

**AFRIQUE ET  
DEVELOPPEMENT  
AFRICA  
DEVELOPMENT**

Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1992



# AFRICA DEVELOPMENT AFRIQUE & DEVELOPPEMENT

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CODESRIA acknowledges the support of a number of African Governments, the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC), the International Research Development Centre (IDRC), Ford Foundation and DANIDA.

Le CODESRIA exprime sa gratitude aux Gouvernements africains, à l'Agence suédoise pour la Coopération en matière de Recherche avec les Pays en voie de Développement (SAREC), le Centre de Recherche pour le Développement International (CRDI), Fondation Ford et DANIDA.

*Typeset and Printed by CODESRIA*  
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**AFRICA DEVELOPMENT  
AFRIQUE & DEVELOPPEMENT**

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

Revue Trimestrielle du Conseil pour le  
Développement de la Recherche en Sciences  
Sociales en Afrique

*Editor*  
*Zenebeworke Tadesse*  
*(CODESRIA)*

Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1992

**Africa Development** is the quarterly bi-lingual journal of CODESRIA. It is a social science journal whose major focus is on issues which are central to the development of society. Its principal objective is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among African scholars from a variety of intellectual persuasions and various disciplines. The journal also encourages other contributors working on Africa or those undertaking comparative analysis of Third World issues.

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The Editor/Rédacteur en Chef  
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CODESRIA, B.P. 3304, Dakar, Senegal.  
Tel: 23-02-11 - Telex 61339 CODES SG - Fax: 24-12-89.

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ISSN 0850 3907

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# National Security and Defense Expenditure in Africa: A Political and Economic Analysis

Julius E Nyang'oro\*

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*Résumé: Bien que les dépenses militaires de l'Afrique ne semblent pas excessifs par rapport à la moyenne mondiale, l'image qu'on en ait devient trompeuse si on fait une comparaison pays par pays par rapport aux autres régions du monde. C'est dans le cadre d'une analyse de la capacité des économies africaines à absorber toutes dépenses improductives (y compris militaires) que cette capacité doit être appréciée. Si on tient compte de cette analyse, les dépenses militaires africaines sont plutôt élevées et dans la plupart des cas non nécessaires. La raison en est que dans la plupart des cas, ce qu'on considère souvent comme dépenses militaires n'est pas destiné en réalité à la défense contre des ennemis extérieurs mais plutôt contre la dissidence intérieure, qui dans tous les cas, résulte des mauvaises conditions économiques et des gouvernements inefficaces. Pour avoir une idée plus précise des coups d'Etat, de l'autoritarisme et du militarisme, qui ont un impact direct sur les dépenses militaires, il est important, dans toute analyse d'aller au-delà des politiques et de l'organisation militaires.*

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## Introduction

Military expenditure has not always been linked to economic performance in macroeconomic analysis. In many instances, military expenditure - which to a great extent is also assumed to imply defense or "security" expenditure - has been regarded as a "Public Good" whose necessity and value is accepted without question (Kennedy, 1975; 1983). Thus Kennedy notes:

*Defense is a public good. It is produced by and for the community. It differs from private goods produced in the market in that it is consumed by all citizens equally whereas private goods are consumed individually and exclusively by those who purchase them. Once a public good such as defense is produced it does not matter whether an individual wants to consume it or not, or whether he has paid taxes or not, his consumption of defense cannot be exclusive and at the expense of fellow citizens, nor can it be limited (1975: 40).*

The statement by Kennedy assumes a lot of things, foremost among them being the existence of a nation-state, accepted as legitimate by the subject populations. This is an important point because in discussing military

expenditure for different countries, we are already acknowledging the imperative of the state to *legitimately* acquire and maintain the ultimate coercive machinery in society. However, this assumption may not steadfastly hold under conditions of political crises where the legitimacy of the state is constantly under challenge from internal groups. Nonetheless, what is important here is the recognition that the very agency (i.e. the state) which is supposed to ensure national security through defense expenditure may not have the political wherewithal to carry out such a task. What we have just stated would not be so significant if its persistence was not so widely present in African countries. In countries such as Ethiopia, the Sudan, Mozambique and South Africa, the very legitimacy of regimes in those countries is under strong challenge internally. For purposes of international comparison, Edward Kolodziej's statement could not be more appropriate:

*The very success of the process of globalizing the nation-state as the basic unit of international relations is the single most important factor in explaining militarization of the developing world (1985: 44).*

Kolodziej's statement could simply be interpreted as an observation of a "realist" view of international relations in the tradition of Hans Morgenthau (1948) and E.H. Carr (1946). The "realist" view of international politics assumed that all nation states would enter the international arena with a view to compete for power based on what was perceived to be a "national interest" broadly defined. In the process of interstate competition, defense expenditure and the acquisition of armaments would be part of this process given the uncertainties of an anarchical world which was based on competition between states. However, if we closely scrutinize Kolodziej's statement and apply it to Africa and many other countries of the Third World, the theory of the globalization of the nation-state becomes very problematic because of its non-attainment. As challenges to the states' legitimacy abound, there can be no "national interest" as such, given the divergence of interest between the various groups in society and the state itself. The implications for defense expenditure and militarism become even more serious. If the legitimacy of the state is under question, Kennedy's notion of the "Public Good" becomes highly questionable in the relationship between the state and civil society, for the notion of "Public Good" assumes an internal congruence between the interests of the state and those of civil society. In other words, globalization of the nation-state is yet to be achieved in many places. The continued civil strife in Africa should be sufficient testimony to that fact.

We therefore, in this paper, question the acceptance of *defense* as a public good in Africa. We raise this question in spite of the fact that, at least in theory, in virtually every country in the world, arguments with regard to defense expenditure are always about details - what weapons systems should

be produced or bought and cost figures attached to particular weapons systems - and not the fundamental question as to whether defense expenditure as such is necessary. Thus, apart from the theoretical question of the validity of the nation-state as an *operational* concept in African countries, this paper moves in another direction which many studies have neglected. It discusses the important question as to the possible direct relationship between military expenditure and economic performance, with Africa as the focus of the *investigation*.<sup>1</sup>

This paper also investigates the possible relationship between military expenditure and regime types in African countries. This is an important question because in African countries militarism and/or militaristic behavior is in most instances tied to the level of defense expenditure. However, for the present purposes, the most important theoretical point is the relationship between military expenditure and militarism on the one hand and economic development on the other - given the persistent economic crisis that has characterized the African scene in the last decade or so. In a way, therefore, this study serves as an exploration of the thesis that increased military expenditure is one of the main reasons for Africa's economic decline in the past two decades.

A corollary point to the preceding thesis is that, as economic stagnation and/or decline is experienced, the African political system has tended to breed a new kind of authoritarianism which is far worse than the early authoritarianism which was experienced in the 1960s when a substantial number of African countries fell under military rule. (For the nature of African coups, see: Beinen, 1979; and Decalo, 1976.) The earlier authoritarianism and military dictatorship seemed to have been largely confined only to political and civil matters, e.g. freedom of the press, assembly, political expression and related areas. The new authoritarianism however, has encompassed all walks of life, and especially in the economic sphere, where the state has sought to fully and more directly engage itself in economic production despite fierce resistance by the population (Nyang'oro and Shaw, 1989; Rothchild and Chazan, 1988; Ergas, 1987).

#### **A Note on Methodology**

As a preliminary to our investigation, we present three kinds of data. First, Table I is a summary of military expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the period 1979-1988 for African countries that

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1 This is not to say however, that studies on this topic have not been conducted. The point is that for the Third World, most studies have concentrated on either Latin America or Asia. See, for example: Benoit, 1973; 1978; Ball, 1983; Looney, 1983; and Kick and Sharda, 1986.

are included in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook for 1989.<sup>2</sup> The data in Table I help us in determining the yearly fluctuation in military expenditure especially for the 1980s when Africa faced its worst economic crisis in the postindependence period. Table Ia averages out the data in Table I. Secondly, in Table III, we present data that show the growth in economic production in Africa between 1965 and 1986. The latter dates are especially important for our purposes because the data for that period can be compared to the data in Table I to see if growth (or decline) in economic production correlated with levels of military expenditure. Finally in Table IV, we present data on African military expenditure in constant price figures to give a better picture of how much money is being spent on armaments. The relevance of Tables II and V will become apparent as the discussion on military expenditure will be related to the number of armed forces on the continent and the number of people who have lost their lives in Africa due to continued internal (civil) wars.

After the presentation of what is essentially static data, the discussion of regime types will be cast in a theoretical framework which seeks to look beyond simple military expenditure to the nature of peripheral (and especially African) political economy in general. The purpose of the theoretical discussion will, be among other things, to offer a critique of studies on African leadership which have tended to portray authoritarianism and personal rule in Africa as a political phenomenon that could be described as unique to the African situation, and which suggest that events which have led to such rule have little to do with the nature of the economy and its dialectical relationship to politics in African countries (See for example: Jackson and Rosberg, 1983; and Decalo, 1976).

### *Empirical Analysis*

Tables I and Ia show that on average, between 1979 and 1988, military expenditure for all countries in Africa (including South Africa but excluding Egypt)<sup>3</sup> was 3.8 as a percentage of GDP. The highest case is represented by Angola, which, between 1979 and 1988, spent on the average 18.4 percent of its GDP on the military. The lowest case is represented by Mauritius

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2 SIPRI is one of the two leading reporters on international military expenditure and other issues related to security matters. The other reporting agency is the London based International Institute for Strategic Studies which publishes the annual *The Military Balance*.

3 Most computations exclude Egypt from the general calculations on Africa's military expenditure because of its involvement in the wider Middle East conflict and the substantial military assistance it receives from outside sources, especially from the United States. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Egypt received most of its armaments from the Soviet Union. However, since the 1973 October War, Egypt has increasingly turned to the West (especially the U.S.) for arms supplies.

which, in the same period, spent only 0.3 percent of its GDP on the military. Libya, which under Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, has acquired a reputation for big spending on armaments, averaged an annual military expenditure of 13.3 percent of GDP for the period 1979-1986 for which data is available. Thus in Africa, the cases that stand out are Angola (18.4%), Libya (13.3%), Mozambique (9.4%), Mauritania (8.6%), Ethiopia (8.6%), Chad (6.1%) and Zimbabwe (6.1%). In all these cases, on a preliminary basis, high levels of military expenditure can be attributed to regional conflicts in which these countries find themselves:

- (1) Perhaps the best illustration of regional conflict, Angola's border conflict with South Africa, and the latter's support for Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces, which have refused to recognize the Luanda government's legitimacy, largely account for Angola's relatively high defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP;
- (2) Libya not only is involved in the wider Middle East conflict, but is also involved in an intense rivalry with Egypt and has had serious border conflicts with Chad;
- (3) In Mozambique, the government of South Africa has for the past ten years armed and supported the rebel movement RENAMO, which refuses to recognize the Maputo government's legitimacy;
- (4) Mauritania, along with Morocco, was for a while involved in the colonial conflict involving the POLISARIO movement in Western Sahara. In the last few years, Mauritania has considerably scaled back its involvement in Western Sahara. The high military GDP expenditure may be a reflection of time-lag in data reporting;
- (5) Up to mid-1991 Ethiopia has been involved in a regional conflict at two levels: against Somalia on the one hand and against a secessionist movement in the province of Eritrea in the Northeast part of the country. These two conflicts coupled with an increased pressure by other internal groups for more autonomy account for the relatively high military expenditures;
- (6) For Chad, see (2) above; and,
- (7) Zimbabwe's high military expenditure can be attributed to South Africa's presence on Zimbabwe's Southern border and also to South Africa's support for RENAMO in Mozambique. One of the tactics that RENAMO uses in Mozambique is the disruption of communication systems including the blowing up of ports and railways. Zimbabwe being landlocked and dependent on Mozambique for an outlet to the sea, has been forced to send troops into Mozambique to guard these facilities. Hence the high levels of military expenditure.

Table I - Africa: Military Expenditure as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product 1979-1988

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1985	1987	1988
Algeria	2.1	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	(1.7)	(1.5)
Angola	14.0	12.8	13.8	11.9	16.5	22.0	28.4	28.4	-	-
Benin	1.9	(1.9)	(1.8)	(1.9)	(2.2)	2.0	2.0	(1.9)	-	-
Botswana	3.6	3.7	3.7	2.7	2.9	(2.4)	(2.2)	(2.2)	(3.0)	-
Burkina Faso	2.7	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.4	2.6	2.6	(2.9)	-	-
Burundi	(2.6)	(2.9)	(3.0)	(3.5)	(3.1)	(3.2)	(3.0)	(3.4)	-	-
Cameroon	1.5	1.2	(1.1)	1.7	2.2	2.1	(2.2)	-	-	-
Central African Rep.	2.0	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.8	-	-	-	-	-
Chad	-	-	-	-	(7.0)	(7.8)	(5.7)	(6.0)	(3.8)	-
Congo	3.7	2.8	(2.1)	(2.3)	(2.3)	(2.6)	-	-	(1.2)	-
Côte d'Ivoire	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	-	-
Ethiopia	8.8	8.5	8.4	8.4	9.0	(8.9)	-	-	-	(3.9)
Gabon	(1.9)	(2.1)	(2.4)	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.8	(3.9)	-	-
Ghana	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	(0.4)	0.5	0.5	(0.6)	-	-
Kenya	4.4	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.3	2.7	(2.2)	(2.7)	(2.8)	(2.6)
Liberia	1.5	2.8	4.8	4.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	(2.2)	-	-
Libya	(14.2)	(10.0)	(14.0)	(15.0)	(13.0)	(14.5)	-	-	-	-
Madagascar	2.9	(2.8)	3.0	(2.7)	(2.4)	2.3	2.2	2.7	1.8	-
Malawi	4.2	4.4	3.3	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.8	(1.6)	-
Mali	-2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.7	(2.3)	-	-	-
Mauritania	10.5	9.7	-	-	5.7	-	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	(0.2)
Morocco	5.6	6.3	6.6	6.5	4.9	4.7	5.4	5.1	(5.0)	(5.0)
Mozambique	-	5.6	7.0	8.0	10.7	12.1	11.7	(10.4)	-	-
Niger	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	(0.8)	(0.8)	-
Nigeria	2.5	2.5	2.3	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.3	1.2	0.8	-
Rwanda	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.9	-	-
Senegal	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.2	-	-
Sierra Leone	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.7	(0.6)	(1.1)	-	-
Somalia	6.8	4.9	4.3	3.4	3.8	2.7	1.8	(1.8)	-	-
South Africa	4.3	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.9	4.1	(4.1)
Sudan	2.0	2.3	1.7	1.5	2.1	(3.2)	(3.6)	-	-	-
Swaziland	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.9	2.6	1.8	1.7	1.7	-	-
Tanzania	7.1	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.2	3.3	4.1	(4.7)	(6.1)
Togo	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.8	(2.8)	(3.5)
Tunisia	2.2	2.2	2.7	5.9	6.6	4.7	5.2	5.9	5.4	(5.2)
Uganda	1.3	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.6	3.3	3.4	3.4	-	-
Zaire	3.0	2.5	1.3	2.8	1.2	1.9	1.4	(1.3)	(3.5)	-
Zambia	4.8	3.5	(4.4)	(4.1)	(3.9)	(3.0)	(2.4)	(3.7)	(3.5)	-
Zimbabwe	6.0	7.1	6.4	5.7	6.2	5.7	(6.2)	(6.5)	(5.8)	-

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 1989, World Armaments and Disarmament (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) pp. 190-191.

**Table Ia - Africa: Military Expenditure as a Percentage of  
Gross Domestic Product 1979-1988 Average**

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Algeria	1.6
Angola	18.4
Benin	2.0
Botswana	3.0
Burkina Faso	2.8
Burundi	3.1
Cameroon	1.7
Central African Rep.	1.8
Chad	6.1
Congo	2.6
Cote d'Ivoire	1.1
Ethiopia	8.6
Gabon	2.7
Ghana	0.5
Kenya	3.1
Liberia	2.0
Libya	13.3
Madagascar	2.5
Malawi	2.5
Mali	2.4
Mauritania	8.6
Mauritius	0.3
Morocco	5.5
Mozambique	9.44
Niger	0.7
Nigeria	1.7
Rwanda	1.8
Senegal	2.77
Sierra Leone	0.8
Somalia	3.7
South Africa	3.9
Sudan	2.3
Swaziland	2.2
Tanzania	4.4
Togo	2.5
Tunisia	4.6
Uganda	2.5
Zaire	1.9
Zambia	3.7
Zimbabwe	6.1
Average for Continent	3.8*

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\* Excluding Egypt.

Source: Calculated by author from SIPRI Yearbook 1989, pp.190-191.

The data on military expenditure for the entire African continent is interesting in a number of ways. The most important characteristic of this data is that, if we discount the seven cases we have analyzed above on the average Africa has a relatively low defense expenditure profile. At the worst, in percentage terms, they are not very divergent from the developed countries. As Robin Luckham's has noted:

*Although the developing countries themselves spend much less on armaments than the advanced industrial countries . . . the proportion of their GNP devoted to military spending is roughly similar. Moreover, their arms expenditures have risen faster than those of industrial countries, leading to substantial increases in their arms imports (1973:35). Emphasis added.*

But the data also tell us that as Africa's economic problems have worsened (Table III), and that governments in areas where regional conflicts do not exist have actually decreased their military spending as a proportion of GDP (see, for example, the cases of Botswana, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Malawi, and Swaziland). Furthermore, the data also conform to what Henry Bienen observed about a decade ago:

*African armies are for the most part small and lightly equipped. The largest tropical African armed forces was under 50,000 (Ethiopia) until the expansion of the Nigerian army during the civil war [1967-1970]; and on a scale for inhabitants per serviceman and serviceman per square mile of territory, African armies rank low in world area comparisons (1978:100).*

Although Bienen's observation was made in the late 1970s, the situation for the most part remains the same, as more recent studies have shown (IISS, 1988). The few exceptions have been those countries which have either been engaged in the Middle East Conflict or have had serious internal disruptions through civil wars, such as Ethiopia. Data on total armed forces are shown in Table II. As Table II shows, the majority of African countries have total armed forces of less than 50,000 each. The data also confirms Eboe Hutchful's observation of a few years ago:

*Currently the [African] continent is divided into a small group of relatively well-armed countries (South Africa, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Nigeria) and a much larger group of countries whose military forces and armaments levels are no more adequate for the purposes of legitimate territorial defense (in many cases less than adequate) (Quoted in Ball, 1988:xixxx).*



**Table II - Africa: Total Armed Forces (Active)**

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Algeria*	139.000
Djibouti*	4.230
Egypt*	445.000
Mauritania*	11.000
Morocco*	203.500
Somalia*	65.000
Sudan*	57.700
Tunisia*	38.000
Angola	100.000
Benin	4.350
Botswana	3.250
Burkina Faso	8.700
Burundi	7.200
Cameroon	11.600
Cape Verde	1.200
Central African Rep	6.500
Chad	17.000
Congo	8.800
Equatorial Guinea	1.400
Ethiopia	315.800
Gabon	3.000
Ghana	10.600
Guinea	9.900
Guinea Bissau	9.200
Ivory Coast	7.100
Kenya	23.000
Liberia	5.800
Madagascar	21.000
Malawi	5.250
Mali	7.300
Mozambique	36.700
Niger	3.300
Nigeria	94.500
Rwanda	5.200
Senegambia	10.300
Seychelles	1.000
Sierra Leone	3.000
South Africa	103.500
Tanzania	400.500
Togo	5.900
Uganda	35.000
Zaire	51.000
Zambia	16.200
Zimbabwe	47.000

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Source: IISS, *The military Balance. 1988-1989*.

\* These countries are classified as "Middle East" countries by IISS.

In the 1988 edition of IISS's *The Military Balance*, African countries with more than 50,000 people under arms were: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zaire; this in a continent which has fifty four countries.

It would seem on the surface that excessive military expenditure may not be a serious problem for African countries, given the figures that we have just cited. However, we need to consider another variable, i.e., the overall capacity of the economy, to see if we arrive at the same conclusion. Thus to get a better appreciation of military expenditure and its effect on the economy, it is important to look at the key *economic* indicators over the past decade. The economic indicators are presented in Table III.

Table III indicates that the average per capita income in Africa for 1988 was U.S. \$600 per year. *This* figure is certainly low if it is compared with that of developed countries such as the United States (U.S. \$17,480) or Britain (U.S. \$8,870) for the same period. (World Bank, 1988:). Even then, the U.S. \$600 average figure for Africa is still misleading in a fundamental way. It must be noted that the majority of African countries earn less than U.S. \$400 GNP per capita, as Table III shows. We find a small cluster of relatively high earners (i.e. U.S. \$800 and above) while over two thirds (2/3) earn much less. Furthermore, except for six countries - Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Cameroon, the People's Republic of Congo, and Algeria - all African countries experienced a severe drop in their income between 1980 and 1986. The country with the sharpest drop in absolute terms was Nigeria, whose per capita income dropped from U.S. \$1,010 in 1980 to U.S. \$640 in 1986 a drop of almost 40 per cent; a situation which has progressively become worse. In relative terms, however, other countries actually seem to have done worse than Nigeria because they had much lower income levels to begin with. Thus, for example, Malawi and Zaire's drops of U.S. \$70 from U.S. \$230 and of U.S. \$60 from U.S. \$200, respectively had much greater negative impacts than Nigeria's.

To reiterate an earlier observation: as a general trend, African countries seem to have reduced military expenditure in the 1980s. The exceptions to this rule were countries engaged in serious domestic conflict, e.g., Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa, as Table IV further illustrates. However, we must exercise caution in determining what those figures mean. If we simply look at levels of military expenditure in terms of its proportion to the GDP and in terms of constant price figures (Tables I, Ia, and IV), we risk overlooking the crucial issue in African military expenditure, which is how military expenditure relates to the economy in general, especially an underdeveloped economy.

Table III - Africa: Growth in Production

	GNP per Capita 1986 Dollars		GNP per Capita 1980 Dollars		GDP Growth	
				1965-80	1980-86	
Ethiopia	120	(20)	140	2.7	0.8	
Burkina Faso	150	(60)	210	3.5	2.5	
Malawi	160	(70)	230	6.1	2.4	
Zaire	160	(60)	220	1.4	1.0	
Mali	180	(--10)	190	4.1	0.4	
Mozambique	210	(20)	230	----	9.0	
Madagascar	230	(120)	350	1.6	-0.1	
Uganda	230	(70)	300	0.8	0.7	
Burundi	240	(+40)	200	3.6	2.3	
Tanzania	250	(30)	280	3.7	0.9	
Togo	250	(160)	410	4.5	-1.1	
Niger	260	(70)	330	0.3	-2.6	
Benin	270	(40)	310	2.3	3.6	
Somalia	280	(---)	----	2.5	4.9	
Cent. African Rep.	290	(-10)	300	2.6	1.1	
Rwanda	290	(+90)	200	5.0	1.8	
Kenya	300	(120)	420	6.4	3.4	
Zambia	300	(260)	560	1.8	-0.1	
Sierra Leone	310	(+30)	280	2.6	0.4	
Sudan	320	(-90)	410	3.8	0.3	
Lesotho	370	(-50)	420	6.6	0.9	
Ghana	390	(30)	420	1.4	.07	
Mauritania	420	(20)	440	2.0	1.0	
Senegal	420	(30)	450	2.0	3.2	
Chad	---	(---)	120	0.1	----	
Guinea	---	(---)	290	3.8	0.9	
Liberia	460	(70)	530	3.3	-1.3	
Morocco	590	(310)	900	5.4	3.3	
Zimbabwe	620	(--10)	630	4.4	2.6	
Nigeria	640	(670)	1,010	8.0	3.2	
Cote d'Ivoire	730	(420)	1,150	6.8	-0.3	
Egypt	760	(+180)	580	6.7	4.7	
Botswana	840	(----)	----	14.3	11.9	
Cameroon	910	(+240)	670	5.1	8.2	
Congo, Peoples Rep.	990	(+90)	900	5.9	5.1	
Tunisia	1,140	(170)	1,310	6.6	3.7	
Mauritius	1,20	(----)	----	5.3	4.4	
South Africa	1,850	(450)	2,300	4.0	0.8	
Algeria	2,590	(+720)	1870	7.5	4.4	
Gabon	3,080	(----)	----	9.5	1.5	
Libya	----	(----)	8,640	4.2	----	
Average	600					

Source: (1) The World Bank, *World Development Report 1982*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982 pp. 110-111; (2) The World Bank *World Development Report 1988*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988 pp. 224-225.

**Table IV - Africa: Military Expenditure, in Constant Price Figures  
Figures are in US \$M., at 1986 Prices and Exchange Rates**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Algeria	1111	1264	1123	1177	1256	1222	1146	1161	1149	1090]
Angola	506	503	503	503	779	1068	1147	1155	1147	-
Benin	20.2	(24.0)	(24.8)	(31.8)	(35.5)	31.8	32.1	30.6	(24.8)	(27.8)
Botswana	25.0	26.6	24.2	19.2	19.5	22.2	24.6	-	45.6	-
Burkina Faso	31.5	30.7	35.2	36.9	35.2	35.4	33.2	40.0	-	-
Burundi	(26.7)	(33.9)	(32.7)	(37.8)	(33.8)	(36.1)	(37.5)	(41.9)	(21.9)	-
Cameroon	101	96.0	95.1]	161	212	222	[244]	(251)	[220]	[189]
Central African Rep.	19.1	15.0	19.0	20.9	24.0	-	-	-	-	-
Chad	20.9	-	-	-	(47.6)	(46.2)	(42.7)	(48.7)	(30.6)	-
Congo	51.0	50.6	(48.4)	(62.9)	(65.8)	(67.8)	(74.0)	-	-	-
Cote d'Ivoire	101	108	93.0	98.4	97.0	96.3	96.4	96.9	96.9	[92.8]
Ethiopia	474	467	450	454	476	466	(402)	-	-	-
Gabon	(66.0)	(90.8)	(115)	(112)	(115)	116	132	136	-	(117)
Ghana	36.2	22.2	28.6	28.1	(19.2)	21.6	35.1	45.0	(45.1)	-
Kenya	297	242	234	237	222	183	(153)	[206]	[229]	[215]
Liberia	18.3	33.1	58.6	50.2	26.3	25.9	25.2	(23.0)	(24.5)	[23.8]
Libya	[8.934]	[7.514]	[8.382]	[7.749]	[5.231]	[4.712]	-	2.766	-	-
Madagascar	86.9	(81.5)	76.0	[66.8]	[60.9]	59.4	56.8	58.9	50.5	-
Malawi	47.6	48.9	36.5	26.7	21.2	18.0	17.5	19.9	(18.1)	-
Mali	45.5	39.2	37.1	40.8	38.8	38.4	42.6	(37.3)	(48.3)	-
Mauritania	85.3	88.3	-	-	46.5	-	-	-	2.8	3.4
Mauritius	2.6	5.0	4.9	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.7	769	[793]
Monocco	731	841	857	893	676	638	771	751	769	-
Mozambique	91.4	108	141	169	203	252	252	275	(725)	-
Niger	15.2	15.5	14.0	12.4	13.2	14.2	(15.4)	(16.0)	-	-
Nigeria	2.321	2.498	2.017	1.580	1.359	(766)	763	711	546	(801)
Rwanda	28.2	31.3	36.3	33.8	32.6	28.7	31.1	34.8	32.7	[29.7]
Senegal	118	107	110	102	97.4	93.9	86.7	82.3	(86.8)	(88.8)
Sierra Leone	18.5	23.5	23.7	19.1	11.8	8.8	[6.3]	[7.7]	[4.4]	-
Somalia	106	72.5	68.8	55.8	64.6	46.4	33.0	(31.9)	(41.1)	[21.1]
South Africa	2.312	2.436	2.287	2.261	2.249	2.384	2.308	2.386	2.550	2.620
Sudan	223	259	208	175	204	259	231	225	(242)	(224)
Swaziland	11.2	11.3	10.1	13.0	10.3	9.6	7.6	7.1	6.7	-
Tanzania	546	255	256	227	195	174	173	216	(259)	(294)
Togo	22.3	21.4	21.5	19.1	18.0	20.7	26.0	(26.6)	(34.7)	(512)
Tunisia	151	165	218	483	568	426	476	520	510	-
Uganda	38.1	72.8	133	64.9	91.7	146	143	70.5	-	-
Zaire	70.8	65.0	35.4	71.7	33.5	58.7	49.5	[45.3]	(44.0)	(30.1)
Zambia	75.1	55.7	[70.9]	[60.6]	[55.1]	[42.2]	[34.7]	[65.7]	[61.0]	-
Zimbabwe	248	336	346	326	316	296	299	(333)	(353)	(326)

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 1978-9. World Armaments and Disarmament, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 185-186.

