
African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2008, pp. 1–28

(ISSN 0850-7902)

Africa in 2108: A Strategic Plan*

Mueni wa Muiu**

Abstract

What will Africa look like in 2108? Following the present trend, four developments may be in place. First, given the rate of AIDS, conflict and starvation, the population (which is already very small) might be exterminated. Second, extermination of the African population will make room for other people to settle on the continent thus fulfilling Leonard Barnes', Stanislave Andresky's and Stephen Smith's predictions. Third, resources will be exhausted which might mean the end of conflict. Fourth, 'tribal clashes' which result in genocide of threatening ethnic groups may become the norm. This paper argues that these four developments will not occur. Instead, neo-liberal policies which are forcing Africans to live in inhumane conditions will be so dehumanizing that in the end they will provoke Africans to search for genuine development alternatives, regardless of the cost (a process that is already in place). Similar to the days of slavery when conscious citizens throughout the world fought against it, in the age of technology these citizens will not sit by and allow any institutions to implement policies that relegate Africa to a '4th world' where conflict, disease, starvation and undevelopment (loss of earlier economic development achievements, for example, education and healthcare as well as the rise of inequality, and moral decay) become the norm.

While current trends tend to marginalize institutions, especially the state in development, we argue that for Africans to overcome the destiny carved

* I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers whose comments improved the quality of this article.

** Department of Social Sciences Winston-Salem State University Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 27110. Email: Muium@wssu.edu; Kandakeamrisi@yahoo.com

for them by globalization – as labourers and bystanders in their own development – they have to reconstitute their institutions based on their culture and history. Only a united Africa can harness its resources for development and fair trade in an age of endemic exploitation and corruption. This paper argues that Africa's future will depend on a revision of state borders, increase in population and the creation of a Federation of African States based on five states. In this article a strategic plan is presented by way of 'Fundi wa Africa: Toward a New Paradigm of the African state'.

Résumé

A quoi ressemblera l'Afrique en 2108 ? Par rapport à la tendance actuelle, quatre nouveaux développements peuvent se présenter. Premièrement, étant donné le taux de sida, les conflits et la famine, la population (qui est déjà très réduite) pourrait être exterminée. Deuxièmement, l'extermination de la population africaine permettra à d'autres personnes de s'installer sur le continent, correspondant ainsi aux prévisions de Leonard Barnes, de Stanislave Andresky et de Stephen Smith. Troisièmement, les ressources seront épuisées, ce qui pourrait signifier la fin des conflits. Quatrièmement, les « conflits tribaux », qui aboutissent au génocide des groupes ethniques menaçants, peuvent être la norme. Cet article soutient que ces quatre développements ne se produiront pas. Plutôt, les politiques néolibérales qui contraignent les Africains à vivre dans des conditions inhumaines seront si déshumanisantes qu'en fin de compte, elles pousseront les Africains à chercher de véritables alternatives de développement, quel que soit le coût (un processus qui est déjà en place). Comme à l'époque de l'esclavage lorsque des citoyens conscients à travers le monde entier ont lutté contre l'esclavage, les citoyens de l'ère de la technologie ne vont pas s'asseoir et laisser les institutions mettre en œuvre des politiques qui relèguent l'Afrique au « quart monde » où les conflits, les maladies, la famine et le non-développement (la perte des acquis en matière de développement économique, par exemple, l'éducation et les soins de santé ainsi que l'augmentation de l'inégalité et la dégradation morale) deviennent la norme.

Alors que les tendances actuelles sont de marginaliser les institutions, particulièrement l'État en développement, nous soutenons que pour que les Africains puissent vaincre le destin qui leur est sculpté par la mondialisation, comme des ouvriers et des spectateurs dans leur propre développement, ils doivent reconstituer leurs institutions sur la base de leur culture et de leur histoire. Seule une Afrique unie peut exploiter ses ressources pour le développement et le commerce équitable à une ère d'exploitation et de corruption endémiques. Cet article défend l'idée que l'avenir de l'Afrique

dépendra de la révision des frontières entre les États, de l'augmentation de la population et de la création d'une Fédération des États Africains sur la base de cinq états. Dans cet article, un plan stratégique est présenté à travers « Fundi wa Africa: Toward a New Paradigm of the African state ».

Introduction

Various studies have been done both by Afro-pessimists, optimists and others who were in between. This paper presents Africa's strategic plan for 2108 by way of a theory. *Fundi wa Africa*'s (of Africa in Kiswahili) main focus of analysis is the state, defined as a multilayered entity from grass-root organizations to the leadership. The core of the state is the people who reside within its boundaries. It is informed by diverse ethnic groups' culture, history and environment. The approach includes historical, political, economic, and cultural analysis; it also looks at the impact of population control on Africa's development.

The emphasis placed by this work on indigenous African political systems is not meant to glorify a so-called 'golden age'. Rather, it is designed to identify the still functional elements of those systems and institutions which could be used as building-blocks to re-construct a popular and developmental (that transforms people's lives for the better) modern African state. In principle, *Fundi* can be used to analyze any African country such as Algeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Sudan, to name a few. *Fundi* can even be used outside the continent to study any former colony in which an indigenous population still exists, such as Brazil, Bolivia, Haiti, Indonesia or Iraq. All these countries experience basically the same conditions, such as poverty, disease and conflict; they only differ in terms of degree. In African countries, such conditions are more extreme and the stakes are higher than in most third world countries because Africa is the largest continent in the world, has abundant natural resources, and is under-populated. *Fundi* can also be used to explain why though Ethiopia and Liberia were always independent, they were never able to industrialize.

Fundi wa Africa differs from the Statist approach in that (a) it analyzes the creation and evolution of the African state (from indigenous to colonial and post-colonial), (b) it shows how internal and external events and actors in Africa shaped the state and its leadership and (c) it prescribes what the ideal state and its leadership (as determined by Africans themselves) should be. *Fundi* examines the nature and structure of

the African state and tries to answer the following questions: how was the African state shaped? What values inform it, and what type of relationship between the rulers and the ruled does it favour? Unless the state is subjected to much greater, in-depth scrutiny and analysis, African studies will continue to deal with form rather than substance.

Thus, if the Japanese state reflects Japanese values, the American state American values or the French state French values, why should African states not reflect African values? Are African values authoritarianism, conflict, corruption, dependency, disorder, hunger and war? In order to meet African peoples' specific priorities and needs, the state must be reconfigured by retaining its positive (and adequately functioning) elements and by incorporating the still functional remnants of indigenous African institutions. In essence, the nature of the African state determines the framework of its economic, political and social interaction with the sub-regional, regional and international environment. Such an approach implies that the state becomes the main unit of analysis and the central focus of our study.

Fundi wa Africa as Theory

This paper argues that African state structures and their relationship with Western countries are the root causes of the African predicament. 'West' here does not imply that Western societies are homogeneous. They are made up of people of different social classes, races, ethnicities and religious beliefs. Similarly, Africa is not viewed as a homogeneous geographic, environmental and socio-political entity. For example, West Africa (especially the Sahel region) is very different from East, Central and Southern Africa. Under the influence of Islam, most African institutions have thrived alongside Western-imposed ones. Furthermore, Islam and Christianity have affected African culture in different ways. In some cases, the worst of indigenous African culture has been retained, for example when super-natural powers are used to destroy life or cause conflict. Using the pretext of tradition, people may depend on their neighbours to provide for their basic needs without any sense of shame. Yet, dependency and laziness were unacceptable values in African culture. Another disturbing feature is the survival of the caste system (based on inherited socio-professional specialization) in some regions of Africa, such as Sahelian West Africa. This system is so entrenched in these communities that members of the so-called 'lower' castes (such as griots,

blacksmiths or leather-workers) are not given much room to grow and prosper outside their own caste. Geographically and environmentally, there are also huge differences between the desert, the savannah/Sahel, and the forest.

By 'African' is meant any person who identifies as such and considers Africa as their home. In this study, 'Africa' refers to all 54 states on the African continent, including Western Sahara and the Indian Ocean island states. African states vary greatly in size, natural resource endowment, environmental features and population. However, the appalling socio-economic conditions facing the majority of the population (conflict, low life expectancy, disease, famine, poverty and unemployment) and the exorbitant privileges enjoyed by the ruling elite (obscene wealth, foreign bank accounts, conspicuous consumption, children studying, and families shopping abroad) are much the same throughout the continent. This predicament puts Africa at the lowest level of economic, political and social development in the world. One striking feature of the African predicament is that the ruling elite typically constitutes no more than two per cent of the population, yet enjoys full citizenship rights, as well as freedom from hunger, disease, fear and conflict. This ruling elite – which maintains an expensive, western-type lifestyle in the country's capital city – remains totally indifferent to the plight of the majority of the people, who are at their mercy. *Fundi* contends that one cannot understand the African predicament without analyzing African indigenous political systems, as well as the colonial and neo-colonial states. Successive historical processes such as slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism (an on-going process renamed 'globalization') contributed to the creation of the present African state, which reflects the Western state but *fails to perform the same functions*.

This paper argues that this Leviathan is a monster which functions as an agent of exploitation of the people by both African rulers and the West. The present crisis facing the African state, which manifests itself through AIDS, conflict, foreign indebtedness, eugenics population policies and un-development makes it impossible for the African state to attain autonomous, self-sustaining development. The present state is not conducive to development because its nature – an exogenous structure without Africans' interests, priorities and needs at heart – and its relationship with the West do not allow for any type of autonomous, popular development. In reality, the African state has been constructed

in such a way that dependency on the West is inevitable. The way out of this predicament is to replace the present African state with the still functional positive elements of African indigenous institutions in order to create a state that can be both autonomous and democratic. Such a development cannot occur without the people's participation, hence the introduction of *Fundi wa Afrika.* It is believed that no one has used such an approach before. Mueni wa Muiu decided to apply it to study the nature of the African state after she observed the building process in a small village in eastern Kenya. The owner of the house determined what the needs of the family were, and explained this to the builder. Throughout the building process, the builder and the owner consulted each other. Whenever any modifications were required, the builder effected them according to the client's needs and instructions. Muiu noticed the same process when she took her material to a tailor for a suit to be made. The tailor would ask Muiu what her needs were, and they consulted each other throughout the tailoring process, which would only be completed when both were completely satisfied with the final product. It is then that Muiu realized that the relationship between Africans and their institutions in indigenous Africa was similar to the building and tailoring processes. In those days, the leaders were attentive to their people's priorities and needs, and they would fashion the political institutions accordingly. Muiu then decided to study the evolution of these institutions to understand when and how they changed to be externally-determined rather than being defined by indigenous factors.

Fundi wa Africa is a new paradigm in African studies. By 'paradigm' is meant, according to Thomas Kuhn, a model of scientific practice that some particular community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice and attracting a group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity. At the same time, this new paradigm is sufficiently open-ended to leave to this group all sorts of problems to resolve (Kuhn 1997:10). The socio-political and economic conditions facing the majority of Africans developed over many centuries and obviously cannot be changed within a short time-frame. Political and economic transformation will take a very long time and is likely to involve conflict because the indigenous and foreign beneficiaries of the present system will fight to maintain the *status quo*.

Fundi *wa* Africa in Practice

The main practical aspects of *Fundi wa Afrika* may be summarized in 15 points.

