dakar

School, with their varied takes on historiography, would be unimaginable in colonial Africa. The advancement in knowledge and experimentations around Yorùbá ontological narratives that animated University of Ife in the 1970s could only have been undertaken in a postcolonial Nigeria. Each in various ways contested and sought to displace the Eurocentric gaze and modalities of thought. From protest scholarship to works of epistemic rupture, each generation of African intellectuals must build on the works of earlier generations without seeking to diminish the significance of contexts provided for the new generation to question and to flourish.

Democratic Deficit

The democratic deficit is what all three countries and leaders share to varying degrees. By the late 1960s (or Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966) each had turned into single-party states. The fact that only the CCM of the three political parties associated with the subject of this enquiry remains a dominant political party in the respective countries suggests the need to pay attention to the distinction between dominance derived from political force, state power and hegemony. Nkrumah's CPP's increasing adoption of the Leninist party model and promotion of the personality cult around Nkrumah himself shifted the CPP from the mass party of the 1950s to a single-party that derived its dominance from the coupling of party and state, and the exertion of state power. The opposition's inclination for terror tactics – the detonation of explosives in public places and assassination attempts – as well as sectarianism stiffened the state's resort to repressive tactics against all oppositions, real or perceived.

Senegal's retreat into single-party rule emerged quite early. In the lead up to the March 1959 legislative elections (and before independence), the government dominated by the Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS)⁷ amended the electoral law. The amendment awarded all seats in the legislature to the party with the largest share of the votes (Gellar 2005). With the resolution of the internal party dispute between Mamadou Dia and Senghor, resolved in Senghor's favour, Senghor moved quickly to centralise party and state powers. Dia, who had been the Prime Minister between 1957 and December 1962, was imprisoned. Senghor eliminated the post of prime minister (Beck 1997; Gellar 2005). In 1964, Senghor's government banned several opposition political parties, including Cheikh Anta Diop's Front National Sénégalais; 'the legal opposition totally disappeared in June 1966 when [Parti du Regroupement Africain-Sénégal] rallied to [Senghor's Socialist Party]' (Gellar 2005: 45).

CCM's dominance would, at least in mainland Tanzania, seem to derive more from hegemony than force, its roots being in every village and town in the country. Even as a single party, the projection of internal party democracy, and giving the population choice in the election of representatives to parliament and local assemblies, created a quasi-democratic culture that would signal to the electorate that their voice matters (however circumscribed).

In December 1980, Senghor stepped down as president of Senegal. Similarly, in November 1985, Nyerere stepped down from the presidency of Tanzania (Chachage and Cassam 2010). The opening up of the democratic space in Senegal began in 1974 with the recognition of Abdoulaye Wade's Senegalese Democratic Party, under Senghor, with full multi-party democratic order following under Abdou Diouf in 1981 (Buuba 1993; Gellar 2005). Nkrumah's overthrow, while driven predominantly by imperial forces, was nonetheless based on significant internal opposition.

Lessons for Contemporary Africa

I address the lessons for contemporary Africa that can be derived from Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere from two broad perspectives. The first concerns lessons for the contemporary pan-African project, which speaks to continental (and diaspora) issues. The second concerns what I call sovereign national projects and policy autonomy, which speaks more to national and sub-regional levels, but is broadly applicable to continental African concerns.

Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere represent variations in postcolonial pan-African imaginations. If Nkrumah's drive for a continental government failed to gain traction, it is perhaps Nyerere's emphasis on unity, even if the journey takes much longer, that seems to have endured. In the last sixty years, the pan-African project has endured at state, associational and inter-subjective levels. Nyerere's longevity and convivial personality meant that even after voluntarily resigning as President of Tanzania in 1985, his global stature continued to grow. His moral authority provided him much leverage in advancing the pan-African agenda in development, regional integration, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and people-to-people pan-African efforts. In many ways, Nyerere's voice and sway are much needed today for contemporary pan-African projects. At the heart of the pan-African project remains a *leitmotif* of Nyerere: unity. As he argued at the 40th Anniversary Lecture on the Independence of Ghana in 1997:

Unity will not end our weakness, but until we unite, we cannot even begin to end that weakness. So this is my plea to the new generation of African leaders and African peoples: work for unity with the firm conviction that without unity, there is no future for Africa (Nyerere 2013a).

This is foundational to addressing issues of development, regional integration, conflict resolution/peacebuilding and people-to-people pan-Africanism. The pursuit of inclusive development is related to issues of regional integration, but as Mwalimu never failed to reiterate, it is a development project that must be value-based and driven by cultivation of local resources (human, material and financial), not one dependent on external resources. 'The development of our own countries is above all our responsibility. If the countries of the South want development, they will have to initiate it themselves by making clear political choices' (Nyerere 2010: 73). The ability to ground development in ethics of equity and mutuality is fundamental for achieving inclusive development. This is in sharp contrast to the prevailing neoliberal take on African integration that privileges free movement of trade and capital over the lives of ordinary Africans. Inclusive development would not simply be about giving out morsels to the 'deserving poor', but the active pursuit of growth with structural transformation wedded to the advancement of the quality of human lives. In such a context, free movement of people – an integral element of the pan-African project – will be less of a frightening prospect for the economically prosperous poles of the continent. The attempt to escape deprivation, harm and social collapse will not be a primary push factor in such intra-African mobility.

Beyond official level activities and efforts, pan-Africanism will continue to be driven by people-to-people engagement at individual and associational levels. Beyond the pan-African project at the continental and global level, a major lesson of the postcolonial project is in the effort to construct sovereign national projects and pursue policy autonomy.

In the last major interview given by Julius Nyerere with Ikaweba Bunting, Mwalimu reflected on the social progress made in Tanzania before structural adjustment, and after:

I was in Washington last year. At the World Bank, the first question they asked me was 'how did you fail?' I responded that we took over a country with 85 per cent of its adult population illiterate. The British ruled us for 43 years. When they left, there were 2 trained engineers and 12 doctors. This is the country we inherited.

When I stepped down, there was 91-per-cent literacy, and nearly every child was in school. We trained thousands of engineers and doctors and teachers.

In 1988 Tanzania's per-capita income was \$280. Now, in 1998, it is \$140. So I asked the World Bank people what went wrong. Because for the last ten years Tanzania has been signing on the dotted line and doing everything the IMF and the World Bank wanted. Enrolment in school has plummeted to 63 per cent, and conditions in health and other social services have deteriorated. I

asked them again: 'what went wrong?' These people just sat there looking at me. Then they asked what could they do? I told them have some humility. Humility – they are so arrogant! (Bunting 1999)

At the heart of the achievements in Tanzania that Mwalimu referred to above are the postcolonial efforts shaped by the construction of sovereign national projects and the pursuit of policy autonomy, shaped differently by the realities of the specific national contexts of Senegal, Ghana and Tanzania. This arcs back to the issue of agency that Mkandawire highlighted above. As mentioned earlier, the models pursued differ in each country. At the level of the political society, the three countries shared a commitment to creating trans-ethnic national identities that bound their citizens together. At the heart of the economic models pursued by the different countries under their respective leaders was the extension of the public sector of the economy and the provision of social services. The training of doctors, engineers, teachers, etc., that Mwalimu referred to, was tied to an overall vision of economic development and the enhancement of citizens' wellbeing. The capacity to respond to local specificities of their countries reflect varying degrees of policy autonomy in the early postcolonial period. If 'nation-building' was an important focus grafted to economic development, in the early postcolonial period, public control over social policy and service provisioning allowed the extension of health and education facilities to diverse areas of the countries. It is easy to build a state-citizen nexus where the state embraces its responsibilities to enhance the wellbeing of its citizens. The design of education provisioning to explicitly promote nation-building and trans-ethnic national identities requires public control over not simply education policy but facilities as well. Similarly, it requires public provisioning of education services at little or no cost at the point of consumption for citizens. Otherwise, how does the state relocate learners from one end of the country to another if access is dependent on the individual's command over market resources?

The lost decade(s) that Mwalimu reflects upon above is not simply about the subversion of the postcolonial project and the deification of the market as a normative determinant of access to resources. At heart, the neoliberal project was about the subversion of sovereign national projects and policy autonomy. Where the different countries in their pre-adjustment phases – and for Ghana, this goes back to the first IMF intervention in 1967 – responded to nuances of the local contexts, neoliberalism imposed a single model, abstracted from reified market transactional logic. Yet, in relation to the nation-building project, which required infusing social purpose to public policy, the market inhabits no social purpose. The idea that one could use market-based access to education to build national unity or develop a new

generation with consciousness beyond the ethnic is an oxymoron. More fundamental in addressing the challenges that African countries face in the twenty-first century is (re-)building the state-citizen nexus infused with the state's enthusiastic embrace of its obligation to advance the welfare and wellbeing of *all* its peoples, not simply the 'deserving poor'. As Africa seeks to emerge from the lost decades, a central lesson is a return to the construction of sovereign national projects and the pursuit of policy sovereignty.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the diversity of postcolonial imaginations, even among those intellectual-political leaders who claim the mantle of African socialism. The three who have been the focus of this review were some of the most cerebral postcolonial African leaders. They shared a broad commitment to varying visions of pan-Africanism and a nation-building project concerned with creating trans-ethnic and trans-racial identities for their countries. They all shared different degrees of commitment to the construction of sovereign national projects, underpinned by efforts at driving economic development and advancing the wellbeing of their citizens – even if Senghor's version was more tempered than those of Nkrumah and Nyerere. Their ideas were not simply 'practical' but underpinned by deep visions of epistemic emancipation. All three shared a broad commitment to ideas and political praxis that embraced a wider humanity than simply 'the African', even if this was their locus of engagement with the rest of the world.

Yet in spite of their broad ideational affinity, they differ in most of the things that preoccupied them and their postcolonial visions. The contexts in which they assumed the leadership of their countries mattered in the construction of the postcolonial societies they envisioned. The nature of the powerful local forces against which they had to contend – for Senghor the powerful Muslim brotherhoods, for Nkrumah, the ethnic-traditional chiefs and 'educated middle classes' – shaped the terrain of their postcolonial projects. In this, Nyerere might have had a more conducive environment in reconfiguring the inherited colonial system of governance. Perhaps much more than Senghor and Nkrumah, for Nyerere the challenge of postcolonial state construction was not simply about transcending ethnic division, but racial divisions as well.

In economic terms, Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere mapped out three distinct, if compatible, visions of postcolonial economic development. Nkrumah was, perhaps, the most ambitious in the push for industrialisation and Nyerere more oriented towards rural development, yet in each case, they were open to learning from the failings of earlier variants of their visions.

The pan-African ambitions of Nkrumah and Nyerere were perhaps more aligned in the search for continental governance structure even when the speed at which they were willing to achieve it differed. Senghor and Nkrumah were more immediately expansive in incorporating the African diaspora in their imaginations of African unity, although this was not an idea with which Nyerere would disagree.

Even for these three most cerebral African leaders, it is difficult to speak of 'African leaders' or the postcolonial project in a singular – a tendency that is increasingly dominant these days. Not only is it difficult to speak of Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere in the singular, it becomes more absurd when individuals such as Mobutu Sese Seko and Idi Amin are presented as epitomising nationalist leadership in the postcolonial era.

In the context of the 'decolonial' discourse, with its fundamental argument of the illusion of decolonisation, the flattening of the African leadership landscape is tied to caricaturing. Accordingly the pursuit of political independence was undertaken to the splendid neglect of the 'epistemic'. In the earlier variation of this caricature, Nkrumah's injunction of 'seek ye first the political kingdom' was presented by Ali Mazrui as a deficient obsession with political power to the neglect of the economic. This caricature flies in the face of numerous instances of Nkrumah's understanding of political independence as a necessary precondition for other projects of decolonisation – even in the same text where he first made the statement. In the current variation of the caricature, it is the neglect of the epistemic that is presented as the deficient underbelly of Nkrumah's injunction. I have demonstrated that rather than something outside the imaginations of Nkrumah (or Nyerere and Senghor), the decolonisation of the mind and the constitution of a decolonised epistemology was at the heart of Nkrumah and Nyerere's project.

Even more significant, beyond sophistry, it is difficult to imagine Nkrumah and Nyerere without appreciating their subversions of colonial modalities of thought, sense-making and sociality. In varying degrees, their intellectual efforts were grounded in African ontological narratives. In Senghor, most explicitly, Negritude was posed in sharp contrast to what he considered Hellenic modalities of thought and sense-making. Nkrumah and Nyerere relied on modes of African social constitution for framing their embrace of norms of equity and mutuality. Even in his claims of adherence to Marxist socialism, the originating premise for Nkrumah are the African conditions and value of what he considered African pre-colonial modes of sociality in the constitution of the postcolonial society. It is, perhaps, in Nyerere that this is most persistently stated.

Whatever their limitations, the failure of Nkrumah, Nyerere and Senghor (in their diversity) was not for lack of aspiration and imagination. Nyerere is the one who most aptly communicated to us the responsibility of the current generation to pick up the baton where the older generation laid it down. The struggle for political independence was never understood as an end in itself. It was intended as the beginning of a long march in our emancipation. The postcolonial ('flag independence' as it may be) makes possible the task that subsequent generations must undertake and fulfil. The task of realising the postcolonial vision is as much a responsibility of the current generation as it was of the older generation. Finally, as Mwalimu reminds us, on matters concerning Africa, 'the sin of despair would be the most unforgivable' (Nyerere 2013a). That starts with acknowledging and embracing the positive efforts of the older generation while advancing the postcolonial pan-African project.

There are lessons that the contemporary postcolonialism project in Africa can take from the thoughts and political praxis of Senghor, Nkrumah and Nyerere. I have highlighted two such efforts: the new agenda for sustaining pan-Africanism, and the reconstitution of sovereign national projects and policy autonomy. Postcolonialisms today must rest on a firm commitment to the sovereign advancement of the economy, social relations, social institutions and wellbeing. It requires paying attention to the nuances of national specificities and the use of public policy instruments to advance national wellbeing and the welfare of all who live within the political jurisdiction.

Notes

1. I use postcolonialism to refer to the period after the formal end of colonial rule. The work of the Chair is funded by South Africa's National Research Foundation and the University of South Africa. This article was completed as part of the Post-Colonialisms Today project.
2. The lecture was delivered at the University of Oxford in October 1961.
3. The continuing Moroccan colonisation of the Saharawi Democratic Republic remains the only blight on this splendid record of the continental organisation. The re-admission of Morocco into the AU further complicates the vision of total liberation of the continent.
4. While the 1964 Declaration seems absurd given the shared sense of incongruity of colonial borders, Mwalimu (Nyerere 2013a) reminds us of the immediacy of the problem: 'Ethiopia and Somalia were [already] at war over inherited borders.'
5. See Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a: 83).
6. Ndlovu-Gatsheni cited Mkandawire (2005: 24) for this claim.
7. UPS was the precursor to the Senegalese Socialist Party.

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The Rocket in the Haystack: Between Nasser's Developmental Vision and the Neo-Imperialist Mission¹

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Abstract

This article assesses Gamal Abdel Nasser's efforts to transform Egypt's postcolonial economy via his industrialisation policies, drawing lessons for today from both his successes and shortcomings. By analysing outcomes through indicators of industrial production, employment patterns, productivity, and main beneficiaries in the post-independence period, the article critiques Nasser's incremental approach, the undermining of workers' movements, and the limiting nature of 'state feminism', which contributed to the failure to achieve full economic and political independence, leading to its eventual collapse in the face of imperialist resurgence. Nasser's industrialisation project, however, does demonstrate the superiority of active policy intervention, particularly of planning and import-substitution-industrialisation, and suggests the need to pursue central planning, economic inclusion, self-sufficiency, and social production aimed at meeting the material needs of the population in the contemporary period.

Résumé

Cet article évalue les efforts de Gamal Abdel Nasser pour transformer l'économie postcoloniale de l'Égypte avec ses politiques d'industrialisation, en tirant de ses réussites et de ses échecs des leçons utiles à la société contemporaine. En analysant les résultats par le biais d'indicateurs de la production industrielle, de schémas d'emploi, de productivité et des principaux bénéficiaires de la période post-indépendance, l'article critique l'approche graduelle de Nasser, l'affaiblissement des mouvements ouvriers et la nature limitative du « féminisme

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d'État », qui ont contribué à l'échec de l'indépendance économique et politique totale, conduisant à son effondrement final face à la résurgence impérialiste. Le projet d'industrialisation de Nasser, cependant, démontre la supériorité de l'intervention politique active, en particulier de la planification et de l'industrialisation par la substitution des importations, et suggère la nécessité de poursuivre la planification centrale, l'inclusion économique, l'autosuffisance et la production sociale dont l'objectif est la satisfaction des besoins matériels de la population dans la période moderne.

*The society of the half percent,² the rule of the exploiting class, the rule of the alliance of capital and feudalism always finds protection in the colonial powers, they ally with colonialism in secret or in the open. We have a multitude of examples in our region, they ally with colonisers, achieve the colonisers' goals, and are in turn protected by the colonisers...*³

Gamal Abdel Nasser, 1965

Introduction

With over 30 per cent of its population living in poverty (Omar 2018), massive devaluation that halved the value of its currency, and rampant inflation, Egypt is now in a dire situation. Unprecedented levels of debt crossed the 100 per cent ratio of GDP over five years ago and were a key justification for the 'reform' package imposed on the Egyptian people. Over-reliant on tourism and semi-rentier in nature, the Egyptian national economy has deteriorated, and its industrial capacity has diminished, whereas inequality is on the rise. The Egyptian middle class, once important and robust, has shrunk to less than 5 per cent of society amid ever-increasing wealth disparities (Social Justice Platform 2018). Before suffering all of these indignities, worsening economic conditions drove Egyptians into a massive uprising in 2011 demanding bread, freedom and social justice. During that uprising, the spectre of an experience six decades prior hung over every conversation about what course the country should take: the Nasserist state with its forgotten promises and crushed hopes remained the model and reference point towards or against which all forces oriented. The era remains mythologised as an age of great builders, corrupt officials, and a bloodied bulwark against imperialism. As such, in order to salvage the policies that made it a high-watermark, the remains of the experiment are worth revisiting, at a time when Egypt has accepted its relegation to the periphery.

A mere seven months after the end of the 1973 6th of October war (also known as the Yom Kippur war), President Anwar Al-Sadat, with recourse to the immense political capital he accrued as a liberator of the occupied Sinai, announced the October Paper.⁴ This policy proposal for the *Infatih*

(Open Door Policy) was the decisive nail in the coffin of the *Ibra lil Saroukh* (Needle to Rocket) policy and its industrialisation programme's hallmark. Although the October Paper acknowledged the public sector as the main pillar of state-led developmentalism, it severely criticised the latter and its alleged inefficiencies, thereby revealing itself to be a hollow homage and ushering in the age of the *Infatih*. More significant, nonetheless, was that the October Paper came to enact the explicit shift to liberal socio-economic policies, i.e. encouraging a growing role for the private sector, intentional negligence of the public sector and its finances, a growing rentier tendency, attempts to attract foreign direct investment, and favouring production for international markets over local needs. Similarly, it opened the door for the regime to shift its allegiance to the US and to initiate a radical transformation in relations with Israel, i.e. the peace treaty of 1978.⁵

The 22-year period of *Ibra lil Saroukh*, which can be traced back to the 1952 Free Officers' bloodless coup/revolution, saw the last British soldier leaving Egyptian soil, two wars with colonial powers, and one of the most ambitious Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) programmes in the postcolonial world, which revolutionised much of the Egyptian polity, society and economy. ISI refers to the policies implemented by former colonies in an attempt to escape their subordinate position as primary commodity exporters in the international division of labour, imposed on them by colonial powers. By producing high-value products domestically instead of importing them, this strategy aimed to reposition countries within the global value chain (Baer 1972: 95–6). However, while ISI is a liberationist project, it only seeks to reposition the polity within the global value chain rather than trying to break with the capitalist totality. This renders such projects mere attempts to move from the ranks of the exploited to the ranks of the exploiters.

This article argues that the *Infatih*, the economic opening orchestrated by Sadat, a precursor to neoliberalism,⁶ was made possible by Nasser's failure to fully realise plans for economic and political independence. Taking this as our point of departure, we aim to interrogate the limits of Nasserite industrialisation policy, a programme that came to encompass the entirety of Egyptian society with its ambitious slogans of Import Substitution Industrialisation and *Ibra lil Saroukh*, which sowed the seeds for its eventual reversal, beginning in the 1970s. Put differently, as per our understanding of Egypt as a part of a capitalist totality, this reversal was associated with the rise of liberal and neoliberal economics worldwide, hence the title of our project (McMahon 2016: 3–10). In fact, the choice of the word 'neo-imperialism' here confirms that the failure of the Nasserite project coincided with the

beginning of a new era of domination that did not require direct physical presence or conquests. Instead, it was through the deployment of economic and cultural force, encouraging liberalisation and later neoliberalisation of under-developing 'peripheral' countries such as Egypt, that the 'core' capitalist developed countries managed to impose their dictations and force the former to give up hopes of complete independence. With the help of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, free-trade agreements, and the mobility permitted to transnational capital, there was no continuous need for direct intervention.

In our present context, the neo-imperialist, neoliberal (and previously classical liberal) project has triumphed over the postcolonial developmental vision.⁷ Its consequences force us to examine the industrialisation policy at the heart of the *Ibra lil Saroukh* programme, and the limitations causing its collapse in the face of neo-imperialist resurgence, met with open arms by the Egyptian state (Waterbury 1983: 123–5).

Research Questions and Methodology

In keeping with the aim of recovering successful anti-imperialist policies through assessing the Nasserite regime's political-economic project that nonetheless caused the triumph of the neo-imperialist mission, this article focuses on the regime's industrialisation project. With the cornerstone being the *Ibra lil Saroukh* ISI programme, this article examines how and to what extent it transformed the economic and social fabric of postcolonial Egyptian society by asking what shortcomings caused its eventual collapse and what lessons can be recovered for future use. It will first delve into the intricacies of the programme (the industries that were prioritised and if they were developed), exploring how policies such as land reform, labour rights, and even women's empowerment were developed as accessories to the programme.⁸ Subsequently, we attempt to contextualise Nasser's industrialisation experience, i.e. specify the circumstances that surrounded the project by focusing on both the internal limitations (economic structures and social formations) and the external interferences (of foreign powers and international institutions) that contributed to the collapse of the Nasserite state's industrialisation programme and its capitalist development project. Moreover, we evaluate how such a behemoth, massive undertaking, which revolutionised the Egyptian economy, interacted with and affected different Egyptian social factions and forces, namely the working class, and, especially, subaltern peasant and working women. Finally, the article concludes with the practical and theoretical lessons that can be inferred from the Nasserite experiment to inform contemporary attempts at inclusive development.

This article relies on a variety of archival materials, including first-hand accounts (narratives collected by the Economic and Business History Research Center at the American University in Cairo) of decision-makers and executives associated with Nasserite industrialisation. Through their memoirs and testimonies, we engage with their takes on how the industrialisation project was conducted and how it affected Egyptian society. Similarly, we use the Women and Memory Forum's archives, the American University in Cairo's Social and Women's History archive, and the Gamal Abdel-Nasser Archives at Bibliotheca Alexandrina for further documents on the history of Egyptian industrialisation and working women. Finally, we draw from a group of primary and secondary sources in both Arabic and English with the aim of highlighting the chronology of Nasser's industrialisation programme, surveying its day-to day progress, before evaluating its effects on the lives of the masses using an interdisciplinary political economy approach, and finally critiquing it both practically and ideologically.

Intermissions and Preconditions

A Necessary Intermission

Although concerned with industrialisation from an early stage in his political career, at the moment of his ascension, Nasser had yet to develop a concrete action plan for realising his vision of an industrialised Egyptian society. Between 1952 and 1954, when the new regime was still engaged in internal power struggles and no clear direction had emerged, several laws were issued that encouraged private and even foreign investment while relaxing state controls on transfer of profits, going so far as to allow foreign interests to gain majority control of companies (Dekmejian 1971: 124). In the first few years of Nasser's rule – between his *de facto* ascension to power in 1954 after the March crisis and the 1956 presidential referendum – the regime showed its willingness to collaborate with the private sector and to create an atmosphere where it could flourish (O'Brien 1966: 124). During this period, the regime had no specific economic orientation.⁹ Nasser had pinned his hopes on the 'national bourgeoisie' to take the lead and expand on the limited but nationally inspiring Banque Misr experiment.¹⁰ His drive for industrialisation was reflected in the creation of an Independent Ministry for Industry in 1956, shortly after he officially ascended to power, followed by the Economic Organisation, which would manage the foreign assets nationalised during the Tripartite Aggression.¹¹ In 1958, Nasser issued decree 453 to reorganise the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) (Sedqi 2004) into chambers and establish new ones, such as the Chamber for Engineering Industries, a sector unique to Egypt that went on to play a significant role in Nasser's industrialisation programme.

Around the same time, Aziz Sedqi was handed the Ministry of Industry and given the responsibility of designing the first industrialisation plan across five years with a budget of E£250 million (US\$ 717.8 million) (*ibid.*). These rapid successive moves were aimed to consolidate the Egyptian industrial sectors into recognisable segments as part of the first industrial plan. On the one hand, the Economic Organisation represented the state itself, and the FEI was supposed to be the channel of communication between the private sector and the government's Ministry of Industry, on the other, even though the private sector was still included in the state's policy, Nasser's hopes for it to actually perform its historically prescribed role were fading quickly.

The reasons for the reluctance of the private sector to invest during that period have been debated for over half a century, with arguments ranging from claims of inherent parasitism in the Egyptian capital to the prevalence of a vaguely-defined rustic mentality. The most succinct explanation is offered by 'Abd al-Salam 'Abdel-Halim 'Amir: the alienation of capitalists from the decision-making circles made them heavily distrustful of the regime, as they felt that they were no longer in control (1993: 156–9). However, instead of their intransigence forcing the regime's hand, it actually strengthened its resolve and encouraged it to start deploying punitive measures. Realising that the moneyed class was heavily investing in real estate as an alternative to industrial investment, the regime enacted the Rent Control Act, Law 55 of 1958, which decreased the rents for all properties built after September 1952 by 20 per cent. This was the regime's way of letting the private sector know that non-productive investments would not be encouraged, while simultaneously making housing cheaper (*ibid.*: 150–3).

Enabling Preconditions

In the process of initiating the *Ibrah lil Saroukh* project, Nasser and his regime clearly saw that for the project to succeed in achieving its socio-economic developmental and political goals, it required the fulfilment of certain enabling preconditions. Three key preconditions can be identified.

Egyptianisation of Foreign Assets

Effectively this was the sequestration of the means of production – and the subsequent nationalisation of the Egyptian assets' processes (O'Brien 1966: 125–32).

This legal but forceful seizure of the material capital and the means of production permitted the launching of the project, created a structural change in the shape of the Egyptian economy, and secured the main factors of production needed for it to succeed. The Nasserite era was born.

To demystify the Egyptianisation process we must clearly recognise that this process does not naturally translate into nationalisation, as the first necessitated that the controlling capital be Egyptian, while the second required it to be held by the Egyptian state. The value of the assets sequestered from foreigners is estimated at US\$ 300 million (Tignor 1998: 154–5). For example, the nationalisation saw some prominent joint ventures such as Al-Nasr Philipps for Electrical and Electronic devices, which was not touched during the first wave of nationalisations, first Egyptianised, and later nationalised (Gazarin 2006: 114). The government, however, was selective in its efforts, as evidenced by the case of the Ford factories in Alexandria – the sole assembler of vehicles in Egypt – which emerged unscathed from both processes (Tignor 1990). This selectivity caused some speculation that it was Nasser's fear of the United States that protected the factory. Others postulate that the factory's nature as an assembler and not a manufacturer made it completely useless for the Nasserist developmental plan, unlike other manufacturing assets.

The New Social Contract of Socio-economic Rights and Ideological Structures

The paramount feature of Nasser's regime was the new social contract it offered the masses. The pre-revolution period witnessed different calls and proposals for land reform; the land reform law enacted by the Nasserite regime was among the least radical submitted to the parliament (Mitchell 1999: 464). Implementing such a modest reform implies an initial desire to not antagonise the landed semi-capitalists and persuade them to take on the transition to industry. Still, the land reform, enacted over three stages, combined with the new tenancy laws, managed to transform the socio-economic and political lives of large sections of the Egyptian peasantry, even if the persistence of violations enabled some of the old elites to maintain their power in a new form.¹² As a matter of fact, small land ownership increased, reaching 57.1 per cent by 1965, with the number of small landowners (defined as owning up to 5 feddans¹³) increasing to more than 3 million by 1965 ('Abdel-Fadil 1975: 11). While the law was revolutionary in the context of its enactment, it also managed to transform the social structure in a way that will be evidenced through this article's narrative.¹⁴ Still, this transformation was not as radical as it may seem. A total of 45 per cent of families working in agriculture remained landless, and the top 5 per cent of owners held 43 per cent of all arable land (Mitchell 1991: 225). Moreover, according to Anouar 'Abdel-Malek, 70 per cent of all new

private investments in the period following the agrarian reform law went to the construction industry, a direction Nasser would counter once he realised that private capital was failing its historical mission ('Abdel-Malek 1964: 40).

These factors had significant consequences, not only for the confidence in the regime, but also for the programme's prospects for success. The local capitalists' lack of interest in industrialisation was one of the main factors encouraging the regime to interfere more directly in the economy and implement measures such as the Egyptianisation and later nationalisation of assets. Additionally, while small ownership increased, the nature of such small ownerships failed to create the large-scale effective demand needed to mechanise farming. This was because, on average, those who received lands, received 2.4 feddans (which was below the minimum of 3 feddans declared by the state),¹⁵ and it was estimated that a minimum of 5 feddans were needed for a rural family to sustain its needs; as such, their full consumptive capacity could not be adequately tapped, especially in regard to productive consumption of farm machinery ('Amir 1958: 153–4).¹⁶

The implementation of universal healthcare and education systems, along with state-subsidised housing, acted as a buffer to the seizing of the material basis for production by securing the long-term social reproduction needed for the process of production. However, this same social contract laid the foundations for an ideological system that went on to cement an undemocratic atmosphere of oppression, as structures were developed to preserve the consent that was essential for the enactment of the Nasserite vision. These structures largely emulated Leninist single-party state ideals, where the party,¹⁷ as a vehicle of national mobilisation, articulated the state's developmental policy. Co-opted by the regime, labour unions gave auxiliary support to sustain the expanding working class. This approach allowed for the influence of the state's bureaucracy to grow. This bureaucracy depended heavily on former officers who were integrated into political, economic and administrative institutions, to the extent that 1500 officers were appointed to jobs related to these institutions between 1952 and 1964 ('Abdel-Malek 1964: 45).¹⁸ Meanwhile, bureaucratic expansion was one of the reasons behind the increase in government expenditure, with the payroll climbing to almost 73 per cent of governmental spending by 1965 (Dekmejian 1971: 230). At the same time, it allowed the large landlords, supposedly categorised as exploiters and traitors by the agrarian reform laws, to maintain their former influence by infiltrating the new parliaments and cooperatives at a time when ordinary peasants and workers (especially women) were denied any real representations on these platforms.¹⁹

Establishing Economic Administrative Infrastructure

Towards the goal of establishing an independent economy, keeping in mind the lack of resources and the inefficient allocation of available funds to support political independence, the regime built three administrative apparatuses: the Economic Organisation (EO), Misr Organisation and il-Nasr Organisation (Basiouny 2007: 11). These three groups were charged with the administrative and executive tasks of managing one section of the state's industrial capacities and overseeing their integration and interaction with each other. As the regime started to lean more towards socialist planning, it attempted to introduce an approach that superficially resembled those used in other socialist economies by implementing industrial plans put forth by the National Planning Committee and the five-year development plans (Mabro and Radwan 1976: 66). They functioned as the overarching structure within which all of the Egyptian economy and polity was subsumed. Two five-year plans were developed, starting from the early 1960s, though the second was never completed due to the defeat of 1967.²⁰

For example, the EO created in 1957 was delegated the task of overseeing the formerly foreign (mainly British and French) assets (Waterbury 1983: 79). In its short life span, lasting only until 1961, the organisation saw its initial industrial investment of E£38 million increase to E£49 million by 1961, and accounted for almost 20 per cent of employment in the industrial sector and nearly 30 per cent of the total output of industrial production in Egypt (Radwan 1974: 206). The other two organisations, Misr and il-Nasr, were established in 1960 to manage the Misr Group assets (formerly owned by Banque Misr's private investors) and the state enterprises coming into being with the first five-year plan (Waterbury 1983: 79). Here, it can be seen that although there was no official hierarchy between these three organisations, as each ruled in its own realm and reported to the Presidency through the National Planning Committee, perhaps the EO had the largest impact, at least in the early stage of Nasser's regime. Despite dissolving shortly after the establishment of the other two, it managed the initial industrial base's expansion and gave the impetus that allowed the other two to thrive and grow.