In 1988 and 1989 the economic outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa continued to be gloomy. The World Bank in its 1988 annual report estimated that the regional GDP in current terms fell from U.S. \$160 billion in 1986 to U.S. \$127 billion in 1987, continuing the steady decline in GDP experienced through the late 1970s and 1980s (World Bank, 1988). This fall in output represents a decline in GDP per capita from U.S. \$400 in 1986 to just over U.S. \$305 in 1987. These figures confirm and continue a trend which was observed at the beginning of the 1980s:

*At a time of rising import prices, import values fell on average seven percent in Africa in 1981. In Madagascar they fell by forty percent, in Sierra Leone by thirty-six percent, in Ghana by twenty-nine percent, in Zambia by twenty percent, and in Tanzania by twelve percent. In 1983 they continued to fall. Such belt-tightening involves major reductions in both public and private consumption and investment expenditures, and inevitable conflict over whose real income will be cut the most (and least). The "import strangulation" associated with terms of trade deteriorations of twenty-five percent and more in recent years has created substantial underutilization and depreciation in existing capacity. Without crucial imports and spare parts, much of the capital stock - in transport, industry, agriculture, and even social infrastructure such as schools and hospitals - cannot function adequately. This results frequently in long term physical deterioration, often accelerated in tropical conditions. In some instances, the unavailability of fuel, imports, and spare parts has severely reduced the capacity to move potential foreign exchange earning export products to the ports. Thus the vicious circle is reinforced (Helleiner, 1983:20).*

The figures and observations by Helleiner, therefore, should tell us much more about the impact of military expenditure on the economy than simple absolute figures of military expenditure itself. The primary issue in Africa's economy is under development, characterized by low productivity and low incomes and resulting in an economy that is severely constrained by low levels of socioeconomic development and highly dependent on the international economy (Rodney, 1972; World Bank, 1988; Ravenhill, 1986; Hyden, 1983). An analysis of military expenditure which fails to recognize *this* fact essentially misses the point. In an underdeveloped economy, military expenditures of any amount (including those for so-called "legitimate" defense) always involve a competition between the military and other sectors for very scarce resources. African countries therefore must recognize that they cannot continue the process of increasing military outlays while social needs go unattended. There are some who have suggested that African countries should build an armament industry to meet the various internal demands of the military. This is an inherently bad idea, especially given the nature of the economy in relation to technology. As

Victor Urquidi (1985:36) has noted, a modern arms industry, given the relatively high technology involved, does very little for an underdeveloped country's economy. Similar to the import substitution industries of the 1960s and 1970s, an arms industry would actually increase the Third World country's dependence on imported technology and other supplies, thus, in essence, making the economy more vulnerable to external economic shocks and adding to the already high level of external debt. Indeed Victor Urquidi concludes that:

*[1] he reasons for setting up an arms industry of sorts in a developing country are not necessarily economic, i.e. cost-benefit in the economic sense is probably little considered in the decision making of a country embarking on the development of an arms industry (1985:37).*

Urquidi's point is an important one because it exposes some of the non-economic reasons for underdeveloped countries wanting to build an arms industry. Usually political considerations - such as prestige - far outweigh economic ones in such decisions. For the most part however, African countries have not been able to create domestic armament industries because such an enterprise would be difficult to justify even in political terms. Thus only South Africa and Egypt have any armament industries to speak of, both producing weapons under licence from major powers.

For that matter, the primary economic point about military expenditure remains. Military expenditure by any one country represents an economic (or opportunity) cost to that country. In economic terms, the point is a relatively simple one: military expenditure uses up resources which might alternatively be employed to provide consumer satisfaction either in the provision of either private or collective goods and services (Blackaby, 1983:17). In the case of Africa, given the lack of resources, the point is an obvious one. Any diversion of resources from the economic side to the military has tremendously serious consequences. As an example: in 1986 and 1987, while the world was concerned about starving children in Southern Sudan, the central government was spending approximately U.S. \$500,000 a day in its war effort against guerrillas of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). In June 1989, the Sudanese government under Prime Minister Mahdi was overthrown when it became apparent that it could neither resolve the military crisis nor the economic crisis which had resulted in, among other things, the starvation of hundreds of thousands of its citizens and a mounting foreign debt.

### ***Theoretical Analysis***

Conceptually, the issue of defense (or military) expenditure is a complex one. Indeed a preliminary question would be *what* constitutes defense? Furthermore, what constitutes *adequate* defense? Most analysts dealing with this issue suggest that there are no clear cut answers to these questions. As

Frank Barnaby notes, estimating military expenditure has always been a problem for three basic reasons:

- (a) there is no agreed definition of the term "military expenditure";
- (b) many countries fail to include in their official military budget significant categories of military spending; and
- (c) the underestimation of the real value of some of the resources employed by the military - e.g. the undervaluation of conscripted manpower (1978:8).

The three issues raised by Barnaby are important conceptually because they bring into sharp relief problems associated with measurement, including of course, the issue of what we are trying to measure. Given the history of military bureaucracies, which have a tendency to exaggerate defense requirements, it is not difficult to see how this could be a problem. The clearest case that comes to mind is that of U.S. involvement in Vietnam where the Department of Defense (DOD) came under strong criticism for having exaggerated both the threat and strength of the enemy in order to boost its own position in the bureaucratic politics of Washington (Gelb with Betts, 1979). The point is that when examining military expenditure, the assumption that pervades the analyses is that countries generally underestimate their military expenditure.

Such underestimations of military expenditure could have even more serious implications for African countries because it would involve a greater diversion of resources from much needed social investments. However, there is also a practical (realpolitik) side to the consideration of this issue. It can be argued that defense expenditure has to be viewed in the traditional sense of national security and hence is a necessary evil which translates into a "Public Good." Furthermore, defense expenditures must be viewed within the context of the politicomilitary environment (e.g. regional conflict) in which a country finds itself (Kennedy, 1982:2). The relevance of this argument is that defense expenditure as such cannot be viewed simply in terms of a "guns versus butter" tradeoff scheme, but rather must be seen as performing a legitimate function of national security. Thus it would seem that a "guns versus butter" argument isolates the "tyranny of choice" involved in decisions about defense expenditure by governments. In light of these considerations, let us apply the argument to African countries to help us determine how far the tradeoff argument can be taken. Given the low levels of socioeconomic development, and the need for more investment in the social sphere, arguably in the postindependence period, security expenditure in Africa has not been a simple equation of guns versus butter. Indeed, defense expenditure has not properly reflected so-called legitimate defense. This point can be illustrated by way of international comparison.

Nicole Ball, for example, has contrasted security expenditures in developed countries and those of the Third World:

*In the industrialized countries, security issues are viewed primarily from the perspective of potential external conflicts, and the role of the armed forces is to protect governments and citizens alike against external threats. In the Third World, internal security considerations often tend to outweigh those of external security and the foremost task of many armed forces is to protect governments and elite groups against the mass of the population. (1988:32). Emphasis added.*

It would seem therefore, that for purposes of our argument, military expenditure *per se* is not the central issue but rather its interconnection to two other variables: the level of socioeconomic development, and the use to which military power is put. In Africa, there have been many instances in which the military has been put against the mass of the population as opposed to actually defending them. Perhaps the most obvious examples are those of Uganda under Idi Amin (1971-1979) and Milton Obote's second regime (1982-1985); the current conflict in the Sudan whereby the central government in Khartoum has unsuccessfully tried to impose its authority on Southern Sudan; the case of Ethiopia where the Mengistu regime fought an increasingly hopeless battle against the various nationalities seeking autonomy from Addis Ababa; and the notorious case of South Africa where the apartheid policies of the nationalist regime have placed the government squarely in conflict with the interests of seventy-five (75) percent of its non-white population.

It is my argument that the above examples from Africa throw into question Kolodziej's (1985) thesis of the globalization of the nation-state. For example, as the Ethiopian state struggled to deal with the nationalities question, one of the mechanisms for control and establishing legitimacy has been the use of military power. Consequently, Ethiopia consistently had one of the largest armies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The fact of a large army however has not necessarily deterred the various nationalities fighting against the central government. As a result, these groups have made it necessary for the central government to channel all the available resources into the military instead of social spending (see for example: Schwab, 1985; Keller, 1988 and Markakis and Ayele, 1978). The Ethiopian case is fast being replicated in the Sudan with the conflict between the central government in Khartoum and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army in the south. But the Sudanese conflict also reflects the tragic results of the European colonization process which consciously or unconsciously disregarded deep seated differences between peoples - ethnic groups and linguistic groups, for example - and artificially bound them together in single countries.



In some ways, we may argue that the repressive nature of the post-colonial states in Africa is to be expected, given the origins of the state itself during the colonial period. During the establishment of colonial rule, European powers used brute force to subdue African groups which resisted colonialism. Examples of military suppression on the continent are numerous: the Maji Maji rebellion in present day Tanzania; Samori Toure's war against the French in Guinea; and the Shona/Ndebele uprisings against the British in Zimbabwe (Oliver and Fage, 1966). Thus, the military element became one of the principal features of the colonial state. With the attainment of independence, the post-colonial state could not escape the realities of the state structures it had just inherited. The following observations can be made regarding the post-colonial state:

- (1) The ethnic and linguistic differences that had existed prior to the colonial government, but suppressed by the colonial government, reemerged after independence. This put tremendous pressure on the new states to maintain the territorial integrity thus leading to militarism and increased military expenditures. Examples: Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the Sudan;
- (2) Not unlike the colonial government, welfare notions of development have been neglected because of lack of resources available to the new states. The result has been increasing restiveness on the part of the population, who expected better economic conditions after independence.

A combination of these two elements has therefore worked to put pressure on the new states which, like their colonial predecessors, find it easier to militarily suppress dissent rather than try to work out problems in a democratic manner. Dissent then is regarded as a security problem.

Given the difficulties that seem to plague the new states, and the reaction by these states to internal dissent, it might seem that the internal security problem should carry added weight in the analysis of military expenditure in Africa for another reason. The non-resolution of the national question (tribal, ethnic, linguistic differences) in the various countries makes governments jittery about internal opposition - regardless of the merits of the opposition. The governments have increasingly become less tolerant of dissent. As a result, millions of people have fled their homelands in fear of their lives if they happen to fall out of favor with the government. Africa today has about 50 percent of the total world refugee population: over 5 million people have fled their homes on the continent. Internal wars, which can only be waged through increased military expenditure have resulted in the deaths that are reported in Table V.

**Table V - Africa: International Wars and War-Related Deaths Since Independence**

	Number of Deaths		
	Civilian	Military	Total
Algeria 1962-63	1.000	1.000	2.000
Angola 1975-89	320.000	21.000	341.000
Burundi 1972-1988	105.000	10.000	115.000
Chad 1980-87	2.000	5.000	7.000
Ethiopia 1974-83	515.000	63.000	678.000
Ghana 1981	----	----	1.000
Mozambique 1981-89	365.000	50.000	415.000
Nigeria 1967-70; 1980-81; 1984	1.000.000	1.000.000	2.000.000
Rwanda 1956-65	102.000	3.000	105.000
Somalia 1988	5.000	5.000	10.000
Sudan 1963-72; 1984-89	750.000	256.000	1.006.000
Uganda 1966; 1971-78; 1978-79; 1981-87	601.000	12.000	613.000
W. Sahara 1975-87	3.000	13.000	13.000
Zaire 1960-65	----	----	100.000
Zambia 1964	----	----	1.000
Zimbabwe 1983	2.000	----	2.000

Source: Calculated by author from: Ruth L. Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures* Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1989, p. 22.

This brings us full circle to the issue of the tradeoff model and indeed to the question of the military expenditure as a "Public Good." It is true that a simple tradeoff model between guns and butter is not a substitute for a deeper analysis of the historical, social, economic, strategic and international factors which operate on decision makers to determine the actual levels of defense (or military) expenditure at any particular time. It is also true that in a community, once a defense capability is established, theoretically every citizen benefits from that capability. However, when that "defense capability" is unleashed on the citizens the way it was in Uganda under Amin or, more recently, in Equatorial Guinea under Francisco M. Nguema, it is no longer a public good. Instead, it becomes a national liability. In this regard, we need to recall Paul Baran's observation in his now classic book, *The Political Economy of Growth*.

The conclusion is inescapable that the prodigious waste of the underdeveloped countries' resources on vast military establishments is *not* dictated by the existence of an *external* danger. The atmosphere of such a danger is merely created and recreated in order to facilitate the existence of comprador regimes in these countries, and the armed forces that they maintain are needed primarily, if not exclusively, for the suppression of *internal* popular movements for national and social liberation. (1973:414). Emphasis in the original.

As we noted earlier, Nicole Ball (1988) essentially makes the same point for the contemporary period. The important question then becomes: What are the prospects for change in terms of lowering military expenditure? If not, what are the conditions which make high military expenditures inevitable?

### ***A Prospective Analysis***

Historically, increased military expenditure in African countries in the postindependence period has been associated with the intervention of the military into politics, and its eventual usurpation of state power. The most obvious examples are those of Nigeria and Ethiopia. In Nigeria, an army of less than 50,000 men rose by almost 400 percent between 1966 (the year of the two coups) and 1970 (the end of the Civil War), necessitating increased allocation of resources to the military. Currently, Nigeria has an army of 94,500. In Ethiopia, an army of 50,000 men under Haile Selassie had by mid-1980s grown to 315,000 men and women under arms, with an increase of several thousand times in military expenditure. It seems, therefore, that as long as there is continued military intervention in politics, we are bound to see increased military expenditure.

But what prompts military intervention into politics? In standard development literature, there are two main types of explanation of military intervention. The two types have been summarized by Samuel Decalo whose study claims to shift:

*... attention away from the discipline's fixation upon the systemic weaknesses of African states and the organizational features of African armies as reasons for coups to the internal dynamics of African military hierarchies, their officer cliques, and corporate and personal ambitions. It is essentially here that the motivations for military upheavals can be found with the fragmentation of power in society at large allowing, or even encouraging their unfettered expression (1976:3).*

Decalo's study is thus a critique of the thesis propounded by Samuel P. Huntington, among others, who saw military intervention in politics as a reflection of broader things in society. In 1968 Samuel P. Huntington wrote that:

*Military explanations do not explain military interventions. The reason for this is simply that military interventions are only one specific manifestation of a broader phenomenon in underdeveloped societies: the general politicization of social forces and institutions. In such societies, politics lacks autonomy, complexity, coherence, and adaptability. All sorts of social forces and groups become directly engaged in general politics . . . society as a whole is out-of-joint, not just the military (1968:194). Emphasis added.*

The problem with both Decalo's and Huntington's studies is that they do not go far enough in explaining the phenomenon of underdevelopment, especially the peripheral state, of which military intervention is only a manifestation. Decalo's study is too narrowly focused to offer adequate explanation for military intervention because it concentrates too much on the institutional framework of the military establishment in seeking reasons for military intervention. On the other hand, Huntington's study, to its credit, incorporates what he calls "all sorts of social forces," but his analysis concentrates too much on the political, putting less emphasis on the fundamental and necessary dialectical relationship between an underdeveloped economy (in its domestic and external dimensions) and the political aspects of that underdevelopment-manifesting themselves in militarism, military coups d'état and "overdeveloped" state structures (Duvall, et al., 1981:313). As Asbjorn Eide and Marek Thee have argued:

*From a dialectical point of view, militarism, [and military coups], especially in the Third World, can be seen as essentially a response to weakness: social, economic or political. The military seizes power either at moments of political stress or in times of crisis. It tries to discipline society and impose solutions in line with its socio-political outlook. Use of violence acquires central importance. The outcome is seldom successful: socio-political problems are not amenable to resolution by force (1980:23).*

Eide's and Thee's point is an important one, especially in light of the social and economic development of African countries during the last decade (see Table III). In the 1950s and 1960s, some people argued that the military in the Third World was a progressive institution because of the relatively higher education levels of military officers over the rest of society. Given their efficiency and organization, the argument went, perhaps the military's role could be extended to running the government in replacement of bungling politicians and inefficient and incompetent bureaucrats (Janowitz, 1964; Johnson, 1962). The military was seen primarily as a savior in an increasingly hopeless political and economic situation of underdevelopment.

In the case of Africa, it didn't take long after independence before there was a wave of coups d'état. Thus as Ruth Collier (1977:295-330) tells us, the first military coup in Sub-Saharan Africa actually occurred in 1960 in the Congo (Zaire), just a few months after independence. In 1963 more coups followed: Congo-Brazzaville, Dahomey (Benin), and Togo. In the next two years there were *four* more coups; *three* of these occurred in countries which already had experienced coups. By 1989, there had been more than Seventy coups or serious military intervention in politics in Africa. Yet the economic crisis continues. Military interventions have not

underlying structural problems both in the polity and economy: socio-political problems are not amenable to resolution by force.

It is imperative therefore, that even more penetrating questions be raised in attempting to identify the particularity of the state and its role under conditions of underdevelopment such as those which are found in Africa. For example, how do we account for the peripheral state's propensity for economic intervention despite overwhelming evidence indicating its incompetence? Dependency theory had a partial answer to this important question because it recognized that:

*... dependence and the distorted pattern of economic development lead to the suppression of interests of the laboring classes, and increasing inequality among social classes. In turn this leads to class conflict which promotes the imposition of coercive, authoritarian rule of the state (Duvall, et al., 1981: 317).*

Dependency theory highlighted the nature of the peripheral state as coercive and authoritarian, arising from the contradictions generated by underdevelopment. In postindependence Africa, as economic problems have increased, civilian authorities have attempted to use the military as a basis for their protection in light of increasing discontent among the masses leading in many instances to the usurpation of power by the military. However, in recent years, the military has shown a reluctance to intervene given the hopeless economic situation that prevails in most African countries.

But perhaps there is a simpler explanation for the state's propensity for economic intervention, which in turn yields a particular kind of authoritarian rule. As economic problems have persisted on the continent and as the mass of the population has sought to "disengage" itself from the state due to its inability to bring about economic development, the state has sought to reestablish its authority by military means (Rothchild and Chazan, 1988). We may ask: how is it possible for the state to achieve this objective given the reduced resources it has at its disposal?

Robin Luckham provides an explanation that seems to fit the African pattern nicely. He notes that it doesn't seem that authoritarian regimes spend much more on armaments than their neighbors because:

*Some of the world's most repressive regimes - Haiti [under Duvalier], Malawi, Swaziland, Paraguay, Nicaragua [under Somoza], Uganda [under Amin] etc. - are proportionately low military spenders. This is partly because the financial cost of internal repression are not usually high since it is not capital intensive and is often underwritten by large powers. Low spending is possible, furthermore, because many such countries - particularly in Africa and Latin America - are relatively*

*insulated from the major sources of international conflict (1978:41).  
Emphasis added.*

Luckman's point is simple but compelling. It is possible to run a ruthless and authoritarian regime cheaply - especially in countries which are underdeveloped.

## **Conclusion**

### ***Which Way Militarism and Economic Expenditure?***

The above analysis leaves open many troubling questions especially as they relate to the capacity of the state in dealing with its citizens. Africa seems to be especially vulnerable to authoritarian rule because of its relatively low level of socioeconomic development. This fact makes it possible for example, for armed bandits to roam the countryside and pose a serious military challenge to a legitimate government. But it also opens up the possibility of an authoritarian regime emerging without being seriously challenged by the mass of the population, given the monopoly of the coercive machinery of the state.

It is not clear however, that military expenditure *per se* leads to economic decline, although it is clear that military expenditure in the African context neither contributes to economic growth nor enhances internal security. The concern of this study can be summarized by Robin Luckman's observation:

*... it is a serious matter to divert resources from schools, hospitals and welfare services to guns, tanks and jet air crafts and most probably can only be done by governments which are prepared in the final analysis to repress the discontent it brings about (1978:44).*

This statement also suggests that it is erroneous to look at the state as a neutral institution in society. Thus we accept the conclusion by Alfred Maizels and Machiko Nissanke as applicable to the analysis of military expenditure and its consequences in Africa:

*[The assumption] of a politically neutral state weighing the security needs of the nation against the welfare losses arising out of reduced consumption to pay for defense, may not have much significance for most less developed economies. Rather, state security in these countries will generally involve the need for safeguarding the legitimacy of the ruling elite as well as the suppression of domestic opposition groups. In addition, of course, there will be the need for protection against possible external aggression. Defense spending, therefore, should be related to the need for military force to keep the ruling elite in power as well as to deter possible threats from aggressors. This will be particularly true for military governments - and these now seems to be*

*in the majority - but also for civilian governments which will try to use their control over the military for similar purposes (1987:130).*

This dual contradiction is in essence the contradiction of politics in Africa.

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# Développement rural au Cameroun: Et si les paysans le concevaient autrement?

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*Abstract: There is a fundamental divergence between state initiated rural development projects and the vision of development by the peasantry. For the latter development means the well-being of people in harmony with the natural and social environment. As a country wide study of Cameroon underscores, thus far, most development projects in Africa have failed to sustain such a harmony. Irrespective of the strategies employed and the degree of success or failure, the net results are the same: destruction of the production and the modes of reproduction of rural communities and pauperization of the peasantry. Presently, the systematic withdrawal of the state as a response to the crisis has exacerbated these problems. It is impossible to do without agriculture but it is not the only investment priority. Thus the question that ought to be addressed is what type of rural development for Africa of the 21st century?*

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## Introduction

Le développement rural, un sujet qui a fait couler beaucoup d'encre, un sujet sur lequel développeurs, décideurs et chercheurs continuent à confronter leurs idées, un sujet sur lequel chacun a eu quelque chose à dire, expert ou non, pourvu qu'il soit investi d'un peu de pouvoir.

Le développement rural, un sujet sur lequel beaucoup de gens ont dit quelque chose, sauf les paysans, mais aussi, un sujet sur lequel il n'y a jusque là pas eu de vrai consensus, s'agissant de l'idéologie, de la stratégie et du résultat.

Cet article apporte une contribution à la réflexion sur le développement rural. Il ne cherche pas à donner une nouvelle définition du concept, celles déjà proposées étant suffisamment acceptées malgré quelques points de divergence. Seulement, un effort est fait pour présenter le point de vue des paysans, interrogés à travers les dix provinces du Cameroun: Adamaoua, Centre, Est, Littoral, Ouest, Nord, Nord-Ouest, Extrême-Nord, Sud-Ouest et Sud.

Cet article essaye globalement de répondre aux questions suivantes:

- 1) Qu'est-ce qui caractérise les approches au développement rural, tel que conçu et mené par les organismes de développement?

2) Qu'y a-t-il de particulier dans la vision du développement rural tel que perçu par les paysans eux-mêmes?

Les questions posées ci-dessus sont analysées à travers des expériences de développement rural et, notamment des exemples camerounais.

Dans la plupart des pays d'Afrique et au Cameroun notamment, aucun consensus ne semble s'être dégagé soit des visions, soit des approches du développement rural, déjà entre décideurs, ensuite entre décideurs et opérateurs économiques. Evidemment, il ne serait pas juste de nier systématiquement toutes les bonnes intentions derrière les actions des uns et des autres pour venir en aide aux pays du continent africain. Malgré les efforts louables déployés, ce qui résulte des divers programmes de développement, indépendamment de succès sporadiques enregistrés çà et là, ce sont des machines et bâtiments éparpillés à travers les campagnes. Bunch (1982) signale que le spectacle désolant que l'on observe à la fin de chaque projet de développement dans le tiers-monde est toujours le même: de la ferraille issue de dons bien intentionnés, éparpillée et en cours de dégradation d'une région à une autre. Bunch dit ceci: j'ai vu personnellement des tracteurs par douzaines, sans compter des charrues, des cultivateurs, des générateurs, des vanneurs, des pompes, des moulins qui n'ont jamais été réparés après la première panne. J'ai vu çà et là des silos modernes qui n'ont jamais rien stocké, des semences qui n'ont jamais été ni utilisées, ni consommées, des animaux à haute performance offerts gracieusement, et qui ont tout de suite été abattus pour la viande ou alors revendus à vil prix par les villageois, et enfin des plants de fruitiers ou d'arbres à replanter qui ont crevé dans des sachets plastiques sans avoir été transplantés.

En fait, ce qui n'est souvent pas pris en compte, on ne cessera de le signaler, c'est que les villageois ont leur propre vision du changement, du développement car, au cours des siècles, au cours des générations, ils ont développé de grandes capacités de production et de reproduction.

Les tiers-mondistes s'accordent à admettre que le savoir et le savoir-faire des paysans peut constituer un énorme potentiel pour le développement rural, s'il est intégré à sa juste valeur dans les processus de planification et d'exécution des programmes. Seulement, ce qu'il faut tout de suite noter, c'est le manque de précision quant à la manière d'intégrer effectivement ce potentiel et le niveau auquel il doit être intégré. Il y a donc unanimité sur la stratégie mais un vide apparent quant à la procédure.

Les nouvelles technologies offertes à travers les projets de développement peuvent empêcher les paysans de voir la nécessité de résoudre leurs propres problèmes. Les dons divertissent l'attention face aux problèmes démographiques, institutionnels ou politiques qui posent souvent de vrais obstacles à tout effort de développement, et tôt ou tard, finissent toujours par jaillir.

En plus des problèmes évoqués ci-dessus, les dons cachent ou occultent l'indifférence de la population cible vis-à-vis de certains programmes d'intervention. Enfin, les dons ne sont pas favorables à l'effet multiplicateur d'un programme.

En effet, dans le processus d'adoption des idées nouvelles, les paysans réalisent que ce qu'ils font n'est pas justifié par une motivation profonde, ils ne le disséminent pas chez les voisins.