1. *Fundi wa Africa* argues that the African state must be reconstructed based on African culture, history, traditions, priorities and needs (however these are defined by Africans). It uses history to demonstrate that African political systems were radically and permanently altered after slavery to serve minority and Western needs. To reverse this trend, Africans must first recapture their economies. Such a development implies Africans' control over the resources within their borders for the *sole benefit* of every African child, man and woman. *Fundi wa Afrika* argues that any other plan is only a distraction which draws Africans' energy away from constructive purposes and toward dependency and destructive activities. African people must also realize that they *have* to take ownership of their own development and democracy. Western countries and their African associates, like any other group, protect their own interests to the detriment of the majority of the people. The dependency of the majority of the population on religious fatalism, corrupt African leaders, or predatory Western countries will only result in bankrupt development models, moral decay and poverty. An astute observer of Western societies, the French publicist Alexis de Tocqueville, observed as far back as 1835 that:

> If we reasoned from what passes in the world, we should almost say that the European is to the other races of mankind, what man is to the lower animals; he makes them subservient to his use; and when he cannot subdue, he destroys them (Tocqueville 1835:179).

In 1921, René Maran deplored the heavy cost in human lives of the French 'civilizing mission' (*mission civilisatrice*):

> Civilization, civilization, pride of the Europeans and graveyard of innocents, you build your kingdom on cadavers. You are the force that prevails over the law, you are not a guiding light, but a wild fire (Diop, O. T. & F.X. Verschave 2005:33–34).

In the same vein, Leonard Barnes argues that

> The NATO countries are no longer able to give. They cannot give at all, in the sense of behaving with a measure of yielding deference in

> those whose value-systems differ from their own. Nor can they give at all, in the sense of showing generosity united to calculations of their own advantage. Beyond a punch in the face from their power, they have nothing, therefore, to offer to anybody (Barnes 1969:55).

Wayne Madsen concisely sums up America's contemporary Africa policy:

> America's Africa policy is morally corrupt. Its commercially-influenced orientation has directly promoted ethnic rivalries and some of the worst bloodshed of the 20th century. U.S. military and intelligence involvement in Africa, far from creating a sanguine and stable environment for a 'new world order,' has taken the continent back to another era, namely, the 'old world order' of Western tutelage, tribal preferences, commercial chicanery, and continued underdevelopment (Madsen 1999:478).

The interests of Africans differ from those of Western countries. The former want to live in dignity, economic self-determination and peace, while Western countries want cheap labourers – who accept an inferior position in a Western-dominated world – and markets for their goods. Western countries also want to exploit Africa's natural resources. Given the nature of the relationship between African and Western states, the former cannot industrialize unless the process is controlled by a small white minority, as is the case of South Africa. Furthermore, conflict, war, disease and epidemics will depopulate the continent to such an extent that it will never be able to compete in the international economy. According to Stanislav Andreski, African countries and peoples will eventually self-destruct under the combined impact of war, famine and disease, acting as efficient checks on population growth:

> In any case, so long as the birth rate remains at the present level, war, famine and disease will continue to play the role of checks to population growth with increasing efficacy. Which of these checks will be more important will depend on the circumstances; and we might see either endemic warfare (internal or external) or harsh despotisms holding down their subjects in such misery and degradation that the victims of *disease, hunger, terror and crime* will be sufficiently numerous to compensate for the high birth-rate (Andreski 1968:212 *the author's emphasis in italics*).

In other words, according to some Western experts, the main problem with Africa seems to be the *Africans* themselves. As Barnes noted back in 1969:

> If it were possible to empty the continent of Africans and replace them with much smaller numbers of say, Chinese or Japanese or even Americans, the *mise-en-valeur* [development] of these desperately ill-used territories would proceed at a pace and in a relatively orderly fashion of which there is no current prospect (Barnes 1969:11).

Stephen Smith makes a similar argument:

> If, by some kind of population replacement program, the population of resource-poor Japan could replace that of oil-rich Nigeria; or the population of France could replace that of the Democratic Republic of Congo, then the future of the 'giant of sub-Saharan Africa' or that of former Zaire would be secure. Similarly, if six million Israelis could replace an almost equivalent number of Chadians, flowers would bloom in the Tibesti desert and an African Mesopotamia would emerge in the fertile lands between the rivers Logone and Chari [in Chad] (Diop O. T. & F.X. Verschave 2005:19, 82–3).

Similar to the days when slavery was the norm and citizens rose against it, in the age of globalization some citizens have taken measures to halt the destructive nature of globalization. These citizens (both local and international) have formed associations to empower themselves. For example, when banks in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria and South Africa denied loans to clients who lacked collateral, these citizens created their own fund-raising organizations which empowered them economically. Similarly, to counter foreign security firms which only protected Europeans, local citizens created their own firms for protection. Africans who live in the Diaspora have also realized that sending funds home is not enough. Instead, they are investing in property whereby they have replaced foreign capital in some cases. As Africans in the Diaspora continue to have dialogue with those on the continent, many are forced to question the viability of the Western-imposed type of development. A new movement is developing which forces these Africans to seek alternative ways of empowering themselves. In the Democratic Republic of Congo where capitalist greed is out of control, citizens have created their own sources of electricity, organized trade and security. It is interesting to note that these movements are developing as a result of the economic disempowerment and moral decay that Western tutelage has produced in these states. These contradictions have forced some Africans to fight for their own liberation as they travel from country to country where the stark realities of uneven development are laid bare.

2. Every *legitimate* state's first priority must be to halt the progression of debilitating diseases still endemic in Africa, particularly AIDS, malaria, sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis), river blindness (onchocerciasis), bilharzia (schistosomiasis) and tuberculosis. This means that leaders will not allow their populations to be used as human guinea pigs by pharmaceutical companies, nor will they spend excessive amounts of money on the military at the expense of their people as is the case in Botswana, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa. In four conflict-affected central African countries (Angola, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Gabon), WHO (World Health Organisation), UNICEF, and the CDC (Center for Disease Control & Prevention) launched the first-ever synchronized massive polio immunization campaign with the aim of vaccinating 16 million children between July and September 2001 (All Africa.com). At the time of writing a combined effort between the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the World Health organization is vaccinating the Cote D'Ivoire's citizens in conflict areas. A leadership that *abandons its people to disease and exploitation is illegitimate.* Legitimate leaders are those who know (and are responsive to) their peoples' basic needs. First, they meet those basic needs (such as security, food and health). Second, these leaders *listen* to their people, they consult them on all major political and economic decisions. Third, such leaders *do not need to be protected* from the people because they are one with the people. Fourth, such leaders also consult with local – as opposed to foreign – advisers who have African interests (whichever way these are defined) at heart. Fifth, such leaders do not *steal* from the people. Instead, they protect and defend the wealth of the nation for the common good, a feature that existed in indigenous political institutions.

3. Africans should connect rural (where the majority lives) with the urban areas on the basis of African culture. The current class formation prevents a reconstitution of the state because the elite is divorced from the peasantry (a process that began with slavery). Transformation cannot occur within the present class structure without conflict developing, since the interests of the elite differ from those of the poor. No people can develop within a foreign culture. If Africans are to control their destiny, they must do so within their own culture. Africans have to take another look at their history to borrow what worked in indigenous Africa and merge it with Western institutions. Indigenous institutional safeguards such as checks-and-balances on leaders' powers would benefit contemporary African states. Civil society organizations must be based

on the African reality and on indigenous social structures such as age-grades. Decentralization of political power must be integrated into the present state system. African leaders should take a leaf from the rural sector to learn what past institutions could work in contemporary Africa. Thus, the Ruwenzururu – a peasant guerrilla movement of the Bakonzo and Bamba on the Uganda-Zaire border active from 1962 to 1980 – organized peasant communities into popular assemblies with supervisory powers over state functionaries. The village assembly – which included all adult villagers – had the right to appoint, censure or acclaim the chief, without any state interference or intervention (Mamdani 1996:197–200, 206–7).

According to *Fundi wa Afrika,* Africans must realize that only their efforts will change the conditions facing them. The people must know that no single individual, however famous, will save them. Everything depends on them. Once the political arena has been demystified through political awareness, Africans will identify with a reconstituted state. Such a state becomes *theirs*. They will not steal from it because they have made it. They can change it whenever they choose to because it is based on their interests. This liberating awareness becomes a driving force for improving the conditions facing them. It also removes the Africans' dependency syndrome (whether on leaders, deities or the West).

Fundi wa Afrika does not assume that culture is constant but views it as a dynamic force that changes according to the conditions facing it. It does not assume that all African culture is valuable, just like not all Western culture is positive. Some aspects of African culture have been used to dispossess Africans. For example, the openness of Africans to strangers has resulted in some people taking advantage of Africans. Africans' trust of others to have their best interest at heart is a weakness that continues to inform contemporary culture. This aspect of African culture must be discouraged. In other words, Africans must prioritize their interests – however defined – over those of others. As any other society does, Africans must rely and build on the best of their own culture to recreate the state. They must incorporate modern technology into the positive aspects of their culture. Mimicking the West only exacerbates Africa's poverty, as is currently happening under the guise of democracy, civil society, liberalization, the rule of law and globalization. Such mimickry perpetuates a process of destruction of African indigenous institutions which began with the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The colonial state cannot possibly be *reformed*. It has to be totally *destroyed.*

How can a rotten mango tree produce mangoes? Africans must ask themselves: whose democracy, whose liberalization and whose globalization are we talking about? They will discover that all these slogans mask a ploy to control African resources. By focusing on the rural sector, the African state will stop the rural-to-urban migration which has left the former in stagnation. Production must be focused on domestic needs rather than being export-oriented. Such an orientation implies that the first priority would be like in any other modern state: to meet the basic needs of the people.

4. Africans must transform the educational system. Under colonial education Africans were trained in irrelevant fields that were not informed by their culture and environment. Education was too theoretical. It was too centralized in urban centres, thus neglecting villages. Western education in Africa alienates Africans from their culture and environment. It presents Africans as people without any *positive* tradition, culture and history, people who were always 'backward', weak and dependent until Western colonialists and Christian missionaries came to *save* them. This misrepresentation must be countered if Africans are to be free. Civic education will be crucial in creating an African state. Such an educational system encourages students to be innovators and educators rather than passive consumers of information. It can integrate African oral tradition, art, history with science and technology to prepare Africans to deal with their environment and the conditions facing them. Such an education would use a new type of pedagogy. For example instead of students sitting in a classroom facing the teacher, the African circle that was used for story telling could be introduced. Students would sit in circles with the teacher – acting as a facilitator of knowledge – at the centre, in the belief that students learn in different ways. Furthermore, education should directly relate to the students' reality rather than alienating them from their environment. Thus, colonial education discouraged Africans from studying science and mathematics. The new educational system must emphasize both disciplines. Schools of mines and engineering must be introduced throughout the continent to teach Africans how to exploit their resources. The abridged and popularized version of the 8-volume UNESCO *General History of Africa* can be used as a starting point for teaching history. Compulsory universal education must be introduced throughout Africa. No society can develop without its youth. Any keen observer visiting African countries from Cape Town to Cairo will be shocked by the number of idle youth. *Fundi wa Africa* ar-

gues that any plan that condemns a society's youth to social, moral and cultural decay – such as that currently proposed by the IMF and the World Bank – must absolutely be *rejected*.

5. Without the proper leadership, Africa is lost to Africans. Throughout African history, African leaders were active either as heroes or collaborators. The system of collaboration continues today. The new leadership's first priority must be to meet the needs of its subjects. Democracy in Africa must serve the interests, priorities and needs of the majority. Any leadership that does not fulfil this role is illegitimate. Enforcing the popular will must be the guiding principle of a good leader. No leader should abandon its people to indignities justified as the 'rule of law'. Whose law is it, anyway? If such a law is a mere pretext to exploit the people, then *nobody should abide by it.* Africans must search their history to understand how leaders were chosen, trained and prepared for leadership based on tradition and culture. The new African leadership should exhibit the following characteristics. First, it must have Africa and its people as their only priority. Second, it must be chosen from each level (village/town council, national and federal) based on ideals and principles that the people themselves will decide on. Third, the performance of the leaders will be judged based on what they have done for the people rather than *how long* they have been in office. Constitutions (whether written or oral) will have provisions that allow for the people to remove a leader from office before the end of a term if such a leader is deemed unsuitable or corrupt. Such a leadership can only develop within a reconstituted state and as a result of the transformation of education. This explains why Africans have to achieve this objective without any foreign interference.