'Socialism without Socialists'²¹

Still, while the regime's rhetoric made extensive use of words like 'socialism' and 'planning', it did not actually, as is commonly believed, implement a central planning nor a socialist approach. Such a misconception should be amended to categorise Nasser's approach correctly, if we are to retrieve lessons about limitations to be avoided. First, central planning is only

possible within genuinely socialist economies, where the state controls all means of production and the private sector – if not outright outlawed – struggles to exist.²² Second, a planned economy stipulates the existence of public space and mechanisms for ordinary working class people to participate in the design of the central plan and its targets, in addition to efficient coordination between the different sectors and goals of the plan (Bettelheim 1965: 66).²³

The categorisation of Nasser's regime as non-socialist²⁴ is actually reinforced by looking into the nature of the regime's ideology known as Arab Socialism.²⁵ The latter, drawing heavily on nationalist and Islamic ideas, was used as ideological backing for crackdowns on Marxists (Abdel-Malek 1964: 51).²⁶

None of these conditions were met in Nasser's Egypt. The private sector was not only allowed to survive but also to prosper and accumulate in certain areas, regardless of nationalisation. 'Abdel Malek asserts that, at least until 1963, private ownership was maintained as a cornerstone of the social structure, as the private sector's contribution to the national income reached 65.8 per cent of the total national income, in comparison to 34.2 per cent from the public sector (1964: 42–3). Specifically, it represented 87.5 per cent in construction, 56.4 per cent in industry, 79.1 per cent in commerce, and an astonishing 93.8 per cent in agriculture (*ibid.*), which was facilitated by the fact it was easy to evade state controls, especially when the products were effortlessly marketable. This allowed the large landowners who specialised in these marketable crops like vegetables and fruits to accumulate large amounts of capital.²⁷ The significance of this becomes evident as field crops, whose prices were strictly controlled by the state, represented 80 per cent of small landowners' production in comparison to one-third of the large landowners' output (Cooper 1982: 455). However, unlike fruits and vegetables, field crops that were produced mainly for export, such as cotton, were not priced by 'free market forces'. Rather, Law No. 108 (1961) designated that all cotton exports be made through public-owned companies (Dekmejian 1971: 329), and in fact, the public sector is estimated to have paid E£489.2 million in wages in 1965, compared to E£372.1 million by the private sector, due to its domination of most agricultural production, internal trade, and personal service sectors (al-Morshdi 1965: 29). This suggests the freedom given to the private sector was not due to the absence of legal framework; it was instead within this specific legal framework that private property was entrenched as a given right (Abu-Laban 1967: 184, 189). This shows the conflicting interests within the industrialisation project, concealed by the pragmatic socialist slogans of the official discourse. For as long as the private

sector is permitted to exist as freely as it did under Nasser, it will endeavour to generate the highest degree of surplus through eliminating all possible competition, which includes the public sector. In the same process, it will seek to exploit the largest possible number of workers.²⁸

Based on the above, it is more appropriate to treat Nasser's planning experience as developmental planning, which resembles the approach of many Western countries to build what is known as the welfare state. Further, Nasser's regime can be characterised as adopting a form of state capitalism that borrowed socialist characteristics such as socialist rhetoric, an economic nationalist orientation, and a degree of planning to achieve certain capitalist ends (Petras 1977: 2, 8).

The capitalist form of the regime was the logical result of a society defined by a weak domestic bourgeoisie that in the pre-1952 days failed to enforce its domination over its own local market vis-à-vis imperialism. Thus, to facilitate this class' accumulation of capital and to hide this already existing weakness, the state form became mystified with nationalism. Meanwhile, it attempted to entrench new rules that served the maintenance of capitalist reproduction, such as to allow this weak nascent ruling class the chance to cement its hegemony over the local market on the expense of feudalism and semi-capitalist social forces.²⁹ Here, although we agree with Cooper's main characteristics defining state capitalism (such as originating from weak national economies with a weak upper class; that it oversees a nationalistic reorientation of economic resources and nationalisation, etc.), we find the two last features he lists worthy of comment. In this sense, we refer to his understanding that, in the aftermath of state capitalism, society remains capitalistic despite the extensive role of the state, and that state capitalism fails to transform society's fundamental structure (1982: 16–7).

In light of the previous discussion on the 'socialist' nature of the regime, it will not be hard to see that state capitalism does not create genuine socialist societies. Rather, through the aid it extends to local capitalists, this state form attempts to transform the nature of society *capitalistically*. In other words, it pushes capitalist development further through the development it oversees and asserts a capitalist mentality over all other pre-capitalist ones. For that reason, Cooper's conclusion regarding Nasser's failure to develop a fully dynamic capitalist system falls short of describing the entire context. Certainly, Nasser failed to construct a dynamic capitalist society, and not for a lack of trying. Instead, this was caused by an interplay of internal-external factors that proved too costly for the regime's hopes. Nonetheless, we must keep in mind that Nasser's regime managed to construct a sort of capitalist society on the ruins of the semi-capitalist/semi-precapitalist norms that dominated Egyptian

society from the beginning of the twentieth century. He simply consolidated the capitalist forces to a large extent and enforced a certain degree of capitalist development. As such, it is possible to understand the pre-Nasser era as one where capitalist forces were still attempting to cement their presence and had failed to do so before Nasser. Accordingly, it is not true that state capitalism by default does not change the nature of society, as the Nasserite experience witnessed a social change that transformed Egypt into a 'capitalist' state. In a nutshell, it would be a grave mistake to highlight that Nasser's capitalism did not generate a fully dynamic capitalist system while forgetting that it revolutionised the entire social structure in Egypt.³⁰

Crucial to this last point is an understanding of the conditions that brought Nasser to power, while keeping in mind the nature of his regime. Looking more closely at the context of a few years earlier, one can see that aside from the well-known poverty that characterised the majority of Egyptian masses, a high degree of political polarisation existed, arousing fears about the type of system to be installed and its possible threats to the class essence of the society. Meanwhile, communists were enjoying growing popularity among the masses, both in cities and the countryside ('Abdel-Malek 1964: 40).³¹ Amid this polarisation, which also saw the rise of religious fundamental movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the fascist Young Egypt's Party,³² the attempts of the nascent domestic bourgeoisie to cement its position vis-à-vis foreign capitalism, and the social unrest the whole situation generated, none of the actors involved were able to clinch victory. Or at least, that was the case until Nasser's rise to power, when he became the Bonaparte who rose above the ongoing class conflict and utilised the state to ensure the implementation of the capitalist development process, regardless of its degree of success.³³

Industrialisation Programme and Progress

As the industrialisation plan was rolled out, the EO shone brightest, with the FEI (and the private sector it represented) relegated to playing second fiddle. By 1961, when the EO had run its course and the first five-year plan was being actualised, the EO had developed into a massive industrial amalgam responsible for over 30 per cent of the total industrial output in Egypt and roughly 20 per cent of employment in the industrial sector (Radwan 1974: 206). According to Sedqi (2004), Egypt saw a real miracle: the building of a real industrial base that was composed of a number of heavy industries such as iron and steel, despite the E£250 million allocated being so minimal that many expected the whole project to fail. However, Soviet assistance was also an important factor, as their loans included minimal interests and longer repayment periods.³⁴

Significantly, these numbers allow us to peer into the essence of Egypt's industrial capital of the period, as they reflect the comparative advantage in productivity that public sector companies developed. The origins of the EO lay in the nationalised foreign assets, which were already more advanced than the majority of the national private sector. This value of industrial output vis-à-vis employment also offers us an insight into capital investment in the sector. The fact that previously foreign-held establishments had a higher output share compared to its lower employment could only mean that these establishments had a significantly higher capital investment ratio that persisted and, according to Aziz Sedqi's (2004) testimony, even increased after nationalisation. This means that Egyptian private capital was reluctant to make long-term investments in productivity. In fact, some writers such as Samir Radwan and Robert Mabro, whose scholarship on Egyptian political economy is widely recognised, often refer to the public industrial sector as the sole 'modern' industrial sector in Egypt, as native industrial capital failed to maintain a sufficient level of investment to keep up with the times, falling into obsolescence by the end of the 1960s (1976: 96–8).

After the regime realised the unwillingness of Egyptian capitalists to follow its plans of long-term industrial investments, instead preferring quick and easy profits, it resorted to acts of nationalisation,³⁵ leading to the expansion of the public sector.³⁶ Certainly, this lack of interest on the capitalists' side did not serve the project well, as decisions had to be approved by Nasser and his cast before their implementation.³⁷

In 1960, the first five-year plan was announced and put into action. The ambitious project saw the creation of several giants of industry such as Al-Nasr Automotive Manufacturing Company, Al-Nasr Company for Television and Electronics, and Al-Nasr Company for Steam Boilers and Pressure Vessels, among many others. The gargantuan public sector that was the hallmark of the Nasserite era was born. All of these newly created companies, along with the nationalised enterprises, were organised under the direct supervision of the Minister of Industry (Gazarin 2006: 114). Thus, by the dawning years of the second five-year plan, 90 per cent of the gross value added generated in establishments of ten or more employees was produced by the public sector. However, that percentage drops to only 64 per cent when smaller establishments are included (Mabro and Radwan 1976: 96). Nasser's vision of a public sector as the vanguard of the industrialisation process without having to be burdened by its minutiae was effectively realised.

For this plan to materialise, the Nasserist regime had to marshal its resources for industrialisation. This marshalling occurred in four main arenas: industrial, agricultural, diplomatic and monetary. In the case of

the industrial arena, the Egyptianisation and later the nationalisation of the main industrial assets allowed the government to control vast tracts of the industrial sector in Egypt. This gave it access to the already established industries and their revenues, which were directed at further industrial expansion and investment.

With respect to agricultural production (arguably more important), the regime not only owned lands outright but also commandeered the process of agricultural production, outlining what and how much peasants could plant, in order to limit the need for importing essentials while still producing enough cash crops to sell on the international market (Ragab and Abou-Harb 1970: 49–56). Both these goals served one purpose: to limit the haemorrhaging of hard currency and save it for the procurement of machinery and material on the international market.³⁸

This leads us to the third arena, that of the diplomatic resources. For many developing nations, the acquisition of machinery and technology, essential for the process of industrialisation, is a precarious task, as the hard currency needed to acquire them on the international market requires orienting the national economy towards external markets, often at the expense of the domestic market's self-sufficiency. To overcome this significant hurdle, loans in these currencies are solicited on the international money markets, which often come with the onerous burden of high interest. This is where diplomatic resource fits in, as cordial relations and strategic partnerships with industrialised nations can lower the cost of borrowing and facilitate payments. It can further allow lower prices and better conditions for the purchase of these machineries and technologies. Such was the case for Ghana and its beneficial partnership with Hungary in the pharmaceutical field, and Czechoslovakia in the rubber manufacturing field (Sawyer 1980: 3–7). The primary partner was the Soviet Union, with which Egypt forged mutually beneficial economic arrangements, and leveraged its geopolitical position and diplomatic clout to gain access to extended lines of credit on favourable terms that would become available once called on. For the 1961 cotton crisis, however, Egypt had to resort to quickly accessible short-term loans, which if not for Nasser's earlier financial prudence would have been disastrous (Social Justice Platform).

The fourth and last arena is the directing of internal market trends, and whether it should be geared to consumption or savings that could be marshalled for investment. In an industrialisation programme such as the one at hand, the choice between the two ends is an immensely difficult and consequential one. On the one hand, increasing consumption is important, to ensure the new factories have market demand that they can fulfil. On the other hand, investment enables these factories to be built in the first place. Facing this

decision, Nasser and his regime could not make a clear choice and favour one over the other, and ended up attempting to achieve both at the same time, hoping that the projected increase in income would allow them to achieve both ends. What transpired were varying degrees of success on both fronts.

On the consumption front, Egyptians' consumptive ability increased in all areas. By the end of the first five-year plan, average per capita consumption increased at the lowest rate for lentils, at just 14 per cent, compared to 1960 when the plan was launched. The highest increases were in radios, at 652.2 per cent, detergents at 453.8 per cent, followed by refrigerators at 215.5 per cent. In fact, the number of households with refrigerators roughly tripled by 1965 (Sabri 1966: 51–4).³⁹ So, while consumption rose dramatically, the still significant reliance on debt for purchasing meant that income levels – and hence consumptive ability – were lagging behind production and could become unsustainable in the long run.

On the savings and investment front, another remarkable success was in the making. After brief but significant growth between 1960 and 1961, savings fell drastically in 1962, when roughly 21.6 per cent of the national savings were wiped out, reduced from E£210.1 million to just E£164.7 million. Savings would only clear the 1961 level again in 1964, when they hit E£236.8 million. By the end of the first five-year plan, savings stood at E£288.4 million, a full 64 per cent growth compared to the 1960 level of E£175.9 million (*ibid.*: 88–90). This decrease in savings – caused by the drop in 1962 – forced the government to rely more on Treasury bills and bonds as a means of financing its investments (Nour 1965: 36). While borrowing to finance productive investments is an economically sound endeavour, the increased reliance on incurring internal debts reveals the difficulties in the policy of pursuing two rabbits at once. So, while Nasser did successfully finance his plans, it was not without hurdles that revealed cracks in the structure.⁴⁰

Industrial Production Development

The Republican government's decision to build an industrial base was not an empty promise. Indeed, industry enjoyed the largest share of public investment from 1957 until the First Republic's demise in the early 1970s. Massive industrial complexes were erected for the manufacturing of steel, steam engines, vehicles, and durable consumer products that aimed to supply the nation's needs, from the needle to the rocket.⁴¹ Between 1956 and 1973, the industry's average share of public investment grew from 23.8 to 33.9 per cent, an overall growth of 42.4 per cent. Contrary to current detractors' claims, these investments were not the least bit wasteful, as within the same period industry's contribution to GDP increased from 13.4 to 21.7 per cent,

a growth of over 61.9 per cent (Mabro and Radwan 1967: 46–8).⁴² The investment in the manufacturing and mining industries during the ten years of the two five-year plans covering 1960–70 amounted to £912.9 million (*ibid.*: 68–9), the equivalent of almost US\$ 2.1 billion at the time.⁴³ The rapid increase in industrial investments translated into higher manufacturing outputs, which doubled between 1954 and 1970 (*ibid.*: 87).

Employment Patterns

These colossal developments were of course accompanied by increases in employment figures in industrial activity in general, and especially in industrial establishments employing ten or more workers (10&<). Overall, the number of workers in the manufacturing industries increased by 118.6 per cent, from roughly 396,800 workers in 1954 to 867,300 in 1967. In (10&<) factories, the number of industrial workers increased by 129.7 per cent, from 264,4000 workers in 1954 to over 607,300 workers in 1967 (*ibid.*: 139). The governmental industrial policy clearly favoured large industrial establishments, creating a bimodal distribution of industrial workers vis-à-vis establishment size in a clearly inverted bell curve. For the purpose of this display (Figure 1) we took the figures of the year 1963⁴⁴ and divided industrial establishments into five different classes (Class I: <10, Class II: 10–49, Class III: 50–99, Class IV: 100–499, Class V: 500+).

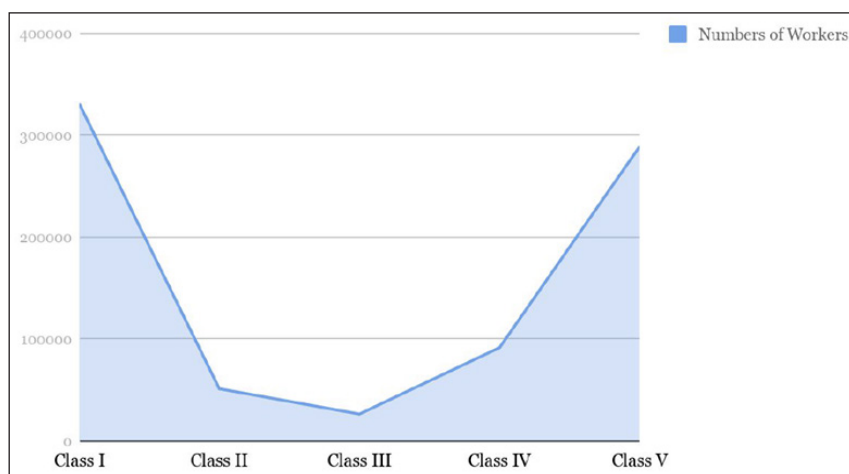


Figure 1: Distribution of workers by factory size

Source: Barbour (1972); Mabro and Radwan (1976: 139)

While Figure 1 capturing the 1963 industrial employment figures shows the (<10) class employing the most workers, it is worth noting that the general trend during that period was the continual, if slow, decrease in employment

in these establishments. Workers in (<10) establishments amounted to 33.4 per cent of the total industrial labour force in 1954, and over the years it decreased, reaching 29.9 per cent in 1967. By 1970, it had decreased to only 27 per cent (Mabro and Radwan 1976: 139).⁴⁵ This bimodal distribution of employment weight in Class I and Class V illustrates the landscape of the Egyptian economy: the public sector dominated all classes but Class I, and clearly favoured the large industrial establishments of Class V, while the private sector remained concentrated in Class I (establishments usually servicing the public industrial sector), the central management of which through the state would have been too inefficient.⁴⁶ The value of Figure 1 is that it undisputedly shows that the economy in Egypt never became completely absorbed by the state, as current revisionist narratives of the period would lead us to believe. Rather, the economy remained in a delicate balance between state-led developmentalist planning and efficient management.

Productivity and Progress

Overall, Gross Value Added per Worker (GVApW) increased significantly during the industrialisation plan, as the massive increase in investment as well as workers ensured that workers' productivity did not lag, and the factories did not become bloated with unnecessary labour. As we mentioned above, the total employment in industrial establishments (10&<) grew from roughly 260,000 in 1952 to 577,800 in 1967. During the same period, the GVA for these establishments increased from E£74.5 million to E£305.7 million (Mabro and Radwan 1976: 99–104). Thus, the GVApW increased from E£286.5 per worker to E£529 per worker, a growth of roughly 84.6 per cent over these fifteen years, a clear and indisputable indicator that the capital investments the Nasserite government poured into the industrial sector were well managed and directed, as they generated significant growth in labour productivity.

As Table 1 clearly shows, while GVApW grew at an impressive rate, considering where the Egyptian industry had started, the growth was vastly uneven, with only one sector (rubber) deteriorating due to the massive bust of the rubber market in the mid-1950s, which continued well into the 1970s. The biggest growth in GVApW was in paper (246.3 per cent), electric machinery (184.9 per cent), and metallic products (128.7 per cent).

Aside from the differentiation of GVApW by sector, clear speciation can be observed between (<10) establishments and (10&<) establishments. As the first class employed roughly 260 out of 867,300 workers, forming 29.9 per cent of the industrial labour force in 1967, it contributed E£57.1 million out of the E£362.8 million of GVA (*ibid.*: 101), i.e. roughly

Table 1: Employment and Gross Value Added⁴⁷

Sector	Workers 1952	GVA 1952 (000)s	GVApW 1952 (EGP/W)	Workers 1967	GVA 1967 (000)s	GVApW 1967 (EGP/W)	GVApW Growth (%)
Food	47606	13553	284.7	76484	32696	427.5	50.2
Beverages	5385	3100	575.7	5635	3799	674.2	17.1
Tobacco	10,532	5484	520.7	12,238	13,538	1106.2	112.5
Textiles	11,5357	24,722	214.3	24,6505	116,376	472.1	120.3
Clothing	5706	1400	245.4	9472	3774	398.4	62.4
Wood	944	155	164.2	3426	1110	324.0	97.3
Furniture	5614	1028	183.1	8672	2578	297.3	62.3
Paper	5245	976	186.1	13,409	8641	644.4	246.3
Printing	7235	2059	284.6	13,354	6138	459.6	61.5
Leather	1995	425	213.0	2874	1069	372.0	74.6
Rubber	186	275	1478.5	4103	2886	703.4	-52.4
Chemicals	11,052	5570	504.0	46,058	38,917	845.0	67.7
Petroleum	4576	6358	1389.4	10,192	15,952	1565.1	12.6
Non-metallic products	13,946	3176	227.7	31,992	12,912	403.6	77.2
Basic metals	3800	1234	324.7	22,966	11,995	522.3	60.8
Metallic products	7292	1283	175.9	24,928	10,032	402.4	128.7
Non-electric machinery	534	174	325.8	8867	3401	383.6	17.7
Electric machinery	1095	340	310.5	11,178	9888	884.6	184.9
Transport	8746	2336	267.1	18935	6496	343.1	28.4
Miscellaneous	2576	865	335.8	6605	3493	528.8	57.5
Total	260,052	74,513	286.5	577,803	305,691	529.1	84.6

Source: Mabro and Radwan (1976: 99–104)

15.7 per cent of total industrial GVA. Considering that the first class is where the private sector primarily operated during that period, these numbers lend credence to Mabro and Radwan (1976), and others' assertions that by the late 1960s private industry in Egypt was so outdated it was particularly inefficient.

The final dimension of the *Ibra lil Saroukh* on which the programme must be assessed is the hallmark goal of building an industrial base capable of supplying national needs and cementing the nation's independence.⁴⁸ In this case, two indicators for success are the rate of import substitution, i.e. the change in Domestic Production Ratio (DPR) of total supply (a measure of self-sufficiency in manufactured products), and the percentage of imports in intermediate consumption (IC) for manufacturing production (Table 2).⁴⁹ It is important to note, however, that intermediate imports can almost never equal zero,⁵⁰ and that tariffs inflate the proportions of this component in a way that we cannot correct in our analysis due to a lack of exact and actionable information.

The figures in Table 2 show clear signs of progress in the main thrust of the ISI programme, as DPR increased across the board. In this vein, some industries were rather created from scratch, such as the electric machinery sector, which grew to cover 46 per cent of domestic needs. Overall, Egypt achieved self-sufficiency in tobacco, clothing, furniture, and leather, and near self-sufficiency in food, beverages, textiles, printing and non-metallic products. Overall, DPR increased by 12.6 per cent, from 70.5 to 79.5 per cent, during the period.

Benefactors

Importantly for the programme's social and economic goals, the expansion of the industrial sector witnessed the influx of large numbers of workers without affecting wages negatively, increasing effective demand. In fact, wages (and compensations related to public firms' profits, of which workers became entitled to a share in 1961) rose steadily over the period of the industrialisation programme;⁵¹ the average hourly wage was doubled between 1954 and 1970 (from 3.7 piasters to 7.4 piasters⁵² per hour) ('Abdel-Fadil 1980: 33). Moreover, the minimum wage was raised three times: in 1962, 1972, and again in 1974. The first of these raises (and the highest increase of the minimum wage in Egyptian history) doubled the minimum wage from 12.5 piasters per day to 25 piasters. It should be noted, however, that the law only covered all industrial workers immediately after its enactment, rather than all workers (*ibid.*: 28–9). This decision was taken in the context of the regime's new socialist direction. As such, as well as raising workers' living standards and consumptive ability, it served the political purpose of securing workers' support for Nasser's socialism.⁵³ Additionally, this same law reinforced workers' gains by improving the public sector workers' situation, granting them 25 per cent of their respective companies' net profits.⁵⁴

Table 2: Domestic production ratio (DPR) and intermediate consumption

Sector	DPR of total supply 1947	DPR of total supply 1967	Change in DPR (%)	Imports in IC (%)	Domestic IC (%)
Food	95.8	92.4	-3.5	51.2	48.8
Beverages	77.8	96.5	24	9.7	90.3
Tobacco	97.7	100	2.4		
Textiles	73.4	96.2	31	9.6	90.4
Clothing	69.7	100	43.4	22.6	77.4
Wood	30.9	68.8	122.6	6.6	93.4
Furniture	90.2	100	10.9	15.6	84.4
Paper	40.4	65.3	61.6	26.2	73.8
Printing	93.2	96.8	3.8	10.7	89.3
Leather	88.7	100	12.8	58.6	41.4
Rubber	30.7	40.7	32.5	44.8	55.2
Chemicals	53.8	61.2	13.8	45.2	54.8
Petroleum	35.3	74.4	110.8	50.2	49.8
Non-metallic products	73.9	89.4	21	16.6	83.4
Basic metals	16.2	65.4	303.7	27.9	72.1
Metallic products	42.5	80.9	90.4	72.2	27.8
Non-electric machinery	0.4	14.3	3475	46.2	53.8
Electric machinery	0.0	46.0	∞	42.2	57.8
Transport	8.3	43.0	418.0	29.8	70.2
Miscellaneous	52.8	66.6	26.1	30.1	69.9
Total	70.5	79.4	12.6	33.4	66.6

Source: Mabro and Radwan (1976: 19, 209)

Instrumentalising Women: State Feminism?

It is evident that Nasser's industrialisation programme saw unprecedented economic transformation, reaping benefits for the entire working class. However, these benefits were uneven: while it enhanced women's presence and participation in certain areas, it also to a large degree maintained and cemented patriarchal norms that effectively prevented women from achieving complete emancipation.

The action rom-com *Taymour we Shafika* (Taymour and Shafika) was released in 2007, featuring the strong-willed environmental prodigy, Shafika, and her romance with her neighbour, the secret service police officer Taymour. Shafika – by the end the Minister of Environment and youngest minister in Egypt – has to quit her job so that her soon-to-be husband does not have to face the dilemma of sitting with his wife on the dais during ministerial functions or standing outside with his colleagues. With this, the flimsiest of excuses, Shafika concedes that her very important work is far less important than the mild and occasional social discomfort of her future husband (Marei 2007).

Contrary to what some might imagine, this theme of the strong-willed woman submitting to her partner's control is relatively new to Egyptian cinema. In 1966, forty-one years before *Shafika* gave up her ministerial position, another woman called Esmat found herself promoted and transferred to a different company in Fateen Abdel Wahab's *Miraty Modeer 'Aam* (My Wife, The General Manager, 1966). Upon showing up to work, Esmat discovers that she was transferred to her husband's company, where she is to be his new boss. Happy for her but wanting to avoid the complications of the situation, Esmat's husband asks her to keep their marriage secret at work so as not to affect his standing. However, as soon as Esmat starts to learn how to fend off the sexist attitudes of her workplace, her relationship with her husband Hussein is revealed. Not standing for anyone at the office impugning his wife's honour, Hussein reveals that they are in fact married. After comedic hijinks and complications caused by employees trying to exploit Hussein and Esmat's marriage, Esmat asks to be reassigned to a different company, only to show up there and find her husband has asked to be reassigned too so he can work with her.

These two movies stand in diametrical opposition to each other: one is about a woman who perseveres against social prejudice in the workplace and eventually asks to be reassigned so she can preserve her marriage without compromising her career's success; forty-one years later, the heroine gives up her much more prominent career so as not to inconvenience her future husband. Even between Hussein and Taymour, the difference could not be more stark. For all his misgivings, Hussein supports his wife and admires her success, making a point of transferring to her new company as a sign of his appreciation of her as a competent manager. Meanwhile, Taymour can scarcely stomach his sweetheart's success, constantly belittling her, commenting on her wardrobe choices, and pointing out that she would not be able to be a good homemaker if she is working.

Miraty Modeer 'Aam delivers the message that entering the workplace is not going to be easy, even with the state's backing, but it is worth the trouble, and the attitudes women face are destined for the dustbin of history. The choice of Shadiya, a singer, actress and sex symbol of the period, to play Esmat perhaps also points to Esmat not sacrificing her femininity in any way for work. However, with far fewer available jobs after the collapse of Nasser's industrialisation project, women were no longer needed to build the nation through participation in the formal job market. They were instead seen as a liability, and unemployment was blamed on their presence in the workforce. As such, Shafika was mobilised in 2007 to tell Egyptian girls and women that no matter how smart and successful you are, even if you could single-handedly end climate change, your greatest value is your role in the private sphere providing unpaid care for your family.

A deeper analysis of the Nasserite industrialisation project and its relationship with women uncovers why its collapse not only saw the participation of women in the formal economy plummet, but also an almost complete reversion of their perceived role in society. A key fact is that women's power within the industrialisation programme was not solely a function of their bargaining power as a part of the labour force, but also a function of the social norms governing Egyptian society at the time, which the industrialisation process did not completely eliminate. In a sort of passive gender revolution, the Nasserite regime pushed to enhance women's economic and social standing, though it shied away from fully emancipating them by overturning the general patriarchal structures governing society, leaving women's status in society stalled.

Unlike the pre-1952 regimes, Nasser's 'welfare state' offered explicit commitments to public equality for women. Accordingly, a type of state feminism – as a formal and legal state strategy for women's rights – was initiated, aimed at introducing changes to gender relations within Egyptian society (Hatem: 1992: 232–3). Such an approach bolstered the regime's political legitimacy and extended its progressive credentials (*ibid.*). More importantly, it highlighted the government's aims and limits by abolishing the structural basis of gender inequality, making reproduction a public rather than a private concern, and employing increasing numbers of women in the state, which continues to employ the majority of women workers (*ibid.*). The regime embarked on a reform agenda that began with affirming the state's commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and wages to all Egyptians, and prohibiting all types of discrimination (on the basis of gender, racial origin, or religion) in the 1956 constitution. These rights were later reaffirmed in the revised constitution of 1963 (*ibid.*). Additionally, all

holders of intermediate school diplomas and college degrees were guaranteed a job by the state, regardless of their gender (*ibid.*). Moreover, women became entitled to fifty days of paid maternity leave and employers were forbidden to fire pregnant women on maternity leave and obligated to provide daily care services where one hundred or more women were employed (*ibid.*). Indeed, taking into consideration the context of the 1950s and 1960s, not to mention the horrible working conditions and societal pressure working women had to experience in the pre-revolution era, the Nasserite regime managed to achieve a number of good results on this front.⁵⁵

Social attitudes towards women's education and employment became more welcoming as women's presence in these areas grew, with participation in the manufacturing sector increasing from 3.3 to 11.7 per cent of total women employed in the private sector between 1961 and 1971 (Hammam 1980: 56). However, this does not translate directly, as women's overall participation in the total manufacturing labour force in 1964 did not exceed 5.4 per cent (in comparison to 5 per cent in 1954) (Mabro and Radwan 1976: 44). By the same token, in 1969, women composed roughly 10 per cent of the formal wage labour market.⁵⁶ In a clear example from 1962, when Nasser opened a textile factory in Qina, one of the most conservative governorates of Egypt, the employment of five girls in one of the regime's first attempts to employ women as workers attracted significant media attention (Bier 2011: 60). This attention was not only a product of the infringement on local norms that prohibited women from occupying such jobs and mixing with men, but also of the regime's insistence on popularising the topic through different newspapers and media outlets. As a result, the number of women labourers inside the factory increased to 200 (*ibid.*). As Bier puts it, these sorts of acts were vital for the new 'revolutionary public life' and for 'redrawing the gender boundaries of political and social order' (*ibid.*: 62).

However, while such examples might suggest radical change was afoot, actual damage to the patriarchal culture affecting the majority of women was minimal. The fear of men's reactions and of antagonising religious groups, and the prospects of losing the support of both, prompted the regime to pick and choose its battles against patriarchal norms (Keddie 2007: 122–4). Instead, in certain state practices and laws, they were to some extent cemented. One example is the enacting of 'gender-specific protective legislation', framed as protecting *womanhood* by prohibiting women from working in jobs categorised as dangerous for their health or morals, such as working in nightclubs with gambling tables and alcohol, taking jobs that require heavy physical labour, as in mines and foundries, or jobs performed between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. (exceptions were granted for performers, nurses

and workers in restaurants and hotels) (Bier 2011: 65–6). So, in this sense, working women remained gendered subjects (*ibid.*: 65).

Even in the industrial sector, where they enjoyed social protection, women were confined to certain ‘feminine industries’.⁵⁷ In the private sector, a microcosm of Egyptian industry, almost 70 per cent of women worked in fields such as retail trade, spinning and weaving, shoes and clothes manufacturing, social services, and food (Hamam 1980: 58). In reality, women’s concentration in industries forms a gradient topographical curve of the perceived femininity and masculinity of industrial work (see Figure 2). This suggests the continuity of the contempt for, or disbelief in, women’s ability to replace men in fields of industry that were considered masculine. As such, even as women made huge strides in their liberation in comparison to the previous period, compared to men in the same period, their gains were rather limited.

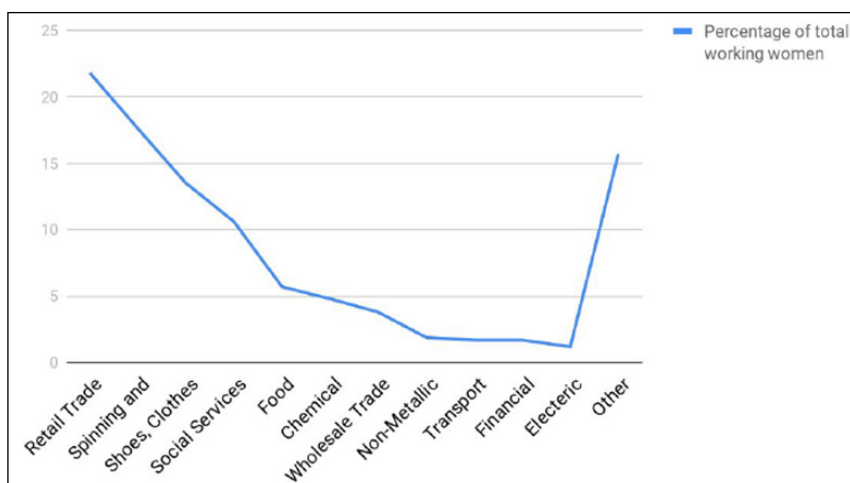


Figure 2: Economic activity of working women in Egypt’s private sector

Source: see Hamam (1980: 58)

Unlike manufacturing and industry, women’s presence in other fields of employment improved significantly; as by 1969, the percentage of working women increased by 31.1 per cent (Bier 2011: 68). However, men continued to dominate top positions and women were concentrated in clerical and teaching jobs (Keddie 2007: 122–4),⁵⁸ which were less rewarding in terms of salaries than other sectors dominated by men (*ibid.*: 67), and were denied the chance to become judges or diplomats (*ibid.*: 66–7). This suggests that educated middle class women were the main beneficiaries of the women-related reforms introduced by the regime.