Cette attitude qui consiste à vouloir entraîner les paysans dans des projets qui ne les convainquent pas a souvent été qualifiée de paternalisme. Elle appelle un certain nombre de remarques: (1) à vouloir faire des choses pour les paysans, on n'aboutit jamais à des résultats durables, car dès que les encadreurs s'éloignent, le programme s'arrête aussitôt parce que les aides ne sont plus octroyées; (2) quand on fait des choses pour les paysans, on les rend dépendants et incapables de prendre des initiatives. A cet effet, il n'est pas surprenant de s'entendre dire: *s'il vous plaît donnez-nous ceci ou cela, et nous ferons le travail demandé*; (3) en général, faire tout pour les paysans les amène à ne plus se préoccuper de résoudre leurs problèmes, si le programme les résout à leur place.

## **2. Le développement rural dans la littérature et les expériences vécues**

Dans cette section, la discussion porte sur: (1) les caractéristiques des approches au développement rural; (2) les approches au développement rural dans quelques projets au Cameroun et; (3) les hypothèses minimales qui en découlent. Elle essaye essentiellement de caractériser les approches du développement rural telles que conçues et menées par les organismes de développement.

### ***2.1. Les caractéristiques des approches au développement rural***

Différentes écoles de pensée ont influencé les approches du développement rural, tel a été le cas des approches traditionalistes, progressivistes, et technologiques. Chacun de ces courants est basé sur des hypothèses, des suppositions et des interprétations causales à partir d'expériences accumulées, et quelquefois appuyées par des études empiriques.

Le fait qu'une institution financière souscrive à telle ou telle école a des implications sur les stratégies. Ces stratégies peuvent essayer de réduire autant que possible les questions soulevées en relation avec des problèmes tels l'impact du projet sur l'environnement, les options méthodologiques, et les activités de développement. Des fois lorsque ces questions sont ignorées, il y a comme une tentative délibérée d'exclusion et d'effacement de la mémoire qui aboutit soit à la mise en place de nouvelles approches même là où les vieilles ont fait leurs preuves.

Outre toutes ces considérations d'ordre méthodologique, les organismes de développement agissent conformément aux directives des institutions financières et politiques au niveau international, et les bouledogues de

l'administration. La tendance générale compte tenu des échéances est donc, au niveau des bailleurs de fonds, de développer et de mettre en place des programmes qui ne répondent à rien d'autre qu'à la logique interne de leurs institutions, sur la base des besoins identifiés à travers des études sur les sites où les projets doivent être menés

Globalement, les études menées dans différents pays du monde suggèrent que les approches ou les stratégies du développement rural peuvent être groupées en trois catégories suivant un continuum qui comprend: (1) l'approche participative connue chez les anglo-saxons comme le "process approach"; (2) l'approche du courtier encore appelée le "broker approach"; et (3) l'exhibitionnisme connu comme le "blueprint approach". Evidemment, cette liste n'est pas exhaustive, mais elle permet de mieux situer la discussion.

S'agissant de l'approche participative, l'idée de base qui sous-tend cette stratégie est que toute intervention dans un milieu donné doit partir des réalités de ce milieu, c'est-à-dire des points forts et des points faibles des bénéficiaires et des réalités de leur environnement. Ceci suppose donc la participation effective de la population cible à la prise de décision et à l'octroi des moyens. Pour les agents extérieurs, il s'agit de comprendre la place réelle de la communauté concernée dans la localité et les relations de pouvoir mises en jeu.

Sur la base d'expériences vécues, l'approche participative suppose qu'il existe des moyens pour collecter l'information utile visant à susciter la participation de la population cible à dégager des ressources, à développer des techniques et des capacités de management. Le point de départ de cette approche est l'établissement d'un dialogue avec la population locale pour générer des idées sur ce qui doit être fait et comment le faire. De cette façon des informations fiables sont obtenues sur la population cible et son environnement. Les données obtenues permettent en plus de mettre en évidence certaines différences entre la population locale et les développeurs, s'agissant de la perception, de la compréhension, des opinions et des suggestions. Les points forts et les faiblesses dans les capacités locales de management peuvent aussi être identifiés.

La logique de l'approche participative veut donc que l'on commence à petite échelle avec des technologies adaptées ou adaptables aux réalités locales, afin de mieux répondre aux besoins des cultivateurs.

De façon générale, il est conseillé, dans l'approche participative, beaucoup de patience, de flexibilité, d'imagination de la part des agents de développement, et en même temps une certaine volonté de participer et de dégager des ressources de la part de la population cible.

L'approche du courtier quant à elle, est basée sur la nécessité de lier les paysans et cultivateurs qui veulent développer leur communauté, mais man-

quent de moyens, à des opérateurs économiques au niveau national, ou à des niveaux plus élevés.

Le rôle du courtier est très délicat compte tenu du fait qu'il doit arbitrer les conflits, tout en s'assurant que les intérêts des uns et des autres sont préservés. Le courtier fonctionne donc aux niveaux local et extra-local, il peut être assimilé à un individu ou à une institution qui assure la liaison décrite ci-dessus et facilite l'accès aux ressources qui ne seraient pas disponibles autrement.

Au niveau individuel, le rôle de courtier a souvent été joué par un prêtre, un camionneur, un volontaire du progrès, etc. Sur le plan institutionnel, le rôle de courtier peut être joué par un organisme de développement, une école locale, ou une association villageoise. Ces portraits permettent de distinguer l'approche participative de celle du courtier, où, les besoins, les potentialités, et les objectifs de développement sont identifiés et communiqués aux individus qui veulent développer la communauté. Pour ce qui est de l'approche du courtier, la pertinence des problèmes identifiés et des actions à mener dépendra en grande partie de la capacité du courtier, du leader ou de l'institution à les adapter aux conditions locales et aux potentialités réelles. Le courtier appartient souvent à une institution. Il y a donc risque que les décisions souvent très ambitieuses prises au niveau du village ne soient pas prises en compte par l'institution à laquelle le courtier appartient à cause des divergences possibles au niveau des stratégies, des actions à mener, des ressources à dégager et du partage des bénéfices.

Enfin, s'agissant de l'exhibitionnisme comme approche du développement, l'accent est mis sur un plan d'activités très détaillé avant son exécution. Les éléments principaux de cette approche sont : le transfert d'une technologie bien connue, la création d'institutions au dessus du niveau local, et la dépense des fonds conformément à des règles bien établies. L'exhibitionnisme est une approche très réglementée, c'est-à-dire qu'elle est essentiellement basée sur l'appréciation de l'expert s'agissant de la faisabilité technique, institutionnelle, et de la capacité de gestion d'un projet. Sur la base des études de faisabilité, et la définition des buts à court terme et à long terme, les technologies, les activités sont choisies, et les ressources nécessaires sont estimées. Les unes et les autres sont en suite liées logiquement dans la réalisation des objectifs fixés par le projet. Cette approche suppose donc que le développement rural est une science, qui se répète, avec de légères modifications, n'importe où dans le monde.

Etant donné que les gouvernements, les organisations financières et les organisations non gouvernementales sont toujours préoccupés de démontrer au public leur efficacité dans la gestion des ressources, le critère d'efficacité devient très important dans leur évaluation. En d'autres termes, l'approche exhibitionniste recherche la réalisation la plus grandiose pour chaque dollar déboursé.

Dans l'approche exhibitionniste, une enclave du projet est créée pour assurer son succès. Fondamentalement, les activités sont planifiées par les développeurs, et menées par les développeurs, pour le bénéfice de la population cible. Evidemment, l'expertise locale est marginalisée au même titre que l'administration locale, malgré le fait qu'elles contribuent souvent à la mise en place de ces projets. Elles ne sont donc utilisées que pour légitimer ces projets.

La liste des approches présentée ci-dessus relève d'un certain nombre de faits caractéristiques. L'un d'eux c'est que quel que soit le projet, quelle que soit l'approche utilisée, il y a très souvent confrontation entre les développeurs et les paysans. Ces confrontations se manifestent à plusieurs niveaux notamment : au niveau de la vision du développement donc de l'idéologie, au niveau de la technologie, au niveau des actions à mener, et au niveau du partage des bénéfices. Les confrontations mentionnées ci-dessus seront analysées dans le cadre de trois projets au Cameroun : la Société d'Expansion et de Modernisation de la Riziculture à Yagoua (SEMRY), la Société de Développement de la Zone du Haut-Nkam (SODENKAM) et les Zones d'Action Prioritaire et Intégrée de l'Est Cameroun (ZAPIEST). L'accent sera mis sur le contrôle des facteurs de production, de la technologie et des produits.

## ***2.2. Les approches du développement rural dans quelques projets au Cameroun***

Les projets SEMRY, SODENKAM, et ZAPIEST sont basés sur des approches: dirigistes (SEMRY), du courtier (SODENKAM) et participative (ZAPIEST). L'intérêt de ces projets est que au-delà des différences stratégiques et indépendamment des cultures dans lesquelles ces projets s'insèrent, les interactions entre développeurs et paysans produisent toujours les mêmes effets s'agissant du contrôle des facteurs de production, de la technologie et des bénéfices.

### ***Le cas de la SEMRY***

D'après Tchala Abina (1982), l'installation de la SEMRY à Yagoua, comme une Société chargée de développer la production de riz, des suites de l'effort du gouvernement camerounais d'assurer une certaine autosuffisance alimentaire dans le pays, avait conduit à la mise sur pied d'une structure qui avait affecté l'accès aux facteurs de production, les pratiques culturelles, les rendements et la distribution des revenus au niveau des paysans.

S'agissant du contrôle des ressources, le résultat du développement d'un vaste périmètre irrigué avait permis à la structure de développement (la SEMRY) de contrôler l'accès à la terre et à l'eau. Les producteurs à encadrer étaient choisis saisonnièrement par la structure sur la base de ses propres critères, et la distribution de l'eau dans les parcelles cultivées était faite suivant un calendrier établi par la SEMRY à sa propre convenance.

La structure de développement dans ce cas, contrôle tous les moyens de production à l'exception des instruments aratoires fabriqués par les paysans eux-mêmes. Les équipements lourds (tracteurs, charrues) utilisés dans la préparation du sol, les pesticides et le savoir-faire technique étaient tous contrôlés par la structure de développement. Ce contrôle avait culminé avec l'introduction du repiquage à la place du semis à la volée, pratiquée traditionnellement par les paysans.

Dans ce cas particulier de la SEMRY, le seul facteur de production contrôlé par le paysan était sa seule force de travail. Et même à ce niveau, il se posait toujours le problème de savoir quoi faire d'autre en dehors de la production de riz. Ceci était illustré par une stricte réglementation de la pisciculture dans les casiers irrigués. Enfin, pour ce qui était du contrôle du produit, l'emprise de la SEMRY était encore prépondérante. En effet, c'était la SEMRY qui déterminait ce qui était destiné à la consommation locale, quand vendre, où, et à quel prix.

Jusqu'en 1987, d'après Engola (1992), le producteur de riz dans la plaine du Logone (zone d'intervention de la SEMRY) n'avait ni accès directe, ni au marché des facteurs de production, ni à celui des produits finis. Pour les paysans, dans la pratique de la riziculture intensive, l'Etat s'est interposé entre le marché des facteurs et les paysans d'une part, entre ceux-ci et le marché des produits d'autre part.

Le riziculteur n'étant donc pas soumis aux aléas du marché des produits finis. Pour le paddy, il bénéficiait de la garantie d'achat de la totalité de sa production ainsi qu'une garantie de prix. Ces prix (pour le riz, une culture vivrière) étaient comme ceux des produits de rente, fixés par un arrêté ministériel au début de la campagne rizicole. Le prix du paddy d'après Engola (1992) était un élément central de la rémunération des paysans. Il déterminait le niveau du coût des facteurs de production, la valeur totale du paddy livré par le paysan, et donc son niveau de revenu monétaire. Il faut noter tout de suite que même à ce niveau, le revenu du paysan était lui quasi déconnecté du marché du riz. En somme, on peut considérer que la reproduction du riziculteur avait été assurée par une régulation étatique, de 1970 jusqu'en 1987.

Avec la raréfaction de ses ressources financières à partir de 1987, l'Etat ne pouvait plus soutenir artificiellement les producteurs de la SEMRY.

L'ajustement structurel a donné le coup de grâce à ce système. Et ce sont les bailleurs de fonds qui veulent imposer leurs solutions : tentative de liquidation par la Banque mondiale depuis 1983, négociation avec succès pour un désengagement progressif de l'Etat par la CEE et la Coopération française.

Le monopole d'achat du paddy a été supprimé par la SEMRY en 1989. Dès 1990, le prix garanti a été supprimé. Les paysans doivent vendre leur production et s'acquitter de la redevance (coût des services fournis par la

SEMRY: labour, eau, intrants) en espèces. Ils peuvent aussi s'approvisionner en facteurs de production sur le marché. Par ailleurs, au lieu de deux cycles de culture par an, les équipements de la SEMRY ne permettent plus que la pratique d'un cycle. La SEMRY a été également amenée à transférer aux paysans des opérations telles : la préparation des pépinières, la gestion du réseau secondaire d'irrigation. Cette situation soulève donc en définitive beaucoup de questions, et notamment celle cruciale de savoir si le paysan peut survivre au désengagement de l'Etat, son engagement dans la culture intensive du riz s'étant fait depuis plus de vingt ans au détriment des réalités de son milieu, au détriment de la réalité du marché, et au détriment de ses besoins réels.

*Le cas de la SODENKAM*

Dans le cadre du projet SODENKAM (un projet de colonisation dans la zone de Yabassi), la promesse d'octroyer des titres fonciers aux pionniers en vue du contrôle des terres que ces derniers devraient mettre en valeur avait été faite officiellement, mais le projet n'a pas pu la réaliser. Des raisons socio-politiques expliquent cette défaillance.

La distribution des parcelles aux pionniers se faisait de façon autocratique, sans tenir compte de la fertilité différentielle des terres ainsi octroyées. Si la SODENKAM n'avait rien fait pour corriger cette injustice qui créait de grandes disparités entre les pionniers, elle punissait par contre sévèrement ceux des pionniers qui essayaient de résoudre ce problème eux-mêmes.

S'agissant du contrôle des moyens de production, et de la main-d'oeuvre, les termes ne sont pas définis clairement. En fait, l'approvisionnement en équipements, intrants agricoles, et l'information technique, devraient être sous la responsabilité de la structure de développement (la SODENKAM), mais en réalité, à part les outils et les intrants agricoles, la performance de la structure avait été en général malheureuse. Les pionniers s'approvisionnaient ainsi sur d'autres sources pour satisfaire leurs besoins en matériel végétal par exemple, et essentiellement sur leur expérience traditionnelle pour cultiver leurs champs.

Pour ce qui était de l'encadrement, la structure de développement n'était par en mesure de mener un programme bien élaboré. Ces défaillances internes avaient à bien des égards affecté l'objectif de départ qui était d'amener chaque pionnier à mettre en valeur un demi-hectare de terrain additionnel chaque année, comme condition préalable à leur recrutement.

Les rendements, les surfaces mises en valeur d'après une évaluation interne menée par la structure étaient très en dessous de ce qui avait été prévu, si un programme plus rigoureux avait été mis sur pied.

Enfin, s'agissant du contrôle des produits, il n'y avait pas de règle fixe dans les textes créant la SODENKAM. Néanmoins, malgré les changements constamment observés dans les relations entre la structure et les pionniers, celle-ci contrôlait systématiquement toutes les opérations de commercialisa-



tion des produits à l'exception du cacao qui relevait des attributions de la SOCOOPED. Mais la SODENKAM elle aussi favorisait plus la commercialisation des cultures de rente que celle des cultures vivrières. A cause des conflits internes au niveau de la structure, le gouvernement avait dû intervenir pour apaiser les tensions s'agissant de la commercialisation du café qui était de loin l'opération la plus importante dans la zone. Ceci avait évité des revendications incontrôlables dans les communautés pionnières.

Aujourd'hui, la SODENKAM a été liquidée par le gouvernement. Les pionniers qui s'étaient installés à Yabassi y sont toujours, sans titres fonciers pour les terrains qu'ils avaient occupés, et en conflit permanent avec les autochtones. Entre temps, les prix du café et du cacao ont chuté de plus de moitié au niveau du producteur. Une fois encore, idéologie, technologie et partage des bénéfices ont été divergents entre structure de développement et paysans. Les paysans au bout de la chaîne ont été abandonnés à leur propre sort.

#### *Le cas des ZAPIEST*

Il s'agit d'une histoire identique à celle de la SEMRY et de la SODENKAM. Le projet ZAPIEST était le tout premier projet de développement rural intégré initié par le gouvernement camerounais. Il avait pour objectifs principaux: de promouvoir le développement agricole dans la province de l'Est, et d'améliorer la participation paysanne dans ce processus.

Dans la poursuite de ces deux objectifs, le projet ZAPIEST avait établi des relations spécifiques avec les paysans en termes: de contrôle des ressources, des moyens de production, de la main-d'oeuvre et, des produits.

La terre, le seul facteur critique dans ce projet, était contrôlée par les paysans et gérée de façon traditionnelle. S'agissant des moyens de production (approvisionnement en intrants d'une part, et savoir-faire technique d'autre part), le projet jouait un rôle important dans l'approvisionnement. Pour l'utilisation des intrants, le projet encadrait seulement les paysans à travers les conseils prodigués, la promesse de rendements meilleurs et de grands revenus, qui étaient les seules forces incitatrices à leur adoption.

Les tentatives du projet pour encourager la participation des paysans se heurtait aussi à des problèmes énormes surtout en production vivrière, domaine dans lequel il manquait systématiquement de messages techniques à diffuser.

Pour s'assurer le contrôle de la main-d'oeuvre en vue de la réalisation de certains objectifs du projet, celui-ci a eu recours à la promotion des organisations villageoises. Dans ces organisations le contrôle social se faisait entre membres à travers le groupe, qui s'assurait que l'individu s'associait à la réalisation de certains objectifs, surtout dans la production des cultures dites de rente (café et cacao).

Enfin, pour ce qui est du contrôle du produit, le projet ZAPIEST avait un monopole absolu sur la commercialisation des produits de rente, dans le

souci de protéger les producteurs contre les commerçants privés, et, surtout pour récupérer les crédits à la production accordés aux paysans. En définitive, malgré le fait qu'il y ait toujours eu concertation entre les autorités du projet et les paysans quant à la façon de recouvrer les crédits à la production, la décision s'agissant de l'utilisation des bénéfices découlant des différentes opérations de commercialisation était prise unilatéralement par les autorités du projet.

Depuis 1987, le projet ZAPIEST a été liquidé par le gouvernement et ses avoirs ont été légués à l'Union des Coopératives de la Province de l'Est (UCAEST) créée en remplacement de cette structure la même année. Entre temps, les prix du cacao et du café aux producteurs ont chuté, décourageant toute velléité de continuer à produire chez le paysan. L'UCAEST, depuis sa création, ne fait pas parler d'elle, laissant les paysans aux abois.

Dans les trois projets résumés ci-dessus, certains faits peuvent être mis en évidence: (1) les projets sont initiés d'en haut pour résoudre les problèmes des paysans; (2) le but visé est souvent de mettre en place dans une communauté, une structure qui contrôle les facteurs de production (terre, main-d'oeuvre, capital), la technologie et le partage des bénéfices; une structure qui opère dans le cadre d'une idéologie clairement définie d'en haut et où les intérêts du projet sont préservés; (3) la vision et la définition du développement sont très limitées et ne concernent que l'augmentation du revenu *ceteris paribus*, au détriment des autres aspects de la vie en milieu rural, et au détriment même des relations sociales de production qui se sont établies entre les différents acteurs sociaux au sein des communautés. Des hypothèses logiques peuvent donc être formulées, à ce niveau, compte tenu de ces constatations.

### **2.3. Hypothèses retenues**

Elles sont les suivantes :

- 1 - le bien-être matériel et moral sont deux notions inséparables dans la vision du développement chez les paysans. Ces deux notions associent aussi bien l'équilibre avec l'environnement que l'harmonie avec le groupe social de référence;
- 2 - l'agriculture occupe une place importante dans la vie de l'individu. Elle associe production vivrière et production de rente, mais n'aliène fondamentalement l'individu ni de son milieu social, ni de son environnement naturel. Elle n'est pas une priorité d'investissement;
- 3 - le développement et la famine ne sont pas incompatibles. L'un ne se console pas sans l'autre. Toute tendance à la limitation des naissances est donc regardée avec suspicion.

Les hypothèses énumérées ci-dessus vont servir de base pour répondre à la question de savoir: qu'y a-t-il de particulier dans la vision du développement rural tel que perçu par les paysans eux-mêmes?

### **3. Le développement rural vu par les paysans**

#### ***3.1. Méthodologie***

Huit cent cinquante six (856) paysans ont été interrogés dans 107 villages choisis dans les 10 provinces du Cameroun à savoir : l'Adamaoua, le Centre, l'Est, l'Extrême-Nord, l'Ouest, le Nord, le Nord-Ouest, le Littoral, le Sud et le Sud-Ouest. Les enquêtes étaient menées par 107 étudiants de la 1<sup>ère</sup> promotion des ingénieurs agronomes de l'Institut National de Développement Rural (INADER), du Centre Universitaire de Dschang (CUDS) au Cameroun. Les 107 villages choisis correspondaient donc aux villages d'origine des 107 étudiants qui menaient les enquêtes.

Sur le plan méthodologique, le choix des villages est un choix raisonné, il n'est pas forcément représentatif de l'ensemble des villages des 10 provinces du Cameroun. Cependant, l'avantage de ce choix est qu'il a permis d'éviter les blocages dus à la langue, facilitant ainsi les échanges entre enquêteurs et paysans, et il a permis de réduire au strict minimum le coût des enquêtes (aucun budget n'avait été alloué à ce travail).

#### *L'échantillon*

Chaque étudiant-enquêteur devait interroger 8 paysans dans le village où il avait choisi de travailler. Des indications précises permettaient une sélection de façon à avoir dans l'échantillon différentes classes: d'âges de sexe et de revenu (15-25 ans, 26-40 ans, 41-45 ans); le critère sexe a aussi permis d'avoir dans chaque village 4 femmes et 4 hommes, de plus le critère richesse a permis d'inclure dans l'échantillon, au niveau de chaque village, 1 personne considérée comme étant très riche et une personne considérée comme étant très pauvre, et les autres se trouvant dans des situations intermédiaires.

Ce dernier critère est évidemment très subjectif, la richesse étant différemment définie d'un contexte social à un autre. Ceci a donc évidemment introduit quelques biais dans l'interprétation des résultats, mais en fait, ce qui nous intéressait dans le critère de richesse était beaucoup plus la perception des paysans que le contenu même du critère. La répartition des paysans par province est présenté dans le tableau 1.

#### *Instrument de collecte des données*

Un questionnaire très léger avait été proposé aux paysans retenus pour les besoins de l'enquête. Outre les caractéristiques démographiques (âge, sexe, niveau d'instruction, situation matrimoniale, nombre d'enfants), les caractéristiques du village (distance au chef-lieu du département, conditions d'accès, population totale, mortalité, natalité, taux d'immigration et d'émigration), la situation de l'agriculture (types de cultures rencontrés, types d'animaux élevés, appréciation des rendements, état des sols) et l'environnement naturel, des questions spécifiques étaient posées sur les

populations rurales face aux problèmes de développement. Ces questions touchaient : les relations ville-campagne, les sources d'information dans le village, les relations avec les services d'encadrement, la perception de la réussite dans la vie, les priorités d'investissement, la perception de la taille de la famille idéale et l'avenir des enfants. Notre réflexion porte uniquement sur les populations rurales face aux problèmes de développement. Les hypothèses formulées sont analysées qualitativement à travers le contenu des réponses et non statistiquement.

**Tableau 1 : Répartition des paysans par province**

Province	Nombre total	Pourcentage interrogé
Adamaoua	16	1.9
Est	47	5.5
Extrême-Nord	48	5.6
Centre	217	25.4
Littoral	96	11.2
Nord	64	7.5
Nord-Ouest	48	5.6
Ouest	215	25.1
Sud	97	11.3
Sud-Ouest	8	0.9
Total	856	100

Source: Auteur

### **3.2. Les résultats**

Les points de vue paysans :

#### *(a) Place du bien-être matériel et moral dans le développement rural*

Le bien-être matériel et moral sont deux notions inséparables dans la vision du développement chez les paysans. Ces deux notions associent à la fois l'équilibre avec l'environnement et l'harmonie avec le groupe social de référence.

Cette hypothèse est vérifiée à travers la perception de la réussite dans la vie par les paysans. Les attitudes sont différentes suivant les classes d'âge. Pour les jeunes, le luxe est primordial: une maison somptueuse, rouler en voiture, une garde robe bien fournie, posséder beaucoup d'argent, etc. Pour cette classe d'âge, pour utiliser leurs expressions, 'l'argent ouvre toutes les portes', 'il renforce l'amitié et l'amour'. Pour les membres les plus âgés, c'est beaucoup plus certaines valeurs sociales qui définissent la réussite dans la vie: être notable dans le village, avoir beaucoup d'enfants, être respecté, participer aux actions collectives, enfin être en harmonie avec Dieu qui donne la vie et la richesse.

D'autres dimensions s'ajoutent pour ceux qui ont une certaine expérience urbaine : avoir un emploi sûr, avoir des maisons en location, être en mesure d'assurer l'éducation des enfants, etc.

La perception de la réussite dans la vie est complétée par d'autres variables en fonction de l'occupation. Pour les agriculteurs et les éleveurs, la réussite dans la vie tient au fait de posséder de vastes étendues sous culture, de grands troupeaux de boeufs, de moutons et de chèvres, et assez d'argent après la vente de produits d'élevage ou de récolte. Réussir dans le commerce est également un signe de succès dans la vie pour ceux des agriculteurs ou éleveurs qui se sont lancés dans cette activité.

En plus des critères énumérés ci-dessus, la réussite dans la vie est conditionnée par la possibilité de subvenir aux besoins de la famille, la possibilité d'apporter du soutien aux membres de la famille élargie, pouvoir soi-même manger à sa faim, être marié et avoir des enfants, pouvoir se faire soigner, etc.

La réussite dans la vie est donc multidimensionnelle. Elle touche différents aspects de la vie de l'individu. Elle est matérielle, cognitive et morale. De façon générale, la réussite dans la vie se définit en relation avec la possibilité de satisfaire à la hiérarchie des besoins de l'individu. Ces besoins varient en fonction de l'âge, de l'occupation, du statut social et de la vision-même que l'individu a de la vie. Quelques besoins régulièrement cités au cours des enquêtes sont les besoins physiologiques (pouvoir manger à sa faim, se soigner sont importants pour les paysans, les besoins de sécurité (avoir un salaire sûr, avoir un logement décent assurent une sécurité matérielle indéniable), le besoin de reconnaissance (être respecté dans son milieu, être notable dans le village, assurent dignité et respect de soi), le besoin d'actualisation personnelle (être à la mode, être au courant des nouvelles idées, être instruit assurent cette dimension), le besoin d'équilibre psychologique (assurer la continuité de la famille, être confiant en Dieu, respecter la coutume, ont été cités plusieurs fois au cours des enquêtes). La réussite dans la vie au vu de toutes ces conditions affecte donc le développement de l'individu dans toutes ses dimensions. Elle dépasse à la fois la possession de l'argent, des biens matériels et le prestige. Elle est également affective dans ce sens qu'il touche l'homme dans ce qu'il a d'humain.