6. Any system that condemns women to violence, poverty and disease must be overhauled. Most indigenous African political systems respected women. But this changed under colonialism. African states must put women back in their rightful place in society as economic, political and social actors. In indigenous systems, women had a choice in polygamous marriages. Women should not be forced to enter into polygamous marriages unless they choose to. Democracy is about choice. Lower-income women have been the victims of the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs as states drastically cut down their expenditure on health care, education and other social services. Women have also been affected by globalization because they are the worst paid in the world economy. They continue to constitute the majority of AIDS victims.

African women's liberation must be based on the positive aspects of indigenous institutions rather than being carbon copies of Western feminism. Women are the heart of Africa's future. Without women, Africa is lost to Africans. African women will be the driving force of Africa's political, economic and social development.

7. In the context of globalization and of the world economy, African countries must be selective in their trade policies in order to develop their human resources behind protective barriers. It is crucially important that Africans create their own companies which will operate throughout the Federation and will be given preferential treatment over foreign-owned companies. All foreign companies operating within the Federation will be forced to pay taxes and to re-invest their profits locally. In a reconstituted state, African leaders have to introduce measures that protect workers against exploitation by trans-national companies such as limited working hours, minimum wages, pensions and medical insurance. Furthermore, companies operating in these countries must not be allowed to create tax-free zones which operate as enclave economies and discriminate against the local people. A National Development Fund (NDF) will be created. Each foreign firm will be required to deposit a percentage of its annual revenues – say, ten per cent – in the NDF. Instead of relying on foreign experts, African countries working within a reconstituted state will rely on African expertise. The disconnection between African leaders and African professionals and civil society/grassroot organizations in contemporary African states is striking. African leaders do not work with African professionals to create policy. Instead, there is tension and competition between the two groups, a process that began with the onset of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This process can only be reversed within a reconstituted state.

8. In the reconstituted African state, the activities of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) will be circumscribed and strictly regulated. In African countries today there are far too many NGOs, each operating according to different agendas, often to the detriment of the people. Some of the activities of these NGOs – especially those engaged in birth-control programs – are highly questionable. A reconstituted state will introduce laws and regulations that will ensure that the activities of these organizations adhere to the interests, priorities and needs of Africans.

9. No development can occur without an efficient transportation system. Roads, railways and air routes should be conceived to connect Afri-

can states to each other. Communication and telecommunication networks must be geared toward the inter-African movement of people and goods' needs rather than toward the former colonial countries. Once internal transportation is improved, trade will increase as different regions trade with each other on the basis of complementarity. For example, Senegal imports nearly all its food. Milk and fruit juices come from either France, Italy or Portugal. Fruits are imported from either Morocco or South Africa. From October each year, lettuce must be imported because none can be produced domestically. In a reconstituted state countries located in the Sahel will trade with East, Central and Southern Africa in various goods. For example, countries of the Sahel are known for their beautiful cloth, artwork and oil. They can export these to central, east, and Southern Africa in exchange for food products. These countries will also trade in minerals. Each region will concentrate on what it produces most efficiently without manufacturing goods produced in other regions. Just as the indigenous system in which different areas – such as forest, savannah and the Sahel – complemented each other, the reconstituted state will do the same. Regions best suited for agriculture will concentrate on food production while the Sahelian regions will focus on textiles and clothing, minerals and fossil fuels and services. Thanks to the freedom of movement of people, goods and capital, expertise will be widely shared by all the states and all the regions.

10. Africans cannot have a reconstituted state without a comprehensive cultural policy in the area of radio and visual arts (including television and film). A uniform policy must be introduced that sets standards for radio and television programming, as well as for film production. A supervisory board will examine each film proposal to make sure that the films produced in (and distributed on) the continent do not denigrate Africans, do not demean African culture and do not undermine African values. In the reconstituted state, no foreign-owned radio or television station will be allowed to operate, as is currently happening in Botswana, Kenya and South Africa. The state should sponsor artists, film-makers, and writers to produce their works in total freedom and without any ideological bias. Foreign soap-operas which seduce the poor with the artificial glamour of Western luxury without providing the means for these people to achieve their goals should be discouraged. Decolonization of the media will take various forms. First, African culture which has been relegated to tourism must take centre stage in the Federation's development. Second, foreign soap operas which are provided free of

charge have to be replaced by locally produced ones (a process in place as Nigeria 'Nollyhood' films become popular). Third, tribal radio stations (for example, as happened in Rwanda in 1994 and in Kenya in December 2007) which are used to promote inter-ethnic hatred can be replaced with African-oriented radio stations. In the Kenyan clashes hate messages were also transmitted through text messages (NPR 2008: February 20; Economist 2008:51–52).

11. A reconstituted state must protect children and the youth (from age 0 to 18). The traveller to such countries as Angola, Congo (DRC), Kenya, Botswana, Uganda, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and South Africa is struck by the number of young children who engage in prostitution. In most of these countries, pornographic material is not restricted. Another common feature of these countries is the number of foreign and local men and women who engage in sexual activities with children. Most of these countries have become havens for paedophiles who get away with activities that are severely sanctioned by law in their home countries. Except for Burkina Faso and Senegal, judicial systems in most African countries have ignored the impact of paedophilia on the fabric of their societies. Heavy penalties must be introduced to punish paedophiles as well as older men and women who engage in sexual activities with children. As the incidence of AIDS increases, another very disturbing development is the number of men – in such countries as Malawi and South Africa – who rape babies in the belief that these babies will cure them of the dreaded disease. Some have cloaked this despicable activity under the mantel of 'African culture'. There are absolutely no instances in indigenous institutions where infants were violated in this manner. Current justice systems do not protect these infants and children. A reconstituted state must impose prohibitive fines on any group or individuals that promote the violation of children's lives under the pretence of African culture, tourism or religion.

12. A reconstituted state must also protect girls from genital mutilation, a practice carried over from ancient Egypt and Kush. In some areas of Guinea the rituals, which mark girls' rites of passage, have been retained without resorting to mutilation. African states can still allow the rituals to be practiced but without the mutilations which have caused so much death and suffering. The goal of the reconstituted state is to retain the positive aspects of African culture while acquiring relevant technology for development. It cannot do so without protecting girls from medically unsound and dangerous practices.

13. Most African cities have failed to substantially increased the electricity, water and sanitation infrastructure which they inherited from colonial governments. No development can occur without a beautification and sanitation department in every region. The main goal of such a department will be to make sure that water is available at all times by creating water reservoirs. Furthermore, cleaning programs must be put in place whereby garbage is disposed of properly and recycling centres are created throughout the region. A cleaning program (similar to that of Shaka Zulu) must be introduced in which each resident is responsible for keeping their private quarters and their cities clean because it is 'their' city. There is nothing traditional about unsanitary conditions. It is a terrible habit that smacks of irresponsibility and lack of accountability. Africans have always kept their villages clean. Why do they lose this quality when they move to cities? Any beautification and sanitation program should include taking care of the homeless people who populate African cities from Cape Town to Cairo. A reconstituted state must build affordable housing for the homeless and provide job training, for example, in crafts and education. In Dakar (Senegal), people, goats, and sewage compete for swimming space in the ocean. During the rainy season, sewage fills some streets for days. In Nairobi (Kenya) Kibera and Mathare have become rubbish dumps. Pikine (Dakar, Senegal), Guguletu and Kayelithsha (outside Cape Town) do not fare better. A state that is managed by the right leadership will not privatize water to the detriment of the poor. Rather, it will tax companies to provide essential public services for the poor. A reconstituted state must make beautification and sanitation a priority. People must be rewarded for planting trees, creating parks and keeping both private and public spaces clean.

14. Africa cannot be secure without a continental army based on redrawn borders (Map 1: FAS). Each state will contribute a contingent to a standing federal army to protect the continent.

This army will be in a better position than international agencies to respond quickly to internal emergencies and to help relocate refugees. This army will be made up of Africans who consider Africa the first priority. It will have to fight against local and international mercenaries who undermine Africa's freedom. Without a dedicated army, the Federation will not defend itself. It is only when Africans realize that they cannot be paid to kill fellow Africans that they will cease to participate in their own disempowerment. Government institutions will draw on

African indigenous methods of conflict resolution. They will open avenues for resolving conflict before it arises by providing basic resources, such as land, food, health care and shelter which currently force many people into conflict. The presence of an African federal army will also reduce the role of mercenaries that continue to wreak havoc in these states. Furthermore, each state will maintain its own youth service (a type of national guard) but will rely on the federal army for its security. The army will not be used to oppress citizens; instead it will be fully integrated into, and be in, the service of the community. No foreign military bases will be allowed in the Federation. Hence the need for a mentally-decolonized military leadership firmly rooted in African traditions and values.

15. The African debt must be totally written off, and a moratorium on debt repayment declared. As a block, the Federation must refuse to pay debt. Several developments may occur from the refusal: open war instigated by those who are owed money, outbreaks of diseases like Ebola may become the norm, low intensity warfare where tribal wars act as destabilization forces may develop (as is currently happening in Kenya where the United States and the European Union are forcing Mwai Kibaki to share power with their candidate of choice, Raila Odinga). If Kibaki (who became an enemy of the empire when he signed economic and military deals with China while marginalizing the IMF/World Bank) refuses to share power with Odinga, the organized violence and death will continue. If they are to free themselves, Africans must be willing to face all these challenges.

Ordinary African men, women and children cannot be held accountable *ad vitam aeternam* for a debt incurred by their unelected elites in pursuit of their own enrichment, and without their *people's consent*. African leaders themselves are personally accountable for repayment of the debt incurred vis-à-vis their Western lenders and overlords. In this sense, it can be truly said that Africa and Africans owe absolutely nothing to Western countries or their agencies. If anything, *it is the West which owes Africans reparations* for the millions of human lives lost and billions of dollars of mineral wealth plundered and revenues extracted during five centuries of European predation and exploitation through slavery, imperialism, colonialism, debt repayment, neo-colonialism and globalization.

Governance and Political Institutions in the Federation of African States

As a reconstituted state, the Federation of African States (FAS - see Figure 1) will include several levels of authority based on a clearly defined separation of power designed to act as a check on the abuses of power by any one branch of government. The national (federal) government will levy federal taxes for the defence and security of the Federation, as well as for the transportation infrastructure. States will collect state taxes – for state defence, security and transportation – and work with the federal government for the benefit of the Federation. The presidency will be organized on a rotational basis between the different regions. Each president can only serve for two six year-terms (if re-elected for a second term). However, citizens have a right to call a referendum if the president fails to perform her/his duties to their satisfaction before the end of the first or second term. Power will be divided between the presidency, the judiciary and citizens' councils (at the village/town, regional and national levels). No branch of government will be allowed to interfere in the activities of the other or to monopolize power to oppress the people. Each level of governance will be advised by an advisory council.