Simply put, Nasser's regime created and oversaw a 'public patriarchy' that encouraged women to work, join the labour force, and enjoy a degree of economic independence while marginally preserving patriarchal culture that views women as subordinate to men and dependent on the state for education, employment, and other important social services (Hatem 1992: 233). While the state actively sought to change the perception of women in the economic sphere, to enshrine work as a part of a woman's life, and actively propagandised women's equality in the workplace, it chose to institutionalise other repressive notions of femininity, which circumscribed particular roles within the workplace. In this context, housework was still largely seen as women's work, so even if unpaid domestic labour time was reduced, a working woman still had to perform both: the same labour as her counterparts at the workplace, and domestic care work, leaving her at a social disadvantage and making work a disproportionate burden for her. As a matter of fact, the regime tried to promote the idea of an 'energetic worker and successful wife' in an effort to ease women's introduction into the economic sphere, particularly in response to fears they would neglect their original role (in the view of patriarchal society) as housewives.⁵⁹ Even when the regime initiated its industrialisation project, which partly depended on expanding the production of electronic appliances, it was believed that encouraging women to work would enable them to generate enough funds to buy the kind of electronics that would make their life easier and at the same time help the industrialisation process by increasing the demand for its products.⁶⁰ In reality, however, the demand was limited to the upper strata due to high prices (Bier 2011: 81–2). In 1962, the regime decreased the prices of locally produced appliances (to become cheaper than imported ones) and allowed public sector employees to purchase them on instalment plans (*ibid.*: 83). These measures were marginally effective, with appliance ownership rising significantly between 1963 and 1964, but failing to help the majority of women.⁶¹

Another survey, conducted in 1970 and published a few days away from Nasser's death by *al-Tale'ah*, interviewed women about their experiences of work. While the sample is relatively small, with only forty-one women surveyed, it is consistent with other evidence. A majority of over 92 per cent of those surveyed had entered the formal workforce after Nasser's ascension. The majority of those surveyed also earned more than the national average wage, even though the occupations reported were factory work, teaching, agricultural work, and retail (1970: 24–8).⁶²

Ironically, the centrality of the phallic image of the rocket to the programme of industrialisation betrays the intrinsically patriarchal approach to women's issues within such modernising projects. In its scope, it becomes

expedient not to wage an all-out war against patriarchal norms, as the project still requires women to maintain their role in social reproduction. Several signs are presented in order here. The personal status laws of the 1920s and 1930s continued to be upheld. In these laws, women were defined as the economic dependents of men and as unstable emotional beings who cannot be trusted with the right to divorce (Hatem 1992: 232–3). Likewise politically, although women were granted the right to vote by 1956, their political representation remained minimal – they were not represented at all in the constitution assembly of 1954, and all independent feminist organisations were outlawed as from 1954 (Keddie 2007: 122).

For sure, Egyptian feminists reacted against these acts. Still, because not all such activists made demands related to socio-economic matters, their opposition to the regime's policies was either quite limited to elitist circles or failed to generate enough momentum to pressure the government to implement radical changes. For example, Doria Shafik, perhaps the best known feminist in the time of Nasser, confined her demands to the political sphere, demanding the vote for women through her institution *Bint al-Nil*. Her political activism dated back prior to 1952 (Nelson: n.d.);⁶³ in 1954, Shafik and her associates started a hunger strike for votes and representation, to which the government acceded (*ibid.*). One year later, Nasser closed Shafik's *Bint al-Nil* before putting her under house arrest in 1960s for a number of years; she eventually committed suicide in 1975 (*ibid.*: 123).

Shafik's ardent support of the revolution and the new regime is evident in her publication *Bint al-Nil al-Siyasiyah* (The political daughter of the Nile), for example in an article titled 'The Happiness of a Nation', in which she celebrated the first anniversary of the free officers' rise to power (Shafik 1953: c.18/89). In the same year, she wrote, 'The only one step left is for women to gain equal political rights. Once achieved women will have been truly liberated.'⁶⁴ She also stated 'there can be no success for a nationalist movement without the cooperation of women It is unfair that half our nation are always giving but then are deprived of their rights'.⁶⁵ However, she started criticising the regime later by saying:

however, all these projects are connected to men. The Revolution has as yet paid little attention to projects dealing with women and their social and political lives True liberation should include the liberation of the majority from signs of slavery.⁶⁶

Despite these differences with the regime, she was quite happy with the regime's approval to let women join the militias of the National Guard.⁶⁷ Eventually, she expressed a more obvious opinion on Nasser's regime by stating that she was protesting 'the onset of the dictatorship that is leading

Egypt into chaos.’ (Nelson n.d.). It is evident that Shafik’s main concern was the anti-democratic atmosphere that Nasser initiated, especially towards women, with little if any analysis around the material interests of women.

Other women involved in political activism, such as Inji Aflatun,⁶⁸ a communist who was running for parliamentary elections in 1956 with Sisa Nabrawi, showed a clear interest in the economic conditions of the masses, rather than an isolated interest in women’s liberation. As their political programmes in the elections showed, they conceived women’s rights as part of a larger struggle dependent on the alleviation of the masses’ dire economic conditions (minimum wages, subsidies, and representation, to name a few).⁶⁹

Aflatun and Nabrawi were just two of sixteen women who ran for these elections receiving positive coverage by the state press despite an overwhelming majority of men being opposed to women in office (Naeba).⁷⁰ Despite this, Rawiya Atya a veteran of the Tripartite Aggression, and Amina Shukri, a social worker, would become the first women elected to office in modern Egypt (Sullivan 1986). Five years later, Dr Hekmat Abu Zaid would become the first woman appointed to ministerial office as she held the Ministry of Social Affairs from 1962 to 1965 (Badran 1995). The groundbreaking lasting effect of her appointment was that the Ministry of Social Solidarity would be one of the few ministries in Egypt that women are routinely appointed to lead.

Remarkably, the regime’s official rhetoric occasionally reflected its deeply-entrenched patriarchal tendencies. In one of his speeches, while commenting on the previous deliberations with the Supreme Leader of the Muslim Brotherhood on the prospects of collaboration, the hijab (veil), and gender segregation, Nasser stated:

Why wouldn’t women work? In my opinion, when a woman works, she is protected; because why do these who go astray do so? Because of need Because of poverty. We hear a woman was sick or her mother was sick and she was in need – we all know the stories – and she has to sell her body; as such work is safety for women. Preventing women from work is against their interests, we are really freeing women by allowing them to work with men shoulder by shoulder (21 December 1965).

In another speech, Nasser mocked British figureheads, including the Queen herself:

Can’t our newspapers insult the queen of Britain or its prime minister? We can, just like you did here in Port Said with your writings on the wall [during the Tripartite Aggression]. We remember this. We can pull out the writings?

You told them ‘your Queng [apparently wanted to say queen but stumbled on his speech, the bibalex archives transcript says ‘king’] is what?’ [the crowd replies ‘whore’] (23 December 1962).⁷¹

Such occasions prove that, regarding women’s presence in public, the supervision of the state was still viewed as something essential to protect them from backsliding. This narrative justifies the public patriarchy implemented by the state and at the same time gives the state the right to determine the limits of women’s participation in the public arena. Additionally, as the second quote shows, womanhood was still used from time to time as an insult, even in official discourse. This should dismantle the myth that Nasser gave unconditional support to women’s liberation and show that his advocacy was still bound by moralist understandings of women’s liberation and its limitations.

All in all, the post-Nasser experiences demonstrate how the retreat of the state from the economic sphere could negatively affect the prospects of gender equality. In 1960, the men’s unemployment rate was 1.9 compared to the women’s rate of 5.8 per cent. Yet, in 1976, the men’s rate was 5.5, with 29.8 for women. The state’s presence provided women with access to public resources without which they would be entirely dependent on the patriarchal family and its related burdens (Hatem 1992: 234). This reversal is simply the entropy of a statist system, as the state left to its own devices without forceful intervention will always revert to requiring the least energy to maintain it. In this case, it would be a resurgence of the patriarchy, which shares its paternalistic roots with the state. Feminism, along with all liberationary politics, stands essentially opposed to the hierarchical nature of the state.

Limitations and Lessons Learned

The Nasserite project for postcolonial industrialisation faced limitations that can be categorised into three groups.

Material Limitations

In the Nasserite case, the most significant issue was the limited cultivable area, any increase in which demanded exorbitant investments. The second main material limitation was the extremely undeveloped industrial sector in Egypt, with some industries needing to be built from scratch, resulting in the third limitation, i.e. time. The very undeveloped nature of Egyptian industry meant the time needed for the realisation of the project was particularly long.

External Limitations

Perhaps the hallmark of any postcolonial project are external limitations materialising in the pressures put forth by colonial powers on newly-independent nations. In the case of Egypt, this was shaped by the Cold War and its bipolarity, reflected in the high dam affair and the 1956 Tripartite Aggression, which almost killed the experiment in its cradle. Nasser also faced other serious external issues. In global politics, Nasser's visualisation of Egypt placed it at an intersection of three circles of identity: Arab, African and Islamic.⁷¹ Realising the extent of the oil wealth lying in the Arab region and the geographical proximity of its countries, not to mention their lack of an industrial base like the one Egypt enjoyed, Nasser saw in the region the prospects of an external market capable of supporting the industrialisation process inside Egypt (Abdel-Malek 1968: 144–5). This is why he sought to extend Egypt's political and economic influences into other Arab countries dominated either directly by imperialist power or by their local allies, through promoting Arab Socialism and creating an Arab common market to sell Egyptian products. Such limitations materialised first in the failed union with Syria under the name of the United Arab Republic, and then later with the ideas of Arab Socialism and the war against British- and Saudi-supported groups in Yemen which caused the Egyptian Treasury burdensome losses (Little 1967: 207–17). On the African front, Nasser's policies can be easily summed up in an excerpt from a speech he gave in Conakry, Guinea:

Let me repeat after my brother [President Ahmed] Sekou Touré, there is but one Africa An Africa part of which got its independence, and an Africa that is still fighting against colonialism. It is the duty of the independent Africa to aid the Africa still struggling against colonialism (2 November 1965).

This invocation of African solidarity was not just a diplomatic courtesy performed for the host country. In fact, earlier the same year, Nasser brought up the ongoing Congo war in a campaign speech, contextualising it, along with the Tripartite Aggression, as the latest imperialist attack on African independence (20 January 1965). As such, Nasser's view of Egypt's relationship to Africa was that of a big sister and her little brothers. The big sister enjoyed independence, a modern army, and an industrial base that her little brothers lacked. While Egypt saw the Arab world – most of which was independent and comparatively richer than their African counterparts at this point – as a market, its sisterhood with Africa was manifested in aiding anti-colonial movements from Algiers to Leopoldville, where Egypt provided Patrice Lumumba with direct military assistance (Shaaraway 2014:

63). It also manifested itself in institutions such as the Organisation of African Unity, in which Nasser positioned Egypt as part of the Casablanca bloc that called for a federated Africa (Manelisi, Kornegay and Rule 2000). The membership of the Casablanca bloc in itself was a clear indication that attempts to separate the African from the Arab were misguided, as it also included Libya, Algeria and Morocco, a concentration of Arab states that can only bely the leveraging of Arab identity for African unity on the part of Nasser and his counterparts. However, the unevenness of development across the continent, coupled with a myriad of physical, linguistic and material barriers, doomed their attempts. Even though the experiment persisted through these failures, it received a staggering blow with the 1967 defeat at Israeli hands. All in all, Nasser's economic and political expansionary programme put him in the imperialist crosshairs long before he was ready to face their wrath, which severely hindered the experiment.

Internal Limitations

These are the limitations imposed on the experiment by its own implementers. Major among these was the absence of coordination between the different sectors, especially with the existence of what Amin referred to as independent centres of power and the various centres of decision-making, resulting in the prevalence of different criteria of implementation and quality.⁷³ Such weak coordination resulted in a competition between public apparatuses in a manner that affected the entire progress of the plan negatively (Labib 2019). The scope of the competition and the extent of its negative effects, however, is unclear. While many planned economies followed a system where the design phase was competitive and the execution phase was cooperative, the exact unfolding of the process in Egypt is not clear enough to establish whether this was the norm or not. Consequently, financial disruptions became one of the permanent features of the system and the programme (Amin 2012: 170–2). The latter, when coupled with a continuous need for imported production inputs (and technology) and occasional disruptions of foreign currency, as was Egypt's case in the 1960s, can affect the sustainability of industrialisation (Mabro and Radwan 1976: 231–6).

Second, the absence of the required industrial base hindered the development of the technology needed for the entire industrial sector, as within the heavy industries the focus was directed towards traditional commodities such as iron and steel, cement, petroleum, and chemical products (Dowidar 1982: 109; Mabro 1974: 144–6). This was coupled with the increased cost of production caused by excessive usage of inputs, mis-storage, and the inability to use the factories up to their full potential

(*ibid.*: 114). Finally, the lack of trained and skilled cadres forced the regime to hire personnel who did not necessarily believe in the project, or others who lacked the know-how needed to avoid wastefulness ('Abdel-Malek 1967: 169; el-Serafy 1963: 230).

However, the limitation that spelled the doom of this experiment was the fact that it attempted to give workers a measure of economic freedom and progress without giving them the political means to protect these very gains. Thus, the managerial caste became the stewards of vast tracts of wealth with only Nasser keeping them in line, binding his fate to the fate of the entire experiment. Upon his death, the stewardship of the managerial caste went unsupervised, allowing them to gradually strip the politically disempowered workers of their gains. The importance of this limitation stems from the fact that, in our understanding, it is almost universal to postcolonial development, as each leader, no matter how noble their goals, ends up embedding the antithesis of their work in its foundation by fostering unequal relations of power and monetary compensation that ensures, once possible, that the new empowered caste will do away with their project.

Breakthroughs and Pitfalls

Nonetheless, positive achievements materialised in the establishment of almost 800 factories (mainly between 1962 and 1968) (Sayigh 1984: 51). In this process, a choice had to be made between favouring heavy industries or consumer goods.⁷⁴ Overall, different types of industries were centres of investment, including textiles, steel and iron, chemicals and fertilisers, mineral, food industries, and durable consumer goods. However, investigating the limits of Nasser's policy requires determining which of the two categories of industries received relative priority. All of these industries did not supposedly materialise as a blind push for industrialisation, but rather as parts of cogent strategy whereby all these industrial cogs fitted together to create the desired developmental leap.⁷⁵ The aim was to create a network of different industries that would serve and develop each other, keeping in mind the main goal of developing Egyptian society. However, the plan did not actually develop accordingly, as the necessary coordination between the different industrial and manufacturing sectors (networking) was never reached (*ibid.*). Critical to note here is that although the state invested in both types of industries, the results were not equally successful. This problem drew a lot of attention in *al-Tale'e'ah*, with many authors arguing the importance of prioritising heavy industries, as was expected to happen in the second five-year plan, due to its long term effects on growth, development, and even agriculture, by providing all the necessary equipment

to increase production, unlike consumer industries, which do not aid overall production.⁷⁶ Likewise, others reiterated the consumer industries' inability to help developmental purposes other than increasing individual consumption, and highlighted how, in fact, public consumption in the first four years of the plan increased beyond the limit designed by it, causing the rate of annual savings to income to deteriorate for the duration of the plan (Eid 1965: 42, 46). This is not to say that heavy industry was neglected; in fact, except for the first year of the first five-year plan, it consistently received more investments than intermediary and consumer industries. However, the argument that is made here is that even more focus needed to be directed on to heavy industry, as it was largely non-existent when the project began, with some authors arguing that allocating 53 per cent of the first five-year plan investments to heavy industry was not enough (Hassan 1965a: 104–5).

Although the Nasserite state gave special importance to the development of heavy industries – those of capital goods – its development lagged. The fact that many of these industries did not exist at all prior to the programme meant that their success would remain rather limited. Meanwhile, in intermediate and consumer products the programme achieved remarkable feats (Mabro 1974: 144–6). So while by the demise of the project Egypt had not become an advanced industrial state, it had achieved significant strides in that direction.

The positive lessons to be drawn from the Nasserite industrialisation programme and its eventual decline are as numerous as they are complex. These lessons include:

The superiority of central planning – and even approaches to planning derived from it – as a tool for developing economies to eliminate the waste of unnecessary competition and parallel processes. In his narrative, Sedqi (2004) showed special attention to the importance of planning and development and how it was a vital part of the industrialisation project. However, he strictly meant the type of planning that leads to increased productivity, which eventually can create tangible development. Thus, it is not strange to find both Sedqi and Abdel-Wahab (2004), despite their obvious hatred of leftist ideas, aggressively attacking the policies of economic opening and categorising the mire of low ineffectual investments under liberalism and neoliberalism and their effects on the economy as disastrous.

1. The attainment of a tangible developmental leap affecting the majority of the Egyptian population should be the mainstay of any liberationist project. Nasser's regime foresaw an unprecedented increase in the social and economic rights professed and granted to the population, which accompanied the induction of a large segment of society into the labour market without depressing wages.

2. The development of self-sufficiency, in tandem with social production aims, to primarily satisfy and serve the social material needs of the population.
3. The success of the neo-imperialist mission after the industrialisation programme was rolled back turned Egypt into a country significantly dependent on external markets for its needs, especially foodstuffs and energy. This highlights the importance of self-sufficiency, which Nasser managed to achieve to a some extent, despite not succeeding completely. Currently, in the absence of such sufficiency, crises abound where supplies of basics and necessities can easily disappear from the shelves due to currency fluctuations or foreign reserves depletion.

It should be clear by now that once the state rolled back its interventionist role practised under Nasser, and after the attempts to escape the dictations of the imperialist system failed, Egypt was restored to its previous position as an integrated part of a capitalist totality, though on neoliberal grounds and under the supervision of the neo-imperialist powers. This does not indicate that, even under Nasser, Egypt completely ceased to be a part of that totality. Rather, after the attempts to create an economically and politically independent state in the face of the old imperialist powers failed, post-Nasser regimes were obligated to accept a re-integration that was never in the Egyptian masses' favour. This means that resistance against imperialist capitalism cannot be a time-bound intervention but must be a protracted, continuous, never-ebbing process, so that whatever gains are achieved do not become sandcastles wiped away by the imperialist tide.

In conclusion, and so as to not let the vastness of the experiment devour our attempts to recover it, one lesson stands paramount atop all others: if we seek to overturn or to merely reshape the capitalist totality, created and maintained by imperialist powers, we cannot fight it piecemeal. Rather, it should be a fight against an entire structure opposing the betterment of the masses' welfare. The essence of the Nasserite project, hinted at by the name 'needle to rocket', is that it was a comprehensive response to the totality of its time, and hence any attempt at a parsimonious recovery that does not aim to recover it in its entirety will be doomed to fail. The increased productivity would not have been achievable were it not for the massive capital investments, which in turn would not have been available were it not for the mobilisation of the state's natural and financial resources. This commandeering of resources was made more palatable to the populace by the new social contract and the economic rights it secured – economic rights that could not have been granted if not for continually rising productivity.

This is not to say that this is a closed circle, but rather to assert the fact that all these developments need to happen in tandem, not only to ensure maximum efficiency and make use of the limited time anti-colonial projects have before the imperial powers can effectively mobilise their arsenal, but also to ensure the mere survival of the project, as any lags in any cogs will eventually halt the entire machine. In fact, we highlighted earlier that one of the reasons the project collapsed was the lagging of democratic workers' representation, which allowed the project to be hijacked. As such, when we seek to recover projects such as these, when we accept these herculean undertakings, we have to do so with the intent to restore the totality of their achievements while avoiding the pitfalls of their disappointments. Just as the imperial powers, personified in Baron Thorneycroft, Defence Minister of the UK, saw that 'there could be no half measures in dealing with [Nasser]' (McNamara 2003: 198) now too, half measures will avail us nothing.

Notes

1. Social Justice Platform. This article was completed as part of the Post-Colonialisms Today project.
2. Common name for pre-revolution Egypt.
3. Victory Day Address in Port Said, 21 December 1965 (Abdel Nasser).
4. The paper has no connection whatsoever to the month of October, however it seems that it was titled as such in a cynical attempt to capitalise on the October War (Yom Kippur War) and popularise it.
5. For more on the period, see Farah (2009); Hinnebusch Jr. (1985); 'Abdel-'A'lim (1990); Morsi (1987); Soliman (1998); and Tignor (2016).
6. We distinguish classical economic liberalism, embodied in Sadat's *Infitah* and the first twenty years of Mubarak's regime, from neoliberalism, symbolised by Mubarak's last ten years at the helm. Confusing both is a common mistake that we find detrimental to the discourse. As such, it is implied throughout this article that Egyptian society witnessed a number of transformations under the influence of the dominant economic mentality and as a clear consequence of Sadat's liberalisation. It follows here that these transformations had different – albeit consequential – ramifications. So, while we understand the difference between them, we lack the space to delve into their specificities. Our focus is directed towards the Nasserite industrialisation experience, as we believe that its failure (combined with other external factors) caused the later shifts to classical liberalism and eventually neoliberalism.
7. This is not to imply that different 'underdeveloped' countries all get to be affected equally, but rather that their development does vary according to the internal conditions prevailing in each case (combining a mixture of old and modern features of capitalist development) without leaving the capitalist terrain, i.e. variegated capitalism. See Jessop (2014).

8. We exclusively use the word 'woman', and not 'female', to avoid any biologically reductive reading of our work.
9. For these first few years, the Nasserite regime tried to make use of the bipolarity of international politics and to extract all the aid it could get from both the US and the Soviets, without officially declaring allegiance to either. However, when the US pursued the World Bank in declining to finance the High Dam, a project which was to provide Egypt and its industries with electricity, and the Soviets stepped in with the necessary funds in the early 1960s, Nasser started shifting towards the latter and inaugurated the 'socialist road', represented in the National Charter of 1962. Ironically, up until the mid-1960s, he depended on American surplus food and loans for land reclamation and road paving (Little 1976: 230).
10. See Davis (1983).
11. Even after the Egyptianisation of foreign assets and until 1961, Nasser continued his attempts to encourage domestic private companies such as Banque Misr and Aboud to cooperate and invest in accordance with the programme of industrial development – to no avail. See 'Abdel-Malek (1967: 72; 1964: 41).
12. For more, see Ansari (1987); 'Abdel-Fatah (1987); 'Abdel-Fadil (1975); Radwan (1977); Mitchell (1967); Abdel-Sadiq and al-Nour (2017).
13. 1 feddan = 4200 square metres \approx 1 acre.
14. By revolutionary we are referring to the fact that the land reform law managed to cement the capitalist relations of production and to attack the feudalist norms, mainly in favour of landless peasants, who, unlike before, gradually became agricultural workers with legal rights. Moreover, more machinery began to be used in agricultural production. As such, farms with tractors increased to 11,378 in 1961 (from 8617 in 1950) and irrigation machines increased to reach 27,157 in 1961 (from 13,399 in 1950) ('Abdel-Fadil 1975: 32–3).
15. Specifically, between 1952 and 1970, the state acquired 944,457 feddans, from which 817,538 were distributed to almost 341,982 families ('Abdel-Fadil 1975: 9–10).
16. This was probably why the regime was so interested in consolidating small ownerships above all else.
17. Over the two decades of Nasser's rule, the party had three different names: *Hai'at il-Tahrir* (the liberation organisation), *il-Ithad il-qawmye* (the national union), and *il-Ithad il-Ishtiraki il-'Arabi* (the Arab socialist union). See Mohamed (2002).
18. They were also appointed to key posts in media, press, culture and the diplomatic corp ('Abdel-Malek 1967: 75).
19. See Ansari (1987).
20. See O'Brien (1966: 104); 'Abdel-Malek (1968: 109–11).
21. It should be remembered that not all socialists and Marxists opposed Nasser equally, as there were some who believed that Nasser could develop to be a fully-fledged Marxist, and hence that their historical task was to put him on 'the road to socialism', not to oppose him. See 'Abdel-Malek (1964: 50–2). Other scholars such as Torrey and Devlin believed that Nasser was only applying some 'socialist remedies' pragmatically to solve some deeply-entrenched problems within Egyptian society (1965: 62).

22. Within such economies, the private sector is confined to act in accordance with the general plan that the state implements; if it survives, it will not be allowed to grow at the same rate as the public sector. For more on the possible cooperation between private and public sector within a centralised (planned) economy, see Dowidar (1965).
23. *al-Talee'ah* was a journal issued by a group of socialists and Marxists following their release from prison in the early 1960s. It started in 1965 and continued until the 1970s, when Sadat decided to shut it down after the social unrest associated with what is known as the food riots. The significance of the journal lies in the discussions it contains on different social and ideological issues that those authors were not allowed to have in public. As such, it provides a great insight into the ideas and critiques of a wide range of leftists of different backgrounds on post-1952 Egypt. For more on the journal, see al-Mulla (2014).
24. Keep in mind the regime's insistence on the sanctity of private property (a social institution) in the constitution of 1956 under articles 8 and 11. See Dekmejian (1971: 125). Equally telling are the decrees of July 1961, as it sought to distance itself from radical/Marxist currents calling for a proletarian revolution to change the entire social structure of the country. Finally, there was the regime's insistence on paying compensation for confiscated property, and the difference between the regime's envisioned ideal classless society and the single class desired by communists. See Kerr (1962: 138).
25. Also referred to as Arab Nationalism and sometimes as scientific socialism. See 'Abdel-Malek (1967: 73).
26. For more on the original sources of Arab Socialism and how it differentiated from Soviet Socialism and Marxism see Dekmejian (1971: 132–4); Hayashi (1964: 78–9, 88); and Kerr (1962: 140).
27. Grocery crops were dominated by large landowners due to the high level of capital required to cultivate them. Additionally, even though the state maintained a control over the inputs (such as fertilisers, seeds...), it loosened its control over the outputs, allowing those owners to increase their income. See Cooper (1982: 24).
28. This is why we find the regime's differentiation between exploitative and non-exploitative owners to the means of production shameful. Simply put, in the long run, the interests of both public and private sectors are destined to clash, endangering the sustainability of the entire project.
29. '[N]ationalism appears as the main fetishistic form of capital domination in the periphery and, hence, it plays a crucial role for capital reproduction.' See Perez Sainz (1980: 60).
30. On the eve of the 1952 events, there were ongoing debates between the Soviets and the Chinese on the nature of the new regime in Egypt. In general, it was believed that it represented a phase of the bourgeois revolution that could lead to the unification of the Arab world into a single nation-state and that it would put an end to the Western domination over the region. However, while the Chinese were eager to support the new regime in the hope that it could be radicalised later,

- the Soviets were first sceptical as to whether they could trust the leaders of such a revolution. Accordingly, the nature of the 1952 revolution, and the new regime it brought to power, was one of the reasons that caused conflict between both powers in the 1950s (Deutscher 1958). For a more detailed analysis on the nature of Nasser's Egypt, especially after the 1967 defeat, see Deutscher (1967: 38, 41).
31. For a more detailed account, see Hussein (1973).
 32. See Jankowski (1975).
 33. On the idea of Bonapartism, see Poulantzas (1969; 1976).
 34. Sedqi maintains that the Soviets did not help with more than 10 per cent of industrial projects (*ibid.*). In another narrative, Mohamed Abdel-Wahab, a former engineer in Nasser's military factories who became Minister of Industry in the 1980s, affirms that the help of the Soviets was essential to the industrialisation process in Egypt, especially since they used to grant Egypt entire factories in exchange for cotton, for example (a repayment agreement). Moreover, he insists that the Soviets should not be held responsible for industrial backwardness in Egypt (Abdel-Wahab 2004).
 35. Interestingly, following Egyptianisation, Nasser depended on Egyptian Marxists such as Ismail Sabri Abdullah and Samir Amin, among others, to establish and run the EO before he persecuted them in the late 1950s. During their work in the organisation, they complained of the highly centralised military bureaucracy and the lack of attention to the proposals submitted to expand the effectiveness of the institution. See Amin (2006: 82–90).
 36. On top of this huge bureaucratic structure was the army, headed by the Revolutionary Command Council. According to some sources, those who refused to show obedience to Nasser or preferred to follow their own ideas were not given the chance and were instantly marginalised (Little 1967: 233–5). Accordingly, in the light of the regime's failure to find enough collaborators among Egyptian capitalists and its need for cadres to fill the top positions, it chose to deploy its own personnel (the army), giving the latter the chance to dominate this newly created state apparatus.
 37. Concurrently, this autocratic manner was mirrored in the outlawing of any space for political expression not only for intellectuals, but also for workers. Merely a month after this new regime rose to power, two workers, Mohamed Mostafa Khamis and Mohamed A. al-Baqri, from Kafr il-Dawar City, were charged in a military tribunal for inciting a strike and violence, and subsequently executed. It was rumoured that both workers were members of a secret communist/leftist society and that their activism affected the charge, as the new regime wanted to clearly express its intention of not allowing this kind of political activism. The co-optation of the workers' union came as the final blow to any attempts to express grievances against the regime or its policies (Beinin and Lockman 1988: 418–26). In the following years, leftist activists (despite the regime's claims of socialist orientation) of different schools and names (Communists, Marxists, Socialists), as well as the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, were prosecuted and imprisoned for conspiring against the state. See 'Abdel-Malek (1964).

38. The importance of this arena is highlighted by the failure of the cotton crop in 1961. The crop was so vital that in 1961 it fetched over £121.8 million out of the £189 million that all Egyptian imports earned on the international market. In 1962, when the crop failed and the value of exported cotton fell to £88.8 million, the Egyptian state was in dire straits, as it not only lost on projected incomes, but it also had to compensate the farmers for their losses. In doing so, the regime fulfilled both a social duty to the farmers and their wellbeing, and an economic function in protecting the domestic market from the pangs of depression. The financial hardship severely affected the first five-year plan as it failed to meet its targets for the year 1962. See Sabri (1966: 86–9).
39. Worth noting here that a majority of appliances sales were on instalments instead of cash sales (Nour 1965: 38–9).
40. Another problem here, that relates to the general finances of the regime, is its dependence on indirect tax revenues. Even though taxes on personal income were increased massively in the wake of the so-called socialist transformation, the majority of tax revenues came from indirect taxes on goods and services. In the financial year 1965–66, indirect taxes comprised almost 73 per cent of the total tax revenues in comparison to about 27 per cent coming from direct taxes on income and wealth. Similarly, the majority of tax revenues came from public sector companies. See Hassan (1965b: 78). For a more detailed study of tax policy and the tax authority's performance under Nasser, see 'Abdel-Fadil in Sabri 'Abdallah et al. (1978).
41. *Ibra lil Saroukh* (Needle to Rocket) was the famous slogan of the Nasserist industrial policy. According to Abdel-Wahab, production was actualised over two production lines, with the first directed towards military needs, and the second (based on the unexploited remaining power of the first line) towards civil production.
42. By 1967, the gross value added in manufacturing industries establishments employing ten or more persons (10&<) had ballooned to over £305.7 million from a mere £74.5 million in 1952, a growth of over 310 per cent. If smaller establishments are included, the gross value added increases to £362.8 million. This growth expanded to every single industry; the lowest gains were made by the beverages industry, whose gross value added still increased by 122.5 per cent. The largest growth however was registered in industries that were almost non-existent at the birth of the Republic, such as in the engineering industries. Growth in industries such as non-electric machinery (1854.6 per cent growth), and electric machinery (2808 per cent growth), were the biggest beneficiaries, even though both combined remained at less than a tenth of the value of the textile industry, for example, which grew by over 470 per cent. See *ibid.* (1967: 99–102). It is important to note that in these calculations, construction, transport and electricity industries are not included, as industry is used in the narrowest possible sense, meaning manufacturing industries.

43. For the conversion rate, see 'The economy of the United Arab Republic', *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development* 1, 1966. Calculating inflation for the US dollar since then, the industrial investment of the period equals roughly US\$ 13.5 billion, or a quarter of a trillion Egyptian pounds in the modern sense.
44. The year that has the most data needed for this display, as K. M. Barbour (1972) offers a trove of information on it.
45. These authors offer several estimates; the researchers here chose the numbers from the Census of Industrial Production as it is the most consistent and a continuation of the estimates.
46. See Gazarin (2006).
47. All figures are for establishments of (10<).
48. The regime's rhetoric about the industrialisation programme focused mainly on iron and steel due to the symbolism that the project carried in Egypt's struggle for economic independence. Within this rhetoric, different forms of tools were used to legitimise the programme and the regime, including a children's book titled *Qeset il-hadeed fi Misr* (The story of iron in Egypt) (Labib 2019).
49. Tobacco was not included in the intermediate imports as its farming was banned in Egypt since the nineteenth century. Hence its inclusion would not only have been pointless but would also seriously distort the overall image.
50. Attempting zero intermediate imports would not be economically wise, as some primary commodities are not available domestically, not to mention that shipping all imports in unprocessed form could be counterproductive, as the cost of transport and domestic processing will end up significantly higher than importing intermediate products. As such, the proper policy is to limit the intermediate imports.
51. There are several factors in compensation, however due to limited space, we chose wages, as it is traditionally the largest and most important component.
52. This roughly translates to an increase from 8.5 cents per hour to 17 cents an hour, putting the average daily wage at US\$ 1.36.
53. In 1966, the regime created an industrial exhibition, where different types of locally produced commodities were offered to encourage consumption (Bier 2011: 83).
54. In 1972, when the minimum wage was increased for the second time, it increased from 25 piasters to 30 piasters per day, and to 40 piasters per day in 1973. Clearly, Anwar Al-Sadat was trying to pacify the working class and convince them that the gains the Nasser's regime offered them would not be eroded ('Abdel-Fadil 1980: 30–3).
55. See Hammad (2016).
56. In 1947, women labourers represented anything between 4–6 per cent of the formal waged labour force (Bier 2011: 63, 68).
57. Bier relates the small increase in the numbers of women workers in factories to the fact that women in general were seen as more efficient in delicate manual labour like assembling refrigerators and television parts (*ibid.*: 67). See Bier (*ibid.*) for the legal prohibitions affecting women working in agriculture.