*(b) Place de l'agriculture dans le développement rural*

L'agriculture occupe une place incontournable dans la vie de l'individu. Elle associe production vivrière et production de rente, mais n'aliène fondamentalement l'individu ni de son milieu social, ni de son environnement naturel. Elle n'est cependant pas une priorité d'investissement.

Cette hypothèse est analysée à travers l'attitude des paysans vis-à-vis des priorités d'investissement dans leurs villages.

L'agriculture dans la majorité des cas est une activité irremplaçable pour la survie des individus et des familles en milieu rural. Bien que pratiquée de façon traditionnelle, elle assure très bien la subsistance des ménages. Elle rapporte des revenus monétaires assez régulièrement quand elle est organisée avec l'appui des structures officielles. C'est le cas pour ce qui est du cacao, du café, du coton et du riz dans différentes régions du pays. Seulement quand elle ne bénéficie pas de cet appui vital des services officiels, comme c'est le cas des productions vivrière et maraîchère, elle devient une activité ingrate. La crise actuelle, due essentiellement à la chute des cours du cacao, du café et du coton sur le marché mondial, a entraîné celle conjointe du prix au producteur en milieu rural. L'agriculture de marché est donc remise en cause, de même que le rôle de l'Etat qui se désengage complètement, Aussi bien de l'encadrement que de la commercialisation des produits de rente et, ne subventionne plus les différentes filières (engrais, insecticides et commercialisation).

Les paysans pensent presque à l'unanimité que l'agriculture n'est pas une priorité d'investissement. Ce sentiment est ponctué par la crise actuelle du secteur agricole. Presque toutes les personnes interrogées s'accordent sur le fait que s'ils avaient de l'argent, ils mettraient en priorité l'accent sur l'amélioration des conditions de vie dans leurs villages. Spécifiquement, il s'agirait de l'amélioration de l'habitat (presque tous les paysans interrogés pensent que la construction d'une habitation décente est fondamentale et prioritaire en terme d'investissement), amélioration ou création de structures de santé fonctionnelles, amélioration ou construction de structures scolaires adéquates, amélioration ou création des infrastructures pour désenclaver la plupart des localités, et création de points d'eau potable. L'ouverture de petites unités de commerce (échoppes, débit de boisson) est également citée comme une alternative méritant l'attention. Dans la presque totalité des cas, l'agriculture vient en fin de liste, et avec elle, la possession d'une voiture pour faciliter les déplacements.

Dans cette analyse, les priorités d'investissement ne suivent pas le même ordre d'un individu à l'autre, mais ce qui est évident c'est que l'agriculture n'en est pas une. Il convient donc de signaler le fait que les différents programmes de développement initiés par le Gouvernement à travers les campagnes, ont le plus souvent mis l'accent sur l'agriculture, et très peu sur le développement humain. Il y a donc eu dans ces programmes comme une espèce d'ignorance délibérée des réalités villageoises. L'agriculture oui, mais tout au plus pour les agriculteurs. Il y a eu peut-être inconsciemment amalgame et assimilation de toutes les occupations rurales avec l'agriculture. Les résultats ne se sont pas fait attendre: exode rural, dédain et mépris de l'agriculture, fuite désordonnée des villages, obéissance déguisée aux recommandations tant que les subventions et une attention particulière pouvaient être octroyées, refus de rembourser les crédits accordés pour la promotion de

la production agricole. Conséquence, le désengagement actuel de l'Etat des opérations de développement agricole a été massivement suivi par le désengagement des paysans de la production agricole, et, surtout de l'agriculture de rente.

*(c) La place de la famine dans le développement rural*

Le développement et la famille ne sont pas incompatibles d'après les paysans. L'un ne se conçoit pas sans l'autre. Toute tendance à la limitation des naissances est donc regardée avec suspicion. Cette hypothèse a été analysée à travers la perception de la taille de la famille idéale et le devenir des enfants.

S'agissant de la taille de la famille idéale, les réponses diffèrent suivant les classes d'âge. Les jeunes générations donnent des chiffres bien précis souvent entre 4 et 6 enfants ou alors entre 3 et 5 enfants. Pour les vieilles générations, c'est plutôt le contraire. Les prises de position sont nettes. Les enfants sont un don de Dieu, il n'est donc pas question de limiter les naissances. Il faut en avoir autant que possible, tant que la mère n'a pas de problèmes de santé, tant qu'elle peut en faire, et suivant la tradition, les enfants sont une richesse. Dieu qui les donne saura toujours comment les nourrir, et comment subvenir à leurs besoins.

Même si la situation n'a pas beaucoup évolué chez les paysans dans les provinces occidentales et septentrionales, et surtout chez les vieilles générations, les jeunes générations en général sont favorables aux foyers monogamiques. Les mentalités ont beaucoup évolué. Cette évolution relève de plusieurs facteurs: la crise économique que vit le pays actuellement et qui a abouti à une très grande chute des revenus chez les paysans, le style de vie qui fait appel à de plus en plus de dépenses monétaires (santé, scolarité des enfants, habillement, mode de vie, etc), l'influence des autres cultures à travers les médias et l'expérience urbaine. La prise de conscience des difficultés de la vie actuelle est plus marquée chez les paysans les plus formés, ceux qui sont ouverts aux idées nouvelles et ceux qui ont suffisamment voyagé. Evidemment ils sont minoritaires dans la plupart des communautés villageoises. Chez les autres, la grande majorité, le sentiment général exprime, la religion chrétienne aidant, que c'est Dieu seul qui est en droit de limiter les naissances, c'est lui seul qui sait et qui décide du nombre d'enfants qu'un couple est en mesure de procréer. L'individu doit donc accepter et assumer cette responsabilité. La notion de Dieu et la perception des décisions divines ne doivent pas être remises en cause. Les programmes de développement doivent de ce fait aider l'individu à assumer son humanité en conformité avec Dieu.

Pour ce qui est de l'avenir des enfants, les paysans interrogés pensent pour la plupart que l'individu est juge suivant sa capacité à assurer l'avenir de ses enfants. Il s'agit en plus de subvenir à leurs besoins, de leur donner une bonne éducation, et de leur léguer plus tard certains biens matériels : des

maisons pour les uns, des terrains immatriculés pour les autres ou pour bien d'autres encore des troupeaux.

Les individus qui réussissent dans ce sens sont hautement respectés dans la communauté, pour leur sens de l'organisation, leur leadership et, occupent souvent des places de notables, de conseillers du chef ou alors, sont tout simplement une référence pour leurs contemporains et surtout pour les jeunes générations.

### **Conclusion**

Cet article montre qu'il y a divergence sur les approches du développement rural entre les structures et organismes de développement par rapport aux paysans en milieu rural.

Pour les structures de développement indépendamment de la philosophie de base, les activités sont centrées autour de l'agriculture comme base du développement, mais alors l'agriculture pour tous, y compris ceux qui ne s'y intéressent pas; et l'agriculture avant tout, au détriment de toutes les autres occupations qui peuvent supporter son développement, au détriment des réalités de l'agriculture paysanne, et au détriment des besoins réels des paysans. De ce fait les programmes de développement rural deviennent des arènes où développeurs et paysans se confrontent pour le contrôle des moyens de production, le contrôle de la main-d'oeuvre, et le partage des bénéfices issus des actions menées.

Dans cette confrontation, illustrée par le fonctionnement des projets de développement tels SEMRY, SODENKAM et ZAPIEST, on constate que les intérêts des projets sont toujours préservés, pour pérenniser leur existence, auprès des populations locales légalement détournées et pour légitimer les actions menées. Dans chacun des cas cités ci-dessus, le glas a sonné pour les paysans avec l'avènement de la crise économique, annoncée officiellement depuis 1987. L'Etat s'est retiré systématiquement dans le cas des ZAPIEST et de la SODENKAM, et, il se désengage progressivement des opérations de production de riz dans le cas de la SEMRY. Entre temps les paysans n'ont pas appris à s'aider eux-mêmes. Les augmentations temporaires des revenus, quand les choses allaient bien, n'ont pas abouti au rétablissement d'un équilibre, rompu avec le village ou le terroir. Ces projets qui ont détourné les paysans n'ont pas pu contribuer au rétablissement de cet équilibre qui d'ailleurs n'a jamais été un souci pour eux.

Il y a donc fondamentalement divergences entre projets de développement rural initiés par l'Etat et conception de ce même développement par les paysans. Pour les paysans, interrogés à travers les dix provinces du Cameroun, le développement rural se conçoit comme:

- 1 - équilibre avec l'environnement et harmonie avec le groupe social de référence, bien-être matériel et intégrité morale;



- 2 - harmonie entre l'agriculture et les autres occupations qui peuvent lui servir de support;
- 3 - compatibilité avec les exigences de la famille, qui doit être préservée en tant qu'institutions.

Les expériences de développement rural en Afrique en général et au Cameroun en particulier n'ont pas favorisé l'harmonie entre l'individu et son environnement (naturel et/ou social). Dans chaque cas connu, cette harmonie a été rompue aussi bien pour les projets qui ont "réussi" que pour ceux qui ont échoué. Au vu des différents points abordés dans cette analyse, il y a lieu de se poser la question suivante : Quel développement rural pour l'Afrique au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle?

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# The Legal Control of Tertiary Institutions in East Africa: The Case of Makerere University

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*Résumé: Partout sur le continent africain, des protestations, grèves et marches ont fait irruption dans les institutions d'enseignement supérieur. Fermetures, expulsions, emprisonnements et même utilisation de la force physique brutale sont la réponse des gouvernements africains. Même si ces turbulences ne peuvent pas être séparées d'une quête plus générale pour plus de liberté et de démocratie de la part de l'institution qui gouverne actuellement la société civile, elles sont également le reflet de la crise qui affecte l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique. Quelle est la nature du contrôle juridique effectuée sur les institutions tertiaires en Afrique? Quel est l'impact de tels contrôles sur l'évolution et les caractéristiques de l'enseignement supérieur? Le cas de l'Université Makerere depuis sa création est un exemple d'un contrôle excessif sur les institutions d'enseignement supérieur même si ce contrôle n'a pas pu étouffer complètement les organisations estudiantines ou mettre fin à des débats critiques. Dans le contexte de la crise économique et politique, le contrôle de l'Etat sur l'enseignement supérieur a toujours eu tendance à limiter largement la liberté académique et les modes d'opération démocratique. La soumission de l'université peut-elle être une solution à la crise africaine?*

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*Since the beginning of the year (1989) students in Africa are everywhere in ferment. Protests, demonstrations and riots have resulted in injuries, lockouts, even deaths. The virus of discontent has spread to Zaire, Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Senegal, Sudan and Zimbabwe. Underlying the upsurge of protest is not simply high spirits and political posturing but a fundamental revolt against bad teaching, poor conditions, unpaid scholarships, rising prices, lack of concern by those in charge and general deterioration of educational conditions (New African: May, 1989).*

## **Introduction: The Virus of Discontent**

Throughout the African continent post-secondary educational institutions are erupting in protests, strikes and demonstrations. African governments retaliate with closures, expulsions, imprisonments and even brutal physical force. (*Amnesty International*, 1989; *Africa Watch*, 1990). While these eruptions cannot be divorced from the wider movement of social forces in Africa today, they also quite specifically reflect the peculiar crisis of our

systems of education. In this context, it becomes extremely important to pause and critically consider the nature of the legal controls exercised over tertiary institutions in Africa. This is particularly essential because the law governing tertiary institutions has been so poorly investigated, whether from a purely legal angle, or from a sociological or political science perspective. Within the context of Uganda, such an inquiry is of particular importance given the recent student struggles that have twice in as many years rocked Makerere University, the last such time culminating in the brutal murder of two students on December 10, 1990, which, ironically, was international Human Rights Day.

Our primary concern in this paper is twofold. First, it is to consider the nature of the legal mechanisms in place at Makerere today and the impact such controls have had on the evolution and character of university education as disseminated by Makerere at the same time, we do not seek to merely make a dry rendition of those legislative controls. Our intention is to subject them to critical inquiry against the background of the historical evolution of tertiary education at Makerere and the concrete political, social and economic conditions that have hitherto prevailed in Uganda and continued up to the present time. Such an examination is crucial to our analysis of the subject if only because the law does not provide, to cite a recent example, for the invasion of the campus by Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs); troops armed with guns, live ammunition, batons and tear-gas canisters and the false imprisonment (without food) of students. In fact, it does not even make provision for the arbitrary closure of the university. In a nutshell, the paper provides a pathology of the "virus of discontent" that afflicts one African University today (*New African*, 1989: 9).

To this end, the paper is divided into three parts. Part I provides an illustrative history of the evolution of the legal mechanisms governing tertiary education, commencing with the establishment of Makerere in 1922, up to the dissolution of the University of East Africa in 1970. It is hoped that this will illuminate the broader context for the legal controls eventually codified in the 1970 Makerere University Act - the legal instrument that currently governs the institution. Part II examines in detail the provisions of the 1970 Act, the 1975 Decree (amending the 1970 Act) and the related mechanism of control exercised in the 1970s and 1980s.

The last section reviews the position of the present National Resistance Movement (NRM) government under Yoweri Museveni, drawing both from contemporary policy papers on tertiary education, the view-points of government officials and from the public domain. In conclusion, we consider what governmental control over tertiary education in its present form actually entails for both staff and student academic freedom in Uganda and how it affects the evolution of a system of university education that serves the twin goals of socioeconomic development and heightened democracy.

### **Colonialism and the Control of Tertiary Education**

To fully appreciate the role of "education" within the context of a colonial situation, one must possess a firm understanding of the nature of the state, in existence, as well as of the social and economic conditions upon which it is constructed. In the words of E.A. Brett:

*Colonialism is a system of rule which assumes the right of a people to impose their will upon another. This must inevitably lead to a situation of dominance and dependency which will systematically subordinate those governed by its imposed culture in social, economic and political life (Brett, 1973: Introduction).*

Following this perspective, it is not surprising that the educational system that evolved in Uganda aped in large measure, that of the colonial power - Britain. It also explains why education commences with the "kindergarten" and culminates in the "university" and furthermore why law as the subject-matter of an educational process is first confronted at the tertiary level.

Education in a colonial context comprises part of the broader infrastructure of underdevelopment (roads and railways; hospitals and military forces) designed to service the channeling of the resources of the colonized territory to the metropolitan state. Thus, the first tertiary institution in the whole of East Africa was set up nearly 30 years after colonial rule. Clearly, "education", then, as it is today, was not a priority in the view of the colonial masters.

The lack of attention accorded to education in Uganda is a point that has been made by numerous historians and sociologists - Ramkrishna Mukherjee being the most critical among them. (Mukherjee, 1985: 161-166, esp. 164). More important however, was the nature of colonial education and in particular, that which was disseminated by tertiary institutions like Makerere. Furthermore, the historical origins and subsequent development of the university under colonial conditions, were critical factors in shaping the character of education disseminated by the institution.

Established in 1922, Makerere was originally a technical school, although as noted by Lugumba and Ssekamwa, "... it had in a fairly short time embarked with considerable success on courses in Medicine, Agriculture, Elementary Engineering, Surveying and Teacher education". (Lugumba and Ssekamwa, 1973: 201). There was no legal instrument which specifically set up Makerere as the "highest institution" of learning in East Africa, a position it enjoyed in its early phase (Macpherson, M, 1964). This does not mean that Makerere evolved "naturally" or autonomously of the existing colonial educational programme. As a technical school it drew its resources primarily from the colonial government and conducted courses that bore the

Administration's stamp of approval. Indeed, the emphasis on technical subjects illustrates the colonial bias against the more "esoteric" subjects such as law, philosophy or sociology.

However, even by the early 1930s, the government had not formulated a distinct policy on tertiary education as such, neither did it see the need to make statutory provision for the functioning of the college. This is illustrated in part by the provisions of the Education ordinance of 1935. That law provided for the formation of an Education Advisory Council (section 4-12), District Boards of Education (sections 13-16) and Provincial Councils of Education (sections 32-36). It also made provision for the registration of schools (sections 32-36), the control of employment (sections 37-39) and the regulation of the pay of teachers (sections 40-42). Finally, it covered Indian Education (sections 44-49), Grants (sections 52-54) and the inspection and closure of schools (sections 55-57). Nowhere in the Ordinance is there any reference to higher or tertiary education.

That omission is easily explicable in that higher education at Makerere and elsewhere in East Africa was yet still in its formative stages of development. However it also tallied with colonial policy of the time, a policy that discouraged the indigenous populace from pursuing activities that did not directly correspond to the designated scheme of production and appropriation. (Jjuuko, 1990, Jorgensen, 1981: 135). Therefore, while primary and secondary education necessitated the formation of a concise system of administration and control, it was not crucial that the same be done for the form of higher education in existence at the time.

Traces of a movement towards a more direct administrative control of higher education can in fact be found in 1929, when in March of that year, the Directors of Education of the three East African territories unanimously agreed that Makerere should be the centre for higher education in the region. (Lugumba and Ssekamwa, *op. cit.*, 201-202). The subsequent appointment in 1935 of a Commission to examine and report on higher education in East Africa, gave further substance to this resolution. The Commission was chaired by the Right Hon. Earl de la Warr, who was assisted by eight other men and one woman. None of the commissioners was of African origin.

In its far-reaching study, the Commission examined the organization and operation of Makerere College, institutions or other agencies for vocational training connected with the college and the system of education from which students at the college were drawn. Recommendations were made on the development and administration of the college in the light of "... the general interests and needs of the communities from which future students might be drawn and the education needs of the women" (*Ibid.*, 202). Obviously, "the general interests and needs of the communities" were really concerned with how best education at Makerere could serve the colonial economy, seeing that no representatives of those "communities" sat on the Commission. Fur-

thermore, the purported attention to "the needs of women" was a thinly-veiled shroud over the otherwise explicit chauvinism of the Commission. This was illustrated, in part, by the emphasis placed on its recommendations on the training of women for "home making" (Ibid.). Educating women at the tertiary level within the colonial scheme principally meant the development of their skills in the kitchen and the home!

The Commission made several other recommendations concerning education in general and Makerere College in particular. Among the more important for the purposes of our analysis were that:

- i) all post-secondary courses at the college and its associated institutions should form the "Higher College of East Africa";
- ii) the Higher college should have an autonomous governing body;
- iii) the Principal and staff of the college be of "university type" and "university status";
- iv) Professional courses in Teacher education, Medicine, Agriculture and Veterinary Science continue and,
- v) the College be developed as a centre for research.

Soon after the Commission's recommendations, an Ordinance was passed by the Governor to regulate the operation and development of the College. As the first legal instrument promulgated with respect to the institution, it deserves special treatment.

#### **A - The Makerere College Ordinance, 1930**

The first legal instrument passed to regulate the operation of Makerere was designed to "... make provision for the control, administration and working of Makerere College", clearly illustrating that tertiary education was henceforth to be closely monitored and developed by the state. The Ordinance set up an Assembly for the College with a Chairman appointed by the conference of East African Governors (section 4). Other members included the Principal of the College, one appointee of the Native Government of Buganda, another from the Makerere College Union Society and two from the Academic Board. The remainder of the Assembly was to comprise appointees of the Governors of the three territories and the British Resident of Zanzibar (section 4.1). The principle duty of the Assembly was to "receive and consider the annual report and accounts of the Council and advise the Council on questions of general policy in regard to the conduct of the College" (section 6).

The actual control over the administration and operation of the College was vested in a Council that was established as a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal (section 9). The chairman was to be appointed by the Secretary of State, upon the recommendation of the Governor, following consultation with the conference of East African governors of

each territory and the Academic Board. Section 13 of the Ordinance laid out the main duties of the council which were *inter alia* to:

*... have the management and control of the affairs, concerns and property of the college and shall undertake that management and exercise that control in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance and the directions of the Governor, acting on behalf of the conference of East African Governors; and in all cases, in the absence of any express provision or direction, shall act at all times in such manner as appears to it to be best calculated to promote the interests of the college.*

A duty was imposed on the Council to consider any advice tendered to it by the College Assembly, and in the instance where such advice was not accepted, to report the matter to the Assembly and to the Governor. Specific duties included *inter alia* the consideration and submission for approval to the Governor of the annual estimates of revenue and expenditure; fixing the scale of fees and boarding charges; regulations regarding the terms of service, duties and discipline of the staff and the establishment of an Academic Board and Boards of Studies. All members of staff were to be subject to the general authority of the Council and of the Principal, although officers seconded from the Government were to be disciplined by the Governor. The Principal was to be appointed by the Secretary of State on such terms and conditions to be fixed in consultation with the Governor and the council.

Quite a few observations can be made of this Ordinance and of the fashion that legislative control over Makerere was to be executed. First is the omnipresence of the colonial and metropolitan state in the organization and control of the College. The appointment of the Principal of the College was vested in the Secretary of State, as did the appointment of the Chairman of the Council. Throughout the ordinance, reference is made to the Governor and the Conference of East African Governors (who appointed the Chairman of the College Assembly). Most of the duties of the Council were overseen by the Governor, particularly as regards the revenue and expenditure of the College, the terms of service, duties and discipline of the staff and the establishment of the Academic Board and Boards of Studies. Finally, in the constitution of the respective organs of the university, government-appointees predominated.

Such extensive control over the College by the colonial administration was not accidental. Neither is it surprising that the office of the Secretary of State for Colonies controlled the appointment of the College Principal and the Council Chairman. It was not merely that Makerere was to develop as an institution that served the interests of the colonial political economy. Rather, the administrative officials, the staff and the kind of students admitted by the

college were to be selected in accordance with the policy that Makerere was first and foremost a state institution.

This point is better illustrated by examining the amendment to the 1938 ordinance passed three years later. The 1941 Makerere College (Amendment) Ordinance incorporated the office of the Secretary of State in the formulation of the terms of service, appointment and dismissal of members of the college staff (section 2). It also made provision for the Secretary of State to remove the college principal, albeit on the recommendation of the Council and the Governor (section 5). One would have thought that as the college began to develop, measures would have been taken to permit it to function more autonomously of the state. The reverse is true, especially since agitation for freedom from colonial rule was on the rise and the source of discontent can be retraced to the growing awareness and agitation of the indigenous population - a phenomenon which captured Makerere also. A firm hand was necessitated at the college to deal with such "indiscipline" and the colonial state (crystallized in the office of the Secretary of State) moved in directly and decisively to ensure that such control could be easily imposed.

It is important also to note that neither the 1938 Ordinance nor the 1941 Amendment made any provision for students' welfare or organization. Presumably this was to be under the control of the Principal and furthermore illustrates that the state did not consider that students were deserving of any rights that could be codified in a legal instrument. Although the institution was ostensibly set up to serve students, they were allowed no independent voice in the determination of their welfare. Indeed, the only mention made of them in the governing statute was in relation to the fixing of fees and the determination of boarding charges! (section 13.3 (c)).

This, then, was the substance of the origins of legislative control over Makerere in the colonial era. Aside from the Academic Board of Studies, the governing body and the main elements in the administration were directly linked to the colonial state. The representation of persons drawn from within the College was minimal, ensuring that state policy could on the whole, be fully implemented in the operations of the institution. The financial and accounting control exercised by the government meant that the college would be wholly dependent on the State for its well-being, a fact which critically impacted on the development of the institution particularly in periods of economic strife. Legislative developments which followed the 1938 ordinance and the 1941 Amendment, concretized this situation.

#### **B - Subsequent Legislative Developments (1941-1963)**

Following the Second world War, Makerere began to be actively steered in the direction of university college for the three East African Colonies. In 1945, the Asquith Commission on Higher Education in the colonies visited the College. The Commission commended the steps taken by Makerere



(towards becoming a university) since the visit of the 1937 de la Warr Commission (Lugumba and Ssekamwa, *op. cit.*, 203-204). Thus, in February 1949, the East African High Commission (comprising the three Governors) assented to the Makerere College Act.

Two important developments are signified by the passing of the 1949 Act. First, it made provision for "... the Government, Control and Administration of Makerere College" - a distinction from the 1938 ordinance as we shall see, that was not merely semantic (Preamble to Act No. 2 of 1949). The College was styled the "Higher College for East Africa at Kampala, Uganda, known as Makerere College". Its functions were explicitly laid down as being directed towards providing in East Africa:

- a) facilities for higher education;
- b) facilities for professional training; and
- c) facilities for research.

In many respects, the 1949 Act paralleled the previous legislation governing the college. In addition though, it abolished the College Assembly and made provision for the appointment of a Visitor by the Secretary of State. (section 5.2). The Visitor was vested with the powers to revoke or amend section 7 of the Act (relating to the membership of the College Council) after consultation with the Council and subject to the Secretary's prior approval. (section 7.8). It also gave him general advisory powers.

The Act made the College Council the principal governing body of the institution, with only the Governor as the remaining supervisory office. A conspicuous change introduced by the 1949 Act in comparison to the earlier laws, was the marked reduction in references to the Governor, the East African High Commission (formerly the Conference of Governors) and the Secretary of State. Also, although the Secretary of State retained the sole power to appoint the Principal of the college, this was to be done following consultation with the visitor and the College Council. The Secretary also retained the power to remove him, although this could only be "... for good cause..." and on the recommendation of the visitor and the Council (section 15). The Governor no longer featured in this action.

Unlike the previous laws which simply vested the Council with the power to create an Academic Board and Boards of Studies, the 1949 Act explicitly set up the Board, making it "... responsible to the College Council for the academic management of the College in accordance with Council policy" (section 9.1 and 9.2). The duties of the Board were also laid out, as was its membership with the Principal as Chairman. It comprised the Head of each school, every Professor, Reader or Senior Lecturer in the various faculties, the Librarian and two members selected by the staff (section 10).

At first glance, it would appear that the 1949 Act considerably relaxed state control over Makerere. A number of factors explain this facile impres-

sion. First was the general relaxation in the controls exercised by the colonial government over political and social life in the colonies in the post-war epoch. Parallel developments were discernable in relation to trade unions, political parties, the local press and farmers' cooperative unions, some of which were legally permitted to function for the first time in this era of colonial rule. A quick glance at the legislations governing the operation of these institutions exhibit a relatively loosened degree of control by the state. In terms of the political economy of Uganda at this time, these legal developments coincided with the heightened agitation for liberation and self-government commenced in the 1940s and epitomized by the Bataka Uprisings of 1945 and 1949 (Uganda Protectorate, 1949, Nabudere, 1980). Hence, it was essential for the colonial state to adopt more 'liberalized' attitudes to social and political life in the colonies if its essential objectives were to be realized. This was the epoch of the so-called "human face" of colonialism (Apter, 1973: 234 ff.).