National ideals, values and goals based on African culture, history and environment will inform every aspect of governance. Unlike liberal democracy that privileges corporate, sectional and elite interests over those of the majority of the people, Africa will have a popular democracy –based on accountability and responsibility – that will be organized from below (Ake 1996:2000). Democracy will only be meaningful in Africa if it allows the people – both those in rural and urban areas – to decide on their destiny rather than allowing corrupt leaders based in capital cities to do so. Since each section of the population will have representatives at all levels of government, power will be decentralized and the people will determine their destiny based on their interests, priorities and needs. Governance will be a bottom–up approach. Power will start from the village councils made up of the local people. This will be followed by a regional council of elders, then a national council who will be followed by the federal council of presidents.

The federal capital of FAS will be based in Napata. Economic and political power will be decentralized, giving people more input in the day–to–day activities of the Federation. The leaders of each of the five states will meet 36 times a year. They will meet in Napata 12 times a year; they will meet in each one of the states on a rotating basis based on

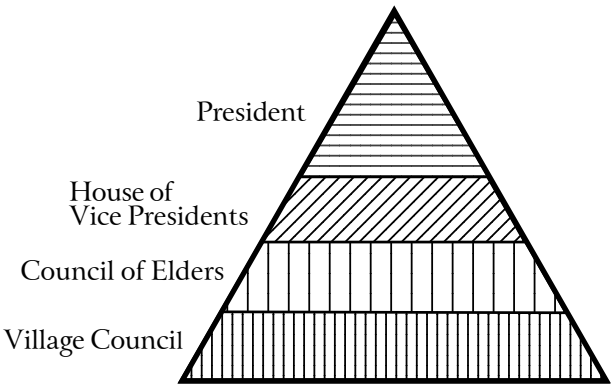
alphabetical order another 12 times; the remaining 12 meetings will be held in their own states. While in a particular state, leaders will meet with the people in town halls as well as in the state's village councils so that they can find out the needs of that particular state. These meetings will be crucial in decentralizing power between rural and urban areas, therefore encouraging a bottom-up approach where leaders learn from the people.

In FAS, governance will be based on a bottom-up approach where most of the power will belong to the village councils of each state, composed of 120 members elected directly by the people. The people's council (composed of 600 members, 120 per state) shall meet twelve times a year at the federal level. Elections will be based on proportional representation where a candidate's election depends on the actual number of votes received. Members of the village councils would each be in office for terms of seven years, renewable indefinitely. Each would represent the village council at the federal level. The governance of each state is entrusted to a state village council made up of 200 members (also elected directly by the people on the basis of proportional representation). These members would be in office for two 3-year terms (if re-elected). State village councils would work within FAS ideals as laid out in the Federation's constitution. The next level would be the council of elders which would be in office for a maximum of three 5-year terms. The council of elders would have 100 members (chosen directly by the people from diverse professional and age-groups) from each state. The State's council of elders would be in office for a maximum of two 4-year terms. FAS' council of elders will be responsible for advising the House of vice-presidents and the president. The third branch of government would be the judiciary made up of individuals skilled in indigenous as well as western law. Village, provincial, state and national courts (High Organ) would make up the judiciary system.

The penal system would be based on rehabilitation rather than retribution and incarceration. FAS would totally prohibit the death penalty. People convicted of crimes and minor offences would be rehabilitated through community service – such as building/repairing roads, schools, public buildings or wells – for a specific period of time depending on the nature and seriousness of the crime. Discrimination in any form would be punishable by law. Any FAS citizen would be allowed to travel and settle freely throughout the Federation regardless of ethnicity, national origin, race, class or gender.

Five vice presidents would make up the fifth branch of government. Each state would elect one vice president. Candidates for the vice presidency must be elected by the constituents of the states based on proportional representation and on FAS ideals as stated in the constitution. The vice presidents would serve for an initial 8-year term to be renewed once. The fifth branch of government would be made up by the presidency which would rotate from state to state based on alphabetical order. Six presidential candidates from a particular state will be chosen from and by the village council. They must win a national election in all five states. The candidate receiving the most votes will become the president. Each president would serve for an 8-year term, renewable once. Power would be like a pyramid with the base holding the most influence (see Figure 1). The people shall have the right to remove any elected official from office before his/her term is over by referendum. The Federation of African States will have a constitution which will specify the structure, rights, duties and powers of each branch of government. Members of the village councils, council of elders, and judiciary will draft the constitution with the assistance of the citizens. The people shall approve the constitution by referendum.

Figure 1: FAS Structure *Reconstituting an African Identity within the Federation of African States*



One cannot discuss the reconstitution of the African state without examining its various fragments. First, there is the divide between the indigenous and the modern sector and between various African states with different colonial experiences and traditions. Transportation must be

improved so that Africans can easily travel within the continent. Currently, it costs more to ship a car from Dakar, Senegal to Cairo, Egypt than it costs to ship one from Japan to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Internal transportation will also improve communication between African regions and facilitate trade as goods will be cheaper to transport. Second, ethnicity has been so politically manipulated both by colonial agents and the post-colonial elite that it has become a major source of conflict. Following indigenous notions of identity that respect humanity in spite of differences, Africans must learn to tolerate difference as a source of strength. An educational system that emphasizes an African identity will play a key role in transforming ethnicity from an agent of division of the people to an agent of unity. People can still identify themselves as Arab, Fulani, Maninka, Kikuyu, Yoruba or Zulu as long as that identity is not used to create conflict. Once an African identity is privileged over an ethnic one, Africans will be ready to control their destinies as they live in peace and dignity. Third, a vast gap exists between Africans in the Diaspora and those on the continent. Both must have open dialogues to encourage communication and an understanding based on cultural as well as other differences. Africans must seek other groups in the Diaspora who have the same goals to reconstitute the state. Africans in the Diaspora who support the new state could invest in these states or settle if they wish to. Fourth, a divide exists within the African continent between rich and powerful states (such as Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa) and poor and weak ones (such as Comoros, Djibouti, Gambia, the Seychelles, and Sao Tome & Principe). This divide also exists between the forest, the savannah and the Sahel. A reconstituted state must complement all these areas as they work together. Fifth, the current African state suffers from a fragmentation of knowledge (Barry 2001). In contemporary African states, there are three types of elites that neither communicate nor complement each other. First, the indigenous elite trained in oral tradition; for example, griots/praise-singers, and medicine men and women. Second, a Muslim/Arabic elite trained to write in Arabic and African languages, as well as a Christian elite. Finally, colonialism introduced its own elite trained in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish at the expense of indigenous languages. A reconstituted state must create avenues where all these elites communicate and work towards the same goal. Unless there is a complementary relationship between these three elites, there can be no economic and political and cultural leadership in Africa.

Different African states must unite within a Federation of African States (see Map 1: FAS) to create internal markets for African goods and economies of scale. It is interesting to note in this regard that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at its 5th extraordinary summit meeting in Sirte (Libya) of March 1-2, 2001, formally adopted an African Union, complete with a Pan-African Parliament, Court of Justice and African Economic Community. Unfortunately, what has emerged from the Sirte meeting is not a United States of Africa but another pale imitation of the European Union designed to further open Africa up for exploitation. As has happened throughout history, with the support of the West, African rulers have mortgaged the continent and its people's future to various organizations. During this process, various factions emerged, thus demonstrating the inability of African rulers to think and act independently of their Western sponsors. Such factions included one led by Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa (with the support of United States and the European Union), on the one hand, and the very few which sided with Libya on the other hand. The Libyan faction called for a self-reliant United States of Africa in the spirit of the late Kwame Nkrumah. The Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa camp won the day.

The Africa Union was finalized in Maputo (Mozambique) in July 2003. It is modelled after the European Union (EU) with a Council of Ministers, a Commission, a pan-African Parliament and an African Court of Justice, while the secondary model is the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) as formalized in the *Kampala Document* of the Africa Leadership Forum then led by Nigeria's president Olusegun Obasanjo of May 1991. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a merger of two previous initiatives: the millennium Action Plan for African Recovery (MAP) launched in February 2001 and sponsored by Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Obasanjo and Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algeria) and the Omega plan of Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal). The objective of NEPAD is to eradicate poverty through a new partnership between Africa and external donors regrouped within the 'Strategic Partnership for Africa'. It has identified eight sectors for priority action: good governance, infrastructure, education, health agriculture new information and communication technology energy and market access. A total of US $64 billion has been earmarked to finance this program to which the U.S. has committed a $6 billion aid package. NEPAD has been merged into AU's development program. NEPAD is a neo-liberal (neo-imperial) project based on the accelerated

liberalization and privatization of African economies, with Western economic, financial and technical assistance and support. It is a mere poverty-reduction program that dovetails with similar programs promoted in Africa by the international financial institutions (International Monetary Fund/IMF and World Bank), Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and Highly Indebted Developing Countries (HIDC) initiatives.

The AU and NEPAD cannot succeed because they are conceived from above (by the leadership) without popular input or support. They do not question the nature of the African state since they accept it as legitimate. Development based on these institutions is development against the people because they assume Africa can only develop by following the Western path in spite of its dismal performance. In addition, the AU and NEPAD are not informed by African culture, history and environment. Finally their goal is to remove the symptoms of the crises in these countries (poverty reduction) without addressing the root cause of the crises, namely the nature of the African state. In other words, the sole purpose of these institutions is to open Africa up for better exploitation by Western firms at the expense of the needs of Africans.

Economic independence based on the exploitation of Africa's resources with a view to improve the standard of living of Africans can only occur once the map of the continent is redrawn and the *right* leadership chosen *by Africans for Africa.*

According to *Fundi wa Africa,* the continent will be divided into five regions. These regions will make up the Federation of African States (Map 1: FAS). The new state of *Kimit* includes: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Western Sahara plus the Arab population of Mauritania, Northern Sudan and Northern Chad. *Mali* will include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, plus the African population of Mauritania. *Kongo* will include Congo (DRC), Congo Republic, Cameroon, Southern Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome & Principe, Rwanda and Burundi. *Kush* includes southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia-Somaliland, Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Seychelles, Uganda, and Comoros. *Zimbabwe* includes Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritius, Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The new federal capital city will be called Napata. It will not belong to any of the five states. These states will

make up the *Federation of African States* (FAS). Each region will have a key player based on population and resources, for example, Kongo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa. All external economic relations will be conducted by the federal government.

Economic Governance in the Federation of African States (FAS)

In a co-written chapter titled 'Sub-Saharan Africa in Global Capitalism', Colin Leys and John S. Saul ask: Is Africa a victim of exploitation or of marginalization?

> The short answer must be both. In the popular meaning of exploitation, Africa suffers acutely from exploitation: every packet of cheap Kenyan tea sold in New York, every overpriced tractor exported to Nigeria, every dollar of interest on ill-conceived and negligently supervised loans to African governments (interest that accrues to Western banks) – not to mention every diamond illegally purchased from warlords in Sierra Leone or Angola – benefits people in the West at the expense of Africa's impoverished populations (Saul 2005:20-21).

Africa operates in a hostile international capitalist system. This hostility will increase as Africans try to liberate themselves; hence the urgent need for the countries within the Federation to trade with each other, therefore creating an economic block.

In the Federation of African States, all economic activities will be geared toward two main goals: improving the standard of living of the majority of the people and strengthening the Federation. The Federation will no longer be a victim of exploitation or marginalization. In this spirit, particular emphasis will be placed on inter-state trade within the Federation. For example, FAS members that produce oil will sell it to other members while they, in turn, will purchase food items or textile products from these states. State corporations – manned by adequately trained managers, technicians and engineers – will be set up to manage and control key sectors of the economy such as utilities (water, electricity and telecommunications) and mining. Obviously, economic independence cannot be achieved without a rear-guard struggle from the contemporary beneficiaries.