58. By 1973, 25 per cent of professional jobs were held by women, and by 1976, educated women made up almost 50 per cent of the entire women's labour force, despite composing just 5 per cent of all women. Related here is that in the wake of nationalisation, the regime used to replace foreign women working in nationalised companies with Egyptian women (Bier 2011: 201, endnotes 25–8).
59. Household management classes became obligatory for women students in the public education system as from 1965. However, criticism against working women usually concentrated on their lack of attention to children, especially when they were left with servants. Of course, not all working women had the financial capacity to hire servants or for their children attend day care, and thus more criticism was laid on them. For more see Bier (2011: 74–82).
60. As a part of Nasser's import substitution policies, public firms such as Ideal started producing gas stoves, washing machines in 1954, and refrigerators and air conditioners in 1956, the first ever in the Middle East. Imported appliances were available from an earlier date (Abaza 2006: 90–3).
61. According to a survey conducted in 1963 by the Ministry of Social Affairs, involving about 3000 women workers, 2299 stated that they had no appliances at all. In another survey conducted by a different institute in 1964, in which working women from the urban cities such as Cairo and Alexandria were included, only 1348 out of 4274 indicated that they owned at least one appliance, while 744 had multiple appliances. Hence, it can be noted that the regime's efforts in this field did not really manage to help the majority of working women (Abaza 2006: 205).
62. As for wages, 31.7 per cent were making less than E£10 per month, 24.4 per cent were making E£10–15 –the range where the average wage of E£12 is centred – while the rest – 43.9 per cent – made well over the average wage as they fell into brackets above E£15 per month. Also note that for the purposes of this calculation we are drawing on the average hourly wage of 7.4 piasters per hour, or roughly E£12 per month mentioned above concerning the benefactors. See *al-Tale'ah* (1970: 24–8).
63. In one of her best known acts to earn women the right to vote, she gathered around 1500 women who stormed the parliament and brought the proceedings to a standstill.
64. 'Qasim Amin, *ibid.*
65. 'Women and the case of Arabs', *ibid.*
66. 'The liberation of women', *ibid.*
67. 'The last hope', *ibid.*
68. Aflatun was later prosecuted and imprisoned (Keddie 2007: 123).
69. Women and Memory forum – Newspapers, clips and documents folder.
70. 'Innovation for Egypt: women office seekers create furor', *The Spartanburg Herald*, 6 June 1956, <https://bit.ly/3w3vYiv>.
71. For the crowd's response, see the speech: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPUATtBYQQ8.
72. See Abdel Nasser (1954).

73. According to some scholars, the plan did not specify the actual production targets and referred only to it in terms of money, with the assumption that its value would remain constant. See el-Serafy (1963: 227).
74. While the first would encourage productive consumption – i.e. reproducing the means of production and creating its own internal demand for its products (internal orientation) with no dependence on external markets and forces for technology and machinery – consumer goods, especially durables, were to improve the population's quality of life. The latter could potentially reduce the socially necessary domestic labour time at home, thus allowing women the chance to integrate into the expanding workforce needed to serve the industrialisation programme. Additionally, it would allow women to secure a more or less stable income and hence increase the effective demand needed to ensure the viability of the economies of scale required for the programme.
75. As a sign of the Nasserite regime's intention to enhance the local without neglecting the agricultural base of the Egyptian economy, lands owned by corporations and companies were barred from those confiscated and redistributed under the land reform law of 1952 ('Amir 1958: 148).
76. See Khaleel (1965).

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Post-Independence Development Planning in Ghana and Tanzania: Agriculture, Women and Nation-building¹

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Abstract

This article analyses development planning in post-independence Ghana and Tanzania, particularly related to agriculture, in contrast with the contemporary neoliberal subsumption of African economies to market forces. The article derives lessons from both their successes and shortcomings. Ghana and Tanzania's experiences suggest the importance of agricultural transformation for national self-sufficiency; development planning as a mechanism to link all sectors of the economy; and the key strategic potential of the state in production, distribution and employment creation. Key shortcomings included the inability to fully de-link national economies from the global capitalist political economy, break dependence on earnings from cash crop exports, and the political and economic marginalisation of women in post-independence development planning. The article suggests that progressive development planning that centres the pursuit of gender justice is a critical starting point for imagining and pursuing alternatives to neoliberalism.

Résumé

Cet article analyse la planification du développement au Ghana et en Tanzanie au lendemain des indépendances, surtout dans le domaine de l'agriculture, en contraste avec la subordination actuelle des économies africaines aux forces néolibérales du marché. L'article tire des leçons de leurs succès et de leurs échecs. Les expériences du Ghana et de la Tanzanie montrent l'importance de la transformation de l'agriculture pour l'autosuffisance nationale ; la planification du développement comme mécanisme de connexion de tous les secteurs de l'économie ; ainsi que, l'énorme potentiel stratégique de

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l'État dans la production, la distribution et la création d'emploi. Parmi les principales lacunes, citons l'incapacité à déconnecter totalement les économies nationales de l'économie politique capitaliste mondiale, la dépendance à l'égard des recettes d'exportation des cultures commerciales et la marginalisation politique et économique des femmes dans la planification du développement après l'indépendance. L'article suggère que la planification progressive du développement, centrée sur la recherche d'une égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, est un point de départ essentiel pour imaginer et promouvoir des alternatives au néolibéralisme.

Introduction

For African nations at independence, social and economic overhaul was necessary to derive meaningful outcomes from their struggles against colonial rule (Dwyer and Zeilig 2012; Pieterse 2001). The first presidents of Ghana and Tanzania, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere, aware of the political and economic ramifications of their countries' incorporation into the global capitalist system, sought to pursue models other than the dominant capitalist, Western-induced modernisation. Their goals were clear: to build robust economies that respond to the social needs of their citizens. Development planning became the task of government and the strategies adopted determined which sectors were considered critical for focused, coordinated targeting. In both countries, important economic sectors were placed under state control, making Ghana and Tanzania two of the few African countries with high levels of state-dominated economies pre-structural adjustment.

What passes now as development planning within neoliberal IMF and World Bank prescriptions is fiscal and financial tinkering accompanied by the retreat of the nation-state from direct economic participation to satisfy human needs. The underlying idea of neoliberalism is that once market forces reach the required equilibrium, all sectors will respond with appropriate outcomes to the benefit of citizens, irrespective of their social and economic standing. Apprehensions have been expressed about the IMF and World Bank policy inadequacies and their detrimental effect on African nations such as Ghana and Tanzania. Such concerns dominated early discussions of the feminist group, the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) and later the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (SAPRIN).² Even as they deepen global poverty, adjustment and austerity policies continue to dominate, framed as the only choice for nation-building.

I use the term development planning in this article to refer to conscious attempts at nation-building that entail interventions directed at transforming

the entirety of social and economic systems (Reddock 2000). I note that mainstream definitions of development have, since the 1950s and 1960s, undergone several modifications, from the point it was conceived as a catch-up process for nations emerging out of colonial rule and those devastated by the Second World War (*ibid.*). The appropriateness of a Western industrial system fuelled by its private capital as the standard for development was called into question when the promised benefits failed to trickle down; however, emerging alternatives since the fall of the Berlin Wall (heralding the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe) have remained marginal, applied only in local contexts. Such attempts attract intense hostility from Western industrialised countries (Pieterse 2001; Reddock 2000). Questions about the efficacy of this vision of national wellbeing, and its accompanying structures, direct economic policymaking globally and in African countries in particular. Six decades after independence, the ability of chosen economic strategies to meet citizens' needs remains in question, heightening the need for credible alternatives.

The postcolonial models ended either violently disrupted, such as in the case of Ghana, or consumed under adjustment policies, like in Tanzania. Numerous studies have sought to explain the conditions that rendered the Ghanaian and Tanzanian experiments untenable; recurring conclusions insist they stand as viable models with important lessons for overcoming the current economic challenges facing African countries (Hansen 1989; Ninsin 1989a; Boesen, Madsen and Moody 1977). The main question of this article is: to what extent do the Ghanaian and Tanzanian economic models stand as viable alternatives to the dominant, neoliberal Western system? The goal is to distil lessons for autonomous national development planning that addresses the needs of Africans. In doing this, the article focuses attention on two key parts of development planning: agriculture and the place of women in nation-building.

The Study Goal, Data Sources and Analytical Frame

My aim is to explore how Ghana's Seven-Year Development Plan and provisions in Tanzania's Arusha Declaration set out to transform social and economic relations within inherited colonial structures. What striking features of these plans can be recovered to inform current efforts at development planning? To address the questions raised, I examine Ghana and Tanzania's planning policies around agriculture and provisions to address women's status in the immediate post-independence period. I draw on documented sources like the Ghanaian and Tanzanian development plans of the first ruling governments, and a selection of studies on their efforts. Further information was derived from expert interviews with a few key surviving members of Ghanaian interest groups like trade unionists,

academics, farmers and youth groups. I submit a deeper coverage of the Ghanaian case because of my familiarity with the context. I use the Tanzanian experience only as a supporting case.

My analytical frame is derived from the political economy approach, guided by a Marxist analysis of production relations, which maintains that central to meeting human needs is how the material base of a society is organised. The two main components, forces of production and relations of production, are accompanied by a superstructure which is a worldview that gives legitimacy to the main production relations and dominant mode of production. I therefore maintain that development planning is the decisions taken about production and distribution to meet citizens' needs within a nation, which emerge out of a theoretical understanding of what development entails (Tsikata 2001; Hill 2005). The theory that frames the development planning choices nations make is a political question derived from certain assumptions about social reality which shape strategic choices. The theoretical basis of development planning serves as the meeting of politics, ideology and explanation of social reality (Pieterse 2001).

A key assumption of the Marxist analysis I adopt is that development benefits accrue to social groups that control the means of production. The state serves to moderate the interests of the class that benefits from production relations. As such, it is critical to consider the actors, context, content and outcomes of development plans. In terms of context, the analysis sets out to describe the conception of the state's developmental role, whether as provider or facilitator, and the ensuing rights that citizens could demand. Examining key development actors entails outlining the prime movers (either internal or external to the nation), their spheres of influence and terrain of operation accorded within the development plans. What levels of control over production resources did the state devolve to such constituencies in the national development plans under study?

Within the Marxist approach, it is also important to consider the social power relations the plans set out to change: was there a perceived need to transform or reform the existing social relations identified as inimical to social progress within the agriculture sector? How did the plans analyse gender relations? To what extent did the Ghanaian and Tanzanian plans seek to use agriculture to restructure their national economies within the broader international capitalist system into which they had been drafted as subsidiary members during colonial rule? What did their development planners conceive as limiting to the agricultural sector and its potential role in national development? How did they set out to address the perceived limitations and what were their preferred alternatives? This article also considers the costing and financing strategies of both plans.

In exploring existing literature and other sources, I outline striking features of the two development plans, detailing their common grounds and divergences. The extent to which development planning options were directed at meeting national needs and what lessons they hold for the present is the subject of the sections that follow. This concentration directs focus on women and rural farmers as actors and interest groups shaping policy orientation and choices. The discussions examine women as a social category, noting how they were generally covered in the development plans and the role they were assigned in agriculture. Finally, I draw important lessons for national development planning around agricultural productivity and provisions for women's social status in the two countries.

Setting the Frame for Development Planning

To appreciate the task that confronted the Ghanaian and Tanzanian governments at independence, it is important to consider the state of economies passed on from colonial rule. The inherited colonial economies in both instances were entirely dominated by British private capital (Ngowi 2009; Ninsin 1989a; Becker and Craigie 2008). They were primary producers of raw materials (agricultural and mineral) for colonial metropolitan industries and purchasers of manufactured products from the metropolis. Unlike in countries of southern Africa, there were no colonial settler communities in Ghana and Tanzania. The main productive forces in both countries, beyond a sprinkling of waged workers in the mines, industries and administration, were peasant farmers. The entire colonial enterprise hardly thought of economic growth outside the interests of the British empire and very few believed that colonial subjects were entitled to benefits other than what the local economy could support (Frimpong-Ansah 1992). The colonial agenda had been subject to debate, nonetheless, and some had advocated for meeting the very simple needs of colonised peoples. Others, such as the economist Arthur Lewis, demanded industrialisation to link modernised agriculture to improve rural productivity, produce food for the domestic market, and release labour tied to the land for urban industry (*ibid.*; Becker and Craigie 2008). According to Frimpong-Ansah (1992), the scale of Lewisian agricultural and industrial transformation was predicated on central planning and the infusion of private capital, an obligation the colonial overlords did not want to assume.

When confronted with the real task of nation-building after independence, the need for alternatives to direct planning became an imperative. Ghana and Tanzania, amongst other African nations, were certain that, after an initial trial, the Western economic model under which they had been colonised was not an option. Nkrumah and Nyerere were clear about the

need to deviate from the Western capitalist models they inherited and seek alternatives that would shorten the national transition to development. The credible alternative were the socialist experiments that had propelled some unindustrialised Eastern European countries to catch up with industrialised Western nations. The added attraction of the Eastern European model was the fact that it was based on the two-stage transition from feudalism to socialism, bypassing capitalism (Dwyer and Zeilig 2012). According to observers like Boesen, Madsen and Moody (1977), Ninsin (1989b) and Jonah (1989), this realisation triggered a redirection of state intervention in nation-building.

Nkrumah and Nyerere set out to develop what they considered viable development alternatives on a brand of socialism that they identified as African. The central tenets of African socialism as basically egalitarian derived its ethos from African communalist values. The African communalistic ethos would allow a transition into socialism, avoiding the disruptive violent conflict associated with the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in Europe. The ultimate society envisioned was one devoid of what was perceived by the two governments as 'exploitation' from internal groups like urban dwellers and speculative businesses. In Ghana, the carrying agent of socialism was the waged worker who was going to produce national wealth in the state-owned industries powered by the Akosombo hydro-electric dam with raw materials derived from modernised agriculture. In Tanzania, it was the peasant in Ujamaa villages practising egalitarian living in an African family style. Both evolved one-party states as the only political system that could deliver and sustain socialism; political pluralism was considered divisive and unable to ensure state control over national resources for the benefit of its citizens (Ayarbior 2016). Tanzania turned to rural development guided by traditional egalitarian principles to deliver citizens from poverty and ignorance, while Ghana proceeded with strategies to reduce dependence on Western imports through rapid industrialisation by modernising agriculture, a strategy termed import substitution industrialisation (ISI). Both placed the foundation of the national development plans in agriculture.

Nyerere was president from 1962 until 1985 and Nkrumah from 1957 to 1966. Whatever potential Nkrumah's autonomous thinking model held for Ghana was curtailed by a violent *coup d'état* less than three years into its implementation. The only plan that received mention after Nkrumah's was the Five-Year Development Plan of the Supreme Military Council (SMC), the second military junta. The SMC's development plan was projected to cover 1975/76 to 1979/80, but its implementation triggered the economic crisis of the mid-1970s that led the country to neoliberal adjustment in the

1980s. Under Nyerere, Tanzania had the chance to implement the post-independence development planning strategy over two and a half decades. The survival of Nyerere's Ujamaa, with the buy-in of international aid agencies which invested in sustaining it, might suggest it was not perceived as a threat to the global capitalist order. Tanzania faced both internal and external resistance to the implementation of Ujamaa, nonetheless (Boesen, Madsen and Moody 1977).

The Tanzanian Agricultural Context at Independence

Tanzanian socialism was conceived as a fifteen-year, long-term plan covering the period between 1964–80 and implemented in a series of five-year development plans.³ The goal was to improve the standard of living by altering production structures through the expansion of industrial production, accompanied by a corresponding reduction of the agricultural share in the national economy. The first Five-Year Development Plan had Tanzanisation as its principal goal. It was under the second Five-Year Development Plan that the Arusha Declaration emerged. Hartmann, quoting Coulson, notes that Ujamaa was incorporated into the second plan because Nyerere insisted on it, presenting it as a policy for rural development based on village settlements provided with modern social welfare services (1983: 395). Enterprises based on foreign-supported, capital-intensive production were considered an extension of colonial exploitation, especially of rural dwellers. The two-pronged industrial strategy opted to develop Tanzania and stem rural/urban migration was the Basic Industrial Strategy and the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) (Kent and Mushi 1995). Malima considers the third Five-Year Plan as truly Tanzanian, since it was 'the first of its kind to be drawn up almost completely by Tanzanians and be subjected to thorough and arduous scrutiny by both the Tanzania Planning Commission as well as the Central Committee and the National Executive Committee of the Party' (1979: 48). The first and second were developed by foreign experts 'with very little political input either from the people, its leaders, or technocrats' (*ibid.*). Tanzania was considered then as lacking the needed technical expertise to draft its development plan.

At independence, under the Nyerere-led Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), Tanzania's developmental problems were initially diagnosed as attitudinal (Schneider 2015). This position changed in 1967 with the Arusha Declaration,⁴ which explicitly stated ideological tradition shifted Ujamaa socialism from a state of mind to political action (Boesen, Madsen and Moody 1977). The developmental challenges identified were poverty, ignorance and disease, in a society where few individuals controlled the

major means of production and wealth. Unacceptable wealth accumulation through extortion, discrimination, bribery and corruption was considered exploitative. The declaration emphasised that Tanzania's wealth, used by the state to provide urban comforts like utilities and modern infrastructure, was derived from rural production, a situation that makes rural/urban disparities exploitative. The task of nation-building was moving Tanzania and Africa out of poverty, ignorance and disease to prosperity, a mission depicted as warfare.

Generally, the eradication of exploitation in Tanzania was seen as contingent on the absence of class society like capitalism and feudalism, as well as of gross income inequality. Political action expected to abolish exploitation was dependent on what was touted as socialist principles of self-reliance, a strong sense of solidarity, and mutual self-help based on the bond between family members. Additional, mainly economic conditions necessary for removing exploitation were full employment, a just return for labour performed, and the guaranteed right of future generations to natural resources. The prerequisites of development mapped out in the declaration were: the people, land, good policies defined as socialism, self-reliance and leadership, intelligence, and hard work.

Measures that would help Tanzania transition to socialism included the nationalisation of public assets, leadership code of behaviour, and wage reforms (*ibid.*). The Tanzanian state was assigned control over the principal means of production and exchange like land-based natural resources, forests, water and minerals as well as manufacturing, commercial and financial outlets. In this, agriculture was expected to play a key role. In fact, increased agricultural outputs for home consumption and export were outlined as the only means Tanzania could develop. Tanzania's interest was production for domestic consumption based on the conviction that the direct beneficiaries should be the rural agriculture labour force. A developmental goal was to alter rural production relations by dealing with access to productive resources. Cooperatives were set up as the principal means for organising production. Institutional support for Ujamaa included the ministries of Regional Administration and Rural Development, Development Planning and Agriculture. The Presidential Planning Team of five experts and a TANU regional official also directly reported to the president in the areas of agriculture, cooperatives, land planning, hydraulic development and economics.

Ujamaa was adopted to support Tanzania's drive to socialism. Communal life was one of the pillars of socialism, egalitarianism and the eradication of poverty as its central ethos. According to Hartmann (1983), Nyerere's view of development was influenced by the need to have peasants in nucleated settlements to facilitate provisioning of social services. Though the

productivity goal was compromised through cracks in implementation, the social investments in health, education and national unity were high. An outcome of Ujamaa and later villagisation was the resettlement of 11 million Tanzanians by 1977. Another was the homogenisation of languages that is said to be at the basis of Tanzania's political stability (Hartmann 1983).

The Ghanaian Context at Independence

At independence, Nkrumah's government inherited the 1951 colonial government's development plan, which was reduced from its original ten-year phase to five. After independence, this colonial development plan's implementation was extended to 1959 (Bennett-Koufie 2018). For Ninsin, the colonial development plan follows the industrialisation-by-invitation (IBI) model. He insists that Ghana had adequate capital to initiate independent industrialisation without international finance capital (Ninsin 1989b). For others, however, it was simply a pragmatic approach to avoid providing the colonial government reason to postpone Ghana's independence (Bennett-Koufie 2018). Whatever the reason for not abandoning the colonial ten-year development plan, the inadequacy of the Lewisian-inspired IBI to transform the Ghanaian economy became apparent by the end of the 1950s (Ninsin 1989b). Private capital inflows were disappointing, trade and budget deficits were high, and so was the country's indebtedness (Jonah 1989; Ninsin 1989b; Sowa 1989).⁵

Nkrumah subsequently launched his first seven-year national development plan; his opening speech questioned the validity of the ten-year colonial strategy, pronouncing it 'a collection of various individual petty projects ... in preparation for future planning' (Republic of Ghana 1964: ix), further explaining that:

[a]t the conclusion of this programme, it became necessary to pause for two years in order to consolidate our position. By the time we reached the stage of implementing the next phase of our programme, it had already become quite clear to us that the only real solution to the reconstruction of Ghana lay, in the long run, in the adoption of a socialist and co-operative programme for industry and the mechanisation and diversification of our agriculture (*ibid.*: x).

The fourteen-chapter development plan covered topics such as agriculture, industry and mining, infrastructure, education, human resource and employment, health and housing, the hydro-electric Volta River Project, public administration, and foreign trade. The remaining chapters detailed financing, implementation, and management strategies. The strategy was two-pronged: deal with the crisis of the neo-colony through state appropriation of capital for investment and begin the path towards socialism.

Strategies for the development of agriculture after independence are captured in the fourth chapter of Ghana's Seven-Year-Development Plan. For the framers of the plan, agriculture and industry were the most strategic sectors: first as entry points for state control over 'supplies and vital springs of economic activity' (Republic of Ghana 1964: 3) and as the basis for generating the needed resources to grow the national economy. According to the plan, at independence, agriculture supplied 77 per cent of domestic exports, employing about 67 per cent of the labour force. The productive capacity was, however, low, and unable to meet national food needs, causing rising food costs and leading to growing imports to supplement productivity deficits. Rising food prices were noted as a threat to the standard of living, political stability and constituted an economic drain. High food prices made Ghanaian products uncompetitive in the global export market. Lower food prices, therefore, became critical for fiscal, monetary and political stability.

The plan was founded on the Convention People's Party (CPP)'s Programme of 'Work and Happiness', and it hinged on four 'cardinal points' named as citizens' welfare, the establishment of a socialist society, African unity, and independence and global peace. It was to serve as the path for building 'a self-sustaining economy based on socialist production and distribution in Ghana' (*ibid.*: vii). In short, the plan aimed to facilitate the transition to socialism, described as citizens' control over their national economy to promote their well-being in the absence of worker exploitation irrespective of their location, be it rural or urban. A socialist society was considered the fastest way to meet the needs of Ghanaians. In the interim, Ghana was going to run a 'mixed economy ... in which public and private enterprise will each have a legitimate, recognisable and very important contribution to make towards economic growth' (*ibid.*: 2). Strategic areas outlined for state control included those providing the basic living needs of Ghanaians such as utilities, raw materials, light and heavy industries, as well as the production of consumer goods with high rates of returns.

To provide a robust foundation for success, substructures like education and research were set in place. Education was designed to supply the Ghanaian workforce with the necessary skills to advance industry and agriculture. Specialised institutions proposed to oversee its implementation included, at the apex, the National Planning Commission, and supporting committees like State Planning and Management, Budget, and Foreign Exchange. The Academy of Sciences and other research institutions were assigned the responsibility to provide cutting-edge research and advanced technology for pursuing the development agenda. The governmental machinery was slated for reform in tune with policy prescriptions. Nkrumah's lament was the inability of the plan to cover the entire African continent.

Farmers, Agriculture and Agricultural Modernisation

Part of African nations' persistent food sufficiency deficits have been blamed on the rural policies of colonial governments and the apparent absence of any effort after independence to break up this colonial strategy (Konings 1981; Dwyer and Zeilig 2012). However, evidence from the Ghanaian and Tanzanian post-independence plans suggest otherwise; breaking the dependence on food imports and delivering adequate nutrition and income for peasant farmers were critical to their developmental agendas. Agriculture was, therefore, one sector where the socialist principles of both governments were played out clearly. Agricultural modernisation was given a prominent place in their development plans. Various modes were advanced in the two countries under study, such as feeding the planned industries and diversifying the mono-export crop production. It was, however, the collectivised production mode that was going to drive the sector. In the next two sections, I examine the agricultural plans of Ghana and Tanzania for their viability in addressing the stated concerns.

Farmers and Agriculture in Ghana

Ghana's agricultural policy, outlined in the Seven-Year Development Programme according to Gyimah-Boadi (1989) and Hansen (1989), was informed by economic and political considerations. The most pressing economic conditions at independence were the need to provide raw materials for the ISI programmes and capital accumulation to support both hard and soft infrastructure. The Ghanaian population was expected to increase by almost 20 per cent in the planned implementation period and therefore increased productivity was necessary to reduce the domestic food production deficit. Hansen (1989) contends the nation's food deficit was blamed on production and distribution or marketing. Low technology and techniques, as well as low-quality seed, livestock and poultry breed, constrained productivity. This situation was further worsened by undue post-harvest losses and lack of reliable marketing facilities, producing price disincentives (Gyimah-Boadi 1989; Hansen 1989). Additional problems included heavy reliance on cocoa mainly for international trade and revenue for the import of capital and consumer goods. The solutions to the identified challenges were captured in the development plan under three tasks, namely: nutritional improvement and the elimination of the food sufficiency deficit, raising incomes in Ghana's rural communities with a special focus on the Northern and Upper Regions,⁶ and increasing raw material production for local industry and the export market to ameliorate the nation's balance of

payments. These goals, in combination with geographical conditions, were expected to influence the regional production of agricultural commodities.

Modernising agriculture production was seen largely as a fitting response to increasing agricultural production. A three-pronged strategy outlined to achieve this was: support for peasant farmers, setting up cooperative and state farms to undertake large-scale farming to feed agricultural industries and produce cereals and meat for the urban market, and turning marketing bodies under state-control. The plan targeted increasing output per farmer and acreage under cultivation. Water conservation and irrigation were key priorities and the goal was to put 80,000 acres of land under cultivation. Greater expansion in the grants for agriculture research was to help solve the problems of seed and stock and outdated farming practices. State-controlled marketing bodies were also established and funds provided to build storage facilities to minimise post-harvest losses and remove from farmers the burden of storing and marketing agriculture produce. The fisheries sub-sector attracted attention as the main avenue for meeting the protein needs in the country. It was to be supported by the State Fishing Corporation with an independent fleet of trawlers that were expected to be increased. Its targeted production was 30,000 tons per annum to be supported by nation-wide cold storage and distribution facilities. Private fishermen were going to receive larger motorised boats and training to operate them, as well as encouragement to organise cooperatives to purchase boats as a means to overcome high prices.

Agricultural modernisation was directed at raising the standard of living of citizens through increased incomes, better nutrition and the stimulation of alternative employment. Modernised agriculture was also considered fundamental to industrialisation since in addition to serving as the main source of industrial raw materials, the sector held the bulk of the nation's labour force. Restructuring agriculture was therefore considered necessary to change employment composition and release labour for rapid industrialisation. Drafters of the plan were aware of the inherent danger in releasing agricultural labour without a corresponding increase in productivity to make up for the reduction in the number of persons working on the land.

The political reasons that shaped the strategic direction of Ghana's agriculture development plan were, according to Gyimah-Boadi (1989) and Hansen (1989), the need to mitigate the growing hostility led by the opposition in its Ashanti Region stronghold. Both cite, in support, the organisations created to facilitate rural, large-scale agriculture: the United Ghana Farmers' Cooperatives Council (UGFCC), the Young Farmers' League (YFL) and the Workers' Brigade. The YFL operated settlement farms for young persons (Gyimah-Boadi 1989). Others were the Ministry of Cooperatives, which

developed out of a department under Local Government and Cooperatives to oversee that the cooperative movement was set up to mitigate absentee farmers' stiff resistance to the agricultural project (Kwabena Senkyire 2018). According to Baffour Kwabena Senkyire:

Cooperatives were central to the 7-year development programme. Government had no control over cooperatives but needed to use them for promoting and developing self-government. Cooperatives were essential; you cannot talk about socialism without cooperatives. They are necessary to develop agriculture because farmers are individualistic in nature. Cooperatives will help bring them together. But Farmers' cooperatives were more functional in the cocoa sector and operated more as marketing entities (*ibid.*).

The UGFCC was incorporated into the central committee of the CPP and their members were given state appointments (Ninsin 1989b). The incorporation was considered mutually beneficial. For the government, beyond the ability to control its members, it allowed better appropriation of capital for nation-building. The state, as an employer and appropriator of surplus, qualified Ghana as state capitalist and less as socialist. The UGFCC became a conduit for appropriating the surplus production of self-employed farmers. Through the Cocoa Marketing Board as the main buyer of cocoa, about 23 per cent tax was imposed on earnings from the sale of cocoa during the 1960 to 1965 era.

The agriculture sector, like the rest of the national economy, was slated to operate under mixed public/private production relations. Identified farming production systems were: smallholder peasant farms, large-scale farms, state farms, and Workers' Brigades and Farmer cooperatives like the UGFCC and YFL. As an apex coordinating body, the State Farms Corporation was expected to 'play a leading part in the production of sugar-cane, cotton, rubber, non-apparel fibres and meat where large-scale organisation has decided advantages in production' (Republic of Ghana 1964: 79). Workers' Brigade farms were expected to adopt the operational models of state farms, with the state financing initial investments. The state farms and those operated by the Workers' Brigade were slated to adopt new technologies on a large scale, not only to boost productivity but to serve as experimental farms for small farmers to facilitate the diffusion of new agriculture techniques and practices. Private farmers were going to be encouraged to form cooperatives to access modern technologies like farm machinery and inputs as well as credit.

Unquestionably, land played a great role in the success or otherwise of agriculture generally and rural agriculture in particular. What made land access and control even more imperative was the fact that rural agriculture in both Ghana and Tanzania was dominated by peasant production. Boesen,

Madsen and Moody's definition of peasantry as those 'whose ultimate security lies in their having certain rights in the land and in the labour of family members on the land' (1977: 159) explains the situation. The dominant land tenure system granted members of land-holding groups communal use rights. Management of such use rights was vested in traditional authorities like chiefs, spiritual leaders, and heads of clans and extended families who held the allodial title in the interest of the landholding group. But communal tenure practices were, in some instances, at variance with the development plans, especially where large-scale land acquisition was necessary and farmers had to be settled on land outside their traditional land holding group.

Development planning had to address the problems of large-scale land acquisition and tenure security for tenant and migrant farmers. According to Ninsin (1989c), three laws⁷ were set out to reform local government practice in Ghana and manage the influence of authority over land. Other laws more directly related to land, according to Ninsin, 'gave state power over stool and other lands; power to authorise the acquisition and use of such lands for either private or public purposes; and to regulate the collection and use of stool revenue' (*ibid.*: 168).⁸ Legislation gave the state control over land in Ghana, allowing it to circumscribe communal tenure practices, support freehold land acquisition and acquire land for collective farming schemes, leading to state interference with traditional practices (*ibid.*). Meeting the interests of farmer groups led to a rift with chiefs, largely over the land question (*ibid.*). Ninsin points out the limited social impact of these laws, primarily from the fact that they failed to address the root of the exploitative relations between landowners and tenant peasant farmers, 'access to land and security of right in, and of title to, land' (*ibid.*: 169). The main issues at the base of production as related to peasant farmers' control over land, tenure security, and fees were not directly addressed. The limited beneficial impact of these legal instruments was further reduced by ignorance compounded by literacy challenges.

Some achievements were recorded: by 1964 the number of state farms had grown from forty-two to 112; the YFL had thirty-nine camps; the Workers' Brigade had forty-three farms; and the number of societies operating under the UGFCC had increased from 992 to 1732 (Dadson 1991). However, the implementation of the collectivised farming model under the Seven-Year Development Plan ran into some difficulties, like shortfalls in terms of set targets (*ibid.*). The state farms deemed the most productive were operating well below target, with under a fifth of the one million acres of land acquired under cultivation. Meanwhile, the YFL could only attain 1 per cent of the projected 10 per cent of the national cultivated area it had been assigned.

The main challenge undermining the effectiveness of the agriculture strategies was timing and sequencing, largely from rolling out a plan whose support systems were yet to be developed. Thus, Dadson (1991) contends that the speed of implementation meant that before supporting organs could yield their targets, actual implementation had begun creating shortfalls in personnel, planting materials, and marketing channels. Agriculture modernisation was riding on mechanisation, fertilizer, and improved planting materials. The nation was, however, dependent on imports for major equipment and their parts. Again, poor scheduling of imports as well as trained technicians rendered almost 80 per cent of the imported farm machinery unusable (*ibid.*). In terms of management, the multiplicity of organs and ministries made autonomous decision-making at the farm level, especially within the state farms, complicated. In fact, Dadson (1991) remains sceptical about the benefits of collectivised farming, blaming managerial and implementation tardiness. It was not clear how the collectivised farming production modes that had been introduced – state-controlled farms, cooperative farming and YFL and Workers' Brigade – were enough to transition capitalist production relations within agriculture into socialism. These shortcomings notwithstanding, Ghana set up a wide range of agriculture-based industries, with elaborate storage and marketing systems, that delivered food products to the urban waged workers right within their workplaces. The infrastructure set, once managerial challenges had been straightened out, should have helped ensure that some of the current problems carried over from colonial rule, like the food production deficit, could have been overcome.

Farmers and Agriculture in Tanzania

In Tanzania, agriculture was seen as 'the basis for development' (Ibhawoh and Dibua 2003: 64), one that was, as in Ghana, conceived of as a socialist project. The policy environment guiding agriculture included the five-yearly development plans of the Arusha Declaration, and several policies passed between 1969 and 1973 on rural development and collectivised agriculture. In 1967, the year of the Arusha Declaration, the supporting Five-Year Development Plan targeted increased food production, and improved educational and health access. The goal of the second Five-Year Development Plan was to ensure the agriculture sector would produce enough food for the growing Tanzanian population, provide raw materials for industry, and produce cash crop to earn foreign exchange to finance imports. The strategy was to transform the production techniques of peasant farmers and improve that of those identified as progressive farmers who had already adopted

modern techniques and were into capitalist production. Commercial farming was also targeted in earlier development plans. Generally, commercial farmers were in the minority, made up of foreigners, but responsible for over two-fifths of the value of national exports. The specific targets set for agriculture production were to overcome some of the basic hindrances, emanating from the utilisation of outdated agricultural practices and techniques, like being overly rain-dependent and utilising rudimentary tools like the hand-hoe (Malima 1979: 48). The strategies included the introduction of animal-driven ploughs and soil fertility enhancement through fertilizer and manure use as well as irrigation. The idea was to incorporate peasant agriculture into the market economy and render them less able to depend on subsistence farming by restricting them to few crops.