Needless to say, the essential features of the colonial system were preserved intact and the 1949 Act clearly demonstrated this. This was especially the case in so far as government appointees still predominated on the Council, the activities of the staff were strictly monitored and no mention was made of the welfare of students. Furthermore, the purported liberalized attitude of the state towards institutional life was belied by the fact that no African was appointed to the council established under the 1949 Act, even though, as Lugumba and Ssekamwa point out, there were a number who were eligible (op. cit., 204). Education at the tertiary level, even within the so-called liberal atmosphere of the era remained a matter to be determined by the colonial state and its agents, to the exclusion of the indigenous populace.

In 1950, following quickly on the heels of the 1949 Act, Makerere College students began to read for external degrees of the University of London. Legally and in substance, Makerere thus became a University College of London, which explains why those who studied there at that time, append the word "London" in parentheses following their qualifications even though they never actually studied at the British institution. At the administrative level, the 1949 Act was still in operation and there is no legal instrument that outlines the nature of the relationship between the two institutions. We need only note that the new affiliation merely confirmed the socioeconomic and political reality of the age. Makerere had long been structured and designed as an institution to provide tertiary education closely patterned on that of the metropolitan state. Its existence and operation were linked to an external polity, as was the manner in which it gained maturity. The formal link with London signified the attainment of that maturity.

With the dawning of independence, political considerations deemed a termination of the Makerere/London relationship imperative. Thus, in 1961

the institution became Makerere University college. Soon after, in 1963, the University of East Africa was set up, with Makerere, the University College of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam forming its three constituent colleges. The 1962 University of East Africa Act vested the institution with the responsibility for University education within East Africa and required it to:

*cooperate with governments or other appropriate bodied in the planned development of higher education, and, in particular, to examine and approve proposals for new facilities, new departments, new degree courses or new subjects of study submitted to it by the constituent colleges (Preamble 1962 Act).*

The dissolution of the university as a regional institution is intricately linked to the growing political and economic crisis that engulfed the three East African countries almost from independence. Suffice it to say that even preceding the actual dismantling of the University of East Africa, steps were already underway to give Makerere complete autonomy and firmly establish it as an independent institution, wholly accountable to the Government of Uganda.

Following this background, we can now turn to an examination of this process and to a critical appraisal of the Makerere University Act as well as the 1975 decree which amended it.

### **The Post colonial Legal Control of Makerere University**

Efforts directed towards making Makerere an autonomous institution, independent of the other two East African Colleges, commenced soon after the achievement of independence. (Dinwiddy and Twaddle, 1988). Throughout the existence of the University of East Africa, there was an uneasy tension between the three member states which saw, by 1964, the exchange of heated words over deviations in the planning and funding for higher education in each country. Duplicate faculties, formerly agreed to be reserved to particular colleges within the University began to be established in each college.

On 12 January 1970, Ugandan President, Milton Obote, set up a Visitation Committee to report and make recommendations on the status and direction of the education offered by Makerere at the time. However, before the completions of the visitation report, Parliament assented to the Makerere University (interim Provisions) Act on June 29, 1970. The preamble to this act is of some interest and we quote it here in full:

*... until the submission of the visitation Committee report (it is) advisable that the law of Makerere University be delayed but interim provision should be made to establish Makerere University to enable it to carry on its educational and other functions in the interim period.*

Of interest is the fact that when the Makerere University, Kampala Act was eventually assented to by Parliament (5 October 1970), it paralleled in many ways the provisions of the earlier interim Act. This leads to the conclusion that the Visitation Committee was in fact set up primarily as a cosmetic measure and that the Government had already decided on the type of institution it wanted to create, as well as the measure of control to be exercised over it.

#### **A - The Makerere University, Kampala Act, 1970**

The most striking feature of the 1970 Act was the reintroduction of extensive state control over the institution - an echo of the very first colonial statute which governed Makerere. The Act made the President of the Republic automatic Chancellor of the University (section 6), with exclusive powers of appointment of the Vice-Chancellor, his Deputy (section 7.2) and the chairman of the University Council (section 9.4). Extensive reference was made to the Minister (of Education), with respect to the establishment of constituent colleges (section 5), the appointment of the Secretary and Registrar (section 8.2), the appointment of Faculty Deans (section 12.1), professors and Institute Directors (section 12.2) as well as the approval of any statutes made by council for the "... government, control and administration of the University" (section 3.2).

Finally, the Minister could, "... if in his opinion it is in the public interest to do so..." direct any University Authority to exercise or perform any of the powers conferred by the Act, and such authority had to comply with those directions. Such power in fact vested the Minister with almost exclusive control over the functioning and the direction of development of the University. With the President as Chancellor, the manifestly political nature of his other office signified the absence of any independence between state and university.

Viewed against the background of political and social conditions prevailing in Uganda at the time, the return to extensive state control over Makerere represented by the 1970 Act is not surprising. First and foremost is the extensive rise in dictatorial tendencies in the Obote Administration commencing from the mid-1960s. This tendency obviously found expression in the legislation of the time and is epitomized most starkly in the Ministerial "powers of directions" - powers which gave Cabinet Ministers virtually total control over Parastatal Organizations (from insurance companies to hotels), and extended into educational institutions. Makerere - representing the pinnacle of the country's educational system and thus the focal point for research, critical debate and organized and articulate youth movements - had to be brought firmly under the yoke of governmental control. This last fact (i.e the increasing importance of students and youth) explains the inclusion

for the first time in a law governing the institution, of two student representatives in the University Council.

Needless to say, such student representation was not intended to provide the student body with any real voice in the management of the affairs of the University or more specifically in the actual decision-making process that affected the student's general welfare. Rather, it was inserted for cosmetic value - "this government also listens to students and takes them as equals". This point is well demonstrated by the fact that under the Act, no reference is made to student's participating in decision-making, or that consultations will precede any decisions affecting their autonomy or welfare. Furthermore, under section 21 of the 1970 Act, the students' association must be constituted in accordance with statutes made for that purpose by the University council, which may also, "... prescribe the constitution, functions, privileges and other matters relating to the students' Associations".

The ultimate conclusion of all the foregoing is that the Act did not permit students' autonomy over the organization of their affairs. This tallied with the overall position of the government regarding other civic associations such as trade unions (Baryahawego, 1990). Concerning students and the youth specifically, parallel mechanisms of control had already been instituted on a national scale, with the establishment of the National Union of Youth organizations (NUYO) and the National Union of Students of Uganda (NUSU) - state-sponsored organizations designed to undermine the autonomy of the students' movement.

At Makerere, student politics were infiltrated from the start by the governing party - the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). Although the era when Guild elections were openly campaigned for on a party ticket was yet to come, the 1960s and 1970s were not free from the intrigue, chicanery and turbulence that was to surround student politics in the 1980s. Such control did not, needless to say, wholly emasculate student organizations or stifle critical debate among them. The point is however, that the powers reserved to the university council could be utilized to achieve precisely that objective should the need arise. And of course, as social, political and economic strife has intensified, the government has not hesitated to employ such powers, even while making bold claims that it supports the movement and independence of students.

Perhaps the most striking reflection of dictatorial power embodied in the 1970 Act, is the provision that made the President of the Republic, automatic Chancellor of the University. The position is not merely ceremonial, even though one of the main functions of the office is to confer degrees, at which point, the opportunity is taken to espouse on government achievements *vis a vis* higher education in general and the university in particular. It also explains why and how the conferment of honorary degrees otherwise an academic function - can assume manifestly political overtones. But most im-

portantly, it marks out the university as a subsidiary of the government (*de facto* and *de jure*) and places a check on the freedom of expression of both staff and students not to mention the control of the Administration. This fact is best illustrated by the intervention of the Chancellor in virtually every major crisis that affects the university. Despite protestations to the contrary, it is in the role of Head of State that the Chancellor reaches any major decision over the university.

Further demonstration of this point is found in section 78 of the 1970 Act, which governs the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor and his/her Deputy. Under the section, the VC is appointed by the President (not the Chancellor) "on such terms and conditions and for such period as the President (once again) may determine". This was no draftsman mistake. The VC is appointed by the President *qua* President, and not as Chancellor of the University. Thus an office which should be primarily academic and professional, is made highly political. Once again the political nexus between state and university is manifest. This link is demonstrated in several other forms. First, the VC has no fixed tenure of office, neither is there provision made for his/her removal other than by the President. This has led to a situation where Vice Chancellors have been shy to adopt positions that may not sit well with the government, and to wait in trepidation whenever a crisis erupts on campus. At the same time, within the context of the campus itself, the VC is a power unto him/herself and there exist virtually no checks and balances to curtail the possible abuse of power. All in all, the situation fostered by the 1970 Act is far from being satisfactory. Before considering the contemporary situation, it is necessary to look at the 1975 decree which amended the 1970 Act.

#### **B. The Makerere University, Kampala Act (Amendment) Decree, 1975**

From a legal perspective, the decree which amended the 1970 Act is an interesting and informative example of the fascist ideology of law that governed Ugandan legislation during the period of military rule (Ghai, 1986). Thus, while it appeared to lessen the direct control of the state over the institution, in one and the same motion, it curtailed student and staff organization and representation. This phenomenon can be described as the "Jekyll and Hyde" syndrome which found expression in many of the autocratic decrees of the era (Oloka-Onyango, 1988: at 99-101 and 115-123).

The apparent lessening in state control was manifest in the amendments the decree made to the powers of the Minister. In section 5, concerning the establishment of constituent colleges, this had to be done "after consultation with the Council and the Senate". Section 7.4 provided for consultation with the chairman of the Council in the making of recommendations to the President on the appointment of a member of staff to act as Vice Chancellor. The

amended section 8.2 still provided for the appointment of the Secretary and Registrar by the Minister, but "acting on the advice of the Appointments Board on such terms and conditions as the Minister may determine". Similar amendments were made to sections 12.1 (concerning the appointment of Faculty Deans) and 12.2 (relating to the appointment of Professors and Directors).

The Jekyll and Hyde syndrome is manifest in the amendment to Section 22 concerning the constitution and powers of the Appointments Board. The new section vested the Board with the responsibility "... except as otherwise provided... for the appointment, promotion, removal from service and discipline of all officers of the University". Here, the exception in fact defeated the rule as the power over appointments and dismissals of senior academic and administrative staff remained vested either in the President, the Chancellor or the Minister. Furthermore, the nine members of the Board were still to be appointed by the Chancellor, with no representation coming from within the university.

The overtly fascist ideology of the Amin regime inevitably found its way into the decree. First, it deleted reference in section 9 of the Act (concerning membership of Council) to "two members of the academic staff (elected by the Academic Staff Association)" and substituted instead "two members of staff elected from amongst themselves jointly by the academic staff and the senior administrative staff." The effect of this amendment was twofold. It made legal the previous outlawing of the Academic Staff Association, on the grounds that the Association was engaged in politically divisive activities. Furthermore, it combined the representation of the academic staff with that of the senior administrative staff, thereby reducing such representation to an even more miniscule figure than before. In essence, the decree confirmed the prevailing government attitude that academic freedom was a privilege and not a right. The same perspective was also apparent in the amendment to section 16 (concerning the membership of the Senate) which deleted reference to student representatives and further deleted the word "association" from the provision governing the two members elected by academic staff.

To cap it all, the Minister's general powers of direction were greatly strengthened by the amended section 35, which now specifies that the Minister may ".... give directions *on any matter* to a University authority as to the exercise of any powers and the performance of *any* functions under this Act, and the authority *shall* comply with such directions" (emphasis added).

The crucial point to appreciate from all foregoing, is the nature of socioeconomic and political conditions prevailing in Uganda at the time. Politically, it was impossible to challenge the authority of the state and one did so at his own peril. Secondly, formal structures of student and staff organizations were outlawed leaving no avenue for the articulation or communication of any grievances that would arise. The 1976 charge on the cam-

pus by Armored troops made this point abundantly clear (Mamdani, 1982). Finally, even though the power of the state had been greatly strengthened under the law, scant attention was paid by the state to legal niceties - total power devolved from the State, epitomized in Idi Amin and his Lieutenants. This then was the fascist ideology of law, which produced a deep-rooted disdain for the law, a disdain which unfortunately prevailed up to the present time.

We now proceed to the conclusion of our discussion with an overview of the current situation regarding the legal control of Makerere.

### **The Legal Control of Makerere Today: Drawn Swords and Democratic Struggles**

We need not recount the circumstances under which the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power or indeed the social and economic conditions that it inherited (Oloka-Onyango, 1989). All of these, including the prevailing political atmosphere, greatly impacted on the crisis that engulfs Makerere today. Seen in purely legal terms, the struggle is one for law reform - a reform that is both comprehensive and extensive. In a wider social context, the struggle between the state and Makerere represents part of a movement for a greater and more democratic freedom for the institutions that govern civil life in Uganda (Mamdani, 1989). In particular, it represents the quest for a solid guarantee of the protection of social, economic and political freedoms and rights. Thus an examination of the legal control of Makerere today must consider both the purely legal issues that arise, and the wider context within which they operate.

It is important to note from the outset that despite the fact that the NRM government has made no legislative reform of the law governing Makerere, its actions and policies have produced the most engaging debate over the issue: who is to control Makerere, and *how* is that control to be exercised? To its credit, the NRM initially turned a blind eye to the more outrageous controls introduced by the 1975 decree, including the banning of the Staff Association - Makerere University Staff Association (MUASA), and the issue of student representation on the University Council. A number of senior academic posts (such as Deans and Heads of Departments) are now elective, following reforms introduced within the university. That non-chalance nevertheless ceased when staff and students challenged the Government on fundamental issues relating to governance and the economy. This concluding note expounds on the trends this debate has taken so far and articulates a number of conclusions about its possible future direction.

#### **A. The NRM Policy on Higher Education**

The NRM/Makerere confrontation over the control of the institution though of fairly recent vintage, has its roots in the global economic and political crisis that afflicts third world countries as a whole, and the issue of tertiary



education in particular (cf. Bako, 1990). The situation that exists in underdeveloped countries is best articulated by the 1981 World Bank report on the crisis in sub-Saharan Africa (IBRD, 1981). The other leg of the confrontation can be found in the structural adjustment programs that are everywhere being implemented with scant regard to the socially adverse ramifications that will obviously ensue (Onimode, B, 1989). Specifically in relation to tertiary education, the World Bank report adopts the position that this is a luxury that countries like Uganda can ill afford: attention must be paid elsewhere, such as to crop production and the boost of exports. Tertiary education, to borrow a phrase, is not a priority (IBRD, 1981: 82 ff.).

This is an old World Bank theme that has found ramification throughout its various activities. Indeed, in a specific report on Education in sub-Saharan Africa, the Bank says:

*The conclusion is harsh and inescapable: to meet minimally acceptable targets for coverage and quality of lower levels of education in most [African] countries, the share of stagnant public expenditures devoted to tertiary education cannot expand further and in some cases may have to contract. Savings must be sought at this level from improvements in efficiency, increase in private contributions, and constraints on the growth of output (IBRD, 1988: 69).*

Within the context of Uganda, this position can be found in numerous policy statements and especially, in the Report of the Education Policy Review Commission, published in January, 1989. While the report gives fairly comprehensive and reasonable directions about the restructuring of tertiary education along lines that do not necessarily tally with those stipulated by the World Bank, the one recommendation that has fueled the present crisis relates to the issue of "cost-sharing". In the words of the Report:

*Students and their parents should assume full responsibility for meeting all noninstructional expenses such as the cost of transportation to and from their homes, pocket moneys, feeding and dependent allowance. (Education Review Commission, 1989: 23).*

Seen in isolation, this recommendation may not, at first glance, appear deleterious. It is the government's response to it that brings into bold relief the subject matter of this paper: *the legal control of Makerere and the implications of that control in terms of academic freedom and democratic modes of operation*. Indeed, it is a mark of the disdain for law, which we referred to earlier, that the Report makes absolutely no mention of the law or of legal issues.

In an over-zealous effort to do the master's bidding, the government issued a statement eliminating virtually all students' allowances, most prominent among them being that relating to books and stationery. In its

stead, the government promised a "book-bank" which would operate in the form of a library - books being lent out at the beginning of the year and returned at the end. It is the failure to satisfactorily implement the bank or to restore the allowances which led to the strike that culminated in the closure of the university on November 20, 1989.

A number of observations can be made on the foregoing, especially in terms of the issue of legal control. First is the fact that no consultations preceded the government directive, either with the academic or administrative staff, or more importantly, with the students. Second, the crisis ran the gamut of hierarchical control - commencing at the V C and moving up, through the Ministers of Education, to the President/Chancellor himself. All of this, one may argue, is in accordance with the law as it exists. There are no provisions in the law governing Makerere that provide for consultations. However, neither does the law provide for the arbitrary and unilateral closure of the university - the final action of the government. Most interesting of all is the action which followed the closure, both in terms of the legal issues raised and the wider political and social context.

First was the inevitable threats and reprimands of the students for being "arrogant and unreasonable". Second was the declaration of the intent to restructure the whole administration of the university. But, most important was the action taken by the University Council concerning the strike. In a meeting which barred student representatives from participation, the Council established an ad hoc committee to consider what measures needed to be taken to address the problem of the strike. The reason given for the exclusion of students was that the university was closed. Students thus had no *locus standi*. While that action was quite legal, it was manifestly undemocratic.

The formation and constitution of the *Ad hoc* committee illustrated the disciplinary and dictatorial mood that surrounded Council deliberations on the issue. Even though the legal advisor to the students' guild sat on the committee, this cannot be considered to be an adequate or full representation of the students in deliberations that would affect them most deeply. It was a classic case of condemning the accused without giving him/her the opportunity to be heard! The recommendations of the *ad hoc* committee were draconian, to say the least. Among them were included measures to ensure the more effective enforcement of the code of conduct governing students: increased control over the student guild by the university administration, and the promulgation of a host of conditions for re-admission to be signed by the student, his/her parent or guardian and the local chairman of the Resistance (Village) Committee (Level 1). The *ad hoc* committee also suspended the guild constitution and imposed a new constitution (dubbed the "Pigeonhole" constitution by students), that severely curtailed the students' rights of assembly and expression.

These measures temporarily abated the crisis. However, almost from the start of the new academic year in October, 1990, the tension resurfaced. The Student' Guild rejected the new constitution imposed by the University Council and were further chagrined by a government declaration that the withdrawal of allowances was not debatable. In response, a boycott of classes was declared and a call made for a democratic discussion of all issues affecting the university. Ten days later, the government despatched 200 troops from the Mobile Police Patrol Unit (MPPU) - a paramilitary wing of the Police force. In the attempt to disperse a student assembly, two students were shot dead in cold blood.

#### **Conclusion: The Postmortem**

The preceding examination enables us to return to a number of questions raised by the phenomenon of legal control as it has been played out in the Makerere setting, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. First, why the necessity for legal control? Second, why the autocratic and often draconian character of those controls? Finally, do such controls work?

At a symposium on Academic Freedom held in Kampala in November 1990, many of these questions seriously taxed the delegates. The overwhelming conclusion was that to the extent that such controls must exist, they must be premised on the basis of dialogue and democratic practice. The removal of rights of association and assembly to students and staff, the dictatorial control exercised by the University Council and the inordinate emphasis on "discipline" serve to heighten the undemocratic nature of the legal controls in existence. Of particular concern was the deployment of Armed Personnel on university campuses - the consequences of which were so disastrous at Makerere (CODESRIA, 1991, especially The Kampala Declaration).

The above notwithstanding, legal controls exist in order that the state can ensure that tertiary education remains true to the task of supplying academic and practical direction and appropriate research for the "developmental" needs of the nation. The draconian aspect of such laws enter the picture in the wake of political and social crises and where the university assumes the posture of predominant critic of the state. This was true of the colonial era, and is all the more so in the era of neocolonialism. Unfortunately, such a perception of the university and the consequent measures imposed to ensure that it is controlled, can only have a diverse effect. This is because the most fundamental of the aspects of university activity is academic freedom and autonomy. The legal controls in place at institutions like Makerere are an attempt by the state to both have the cake and to eat it, simply because, since the state "pays the piper", the piper must play the tune of the state.

The ultimate conclusion is that the draconian laws in place at tertiary institutions cannot work, if the objective is to secure the acquiescence of the

university in the operation of the neocolonial state. Nothing short of the transformation of the character of the neocolonial state will lead to the positive transformation of the society over which it governs. Until African states realize that the solution to the African crisis lies in *collective* and *democratic* methods of collaboration, legal controls, especially draconian ones, can never solve the crisis.

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# Inertia in African Public Administration: An Examination of Some Causes and Remedies

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**Résumé:** *Les fonctions croissantes de l'Etat moderne ainsi que le changement d'orientation intervenu dans son rôle par le passage d'institution purement régulatrice du maintien de l'ordre et de la loi à celui d'agent du développement socio-économique requièrent une fonction publique dynamique. Cependant, en raison d'un certain nombre d'obstacles, les bureaucraties publiques des pays africains n'ont pas pu satisfaire adéquatement les exigences de l'évolution économique et technologique rapide de leur environnement. L'un des obstacles les plus difficiles à surmonter est l'inertie qui peut être entraînée par plusieurs facteurs dont la taille de la fonction publique, une centralisation excessive de l'autorité de décision, une délégation de pouvoir et de responsabilité inappropriée, une adhésion rigide aux règlements et procédures, l'attitude au travail, l'autorité des fonctionnaires, un personnel pas suffisamment qualifié et l'environnement politique et constitutionnel. Au-delà des problèmes structurels, les éléments qui méritent une attention particulière sont ceux du moral bas et du manque de motivation de la direction et du personnel des organisations publiques. Les causes principales de la détérioration avancée du moral, de l'efficacité et de la discipline des fonctionnaires sont les suivantes : taux très bas des salaires, manque d'autres motivations, ainsi que la politisation de la fonction publique dans laquelle la promotion ne se fait pas sur la base de l'ancienneté ou du mérite mais plutôt sur des bases politiques. Les problèmes du sous-paiement ont été aggravés par les dévaluations massives entraînées par des programmes d'ajustement structurel.*

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## Introduction

All over the world, Governments have extended the scope of their activities beyond the traditional tasks of defence, maintenance of law and order and the collection of taxes. Robson has remarked that:

*The increased functions of the state are one of the most commonplace facts of modern political history. Every textbook on government emphasizes the vast growth in the duties and responsibilities of public authorities today compared with a century ago.<sup>1</sup>*

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*Africa Development Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1992, pp. 67-80*

1 W A Robson, 'Recent Trends in Public Administration' in W A Robson (ed.) *The Civil Services in Britain and France*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1956, p.48.

After attaining independence, many new African States realized that political independence, though laudable, is not adequate to promote economic and social development. To enhance their welfare objectives, many governments of the new states have created an environment quite conducive to a widespread social and economic well-being of their citizens. Educational institutions and hospitals have been established; basic infrastructure such as water, roads, telephone networks, railways, electricity and heavy-capital demanding projects have been undertaken; and several public enterprises, boards and other agencies have also been established to accelerate the pace of socioeconomic development.

However, in the pursuit of their multiple goals and aspirations, and in the fulfillment of their multifaceted functions, these public organizations face several administrative difficulties which call for reform. It is these problems which have made the public sector in most African countries ineffective, inefficient and unresponsive to the changing needs of the society. One of the most intractable of such obstacles is inertia. This may be defined as the combination of forces that tend to generate resistance to change and which reduces the ability and capacity of organizations to be flexible, adaptable and productive whether in the form of services or goods. This paper seeks to examine some of the causes of inertia in African Public Administration and also suggest possible solutions which will help ameliorate the business of the public bureaucracy.

### ***Causes of Inertia***

Any diagnosis of the organizational framework in which public servants operate should begin with Max Weber's model of bureaucracy. For our purposes the key features to note in Weber's ideal bureaucracy are the following: stress on a hierarchical structure of authority each lower office is under the control and supervision of a higher one and the assumption that initiative can come only from above; there is also stress on obedience by subordinates to their superiors: all operations are regulated by a system of rules; bureaucratic authority resides in the office not in the occupant of the offices and the office holder should not misappropriate the resources in the office (i.e official activity must be separated from the private life of the official). While Weber's bureaucratic model was not specifically intended for a single bureaucracy, it has elements that are familiar to all public organizations.

Inertia may be caused by a variety of factors. These include the following: the sheer size of the Civil Service; excessive centralization of decision-making authority; inadequate delegation of authority and responsibility; rigid adherence to rules and procedures; attitudes to work and authority of civil servants; inadequacy of qualified personnel; the political and constitutional environment of public sector which may not be conducive to risk taking and others.

***The Sheer Size of the Civil Service***

The public bureaucracy, or what is commonly referred to as the Civil Service, is the biggest organization in many countries. As a complex organization, it consists of Ministries, each of which is subdivided into several departments and divisions. Currently, the Ghana Civil Service for instance, comprises of eighteen ministries. The heavy volume of work handled by a large staff in these ministries results in the introduction of standardized procedures which normally become the subject of regulations and rules. Thus the sheer size and complexity of the Civil Service makes it difficult for it to operate with the speed which has characterized small organizations. One should not forget that big creatures normally move slowly.

***Excessive Centralization of Decision-Making Authority***

An important factor, which has been of much public concern, appears to be inordinate delays in rendering service to members of the public and in prosecuting government business. Delays can be attributed to the structure and procedures of the Civil Service. The problem of structure may stem from excessive centralization of decision-making authority in central ministries in the national capital. Due to the highly centralized bureaucratic structure, there is a lack of co-ordination of policies among departments as well as lack of dissemination of information for effective decision-making. The Ministers/Commissioners and the top central ministry officials are hard-pressed to cope with the volumes of work and range of decisions they have to make. The overall effect is procrastination.

Centralization of the machinery of government stifles prompt execution of several rural development programmes because regional and district officers lack sufficient discretionary authority to take decisions. Almost all major development decisions affecting local issues have to be taken in the national capital. This, usually, entails loss of precious time due to ineffective and poor communication networks - several district headquarters do not have telephone networks and officers have to rely on correspondence. The postal system also, tends to be unreliable because many postal vehicles frequently break down; letters take a long time to reach their destination. This delay, in some cases, throws many programmes and projects, whose implementation depend on the season, out of gear. Moreover, decisions taken far away from the scene of action tend to be deficient because they are divorced from the local realities. Consequently, local initiative, enthusiasm and aspirations are suppressed, if not killed. If on the other hand, depending on the urgency of the issue, the district departmental head takes a unilateral



decision without reference to his immediate boss - the regional head of department - he will be queried.<sup>2</sup>

In Ghana for instance, despite the Government's commitment to decentralization, there are still some elements of centralization in the public bureaucracy. Traces of centralization can be seen in the payment of annual increments, leave claims and the omission of names on payment vouchers. The payment of annual leave bonus sometimes involves the beneficiary travelling to Accra, national capital and location of the Accountant-General's Department in order to expedite action on the processing of his payment forms. Similarly, the omission of names on payment vouchers also means going from the remotest part of the country to Accra to clarify the issue with the Accountant-General's Department; correspondence from both regional and district departmental heads do not suffice to avoid making the trip to the national capital.<sup>3</sup> The cost of transportation and hotel accommodation may, at times, not make the journey worthwhile.