Map 1: FAS

Conclusion

Without political and economic unity among African states, and without a political system based on the people's interests and informed by indigenous institutions, there can neither be a united Africa, nor an African renaissance. As the preceding discussion amply demonstrates, this calls on Africans to take control over their own development.

Kwame Nkrumah correctly observed in the early sixties that:

> We are Africans first and last, and as Africans our best interests can only be served by uniting within an African Community (...) We in Africa have looked outward too long for the development of our economy and transportation. Let us begin to look inwards into the African Continent for all aspects of its development (...) We in Africa have untold agricultural, mineral, and water-power resources. These almost fabulous resources can be fully exploited and utilized in the interest of Africa and the African people, only if we develop them within a Union Government of African States (Nkrumah 1963:216, 217 & 219).

Africa's unity is still essential for development, peace and security. Godfrey Mwakikagile notes:

> If the future of Africa lies in federation, that kind of federation could be a giant federation of numerous autonomous units which have replaced the modern African state in order to build, on a continental or sub-continental scale, a common market, establish a common currency, a common defence, and maybe even pursue a common foreign policy under some kind of central authority – including collective leadership on rotational basis – which Africans think is best for them (Mwakikagile 2001:121)

According to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere:

> Africa…is isolated. Therefore, to develop, it will have to depend upon its own resources basically, internal resources, nationally, and Africa will have to depend upon Africa. The leadership of the future will have to devise, try to carry out policies of maximum national self-reliance and maximum collective self-reliance. They have no other choice. Hamna! [Kiswahili for there is none] (Saul 2005:159).

Against all odds, Africans have survived on the edge of starvation and poverty for five centuries. They must not just survive but *overcome* and *triumph* by becoming the initiators and owners of their own development – a process that entails a mental decolonization from dependency either on deities, leaders or Western countries and institutions. Africans can *triumph* over the destiny carved out for them by five centuries of capitalism's exploitation and marginalization of the continent. They have to harness their energies towards positive and constructive – rather than negative and destructive – pursuits: not to destroy each other but to fight against a common enemy which is dependency, poverty, disease and war. Africans must be incredibly bold and innovative if they are to, at last, control their natural resources and their destiny. They are definitely up to the challenge. Africa must solve its problems the African way on the basis of its own history, culture, tradition and environment.

References

Arcton, Q-O., 2008, 'Cell Phone, A Tool of Violence in Kenya', *National Public Radio* 20 February; 5 minutes, 52 seconds.

Ake, C., 1996, *Development and Democracy in Africa,* Washington DC: The Brookings Institution.

Ake, C., 2000, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa,* Dakar: CODESRIA.

Andresky, S., 1968, *The African Predicament: A Study in the Pathology of Modernization,* New York: Atherton Press.
Barnes, L., 1969, *African Renaissance,* Indianapolis: The Bob-Merrill Co.
Barry, B., 2001, *Senegambia: Advocating Regional Historical Perspective,* SEPHIS# 1, 2 www.sephis.org/htm/publications.htm
Diop, B. B., Tobner, O. & Verschave, F.X., 2005, *Négrophobie*, Paris: Editions des Arenes.
Editorial 2008, 'Kenya Ethnic Cleansing in Luoland', *The Economist,* February 7.
Kuhn, T., 1997, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Madsen, W., 1999, *Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa 1993-1999*, Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.
Mamdani, M., 1996, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Muiu wa Muen and Martin, Guy, A New Paradigme of the African State: Fundi wa Africa 9, New York: Palgrave Mcmilan- forthcomming.
Mwakikagile, G, 2001, *The Modern African State: Quest for Transformation*, Huntington, New York: Nova Science Publishers.
Nkrumah, K., 1963, *Africa Must Unite,* London: Panaf Books.
Nyerere, J. K., 'Reflections' in *Reflections on Leadership in Africa: Forty Years after Independence: Essays in Honour of Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday,* ed., Haroub Othman (Dar es Salaam: Institute of Development Studies, 2000).
Saul, J.S., 2005, *The Next Liberation Struggle: Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy in Southern Africa,* Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
Smith, S., 2003, *Negrologie: Pourquoi l'Afrique Meurt*, Paris: Calmann-Levy.
Tocqueville, A. de, 1963, 1835, *De la Democratie en Amerique,* Paris: Union Generale d'Editions.
U.N. Integrated Regional Information Network, 'Polio Campaign Succeeding despite Challenges', 8 August 2001, see *http:www.allAfrica.com*

African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2008, pp. 29–53

(ISSN 0850-7902)

'We Met the Enemy and He is Us': Domestic Politics and South Africa's Role in Promoting African Democracy

Steven Friedman*

Abstract

South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy has disappointed scholars and activists who expected the post-apartheid state to promote democracy and human rights in Africa and the world, and who complain that it has failed to fulfill that promise.

This paper examines South Africa's role in democracy promotion since 1994 and, in particular, the argument that it intended to promote rights and freedoms in Africa but was forced to change its approach by power realities on the continent. It finds this explanation wanting and argues that the core goal of foreign policy of the post-apartheid government was not to promote democracy, but rather, merely to prove white racism wrong.

Since 1994, the African National Congress-led government has been aware that much of white opinion, at home and abroad, expects majority ruled African societies to fail. Its prime concern, therefore, has been to refute the prejudice that black Africans cannot run successful societies. It is this concern which has underpinned foreign policy: the aim has been to project Africa as a continent whose states are measuring up to the Northern model of a successful society. Hence, democracy promotion has been only a means to that end, and this is the major factor responsible for its uneven and sporadic application.

* Director, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Rhodes University/University of Johannesburg. Email: sef53@mweb.org.za; sfriedman@uj.ac.za

Résumé

La politique étrangère postapartheid de l'Afrique du Sud a déçu les universitaires et les activistes qui s'attendaient à ce que l'État postapartheid fasse la promotion de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme en Afrique et dans le monde, et qui se plaignent qu'il n'ait pas réussi à tenir cette promesse.

Cet article examine le rôle de l'Afrique du Sud dans la promotion de la démocratie depuis 1994 et, en particulier, l'argument selon lequel elle avait l'objectif de promouvoir les droits et les libertés en Afrique, mais qu'elle a été contrainte de changer son approche par les réalités du pouvoir sur le continent. L'article défend que cette explication se révèle insuffisante, et soutient que l'objectif essentiel de la politique étrangère du gouvernement postapartheid n'était pas de promouvoir la démocratie, mais plutôt de simplement prouver que le racisme blanc avait tort.

Depuis 1994, le gouvernement dirigé par le Congrès national africain (ANC) est conscient du fait que la plupart des blancs, au pays et à l'étranger, s'attendent à ce que les sociétés africaines gouvernées par une majorité noire sont vouées à l'échec. Son premier souci a donc été de réfuter les préjugés selon lesquels les Africains noirs sont incapables de diriger leurs sociétés avec succès. C'est cette préoccupation qui a sous-tendu la politique étrangère: l'objectif a été de projeter l'Afrique comme un continent dont les États sont à la hauteur du modèle de société prospère du Nord. Par conséquent, la promotion de la démocratie a été seulement un moyen à cette fin, et c'est le principal facteur responsable de son application inégale et sporadique.

Introduction

Expectations that a democratic South Africa would promote democracy and stability in Africa were articulated within minutes of democracy's achievement on May 10, 1994.

The inauguration of Nelson Mandela as first President was attended by then United States Vice-president Al Gore who is said to have taken him aside and requested his minutes-old government to send peacekeepers to Rwanda (Adebajo 2006). The United States was to make further appeals to the new government to play a leading role in stabilising Africa – raising inevitable objections that it saw South Africa as a useful means of deflecting pressures for engagement in messy conflicts: 'To more cynical observers, it was a way of letting the international community, and particularly the West, off the African hook' (Barber 2004:85-86). While the goal was ostensibly to end conflicts, democratisation was an implied concern – then US secretary of state Warren Christopher raised the Nigerian junta and a coup in Burundi as potential areas for intervention in 1996 (US Department of State 1996). And expecta-

tions – within the country and among international actors – that South Africa would become a force for democratisation in Africa were strong (Seymour 1996). A new democracy, seen by many as a miraculous expression of the democratic ethos, was expected to seek to export it to the rest of the continent, and perhaps beyond.

South African democratising efforts have fallen significantly short of expectations (van Aardt 1996) – even allowing for the reality that what is expected from an iconic new government will far exceed the possible. While it may claim some successes, gains have been far less visible than we might expect from a state whose economy dwarfs all others on the continent and whose political capital as the product of Africa's successful fight against apartheid should give it moral weight. And perhaps the most important challenge to its democratising intent and capacity, its response to Zimbabwe, has been a conspicuous failure (Sachikonye 2005) which has also tarnished its moral lustre and reduced its credibility. While it is unfair to say that South Africa has done nothing to meet the expectations, it has not exerted the influence its assets seemed to give it.

This article, in particular, takes issue with explanations which see the limitations of South African democratisation as a case of an 'idealist' foreign policy adjusting to external realities (Barber 2004; Lodge n.d.). While acknowledging that promoting democracy elsewhere is difficult and that attempts by South Africa to do this in Africa are particularly so, it challenges the assumption of a South Africa eager to spread freedom and an African reality determined to resist it. It argues, rather, that South African policy has been ambiguous since 1994 and remains so. It seeks to show that these ambiguities are rooted in a domestic reality in which conflicting visions of democracy and its promotion contend – and that the complexities of South Africa's own efforts to democratise play a crucial role in shaping its responses to African democratisation. This suggests a need for analyses of international democracy promotion to examine how complexities in democracy promoting states affect their capacity to spread democracy.

Post-Apartheid South Africa and Democracy Promotion

South Africa's democracy promotion experience can be divided into three phases: while there is a rough chronology, one does not follow another in strict date order. This seeming progression in policy and action is, however, thrown into disarray by an apparent anomaly – its policy towards Zimbabwe.

Dashed Expectations

The newly-elected African National Congress government was partly responsible for encouraging the expectation that it would energetically promote democracy.

A 1993 article by Nelson Mandela in *Foreign Affairs* which declared that 'human rights should be the core concern of foreign policy' after apartheid (Mandela 1993) was often cited immediately after the ANC took office as evidence of a commitment to encourage democracy abroad. A statement of foreign policy intentions at the end of 1994, when the ANC became the government, declared that 'South Africa will devote its energies to the accomplishment of democratic ideals throughout the world'. Although this was qualified by a passage noting the tension between democracy promotion and sovereignty, it promised: 'Grateful for the international solidarity which supported the anti-apartheid cause, a democratic South Africa will be in solidarity with all those whose struggle continues' (ANC 1994).

This expression of foreign policy 'idealism' (Barber 2004:92) was often contrasted with the 'realism' of the apartheid-era foreign policy establishment and its intellectual camp-followers, who tended to see foreign policy as a means of maximising economic advantage (Evans 1993). Concern for democracy and human rights was thus associated with the new order's foreign policy orientation. The most vigorous post-apartheid foreign policy debate was not the interchange between government and opposition but that between the Department of Foreign Affairs, the parliamentary foreign affairs committee dominated by the now governing ANC and scholars and activists who had worked closely with the new establishment and hoped to shape its policy. And a key issue was the new government's perceived failure to support the fight for democracy in Africa and the world (Diescho 1996:7; Daniel 1995).

The post-apartheid government was charged with sins of omission and commission. On the first score, with failing to take the democratic lead which its provenance demanded: 'the world expects more from a democratic South Africa ... After a long struggle for human rights in this country, our new democracy is viewed as a natural leader…' (Seymour 1996:1). On the second, of feting dictators who were economically useful – Indonesia's Suharto's 1997 state visit was still being cited as a reproach to Mandela three years later (*Sunday Times* 30/1/2000) – or of co-operating with African autocrats, such as Nigeria's Abacha junta. The

government insisted that a key aspect of its foreign policy was 'universality' – it would deal with all countries whatever it thought of their 'internal or external policies' (Barber 2004:92). But critics noted that the claim that contact with an undemocratic government did not mean endorsement were repeatedly made by those who retained links to the apartheid government (du Preez 2007).