Ujamaa villages were conceived as cooperative production systems based on the 'traditional African practices of communal living and social equity' (Ibhawoh and Dibua 2003: 67). Beginning with Ujamaa in 1968 and later villagisation in 1974, rural relocation and resettlement transformed from voluntary choice to force (Hartmann 1983). In a bid to increase productivity, the government supplied support to Ujamaa village dwellers in the form of agriculture inputs like seeds, insecticides, farming technology-tractors, and ploughs. Other inputs included infrastructure such as utilities, transportation, storage, social services, and marketing facilities and extension services (Boesen, Madsen and Moody 1977). Ujamaa had varying levels of success, faring better in areas of dispersed settlements, higher poverty and lower levels of cash crop production. For some, the introduction of villagisation policy, presented as a bifurcation of two elements of Ujamaa, 'living together' and 'working together', represented a vague admission that the earlier Ujamaa policy had failed (Hartmann 1983: 273).

The role of land in agriculture policy as outlined in the Ghanaian case applied in Tanzania as well. Direct management of land by the state was more successful in Tanzania than in Ghana. Thus, state acquisition of land, introduced by constitutional fiat, made the president the highest authority over land in Tanzania. State intervention was used to regulate access for poor rural farmers and to meet large-scale agrarian policy goals in Tanzania. Some of this authority was extended to the minister in charge of energy and mining, to facilitate land acquisition for mining (Schneider 2015). Such widespread authority was imperative for Tanzania's Ujamaa.

Several implementation strategies limited the beneficial outcomes of Ujamaa or rural transformation just as in Ghana. Named shortcomings were evidenced in the inability to meet set goals and failure to achieve agrarian change to catalyse socialist transformation. The causes named are

numerous, including the lack of clarity around management responsibilities to ensure delivery of policy goals, and clear-cut implementation strategies. Some accounts have noted the limited capacity of peasant production to expand to meet the needs of the capitalist society, an observation that is not borne out by Ghana's experience of cocoa production. Hartmann rejects these explanations and looks for answers rather in policy formulation and implementation processes. For her, the multiplicity of policymaking sites (government, party and presidency), as well as the disjuncture within these sites arising out of their opposing goals and motives, set the stage for policy collapse (Hartmann 1983). However, Hartmann suggests that the disconnect between president, politicians and technocrats in rural policymaking and implementation was deliberate, as it served the interest of Nyerere by offering him some 'manoeuvrability' to push his ideas (1983: 88). It also allowed party members to have their way.

The original intent was to use Ujamaa for the grassroots mobilisation of rural Tanzanians; however, strategies did not exist to connect the political party (TANU) structures with those of the Ujamaa villages. Existing structures were hardly functional and those connecting village-level decisions to district, regional and national decision-making were weak. Lost in this were the participating members of the Ujamaa villages, who were effectively removed from practical decision-making and reduced to passive recipients of support:

their labour inputs, which were small and irregular, and ... participation in meetings where the role of the villagers was mainly passive in approving the proposal presented to them by government officials directly or through the village leadership (Boesen, Madsen and Moody 1977: 154–5).

By 1973, the state shifted from incentives to coercion (forced relocation and imprisonment) to ensure mass relocation (*ibid.*). Rural Tanzanian attitudes, according to Ibhawoh and Dibua, 'ranged from scepticism and mistrust to outright resentment and opposition' (2003: 68). While coercion entrenched resentment, making the scheme further unpopular, incentives dampened the motivation for increased productivity.

Other gaps included the fact that Ujamaa, though framed as benefiting from traditional modes of living in Africa, actually provided limited opportunities to incorporate traditional agricultural practices as they were deemed backward relative to Western-style agriculture. The project was also supported by an overblown public service, a situation which Kent and Mushi (1995), quoting Biersteker (1990) and Schott (1992), describe as 'wider Keynesianism' fraught with the tendency to overload the state (1995). Thus, while the public service grew at 15 per cent per annum, 'agriculture and industry together increased at an average of about 3.4%' (Malima 1979: 48).

TANU had three direct implementation responsibilities: providing political outlook, coordination and mobilisation (Hartmann 1983). These differing aims and institutional responsibilities, for Hartmann (1983), led to divergent interventions leading to reduction in agriculture productivity. For example, while some crops increased productivity, such as tobacco, tea and cashew nuts, other major export and food crops did not fare well. Agricultural production decreased in the period between the first and second development plans, though there was an increase in industrial production (Malima 1979). Tanzania became more dependent on foreign aid in 1975, six years after the Arusha Declaration, than it was before. According to Hartmann, 'the aid component was 24.4 per cent of total development expenditure in 1967, but 32.5 per cent in 1970/71, and 62 per cent in 1975/6' (1983: 8). This intensified decline in agriculture in the early 1970s, compelling the three organs to coordinate their activities through a joint platform. It also marked the shift from Ujamaa to villagisation. But for some observers villagisation was the final nail in the coffin of agricultural decline, coinciding with a drought and famine that forced Tanzania to import food at a time when its foreign earnings were under stress from higher crude oil bills and also strained reserves (*ibid.*). Other accounts of the failure of the villagisation project were the high levels of capitalisation that it attracted. Insufficient funds rendered most of the targets set as unattainable.

Women as a Development Constituency

This section presents an account of women's activism in colonial Ghana and Tanzania and the extent to which their mobilising and organising potential was effectively channelled into post-independence development planning generally and agriculture in particular. Women were an important constituency in nationalist struggles across Africa. Various accounts show that in Ghana and Tanzania, women's participation in pre-independence struggles provided the mobilising pivot for the CPP and TANU. This was however, not reflected in the elite and male-dominated nationalist leadership (Dwyer and Zeilig 2012).⁹

Ghanaian Women and the Seven-Year Development Plan

During the independence struggle, women were at the forefront of protests and mass mobilisation. Women traders were instrumental to the success of hold-ups in the trade of imported goods and cocoa, and women also deployed large financial outlays for the CPP to function as a political entity. Tsikata attributes the growth of the CPP to women 'who toured the regions of the country alongside the men' (1989: 77). Manuh (1991) adds that the

appointment of four women as propaganda secretaries – Leticia Quaye, Hannah Cudjoe, Ama Nkrumah and Sophia Doku – was responsible for mobilising party members. They carried out educational programmes for women in the party and were critical thinkers. Mabel Dove Danquah and Akua Asabea Ayisi worked to produce the CPP's newspaper, *The Evening News*, also contributing articles (*ibid.*). Other contributions mentioned included operating singing and cultural groups to liven up party meetings and serving water (*ibid.*). In fact, some women, such as Leticia Quaye, Akua Asabea Ayisi and sixty-year-old Arduah Ankrah suffered time in the colonial prisons on account of their activism in the CPP (*ibid.*).

Ghana's Seven-Year Development Plan recognised the impact of women's social status on nation-building and included attempts to address them. In Ghana, there was a conscious effort to address women's absence in political decision-making in the party and national politics. Nkrumah's affirmative action provisions after independence ensured that women were part of the legislature. The Representation of the People's Act (Women Members), passed in 1959, later amended in 1960, saw ten women elected to the National Assembly.¹⁰ Other provisions included appointments to ministerial and district level headship as well as on boards of corporations and schools (Manuh 1991). Such efforts failed to take into consideration the role of women during the independence struggle and sought to discourage independent women's mobilisation, instead channelling their efforts into apolitical ventures. Beyond Nkrumah, who recognised women's potential benefit to the party and country, the general attitude of the CPP hierarchy was one of hostility and suspicion, with some fearing women could overturn male dominance in the party (Tsikata 1989). Tsikata explained that the General Secretary of the CPP, who had been assigned the task of organising women, 'saw an organisation of women as a potential threat to the position of men, and dismissed the task of organising them ... [as] a great inconvenience' (1989: 80). In Ghana, two important women's organisations, the Ghana Women's League¹¹ and Ghana Federation of Women,¹² were encouraged to merge by the ruling party into the National Council of Ghana Women (NCGW) (Manuh 1991). The NCGW, like the farmers' organs, was incorporated into the ruling CPP. The task of the NCGW was organising rallies, building day-care centres for working women, and networking with other women's organisations beyond Ghana (Tsikata 1989). The CPP constitution was at pains to ensure that women did not develop autonomy within the party, stating that:

Each party branch shall have a women's section to cater for the special interests of women, but the women's section shall be part and parcel of the branch. There shall be only one executive committee for each branch, including the women's section. The same applies to the ward and constituency.¹³

Unlike in the Tanzanian Arusha Declaration, beyond the specific mention of women in relation to high childbearing rates, Ghanaian women's contribution to the composition of the development plan and potential for the achievement of development goals were acknowledged, stating that 'like other progressive countries, Ghana should make full use of the potential of female labour force especially now that, with universal education, these girls will be educated by the time they are ready to enter the labour market' (Republic of Ghana 1964: 152). Domesticity was highlighted as essential for women in the Ghanaian plan, indicated in the statement: '[f]or girls it is intended that, in addition to learning some of the commercial and manipulative skills taught to the boys, there will also be training in such specialised fields as domestic science and handicrafts' (*ibid.*: 152).

After independence, women benefited more from economic and work-related legislative changes and improved access to social services like education, health and wider employment opportunities in the formal sector. Educational expansion resulting from the Accelerated Plan for Education in 1952 and the Education Act of 1961 gave women in Ghana a new impetus, increasing their enrolment from primary to tertiary institutions like universities. Adult education programmes gave older women opportunities to acquire literacy skills. While educational enrolment and participation rates still failed to match those of men, increased opportunities enhanced women's access to formal sector career opportunities. There were, additionally, attempts to create in-roads for women in hitherto male-dominated occupations like tractor driving and the military, both infantry and the Air Force as pilots (Manuh 1991). Thus, according to Manuh, '[b]y the end of the CPP rule (1966), there were a number of women doctors, dentists, lawyers, graduate teachers, administrative officers, parliamentarians and a judge of the Supreme Court' (*ibid.*: 117). Other benefits were in the area of legislation like the Industrial Relations Act of 1958 (IRA 56) that favoured working women in the formal waged sector. Discriminatory pay policy between women and men was made illegal, and women could get pregnant while working and not suffer loss of employment. They were, in addition, entitled to maternity leave with pay (*ibid.*). Employment opportunities were created in the non-waged cooperatives.

The strategies largely failed to match their pre-independence potential (Manuh 1991; Tsikata 1989). The direct benefits of the development strategies to rural women farmers and urban traders were few. It is their petty-bourgeois counterparts who gained prominence (Manuh 1991). Perhaps the intention to modernise the Ghanaian economy through industrialisation led to the neglect of specific efforts to improve the lot of women farmers and

traders. The main beneficiaries of the CPP rule have been acknowledged as petty-bourgeois women whom Manuh blames for unsuccessful attempts to enact legislation to protect women's interest in marriage, divorce and inheritance (1991). Such legislation might have provided women farmers some measure of tenure security in the event of marriage failure through divorce or widowhood. Women's land rights remain a problem and there were attempts to address this in a new land Act passed by Ghana's parliament in July 2020. The Act merged the numerous and often conflicting legal instruments on land in Ghana. Thus, women might have gained entry into large-scale plantation agriculture as waged workers under favourable conditions and the largely peasant rural women farmers might have gained access to improved farming techniques and inputs as well as storage and marketing facilities. The key question of access to the main means of agricultural production – land – was inadequately addressed.

Tanzania Women and Ujamaa

Tanzanian women, like their Ghanaian counterparts, were also critical in mobilising for the nationalist struggle that brought independence, financing political events, and connecting party leadership with their members. Their presence in the ruling party was just a chance occasion, as Geiger's (1987) account shows. It was fuelled by Bibi Titi Mohamed's connection to the party through family ties. The turning point was the visit of John Hatch, who insisted on meeting women members of the party, an event that galvanised Bibi Titi Mohamed to expand women's membership in the party.¹⁴ Like their Ghanaian counterparts, the most active Tanzanian women in TANU were urban located traders 'in a range of occupations vital to urban existence' (Geiger 1987: 10).

After independence, Tanzanian women lost their political clout as a constituency with the power of contestation to threaten national or party stability. All independent women's organisations were replaced with the *Umoja wa Wananwake wa Tanganyika* (Women's Unity of Tanganyika, UWT). The Tanzanian state saw no need to involve women and few were seen in political leadership positions in either parliament, public office, or the party. Dwyer and Zeilig explain: 'few women MPs were elected, and female ministerial representation was generally limited to tokenistic areas such as Social Welfare' (2012: 66). Geiger suggests the demand for literacy was an excuse to exclude women from political decision-making in independent Tanzania.¹⁵ They suffered rejection, such as Bibi Titi Mohammed whose husband, under pressure from his male colleagues, is reported to have divorced her (Dwyer and Zeilig 2012; Tsikata 1989).

As such, post-independence benefits in Tanzania, just like in Ghana, accrued to women with Western education, usually those outside grassroots mobilising. Overnight, women who were not part of the nationalist struggles for independence gained attention as viable leaders. Activists like Mwanvita Mnyamaini and Binti Kipara got jobs in the formal sector as unskilled waged workers. Western education, not activism, became the resource propelling women into political leadership; formal education qualified women to offer to their 'less fortunate' sisters lessons in domestic science. As domesticated citizens, Tanzanian women were provided educational programmes to enhance their ability to support rural family welfare. They were taught home economics practices informed by Western norms.

The agriculture project, the Ujamaa, was highly gendered, predicated on the assumption that women would perform as ideal mothers and wives with extreme devotion to the home. Gender roles were framed in the language of war, with 'the true female soldier of Ujamaa socialism [projected as] the devoted mother ... of her own children and by extension of the nation as a whole' (Lal 2010: 6). As soldiers, Lal (2010) goes on to explain, women were to be 'guardians of food security and family well-being.' Thus:

the plan proposed a range of projects, including seminars and trainings in home economics, the establishment of day-care centres, and the initiation of collectively run women's petty commercial groups engaged in activities such as sewing, cooking, vegetable cultivation, and livestock management (*ibid.*: 7).

In the absence of a dedicated focus on women's needs, be they material or strategic, traditional women's groups emerged in most villages. According to Boesen, Madsen and Moody, the groups were organised around 'mutual insurance or public relief' to 'satisfy the need for some kind of external security for the survival of the household for which the women are otherwise directly responsible internally in the family' (1977: 138). Membership precluded women who were deemed to be unstable and therefore had no interest in agriculture like sex workers and those who rented rooms. The groups enabled women to deal with their immediate needs. Few of these groups were successful; a number were described as plagued by irregular meeting attendance, uneconomic enterprises, lack of integration into the mainstream Ujamaa structures, and a total absence of support from the wider society.

The gendered configuration of the family, and women's place in it, was, according to Lal (2010), not without contradictions. The relegation of women to the developmental roles of mother and wife were derived from what was supposedly indigenous. Evidence for it was sought in pre-European contact practices and norms. Yet the model projected was the monogamous nuclear family, an ideal based in Europeanised Christianity that abhorred

the traditional kinship structure, which formed the basis of Ujamaa living in rural Tanzania (Lal 2010: 3). The notions of femininity on which Ujamaa womanhood was founded were derived from traditional as well as colonial Christian ideas rooted in patriarchy with an ideological underpinning that separated the private/domestic from the public domain of activities. As Lal explains, underlying this was the TANU 'symbolic configuration of the [Tanzanian] nation as ... an extended socialist family' (Lal 2010: 10). Women who strayed from this ideal were attacked and subjected to various forms of violence, from verbal abuse to physical attacks. In urban spaces, radical unmarried women who took to Western fashion met the wrath of state representatives: young male militants empowered by Operation Vijana.

Dwyer and Zeilig (2012) observe that postcolonial governments, despite their anti-poverty and equality rhetoric, in practice reinforced feminine stereotypes. The emerging developmental focus, derived from the liberal approach, sought to include women into mainstream society, without questioning existing patriarchal structures that constrained their participation in political and economic spaces. Family-friendly provisions were designed to improve efficiency and not to address systems and structures generating gender inequality. The provisions in development plans for Ghana and Tanzania were, for all intents and purposes, informed by patriarchy, derived from prevailing colonial Christian notions of femininity and accompanying masculinities. They were at variance, in several instances, with the actual role women played in the independence struggle. The absence of a strong, politically aware women's movement was blamed for this state of affairs. Women's active participation in nationalist struggles did not emerge out of progressive attitudes towards women that were challenging patriarchal structures. This omission within the nationalist struggles to focus on structures generating women's inequality, created in the confluence of pre- and colonial systems, meant that the chance to deal with patriarchy in post-independence Ghana and Tanzania was lost.

Strategic Choices and Lessons for the Current Era

This section highlights lessons from the immediate post-independence period in Ghana and Tanzania for present-day development planning. In distilling strategies that can be recovered to inform current attempts at nation-building, I focus not only on the positives but the negatives as well, since both draw attention to practices that are at once supportive and inimical to nation-building. Using the Marxist analysis announced earlier, I begin by highlighting the ideological underpinnings of the development plans as well as key development actors and their levels of economic and political control.

My earlier accounts have covered to some extent attempts to outline factors that rendered these two experiments ineffective. These shortcomings, which I identify as the negatives, hold lessons for current day practices since they inform the policy-making terrain about what should be avoided. First, was the failure to fully de-link national economies from the global capitalist political economy that had positioned African countries as primary producers, a failing identified as the bane of all postcolonial attempts at building economic and political alternatives. Keeping the linkage amounted to 'effectively postponing any political formulation that would directly address class contradiction within African societies' (Dwyer and Zeilig 2012: 31). Second, the economic strategies adopted, according to Dwyer and Zeilig, failed to break the dependence on earnings from cash crop exports to finance development expenditure. Thus, agricultural development positioned export trade as a major development goal even as it sought to increase production for domestic consumption and industrialisation.

The states' influence over productive resources were constrained by the incorporation of national economies into the capitalist system, a situation that made foreign direct capital a principal productive resource for development. The ISI of Ghana and Ujamaa of Tanzania are described by Dwyer and Zeilig as: 'national developmentalism ... largely dependent on international forces beyond the control of supposedly sovereign African states' (2012: 35). This allowed the haemorrhaging of local foreign exchange reserves, through the repatriation of underserved profits. Using the example of cocoa earnings, Ninsin shows how a dramatic increase in cocoa production of over 200 per cent only earned Ghanaians an additional income of 7.7 per cent. This shortcoming continues to plague both nations as they still remain primary producers of agricultural products that form the main source of foreign exchange earnings to finance development. In Ghana, the land question remained unresolved, and the limited attempts to use legislation to restrict customary control over land and land rights of peasants and women were inadequately addressed.

Women's role in national development is an area that the development plans offer both positive and negative lessons for current attempts at nation-building. The discussions show how women's political roles in nationalist struggles were completely reversed after independence in a move that de-politicised their actions in both countries. Once independence was achieved, women underwent the full brunt of patriarchy in both Ghana and Tanzania. There was no effort by both political parties to harness the enormous political potential women had displayed during the struggle for independence for nation-building. As a result, the post-independence economic and political

benefits were claimed by men and urban educated women who took advantage of Western formal educational opportunities. In most instances, they had played no role in the nationalist struggles.

The development plans under study had different levels of gender sensitivity. Neither the Ghanaian nor the Tanzanian plan recognised prevailing gendered stratification of women as inimical to national development and requiring dedicated targeting. There were no strategies designed to confront the systemic structures of gender inequality. Their gender unawareness led to policies entrenching the status quo. Ghana's, however, can be said to be an example of how general provisions can benefit women, while at the same time pointing to the need for some level of gender sensitivity on the part of policymakers. In Ghana, where some attempt was made to boost women's political participation, it was mainly an affirmative action provision to integrate women into mainstream society by granting them access to political leadership. Limited as this provision was, it led to an increase of women in the legislature. To date, Ghana struggles to get an affirmative action bill passed to create some opening for women in political decision-making and national public life. What must be avoided is a concentration on women that makes them the problem and therefore puts on them the burden of resolving gender inequality.

There were issues of buy-in by the very people that development plans were meant to benefit; thus, an ideological constituency that owned the development plan, with deep understanding and implementation capacity, was missing. The failure on the part of the nationalist movements to cultivate class consciousness linking living conditions under colonial rule to global capitalism led to their demise after independence. The recourse to highhanded measures to rural Tanzanians' resistance and opposition to Ujamaa villagisation is a case in point. For some, like Schneider (2015), it was inevitable that authoritarian paternalism should be the option adopted to deal with the extreme resistance of rural dwellers to move into modern Ujamaa villages. The official perception was that, since the end was in the interest of the entire community, any means to achieve it were justified. However, it rendered the peasants powerless, transferring control to technocrats.

These failings notwithstanding, there are positive lessons for present-day development planning. They derive from the comprehensiveness of the plans that linked all sectors of national economies, the clear goal of self-sufficiency, especially in feeding the nation, framed by a vision of a state that responded to the needs of its citizens. The strengths of the development plans were their sturdy ideological focus that led them to prioritise domestic needs. Nkrumah and Nyerere set development planning as political projects and chose African socialism as their ideological orientation to deliver their nations out of

underdevelopment. They were convinced that capitalism could not hold the answer to the problems of the postcolonial state. The economies of both nations under discussion were planned with the simultaneous operation of the capitalist modes of production with other non-capitalist forms. Private capital was allowed space to operate under measured terms. The emergence of a domestic capitalist class was seen as inimical to the socialist orientation of the nations. State-controlled national capital was supposed to play the critical oversight role. Such a clear ideological position is lacking currently in both countries. Even as the rhetoric of 'Ghana beyond Aid' gains currency in national discourse, there is very little questioning of the dominant neoliberal framework that locks the country into the exploitative international economic relations that make aid a necessary component of the national budget.

The second lesson is the role of the state as a principal economic actor, holding onto strategic areas of production and distribution and generating employment. The economic framework, though situated in the capitalist mode, placed the state in between foreign direct capital and citizens, meditating to some extent the impact of capitalist exploitation. The state provided the needs of citizens with the surpluses appropriated by its direct participation in production. This is perhaps the strongest lesson that these two development plans hold for the current era where adjustment policies remove the state from direct production and submit meeting citizens' needs to the for-profit market.

The third lesson concerns how development planning grounded the two national economies on agriculture. Though the strategies differed in both countries, the approach speaks to a fundamental understanding of the basis for economic transformation. Slated as the key economic sector, prioritised goals for agriculture were to meet domestic consumption and industrial production. The differences lay in where the national wealth was going to be created to sustain the socialist ideals. In Ghana, it was the state enterprises; in Tanzania, it was the Ujamaa villages. Both believed and promoted collectivised farming as a solution to agriculture productivity, especially amongst peasant farmers. Attempts were also directed to control distribution and marketing of agricultural products. At present, both nations, like others across the African continent, still grapple with challenges that frustrate efforts at meeting food self-sufficiency. Ghana, for example, maintains a production shortfall in major cereal staples like rice and maize, as well as vegetables and fish, relying on imports to make up these deficits. Ghana and Tanzania stand to benefit from lessons these two plans hold for rural agricultural transformation to propel national development. Investment in agriculture was also an employment potential, especially for young persons.

Conclusion

In highlighting lessons, I note the directions pointed out by the negatives and the positives. In conclusion, I draw for emphasis the positives that should offer leads out of the myriad of African economic and social development, and negatives that should be avoided at all costs. The strongest point is in the conviction of Nkrumah and Nyerere that development planning extended beyond a purely economic affair into the political realm grounded on a philosophical orientation that gave it legitimacy. They both made a strong ideological grounding in the imperative for African socialism. Their variants of socialism were dictated by what they conceived as African humanist values. Development planning sought to regain and maintain state control over productive resources, making the direct producers the main beneficiaries. This was the origin of the uniqueness of these development plans. A fact that calls on governments in countries such as Ghana and Tanzania to begin a debate on an alternative world outlook that is critical of the validity of the claims of liberalism to submit production and distribution for national development to the dictates of the market. Developing an ideological outlook to guide development planning should be accompanied by an ideological constituency that will own and guide its progress.

Dealing with women's social positioning can derive lessons from what should not be done. Thus, strategies that are evolved should move away from integrating women into existing structures but rather target structures that uphold patriarchy as a political system with interests. Also to be outlined for focus in development plans are other systems of privilege that allow women to navigate gendered limitations better than others. Perhaps these shortcomings can be seen in the conceptions of socialism of the two leaders, Nkrumah and Nyerere, who believed in a non-violent transition from communalism.

The suggestions offered so far are only a preparation for a robust focus on agriculture. Nations have to recover agriculture as the base sector for development. Supporting farmers to acquire inputs, services, farming practices and productive resources then becomes a state responsibility. The problematic area of storage and marketing should also be a state responsibility that builds on collectivised farming. Collectivised farming holds the key to expand control over the national income, create employment and facilitate industrialisation. This, however, calls for a re-conception of the state's development role. As my analysis shows, this may only be achieved by resuming the efforts to break the hold of capital over African economies to capture policy, a move that calls for an ideological shift.

Notes

1. University of Cape Coast. This article was completed as part of the Post-Colonialisms Today project.
2. See for example The Dakar Declaration on Another Development with Women (AAWORD 1982) and the SAPRIN (2004) publication, *The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis, Poverty and Inequality*.
3. The First Five-Year Plan was from 1964 to 1969, the Second Five-Year Plan from 1969 to 1974, and the third, from 1976 to 1981.
4. Titled 'The Arusha Declaration and TANU's Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance' of 1967. Its authorship is assigned to Julius Nyerere.
5. According to Jonah (1989) Ghana's foreign reserves of £211 million in 1955 dropped to £181.6 million in 1957, and by 1960 they stood at £150.3 million.
6. These were communities neglected under colonial policy to induce labour migration into mining and manufacturing.
7. The Local Government Ordinance of 1951, the State Council Ordinances of 1952 and the Municipal Ordinances of 1953 (Ninsin 1989c).
8. The land laws in question were the Akim Abuakwa Stool Lands Control Act, 1958 (Act 8); the Ashanti Stool Act, 1958 (Act 28); the Stool Lands Control Act, 1960 (Act 79); Farm Lands (Protection) Act, 1962 (Act 107) Rents (Stabilisation) Act, 1962 (Act 109); Administration of Lands Act, 1962 (Act 123) and the Concession Act, 1962 (Act 124) (Ninsin 1989c).
9. See Geiger (1987) for a detailed account of male vulnerability and the use of women to front TANU activities in Dar es Salaam.
10. The full list as provided by Manuh (1991: 132) are Susanna Al-Hassan, Lucy Anin, Regina Asamany, Comfort Asamoah, Grace Ayensu, Sophia Doku, Mary Koranteng, Victoria Nyarko and Christiana Wilmot.
11. This organisation had a political character and operated under the leadership of Hannah Cudjoe.
12. Founded in 1953, it was originally known as the National Federation of Gold Coast Women. It was headed by Evelyn Amartefio and was known as the less political organisation.
13. See the Women's section of the CPP constitution (CPP Revised 1959) from pages 25 to 26.
14. See Geiger's (1987: 10) account of how the astute Titi Mohamed turned the occasion into an opportunity to mobilise women into TANU.
15. Geiger (1987) mentions the few active women in the pre-independence struggle who were able to transition into post-independence political leadership; they were Bibi Titi Mohamed, Tatu Mzee, Asha Ngoma and Hadija Swedi.

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Economic Decolonisation and the Role of the Central Bank in Postcolonial Development in Tunisia¹

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Abstract

Overserving how the hegemonic neoliberal model of central banking works to undermine African agency and development in the present day, this article charts an alternative path, drawing from Tunisia's efforts to decolonise their monetary institutions in the immediate post-independence period. Tunisia's construction of a developmentalist Central Bank played a critical role in mobilising resources to facilitate their post-independence agrarian reform agenda and industrialisation plans. Key characteristics of this model included working in tandem with the government towards shared objectives, mobilising domestic resources to finance development plans, and intervening directly through methods like incentivised savings and subsidised loans for strategic sectors. This is in contrast with the neoliberal model in which central banks are independent from the government, focused on controlling inflation above all else, and exclusively use indirect methods like interest rates to conduct monetary policy. The article highlights the progressive and feminist potential of central bank reform in the contemporary period as a key mechanism for Africa's economic transformation.

Résumé

En observant la manière dont le modèle néolibéral hégémonique de la banque centrale fonctionne pour miner les actions et le développement de l'Afrique à l'heure actuelle, cet article trace une voie alternative, en s'inspirant des efforts de la Tunisie pour décoloniser ses institutions monétaires immédiatement après l'indépendance. La construction par la Tunisie d'une banque centrale développementaliste a joué un rôle essentiel dans la mobilisation des ressources pour épauler le programme de réforme agraire et les plans d'industrialisation

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d'après-indépendance. Les principales caractéristiques de ce modèle consistent à travailler en tandem avec le gouvernement pour atteindre des objectifs communs, à mobiliser des ressources nationales pour financer les plans de développement et à intervenir directement par le biais de méthodes telles que l'épargne incitative et les prêts subventionnés pour les secteurs stratégiques. Ce modèle est aux antipodes du modèle néolibéral dans lequel les banques centrales sont indépendantes du gouvernement, se concentrent prioritairement sur le contrôle de l'inflation, et utilisent exclusivement des méthodes indirectes comme les taux d'intérêt pour mener leur politique monétaire. L'article souligne le potentiel progressiste et féministe de la réforme des banques centrales dans la période actuelle en tant que mécanisme clé de la transformation économique de l'Afrique.

Introduction

Before being confined to inflation control by quantitative monetarists in the late 1970s and early 1980s, central banks played a key role in the economic growth of developing countries. Today, the neoliberal vision of central banks has become hegemonic, marginalising the developmentalist vision. This neoliberal vision is characterised by three features: (1) the independence of the central bank, i.e. its ability to resist government pressure to finance deficits; (2) a focus on a single mission – the fight against inflation – while excluding all the tools at its disposal to promote the country's development; (3) the use of indirect methods to conduct monetary policy and concomitant prohibition of any direct method of credit allocation.

However, this neoliberal model of central banking was not always ubiquitous. At the time of the national liberation movements in the 1950s, the question of monetary independence was defined in different terms. Indeed, the independence of central banks meant that countries had a central institution whose operations were independent of their former colonial powers. The development challenges of that period were such that central banks had to play a decisive role in mobilising domestic resources to invest in the country's development. In the case of Tunisia, I will try to answer several questions. Firstly, how was central bank reform critical to Tunisia's decolonisation agenda/efforts? This requires addressing several sub-questions, including: on the basis of what power relations did Tunisia force France to accept the introduction of the Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT) and the Tunisian dinar? To what extent did economic decolonisation and 'Tunisification' change the economic structures of domination set by France? To what extent has the government's socialist policy materialised in the BCT's activities? What was Tunisia's strategy to free itself from French monopoly on its foreign trade? What structural weaknesses facilitated the neoliberal shift of the 1970s?

This article argues that Bourguiba's phased decolonisation – a pragmatic step-by-step decolonisation process – was partially successful at breaking down the structures of economic domination set by France. First, it explains how Tunisia embarked upon the process of economic decolonisation by dismantling the structures of monetary, banking, and customs domination established by France. Second, focusing on the period of Ben Salah's socialist experiment in the 1960s, it analyses the role played by the Tunisian Central Bank in the process of the accumulation and mobilisation of domestic monetary resources for development financing, another crucial dimension of economic decolonisation.

Brief History of the Evolution of the Structures of Economic Domination in Tunisia

Before independence, France set up diverse structures of economic domination in its colonies and protectorates. These structures were put in place to support what was then called the 'Colonial Pact', which can be summarised as follows: 'the centre manufactures; the periphery provides food products, raw materials and markets' (Saul 2016: 24). In Tunisia, this pact was first developed through agrarian exploitation, to which mining, mainly phosphate and iron, was added from 1900 onwards. At the time of the French protectorate, the Tunisian economy was mainly agricultural and dominated by three main crops: cereals, olives and vines (*ibid.*: 114). In order to establish and maintain this Colonial Pact, and strengthen ties between the centre and the periphery, France had to set up structures of economic domination in Tunisia, mainly in the monetary, banking and customs fields. These three areas must be analysed in conjunction, as central to France's structural domination. Whereas monetary and banking policy are essential to the valorisation of the dominated country, customs policy facilitates the two-way flow of goods and capital.

The new direction taken by the French settlers – from purely speculative financial colonisation (in real estate and agriculture) to agrarian colonisation from the end of the nineteenth century onwards – created the need to set up the economic structures to support this change. Thus, in 1904, the Bank of Algeria, originally established by France in 1851, was authorised to issue the Tunisian franc, a specific currency for Tunisia at fixed parity with the French franc. The issuing of banknotes and the possibility of discounting were authorised under the same conditions as they had been for Algeria. Bank discounting is a short-term credit operation whereby bills of exchange are transferred to the banker who, in return, pays them immediately, incurring less interest and fewer commissions. Renamed the Bank of Algeria and Tunisia (BAT), the issuing institution had the unique feature of performing

the role of both a commercial bank (discounting) and a bank supervising other commercial banks (rediscounting), which distinguished it from the banking practices of the metropole, where the two roles were kept separate. By 1955, the eve of independence, the BAT's discount portfolio represented 45 per cent of its rediscount portfolio (Guen 1961: 198). This new issuing institution was to be accompanied by the establishment of branches of major banks in the periphery, an installation facilitated by the absence of a legal framework governing the activity of banks in Tunisia. These banks, because of their affiliation with banks in the metropolitan area, had the advantage of benefiting from both the direct discounting of the BAT and the indirect discounting of the Banque de France through their parent company. This has the effect of increasing their ability to mobilise resources in France to provide settlers in Tunisia with credits, particularly agricultural credits. The 'Banking Agreement' introduced by the branches of metropolitan banks in Tunisia allowed them to pursue an interest rate policy that would improve their profitability (*Bulletin économique* 1946: 4). Their presence thus ensured that the settlers' credits were directed towards the sectors that allowed the greatest primitive accumulation (Amin 1970), first in the agricultural sector, then in the mining sector.