#### *Inadequate Delegation of Authority and Responsibility*

Another cause of inertia which is closely related to the problem of excessive centralization is inadequate delegation of authority and responsibility by superior officers to their subordinates. That delegation of authority is of much practical significance in administration cannot be disputed. Delegation enables the superior officers to concentrate on the more important tasks while giving the subordinates an opportunity to take initiatives as well as demonstrate their capabilities. It also saves time and allows the utilization of local knowledge and talent. Thus the delegation process can provide a basis for making reliable performance appraisals and ensuring that decision-making is brought as close as possible to the scene of action.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, available evidence indicates that senior public officials are reluctant to delegate authority due to a variety of reasons. An important issue is the habits and ingrained attitudes of central ministry officials and their lack of confidence in the quality and capabilities of their subordinates, especially the field staff. Ironically, both the regional and district departmental heads were promoted to their present status after a thorough assessment of their experience and competence by central ministry officials; yet there is an increasing tendency, on the part of the latter, even though they posted these officers to head the regions, provinces and districts, to look down on them.

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2 Interview with district government officials at Ejisu-Juaben and Bosomtwe and Atwima Districts in Ghana respectively.

3 *Ibid.*

4 See K A Owusu-Ansah, 'Possible Areas and Strategy for Administrative Reform in the Ghana Civil Service' *Greenhill Journal of Administration*, Vol.1, No.1, April-June 1974, pp. 12-14.

Other factors for failure of the senior officers to delegate authority to their subordinates include the fear of losing their positions to well groomed and brilliant subordinates, the desire to create an impression of indispensability and the latter's inexperience and lack of self-confidence.

In addition, in the case of decentralized programmes, central ministry officials are quite often reluctant to relinquish some of their powers and functions to decentralized departments because the programmes are seen by them as a device for curtailing their powers and influence. They are therefore not committed to the success of these programmes. Thus, the decentralization programmes of several African Governments suffer from a fundamental defect, in that, the very people who are to implement the programmes, and whose attitudes will determine their success or failure, are, at the outset, opposed to them, due to the loss of their privileges entailed in an effective implementation.

There is also the problem of effective supervision and control in the Civil Service. In order to encourage the subordinate to feel at ease in this dependency and to perform well, the superior should make available to him the organization's objectives, policies, rules and regulations and the standards expected of him. This is virtually absent in most Civil Service departments and agencies. As a result of the lack of clearly defined responsibilities and the hoarding of information, many junior civil servants are always naive, due to ignorance, and unable to perform well. This ignorance and the prevailing tendency on the part of civil servants to refer issues upwards for clarification cause delay. Shifting of responsibility has become common; the safest position to avoid mistakes is not to act. This also causes delay.

#### ***Rigid Adherence to Rules and Procedures***

An important goal of the Civil Service is to give the public a service which is safe and sure, but swift and cheap. This necessitates caution and slow-moving in the activities of civil servants. Rules and regulations are rigidly adhered to in the interest of impersonal and impartial behaviour, but lack of imaginations, discretion and initiative on the part of public officials and the exercise of caution results in red tapism. According to Juran, red tapism may be defined as "delay, buck-passing, pigeon-holing, indecision and other phenomena which contribute to, and end in the action".<sup>5</sup> Red tapism contributes to inertia in administration. Thus an aspect of operation that has often been denounced for delay in the Civil Service is the body of standing operating procedures popularly called "General Orders". The Daily Graphic in Ghana in an editorial comment, reiterated public condemnation of the cumbersome Civil Service procedures as follows:

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5 B M Juran, *Bureaucracy, A Challenge to Better Management*, New York, 1944, p.38.

*Much of the red tapism and the civil servants' much condemned inefficiency can be traced to the unrealistic and unnecessarily rigid orders which make it virtually impossible for the organization to function as it should and yield the desired results.<sup>6</sup>*

It is true that the delay may simply be the legitimate time needed by a Civil Service department or a public organization to perform its official work. It should also not be forgotten that certain services undertaken by some public institutions and agencies by their very nature are too complex and may require reference to several different departments for their proper performance. However, what is disturbing is not the existence of the rules, but the rigidity with which they are adhered to without regard to variations in circumstances. Besides, some of these rules and procedures are outmoded. Most African countries have not reviewed their General Orders and Civil Service codes since independence. In fact, Ghana is currently reviewing its General Orders and Civil Service Code - after a period of thirty years. There is resort to too much paper work involving, not necessarily policy issues, but even routine matters. As pointed out by Aryeh Globerson:

*An exaggeratedly legalistic approach leads to excessive correspondence and paperwork, including a multiplicity of authorizations and signatures. All this may be justified when matters of principle are involved, but it is very doubtful whether it serves any useful purpose when applied to routine matters where fixed procedures suffice.<sup>7</sup>*

The cumbersome operating procedures stem partly from the hierarchic nature and structure of the civil service and also from the accountability which civil servants are liable. Hierarchical routing of correspondence and other communications delay decision-making. Documents and files have to follow a prescribed series of steps through administrative layers. Thus one of the major impediments to quick action can be traced to excessive layering in the central ministries. Files move from one office to another, and since most of these files are not classified according to importance, many matters cannot be settled without reference to the Permanent Secretary himself. Much of the time of senior officials is devoted to the review of papers and files received from subordinates. These are then passed on to still higher officers.<sup>8</sup> According to Fainsod "... Procedural slavishness and dilatory

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6 *Daily Graphics*, 2 January 1974.

7 Aryeh Globerson, 'Problems of Public Administration in West African Countries', *Public Administration in Israel and Abroad*, Jerusalem, 1964, p. 92.

8 Albert Waterston, 'Administrative Obstacles to Planning', *Economia Latina Americana*, Vol.1, No.3, July 1964, p.318.

tactics at lower levels have created bottlenecks which only heroic action can break".<sup>9</sup>

A typical cause of unjustified delay is the processing of simple routine matters through an excessively cumbersome procedure. Examples are money claims such as insurance, social security, bank loans against large organizations, licence applications and passport issues. Contractors and private businessmen face several handicaps because of rigidly followed rules and regulations. To secure approval for industrial or import licenses, a businessman is often required to fill out numerous forms, visit several government offices in the national capital and wait outside government offices for long periods.

A related cause of delay in the Civil Service is the devotion to precedents. Due to considerable pressure exerted by the public, administrators find it more convenient to solve problems in a manner that has been tried before, rather than venture into the unknown. Precedents play a major role in decision-making in the Civil Service. A precedent is a previous decision or case taken as an example for subsequent cases or for supporting similar acts. The basic rationale behind the idea of precedents is not only to avoid the possibility of a central government department or agency giving different decisions at different times in similar cases, but also to facilitate the expeditious disposal of similar cases in future. In effect, the constant reference to precedents will help achieve uniformity and also preserve the Civil Service tradition of fairness and impartiality. However, an inherent major weakness is that precedent usually makes little or no allowance for cases of unusual circumstances which have no bearing on current situation. In a situation where precedent is lacking, the official will refer the matter to his superior, and if the case is unusually difficult, it may slowly travel along the administrative chain of responsibility until a decision is made at the top level, after an exasperating time lag.

#### ***Attitudes to Work and Authority of Civil Servants***

Besides the structural and procedural problems of the Civil Service, there are attitudinal problems that have, not only called for constant public comment, but also created room for delay. The attitudes to work and authority of most public servants deserve much to be desired. Due to their apathetic attitudes, they do not apply themselves to work as much as they should. An editorial in the *Ghanaian Times* opined:

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9 Merle Fainsod, 'The Structure of Development Administration', in Swerdlow I (ed.) *Development Administrations - Concepts and Problems*, Syracuse University Press, 1963, p.11.

*... by every yardsticks the attitude to work of the civil servant of today has become one of the most serious problems which must be counted among those that call for priority treatment.*<sup>10</sup>

While it is fair to accept that the attitudes to work of quit a number of public servants are poor, one must also not lose sight of the factors which have created this situation. Their purchasing powers, their sense of motivation in relation to the incentives that are given them and their patterns of living are important issues that deserve attention in any critical analysis of administrative problems of the Civil Service. Low morale and lack of motivation on the part of both the management and staff of public organizations may stem from several causes. It may be due to the politicization of the Civil Service in order to make it politically responsive to the aspirations of the regime. When public office is treated as a legitimate object of spoils, when promotion is not based entirely on seniority or merit but rather on political considerations - this leads to a sharp deterioration of the morale, efficiency and discipline of civil servants.

Another cause of low morale is that civil servants are grossly under remunerated. Besides, they lack other forms of incentives and welfare programmes. Under these circumstances, many civil servants are compelled to supplement their salaries by engaging in business or accepting other employment which results in the neglect of their official duties. In some African countries, especially those which have embarked upon International Monetary Fund/World Bank inspired Structural Adjustment Programmes, currencies have been devalued massively. Consequently, inflation is too high and the minimum wages are so low that they can not even buy a kilo of meat. The civil servants are therefore dissatisfied with their poor incentives and this is manifested in the widespread lack of concern for the nation and the masses where personal interests are involved. This lack of concern for the nation finds expression in the careless manner in which some civil servants use public or government property and in the desire to grab, at the expense of the state. Civil servants are so demoralized that they are unlikely to identify the objectives of the Civil Service/Organization with their own aspirations. This situation is further exacerbated when workers either have no access to the decision-making process or channels for articulating their needs and points of view.

#### ***Inadequacy of Qualified Personnel***

Inertia may be caused by shortage of qualified personnel. The tremendous expansion in the functions of Government over the past four decades has not

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10 Ghanaian Times, 4 September, 1973.

been matched by a corresponding increase in the availability of qualified personnel. Our educational institutions have been unable to produce enough qualified personnel in the numbers and with the speed demanded by the economic, social and political development of the African countries. Consequently, the few trained personnel find themselves so heavily loaded with responsibilities that their effectiveness is dissipated. Even in some government departments it is difficult to get staff to carry out the prescribed routine operations on documents.

In Ghana for instance since 1983, the central government, has embarked on an Economic Recovery Programme with substantial financial support from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. As part of this programme 32,542 personnel have been retrenched in the Civil Service and the Ghana Education Service over the period 1987-1989 and a total of C5.5 billion has been paid out in compensation packages.<sup>11</sup> Since 1985, there has been an embargo on the recruitment of new staff. This has exacerbated the acute personnel problems facing ministries and departments. In the course of a fieldwork conducted in 1988, the author of this article discovered in Ejisu-Juaben and Bosomtwe districts in Ghana that many decentralized departments such as Social Welfare, Information and Community Development, did not have any supporting staff - messengers, clerical officers, typists etc. Undoubtedly, this situation makes field administration virtually impossible in that at times offices had to be closed in the absence of the only senior officer manning the whole district department. The shortage of basic office skills hampers the expeditious disposal of public businesses. While these shortcomings cannot be easily remedied, more attention to these lower level administrative problems may well help break the bottlenecks which frustrate administrators.

***The Political and Constitutional Environment of Public Sector not Conducive to Risk-taking***

The political and constitutional framework within which public administration, especially the public service, operates is not conducive to creativity. Creativity involves risk-taking - something which is not appreciated in the public sector. A commercial firm, on the other hand can take a risk because if a private firm makes a mistake no great harm is done to the country at large. In fact, its harmful repercussions are localized. But in the case of a mistake by the public service the situation assumes a different dimension because the whole country may be affected. The public sector deals with people's lives, ambitions and aspirations. Caution is certainly called for in handling public business, especially in the area of health and

11 See, 'C5.5 Billion Paid Out to Redeployees in Civil and Education Services' (No author indicated) in *Ghana Civil Service Journal*, No.1, 1990, p.27.

food, where the slightest mistake or omission might result in the administration of dangerous drugs to the public. Moreover, public servants are quite often subject to public scrutiny and question. The passion for accountability fosters legalism and delay. Niskanen observed this fact when he expressed that: It has long been observed that legislators, the press, and political scientists appear to be more interested in how honestly our public activities are conducted than on how well they are conducted".<sup>12</sup>

Such attitudes, it is argued, have made public servants cautious. To them the successful career will be one without mistakes: not one noted for innovation. This is what Painter has referred to as 'maintenance values' which can be broadly described as 'keeping your nose clean'.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Other Factors***

Inertia in administration can be caused by the unwillingness to alter a programme in which a government organization has invested substantial financial and human resources including equipment. For example, after the Ghana Government had spent a great deal of money on equipment, seminars and workshops to facilitate the implementation of its educational reform the Junior Secondary School Programme - it resisted any efforts by parents, the National Union of Ghanaian students (NUGS) and other pressure groups, to suggest alternative educational programmes.

Decision-making through the committee system in administration despite its alleged advantages, can sometimes lead to inertia. Rather than save time, committees may actually waste it by going into excessive detail and by delaying decisions while waiting for another committee to make a decision which affects its work. At times, the sheer size of some committees and their cumbersome procedures impede on prompt decisions being taken on vital issues. In fact some of these committees are not necessarily meant for taking important decisions but avoiding them. Walter Sharp argues that public administration in the United Arab Republic (UAR) is:

*cluttered with special committees and councils for a variety of purposes.... (These Committees often) reflect a desire to sidetrack knotty problems, or to remove the onus for difficult decisions from a single official to a group...<sup>14</sup>*

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12 Niskanen, W, *Bureaucracy and Representative Government*, New York, Aldine-Atherton, 1917, p. 192.

13 Martin Painter, 'Administrative Change and Reforms', in Brian Galligan (ed), *Australian State Politics*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1986, p. 203.

14 Walter R Sharp, 'Bureaucracy and Politics: Egyptian Model' in Siffin W J (ed), *Towards a Comparative study of Public Administration*, Indiana University Press, 1957, p. 165.

Political instability also causes delays in administration. Experience has shown that in those African countries which have witnessed several military interventions, such as Ghana and Nigeria, continuity in administration has been undermined. This has retarded progress in the implementation of several development projects. A new government assumes office and blames the previous regime for adopting policies and programmes not in the interest of the people. In order to legitimize its power base, the succeeding regime abandons some of the old programmes and projects of its predecessor without any meticulous evaluation of their viability, and embarks on its own objectives and priorities. For political reasons, it may take a longer period before any consideration can be given to the revitalization of such abandoned projects. This attitude has retarded the development of some coup-infested African countries and underlines the fragility of the authoritarian system. Due to the frequency of coups, some African countries have not been able to build up any stable institutions capable of formulating any long-term plans.

### **Possible Solutions**

This section discusses solutions to some of the problems of inertia which have been the subject matter of the preceding section. The first major remedy to overcome the problems of excessive centralization of decision-making authority is decentralization. Decentralization entails the removal of functions from the centre, this may be either functional or geographical. Functional decentralization refers to the transfer of authority to perform specific tasks or activities to specialized organizations that operate nationally. Examples are the creation of public enterprises to build and maintain utilities and field offices within national ministries to deal with health care or road construction. Geographical decentralization, on the other hand, involves both processes of deconcentration (i.e. delegation to field offices) or devolution (i.e. to local authorities or other local bodies).

As the latest fashion in development administration, decentralization has a number of appeals. It ensures that the public business will be dealt with more expeditiously; various types of procrastination and red tape will be eliminated by doing away with the requirement of frequent reference to central authorities before action can be taken in the field. Ministers/Commissioners and the national ministries will be relieved of several daily actions most of which will in any case be governed by established precedents. To senior managers in other public organizations, decentralization is also valuable because it tends to ease the burden of detail that weighs on them and it enables them devote more time to major problems.

Decentralization requires delegation of a large amount of discretionary authority and allocation of responsibility. This in turn increases the opportunities for initiative. There is no better technique of training young officers



for higher duties than by letting them make decisions at their own level. Decentralization also facilitates increased knowledge of and sensitivity to local problems and needs, because of closer contact between field officials and local residents. Another argument in favour of decentralization is that if decisions are made by field officers they are more likely to be relevant to local needs and conditions. Local residents are more likely to be seriously committed to development programmes which affect them and will therefore participate actively in implementing them. Moreover, success in fulfilling a community need will encourage people to try to meet others.

However, decentralization programmes in the African countries have recorded more failures than successes due to a variety of reasons. In the past, some of the decentralization programmes were hastily instituted without any careful assessment of the personnel establishment and capacities of the decentralized departments and agencies that would be needed to perform their functions. It was simply assumed that capacity for management existed. These deficiencies adversely affected the implementation of the reforms. Caution and careful planning are called for before governments in the Third World embark on major institutional reforms such as decentralization.

Most of the decentralization programmes failed because of insufficient understanding of the provisions of the reforms and the new roles expected of both councillors and district civil servants. This stemmed from the lack of adequate education on the real meaning and the fundamental philosophy of these reforms. On the 1980 Zambia reforms for instance, Bodemeyer notes that:

*A good deal of conflict and confusion therefore appears to be attributed to the fact that people are expected to work within an organizational model which is basically different from the one they are used to, and nobody has put much efforts into explaining to them the difference.*<sup>15</sup>

Sound decentralization demands a clear enunciation of policy. To this end, it is suggested that legislations dealing with decentralization programmes should be seriously reviewed, paying particular attention to those sections which, through their imprecision, are conducive to role conflict. Similarly, policy statements must be clear as to the type of decentralization envisaged - whether the intention of central government is deconcentration or devolution. The success of decentralization in the Third World countries will depend on the extent to which decentralized departments and agencies

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15 Bodemeyer, R, *Administrative Development: The Effects of Decentralization on District Development in Zambia*, Giesen, Federal Republic of Germany, Centre for Regional Development Research, 1984, p. 66.

receive the political support of the national leadership. Success will also depend on the extent to which district officials help to provide the necessary administrative support for district councillors, thus enabling them to initiate plans for effective local development. Finally, decentralization programmes cannot be implemented without adequate financial and human resources.

The problem of ineffective delegation of authority can be remedied by the education of senior officials to appreciate that sharing responsibility with competent subordinates does not necessarily deprive them of their managerial prerogatives. Counselling and participation of officials in seminars and workshops may further relieve the senior officials of any fear of losing their jobs to their subordinates. The latter's inexperience, lack of self-confidence and other difficulties might be solved through systematic training and counselling programmes. In order to encourage efficiency, realistic targets should be set for workers. However, workers should be involved in this exercise. Their progress can be monitored at mutually agreed stages and by methods familiar to them.

The outmoded and cumbersome procedures, rules and regulations such as the General Orders and the Civil Service Code, should be revised to suit current changes in the machinery of government in particular and the society as a whole. Furthermore, in order to check hoarding of information in the Civil Service and in other public organizations, it is suggested that ministries and departments should prepare handy brochures of only those parts of the General Orders (GOs) and other policies which are relevant to their own operations. These should be distributed to every literate employee of the organization. A clear understanding of the GOs, it is hoped, will increase the flexibility with which the Civil Service and other public agencies cope with their environment.

In order to overcome irresolution, lack of initiative and other tendencies towards inertia, and in order to attract administrators of high calibre, it is suggested that positive efforts should be directed at a system of proper selection, training and promotion of suitable candidates for all levels in the public service. In addition, service, based on merit, must not only be established, but also encouraged. Such a system cannot be effective without adequate facilities for training. Comprehensive training schemes and staff development programmes should therefore be made available to all categories of staff. These may serve the double purpose of improving the performance of the present duties carried out by the trainees and identifying promising candidates for future promotion.

Besides training, any reform programme should also aim at improving the morale in the Civil Service, developing leadership skills, improving *esprit de corps* and above all ensuring that civil servants are paid salaries comparable to other public organizations and also commensurate with their qualifications and output. This will not only remove the tendency among

civil servants to devote less than the full working day to official business because of the need to earn additional income for their sustenance, but will also help to retain staff. The pay system, cost of living and fringe benefits should be reviewed from time to time (in line with changing economic trends). Furthermore, if civil servants are to operate effectively without any anxiety, then, they should be assured of their security of tenure and adequate pension and social security schemes.

Finally, a regular system of transfer of public officials may help to reduce inertia in our administration. If transfers are made at regular intervals they may reduce the tendency of civil servants establishing an informal network of relations, based on vested interests in the status quo at the stations they occupy, for a long time. Such regular transfers, if effectively implemented, will help to reduce the acute problem of personnel shortage which is most felt in the rural areas. Transfers will further ensure a fair distribution of competent officials some of whom are concentrated in the national headquarters and are reluctant to go to the hinterland.

### **Conclusion**

It is evident from the review of some of the principal causes of inertia that it is not only detrimental to the needs of a dynamic administration, but also not conducive to rapid socioeconomic development. By its very nature, inertia breeds stagnation and frustration. Inertia runs counter to reforms aimed at ensuring that organizations are more responsive to changes taking place in their environment. More importantly, inertia in public administration, by slowing down and impeding on the provision of essential services, such as health, is inimical to the interest of the ordinary people, especially the illiterate people in the countryside who have little access to public officials; and who may not have social and political connections and, above all, any money to influence their way through.

Public expectation is for a more dynamic and flexible Civil Service which will be more responsive to technological changes taking place, not only in its environment, but also in its scope and functions and more responsible to the socioeconomic challenges. Thus, if the management technology (i.e the appropriate application of methods, procedures, rules, operations and culture in the civil service) is improved, the major constraints on efficiency and productivity will be removed. Tax payers will then enjoy better services from the Civil Service.

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# Determinants of Entrepreneurship Development in the Urban Informal Sector of Lagos

I Oluranti Ogunrinola\*

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*Résumé: Le développement de l'entreprenariat dans le secteur urbain informel dépend d'un certain nombre de facteurs. Les données collectées à partir de 320 entreprises de confection et de services du secteur informel dans le quartier de Badagry à Lagos montrent que la récession économique actuelle joue un rôle important dans le développement de l'entreprenariat. La culture, le niveau d'éducation ainsi que la réaction des individus par rapport aux facteurs de motivation comme des perspectives de salaires plus élevés et la fierté de détenir une entreprise sont d'autres facteurs entrant en ligne de compte. Ces facteurs ne sont pas indépendants l'un de l'autre mais s'influencent mutuellement. Pendant la période de récession économique, la tendance est au développement du secteur de l'entreprenariat dans le secteur informel à cause de la faible capacité d'absorption du secteur formel et également à cause des compressions et suppressions d'emplois. C'est pourquoi l'objet de toute politique devrait être d'élever les capacités techniques et de gestion des agents du secteur afin d'augmenter les possibilités de génération de revenus et d'emplois.*

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## Introduction

The pioneering works of Callaway (1964, 1973, 1979) on the indigenous enterprises of the urban informal sector have shed some light on the potentials of the sector in terms of skill development and employment generation. Recent primary and secondary school leavers from within the city and their immigrant counterparts who are young and ambitious do not usually get the desired urban formal jobs. This is due partly to the lack of necessary skills, and partly to the low and dwindling absorptive capacity of the urban formal economy. Most of these unemployed youths are however finding means of livelihood in the urban informal sector of the economy as master-craftsmen, among other forms of employment, after a few years of apprenticeship. This development gives rise to the emergence of a class of indigenous entrepreneurs in the urban informal economy.

Unfortunately, however, empirical work on the urban informal sector in Nigeria has not received the adequate attention of researchers. Given its potentials for employment and income opportunities (ILO, 1972; Callaway, op.cit.) outside the formal sector, we feel this should not be so. In a partial attempt to fill the lacuna thus created, we wish to examine the factors that

are responsible for the rise of indigenous entrepreneurs in the craft enterprises of the urban informal sector of Badagry in Lagos State.

Aluko (1966) has shown that the educated are usually not motivated towards indigenous entrepreneurship due to a host of factors identified in his study. We shall examine whether this hypothesis can be sustained as regards entrepreneurship development in the urban informal sector. Other factors, apart from education, affecting entrepreneurship development in the craft enterprises of the urban informal sector will also be examined.

The paper is divided into five sections. Apart from Sections I and V which give the Introduction and Conclusion respectively, the other three parts give the main thrust of the paper. Section II examines the role of entrepreneurs in development processes, Section III looks at the importance of the informal sector in entrepreneurship development while the analysis of our data is presented in Section IV.

### **The Role of Entrepreneurs in the Development Process**

In orthodox economic theory, there is no established theory of the entrepreneur. The reasons for this lie in the simplistic assumption of perfect flow of information needed for decision-making, coupled with a perfect mobility of resources between and within industries. In such an economy, the problem of mobilizing resources and turning them to outputs appears to be a trivial activity (Leibenstein, 1978; Casson, 1982). However, in the real world situation these assumptions do not hold and as such the entrepreneur has been identified as an indispensable factor of production, for instance, he has the critical role of combining other factors of production in the 'right' proportion to produce a given optimal output level.

In Schumpeterian analysis, the entrepreneur is primarily an innovator - one who is the first to make the commercial application of an invention - when he carries out new combinations of factors of production and distribution. Extending Schumpeter's analysis, Leibenstein distinguished two types of entrepreneurial activities: the routine entrepreneurship and the Schumpeterian or 'innovational' entrepreneurship. Both types of entrepreneurs are expected to be 'organizers' of other factors of production. The routine entrepreneur operates in a neo-classical world of perfect information while the innovational entrepreneur operates in the real world situation of market imperfections. As such the entrepreneur in the latter case has to perform the tasks of 'gap-filling' and 'input-competing'. In essence, the thesis Leibenstein is putting forward is nothing more than the risk and uncertainty bearing functions of the innovational entrepreneur in the real world situation, as distinct from the orthodox view of perfect competition. Corroborating Leibenstein's view, Casson (1982) defines an entrepreneur as someone who specializes in taking judgmental decisions about the co-ordination of scarce resources.

Thus, no matter the type of economy under consideration, whether free enterprise or socialist economy, there is a need for an adequate supply of entrepreneurs for economic development and growth. This is because the entrepreneur, through innovations, acts as a catalyst in the development process. Schumpeter identified innovators and imitators in his analysis. These two groups are not mutually exclusive, because an imitator in period 't' can develop into an innovator in period 't = n'; 'n' being some number of years. In developing countries, the entrepreneurs cannot be said to be innovators in the Schumpeterian sense. Low level of technological development in these economies on the one hand, and the openness of these economies to foreign influences on the other, necessitate the adoption of foreign technology. Moreover, since income is low, not all the required capital can be acquired. Therefore, in the developing economies, we can identify the 'imitating-innovators' and the imitators.

To some extent, the former group innovates, but such innovations are in the form of adapting imported technology to resource endowments and needs in their environment. These entrepreneurs have the capacity to search and discover economic opportunities, evaluate them, marshal the financial resources for the enterprise, take ultimate responsibility for management and be the ultimate uncertainty and risk bearers. Moreover, they are able to adapt to changing needs of the urban economy. The dynamism of the economy, in turn, calls forth new types of entrepreneurs from time to time. This is because factors responsible for such changes are constantly at work. Some of such factors responsible for changing needs of urban dwellers include per capita income growth, accumulation of new knowledge, the creation or adoption of new products, and so on.

Adequate adjustments to these needs can only be done by small-scale informal sector entrepreneurs whose small size provides the advantage of quick decision-making. As a result, the speed of adjustment is likely to be faster than that of a typical large scale enterprise that is necessarily bureaucratic. Thus, the informal sector enterprises constitute agents of development in terms of resource use and quick adaptation to meet local needs.