In this phase, the government's commitment to promoting democracy elsewhere seems matched neither by vigorous action nor by credibility among advocates of an active role.

Derring-Do In Nigeria and Lesotho, Speaking Loudly in SADC

The initial expectation that the ANC in government would carry the democratic torch through Africa and the world were inevitably exaggerated. But so too was the claim that it had turned its back on promoting democracy: as early as 1994, it intervened in Mozambique to support an electoral process in difficulty (Barber 2004:100). Some eighteen months after democracy was achieved, Mandela took an unprecedented stand on a human rights issue – the execution, in late 1995, of the Nigerian activist and author Ken Saro-Wiwa (Human Rights Watch 1996). He reacted angrily, calling for sanctions against the Nigerian junta and its expulsion from the Commonwealth – a response which was said to have 'pitched South Africa way ahead of the position of any other African government' on Nigeria (*Mail and Guardian* 24/11/1995).

Since post-independence African heads of government tended to rally together, Mandela's intervention prompting anger from other governments on the continent. The Organisation of African Unity described the call for sanctions as 'not an African way' of dealing with a problem (Vale and Maseko 1998:272) while Liberia urged '…other African countries to prevail on President Mandela not to allow South Africa to be used in the division and undermining of African solidarity' (Venter 1996:2). Mandela was seen, it was claimed, to be acting in the 'white man's way', following a 'Western' approach (Diescho 1996:9). Vigorous action against Nigeria by African states did not ensue and South Africa seems to have decided that discretion was the better part of valour: in an address to parliament in May 1996, then deputy president Thabo Mbeki argued that South Africa did not have the leverage to dictate to Nigeria. He suggested that Mandela had been set up for failure by western leaders, some of whom were protecting oil profits and Nigerian assets in their countries (Adebajo 2006).

This experience did not deter South Africa from an aggressive and very risky intervention to protect an elected neighbouring government which seemed under threat from a military coup. In September 1998, South Africa and Botswana, acting formally on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), despatched troops to the neighbouring kingdom of Lesotho after its elected prime minister, Pakalitha Mosilisi, requested help because he feared a coup. The incursion initially appeared disastrous and encountered widespread criticism: the troops faced armed resistance and intervention prompted widespread looting. In the fullness of time, however, it could be said to have been justified by democracy's restoration in Lesotho: academic critics of the action labelled the intervention an 'unlikely success' after elections in 2002 (Southall 2003).

Nor were Mandela and Mbeki discouraged from supporting democracy in the SADC region and further afield. In late 1997, after events in Southern Africa created fears of a retreat from democracy, Mandela used his office as chair of SADC to raise concerns:

> At some point therefore, we, as a regional organisation, must reflect on how far we support the democratic process and respect for human rights. Can we continue to give comfort to member states whose actions go so diametrically against the values and principles we hold so dear and for which we struggled so long and so hard? Where we have, as we sadly do, instances of member states denying their citizens … basic rights, what should we as an organisation do or say? (Mandela 1997)

Months later, Mbeki was as blunt, satirising governance ills on the continent, including ballot-box stuffing (Mbeki 1998). Neither seemed to have been cowed by the disapproval of their peers (which was said to have greeted these interventions too) or to have been seduced into silence by expediency.

While this phase is usually associated primarily with the Mandela administration, and in particular its later period, one aspect endured into the Mbeki presidency: twice, in Zambia and Malawi, he intervened to dissuade presidents from seeking a third term in office in the face of mobilised public opposition (Lodge n.d).

In this phase, South Africa is doing much of what first phase critics want it to do – energetically pursuing democracy, even if this means clashing with autocrats. Advocates of democracy promotion now accepted

that it shared their interest (Solomon 1997). But assertive, public, democracy promotion was giving way to a more modest approach.

Speaking (Largely) in Code

In the third phase, which continues into the present, South Africa continues to play a role in democracy promotion but influence and intervention is tailored not to confront African leaders and is justified on grounds other than democracy's merits.

First, interventions are presented not as democracy promotion but as contributions to conflict resolution. They are pursued within a context in which South Africa seeks to assist other societies in applying the inclusive negotiated settlement model which ended apartheid:

> The most consistent thread in South Africa's post-1994 foreign policy forays lay in its efforts to 'export' its model of conflict resolution to other situations: this consisted of painstaking compromise and consensus-building and the assimilation of rivals into new, democratic systems … Pretoria tried this in Mozambique, the former Zaire, Nigeria, Angola and Lesotho (Marais 1999).

This approach has also been applied to two major international conflicts, Northern Ireland and Palestine. While the most impact may have been achieved not in Africa but in Northern Ireland, where Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams insists that engagement with the ANC helped persuade his movement to abandon violence and pursue a political settlement (Adams 2005), continuing attempts to broker peace in Democratic Republic of Congo (Department of Foreign Affairs 2006) and Burundi (*SABC News* 17/6/2006) have produced processes which could yield inclusive democratic orders. A key element is participation in peacekeeping: 'overall South African peacekeeping deployments in African countries total 2,800 personnel' (Lodge n.d.).

These interventions, since they entail an attempt to include all political actors in the process and are meant to produce a free and fair election, are attempts to democratise as well as to prevent violence. But they are presented not as democracy promotion exercises, but as attempts to settle conflicts.

Second, an attempt to channel democratising influences through multilateral, continental, institutions. Thus, South Africa has played a key role in establishing the African Union (AU) and developing its New Partnership for African Development (Nepad). Nepad, adopted in 2002, includes a declaration which commits African governments to:

> The rule of law, the equality of all citizens before the law and the liberty of the individual, individual and collective freedoms, including the right to form political parties and trade unions… (NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance, Section 7).

The AU has also adopted the OAU's proposal to establish an African Peer Review Mechanism in which civil society is to participate and which tests, among other issues, the state of democracy (OAU 2002). South Africa has sought to act as an exemple by submitting itself to peer review. This approach is consistent with an oft-stated South African concern for multi-lateralism as a means of settling disputes which, in the view of some scholars, is evidence of its status as an actual or aspiring 'middle power' (Wood 1998:1).

Third, a democratising influence is exerted through instruments which purport to have another purpose. Thus, Nepad is concerned to promote development and 'good governance'. Its democracy promoting elements are phrased almost as technical aspects of 'good governance' which are required if the continent is to achieve growth, modernity – and foreign aid: its Democracy and Political Governance Initiative is presented as a means to 'contribute to strengthening the political and administrative framework of participating countries... It is strengthened by and supports the Economic Governance Initiative, with which it shares key features' (Nepad 2001:17). The Peer Review Mechanism is not presented as a measure of democratic achievement, but of a more general commitment to the growth-oriented and developmental goals of Nepad:

> The primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration… (OAU 2002:2).

In this phase, South Africa has continued to play a role in supporting democracy promotion, but one performed almost by stealth. Its role is less open to challenge, and less threatening to power holders. But its impact is greatly reduced by the need to move at the pace of actors who may be resistant to democracy.

The Fatal Flaw? Zimbabwe

If South Africa's response to the challenge of democracy promotion had stopped at the examples cited thus far, its role could be judged to be benign if sometimes ineffectual. Lodge points out that it has assisted

electoral processes, supported 'politically negotiated conflict resolution' in which civil society participation has been encouraged and persuaded reluctant presidents to observe term limits' (Lodge n.d.). But this relatively positive evaluation must be greatly modified by its failure to meet the moral and strategic challenge of its most conspicuous foreign policy test: Zimbabwe.

The events which began when President Robert Mugabe's government lost a constitutional referendum in 2000, in which attempts to defeat him at the polls have been beaten back by a sustained and often violent authoritarian onslaught, have been exhaustively analysed (McKinley 2006). Suffice it to say here that South Africa has, during the tenure of former President Mbeki, offered substantial aid and comfort to the Zimbabwean regime by sending official delegations which endorsed elections regarded by independent sources as fraudulent, often ignoring the opposition, seeking to temper international action against Mugabe and remaining silent on human rights abuses.

South Africa has insisted through much of the conflict that it is adopting an even-handed approach which relies on 'quiet diplomacy' and is seeking an inclusive negotiated settlement (Sachikonye 2005). But, since Zimbabwean democracy has continued to decline throughout this period and South Africa has appeared to condone this, claims of neutrality have lacked credibility. As a Zimbabwean civil society activist said of official claims that South Africa was avoiding unproductive 'megaphone diplomacy' – 'You *are* engaged in megaphone diplomacy. But you are pointing the megaphone in the wrong direction.' (Round-table, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria 2003).

Critics who insist that South Africa has not exerted the pressure it could on Zimbabwe include not only the Zimbabwean opposition but former President Mbeki's brother Moeletsi, deputy chair of the SA International Affairs, who has consistently urged a more assertive stance (Lodge n.d.), as well as civil society organisations in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Even if the complaint that South Africa has supported a sustained attempt by an illegitimate government to crush opposition is rejected in favour of the government view that it has been trying to resolve a difficult problem in the only possible way, Zimbabwe remains a notable failure because Mbeki and his government insisted that they were trying to reach a settlement and none is in sight.

More importantly, the South African response to Zimbabwe has severely tarnished the effectiveness of its promotion of democracy. It has

created an impression of inconsistency and thus expediency (du Preez 2007) – South Africa may well not be able, after Zimbabwe, to return to more vigorous promotions of democracy of the sort it attempted in the second phase, even if circumstances seemed to warrant it, because this would raise obvious questions about why abuses were permitted in Zimbabwe but not elsewhere. In effect, the Zimbabwean response may have ensured that South African democratisation efforts will remain limited and conducted by stealth.

It is also possible that, because the response has been justified as a strategy to achieve an inclusive settlement, it may have damaged the credibility of this strategy too. If inclusive negotiation means condoning anything power holders do to the powerless, it is unclear what constraints it places on the former and what hope it offers the latter. While the inclusive style may still enjoy credibility in cases such as Burundi and DRC, where both power holders and challengers have access to arms and the one cannot be considered to be at the mercy of the other, they may now be discredited in cases in which citizens require protection from power holders who hold a monopoly on coercion. It may also weaken South Africa's already limited influence within the AU and SADC. A key weakness of the multi-lateral instruments South Africa has helped to shape is that they have never been used against Zimbabwe – they have, in reality, never been used against an incumbent government and have seemed to be designed to protect incumbents.[1] The impression that they are cosmetic or a means of shoring up existing power relations not only reduces their credibility among actors working for democracy, but among power holders who do not expect to be held to account by them.

Zimbabwe is, therefore, not simply a limited stain on South Africa's democratisation record. It severely compromises the credibility and strategic viability of its role as a democratiser. In essence, it appears to confirm that South Africa's role as a promoter of democracy is now largely limited to doing what power-holders will allow it to do.

The Manacled Giant? Explaining the Limits

What are we to make of this experience?

One influential strain of analysis sees it as a reminder of the limits which face democracy promotion ambitions (Barber 2004; Lodge n.d.). In this view, the new South Africa made an energetic attempt to spread democracy but was then forced by reality to retreat into a more nuanced

stance which acknowledged the limits of foreign policy 'idealism', making significant concessions to a more sober 'realism'.