To ensure the development and strengthening of the Colonial Pact, a customs structure was put in place to facilitate the two-way flow of goods and capital while ensuring the primacy of French interests in Tunisia. Before France established the Protectorate, Tunisia had concluded trade treaties containing the 'most favoured nation' clause with Italy in 1868, and Great Britain in 1875. The Bardo Treaty, which established the Protectorate in Tunisia in 1881, did not call into question these trade treaties signed with France's rival powers. It was only later, through the law of 18 July 1890, that France allowed Tunisia's main exports to the metropole (cereals, olive oil, livestock) duty-free, with a quantitative limit in the form of tariff quotas. In 1896, France denounced trade treaties with foreign countries and imposed more privileged treatment than what the 'most favoured nation' clause allowed. Finally, it was the law of 30 March 1928 that established a partial customs union between France and Tunisia through a list of goods that could circulate duty-free between the two countries and for which a common external tariff modelled on that of France applied (Saul 2016: 114–15). Tunisia retained the freedom to set its own tariff for goods not included in this list. The customs union was thus the principal mechanism through which Tunisia was incorporated into the French colonial economy. It enabled the establishment of a free trade area between the two countries to facilitate the movement of goods, and a common external tariff (set by France) to eliminate all foreign competition and transform Tunisia into a

captive market for French interests, thus ensuring the consolidation of the structures to establish the Colonial Pact.

The economic crisis of the 1930s hit just as France had completed implementing the structures of the Colonial Pact, catalysing the disintegration of the colonial economy in Tunisia. However, through agrarian colonialism, the French had succeeded in dismembering and dislocating the economic coherence that still prevailed in Tunisia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Colonialism was hence the cause of the country's future 'underdevelopment', characterised by a disarticulated economy where the sectors no longer feed each other but only feed the metropolis with raw materials at lower costs (Amin 1970: 33). This period was marked by a 'demographic explosion [that] was combined with the disintegration of the traditional economy and society and the crisis of capitalism' (Mahjoub 1987). The rural exodus caused by agrarian colonialism, coupled with the weakening of the colonial economy in Tunisia as a result of the crisis of the 1930s particularly with the collapse of the prices of the main exported agricultural products (wine, wheat, oil), laid the foundations for the national movement that would develop in earnest in the aftermath of the Second World War.

The 1955 Conventions: Formalisation of the Structures of Economic Domination

Several regional events accelerated the questioning of the Colonial Pact after the Second World War, including the massacres of Sétif in Algeria in 1945 and the upheaval following the assassination of the Secretary General of the Tunisian trade union, Farhat Hached, in 1952 by France. The Tunisian national movement grew stronger, and the French authorities understood that it was necessary to change their methods in order to preserve their interests. For the 'reformist' fringe of the French authorities, France's *de facto* dominant position was already secured and therefore would not be threatened by developing new legal and political relations on the basis of formal equality and reciprocity (Saul 2016: 660). This idea was represented by Pierre Châtenet, who became Minister of the Interior between 1959 and 1961. On his return from the United States in January 1953, Châtenet set out this new doctrine: 'the notion of Protectorate must be replaced by that of associations, mutual guarantees, and technical assistance. It is therefore not a question of abandoning positions for wanting too much to keep their support intact, but of changing in time the support that collapses to keep the positions' (*ibid.*). This formulation summarised the foundations of the French position at the time of the negotiations with the Moroccan and Tunisian nationalists; Tunisia

became the matrix for the realisation of this paradigm.

Faced with the political impasse and the deteriorating economic situation, Pierre Mendès France, then President of the French Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs, announced: 'Only one path was open: that of Tunisian internal autonomy, with agreements guaranteeing French interests' (*ibid.*: 664). This is how the negotiations for Tunisian internal autonomy between France and the nationalists began, leading to the signing of six agreements, including a financial agreement of particular interest to this analysis. The main lines of the economic negotiations were outlined as early as September 1954.

On the monetary level, the negotiations resulted in Tunisia committing itself to remaining in the Franc Zone. Belonging to this zone meant that the Tunisian franc and the French franc remained at fixed parity. In addition, France would undertake to maintain unlimited convertibility between the two currencies. In return, the two countries – Tunisia in particular – would commit to maintaining full freedom of capital transfers. The BAT was to remain an issuing institution for Tunisia until the end of its mandate, after which it would be subordinated to the central monetary authority of the Franc Zone, i.e. the Monetary Committee of the Franc Zone, created in 1951 by a French decree. A pooling of foreign currency resources was established (currency pool), and through this pool Tunisia was allocated foreign currency credits necessary for its external supplies. Foreign exchange regulations were unified between the two countries. In addition, France would maintain a certain degree of control over Tunisian public finances, secured through the guarantee of Tunisian debt and provision of assistance in the form of foreign currencies and French francs (*ibid.*: 667).

To fully understand the monetary position to which Tunisia committed itself by signing this agreement, it is helpful to make a comparison with the situation that still prevails today through the maintenance of the CFA franc in the African countries of the Franc Zone. Indeed, the CFA franc system is based on four essential principles:

1. the fixing of parities between the CFA franc and the French franc (and later the euro);
2. the principle of an operating account, i.e. the pooling of the currencies of the Franc Zone within a Banque de France account;
3. the principle of free convertibility (guaranteed by France);
4. the principle of the free transferability of capital.

As demonstrated above, these four principles were present in the 1955 agreement negotiated with Tunisia. That France has succeeded in maintaining such a system more than seventy years after the wave of independence in

Africa clearly shows its role in guaranteeing French interests on the African continent. It also shows that at the time of signing this agreement with Tunisia, France had the intention of maintaining this system for an indefinite period of time and rejected any idea of independence. This is demonstrated by Mendès France's comments in a letter addressed to Marshal Juin on 2 February 1955:

You go further than I am going myself; because, as far as I am concerned, I do not envisage Tunisia's independence even after a very long probation period. ... I have always spoken out against the claims of some of our interlocutors to independence (even in the distant future) (*ibid.*: 665).

As explained above, trade relations between Tunisia and France at the time had been governed by the law of 30 March 1928, which established a partial customs union between the two countries. The Economic and Financial Convention signed on 3 June 1955 made this customs union total. As a result, even the previously minor freedom to set a tariff autonomously for goods not on the customs list was abolished for Tunisia. In a memorandum sent by the French delegation to the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) on 20 October 1956, exactly seven months after Tunisia's independence was signed, France stated:

This implies not only the abolition of all customs barriers between France and Tunisia but also the abolition of previous French and Tunisian tariffs to replace them with a common customs tariff. From now on, the same prohibitions and restrictions, the same customs duties and, generally speaking, the same customs laws and regulations are applicable, in principle, to trade between each member of the [Franco-Tunisian] customs union and foreign countries.

The objective of this memorandum was to have this total customs union, based on the June 1955 conventions, recognised at the international level, thus legally binding the newly independent Tunisia to these unjust agreements. As the French Minister for Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs explained at the time of the negotiations of the June 1955 conventions with Tunisia:

The customs and monetary union enshrined in the economic and financial convention replaces a state of fact with a legal situation and substitutes a contractual commitment to cooperation within common institutions for the unilateral nature inherited from the colonial pact, which governed most of our decisions in monetary and customs matters (Saul 2016: 668).

This is how the move from the concept of 'pact' to that of 'association' occurred without changing the pre-existing power relations.

The Role of Money and the Central Bank in Tunisia's Economic Development Trajectory

Before moving on to the stages of monetary, banking and customs decolonisation, it is important to reflect upon the meaning of monetary decolonisation as conceptualised by analysts at the time, particularly in relation to the country's development trajectory. Indeed, it is first of all important to note that at a time when Tunisia wished to create its Central Bank, monetary theory was based on centuries of debate centred exclusively on Western economic systems and, regarding currency in particular, on the systems of the French, English and later the American empires. However, in order to understand the particular stakes involved in creating a Central Bank independent of the French metropole, it is important to turn to a particular controversy related to a new system that was set up after the First World War.

At this time, there was an intense debate about which was the best standard for the international monetary system. The two most discussed systems were the 'gold standard' and the 'gold exchange standard'. In the gold standard system, the issuing bank only keeps gold or claims denominated in national currency (short-term, or possibly medium-term notes or Treasury bills) on its balance sheet in exchange for the monetary issue. The positive balance of payments of the United States during the 1914–18 war caused a large part of the world's gold reserves to migrate to the United States accompanied by a 50 per cent increase in domestic prices by the end of the war. When England wanted to restore the gold standard in 1925, analysts realised there was an insufficient amount of gold in the world to restore the gold standard. To overcome this problem, it would have been necessary to increase the price of gold by 50 per cent in order to accumulate enough gold to restore the gold standard (Rueff and Claassen 1967: 499). However, the League of Nations preferred to adopt the idea of gold deficiency, and at a conference in Genoa in 1922 recommended that governments 'overcome the gold deficiency by using balances abroad' (*ibid.*: 500). This meant replacing gold with foreign currency payable in gold. This was the charter of the gold exchange standard. Thus, under the gold exchange standard, the issuing bank may issue currency, not only against gold and claims denominated in domestic currency, but also against currencies payable in gold.

The gold exchange standard collapsed with the 1929 crisis, and it was not until 1945, at the end of the Second World War, that the system was reinstated. At that time, only the United States still had a currency convertible into gold. However, this system had the particularity of transmitting inflation to creditor countries and maintaining price stability in debtor countries

holding gold without the latter actually paying the cost of the deficit. The system works as follows: when the United States has a deficit with foreign countries, it pays in dollars. These dollars arrive, by various means, at the creditor issuing bank and thus creates inflationary internal purchasing power (credit or notes) by issuing money equivalent to the amount of dollars received. But these dollars are unusable on the spot (e.g. in Paris, Tokyo, Bonn) because the issuing bank, on the same day it receives them, puts them back on the New York market by buying Treasury bills or depositing them in the bank. This leads to an incredible system in which the debtor country whose currency is payable in gold recovers, on the same day it makes them, the payments it has made to foreign countries. Thus, thanks to this system, the United States has never had to suffer the effects of its deficits, which in turn has resulted in constant inflationary trends in creditor countries. Accordingly, through this 'gold exchange standard' system, the United States has set up an international system of monetary domination allowing it to have deficits without effectively having to pay them.

Due to their role in entrenching the interests of the great powers and maintaining a certain stability for global capitalism, few theorists have been interested in the repercussions of these controversies for Third World countries. It was through Samir Amin's book on global accumulation that an overview of monetary mechanisms on the periphery was first articulated (1970). Amin underlines the particularity of colonised countries, where two integrations were crucial for maintaining imperial interests: monetary integration, in the form of monetary zones such as the Franc Zone or the Sterling Zone, and banking integration – often ignored by theorists but of crucial importance – because the functions of bank credit were performed almost exclusively by branches of metropolitan banks in the colonised Third World countries. Amin distinguishes the passive and active roles of the banking system, with the former functioning through the distribution of credits according to the needs of the local market, and the latter through the accumulation mechanism. Capitalist accumulation requires an increased amount of money because the gross national product grows, for which it is necessary to 'throw' more money into the circuit beforehand. New investment does not yet have an outlet, but it will soon create it by expanding production. However, as Amin points out, if the entrepreneur does not find an outlet, the banking system will not solve the fundamental problem of the non-existence of this outlet for additional production. Thus, the control of the banking system is a necessity for newly independent countries that wish to initiate an accumulation process that will enable them to emerge from 'underdevelopment'. The challenge posed by a lack of control is all the more critical under a regime of free capital transfers, where foreign commercial

banks, in case of liquidity needs, are not obliged to go through the new central bank of the independent country, and can discount directly from the metropolis, which reduces the local central bank's 'credit control' margins. As to monetary issuance, Samir Amin stresses that the nature of currency hedging (gold or foreign exchange) is of great importance in determining whether the value of the dominant economy's currency is automatically transmitted to the underdeveloped economy or not, as will be demonstrated in the case of Tunisia.

Economic Decolonisation in Tunisia

The first years after Tunisia's declaration of independence in March 1956 were marked by a decline in credit, but above all by significant capital flight to the metropole. The newly independent government sought to address the issue through capital controls. However, capital control was illusory without the necessary control and enforcement instruments, hence the need to create a national issuing institute (Guen 1961: 199). This idea was first developed collectively by the UGTT in its 1956 report, headed by Ahmed Ben Salah as Secretary General at the time, which would later be used for the Ten-Year Plan. In 1958 Tunisia created the BCT, beset, as explained above, by significant challenges. However, it is important to understand to what extent economic decolonisation in Tunisia achieved an actual break with France, its culture and practices.

'Bourguibism', named after Tunisian President Bourguiba, before being an ideology, is a method of decolonisation in stages. It is interesting to note that the Deputy Director of Finance under the French protectorate, Jacques Bonnet de la Tour, remained in place under Hédi Nouira, the new Tunisian Minister of Finance, during the negotiated transfer of the currency issuing privilege from the BAT to the BCT (Moalla 2011: 102). According to Mansour Moalla, a key player in the implementation of the BCT and the dinar, the main officials from the protectorate era remained in place. Coming from a family of farmers in Sfax, Moalla studied in Paris, where, with Tunisians living in France, he organised the launch of the first Congress of the General Union of Tunisian Students (UGET), of which he became the first President. After returning from a trip to East Berlin in 1951, he explained: 'I have acquired two certainties: I will never become a communist and I will not engage the UGET in the Soviet camp' (*ibid.*: 64). With two other young collaborators of the time, Abderrazak Rassaa and Béchir Ben Yahmed – who became Secretary of State for Information under Bourguiba and founder of *Jeune Afrique* – Mansour Moalla participated in the negotiations for internal autonomy led by the big landowner of Tunis,

Tahar Ben Ammar. However, having been admitted to the prestigious Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) in Paris, Moalla preferred to abandon the negotiations process on internal autonomy to begin his studies. After graduating from the 'France-Afrique' promotion, 'because of my presence in its midst, which is a sign of sympathy' (*ibid.*: 89), as he pointed out, Moalla was assigned to the Corps of the Inspectorate of Finance in which he worked until September 1957, the date of his return to Tunisia. Back in Tunis, he contacted Hédi Nouira to join the Ministry of Finance, justifying his recruitment through reference to his membership in the 'elite body' of the Inspectorate of Finance, for which 'Nouira had much consideration ... to the point that his cabinet director was a French inspector of finance', i.e. Bonnet de la Tour (*ibid.*: 102). Bonnet de la Tour would be quickly replaced by another French financial inspector, Yves Roland-Billecart,² who had to resign in July 1958 following the hospitalisation of Hédi Nouira, with whom he got along very well, and especially following the French bombardment of Sakiet Sidi Youssef, a turning point in the Algerian war in Tunisia. As such, far from any clear break, the negotiations linked to economic decolonisation were in line with French practices, and it was only external events, i.e. the Algerian war, that made it possible to break with the French presence at the highest level of the Tunisian finance administration.

In Bourguiba's vocabulary, each step of the decolonisation was described as a 'battle'. Thus, the establishment of the BCT and the dinar would be described as the 'battle of the dinar'. The economic conditions were the same as those prevailing in the June 1955 conventions: 'France exercised external economic sovereignty, whether in terms of foreign trade or foreign finance' (*ibid.*: 104). The most important aspect faced by Moalla when negotiating transfer of the issuing privilege was the training of managers, which would form the core of the new Central Bank's service management. Considering the BAT as its 'opponent', Moalla, who was not yet thirty-years-old at the time, set out in search of a central bank where the selected Tunisian participants could go for a training course. Moalla informs us that the Banque de France was ultimately chosen and it 'kindly welcomed them [the Tunisian interns] for several months and organised their stay in the Bank's various departments' (*ibid.*: 105). Having met the then President of the Banque de France, Wilfrid Baumgartner, Moalla emphasised that he had 'succeeded in convincing him to assist us effectively by setting up a multifunctional "mission" including banking specialists, a mission intended to take place in Tunis for a few months before and after the opening of the BCT' (*ibid.*). The specialists referred to include the General Director of Credit at the Banque de France, Bolgert, who had just retired, and his assistant, René Brousse, who carried out a similar mission in Syria and would remain in contact with Moalla for a

long time thereafter. Thus, the 'battle of the dinar' was launched in a peculiar way: in close collaboration with the Banque de France, the regulatory body of the 'adversary', the BAT.

It is difficult to assess the role played by the French specialists at the Banque de France, but the statutes of the BCT and the nature of the new currency created give us some indication of the direction taken by the team responsible for creating the institution. A comparison with the 1955 conventions demonstrates continuity. Indeed, none of the principles were called into question when the BCT was created at the beginning of November 1958: capital transfers would continue to be free, and the dinar was maintained at parity with the French franc (1 dinar per 1000 French francs) (Saul 2016: 673). Another crucial point appears in the BCT's new statutes, in particular in relation to how the Tunisian dinar would be covered. Article 39 of the BCT's statutes stipulates that 'the Central Bank operations generating the issue shall include: (a) gold and foreign currency transactions; (b) credit transactions; (c) the purchase and sale of money market instruments; (d) loans granted to the Treasury'³. The consequence of this essential article is that the BCT was obliged to cover the Tunisian currency with gold and foreign currencies, which at the time were exclusively composed of French francs. Where under the Gold Exchange Standard regime the issuing bank could issue currency against gold and claims denominated in national currency and also against currencies payable in gold (only US dollars in 1958), under this new regime, which could be called 'currency exchange standard', the BCT could issue currency against gold and claims denominated in national currency, but also against foreign currencies, but not necessarily payable in gold. Under this regime, at no time could the BCT claim to be paid in gold for any surplus it may have accumulated, and any bilateral trade surplus with France, for example, would immediately be returned to Paris to finance French trade deficits. This system therefore allowed France to maintain its trade deficits with Tunisia, without actually paying the cost, similar to the system the United States itself had introduced under the Gold Exchange Standard. In other words, this monetary regime did not call into question the 1955 agreements, and in particular the principle of pooling currencies at the Banque de France.

At the time the BCT was inaugurated in France, General de Gaulle had just come to power and appointed Antoine Pinay and Jacques Rueff – who was known as the greatest critic of the Gold Exchange Standard – to prepare an economic recovery plan. As Rueff later indicated: 'In October 1958, when we examined the situation of French finances, the exchange rate stabilisation fund was reduced to almost zero' (Rueff and Claassen 1967: 492). The Pinay-Rueff stabilisation plan (Chélini 2001: 102–23) would be the real

turning point in the 'battle of the dinar'. Indeed, Jacques Rueff proposed the creation of a new franc, the 'heavy franc', in order to remedy the poor state of France's public finances in the months leading up to the country's entrance into the new European monetary and customs system. On 27 December 1958, France decided to devalue its currency to create the 'heavy franc'. It was in this context that Tunisia took its most decisive decision in the 'battle of the dinar': to 'decouple the dinar' so that it would no longer be fixed in parity to the French franc. Bourguiba explained his decision as follows:

I thought that this young and new country could not decently devalue its national currency two months after its introduction. The government refuses to accept any devaluation even if it means stopping our activities Playing with the currency bearing the effigy of the Head of State and the signature of those responsible for his finances is indecent from a moral point of view (Zarka 1964).

This decision was facilitated by the fact that Morocco had just taken the same step. It had a very significant impact on economic relations with France. Indeed, as the BCT's annual report points out: 'the exchange rate premium resulting from the non-alignment of the Tunisian currency with the French currency was likely to cause an exodus of significant capital' (1959: 54). Thus, the refusal to follow the devaluation of the franc almost automatically led to the introduction of transfer controls. The establishment of transfer control is so complicated that even Samir Amin in 1970 still doubted the ability of 'underdeveloped' countries to implement it (1970: 128). According to Moalla, since this transfer control was not well received by the Banque de France's mission to the BCT, they refused to help in creating the department responsible for implementing this control. The BCT then called on a Belgian expert, Georges Simon,⁴ to help set up this service. The control of transfers was introduced by the law of 13 January 1959. The other consequence of the decoupling of the dinar was a new definition of the monetary unit, no longer in relation to the franc but directly in relation to gold at the rate of one dinar for 2.115880 grams of fine gold, i.e. one dinar for 2.38 US dollars (BCT 1959: 45). Thus, the decoupling of the dinar was a decisive blow to its membership in the Franc Zone. Of the four principles governing a country's membership in the Franc Zone, the decoupling made it possible to deny two in the space of a month: parity between the dinar and the French franc and freedom of transfers. The two additional principles remained in place: the principle of an operating account through the French Exchange Stabilisation Fund to which Tunisia was still contributing, and its counterpart, the convertibility of the two currencies. Though the departure of the French official from the Ministry of Finance and the introduction of the BCT and the dinar were in

line with the 1955 conventions, it was only an external event, in this case the devaluation of the franc, that gave Tunisia the opportunity to break France's monetary domination. This ability to seize the opportunity of external events to break certain structures of domination is clearly a specific feature of the phased decolonisation followed by Tunisia.

Following the decoupling of the dinar, Tunisia acquired significant monetary independence. However, in order for it to be fully functioning, the BCT had to be able to control credit in Tunisia, particularly because of the presence of French banks in the country. The control of transfers, as a consequence of the decoupling, also had the effect of removing the only way for foreign banks based in Tunisia to escape control of the BCT, which could previously be discounted to France under the free capital transfer regime. As Amin had pointed out, since monetary and banking integration are linked, achieving partial monetary independence automatically allowed the BCT to take control of the credit policy of foreign commercial banks operating in Tunisia.

On the back of this dynamic, in January 1959 Tunisia began negotiations with France on the customs union and the main monetary principles. This is the beginning of what can be called the 'foreign trade battle', which focused on three main aspects: the repeal of the customs union, the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements, and the liberalisation of foreign trade from French control. As Guen points out, 'at the very moment when French financial aid was suspended [in 1957, following Tunisia's positions during the Algerian war], the Customs Union, which in the minds of many Tunisians was the counterpart, also had to be broken' (1961: 209). It was only in 1959, with the 'battle of the dinar', that Tunisians had the opportunity to challenge one of the structures of economic domination that had been put in place in 1955. In August 1959, faced with the slow pace of the Franco-Tunisian economic and financial negotiations, the Tunisian government unilaterally drew up an autonomous customs tariff, which was subsequently the subject of Article 1 of the Trade and Tariff Agreement signed on 5 September 1959 between France and Tunisia (*ibid.*: 210). The commercial and tariff section of this new convention repealed the 1955 customs union while maintaining the free movement of goods between France and Tunisia. Additionally, a minimum tariff and 'most favoured nation' treatment were to be established between the two countries (Saul 2016: 673). Finally, with regard to the monetary component of the September 1959 agreement, Tunisia attempted to assert control over the management of its foreign exchange reserves. It did so through the individualisation and separation of accounting of its foreign exchange transactions on the Paris market, as well as by establishing 'drawing rights' on any credit balance of its settlements with countries outside the

Franc Zone. Tunisia benefited from a drawing right of US\$ 15 million at the time of the agreement. However, for settlements with countries in the Franc Zone, Tunisia was still subject to the principle of pooling currencies and was not in a position to convert these currencies into other ones, with the risk of loss of value due to French devaluations. We therefore see that on the issue of foreign exchange reserves, Tunisia only managed to free itself at the margins. By keeping control of a large part of Tunisia's foreign exchange reserves, France still had in its hands a significant leverage with which to apply pressure on Tunisia.

The Role of the Central Bank in Ben Salah's Socialist Experiment

As demonstrated in the previous section, by the beginning of the 1960s Tunisia had already made a good start on its economic decolonisation process by gradually overturning the structures of economic domination formalised under the 1955 conventions. Having regained control of a majority of the levers of the economy (Central Bank, credit, foreign trade), it was now time for the country to focus on economic development. To fully emerge from the status of 'underdevelopment', Tunisia, like the other newly independent countries, had to be able to start an autonomous process of capital accumulation. Indeed, until the 1960s Tunisia was incorporated into the international process of capital accumulation, mainly through the export of agricultural products. This insertion allowed the birth of a mostly agrarian (export) and commercial (import-export) local bourgeoisie. The industrialisation of the country was not formally possible due to the presence of structures of economic domination, in particular the customs union. However, the initiation of a national process of capital accumulation was also blocked for internal reasons, mainly because of inequalities in the distribution of income in the agricultural sector, which failed to create a sufficiently large demand to allow this accumulation process to take off in the industrial sector (Benachenhou 1999). This is why one of the greatest reforms initiated since the 1960s, and one of the most controversial so far in the history of independent Tunisia, is the agrarian reform led by Ahmed Ben Salah through the establishment of production units in cooperative form. Here, it is important to stress the two intertwined approaches, which were central to the way this accumulation process was carried out in Tunisia: a financial and banking approach based on rational calculations of financial profitability by central planners to attract international financial institutions; and an agrarian approach that involved long-term social choices that could not be reduced to a question of financial profitability and could jeopardise certain private national interests (the agrarian bourgeoisie).

It is important to recognise the major role played by the ideology of the single party in the way planners thought about land reform with all its social, technical and financial implications. In Tunisia, Tunisian socialism is generally associated with the name Ahmed Ben Salah, who led the planning of the Tunisian economy for almost a decade. When the crisis broke out within the leading nationalist New Destour party following the signing of the 1955 conventions between the pro-Western wing represented by Bourguiba, who supported the gradualist method, and the pan-Arab wing represented by Ben Youssef, who denounced these conventions, Ahmed Ben Salah, then Secretary General of the UGTT workers movement, took sides with Bourguiba. This is what sealed the alliance between the party and the union in the following years. This is how a rather particular Tunisian socialism developed, given that at the time it was essentially based on American geopolitical and financial support. Socially, the agrarian reform was initially based mainly on small-scale farming around agricultural farms recovered from former settlers, particularly after the nationalisation of agricultural land in May 1964. Moreover, the discourse of the Tunisian elites of the time was imbued with the Western notion of development and orientalist conceptions of progress. Accordingly, it was the elite, representing the positive pole of development because of their ‘modernity’, that had as its essential mission to educate the backwards masses, representing the negative pole, as summarised in the following diagram by Michel Camau.

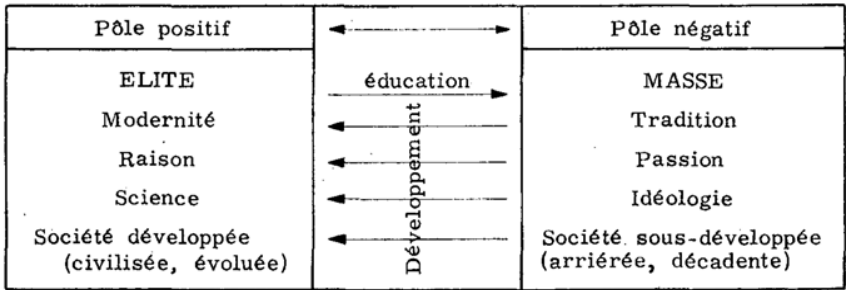


Figure 1: Western development model

Source: Camau (1972: 44)

Technically, the leaders of the time were convinced that it was necessary to catch up with the developed countries, that the indigenous techniques of the peasants were archaic, that it was necessary to use modern techniques through the mechanisation of agriculture (which was the selection criterion and purpose of agrarian reform), to build large hydraulic dams, etc. These technical choices resulted in the mass import of capital goods with all that

this implies in terms of foreign financing needs, short-term profitability requirements, and balance of payments deficits. This is all the more significant considering the progress made on Tunisia's indigenous techniques, more in line with the country's constraints, which were so advanced that some analysts even spoke of a Tunisian school of thought in this field (Ajl 2018: 64–84). Alternative technical choices could have furthered autonomous agricultural development and reduced the need for external financing.

The Role of Tunisia's Central Bank in the Development Trajectory

What role did the BCT play in supporting this attempt at an autonomous process of capital accumulation? As has been demonstrated, the banking sector plays a key role in the accumulation process by providing the necessary currency to broaden the economic base for accumulation. However, it is only an advance. If the accumulation does not take place in the real sector, which was agricultural for Tunisia, the banking sector will not be able to solve this structural problem. The BCT did indeed play two important roles in the implementation of agrarian reform. First, to compensate for the slow formation of savings, the BCT required all commercial banks to invest up to 25 per cent of their deposits in Treasury bills or capital bills needed to finance imported agricultural capital goods (Poncet 1965: 147–69). This measure of authority exercised by the BCT made it possible for the banking sector to contribute to the mobilisation of the resources needed to finance agrarian reform. As to savings (term deposits, quasi-currency), the BCT set conditions for banks in 1962 to encourage depositors to keep their term deposits stable, thus allowing them to be used to finance investments through credit. Consequently, term deposits rose from 4.1 MD at the end of 1961 to 11.6 MD at the end of 1964 and 29.4 MD at the end of 1968 (BCT 1970: 15). Finally, the BCT played an important role in directing credit to priority sectors through its rediscount policy. Indeed, the BCT used the rediscount rate according to the type of effect (agricultural season, medium-term loan, etc.) in order to direct resources towards the country's needs. Thus, as of 1966, the BCT's rediscount rates were as follows: 5 per cent for the majority of items; 4 per cent for export financing, seasonal crop credit effects, medium-term credits for construction; 5.75 per cent for ordinary medium-term items. Thus, if its tools are translated into objectives, the rediscounting system shows that the BCT favoured and oriented banking operations according to certain objectives: balance of payments equilibrium, export credits, industrialisation of the country, medium-term investment credits, agricultural infrastructure development, and crop cost rating (*ibid.*: 12–13).

To summarise, the BCT played a central role in the autonomous financing of the development of post-independent Tunisia. Indeed, contrary to the now hegemonic neoliberal vision of the role of a central bank, the BCT’s main mission was not to reduce inflation but rather to mobilise the resources (i.e. savings and capital) needed to finance Tunisia’s autonomous development, and then to direct these resources towards sectors considered strategic within the framework of the ten-year outlook, including balance of payments, industrialisation and agricultural infrastructure.

Figure 2 summarises the fundamental differences between the neoliberal approach today and the developmentalist approach of the postcolonial era described here, particularly regarding the role that a central bank must play in a country’s economy.

Central bank	Neoliberal approach	Developmentalist approach
<i>Relationship with the government</i>	The central bank must be independent of the government.	The central bank is an institution at the service of the government to achieve the development objectives set by the latter.
<i>Objectives and missions</i>	Controlling inflation. All other development objectives must first be subject to this imperative.	Mobilise essential domestic resources to finance development independently. Direct these resources towards the strategic development objectives established by the government (employment, sectors, exports, territorial inequalities, etc.).
<i>Tools</i>	Non-intervention in general. Indirect intervention through interest rates. Market forces are self-regulating.	Direct intervention. Obligation for banks to participate directly in the financing of equipment (equipment bonds). Savings incentive policy. Orientation of the banking resources mobilised through a policy of subsidised loans for strategic sectors.

Figure 2: Differences between neoliberal and developmentalist approaches

For a developing country, the adoption of the neoliberal approach has negative consequences. Indeed, the weakness of capital accumulation is a central issue that structures the position of dependence of peripheral countries on central countries. By establishing the independence of the central bank, peripheral countries deprive themselves of a crucial institution capable of

mobilising the monetary resources necessary for capital accumulation. Moreover, by adopting the approach that only market forces can optimally allocate scarce accumulated resources, the authorities of peripheral countries are wasting those resources that end up invested in speculative rather than strategic sectors that allow autonomous development to take place. As for the case of the BCT, this article has shown how during the period of economic decolonisation, it mobilised and directed banking and savings resources to support the agrarian reform that had been underway since the early 1960s. But did this agrarian reform make it possible to initiate a national and autonomous process of capital accumulation? In other words, was the role played by the BCT sufficient to initiate this accumulation process? To what extent has the monetary and credit policy of the BCT accompanied and strengthened agrarian reform to reduce economic and gender inequalities?

There is a certain consensus on all sides to conclude that Tunisia has not been able to initiate this accumulation process. Too radical for some and not enough for others, agrarian reform, although enthusiastically implemented, failed to resolve the contradictions inherent in the way it was approached. Rather than enabling the long-term reform of social structures that many expected, the technical choices that resulted in mass imports of capital goods put financial pressure on cooperatives, forcing them to adopt a short-term profitability approach financed largely by international financial institutions (the World Bank in the first instance). Coupled with an extraordinarily long drought in the 1960s, agrarian reform failed to deliver on its promises to small farmers who perceived it as an expropriation without improving their incomes. Thus, while its aim was to reduce income inequalities in order to initiate the development process, in many cases it has worsened the situation for farmers. On the other hand, the state's official communication advocated the emancipation of the status of women through 'state feminism' (Bessis 1999) that allowed women access to credit and encouraged them to enter the labour market, both with a view to controlling demographics and improving their image in Western countries. However, this state feminism was mainly aimed at women from the positive pole who were not mainly concerned about the possible success of agrarian reform. Although the credit policy of the BCT has remained silent on the economic status of women, it is highly probable that they were proportionally the most affected by the failure of agrarian reform and the austerity policies implemented by the IMF during the 1960s, as recent studies have shown (Seguino and Heintz 2012: 603–38). Thus, state feminism failed to transcend the Western notion of development between the elite representing the positive pole and the mass representing the negative pole, either in the context of agrarian reform or in the context of the policies of the BCT.

It was when Ben Salah's reform became widespread in 1969, this time affecting not only small farmers but also the middle and upper middle classes of the agrarian bourgeoisie, that an ad hoc alliance between small farmers and landowners thwarted this reform. In addition, financial support was provided for 'planning support', mainly by the United States. In vogue at the time, it was claimed this type of financial support would help make Tunisia a model of success, but not to the point of supporting a meaningful agrarian reform that would actually address the structural economic and gender inequalities in the agrarian sector. Thus, in a few months, Ben Salah's cooperative experience, at the heart of agrarian reform, was abandoned and he alone was blamed for its failures, despite all the political support he had received at the time of the generalisation of its implementation.