#### **The Informal Sector as a Source of Entrepreneurship Development**

The term 'informal sector' was first used by Hart, K. (1973) in his study of employment opportunities in Ghana. The term has since been popularized by the ILO/UNP's employment mission to Kenya (ILO, 1972). The term was used to describe enterprises that were outside government regulations and which operated outside the incentive systems offered by the government and its other agencies. According to the ILO group, the informal sector is characterized by ease of entry, small-scale and labour-intensive operations, where technology is adapted and skills are acquired outside of the formal

school system but operates in highly competitive labour and product markets.

For the purpose of this analysis, we shall define the informal sector enterprises as enterprises which have the following characteristics: They are outside the organized capital and produce markets and are not registered by the government under the Business Registration Act; paid employment is an exception rather than the rule, and as such, such enterprises employ less than ten workers; production is carried on in semi-permanent places like rented shops, uncompleted buildings, open spaces by the roadside and parts of own-rented accommodation; and finally, the entrepreneur himself is physically involved in the production process.

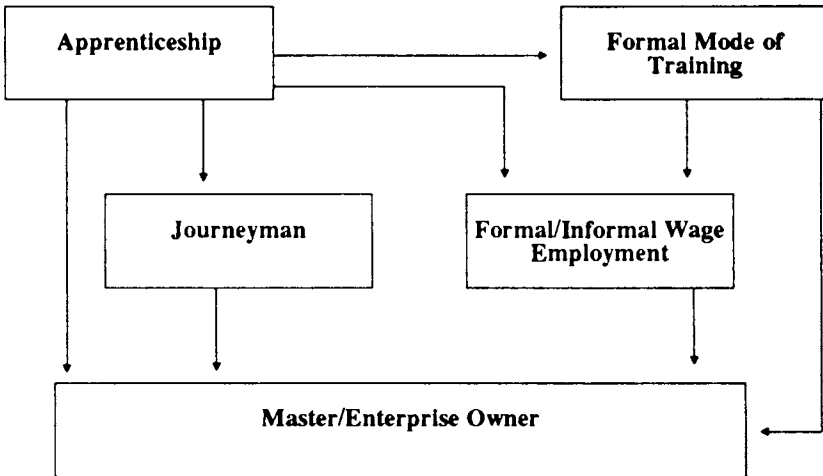
These enterprises have, for long, served as training grounds for young school leavers who are ambitious but have no skill for urban formal sector jobs. In general, operators in the informal sector can be classified into three groups. The first group consists of those born of parents operating in the sector. These may choose to remain or move to the formal sector after having obtained formal education. The second group consists of rural migrants with little or no education. The third group is made up of those from the formal sector. This group of people who would have been otherwise unemployed, thereby constituting a burden on those employed, find their means of livelihood in the informal sector as carpenters, barbers, mechanics, tailors and so on, after a few years of apprenticeship.

Most of these entrants into the urban informal apprenticeship system have an ultimate goal of becoming entrepreneurs after their training period. This goal may be achieved immediately after training, or if unable to set up immediately due to lack of initial capital, a prospective entrepreneur can either take up a paid job or join a master as 'journeyman' until enough capital is made. Thus the apprenticeship system provides the major form of skill development process in the urban informal sector. Another form of skill and entrepreneurship development process is the formal mode of training (which includes those trained on-the-job in the formal sector and/or through the educational system) but this is not very prominent among the informal sector operators.

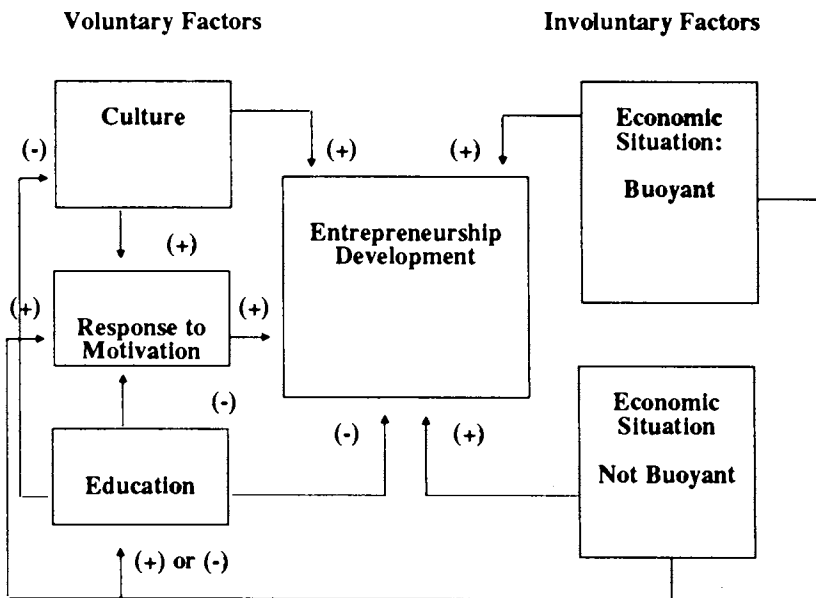
Figure 1 shows the skill and entrepreneurship development process in the urban economy.

Though neglected and un-encouraged by the government, the informal sector has been known to have contributed immensely to skill formation and entrepreneurship in less developed countries (Adeyemi, 1979; Bakht, Z. 1984).

**Figure 1: Skill Formation and Entrepreneurship Development Process in the Urban Informal Sector**



**Figure 2: Factors Influencing Entrepreneurship Development in the Craft Sector**





### **Factors Affecting Entrepreneurship Development and Their Expected Direction of Influence**

Entry into the urban informal sector for the purpose of becoming an entrepreneur can be voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary factors identified are: the influence of culture; educational attainment; and response to motivation.

Involuntary factors identified can be explained in terms of economic situation (i.e whether the economy is buoyant or not). Each of these factors affects entrepreneurship development in the urban informal sector. The line diagram in Figure 2 shows the direction of influence of each of the identified factors on entrepreneurship development and on one another. Each of these factors and the expected outcomes regarding its influence on entrepreneurship development will be discussed.

#### ***Influence of Culture***

Within the traditional family structure, the culture of passing family skills to descendants is widely prevalent. Thus families known for hunting, carving, weaving, blacksmithing, native medicine and so on, are culture-bound to pass such skills to their sons or daughters who will in turn pass them on to their descendants. This cultural influence is prevalent among rural migrants and those that were born in the sector and have low education. *A priori*, we expect cultural influence to have positive, though very low, impact on entrepreneurship development. We expect it to be low because the prevalence of formal education has a negative impact on it, making fathers to prefer their sons/daughters to be well-educated and to go into the formal sector. However, those with little or no education will still be influenced by cultural attitudes towards entrepreneurship in the informal sector.

#### ***Education***

Education enhances the opportunity of an individual to participate in the formal high-productivity sector of the economy. Those with little or no formal education (in an economy where the rate of growth of the labour force exceeds the rate of job creation) are 'bumped' out of the skilled labour market and are forced either to remain in the formal sector as applicants or move into the informal sector. As the educational attainment of applicants increases in the aggregate, employers tend to inflate educational requirements for jobs. This worsens the chance of those that are less educated into being absorbed into the high-wage formal sector. Given this situation, therefore, an applicant with a relatively low education in the urban economy has the following options:

- (i) migrate back to the rural sector and get an agricultural occupation;
- (ii) continue in urban sector job-search until a job is eventually found;

(iii) engage in an urban informal sector activity, either as an employee or an apprentice, with a view to owning an enterprise in the future.

Option (i) is probable but not highly likely as rural immigrants will be prepared to remain in the urban economy at all costs, given the deplorable conditions of rural life (Ogunrinola and Olaloye, 1988). Moreover these people aim at maximizing lifetime utility by participating in the urban economy. Option (ii) is also not likely. This is because urban immigrants are often too poor to afford the luxury of full-time unemployment for a long time (Blaug M. 1974). Option (iii) seems the most likely. Those who intend to own their enterprises in the future, in most cases, get apprenticed to a master for training while a host of others engage in petty trading or obtain informal wage employment.

Thus we feel, *a priori*, that educational attainment and entrepreneurship development in the informal craft sector were inversely related. That is to say, the higher the formal educational attainment of an individual, the less likely it is for that individual to be motivated towards entrepreneurship in the informal sector (Aluko, 1966). This expectation seems reasonable given the kind of education that creates aversion for manual work that is prevalent in developing countries. Moreover, opportunity for entering the desired highly productive and protected formal sector increases with education.

#### ***Response to Motivation***

Motivation towards entrepreneurship may arise from the independence and pride of ownership associated with owning one's enterprise. Also, motivation may result from the possibility of maximizing life-time income stream in urban self-employment. Those that are likely to come under this influence are:

- (i) rural migrants from the traditional sector with little or no education who are not culture-induced, but are probably influenced by the demonstration effect of home-coming of friends and relatives. This class of people had previously migrated to the cities to become enterprise-owners after a few years of apprenticeship;
- (ii) those who initially, with low education, accepted the urban formal wage employment as clerical workers or messengers, but were later trained on-the-job as artisans by their employers;
- (iii) those trained through the apprenticeship system, but had to work as 'journeymen' or get formal wage employment in order to obtain initial capital.

The educational attainment of these classes of people is low and, if given the chance to receive further education, their orientation will shift from informal sector employment to formal wage employment. Hence the negative

relationship postulated between education and response to motivation of becoming an entrepreneur in the urban informal sector (Figure 2).

For those in group (1), their interest was stimulated by those who went into the informal sector before them and who are now 'successful'. Thus, wanting to be like their predecessors, these youths migrate to the urban sector and get apprenticed to masters and, all other things remaining equal, set up their own-enterprises after training. Those in groups (ii) and (iii) are motivated by the 'success' of their counterparts who have set up their own businesses. In most cases, these people maintain a dual role in the urban labour market. That is, they work for wages in a firm or for a master, and engage in part-time jobs after office/workshops hours on the informal sector. Their earnings from such part-time work encourage them to think of setting up on their own and being proud enterprise owners, free from control associated with their current employment. Those that are risk-loving tend to give up current employment, even before reaching retirement age, while those that are risk-averting are not likely to set up their own enterprises until after retirement from current employment.

Thus, we expect a positive relationship between motivations identified and entrepreneurship development.

#### ***Economic Situation***

The economic situation, in terms of whether the economy is buoyant or going through a recession/depression, is expected to be an important factor in entrepreneurship development. In each period of boom and depression, income opportunities open to individual economic units differ at different costs and benefits. During a boom, economic activities are stimulated and employment and income opportunities abound in both the formal and informal sub-sectors of the urban labour market. Urban formal jobs are available for many applicants that are qualified by previous educational attainment. Also, motivation towards indigenous entrepreneurship increases for those not qualified to enter the formal sector jobs.

However, during a recession, formal urban job creation may be zero or even negative. Most migrants to the city are not likely to be employed in the formal sector while there may be retrenchments and lay-offs in the sector. Thus, having no other choice, many of the rural migrants and those unemployed in the city may be forced to be apprenticed to a master in the sector with a view to owning enterprises after training. Thus, during economic recession, we expect, a priori, a strong incentive towards entrepreneurship development in the informal sector.

We want to mention, albeit briefly, that these factors are not totally independent of one another. Rather, they exert influence on each other. As shown in Fig. 2, culture is influenced by education while economic situation exerts an influence on education and response to motivation. The direction

of influence and its possible impact is indicated by arrow and sign (+ or -) respectively.

**Factors Affecting Entrepreneurship Development: The Case of Badagry Local Government**

*Data*

*A priori* knowledge about urban informal enterprises in Nigeria indicates that the average size is small and that they are organized mostly as sole-proprietorship businesses. Performance of entrepreneurial functions in these enterprises is, thus, the prerogative of the proprietors themselves. Hence, for the purpose of this study, we have treated the proprietors as the relevant group of entrepreneurs.

A sample survey of three hundred and twenty (320) enterprises was undertaken in the Badagry local government area between January and June 1988. The survey covered the three administrative divisions (Ajeromi, Ofo, Badagry) of the local government. The study area is a typical urban centre in Nigeria in terms of population and the economic activities and hence, its choice for this study.

Areas of concentration of each class of enterprises were chosen in each administrative division (called wards) and a systematic sampling method was applied in selecting the sampled enterprises. However, where proprietors refused to cooperate with our field assistants, we have selected the next enterprise for sampling. In all, we interviewed 500 enterprises but only 320 enterprises gave the necessary information. This gives a response rate of 64%.

*Characteristics of Sampled Enterprises*

The enterprises covered in our survey are urban informal manufacturing concerns. These are Tailoring, Shoemaking, Carpentry and Welding, including a service industry (printing). Hence, there are five industrial activities in the sample. Table 1 shows the distribution of the enterprises by wards.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents in the Survey Area by Type of Business**

Wards Business type	Ajeromi	Ojo	Badagry	Total	% of total
Tailoring	29	21	20	70	21.9
Shoemaking	30	21	21	72	22.5
Printing	23	16	19	58	18.1
Welding	25	19	16	60	18.8
Carpentry	25	18	17	60	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's Field Survey, 1988.

In each of the wards, each industrial sub-sector is almost equally represented. However, Tailoring and Shoemaking are dominant in each of the three wards.

***Forms of Business Organization***

The typical enterprise in our study area is the sole proprietorship. Other forms of business ownership such as partnership and family-ownership are not as predominant. Out of the 320 enterprises studied, 261 (82%) are sole proprietorship, 54 (17%) are partnerships, while 5 (2%) are family-owned (Table 2).

**Table 2: Forms of Business Ownership**

Ownership Structure Enterprise	Sole proprietor	Partnership	Family-Owned	Total	% of Total
Tailoring	50	20	0	70	21.9
Shoemaking	68	1	3	72	22.5
Printing	40	18	0	58	18.1
Welding	48	12	0	60	18.8
Carpentry	55	3	2	60	18.8
Total	261 (81.6)	54 (16.8)	5 (1.6)	320 100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 1988.

***Age of Business***

Most of these businesses are young while only a few are relatively old. As shown in Table 3, while 80% of the enterprises are between one and ten years old, only 2% are over 20 years old. This situation implies that many of them do not live beyond their teens. This is not unexpected due to the dominant form of business ownership which is the sole proprietorship; and as such the high rate of business failure may be due to the low level of capitalization and/or the death of the sole owner, among other factors. Table 3 shows the age distribution by type of enterprise.

***Results and Discussion***

Tables 4 to 7 give the summary of our findings. Table 4 shows various determinants of entrepreneurship in our study area. Each of them is discussed in turn.

***Cultural Factor***

As shown in Table 4, a total of 4% of all the entrepreneurs sampled were influenced by their father's occupation. This influence is greatest in tailoring (10%) and least in printing (0%), which is a modern occupation associated with the advent of the formal educational system. Many of these

culture-induced entrepreneurs inherited their enterprises from their fathers, while others only received the necessary training from their fathers or kinsfolk and migrated to Badagry local government area to set up their own enterprises.

It should be emphasized that our findings with respect to cultural influence be interpreted with caution. This is because our survey did not cover typical traditional crafts like blacksmithing, native-medicine, weaving and so on, which are prevalent in the rural areas. Cultural factors are likely to be stronger in such rural traditional occupations.

**Table 3: Age Distribution of Enterprises**

Age (Years) Enterprise	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+	Total	% of Total
Tailoring	24	33	10	1	2	70	21.9
Shoemaking	50	13	6	2	1	72	22.5
Printing	5	27	16	6	4	58	18.1
Welding	35	15	7	3	0	60	18.8
Carpentry	35	22	6	2	0	60	18.8
Total	114 (45)	110 (34.4)	45 (14.0)	14 (4.4)	7 (2.2)	320 100	- 100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 1988.

**Table 4: Factors that Influenced Entrepreneurs in Choosing Present Occupation**

Enterprises Reasons	Tailoring	Shoe- making	Printing	Carpentry	Welding	Total
1. Influenced by father's occupation	10.0	4.0	0.0	5.0	1.0	4.3
2. Personally interested	15.0	3.0	35.0	15.0	10.0	15.0
3. Could not obtain formal sector employment	30.0	30.0	25.0	25.0	30.0	28.3
4. Parents too poor to afford higher education	30.0	43.0	14.0	30.0	16.0	27.3
5. Retrenched in previous formal sector employment	10.0	18.0	0.0	15.0	18.0	12.4
6. Voluntarily resigned from wage employment	5.0	2.0	26.0	10.0	25.0	12.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 1988.

**Economic Factors**

The current economic recession in the Nigerian economy has influenced, to a great extent, the development of entrepreneurs in the informal sector. The impact of economic factors can be broken down to:

- (a) Low-absorptive capacity of the formal sector industries preventing new entrants from getting a formal sector job;
- (b) Retrenchment and lay-off of formal sector employees.

Table 4 shows that 28% of our respondents got into informal sector because they had no opportunity to enter the much-desired formal sector labour market. Furthermore, about 12% were laid off, or retrenched, from their previous formal sector employment before setting up their own enterprises in the informal sector. In total, about 41% of the entrepreneurs had been influenced by economic factors.

This result is not surprising. The down-turn in the level of economic activities in Nigeria led to excess capacity in the formal industrial sector as a result of the shortage of foreign exchange to import the needed raw materials. This led to mass retrenchment in the industrial sector. The government sector was not spared either (National Manpower Board, 1984). These retrenched staff had to make a living and as such most of them turned to the informal sector of the economy. Many of these had had some form of technical training either before entering the formal sector or on-the-job training in their former respective places of work. Table 5 reveals this fact

**Table 5: Pre-retrenchment Training of those Retrenched in the Formal Sector**

Training mode	%
1. No previous training	13.2
2. By apprenticeship system	43.4
3. On-the-job in the formal sector	27.2
4. Technical college	16.2

Source: Author's Field Survey, 1988.

Only a few of this group of entrepreneurs (13%) had no previous training before retrenchment. The rest (87%) had had one form of training or the other. Training through the apprenticeship system is the most popular, and this further strengthens the role of the informal sector in skill formation process. 27% were trained on-the-job while 16% were college-trained.

However, our a priori expectation that entrepreneurial development will be highly favoured in a declining economy is strongly supported.

**Educational Factor**

The impact of education is shown in Tables 4 and 6. In Table 4, 27% of our respondents got into the informal sector because their parents or guardians could not support them through the formal educational system. This phenomenon predominates among shoe-makers (43%) and is least pronounced among printers (14%).

Table 6 also shows that the formal educational attainment of the entrepreneurs are rather very low. About 1% of these entrepreneurs had no formal education, while only 23% of them attained primary school for a couple of years. The majority of them (54%) were able to complete primary school education while 19% attended secondary schools for a couple of years before dropping out. Only 3% were able to complete secondary education.

**Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Entrepreneurs by Level of Education**

Enterprises Level of education	Tailoring	Shoe- making	Printing	Carpentry	Welding	Total
1. No formal educ.	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.9
2. Below full primary	24.3	20.8	1.7	26.7	38.3	22.5
3. Full primary	60.0	62.5	48.3	56.7	41.7	54.4
4. Below full secondary	11.4	12.5	44.8	13.3	15.0	18.8
5. Full secondary	2.9	1.4	5.2	1.7	1.7	2.5
6. Others	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7	0.9
Total % =	100	100	100	100	100	100
N =	(70)	(72)	(58)	(60)	(60)	(320)

Source: Author's Field Survey, 1988.

The finding supports Aluko (1966) as well as our a priori expectations of negative relationship between education and informal entrepreneurship. Since this group of people are unable to acquire higher education, their choice of entering the formal wage sector is slim. Thus, one way to making a living is to be apprenticed to a master with a view to owning an enterprise. And such decisions were taken by 27% of our sampled entrepreneurs.

**Response to Motivation**

Two classes of people were identified among those motivated to enter the informal sector. These are:

- (a) those that were not culture-induced but were primarily interested in the sector and thus went into entire entrepreneurship directly, through the apprenticeship system; and
- (b) those that first went into the formal and informal wage employment before setting up as enterprise owners.



As shown in Table 4, those that belong to the first group are 15%, while those that belong the second group are 13%. Thus, the factor of motivation accounts for 28% of our sampled entrepreneurs. However, as expected, this factor is important among those with little or no formal education. Only 8% had ever attended secondary school for a couple of years before dropping out, while 35% of them had primary education. The rest had no formal education.

Nevertheless, the fact that as many as 15% formal sector wage-earners are still voluntarily motivated to the informal sector gives an indication that the sector possesses income-generating potentials for the ever-increasing urban labour force in Lagos. This fact is reinforced by the general summary presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Factors Determining Entrepreneurship Development**

Identified factors	Classifications (%)	
	Voluntary	Involuntary
1. Cultural	4	-
2. Economic	-	41
3. Education	27	-
4. Motivation	28	-
Total	59	41

Source: Author's Field Survey, 1988.

While 41% were forced into the sector due to the prevailing economic situation, 59% voluntarily went into the sector for the reasons classified in the table and previously discussed (above).

At this juncture, it is pertinent to examine the welfare of these categories of urban informal workers in terms of earnings and job satisfaction. One popular assumption in the literature is that the informal sector is a waiting ground for the urban unemployed pending the time they will obtain 'suitable' or 'desired' employment in the high-wage urban formal sector. This, it is argued, is because employment in the informal sector serves as a means of financing the period of search for formal sector employment. This theory presupposes low wages and hence, a low level of living for urban informal workers (Harris and Toderò, 1970).

Our findings, however, do not lend support to these views. Given their level of education as shown in Table 6, the urban informal sector entrepreneurs do enjoy reasonably high average earnings relative to their formal sector counterparts.

While the minimum wage for the class of workers in the formal public sector is ₦1,500 per annum, entrepreneurs in each occupational category receive an average of ₦2,300 per annum (Table 8). Entrepreneurs in the

printing trade have the highest average mean income of ₦2,974 per annum. This may be as a result of their relatively higher level of education (Table 6) and higher level of capitalization needed in the industry. The lowest average income is recorded by shoe-makers.

**Table 8: Distribution of Entrepreneurs Annual Income by Type of Enterprise**

Enterprises Annual Income	Tailoring	Shoe-making	Printing	Carpentry	Welding	Total
Below ₦500	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.3
₦501 - ₦1,500	4.3	4.2	5.2	6.7	16.7	7.2
₦1,501 - ₦3,000	80.0	87.5	50.0	66.7	75.0	72.8
₦3,001 - ₦4,500	11.4	8.3	41.4	23.3	5.0	17.2
₦4,501 - ₦6,000	1.4	0.0	1.7	3.3	1.7	1.6
Above ₦6,000	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.9
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	(70)	(72)	(68)	(60)	(60)	320
Average annual Income (₦)	2,466	2,346	2,974	2,521	2,343	2,518

Source: Our Field Survey, 1988

The modal income group is ₦1,501 - ₦3,000 which is received by 73% of the entrepreneurs, while 17% receive between ₦3,001 and ₦4,500 per annum. Of the latter income group, the printers dominate (41%). Furthermore, given the fears usually exercised by these entrepreneurs in divulging information on their earnings, we have reasons to believe that the figures given are under-estimates of their actual earnings.

In terms of job satisfaction, our survey reveals that 89% of these entrepreneurs are satisfied with their current employment, thereby preferring their current jobs to a formal sector alternative. Only 11% of them prefer wage employment in the formal sector.

In summary, however, our findings do not support the probability-migration model thesis for the entrepreneurial class of urban informal workers. However, the theory may be applicable to unskilled urban informal wage and self-employed workers not included in this study.

### Conclusion

This study has attempted to analyze the factors that are responsible for the rise of indigenous entrepreneurship in the urban informal sector of Badagry. It is enlightening to find out that the current economic recession, among others, has been a very significant factor in this respect.

Instead of crying over spilt milk, those that are adversely affected by the economy by way of: not realizing their unrealistically sanguine labour market expectations; not being able to continue to the top of the educational ladder; having been retrenched as a result of industrial excess capacity and governments' lean purse are fast turning their lime to lemonade by exploiting, to their benefit, the hitherto unexploited income and employment opportunities of the informal sector. Other factors identified include the influence of formal education, culture and individual's response to motivation of higher earnings potential and the pride of business ownership.

Furthermore, due to the observed negative relationship between educational attainment and entrepreneurship in the informal sector, the secondary school graduates that are greatly affected by unemployment<sup>1</sup> are either reluctant or not interested in entering the sector.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in conjunction with the current open apprenticeship scheme, the National Directorate of Employment should intensify its effort in encouraging this class of people to get interested in manual work which has been shown to be no less rewarding than the formal sector alternatives. This could be done by providing the needed initial capital (in form of tools) on loan, guaranteed by the recipients' state government, to these people after their period of apprenticeship. The beneficiaries of such loans should be assisted through extension services to be able to develop.

Moreover the thrust of policy should be geared towards increasing the educational/managerial knowledge of the entrepreneurs in the sector. This is because of the direct link that exists between educational attainment and managerial ability and hence, income. To facilitate this, central workshops should be established in major towns where informal technical workers and other small-scale industrialists can receive technical and managerial assistance. Moreover, the National Directorate of Employment in conjunction with the Industrial Development Centre should organize workshops, seminars and symposia for these entrepreneurs on the rudiments of record-keeping and management. Information on these services should be widely disseminated through radio, handbills, posters and so on, because most of the activities of these bodies (NDE, IDC) are not known by informal sector operators.

It is our contention that assistance given to these informal sector operators will have a high multiplier effect. This is because of the expected

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1 *The Statistical Bulletin*, Published by the Ministry of National Planning shows that 77% of the unemployed are secondary school graduates.

2 However, this should be interpreted with caution since we did not conduct a survey on the educational level of those that are currently undergoing apprenticeship. Our assertion here is based on our findings reported in Table 6.

high spread effect, through the apprenticeship training process that is constantly going on in the sector.

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## Book Reviews

Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, 236pp.

**Tiyambe Zeleza\***

This is arguably the best introduction to the demography of the slave trade, the largest forced migration in human history, a subject that remains central to a full understanding of Africa and its place in the world economy. Unlike most contemporary historians on the slave trade, who seem more fascinated by the sophistry of their econometric models, rather than the catastrophic dimensions of this inhuman trade, Manning skilfully combines dry statistical analysis with poignant descriptions of the tragedy of slavery. The tone is set in the prologue where he states that although the study:

*focuses primarily on economic history... the influence of slavery has extended beyond the economy to transform human emotions and trouble the human spirit. For this reason I have chosen to integrate spiritual and dramatic terms into this tale of costs and benefits: slavery was a sacrifice of Africans for the transformation of the wider world, and slavery was a tragedy for the people of Africa (p.1).*

This is economic history with a big H. It goes beyond the petty concerns of economic balance sheets to ask the great moral questions. The book has some of the passion of Walter Rodney's bitter treatise, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, the breadth of Williams' monograph *Capitalism and Slavery*, echoes of James, C L R' *The Black Jacobins*, and the cold feel for numbers of the statistician. It supports and elaborates on Rodney's thesis that the Atlantic slave trade contributed to the growth of slavery within Africa, and Williams' thesis that it assisted the growth of industrial capitalism, and reiterates James' argument that slave rebellions, not just liberal humanitarian protests and falling rates of profits, played a key role in the abolition of this hideous institution.