The evidence for this shift is said to be contained in a 1997 ANC discussion document (ANC 1997) tabled at its conference that year. While it repeated 'idealist' intentions, it placed 'at the top of the international agenda' developing a just and equitable world order and also added opposition to colonialism and neo-colonialism as a goal. This was seen as a dilution of the human rights commitment (Barber 2004:119). The document also, it is argued, scaled down the ANC's human rights ambitions, arguing that South Africa should not 'overestimate ourselves as a middle income country'. It cited the Nigerian case as an example of the dangers of acting alone and argued for action through multi-lateral bodies. This change, with an agreement on foreign arms purchases '(which) signalled new recognition … of the importance of military capability if South Africa was to exercise pan-African influence' signalled, it is argued, the emergence of a foreign policy which began to acquire consistent characteristics that were to endure into Mbeki's administration. Key features are a stress on multi-lateralism consistent with an embrace of a role as a 'middle power' and a 'self effacing posture on the continent' (Lodge n.d.).

Two aspects are crucial to this view. First, an assumed unity of purpose within the ANC. While divisions are at times mentioned in passing (Barber 2004:120), consensus on the need for the promotion of democracy and human rights is assumed. Second, policy is seen to evolve in response to external constraints. The chief obstacle to a more assertive and effective policy is external reality which moderates an 'idealist' consensus as an eager but inexperienced new government comes to learn that the world is not necessarily hospitable to energetic intervention in support of democracy.

In fairness, the pursuit of democracy in other countries is not purely an act of will: intervention faces daunting obstacles, generally and in Africa in particular. But, in South Africa's case, the domestic dimension was more important in shaping willingness to promote democracy and in limiting the inclination to do so more generally and vigorously. The ANC's commitment to democracy promotion was not unambiguous and nor was there necessarily consensus on its desirability. Because it locates the limits on democracy promotion purely in the external environment, the view discussed here misreads the dynamics which shaped South Africa's

policy and action. It cannot explain why responses which were widely seen as 'expedient' contradictions of the ANC's democracy and human rights commitment were evident before the Nigerian crisis indicated the limits of 'idealist intervention' – or why these approaches were also pursued in Asia where South Africa had never tried to promote democracy and can therefore not have abandoned idealism in the face of reality.

In Asia, the 'universality' which prompted Mandela to fete Suharto could hardly have been prompted by a chastening encounter with reality. Nor, although it followed the Nigerian events, could the decision in 1996 to recognise the People's Republic of China, which was not a democracy, rather than Taiwan, which had just become one. The ANC hoped to deal with both countries, but neither's democratic credentials were at issue: since Taiwan had contributed generously to the ANC's election expenses and the post-apartheid government's reconstruction programme, debate centred around the economic merits of the two relationships – where principle was raised in Taiwan's support, the rationale was again 'universality', not democracy (Barber 2004:106-108).

The account is further undermined by the fact that 'idealist' interventions such as Mandela's 1997 speech to SADC, Mbeki's 1998 speech satirising African autocrats and interventions to dissuade neighbouring presidents from seeking third terms followed the Nigerian events and that two of these interventions were attempted after the 1997 discussion document.

Nor, finally, do these analyses allow for diversity within the ANC on the merits of democracy promotion itself. Within Africa, the period before Saro-Wiwa's execution was marked by a sympathetic South African attitude to the military government – its foreign minister, Chief Tom Ikimi, was invited to visit Pretoria (Barber 2004:109) and used his time to lobby for his government. Delegations of 'academics' linked to the junta were hosted by the foreign affairs department.[2] This enthusiasm for 'constructive engagement' or tacit support for the junta did not emanate from Mandela – he was said to have been embarrassed by it (*Mail and Guardian* 22/11/1995). The architect, circumstantial evidence suggested, was Mbeki. He had been the ANC representative in Nigeria (Barber 2004:16) where he is said to have had contact with Abacha and other military figures. He took a lively interest in foreign affairs and was often seen by insiders as the 'real' foreign minister. And it was he who delivered the 1996 speech suggesting that Mandela had been 'set up' by the West. Policy on Nigeria was clearly not unanimous.

Despite this, the 1997 document is presented as a unified ANC response to external complexity. A closer look invites a different view. Unlike other ANC and government documents on this question it offers a left-wing analysis of international realities, albeit a pragmatic one. While welcoming some consequences of the end of the Cold War, it adds:

> the collapse of the Soviet Union had the effect of reducing international support for national liberation struggles, as well as the absence of space and support for developing countries to develop alternative economic and political policies relatively independently from the ideas set out by the Western capitalist countries (ANC 1997).

It sees a 'need to break neo-colonial relations between Africa and the world's economic powers'. And, while endorsing multi-party democracy, it observes that 'multi-party systems have been introduced in Africa in circumstances where other conditions have had the effect of weakening the capacity of governments to stop the explosion of ethnic war' (ANC 1997). It is of some importance that, when the document was drafted, the chair of the ANC National Executive's International Affairs committee was SA Communist Party general secretary Blade Nzimande (ANC 1997b).

This does not mean that the document was the ANC left's attempt to take over foreign policy. It could not have been published if the ANC leadership did not want it circulated and Nzimande was not the only person responsible for international policy. There are many continuities between it and other government and ANC policy pronouncements. And it does foreshadow some later foreign policy directions – a more active role in championing Southern concerns in world trade negotiations and a part in designing the AU.

But parts of the document take a stance unusual for ANC foreign policy documents before or after it. It is the one document at the time to warn of limits to multi-party democracy, and some of the approaches it advocates, such as 'the strengthening of party-to-party relations with progressive parties in the region and the continent' or 'cementing solidarity amongst the progressive forces in the world based on the principles of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and a democratic world order' have not been adopted. This suggests that it was not an announcement of a new direction but a proposal, some of which was ignored. This makes it the product of wrestling within the ANC, not only between sections of the movement but within them, not over how to promote democracy but

over whether this should be a priority at all. And the fact that parts of it have proved influential and parts have not may be a product of the extent to which ANC thinking on these issues is fraught with ambiguities on whether to promote democracy as well as on how to do it.

Democracy promotion is an uncertain and complex undertaking (Carothers 1999) – in Africa, particularly so. It can invite resistance from threatened power holders (Carothers 2006). And, even where those in power do not overtly oppose it, they may be able to employ effective stratagems to ensure that 'democratisation' does not threaten them. Since democracy promotion inevitably entails incursions into Westphalian understandings of sovereignty, governing elites can insist that they are being subjected to the imperial attentions of meddling foreigners. They are helped by the reality that the line between democracy promotion and imperial imposition can be exceedingly thin (Kurlantzick 2004). Even where democracy promotion has the active consent of the governing elite, crafting appropriate interventions may often require an intricate understanding of local complexities well beyond those undertaking the intervention (Reitzes and Friedman 2001).

In Africa, these complexities are enhanced. Despite a seemingly dramatic movement towards democracy – 49 of its 52 countries held competitive elections between 1989 and 1997 (Bratton and van de Walle 1997) – substantive progress towards democratic regimes is uncertain. Electoral competition is often accompanied by authoritarian features: many of the continent's elites are adept at offering a semblance of democratic appearance while abrogating its substance (Joseph 1998). In several important cases, states remain fractured by deep-rooted conflicts – in some cases after elections whose results are disputed. And, in many African countries, the state is weak and largely insulated from the social pressures which might keep elites accountable to citizens (Mkandiwire and Soludo 1999; Clapham 1999). In these cases, plausible domestic partners able to advance democratisation are difficult to locate. South Africa's efforts have, therefore, been constrained by the complexities of the environment within which democracy promotion must be pursued.

For post-apartheid South Africa, intervention in support of democracy is particularly complex. The support of other African states was a key resource for the ANC during the 'struggle' period – states such as Nigeria lavishly supported the ANC's 1994 election campaign, prompting charges by the opposition that foreign policy was shaped by the ANC's 'electoral debts' (Sampson 1999:560). During this engagement, links

were forged with African governing elites, making ANC leaders reluctant to do battle against leaders with whom they had worked for years. The fact that democracy was achieved by a negotiated transition rather than a military defeat of the *apartheid* order also offered autocrats a handy means of deflecting South African appeals to democratise by insisting that the post-apartheid government was a puppet of white interests: 'The bitter Nigerian response envisaged Mandela as the black leader of a white state – implying that his white officials … had led him by the nose…' (Barber 2004:115). Vulnerability to being portrayed as a servant of the white establishment may explain why, in the last year of the Mandela administration, Mugabe was able to isolate South Africa within the SADC when he felt threatened by it (Field 2003:360).

Some scholars and diplomats suggest that post-apartheid South Africa found itself in much the same position as Germany and Japan after World War Two – its democratisation did not outweigh its neighbours' memories of it as a domineering, expansionist, power. While there were expectations that the newly democratic state would play a benign role in the lives of its neighbours, energetic intervention would be portrayed as an attempt to revive past hegemony. This factor, coupled with fears of South African economic power, limit South African influence in Africa (Vale and Maseko 1998) – on democracy as well as on other issues. But, as important as these external constraints were, the key obstacles to effective democracy promotion by South Africa were domestic.

The Trojan Horse: Domestic Constraints

Democracy promotion, like other foreign policy goals, is inevitably filtered through a domestic political lens which constrains and shapes policy.

The 'realist' notion that states always seek to act in their own interests (Walz 1959) has, therefore, been criticised for viewing the state as a 'unitary' actor which harbours only one conception of its interests. By contrast, models such as Robert Putnam's theory of the two-level game (Putnam 1998), which analyses international bargaining as the outcome of an interplay between the domestic and the external, stress the role of domestic interest group conflict on international behaviour. This is not the place to discuss models for understanding the domestic dimension of foreign policy (Friedman 2005). Suffice it to say that there is a vital domestic dimension to democracy promotion which often makes it the subject of heated contest in democracy promoting countries (Youngs 2006). Accounts of democracy promotion which ignore the crucial role

of ambiguity and contest in the democracy-promoting country – and therefore assume a coherence and consensus on what is to be done if not on how to do it – are likely to offer a misleading picture. The South African case illustrates this.

Promoting What?

Contrary to conventional wisdom, ensuring that Africa becomes democratic is not a core concern of the post-apartheid government.

This does not mean that the ANC in government has turned its back on its 'freedom struggle'. It has remained true to it, for the fight against *apartheid* was not primarily a struggle for democracy but for majority rule: a seminal history is, appropriately, not called an account of the 'Black Man's Struggle for Democracy' (Roux 1964). The ANC and its allies were not unsympathetic to democracy. But the primary rationale of the 'struggle' was 'national liberation' – the freeing of black people from racial minority rule (Johnson 2003). Democracy and human rights were invaluable tools in that 'struggle' and this ensured a more enthusiastic commitment to democracy than might have been expected after a brutal conflict. But they were means, not ends. Similarly, South African democracy is not a product of a fight for democratic freedoms but of a balance of power which ensured that majority rule would be achieved by negotiating a liberal democratic constitution (Friedman 1995).

This concern with racial subjugation did not end when apartheid fell. Post-apartheid politics have been underpinned by a pervasive theme often not stated overtly: whites expect a black government to fail and the leaders of that government know they do.[3] It is, therefore, a key preoccupation of much of the new governing elite to show that black people can govern an industrialised society (Friedman 1993; Friedman 2004). The chief concern of post-apartheid governance has not been to deepen democracy or pursue growth but to prove white prejudices wrong by showing that black people can govern.