Thus, the role of the BCT and the banking system in the accumulation process was essential and necessary. It made it possible to reduce, to a certain extent, the need for foreign capital by mobilising domestic resources to finance the heavy equipment of agrarian reform as well as the essential basic infrastructure that later set Tunisia's development in motion, although in other forms. On this level, Tunisian planning was able to meet its objective of self-centred development on the basis of investments financed at least 50 per cent by domestic savings (Ten-Year Plan).

Table 1: Gross investment, domestic savings, and foreign aid/credit, 1960–68

Années	Investissements brut	Epargne intérieure	Aides et crédits étrangers (nets de remboursement)
1960	59, 8		
1961	63, 9		
1962	73, 8	28, 2	33, 5
1963	82, 6	42, 3	36, 7
1964	93 (dinars 1960)	50, 4	50
1965	132, 2	54, 2	81, 7
1966	128, 9	67, 4	56
1967	126, 6	57, 6	57, 8
1968	117, 9		

However, the use of imported and capital-intensive techniques, combined with overly bureaucratic and undemocratic management of cooperatives, exerted too much pressure on profitability and too little motivation for small farmers for the experiment to produce a convincing result for Tunisian agriculture. Indeed, despite the mobilisation of substantial investment, agricultural production was almost stationary during the 1960s (Poncet 1969).

Table 2: Select outputs, 1955–68

	Unité	1955-59 (prod. moyen)	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Blé dur	1000 qx	3600	3700	2000	3200	5300	3500	4200	3000	2800	3100
Blé tendre	"	1200	900	400	700	1100	700	1000	500	500	700
Orge	"	1500	1500	500	1000	2300	1300	1800	800	700	1300
<u>Total</u>		6300	6100	2900	4900	8700	5500	7000	4300	4000	5100
Huile olive	1000 t	50 à 60	128	32	34,5	45	88	95,4	52,5	19,5	51
agrumes	"	65 à 70		114	80	58	88	94	82	110	66
dattes	"	30 à 40		43	38,4	16,7	50,9	43	54	42	39
vin	1000 hl	1500	1500	1400	1800	1700	1800	1850	1300	800	900
Prod. maraî- chères	1000 qx				3000	4100	3700	4200	4800	4400	3900
Betterave sucrière	"					447	487	375	564	398	275
pêche	1000 t		15,7	23,4	18,1	20,5	19	22,6	25	33,1	32,5

N.B. : Pour ces chiffres et les suivants, source : *L'économie de la Tunisie en chiffres*, Tunis, S.E.P.E.N. (publication annuelle).

This overabundance of foreign equipment and financing considerably reduced the Tunisian government's room for manoeuvre at the time, so that in 1964, Tunisia had to devalue its currency and call on the IMF to draw up a 'stabilisation plan', the former name for austerity plans. At a press conference in March 1966, Bourguiba, looking defeated, announced: 'At the beginning of 1964, we found ourselves faced with a dramatic situation ... our balance of payments and the economic health of our country required, to avoid bankruptcy, severe measures ... we had to choose between breaking with France and the threat of bankruptcy' (CRAM 1967: 717–31). While at the time of the creation of the currency, analysts were proud to announce that 103 per cent of the dinar's issuance was covered by gold and foreign exchange reserves, this coverage was reduced to 42 per cent by 1964 and reached its lowest level, 33 per cent, in 1966 (BCT 1970).

The fall of Ben Salah in 1969 brought with it a loss of faith in any idea of self-centred development as explicitly delineated and implemented through his administration's ten-year development plan. The liberal turnaround of the 1970s put Tunisia back on the path to a fully foreign-dependent economy, notably with the April 1972 law on the promotion of fully exporting companies. This law stipulates that foreign companies (non-resident within the meaning of the law) are not required to repatriate their export revenues, which constitutes a renunciation of the management of the country's foreign exchange reserves, especially since these reserves are used to cover the issuance of the Tunisian dinar. Significantly, the two personalities at

the heart of this liberal shift were Hédi Nouira, Governor of the BCT during the years covered by the ten-year outlook, who became Prime Minister in the early 1970s, and Mansour Moalla, former Director General of the BCT who participated in its founding and then became Minister of Planning in place of Ben Salah. It is here that the 'Bourguibist' method of decolonisation in stages finds its limits. When the internal and external environment no longer provides opportunities that can be mobilised to serve decolonisation, this method turns against itself and generates the following observation: what can be decolonised in stages can also be recolonised in stages according to the internal and external environment.

Conclusion

The 1960s was a period rich in lessons. Since Tunisia's independence in 1956, this is the only period in which the authorities explicitly developed a vision of economic decolonisation and self-centred development, namely through the Ten-Year Plan written and put into place by the UGGT and its Secretary General Ben Salah. Despite the challenges faced by the actors of this period, they laid the economic and infrastructural foundations that enabled subsequent generations to reap the benefits of these efforts. However, as has been argued, the experience of cooperatives in the context of Ben Salah's agrarian reform was limited due to several factors, including placing too much trust in external financial support, an overly centralised bureaucracy incapable of grasping the specificities of Tunisian agriculture, and a vision of development too focused on the West. Nonetheless, these reforms were part of a coherent framework that went deep enough to lay the foundations for Tunisia to develop on its own resources as much as possible. The sudden end of this experience has overshadowed, in the minds of many Tunisians today, all the positive initiatives that were developed as part of a broader project of self-centred development. This article has also demonstrated how Bourguiba's phased decolonisation was partially successful at breaking down the structures of economic domination, in particular when the external conditions were favourable, as with the establishment of a Central Bank and a national currency at the time of the Algerian war of independence. Moreover, contrary to what neoliberal ideology conveys, the BCT succeeded in mobilising, controlling and directing credit towards the needs of the national economy. Since the early 1970s, and especially since the IMF's structural adjustment plan in 1986, the Tunisian authorities have lost the initiative in terms of development and have ended up obediently following the models promoted by international financial institutions. This desire for self-centred development, coupled with a vision of development that is more in line with Tunisia's history

and geography, would make it possible to renew a more equitable vision of development that is no longer based solely on the accumulation of capital, but also on the accumulation of knowledge by the country's various social strata, from peasant to artisan, from teacher to engineer.

Notes

1. Tunisian Observatory of Economy. This article was completed as part of the Post-Colonialisms Today project.
2. Roland-Billecart was later to inspire Constantine's plan in Algeria; he was negotiator of Algeria's independence, founder of the French Development Agency (AFD), but above all general manager of the Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique, the institution responsible for issuing the currencies of the countries of the Franc Zone and de facto general manager of the two central banks of West and Central Africa (see Roland-Billecart 2018).
3. Law 1958-90 on the creation and organisation of the Central Bank of Tunisia. Art. 39.
4. Later, the Algerians would call on him to set up the new Algerian Central Bank.

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Radical Regionalism: Feminism, Sovereignty and the Pan-African Project¹

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Abstract

This article analyses how sovereignty in Africa's immediate post-independence period was necessarily conceptualised as a regional pan-African and internationalist project of decolonisation, outlining lessons for the contemporary period. The capacity of newly independent states to shape their domestic policy and mobilise resources was constrained by their subordinate place in the global political and economic order, which made them dependent on foreign capital and tied them to the interests of their former colonisers. As such, they fostered radical regional and international solidarity that would facilitate the continent's development. Looking at a series of feminist conferences in the immediate post-independence era, the article also traces the contributions of Southern feminists to the decolonisation project and African feminists to the conception of pan-Africanism, breaking with Western feminists to conceptualise national liberation as fundamental to gender justice.

Résumé

Cet article analyse la manière dont la souveraineté, dans la période qui a immédiatement suivi les indépendances en Afrique, a été nécessairement conceptualisée comme un projet régional panafricain et internationaliste de décolonisation, en insistant sur les enseignements pour la période contemporaine. La capacité des États nouvellement indépendants à façonner leur politique intérieure et à mobiliser des ressources était limitée par leur place secondaire dans l'ordre politique et économique mondial, qui les rendait dépendants du capital étranger et les liait aux intérêts de leurs anciens colonisateurs. Ainsi, ils ont encouragé une solidarité régionale et internationale radicale qui faciliterait le développement du continent. En examinant une série de conférences féministes organisées au lendemain des indépendances, l'article retrace également les contributions des féministes du Sud au projet de décolonisation, ainsi que celles des féministes africaines à la conception du

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panafricanisme, rompant avec les féministes occidentales pour conceptualiser la libération nationale comme fondamentale pour l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes.

Introduction

Decolonisation across Africa brought about historic changes; it was a moment of solidarity, optimism, and radical rethinking of political and economic systems. This article explores how decolonisation projects across the continent articulated new visions of economic development and political sovereignty. In particular, through an analysis of inter-state continental conferences and feminist regional initiatives, I explore an African vision of sovereignty and regionalism that demonstrated a clear awareness of the structural limits imposed by colonial rule.

Through both ideological and material changes, these nations tried to resist colonial structures of global capital and create a more equal postcolonial world. Through nationalisation and industrialisation, states attempted to create new forms of independent development that relied on regional cooperation, with social policies such as free education, healthcare and guaranteed employment being introduced to strengthen and modernise the nation. This is in contrast to how regionalism across the African continent is envisioned today, which is often within a neoliberal framework that operates at the state level and prioritises free trade, access to foreign capital and foreign direct investment, producing citizens as competitive workers in the global world market. It is also in contrast to the many radical movements, organisations and activists that were engaged in pan-Africanism and Third Worldism before, during and after decolonisation. While the first part of this article focuses mainly on state-led projects of decolonisation, I turn in the second half to feminist regionalisms to explore an example of non-state pan-Africanism at play. African feminists in their diversity, but also other continental movements such as those of workers, students and intellectuals, fought for radical iterations of pan-Africanism. In many ways, one effect of the postcolonial state has been to de-radicalise decolonisation and these movements.

I make use of the term 'regionalism' throughout this piece to refer to a state policy of continentalism across Africa. The reason I term it regionalism is to echo the Third Worldist belief in various decolonised regions coming together to confront colonial capitalism. Regionalism thus indicates both a form of continental solidarity across Africa as well as a belief in Africa as a region coming together in solidarity with other states in Asia and Latin America. Because of this, there is no easy division between regionalism and internationalism: during this particular moment, the two feed into

one another. Internationalism here refers to global connections of Third Worldist solidarity that produces an international anti-colonial movement.

Regional solidarity and cooperation were linked to the evolving project of pan-Africanism, which connected African countries on the basis of a shared ideological project of independence and anti-colonialism. Notions of sovereignty and internationalism in particular can shed light on this broader project. Radical regionalism touches on the very heart of the pan-African project as it encompasses questions of identity, nationalism and agency. While African independence projects were in many ways nationalistic, they also understood independence as needing to go beyond the nation. It is these understandings of state agency and state sovereignty at national, regional and international levels that is the focus of this article.² Alongside this, there was an emergence of a clear feminist consciousness within the politics of decolonisation and anti-colonialism. Ideologically, a strong discourse of solidarity across the African continent and diaspora provided a pathway for conceptualising postcolonial nationhood.

The overarching aim of this article is to trace some of the ways in which state-led projects of decolonisation in Africa understood regionalism during this historical moment; in other words, to situate these policies and debates within a broader ideological and material project, one very much centred around questions of agency, regional solidarity and sovereignty. In particular, the article focuses on two elements of this: state-led economic policies and feminist interventions. By zooming in on these particular aspects, I aim to show how they contributed to the development of this moment. To do this, my main research question is: How can we explore state-led economic policies and feminist debates as spaces through which postcolonial African states asserted their sovereignty as well as reimagined regionalism and the international? This is not an exhaustive exploration, given the multiplicity of ways in which states and blocs organised against colonialism; nor does it aim to cover pan-Africanism as a whole. Rather the focus is on some of the debates states and political leaders as well as feminists had around decolonisation, and how they might speak to ideas of connection between Africa and the world. Temporally, I limit my focus to the mid-twentieth century, although much work has been done around pan-Africanism, postcolonialism and political economy in more recent decades.³

Pan-Africanism emerged from both the African diaspora and the African continent itself. The initial call for pan-Africanism came from people such as Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. Du Bois and Anna Julia Cooper (the latter being one of the main organisers of the first Pan-African Congress in 1901), as well as statesmen (Kasanda 2016: 184). Included

within the pan-African lifeworld are also individuals such as Léopold Sédar Senghor, the first president of Senegal (1960–80) who founded *négritude* (1966), a movement that emphasised the cultural and racial unity of Africa (*ibid.*). The organised pan-African movement is said to have begun with the founding of the African Association in London in 1897 (Adi and Sherwood 2003: viii). By the early twentieth century, in the context of growing anti-colonial movements across Africa, political parties, leaders and activists leaned towards pan-Africanism as a political ideology for liberation from colonialism. Seminal events such as the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester, England, reflect this divergent locus of pan-Africanism, where ‘Africa for Africans’ became a major discourse. Kwame Nkrumah, one of the delegates, noted: ‘Pan-Africanism and African nationalism really took concrete expression when the Fifth Pan-African Congress met in Manchester. Instead of a rather nebulous movement concerned vaguely with black nationalism, the Pan-African movement had become an expression of African nationalism’ (Nkrumah, Arrigoni and Napolitano 1963: 134).

This article focuses on two particular aspects of pan-African decolonisation. The first is the underlying regionalism that runs through it, which I refer to as radical regionalism. The second is the contributions made to this project by African feminists and feminist organisations, who engaged with one another regularly throughout the twentieth century to conceptualise agency and sovereignty and incorporate gender into debates around African independence. These two areas of focus provide important and neglected entry points to shed light on the challenges of pan-African thinking and its potential for facilitating alternatives to contemporary neoliberal regionalism. While much work has looked at the pan-African project as a form of internationalism, there is space for the question of African regionalism to be further explored. Contributions to the pan-African project from feminists are similarly under-studied.

This article draws on multiple sources of data, including primary archival material and secondary sources. The archives include the Wilson Archives on the Bandung Conference; the Women’s International Alliance archives at the LSE library; and the Pan-African Congress in Manchester. The former archives were available online, and the latter I was able to access personally. These archives differed significantly from one another, in the sense that the Wilson archives were primarily about correspondence between heads of state, while the Manchester archives were about debates, letters and press releases by activists. Moreover, each archive focused on different groups, thereby providing a rich array of material. In terms of secondary sources, I relied on multiple historical studies of pan-Africanism, as well as books analysing the period of decolonisation across the continent.

One challenge during the research process was the lack of material on feminists who were active during this period, specifically a systematic collection of what they thought, said and did. This pushed me to look for clues between the lines, and to approach the archival material I found with that in mind. This meant paying attention to which women were mentioned and when, and following up on those leads. I also traced particular themes, ideas and events that come up multiple times. This allowed me to trace what was seen as central to the project of decolonisation. My aim was to put the material together into a story that focused on particular topics such as sovereignty, nationalism and feminist activism. Thus, story-telling through archives is an approach that very much inspired the way I thought about my material and method. I am conscious of the limits to this, and that in searching for evidence of regionalism I may have constructed a story about regionalism that overstates its importance. However, my aim is not to make an argument about how influential regionalism was, but rather to trace how it was part and parcel of anti-colonial and postcolonial politics.

Theoretically, I work from the assumption that the material and the ideational are always co-constituted and never neatly separable. The political economy of a given context is therefore always connected to discourse and ideology, and thus must always be studied from that lens. Pan-Africanism is no exception, and I have very much understood it to be a project that had strong material and ideational elements. For example, the discourse of solidarity is one we often associate with pan-Africanism; however, I try to show that this was more than simply a discourse as it also constituted a material approach to organising economies and societies.

The argument of this article is that postcolonial state projects across the African continent were conscious of the limits of the 'colonial international' and of the need to articulate decolonisation projects that would guarantee political and economic independence. In order to achieve this, they deployed forms of radical regionalism that highlighted the connections between them and that brought solidarity to the fore. Concepts like sovereignty and internationalism were debated extensively, and played a major role in forms of regionalism. I also focus on feminist organising during the same period to highlight the ways in which they mobilised the idea of solidarity, arguing that sovereignty and internationalism were central to feminist forms of radical regionalism as well.

The first section looks at the idea of the colonial international, and argues that nations across the global South saw sovereignty as central to independence and as a means of challenging colonial internationalism (Getachew 2019). Using Vivienne Jabri's concept of the 'colonial international', I trace the claims

made by postcolonial states that revolved around economic and political sovereignty. The second section discusses the concept of internationalism more extensively, focusing in particular on debates between postcolonial nations around solidarity. Drawing on archives of the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, I show the ways in which internationalism was connected to regionalism and nationalism. The third section looks at the concepts of sovereignty and internationalism through the lens of feminists and feminist organisations. Focusing specifically on conferences African feminists organised and attended during the 1930s–60s, I trace the ways in which they mobilised the idea of solidarity, and whether this was articulated differently from the ways in which postcolonial states and leaders mobilised it. The fourth section brings together the debates in the first three sections in order to make the overarching argument that we can read understandings of sovereignty and internationalism through the project of radical regionalism. I propose that many of these states and feminists conceptualised the relationship between the nation and the global as porous, unstable and fluid in a productive way. While the nation remained central to anti-imperialist politics, it was not seen as limiting to forms of regional and international solidarity, which were seen as equally important to decolonisation.

Sovereignty vis-à-vis the Colonial International: Bandung as a Moment of Resistance

Sovereignty during the anticolonial and postcolonial period was closely connected to Africa's relationship with the international sphere, one still structured by colonialism. This becomes clear when we look at initiatives such as the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, a conference bringing together leaders of newly-independent nations that aimed to plan for a political and economic future determined in and by postcolonial nations. In this section, I introduce Vivienne Jabri's concept of the 'colonial international'⁴ and draw on material from the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung to flesh out some of the debates around the concept of sovereignty, which fed into anti-colonial alternatives pan-African leaders envisioned. The archival material I draw on represents an attempt to create a narrative around how these leaders saw the international, and how they navigated the tensions between the national, regional and international. I pay special attention to economic development plans; sovereignty for these figures meant more than simply formal or legal decolonisation, as it also required economic and political independence. The following section focuses more explicitly on internationalism; here I aim to contextualise the debates around sovereignty as a whole.

Vivienne Jabri uses the term 'colonial international' to describe an international sphere still permeated by imperialism. The timeframe this refers to is the 1950s and 1960s, during which appearances suggest an end of colonial rule – and therefore an international sphere open to all independent nations – and yet during which we see the continuing presence of colonial power. This concept has parallels with Kwame Nkrumah's neo-colonialism. Jabri argued that the changes put forward by postcolonial leaders across Africa and Asia should be understood as attempts to access the colonial international (2012: 100). Sovereignty was defined as belonging to some nations and not others. From mandates and protectorates to settler colonies and colonised nations, the logic of colonialism was a linear one where many nation-states were stuck in a position of *potential* sovereignty. As Antony Anghie writes, 'Sovereignty existed in something like a linear continuum, based on its approximation to the ideal of the European nation-state' (2007: 148).

Regaining control over the institutions of international political economy – the same institutions that reproduced global inequality – was seen as the path to independence:

In its role in both accumulation and the establishment of legitimacy, the postcolonial state is an interventionist state: it seeks to construct a hegemonic structure that functions to legitimize a political economy of development; it builds a state apparatus geared for planning as well as the mobilization and management of national resources (*ibid.*: 102).

However, this is always done vis-à-vis the international; it is this tension that mediates anything and everything the postcolonial state does. 'This is where the postcolonial state comes face to face with the colonial structure of the international. The resistance of the postcolonial state as such must hence be measured in terms of how it fulfils its role in relation to the constraints of the international' (*ibid.*). This suggests that when we evaluate post-independence leaders and their political projects, we must take into account their relationship(s) with the international. In the case of Africa, this resistance meant not only transforming African production within the international sphere that was, in and of itself, colonial, but also the creation and articulation of new social and political projects that moved beyond the binaries of East and West (*ibid.*: 103).

The attempted dismantling of the colonial international, which was seen as part and parcel of decolonisation, can be read through seminal events such as the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung in 1955. Bandung has produced a wide array of literature and debate, ranging from those adopting a 'narrative of disappointment' to those adopting a 'narrative of nostalgia' (Eslava,

Fakhri and Nesiah 2017). Bandung brought together representatives of over two-thirds of the world's population, and the emotional and symbolic nature of this moment cannot be overstated. In many ways, it recalls Frantz Fanon's hopes for a postcolonial renaissance, and for the creation of a new international beyond European imperialism:

The Third World today faces Europe like a colossal mass whose aim should be to try and resolve the problems to which Europe has not been able to find answers. If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us. But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries. ... No, we do not want to catch up with anyone. What we want to do is go forward (Fanon 1963: 254).

For Fanon, the creation of a new social and political project was very much tied to anti-imperialism and anti-racism. Fanon's work focused on a material analysis of neo-colonialism, and can be read alongside the work of Kwame Nkrumah, among others, who clearly pointed to neo-colonialism as a material and ideological consequence of colonial rule (Fanon 1963). Nkrumah understood neo-colonialism as a 'situation of infringed national sovereignty and intrusive influence by external elements' (quoted in Langan 2017: 1) thereby centring the question of sovereignty. Neo-colonialism was understood as any policy, event or influence that impeded the ability of a sovereign nation to self-govern. Indeed, Nkrumah explicitly mentioned aid when he discussed the ways in which neo-colonialism worked:

Control over government policy in the neo-colonial state may be secured by payments towards the costs of running the state, by the provision of civil servants in positions where they can dictate policy, and by monetary control over foreign exchange through the imposition of a banking system controlled by the imperialist power. 'Aid' therefore to a neo-colonial state is merely a revolving credit, paid by the neo-colonial master, passing through the neo-colonial state and returning to the neo-colonial master in the form of increased profits (Nkrumah, Arrigoni and Napolitano 1963: ix).

Other African leaders at the time similarly argued that colonialism would not end that easily, and that former colonial powers would continue to attempt to exercise control over Africa and the rest of the global South (Sankara and Anderson 1988).

These were the very themes that animated the conference; indeed, anti-racialism was a centrepiece of the debates around what 'universal human rights' should look like. As Partha Chatterjee notes, discussions around

human rights at Bandung – rather than reveal a concession to liberal colonial notions of human rights and the depoliticising effect this definition carried with it⁵ – revealed how differently postcolonial nations approached the concept of human rights: ‘In 1955, no one had any doubt about the principle problem of human rights in the world: the continued existence of colonialism and racial discrimination. The principle of self-determination of peoples and nations was the chief instrument by which human rights were to be established’ (Chatterjee in Eslava, Fakhri and Nesiah 2017: 672). Chatterjee continues:

Accordingly, the conference supported the rights of the Arab people of Palestine. It called for the end to racial segregation and discrimination in Africa. It supported the rights of the peoples of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia to self-determination. It called for Cambodia, Ceylon, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Libya, and Nepal to be admitted to the UN, and for a united Vietnam. These sentiments were invoked when the Non-Aligned Movement was formally launched in Belgrade in 1962 (*ibid.*).

It is around national sovereignty that the battle lines of the colonial international become clear. The international was a ‘colonial international’, as Jabri phrased it, precisely because not all nation-states were considered to be sovereign; in fact, the majority were not. Categories such as mandates and protectorates betrayed this linear logic of colonialism, whereby some nations were *potential* nation-states (*ibid.*: 668) embodying sovereignty, but to reach this stage meant achieving a certain civilizational status. As Anghie notes, ‘Sovereignty existed in something like a linear continuum, based on its approximation to the ideal of the European nation-state’ (2007: 148). Nevertheless, while it is clear that postcolonial nations posed a radical critique of the unequal distribution of sovereignty – and thus the creation of an international that was colonial rather than equal – a problem arose following their adoption of the nation-state as a means of challenging this inequality. In other words, it was accepted that the nation-state was a prerequisite of sovereignty, thereby displacing other notions or sources of sovereignty. This in turn led to the intensification of other forms of oppression, including against ethnic and religious minorities who did not fit within the bounds of the new nation. Indeed, as Bandung was taking place, the host, Indonesia, was in the midst of colonising West Papua.

The material and economic dimensions of sovereignty are equally important to note, and I elaborate on these in the next section. The call for sovereignty was matched by a call for industrialisation.⁶ Some of the themes that emerge from these principles include the need for cooperation within the global South; the creation and sharing of technical expertise, research

and development; the establishment of international bodies to coordinate economic development; and self-determination in terms of economic policy. As Chatterjee notes, the communiqué suggests that most countries at the conference saw themselves as ‘exporters of raw commodities and importers of industrial products’ (Chatterjee in Eslava, Fakhri and Nesiah 2017: 673). State-led economic development through industrialisation was envisioned as a means of interrupting the dependency they faced on global capital. State-led economic development through industrialisation was envisioned as a means of interrupting their dependency on foreign capital. A national programme for development based on industrialisation thus clearly emerges from the conference as well as debates before and after. This is not to discount the fact that in some ways, the adoption of the modern nation-state and nationalism on the part of postcolonial elites was an implicit acceptance of colonial modes of governance and societal organisation (Massad 2012: 277–8). Although there were attempts to radically critique the classical idea of sovereignty, for instance by Senghor and Césaire who posed the possibility of a federated community, the reality is that the majority of African postcolonial states adopted what was very much a Eurocentric framework for national organisation.

Evaluating Bandung, the Non-Aligned Movement that emerged from it, and postcolonial projects more broadly, requires understanding the context in which they emerged; or, as Chatterjee suggests, considering what they were fighting against (Chatterjee in Eslava, Fakhri and Nesiah 2017: 657). Bandung and the Non-Aligned Movement were part of a set of ideas that characterised decolonisation, ideas that located justice both nationally and internationally. In many ways, these created a new space of internationalism (*ibid.*: 671) that, for a brief moment, challenged colonial internationalism. ‘The demands made at Bandung still remain the unfulfilled promises of a global order founded on the freedom and equality of nations and peoples. That is why the memory of 1955 still refuses to go away, even though the world has changed so much over the past sixty years’ (*ibid.*: 674). It is difficult not to see this as a lost or missed opportunity (Taha in Eslava, Fakhri and Nesiah 2017), even when we understand the severe limits these nations faced. Such a moment has not come about again, and in many ways, we have since seen a deepening of the colonial international with the Washington Consensus in the 1970s. Unfulfilled promises of justice and the growing unlikelihood of a decolonised international continue to haunt us precisely because we are increasingly seeing the fulfilment of a vision that is antithetical to the one people across the postcolonial world imagined in the 1950s.

A Decolonised International

This section focuses explicitly on ideas of internationalism that animated many of the states and political leaders that were active during the period of decolonisation, showing how the lines between national and international were often blurred in a conscious attempt to transform global politics. In this sense, state-led projects of decolonisation were not just trying to decolonise individual nation-states, but also the broader international sphere, calling for the economic, political, social and intellectual cooperation of African countries and the African diaspora. The main demand was that African resources be used for the development of African peoples, and that independence meant more than legal or political emancipation but also encompassed economic independence. This was to be done through unifying markets and creating a new political landscape through which African unity could thrive. This movement between the national and international produced a radical form of regionalism: a form of transnational solidarity between states that called for a new international based on principles of sovereignty and equality.

This period of decolonisation, therefore, produced an interesting articulation of sovereignty that blurred the lines between the national and the international, producing radical regionalism. The latter term thus suggests that whereas today the bounded nature of sovereignty is represented through defensive territoriality, during the 1950s and 1960s there was a more fluid and porous understanding of sovereignty. In the current moment of resurgent right-wing nationalism, where the nation is to be protected from internal and external ‘enemies’, it appears as though sovereignty will only become more constricted. One lesson we can take from previous eras is the importance given to regional and international solidarity, alongside the maintenance of national sovereignty against imperial power.

This section is built largely around both the 1945 Pan-African Conference in Manchester and the ‘Bandung Archives’, which include correspondence between postcolonial leaders in the lead-up to the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung and the period thereafter. Interestingly, there was a second Afro-Asian Conference that had been planned but that never materialised because of growing tensions between various postcolonial nations. I first discuss some of the debates key figures had in this archival material, before turning to the second conference that never took place. The agenda of the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung was to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism or neo-colonialism by any nation. The agenda of the 1945 Pan-African Conference in Manchester was to denounce and criminalise racial discrimination, and denounce imperialism

and capitalism, while also providing a space within which activists and politicians could organise around the shared goals of decolonisation.

1945 Pan-African Conference in Manchester

A press release by the Pan-African Congress in Manchester (1945) stated:

On Monday, the 15th of October a Pan-African Congress will begin in the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, and go on for a week. Roughly two hundred delegates hold mandates from political, social, industrial and co-operative organisations; cultural and youth movements. The Colonial Trade Union movement is well to the fore in representation. Dr. W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, the eminent Negro scholar and writer will represent the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples of America. The Congress promises to be the greatest and most representative ever called by Africans and peoples of Africa[n] descent to plan and work for their freedom. (Pan-African Congress 1945)



Figure 1: Plaque in Manchester commemorating the location of the 1945 Pan-African Conference (Source: Boardman n.d.)

This built on earlier pan-African congresses, including the first ever which was organised by Du Bois in 1919 in Paris. He wrote:

I was convinced by my experience in Paris in 1919 that here was a real vision and an actual need. My plans as they developed had in them nothing spectacular nor revolutionary. If in decades or a century they resulted in such world organisation of black men as would oppose a united front to European

aggression, that certainly would not have been beyond my dream. Out of this there might come, not race war and opposition, but broader co-operation with the white rulers of the world, and a chance for peaceful and accelerated development of black folk (*ibid.*).

In the build-up to this conference, pan-Africanism was influenced by socialist, anti-imperialist and internationalist movements that advocated for a decolonisation of the 'colonial international'. These included the influential *négritude* movement founded by Césaire and Senghor, as well as the Marxist-inflected activism of Claudia Jones, Walter Rodney and Frantz Fanon.

<u>AGENDA.</u>	
<p>SATURDAY, 13th October.</p> <p>Delegates report and various committees assemble. A social function in the evening — Congress Ball. 6-30 p.m.</p>	<p>THURSDAY, 18th October.</p> <p>1st Session. Resolutions on the West-Indies. 2nd Session. Reports and discussion on the Negro problem in North, South and Central America.</p>
<p>SUNDAY, 14th October.</p> <p>Luncheon to the delegates 12-30 noon. Orient. Visit to American Red Cross, Lever St., 6-30 p.m.</p>	<p>FRIDAY, 19th October.</p> <p>1st Session. (a) Further reports and discussion on the Negro problem in North, South and Central America. (b) Report on the coloured communities in Europe. 2nd Session. (a) Resolutions on the Negro problem in North, South and Central America. (b) Resolutions on the coloured communities in Europe. Negro Life and Culture. 7-30 p.m.</p>
<p>MONDAY, 15th October. <i>Mr. Garvey</i></p> <p>1st Session. Welcome of delegates by Lord Mayor of Manchester (Ald. W. P. Jackson). Reports and discussion on North and West Africa. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2nd Session. Reports and discussion on Southern Africa. 2-30 to 5 p.m.</p>	<p>SATURDAY, 20th October.</p> <p>1st Session. General summing-up and decisions. 2nd Session. Special Session of the Congress committees and commissions. Banquet 7-30 p.m.</p>
<p>TUESDAY, 16th October. <i>Lord Mayor</i></p> <p>1st Session. Reports on East and Central Africa. 2nd Session. Resolutions on Africa, <i>South African</i></p>	<p>SUNDAY, 21st October.</p> <p>Public Meeting. 3 p.m.</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY, 17th October. <i>24.6.1945</i></p> <p>1st Session. Reports and discussion on the West-Indies. <i>Resolution on Africa</i> 2nd Session. Further reports and discussion on the West-Indies. Social Function (Evening).</p>	<p>All Sessions at CHORLTON TOWN HALL.</p>

Figure 2: 1945 Pan-African Conference programme (Source: Unknown 1945)

The Pan-African Congress in Manchester was the fifth such conference. It was held from 15–21 October 1945, following the creation of the Pan-African Federation in Manchester in 1944. It was organised by George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah, and attended by over ninety delegates including Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Banda, Obafemi Awolowo and W. E. B. Du Bois (who had organised the first Pan-African Congress in 1919). Resolutions criminalising racial discrimination and denouncing imperialism and capitalism were passed. Additionally, a journal was created at the Congress entitled *Pan-Africa*, remaining in print for two years.⁷ The resolutions criminalising racial discrimination in particular highlight the ways in which imperialism and racism were seen as co-constitutive. This, too, highlights an assumption that is missing today, where racism and imperialism are not always analysed as co-constituted but rather as separate structures or events.

The Pan-African Congress had ties to various movements, including that of Marcus Garvey and the international trade union movement, to which many workers across Africa were affiliated (Shepperson and Drake 2008). Many of the discussions revolved around independence and national liberation across Africa and the diaspora:

Looking back at the 1945 Pan-African Congress, it seems evident that some valuable groundwork for independence movements in British Africa was laid in Manchester, England, in the mid-1940s: especially through the work of Kwame Nkrumah for the Gold Coast which became independent in 1957 under the old African name of Ghana; and of Jomo Kenyatta for Kenya which achieved independence in 1963 (*ibid.*: 5).

Nkrumah in particular put forward his idea of a united Africa, or a pan-Africa. He began by targeting former French colonies in West Africa, urging them to leave the French Union and join a new Union of Africa. France organised a referendum, in which all countries except Guinea voted to stay in the French Union. Sékou Touré in Guinea came up with the slogan 'Better independence with poverty than servitude with plenty' (*ibid.*: 14). Ghana stepped in and lent Guinea 23 million US dollars, and put forward the proposal to found a union of African states. Nkrumah also rearticulated relations between 'sub-Saharan' Africa and North Africa, using the slogan 'The Sahara no longer divides us, it unites us' (*ibid.*). Not only did Nkrumah marry an Egyptian woman, Fathia Nkrumah, but he also had a close relationship with Egypt's first post-independence leader Gamal Abdel Nasser.