Manning is unsparing in his condemnation of the Europeans who launched the trade and the Africans who participated in it for their own short-term prosperity, to the long-term detriment of their societies. His conclusion is unequivocal. On the one hand, slavery left Africans "depleted in population, divided irremediably among themselves, retarded economically, and despised as an inferior race in a world which had built a vision of racial

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hierarchy based on the inspiration of their enslavement" (p.2). On the other hand, it brought economic progress to the western world and civilization's advance. "The very term "western civilization", Manning argues, "serves to arrogate full credit for the present economic supremacy of the Atlantic nations to its European ancestors", forgetting the indispensable contributions of African slaves (p.6).

As a story of beneficiaries and victims, Manning confronts the question of how the contemporary world should respond to this past. There are those who demand reparations, a demand that has now reached the chambers of the OAU. Manning observes that there are practical problems in identifying the current heirs of the beneficiaries who should make the reparations and the heirs of the victims who should be compensated. Should the reparations go to the descendants of slaves in the Americas, or to Africa from where the slaves were taken? And were reparations to be paid to Africa, how could it be ensured that the compensation did not go to "the descendants of the slave merchants rather than the descendants of the slaves" (p.175). Despite these problems, Manning believes that "the idea of reparations is important because of a key concept it brings with it: it serves effectively to deny the notion that the current poverty and weakness of Africa is a result of its current qualities" (p.175). In the absence of reparations the least that can be done is to remember the African slaves, to "honour their memory and thereby ensure that no such sacrifice will be made again" (p.176).

That is what the book is about, an attempt to remember the slaves, to determine how many suffered this tragic fate, and assess the impact of their enslavement on the societies they left behind and those that they went to. He begins the story in Chapter 2, where he argues that slavery was practised by most of the world's societies at one time or another. In fact, by 1500 Africans and people of African descent were a clear minority of the world's slave population. "What distinguishes Africa and Africans with regard to slavery", he contends, "is modernity. The enslavement of Africans increased in the modern period, a time when enslavement of other peoples was dying out" (p.27; *Italics original*). It is no secret why the Europeans wanted African slaves after the so-called discovery of the Americas. More difficult to decipher is why African societies supplied them. This is where Manning fails. He believes the answer lies in the relatively low productivity of African agriculture, an assertion based on a wild misreading of African agricultural system. But even if it were true, as he himself recognizes, low productivity, "did not in itself make the slave trade inevitable" (p.35).

Manning is on surer grounds when he discusses the growth of the slave trade in the subsequent chapters. He carefully distinguishes the geographical origins and destinations of the slaves and the demographic structure of the different slave populations. He identifies three clusters - the Western Coast, the Savanna and Horn, and the Eastern Coast - each of which, is further

subdivided. The slave trade from the Western Coast began in the early fifteenth century, was predominantly male and was destined for the Americas. The slave trade from the Savanna and Horn to what he calls the Oriental markets, was much smaller, although older, and female slaves predominated. By Oriental he means not only Asia, but also North Africa, an unfortunate homage to Eurocentricism. The last to develop was the slave trade of the Eastern Coast. It exploded in the nineteenth century and "combined the experiences of the Western Coast, the Savanna and Horn into a dizzying and disastrous sequence of events" (p.52).

The demographic consequences of these slave trades were far-reaching. The populations of the affected regions not only fell absolutely, but their growth rates were also curtailed by changes in fertility and family patterns, settlement patterns and economic activities. The exact combination of factors, of course, differed from one region to another, given the varied demographic regimes. On the Western Coast, fertility rates were depressed by the growth of polygyny, while in the Savanna and Horn, there was a relative shortage of women. Manning believes that on the Western Coast especially, the experience of slavery reinforced patriarchy. He concludes that as a result of the slave trade "Africa had virtually no population growth from about 1750 to 1850", precisely "the era in which European and American populations began a high rate of growth" (pp.84-85). Altogether, he estimates that about 14 million persons were exported from tropical Africa as slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alone, two-thirds of them from the Western Coast, a fifth from the Savanna and the Horn, and the rest from the East Coast.

It was not just the demographic and economic structures which were distorted by the slave trade, social and political institutions and values were also affected, so that even after slavery to the Americas was abolished, the infrastructures, developed to supply slaves, remained and were now used to expand local labour supplies to produce commodities demanded by European economies. In short, slavery corrupted African societies. As Manning puts it, "slavery was corruption: it involved theft, bribery, and exercise of brute force as well as ruses. Slavery thus may be as one source of precolonial origins of modern corruption" (p.124).

The impact of slavery was, therefore, profound and contradictory. It contributed significantly to capitalist construction and the development of racist ideologies in the West, and demographic and economic stagnation in Africa. But it also helped create the very idea of Africa. And, lest we forget, African societies survived the scourge. Perhaps we should be inspired by that as we face the depressing present and the unpredictable future.

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# Coming to Terms with the Famine and Food Question in Ethiopia

A Review of Rahmato Dessalegn, *Famine and Survival Strategies*, Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1991, 246 pages

Nyangabyaki Bazaara\*

The book is no doubt another effort to come to terms with the recurring famine in Ethiopia and to contribute towards evolving a durable solution. Indeed as Rahmato argues, food aid of the magnitude witnessed during the 1984/85 famine can not be a solution but a complement to the peoples' effort to avert the scourge of famine. Thus the main concern of Rahmato's book is the examination of the strategies peasants have been adopting in the face of famine (p.15). Put differently, "What do peasants do in the face of severe food crisis and ecological stress and how do they manage to survive on their own, if ever they do?"

The book is divided into 10 chapters. In chapter one the objectives and the theoretical thrust of the study are spelt out. In chapter two, the organization of the book is outlined. Chapter 3 dwells on the ecological and geographical setting of Wollo and Ambassel, the areas from which most of the empirical evidence used in the study was collected. Chapter 4 describes the features of the economy in the study areas. In chapter 5 the production system of peasants, what the author calls the "peasant mode of production" is described. Chapter 6 describes the 1984/85 famine situation in Wollo. Chapter 7 and 8 highlights what peasants do in anticipation of, and during, famine. Chapter 9 deals with post-famine recovery and chapter 10 revisits theories on the causes of famine and offers solutions to famine in Ethiopia.

The book is very rich in empirical evidence, which demonstrates the level to which the author went searching for the "mystery" behind the famine that hides behind the Ethiopian mountains. One can not but be impressed by the authors field experience which allows him to be sensitive to minute details. At the same time, the book is important because of the approach he employed. For long studies on issues of agricultural stagnation/development have treated the peasantry as objects and not subjects of history. Peasants were, so to speak, a sack of potatoes, the sort of impression Marx once painted. The author makes his point that the search for solutions to recurring famine must begin with the victims. We need to understand their capabilities, potentials and weaknesses. However, the data/information,

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collected so painstakingly, could have enhanced the stature of the study if some methodological, conceptual and theoretical issues had been critically addressed.

### **Contextualizing Famines and Peasant Responses**

The author correctly observes that "famine has occurred in a large variety of historical, political, economic and ecological contexts" (p.215). But he does not put the 1984/85 famine into historical and contemporary contexts. For to appreciate the distinctiveness of one famine from another requires a historical analysis of the social, economic and political structures of the Ethiopian society. The question is "what makes the 1984/85 famine distinctively different from that of 1973/74 or even those that had occurred much earlier?" Were the responses of peasants and the innovations they undertook to confront the famine the same as in the earlier period? What aspects of the survival strategies were applicable in past famines and which ones are no longer applicable?

The author correctly critiques the "Capitalist development school" (p.212) for giving impressions that famines are caused by external forces and absolving the "internal and intrinsic social forces and political and economic structures". This, however, does not mean that external forces can be ignored. If anything the analysis must integrate both the internal and external forces to highlight how the interplay of these factors contribute to famine. While it is true that Ethiopian society was never colonized (p.215), it non the less never remained isolated from the world capitalist system. The author argues that peasants in Wollo are subsistence farmers who do not produce for the world market (p.58). According to the author, this fact implies that they are not integrated into the national and international markets. Yet a careful reading of the book reveals evidence to the contrary. What this evidence shows is that Wollo has been integrated in the national and international economies as a labour and cattle reserve. Before the 1974 revolution:

*Every year tens of thousands of peasants from Wollo would migrate to the large modern plantations and to the coffee growing areas in pursuit of economic gains" (p.146). ... "among the major sources of seasonal employment for Wollo peasants were the two giant agricultural schemes on the eastern and north-western lowlands of the country, namely the cotton plantations of the Awash Valley, and the sesame seed farm enterprises in the Setit Humera region. Cossins has estimated that some 20,000 Wollo peasants were annually employed as seasonal labourers in the farms in the Delta of the Awash river; there were also a large number of them working in the Humera area, and in south-western Ethiopia in the early 1970s. In an earlier work I estimated that the Awash Valley and the Humera enterprises employed over a quarter of a million permanent and temporary workers originating from outside the*

*regions in the same period, and about one third of these, i.e. 70,000 to 80,000, were from Wollo. In the Awash Valley in particular, Wollo peasants were employed as "outgrowers" which involved raising crops on rented land to sell to the large plantations on contractual basis" (p.146).*

Definitely some of the crops such as coffee, cultivated by migrants from Wollo, were exported to the world market. In the text, the author praises the livestock potential in Wollo. Later he intimates that cheap cattle from Wollo finds its way into the urban centres and beyond the borders of Ethiopia. Shoa and Wollo merchants smuggle it to Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya and Somalia (p.180) or even to the Middle East. This trade may not simply be occasional when there is famine in Wollo but also during the non famine times. Finally Wollo peasants do consume imported products - soap, paraffin, etc. What this evidence indicates is the fact that Wollo is very much integrated into the world market. This integration continued even after the 1974 revolution when wage labour was substituted for forced/conscript labour. And what is interesting about our observation is the fact that the experience of Wollo is similar to the experiences of labour/cattle economies else where in Africa. The similarities can be gleaned from the history of labour reserves in settler Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa or even non-settler countries such as Uganda. What is common to these reserves is recurring famine, food shortages, malnutrition, over-population and environmental degradation. Historically in Africa all areas that were integrated as labour/cattle reserves have been victims of recurring famine! Perhaps we would draw some lessons.

The reality of cash crop and labour/cattle reserves in Ethiopia points to another set of issues regarding capitalist development after the Ethiopian revolution of 1974. The author argues:

*So much has been written about rural class formation in Africa that the subject needs to be carefully re-examined, and some of the sound and fury regarding the alleged capitalist offence in the African countryside be given the burial it deserves (p.23)*

Was capitalism shattered by the so-called "socialist" regime of Mengistu? (p.24). This question can be interpreted on the basis of a number of assumptions that the pre-revolution Ethiopian society was capitalist which it was not and the author demonstrates his awareness by enclosing the word capitalism in inverted commas. Though pre-revolution Ethiopia was not a capitalist system it none the less experienced a capitalist development. At the same time it would be totally erroneous to say capitalist development was arrested after the 1974 "revolution". It is certainly a mistake on the part of many scholars to assume that any country can become "Marxist" or "socialist" through simple proclamations that Tanzania or Ethiopia, Kenya,

Uganda, etc., is "socialist". The failure to see through labels has been one of the problems many academics have faced when confronted with crises in countries that described themselves as socialist (e.g. Nyerere's Tanzania, Mengistu's Ethiopia, etc.) or the recent crisis in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It must be acknowledged that Ethiopian society is neither capitalist nor socialist. Yet one is persuaded, on the basis of the evidence in the book, that capitalist development continued even after the "socialist" revolution with its usual characteristics of uneven development among regions, sectors, etc. It is clear from the book that the regional imbalances created before the revolution still continued after the 1974 "revolution". Wollo continued to play the role of a labour and cattle reserve for both the national and international markets. The uneven development manifests itself as before, the south as a plantation zone and Wollo as a supplier of cheap labour and cattle.

Another fact of capitalist development can be discerned from the ongoing social differentiation among the peasantry even in the "socialist" context. To this we add the fact that features such as g'it'ir (child contracting), contract farming, etc, are characteristics of early phases of capitalist development, emerging via pre-capitalist relations and state policies. It may be that the development of a wage labouring class is not marched with a corresponding development of a capitalist class in Wollo or the surplus is not being re-invested in the rural areas, but this labour is becoming an important phenomenon. This labour is the one working in the south or simply migrating to the "urban areas and become part of the urban unemployed (p.25) or join the fighting groups". This means that "capitalism" was after all not shattered in Ethiopia and will remain for years to come.

While the author does not deal with the nature of Wollo's integration into the world market, he at the same time does not bring out the social basis of the Ethiopian state. To be sure, the reader glimpses, here and there in the text, the forms and extent of surplus extraction by the state - "corvee" labour for military and other "communal" needs (p.99, p.147, p.206), the disruptive nature of the fighting and resettlement schemes (p.105 and p.205), grain quotas, the absurd prices offered to peasants (p.95), etc.,. One however, does not clearly grasp the social and economic structures of Ethiopia and how they reproduce famine in Ethiopia. Unless one understands the social classes that define the character of the Ethiopian state, it is impossible to evolve programmes for liberating peasants. It is unfortunate that the author dismisses the discussion of the state as being outside the scope of his study (p.217).

### **Peasant Class, Differentiation and Famine**

The author rightly treats the peasants as a single class, although, through a process of social differentiation, it is split up into different strata. The

author is right in arguing that there is a certain amount of confusion regarding "rural class formation" and "exploitation". Therefore, he correctly notes that as long as one considers the peasantry as a class, then there can never be exploitation internal to that class. I also share the same sentiments as far as the names we give these strata - poor peasants, middle peasants and rich peasants. Many students of African peasantries are not satisfied with these terminologies. Indeed, it goes without saying that there is need to develop concepts that appropriately fit the content we endeavor to describe.

The author, however, does not convincingly tell us the criterion used to identify or categorize peasant strata or classes in Ethiopia. How does one determine that such and such a household is lower, middle, or upper peasant? What makes the middle peasant self-supporting and what makes other strata not self supporting? (p.25). Earlier on the author defined a poor peasant (lower peasantry) as one "who does not have sufficient labour or traction power" (p.21). Does this imply that the middle peasant is self-supporting in terms of labour and traction power? If family labour and traction power is the criterion, the logic ceases to apply when it comes to "upper" peasants. For when it comes to this strata the author gives an impression that "upper" peasants are self-supporting in labour and livestock but have more labour and traction power than others! If he rents out what would distinguish this upper peasant from a middle peasant who also rents out oxen? What complicates everything is that he dismisses the concept "rich" peasant without explaining what is so offensive in the usage and what is better about the concept "upper" peasant. The point is, if family labour and traction power is the criterion for determining the various peasant strata, how many family people and how many oxen define a particular household to be lower, middle or upper peasants? What are the cut off numbers for each class? And by the way, having chosen his descriptive names (lower, middle and upper peasants) for the peasant strata, the author does not employ them consistently. For example, he decries the usage of the concept "rich peasants" and indeed he is careful in the book not to use it. But he extensively employs the concept "poor peasants". Now, in a society where you have poor peasants, there must be rich peasants too!

In the discourse over peasant differentiation in Africa this problem has often been overcome by defining what one understands to be a certain peasant stratum. Though implements, the size of land and the number of oxen do help in determining the position of a given household, the crucial variable is the labour used predominantly in production - family, communal or wage labour. A poor or lower peasantry is one who derives much of his/her livelihood from using family labour and also selling labour to upper or rich peasants or plantations. Usually such a household is deficient in instruments of production of land. What makes a middle peasant self-supporting is the self reliance in terms of labour. Rarely does a middle peasant sell

or hire labour. The upper peasant derives most of his/her livelihood from partly using family labour and partly hiring the labour of the poor peasants or wage labourers. The author misses the point by assuming that the fact that "upper" peasants hire relatives and do not pay wages in the form of cash, means that "upper" peasants do not engage in wage labour. He says:

*Degga peasants, especially if they happen not to be blessed with sufficient land and/or sufficient traction power hire themselves out (mainly) Woyna-Degga peasants, i.e. those with large enough holdings as labourers during weeding and harvesting; if payment is involved it is almost always in kind. The practice of hiring labour for a cash wage is virtually unknown. Often, enough in fact, a good number of peasants who work as temporary hands are related by blood, marriage or religious convention to the owner of the farm, and may be working for him not for immediate remuneration but for a favour to be received at a future date (p.80).*

Precisely, in early phases of capitalist development, payments take the form of kind and gradually assuming cash forms. In addition, in these early phases of capitalist development, rich peasants begin their accumulation by laying claims on the pre-capitalist relations and ethics of co-operation. Capitalist development is a process which initially adapts to pre-capitalist relations. It does not just drop from the sky. As the process continues, the rich peasants may translate themselves into capitalists, depending entirely on wage labour, whether of relatives or non relatives. We should add that upper peasants also invest in trade; they are potential merchants of tomorrow.

The issue of identifying and determining classes becomes crucial when it comes to the wage-labouring class. This is a group the author calls the marginalized peasants who often have no land of their own and earn their livelihood by providing labour. This raises two interrelated problems, one methodological and the other conceptual.

The author says that it was difficult statistically to identify this class. This is no doubt due to the fact that the author could not see through the pre-capitalist relations and secondly, due to the defects in the methodology he employed to collect data. Let us look at his methodology.

Rahmato says that in their estimate 50% of the peasantry belonged to the lower peasantry, 40% to middle stratum and 10% in the upper stratum (p.25) with the "labouring" group collapsed in the lower peasantry. How did they arrive at these figures, the author says by indirect evidence! (p.25). Furthermore, the questionnaires, the author says, "were meant to be put to peasants who had at varying degrees personally experienced the 1984/85 famine. Those peasants whose communities had escaped disaster "... were not selected for the interview" (p.36). It is possible, then, that land labourers were excluded from the interviews since they could have migrated to the

southern plantations at the time of the famine! It is even possible some were still in the south working for a wage or they had joined the fighting groups. A methodology that focuses on the household is, however, capable of discerning the labourer class as a distinct social group from the peasantry. We shall later show how the administering of the questionnaire only to famine victims led to another error - that peasants were engaged in survival strategies and no accumulation strategies during the 1984/85 famine.

Furthermore, if it was difficult to identify statistically the land labourers class, then conceptually the author should tell us what this category is, whether it is likely to expand or not, and the implications for rural production, survival and accumulation strategies. In addition, we would be interested in understanding the relationship between this class and the fighting groups in Ethiopia. For ultimately, we know that wars have contributed to rural instability, less production and famine. Could it be that this class has been recruiting ground for the fighting groups, especially those who can not get employment? Rahmato says that the "upper" peasantry do not exploit and has no contradictions with other peasant categories. We have already noted that there is no exploitation internal to the peasantry. But this does not mean that there is no "surplus" transfer and no contradictions among the various peasant strata. The author argues that peasants interact with each other for mutual benefit. This, automatically, nullifies the fact of differentiation. For example, he gives an example of poor peasants in Ambassel awraja who, without draught animals, rent out their land to the "prosperous" ones. That the renter agrees to farm the land and after harvest a portion is given to the owner of the land. That this example shows that both sides benefit and in fact it is the poor peasant who appropriates the labour of the prosperous one (p.26). Obviously this example is not convincing, unless Rahmato can show how much the market rate of rent is, the price of seeds, the market rates for weeding, harvesting and threshing as against the value of the total harvest and how it is distributed!

Let us look at the data in the book. The author does demonstrate that draught power in Ambassel is not evenly distributed. Five percent of the population own more than 2 oxen, 35% own 2 oxen, 40% one ox, and 20% no ox (p.74). Because of this uneven distribution of oxen, a variety of relationships develop. There is *Mengenajut*, a practice where peasants with one ox each team and work together in turns. No fee or remuneration is involved. *Mengenajut* is a communal practice which can indeed be said to lead to mutual benefit. *Mengenajut*, however, is different from the most common practice of renting farm animals in Ambassel - *Wonfel* (p.74). *Wonfel* is a practice where someone rents oxen in exchange for labour. The one who hires the oxen is supposed to work two days on the farm of the owner of the oxen for every one day he/she ploughs his/her field. This clearly leads to inequalities at the end of the day. The one hiring will be one step behind

the owner of the oxen. He will not adequately time the season and the result is that while the owner of the farm has more yield the one hiring will have less. If this kind of dependence continues, the one hiring will be in a vicious cycle that gradually leads him/her to impoverishment. Thus all forms of rent - labour rent (*Wonfel*), Commodity rents (*chinnet*), etc., - lead to surplus transfer within the peasantry class and indeed have potentials for breeding conflict and watering down the ideology of community sense of belonging and co-operation.

This leads us to the concept of "peasant mode of production". This phrase has been very contentious in scholarly circles. It is a phrase that was widely employed by the "articulation of modes" school of thought to show that the underdevelopment of African societies was due to the penetration of monopoly capital. The penetration did not result in a fully fledged capitalist "mode of production". Instead, that penetration preserved the "peasant mode of production" co-existing with the "capitalist mode", with the latter as the dominant. We shall not belabour the critique against this school. Suffice to point out that if peasants are differentiating into various strata, with unequal access to productive resources (land, labour, oxen, etc.,) and in turn this translating into various forms or practices of production, is it possible to talk of a single "peasant mode of production"? The author rightly argues that peasants live in a variety of ecological, historical, political and economic contexts. These contexts vary with time and define the nature of social differentiation and forms of production of each peasant stratum. This means that the usage of a "peasant mode of production" is inappropriate if not irrelevant! Indeed the evidence in the book leads one to think that after all we should be talking of the different peasant forms of production and not a "peasant mode of production".

This also goes for the concept "peasant survival strategies". The data in the book show clearly that there are inequalities in access to land, instruments of production (ploughs), drought animals and also there are variations in the demographic composition of the households. These factors acting in concert with demands of the state (conscript labour, forced labour, forced sales) and environmental degradation do influence the decisions about what crops to grow and the timing. Inequalities in access to productive resources are in turn translated into unequal harvests. Those disadvantaged in terms of productive resources will be more vulnerable to famine because there will be less grain in the *goudguad*. On the other hand, those with better productive resources will have more grain. To the extent that when drought strikes, the survival strategies of the two categories will be different. If anything, the one with more food will not simply be adopting survival, but also accumulation strategies! Yet the author does not see accumulation strategies of certain peasants because of the assumption over the nature of peasant participation in the market and secondly the methodology which only allowed him to

administer the questionnaires to the victims and nothing to the beneficiaries! One indeed is reminded of Mamdani's famous statement about the Sahel famine of the 1970's. This was a story of a thin man and a fat man. "Said the fat man to the thin man, 'you should be ashamed of yourself. If someone visiting the country saw you before anyone else he would think there was famine here'. Replied the thin man, 'if he saw you next he would know the reason for that famine'.<sup>1</sup> In any famine situation there are losers and beneficiaries. A realistic and comprehensive analysis of the famine situation in Wollo would require that the questionnaire be administered to both the victims and beneficiaries of the famine. This shortcoming may explain why the issue of peasant differentiation is not adequately handled in the book and why there is a mistake of assuming that there can be something such as "peasant survival strategies" and nothing like accumulation strategies. It follows that the vulnerable strata are the most poor and these have everything to gain by emphasizing the traditional morals or pulling efforts to survive. On the other hand the upper peasants always welcome such situations as an opportunity:

*Peasants who took advantage of the behaviour of the market during the crisis and engaged in vigorous commercial activity... What they did was to buy one product in one market and sell it for profit at another, trade in high price products, especially grain or buy livestock cheaply and keep them out of the famine zone for the duration of the crisis (p.200).*

In fact the author acknowledges that the new middle and upper strata are products of vagaries of the weather and of economic activity during the famine (p.198). What the author does is to argue that what ultimately matters is not the transfer of "surplus" from one peasant stratum to another; that is an inter-peasant affair! According to the author, what mattered was that the "surplus" remained in the rural areas! Yet cattle bought at distress sales were smuggled out of the country or remained in other regions despite the persuasion that most of it came back. Indeed, one wonders how much of the surplus remained in the rural areas.

Even if one were to accept that such a thing as "peasant survival strategies" existed, one would still want to believe that such "strategies" were based on circumstances specific to that period. History does not repeat itself except that similar aspects from history may recur. It is not possible to talk of a particular set of "peasant survival strategies" across history. Similarly, those who have drawn up models for survival strategies have forgotten that peasants are constantly differentiating and that alters the

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1 Mamdani, Mahmood, "Disaster Prevention: Defining the Problem", in Publication of the Council for Human Rights in Uganda (CURE) West Germany, May, 1986.



strategies they adopt during crises. For differentiation, understood in the specific circumstances operating in the wider context, keep on altering the material and cultural bases of the society. In this sense one fails to see, "the co-operative ethic which informs all aspects of peasant life is grounded on reciprocal support and transactive of mutual benefit" (p.159) [emphasis added].

The peasant-state relationships do come out in focus in the book. Recognition of the negative role of the state leads the author to suggest that the free forces of the market should be left to operate. It is fashionable these days of structural adjustment to argue that the interventionist role of the state should be minimized for agricultural production to pick-up. This recommendation is based on the conviction that state intervention reduces peasant incomes and renders peasants incapable of agricultural innovation and expanded production. The solution is to roll back the state to allow market forces to operate. No one can deny, after reading this book, that the state has been plundering peasant surplus. But the call for a free market, as the author does, is equally fallacious. For the market historically develops as part and parcel of the commodity production and class formation. Ultimately, the role of the market will be positive or negative depending on the class character of the market. For tomorrow we may have starvation amidst plenty!

#### **The Food Question: What is to be done?**

The author makes a point that we should not offer blue prints. We need solutions that arise from the concrete understanding of the societies we are dealing with. Furthermore, there is no single factor that explains the recurrence of famines, either in Ethiopia or elsewhere.

The most important point to be observed, as far as his policy prescriptions are concerned, is that they are cast in a technistic mold. Some of the insights that come out from the book are not used in making suggestions. For example, the author talks of food conservation, reduction of the pre and post-harvest losses, soil conservation, drought resistant seeds, famine crops, emergency seed bank, strategic food and livestock reserve, creation of "permanent food emergency zones" and relieving those below poverty line of taxes (p.219-224). Who will do these things? The author says that the state should do it! Surely the same state that concealed information about the starving millions is now being asked to undertake policy reform? In addition to this, the data presented earlier shows that "private grain merchants who charged exorbitant prices greatly benefited by the obstructive policies of local officialdom in both 1972 and 1973... Food sent to starving areas was not redistributed to the needy but sold to private merchants..." (p.102). Who is going to change the attitude of the greedy "local officialdom"? In any case, how are we to be sure that the state, as a matter of fact, did not

deliberately cause famines in the rural areas to break the backs of the resistant peasants?

The point is that famine and food issues are political questions. There is no way one can introduce reforms the market or technical innovations or transform the productive powers of the peasants without first solving the political question. It is not enough to say that the task of feeding the cities be left to "grain merchants and private endeavor" (p.224). Have we so soon forgotten how the rice question led to the massacre of Tolbert of Liberia? In other words, which social classes will be the agency of transformation, or resolve the food question?

Rahmato has set the pace by bringing to light as much empirical facts as he could get. He has given us a basis for further reflection on this burning question of our time. We welcome the contribution. We should build on it.

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ISSN : 0850 3907