Figure 3: 1945 Pan-African Conference delegates A (Source: Unknown 1945)



Figure 4: 1945 Pan-African Conference delegates B (Source: Unknown 1945)

Ghana's decision to lend Guinea 23 million US dollars is another instance where regionalism took on both a material and an ideational form. Here, Ghana was central in providing financial and military support to other anti-colonial movements. The formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU); the setting up of the Institute of African Studies; the funding of *Encyclopaedia Africana* all point to a material basis of support for cultural forms of anti-colonialism. The decision to lend money to countries such as Guinea in order to free them from becoming indebted to imperial countries is another example of this support. Nasser, similarly, saw outlets such as *Voice of the Arabs* as central to spreading anti-colonialism across the continent.

In 1958, Nkrumah was to organise the Accra Conference, or the Conference of Independent African States. This included only eight countries at that time: Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia and Ethiopia:

They were now talking about a united political entity as large as the USA, the Soviet Union, or China. Their perspective at this conference and its aftermath was not fifty African states, it was continental government of the continent. At the back of the hall at the conference there was a big map of Africa and Padmore and others had taken a picture from this magazine, *Pan-Africa*, of a very strong black man breaking his chains, and they had superimposed this on a map of Africa. Underneath it they had paraphrased Marx and Engels: 'You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a continent to regain.' And that was sort of the spirit at this particular conference. ... On the last

day, Nkrumah got up and made a speech: 'Now you've seen an independent state, we've had this big conference, now go on and free your part of Africa.' And sitting here at the time was Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, and a number of other people who would soon 'free their part.' Banda was there from Malawi, and when he got off the plane and said his place should be in prison like Kwame Nkrumah. This just fired up the whole continent which said, 'Let's get moving.' And they set a goal: 'The year 1960 is going to be Africa's year – this is '58 now – we're going to try to be free' (Shepperson and Drake 2008: 16).

This powerful account by St. Clair Drake, who was present at many of these conferences, highlights the strongly regional sentiment that brought together many of these leaders. For them, the idea of a united Africa was central to how they envisioned independence and a future beyond imperialism. Moreover, as this passage highlights, the connections between them served to propel liberation movements forward across the continent. Seeing Nkrumah, who had led Ghana to independence in 1954, inspired leaders like Kaunda, Nyerere and Banda, who were to lead their own countries to independence soon after. These connections, that were both political and emotive, cannot be understated. If Africa is to move forward along the lines of independent development today, this form of radical solidarity across the continent is surely a prerequisite.

The OAU was formed in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with the aim to encourage political and economic integration among member states, and to eradicate colonialism and neo-colonialism. At its inaugural meeting, Gambian pan-Africanist Alieu Ebrima Cham Joof is quoted as saying:

It is barely 75 years when the European Powers sat round the table in Germany each holding a dagger to carve up Africa for its own benefit. ... Your success will inspire and speed up the freedom and total independence of the African continent and eradicate imperialism and colonialism from the continent and eventually neo-colonialism from the globe.... Your failure, which no true African in Africa is praying for, will prolong our struggle with bitterness and disappointment. I therefore adjure that you ignore any suggestion outside Africa and holding that the present civilization, which some of the big powered are boasting of, sprang up from Africa, and realising that the entire world has something earthly to learn from Africa, you would endeavour your utmost to come to agreement, save Africa from the clutches of neo-colonialism and resurrect African dignity, manhood and national stability (Cham-Joof 2006 [1963]).

The aims of this organisation included coordinating and intensifying cooperation in Africa; defending sovereignty and independence; and eradicating colonialism and white minority rule. The OAU was established following a division between

the 'Casablanca bloc' and the 'Monrovia bloc'; the former, led by Nkrumah, wanted a federation of African countries, while the latter, led by Senghor, saw unity as something that took time through economic – not political – cooperation.⁸ The OAU provided material support to anti-colonial movements through training and arms (the ANC and ZANU are two examples), and set up the African Development Bank to fund economic projects in Africa.

However, even within the OAU, divisions soon emerged between former French colonies and the rest, as well as between countries that supported the US versus those that supported the USSR. As I have shown with Bandung, support for the US was seen as problematic and thus countries which expressed such support were not always welcomed in these spaces. This brings us back to the colonial international, and the ways in which colonial-era divisions continued to impact the possibilities of radical regionalism.

1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung

The theme of internationalism comes out quite clearly in materials from the first Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, particularly through constant references to put aside differences and focus on common challenges. In a secret Chinese intelligence report on the conference, it is stated:

The original intention of Indonesia to organise the Asian-African Conference was attributed to the agony it felt for lack of energetic support in its pursuance of 'a positive and independent policy' as the USA attempted to isolate it and pressed it to give up the existing policy. They felt it was necessary to organise the Asian-African Conference [sic] to encourage "independent" policy, and oppose military cliques and colonialism (Chinese Foreign Ministry Intelligence Department 1954).

In another document, economic cooperation was emphasised:

Economic development is an important issue faced by Afro-Asian countries. All these countries lack capital and human resources, hence they can cooperate with each other on economic development. ... It is very important to expand regional and cross-regional commerce, it is also beneficial (Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Indonesia 1954).

This brings us back to the themes discussed in the previous section, namely: the centrality of economic development to the broader project of decolonisation. The need to develop capital and human resources was seen as imperative, and this was modelled on the idea of regional solidarity and cross-regional commerce.

Related to the question of independent economic development was the issue of political non-interference. The question of non-alignment animated

many of the discussions that appear in this material. In one correspondence, Nasser says:

I stepped forward to propose holding the Second Non-Aligned Conference. The main purpose is to encourage and attract emerging countries and those still under the influence of foreign countries to adopt an independent policy to enable Non-Aligned Countries leaders to discuss not only their own national issues but also important international issues, and to emphasise that war and peace not only involve the great powers but influence us as well. Furthermore, the conference can also promote our trade with one another (Premier Zhou Enlai and President Nasser 1963).

Similarly, in a correspondence based on a visit of the Chinese Premier to Ghana, Mali and Guinea, Nkrumah was recorded identifying the root causes affecting peace as imperialism and both new and old colonialism (Cable from the Chinese Foreign Ministry 1964). Malian leader Modibo Keita expressed support for non-alignment and positive neutrality, as well as socialism (*ibid.*).

One topic that emerged quite clearly from this archival material is that of Palestine/Israel. Palestine was a central concern for many countries, particularly those in North Africa and the Middle East. In a record of a conversation between Nasser and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, Nasser says:

The United States, Britain, and France carry out activities toward Africa by way of Israel. We do not go into countries originally under the control of Britain or France, but Israel can. They take advantage of the condition of Israel not being a colonial country to act by way of Israel to provide aid to African countries and to exercise control over them. In Casablanca at the start of 1961, I asked President Keita of Mali why his country was purchasing small arms from Israel. He replied that France refused to provide them. Mali could not buy them from Israel. I urged him to buy them from France, or else we could also provide them, and at a price lower than that of Israel. As a result, Keita cancelled the agreement with Israel and bought the weapons from us (Premier Zhou Enlai and President Nasser 1963).

There is much to unpack here, but what is of particular interest is the notion of African solidarity against Israel in light of the occupation of Palestine. Nasser is quite explicitly claiming that other African countries such as Mali should be apprehensive about Israel's encroachment into the continent. In the words of Zhou Enlai, 'Israel is the wedge of imperialism driven into this region' (*ibid.*). In the previous excerpt, we see the material underpinnings of internationalism: the discourse of solidarity was more than discursive, it also meant materially enacting networks of buying and selling that bypassed imperial nations. Nasser was not suggesting that Mali refuse to buy from

Israel simply on the basis of solidarity, but also proposing that Egypt could provide those weapons instead. Here we see the coming together of a material and ideological expression of regionalism.

Alongside Palestine/Israel, three other major conflicts emerge as of central importance to various African leaders: French colonial rule in Algeria, the situation in Congo, and the situation in Vietnam. In a correspondence between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and the Algerian Ambassador to China Mohamed Yala, the latter said:

We are very sympathetic to Vietnam. Vietnam is being split up, and in 1962 France also tried to partition Algeria. Even still, Algeria keeps running into imperialism, primarily the opposition and breaking of American imperialism. They have had huge profits in Sahara Petroleum and support a rebellion. America was also behind the Algerian-Moroccan conflict. You could say that we have the same enemies and the same mission. If the entire world followed the example set by Cuba, Vietnam, Taiwan, Congo and South Africa and rose up and fought back, what would America be able to do? America is still dealing with just one Cuba, a single Vietnam keeps America's leaders constantly busy. If there were ten Cubas in the world or ten Vietnams, what could they do? Congo currently is exactly a third Cuba (Premier Zhou Enlai and Mohamed Yala 1964).

Here we see a clear emphasis on internationalism, through the point that imperial powers would not be able to repress uprisings if they happened across the postcolonial world at the same time. Yala's point about having the same enemies is also pertinent: it is precisely anti-colonialism that brought together many African nations in a form of regional and international solidarity. What is also quite striking is that Congo was centred alongside the problem of Palestine and Vietnam, in distinction to today where – although the conflict in Congo continues – it is not often mentioned as a crisis the global community needs to respond to.

The principles described in this section were not adopted by all African countries. There appeared to be a split between African countries who were seen as allies of the US and those that were against it. Countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco were seen as allies of the US and therefore as problematic (*ibid.*). The growing tensions between African countries based on this split were partly what prevented the second Afro-Asian Conference from taking place. Although a second Afro-Asian Conference was planned to take place in Algiers, it never materialised. This was partly because of the coup that ousted Ben Bella and brought Boumedienne, and partly because of the politically divergent paths African nations were taking. It is here that we see the end of an era, seeing many of

the promises of Bandung fail to materialise. I now turn to a conference that was more specifically focused on pan-Africanism that set the ground for the growing pan-African movement.

Feminism Between Home and the World

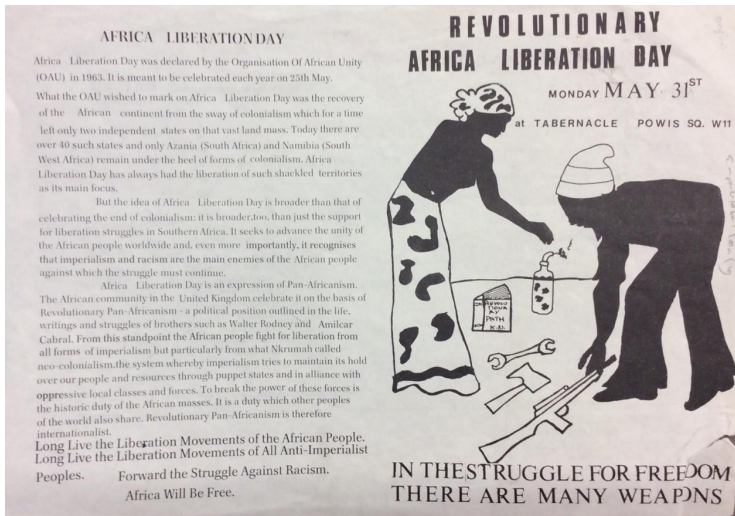


Figure 5: OAU poster (Source: Organisation for African Unity n.d.)

I begin by focusing on some of the debates feminists in the postcolonial world had around postcolonial projects more broadly, including that of pan-Africanism. To do this, I rely on the concept of transnational feminism, which denotes movements and connections between and among feminists that allowed them to come together in solidarity without assuming that the differences among them did not exist or that they were potentially divisive. Transnational feminism is directly connected to the theme of radical regionalism in that it understands feminist organising as intrinsically regional and international. Feminist conferences in particular were key spaces in which regional solidarities were cultivated, and in which problems afflicting nations were understood as connected to one another.

I focus specifically on some of the feminist conferences that were held, and the articulations around solidarity that emerged from them. I am especially interested in the 1939 International Association for Women (IAW) congress in Copenhagen, the 1959 Asian-African Conference of Women in Colombo, and the 1961 Afro-Asian Women's Conference in Cairo. While the first is interesting because it marked a moment during which feminists in Africa broke with Western feminists because of disagreements over imperialism,

the latter two conferences are interesting because they mark a new beginning in feminist solidarity across borders over the issue of imperialism.

I begin this section by engaging with the poster 'Revolutionary African Liberation Day' (Figure 5). In many ways the poster is symbolic of a political moment during which men and women were seen as necessary to the liberation struggle. As the poster notes, African Liberation Day – created by the OAU – was set up to connect African people globally against imperialism and racism, and was seen as 'an expression of pan-Africanism'. This pan-Africanism was seen as intrinsically internationalist, and although centred on Africa, it made claims about a broader type of unity. Despite the presence of a woman in the poster, the topic of sexism and gender inequality is not mentioned in the poster, nor is it necessarily a major theme across much of the archival material I found. This is despite the fact that feminists engaged with the pan-African project in multiple ways, as well as with the fight against colonialism and racism more broadly. This section explores these engagements in order to contextualise how feminists both supported and went beyond the pan-African project.

Solidarity among postcolonial nations during the era of decolonisation set the scene for many of the debates and policy transformations that took place. We often recall the pan-African movement through the work and writing of male visionaries, such as George Padmore, Walter Rodney, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Amílcar Cabral, Stephen Bantu Biko and Frantz Fanon. Yet, as Mama and Abbas remind us, 'an accurate historic record must include women like Mable Dove Danquah, Adelaide Casely-Hayford, Bibi Titi Mohamed, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Gambo Sawaba, Muthoni Likimani, Thenjiwe Mtintso, Djamila Bouhired, Charlotte Maxeke, Albertina Sisulu, and the other uncounted numbers of women who mobilised for Africa's liberation' (2014: 4). Similarly, Carole Boyce Davies writes that despite being erased from the history of pan-Africanism, women have been active within it from the beginning (2014: 78). Davies calls for us to place this activism within the broader field of transnational Black feminism, given the similar types of debates such women engaged with. She gives the example of Annie Cooper, who not only published extensively on the subject but was one of the organisers of the first Pan-African Congress.

Women contributed to the pan-African lifeworld in many ways, including through organising, scientific innovation, novels, plays and a whole range of other initiatives. This section focuses on feminist organising – specifically through conferences – and the ways in which these spaces opened debates around pan-African solidarity and solidarity with women across the

postcolonial world. While we know more about women's participation in Black internationalism (Brown 2015), and pan-African organising outside of Africa (Reddock 2007; Davies 2007), there is so much more to know when it comes to feminist contributions to the pan-African project within the continent.⁹

We have seen a growing shift towards African regionalism in the last two decades, in particular through the establishment of educational centres such as the African Gender Institute in South Africa and CODESRIA in Senegal, as well as through increasing developmentalism and NGO alliances. This regionalism, however, has a historical predecessor. As Amina Mama notes, reflecting on work being done at the African Gender Institute: 'We worked with an idea of activist scholarship that was both globally informed and locally grounded, taking its cues from international feminist movements, as well as from the history of diverse women's struggles in the region, using shared reflection to generate locally grounded critical engagements with feminist theories, pedagogies and curriculums' (2011: 7). It is this history that this section explores, particularly in relation to the regional and international connections formed through it.

The 1939 IAW in Copenhagen marked a breaking point in relations between Western and Eastern feminists. Given the colonial context during which many of the early feminist debates began, it is understandable that women saw gender equality as tied to national liberation. This soon produced confrontations between African, Asian and Middle Eastern feminists on the one hand, and Western feminists on the other. These often took place at international feminist conferences following the refusal of Western feminists to take seriously the problem of colonial rule that their own governments were incriminated in (Badran 1996: 13). These contradictions led feminists to look elsewhere for solidarity. In countries like Egypt, this began as early as the 1940s, when Egyptian feminists were accused of not upholding the democratic and equal principles they constantly spoke of (*ibid.*: 223). It was the 1939 IAW congress in Copenhagen in particular that revealed to Egyptian feminists the myth of a global sisterhood.

Egyptian feminists began to note the double standard at play in the realm of international politics. They pointed out, for example, that countries such as Britain were never criticised for colonialisation rule or the giving away of Palestine, whereas countries deemed 'undemocratic' such as Egypt were constantly criticised. At the IAW feminist congress in Copenhagen, there was an explosive confrontation surrounding the myth of a 'global sisterhood'. Margot Badran writes:

This double standard made Huda Sha‘arawi feel that ‘it had become necessary to create an Eastern feminist union as a structure within which to consolidate our forces and help us to have an impact upon the women of the world.’ Indeed, as early as 1930 Nabarawi had asserted that the path toward liberation of Eastern women was different than that of Western women, suggesting that Eastern women should unite. Meanwhile a move toward Arab unity had been growing among women and men in Egypt and other Arab countries (*ibid.*: 238).

Eventually they were to turn towards other African and Asian feminists and create separate conferences that focused on issues affecting colonised nations. This mirrors what I argued earlier in relation to Bandung: the creation of spaces for regional and international cooperation amongst postcolonial nations were central to the formation of radical regionalism. The reluctance of Western feminists to speak out against the Balfour Declaration and the subsequent colonisation of Palestine was the final straw for Egyptian feminists, who did not see a separation between gender justice and national liberation. In an instance of colonisation, they saw feminism’s role as one of resistance; feminists were supposed to challenge all forms of oppression, rather than focus on gender as though it was neatly separable from other forms of oppression. Alongside this was the obvious problem of Western feminist support for these very colonial projects. The category of ‘woman’ has always been an already-racialised category that is far from universal, even as it was claimed to be so.

This shared analysis of imperialism connected women across different geographical and cultural spaces and provided a means through which radical regionalism could be created. For feminists, radical regionalism very much rested on a shared understanding of colonial history and the colonial present, and what it meant to think of a future that took national sovereignty seriously. As Elisabeth Armstrong has written: ‘Fostered by the shared analysis of imperialism, women from newly independent and still colonised nations in Asia and North Africa honed what I call a solidarity of commonality for women’s shared human rights, and a solidarity of complicity that took imbalances of power between women and the world into account’ (2016: 305). Similarly, Antoinette Burton (1994) has written that these conferences made visible the refusal by women in Asia and Africa to be dismissed or be seen as developmentally backward in their demands, or be mobilised without consultation into a Western-dominated feminist agenda.

The growing momentum around transnational and anti-colonial feminist solidarity was heightened by the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in

1955. The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation is another prominent example of a forum in which African feminists engaged with one another and with other feminists from the global South. Laura Bier writes:

As new alliances were forged in the international arena, groups of women activists, writers, students, and politicians circulated within the milieu of international conferences, visiting delegations, summits, and committee meetings. The resulting exchanges and networks were part of what made possible the sorts of imaginings that overflowed the boundaries of the nation-state (2011: 159).

Throughout these meetings, the central articulation was around postcolonial agency and the importance of feminists in the global South to speak on their own terms. Even before this meeting, however, feminists such as Amy Ashwood Garvey and Claudia Jones were engaging in internationalist activism around imperialism and gender (Reddock 2007).

However, the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung was not the first time women from across Africa and the rest of the global South came together to discuss imperialism, capitalism and gender. In 1947, the Conference for the Women of Asia was held with the explicit aim of 'opening a new chapter for Asian and also African internationalist leadership' (Armstrong 2016: 307). The conference was held in Beijing, and was one of the first international events organised by the Chinese Communist Party. It included 367 women from thirty-seven countries. It became clear from the conference that what connected women from across Asia and Africa was anti-imperialism, mass-based organising, a membership dominated by rural women, and anti-capitalism (*ibid.*). Conference reports, such as one based on this one entitled *The Women of Asia and Africa*, emphasised the shared struggles women in both continents faced.

One fascinating point that was raised by women at this conference was the need to hold both their own states as well as imperial states to account. Indian feminist Jai Kishore Handoo, for example, led a campaign against the use of Indian troops to put down the independence movement in Indonesia, and a Vietnamese delegate appealed to African delegates at the conference to protest against Algerian, Tunisian, Senegalese and Moroccan soldiers being taken to Vietnam to 'fight against a brother people, against whom they have no reason whatsoever to fight' (*ibid.*: 312). What created solidarity, therefore, was a shared commitment to fighting against imperial oppression, both at home and abroad. Here again we see parallels with the communiqué that emerged from the conference at Bandung: the fight against empire was understood as creating connections between postcolonial nations and activists within them.

It is important to note that feminists often elaborated a double critique, of both Western feminism as well as of postcolonial states. For example, the focus of some feminists on social reproduction posed a question to such states as to whether they were taking the gendered consequences of state-led capitalism seriously. Similarly, the questions feminists raised around whether gender equality principles would be enshrined in new constitutions pushed states to think about what the project of decolonisation meant for everyone. As we now know, many states did not pay attention to these critiques, and reproduced gender inequality in some ways, while addressing it in others.

A second conference with a similar theme was held in 1958, three years after the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, this time in Colombo, Sri Lanka; and a third in Cairo in 1961. The latter conference, which was more leftist and radical in orientation, focused on solidarity between women based on both nationalism and their positions within global capitalism. Interestingly, because of an increasing focus on fascism among Western feminists at the time, there were debates around the centring of fascism at the global level.

While women delegates from Africa and Asia did not disagree about the importance of eradicating fascism, they defined 'fascism' through the lens of imperialism. War in the colonies was ongoing in 1945, these delegates reminded the assembly. Fascism was one powerful force behind military conflict, but colonialism was another as colonial powers attempted to quash freedom movements by brute force. Delegates from Asia and Africa did not nationalise their analysis of imperialism to indict one colonising country over another. Instead, they focused on the political economy of colonialism. Colonised people, they stressed, lost the opportunity to enjoy basic dignity and to provide for their own well-being (*ibid.*: 321).

These reflections highlight the tensions around 'global sisterhood' while showing some of the emerging connections between women across Africa and Asia. From Egypt to India to Kenya, women were highlighting the problems they faced from both local patriarchy and global imperial capitalism, participating, I would argue, in cultivating radical regionalism.

Women did not only do this at feminist conferences but also took up space at broader conferences around anti-imperialism. Amy Ashwood Garvey addressed the Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945, focusing on the position of the Black woman:

In Jamaica, women in the civil service ... take no active part whatever in the political development of the country ... it is among the women teachers that we find a progressive movement ... the labouring class of women who work in the fields, take goods to the market, and so on, receive much less pay for

the same work than the men do ... the Negro men of Jamaica are largely responsible for this, as they do little to help the women to get improved wages (Adi and Sherwood 2003: 73).

This double critique was central to the ways in which African, Asian and women of African descent imagined decolonisation. Decolonisation was never simply about men from these countries taking over political power; it was about liberation for both men and women. While the archives do not tell us in great detail who the women across the African continent were who took part in these conferences, we do know that there was momentum around feminist organising that took both patriarchy and imperial capitalism seriously.

I am fully aware of the risks involved in having focused on conferences as spaces in which feminists organised, given the tendency for such feminists to come from elite backgrounds and to be professionals. Many feminists active at these conferences were well-educated and came from the middle classes or elite families of various African nations. As has been noted by other scholars, this often produced a very particular understanding of feminism that tended to exclude other women (Ahmed 1992). For instance, the issues that were prioritised tended to be those that touched the lives of professional women, rather than working-class women. In the context of Egypt, for instance, feminists in the 1920s and 1930s tended to focus on veiling and seclusion, as well as legal and educational rights, because those were the restrictions that affected their lives the most. The class distinctions between feminist activists – who often appeared at these conferences – and the many women they claimed to represent continue to be an important site of fracture and contestation.

At the same time, we do see indications that these conferences were not as homogenous as we may at first assume. Take, for instance, the two later conferences I discussed earlier. The first, in 1958, three years after the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and the second in Cairo in 1961. These conferences are notable for their focus on leftist feminist activism, and on radical forms of politics that women embodied. The conference in Colombo, in particular, included important discussions on capitalism and class. Even more importantly, the 1947 Conference for the Women of Asia, held in China, was attended primarily by rural women and its focus was almost solely on the question of mass-based organising.

Even within specific feminist movements we see important tensions arise in relation to questions of class and nationalism. Leila Ahmed has argued that what became the dominant voice of feminism was one that favoured Westernisation and secularisation, a primarily upper-middle class version (1992: 174). The nationalism they propagated, therefore, was closely

tied to a particular understanding of how Egypt needed to modernise in order to become fully independent and has close connections to Egyptian modernists who, feeling the European gaze toward the Orient, felt the need to portray Egypt positively. The alternative to this were feminists who tried to articulate female subjectivity within a more 'Egyptian' discourse. Malak Hifni Nassef, for example, formulated her ideas about feminism in and through the lens of Egyptian culture.

In the 1950s, when socialist tools and concepts became more prominent throughout the postcolonial world, we see Egyptian feminists engage with a way of analysing what many of them saw as the main problem facing Egypt: social inequality. Some examples include Inji Efflatoun, who, as a delegate of the League of Women Students and Graduates of Egypt, the communist women's organisation, to the World Congress of Women held in Paris in 1945, gave the following speech:

I made a very powerful speech in which I linked the oppression of women in Egypt to the British occupation and imperialism. I not only denounced the British, but the King and the politicians as well. It was a very political speech in which I called for national liberation and the liberation of women (*ibid.*: 196).

Other feminists active as communists included Latifa al-Zayyat and Soraya Adham.

While a focus on feminist conferences, therefore, tends to dominate the literature – largely because these remain some of the few remaining records of feminist activism during that era –this does not easily correspond to a focus on elite feminist issues at the expense of everything else. There existed contestation within these conferences and within feminist circles more broadly around what feminism meant, and how a certain class bias needed to be addressed within national feminist movements. This played out within national feminist spaces, as well as at various international feminist conferences. As anti-capitalism became more central to feminist activism during the 1940s and 1950s, we see the participation of non-elite feminists increase, and the subjects of these conferences shift.

Moreover, we can also see from the discussions feminists had at these conferences that the futures they proposed did not neatly align with what states and the broader male-dominated pan-African project were proposing. This is where we see divergences within radical regionalism. It is not a simple case of feminist and pan-African visions being aligned, but rather that they aligned in some ways while clashing in others. In particular, they may both have prioritised anti-imperialism and the need for economic independence, as these animated many movements at that historical moment. However,

feminists often took more radical stances on what anti-imperialism meant, as we can see from their critiques of their own states' decision to participate in military activities in other countries. Similarly, feminists often posed a more thorough form of anti-capitalism that was significantly different from state-led capitalism adopted by many African postcolonial states.

Feminists are thus an important group that performed radical regionalism. Feminists posed a double critique against both patriarchy and capitalist imperialism, therefore fighting a battle on two fronts. Because of this, there were early confrontations between Western and Afro-Asian feminists who disagreed over the priorities feminists should organise around. For Western feminists, imperial capitalism was not seen as an issue, whereas for African and Asian feminists it was seen as a central issue. This led to African and Asian feminists creating regional forms of solidarity rather than international ones with Western feminists. Thus feminists practised a form of regional radicalism that in some instances was more radical than the form practised by postcolonial leaders such as Nasser, Nkrumah, Nehru and others. This was because they posed a challenge to both imperialism and capitalism – as these leaders did – as well as to patriarchy and its emergence within the form of the postcolonial state and postcolonial nationalism.

Central to this point is that within feminist critique of the nation-state we can locate a particularly important intervention in understandings of sovereignty. The nation-state in its patriarchal orientation prevented some feminists from seeing it as an ideal vessel for liberation politics. Given our contemporary context, where socialist internationalism has weakened and regionalism has at times become synonymous with developmentalism, the nation-state remains patriarchal and nationalist in an insular and regressive manner that connects deeply to global capitalism. Indeed, one cannot help but wonder what Africa's future would have looked like had it been in the hands of radical groups such as feminists, workers, students and beyond, who often had more radical futuristic visions that went beyond nationalism, the nation-state and patriarchy.

Conclusion

This contribution has centred decolonisation across Africa as a foundational event in relation to questions of economics, politics and society. Through an analysis of sovereignty and economic policies, I have traced the ways in which states navigated the structures of colonial rule and the new reality of postcolonial nation-building. In particular, I have analysed the forms of regionalism and internationalism that animated this period, through economic programmes such as nationalisation and industrialisation, as

well as through debates around sovereignty. The article worked from the assumption that the material and ideological are always connected, and that an analysis of decolonisation must take both into account.

The argument of this piece is that postcolonial state projects across the African continent were conscious of the limits of the 'colonial international' and of the need to articulate projects that would guarantee political and economic independence. Notions of agency, sovereignty and radical forms of connectivity were thus central to this broader project, as was feminist organising and other forms of solidarity across borders. This adds to what we already know about solidarity during this moment, and works to centre radical forms of politics that may hold promise for us today.

This focus on regionalism during decolonisation raises interesting questions about regionalism across the continent today. Then, regional solidarity and cooperation were linked to the evolving project of postcolonial nation building, which connected African countries on the basis of a shared ideological project of independence and anti-colonialism. For this reason, I refer to regionalism then as a *radical regionalism*, based on the goal of anti-colonial independence. The radicalism embedded within this form of regionalism (connected to internationalism) evoked norms of agency and sovereignty that challenged the 'colonial international' and paved the way for independent forms of economic development.

The current context is radically different from the moment of decolonisation, in several ways. First, economically we have seen the increased embeddedness of neoliberalism across all spheres of life in a way that has naturalised the logic of the market. Second, the political ramifications of this for regionalism in particular have been that regional cooperation is understood as neoliberal cooperation across borders and economies rather than the more radical forms of regionalism that were imagined previously. Finally, and specifically with regards to feminists, neoliberalism and increasing developmentalism have meant that gender equality has been framed within discourses of development propagated by NGOs. This has sometimes had the effect of de-politicising and individualising gender inequality.

So, what can we learn from the moment of decolonisation? One lesson is that the notions of regionalism and internationalism are crucial to creating alternative forms of solidarity. Non-alignment is an interesting political principle that could hold promise for Africa today. Non-alignment at its core was a commitment to stand against imperialism and exploitation. Given the large amount of colonial activity in Africa today, it is imperative that African countries recognise the importance of resisting colonial interests and co-operating to resolve conflicts that continue to rage unresolved. Another

example can be drawn from feminist activism. The radical connections between African and Asian feminists are a useful example to think of in light of the increasing fragmentation of women's solidarity today. Of particular importance is the centrality of anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism and anti-patriarchy to the struggles of feminists in the 1950s and 1960s.

Another lesson that can be taken from this moment is based on the principles underlying regional cooperation. Radical regionalism goes beyond trade deals or institutional commitments to cooperation and instead poses the question: *economic development for whom?* This was the question that drove many of the leaders and movements of the decolonisation period, to which the answer was that economic development must always serve both nation and continent. Any forms of regional cooperation should therefore be based on that principle. Moreover, the basis of the nation-state is also important to think about critically. The feminist proposal to re-imagine the nation-state as well as to think of sovereignty as something that could go beyond the nation-state both provide creative ways of thinking through some of the limitations of contemporary nation-state formations as well as the rise of right-wing forms of nationalism.

Economically, much can be learned as well. Industrialisation was seen as central to any such independent economic policy. Currently, African development is heavily reliant on finance capital, foreign direct investment, and foreign aid. Many of the debates in the 1950s and 1960s clearly saw the problems with this over-reliance on foreign capital, especially Western capital. Industrialisation was seen as the way out of this dilemma, as it would allow African nations to develop their own resources, of which they have plenty. Primary commodities were extremely important in this understanding of independent economic development. They were recognised to be crucial to the functioning of global capital and to the development of Western countries themselves. However, because they were exported raw and manufactured elsewhere, the value from these products never reached Africa itself. One aim of these movements was to move beyond Africa as a supplier of raw commodities. Nationalising key industries was similarly seen as important, particularly infrastructure and banking. We are seeing the privatisation and selling-off of key industries across the African continent today, in precisely a reversal of what leaders in the 1950s were advocating. Nationalising means greater control over these key industries, and also provides a means of creating local capital that can be used for development.

In sum, there is much to learn from the moment of decolonisation and the ways in which the future was imagined. Radical forms of politics, whether emanating from pan-Africanists or feminists, centred the idea that

Africa should control its own destiny. Sovereignty was seen as the answer to the continuing control exercised by colonial power, and independent forms of economic development were crafted to counter the uneven global economic system. Since the 1970s, Africa has become increasingly entangled within neoliberal and ultra-nationalist forms of economic and political development. It is increasingly urgent for us to think of alternatives to these exploitative systems. Perhaps this does not mean only thinking of the future, but also revisiting the past.

Notes

1. London School of Economics. This article was completed as part of the Post-Colonialisms Today project.
2. This builds on important emerging work on this topic, particularly Getachew (2019).
3. I want to highlight the work of Thandika Mkandawire, Samir Amin and Archie Mafeje and thank the anonymous reviewer for these suggestions.
4. This builds on previous theoretical approaches such as dependency theory, world systems theory and the work of Samir Amin in the context of Africa and the Middle East.
5. See Moyn (2014).
6. In some ways, this pre-empted approaches such as dependency and world systems theory, which centred the global capitalist system as a site of colonial inequality.
7. There are only two full sets of it in existence: at the Houghton Library at Harvard and the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh.
8. It is beyond the scope of the article to go into detail of the differences between these blocs; however, I want to note that these differences also speak to the particularity of global capitalism and decolonisation at that moment and how liberation was imagined.
9. This is not to deny that some individual women, such as Amy Ashwood Garvey, are renowned for their contribution to the pan-African project. As Adi and Sherwood note, 'If ever there was a life of lived pan-Africanism, it was that of Amy Ashwood Garvey. She not only lived in many parts of the Black world, but participated in the major events – from the founding of Garvey's UNIA to the Pan-African Conference of 1945 and the independence of Ghana in 1957' (2003: 69). However, because her manuscripts were lost, we have little access to her full body of work (*ibid.*).

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