This also clearly underpins understanding of engagement with the rest of Africa. Mbeki's 1998 speech poking fun at Africa's failure to get its house in order looks at the continent through the eyes of the citizens of Dead Man's Creek, Mississippi, who are told that an African Renaissance has begun, removing them from the obligation to pay for intervention in Africa, but discover, through news bulletins, that nothing on the continent had changed (Mbeki 1998). African leaders are thus behaving in ways which ensure that white, Western people have a low opin-

ion of them. The key objective of South African strategy in Africa is a continent which can win respect by becoming the kind of place which bigots believe it can never be: democracy is embraced as a means to this end. It is significant for example that the Nepad document devotes only two pages out of 59 to discussing the details of its democracy and political governance initiative (Nepad 2001:17-19).

This explains the patterns described here far more plausibly than the notion of an enthusiastic democratiser running up against unpleasant realities. If South Africa's democracy promotion is situated within a concern to refute international prejudice, some of the ambiguity and unevenness can be understood. Is the goal better served by ignoring or defending democratic deficits in Africa because they can only enhance white Western prejudice – or by highlighting them in the hope of changing them? The answer is both, depending on circumstances and context. In Zimbabwe, the former prevails, for the conflict is the only one discussed here in which criticisms of government behaviour are closely tied to race; Europe and America are often accused of highlighting violations in Zimbabwe because white farmers have been among the victims in that country (Nzimande 2006). It is far easier to see criticism of Mugabe as a pandering to bigotry than a similar response to Nigeria or Lesotho.

Nor should the tendency to cloak democratisation in developmental and technical garb – or to present it as a by-product of conflict resolution – be seen purely as a manoeuvre to seduce authoritarians into democratisation. South Africa promotes inclusive settlements and urges the adoption of democracy as part of a wider attempt to enhance the effectiveness and international credibility of African states because it sees democracy as a means to a wider end. The approach is less a response to external realities as an expression of the South African governing elite's understanding of Africa's needs and challenges.

The attempt to 'export' the South African model of conflict resolution and democratisation is also consistent with this concern. One symptom of the desire to refute prejudice is an elite preoccupation with South Africa as a source of 'world class' contributions which demonstrate Africans' ability to enrich humanity – anything from the post-1994 constitution to financial services may be presented as 'world class' to show what the country has to offer (Friedman 2005b). Exporting a model of conflict resolution is one further way of demonstrating 'world class' status.

That South Africa's desire to encourage democracy is part of a wider concern to restore black African self-esteem does not devalue it. But it

does introduce dilemmas, ambiguities and contradictions which explain the different trajectories it has taken and the varying perspectives towards it within the ruling elite. At times, differing strategies and views have existed side-by-side – in the same policy documents or in the approaches of the same politicians. This has less to do with confusion than with the reality that the pursuit of democracy has to be weighed against other goals to which it is subordinate.

A full understanding of South African democracy promotion requires that this factor be combined with the paradoxical insularity of South Africa's international interventions.

Promoting or Projecting?

Assumptions that South Africa is committed to a coherent project of promoting democracy elsewhere are also partly based on a misapprehension of its elite's relation to the world.

For decades, the contending forces in South Africa were locked in a battle which was often played out in the world arena: winning world support was a key component in the strategies of the *apartheid* government and the ANC (Thomas 1996). The negotiation process which ended *apartheid* was, during much of the first two years of the 1990s, playing as much to a foreign audience as a domestic one. International influence was significant in shaping negotiating positions (Landsberg 1995). This dynamic forced the ANC into a diplomatic role which it performed with great effect, raising expectations that foreign policy would be the arena in which it would perform most proficiently in government.

But the concern for engagement with the world during the *apartheid* era was, in an important sense, illusory: relations with other states and actors was about *apartheid* and nothing else. A key preoccupation of the *apartheid* government was winning international legitimacy (Mills and Baynham 1994). The ANC's international role was to deny it that: so central was this focus that, for much of the exile period, guerrilla war, dubbed 'armed propaganda' by the ANC leadership, was designed more as a diplomatic weapon than an instrument to overthrow the white-ruled state (Lodge 1984). As its campaign to win support for the anti-apartheid 'struggle' gathered momentum in the West, this required that it remain fairly bland on international issues for fear of antagonising major powers.

While the international context was strongly embedded in the consciousness of whites and blacks, it was so only in the context of *apart-*

heid. Within the resistance tradition of which the ANC was part, world opinion was seen, excessively at times, as a key to freedom. One of the earliest responses to segregation by the Western educated leaders who founded the ANC was to send a delegation to London to request the British king to intervene on behalf of his black subjects (Roux 1964:110); petitioning the colonial authorities was a central theme in ANC strategy until the 1940s. Nor was reliance on external influence restricted to the elite: in 1921, Wellington Butelezi, a herbalist and preacher, rallied a mass movement by promising that black Americans would arrive in aeroplanes to free black South Africans (Roux 1964:140-141). The reliance on external intervention was an expression of real or perceived powerlessness which remained a crucial element of resistance strategy into the 1990s. In exile, the ANC established diplomatic missions throughout the world and was afforded a presence in significantly more countries than the *apartheid* government (Evans 1996). Its aim, however, was single-minded – to win support for the fight against *apartheid*.

There was, therefore, much interaction with the world – but the goal was not to establish what South Africa could do for the world but what the world could do for South Africa. 'This forced the ANC … to develop a narrow and highly parochial view of the world' (Diescho 1996:11-12). The oft-stated expectation that a movement which had made human rights virtually its *raison d'etre* during the *apartheid* period would champion this cause vigorously after defeating the system might have made good polemics, but was faulty analysis. A stress on seeking resources to sustain the post-apartheid order was a continuity, not an inexplicable departure from tradition.

Again, this explains key aspects of the democracy promotion agenda, in particular the complaints of expediency. 'Universality' can also be traced back to a desire to get on with anyone who has anything to offer South Africa, whatever their human rights record. Asked in 1990 for his response to human rights abuses in other countries, Mandela replied: 'Our attitude to any country is determined by (its) attitude .... towards our struggle' (ABC *Nightline* 21/6/1990). For the ANC, apartheid was not simply a human rights issue – it was *the* human rights issue. The highest form of human rights commitment was, therefore, opposition to apartheid. Domestic human rights performance was, in comparison, unimportant.

This raises the possibility that one spur for democracy promotion was not 'idealist' concern but a desire to impress trading partners and

sources of investment. Certainly, an emphasis on 'selling' the new democracy to investors and trading partners – one foreign service cadet complained that he felt he was being trained to become a 'global hamburger salesman (Exchange, Foreign Service Institute 1995) – was a key feature of early post-apartheid foreign relations. The inward looking nature of outward relations made it possible to view a scramble to persuade anyone with money to direct it towards a new South Africa not as a compromise with democracy but a means of promoting it since the growth of post-apartheid South Africa was the ultimate contribution to democracy and human rights. Democracy promotion could be, partly, another means to that end.

As the end of apartheid has become distant, this influence may seem to have diminished – 'self-effacing' democracy promotion is unlikely to help investment. But the domestic focus persists, most notably in responses to Zimbabwe. The conflict is one between a 'liberation' party which is seen to have won independence for its country and a trade union-led civil society movement. While the ANC leadership has achieved electoral dominance, a significant check on its power and challenge to its leadership is the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), ironically an ANC ally, and a range of civil society organisations (Friedman 1999). While speculation that Cosatu might form a worker's party to challenge the ANC is unlikely to be vindicated (Harvey 2002), this possibility clearly weighs on the minds of ANC leaders. It is, therefore, perhaps significant that, when a senior official in the Presidency was asked at a confidential meeting why South Africa seemed cool towards the Zimbabwean opposition, he replied that it was led by trade unionists who were never equipped to run countries (Discussion March 2004). The obvious implication is that the Mbeki administration saw the idea of a trade union-led civil society coalition unseating a 'liberation' party as a precedent unhelpful to South Africa's development. What the Zimbabwean conflict may say about South Africa was far more important than what South Africa might say about the conflict.

This issue would not arise if the future of South African democracy seemed largely settled. Inevitably, it is not. Only fifteen years after a severe conflict in which none of the parties saw democracy as an end in itself, its future and merits are still in doubt. This, with South Africa's 'inward outwardness', means that promoting democracy elsewhere will inevitably be filtered through a response which keeps a weather eye on the implications for South Africa's own prospects. And it may well be

that a 'self effacing' approach, in which the democratisation burden can be shared and subsumed into other objectives, best fits the circumstances of a new elite uncertain of the future of the society which it governs. If South Africa's current power holders were more certain of its prospects, they may have clearer ideas of what they would like to promote elsewhere.

Conclusion: What can be Learnt?

Does South Africa's experience say anything about the circumstances of one country at one time or does it have a more general application?

While the case has unusual features, it does have more general application. It warns against expecting a coherent approach from states whose democracy is far from established and who will inevitably filter their role abroad through their own ambivalence and uncertainty about their future. But, more generally, it warns against too sanguine a view of the capacity of states to promote democracy elsewhere – not only because the external constraints are very real but also because the attempt will be filtered through domestic concerns which ensure that democracy promotion may say as much about the frailties, ambiguities and dilemmas of the promoting country as it does about those among whom it is to be promoted.

This does not mean that claims by states, including those which are newly democratic, to be promoting democracy in other states should be discounted – even South Africa's modest, sometimes incoherent and often ineffective strategy has achieved democracy in Lesotho and the possibility of inclusive government in Burundi and DRC. And its influence on Nepad and the AU, while not apparent in concrete action yet, may still bear fruit, subtly constraining autocrats. But it does mean that the already sobering realisation that democracy promoting countries may be constrained from effectiveness by inadequate knowledge and a need to co-exist with 'targeted' governments must be complemented by a recognition of the key role of domestic preoccupations in further limiting the possibilities of democracy promotion.

Notes

1. In 2002, the AU initially refused to recognise Madagascar's President, Marc Ravalomanana, who defeated incumbent Didier Ratsiraka after the Supreme Court declared him the lawful winner. His opponents insisted that this manner of winning was 'unconstitutional' and therefore violated the AU's ban on recognising governments who attain power unconstitutionally. Even after his

victory was recognised by all parties, the AU ban stood. While it was later lifted, it was seen as evidence that provisions which appeared to entrench democratic principle were being used to protect incumbents. Afrol News 'Madagascar returns to normalcy without Africa' 11/7/2002 http://www.afrol.com/News2002/mad042_au_reconciliation.htm

2. The author was director of a research institute at the time. It was contacted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and asked to meet a delegation from a Nigerian research institute. Most members of the delegation held military rank and we were informed by Nigerian exiles that they were closely linked to the Abacha government.

3 The attitude is not restricted to South African whites. A (white) mining executive tells of visiting fund managers in North America and Western Europe in an attempt to raise investment capital. His and his colleagues' pitch consisted largely of references to healthy economic fundamentals and progress in resolving conflicts. 'But you have a black government' many of his audiences responded. Discussion, senior mining executive, 1995.

References

Aardt, M. van, 1996, 'A Foreign Policy to Die For: South Africa's Response to the Nigerian Crisis', *Africa Insight,* 26(2), pp. 107-119.

Adams, G., 2005, *Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams at SAIIA,* SA Institute for International Affairs http://www.saiia.org.za/

Adebajo, A., 2006, *The Pied Piper of Pretoria,* Human Sciences Research Council, April www.hsrc.ac.za/research/programmes/DG/events/20060411_adekeye_adebajo.pdf -

African National Congress, 1994, *Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa*, Johannesburg: ANC, December http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/policy/foreign.html

African National Congress, 1997, 'Developing a Strategic Perspective on South African Foreign Policy', *South African Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 5 No. 1, Summer, pp.170-184.

African National Congress, 1997b, 'Section Four: Activities of the National Executive Committee', *50th National Conference Documents* http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/conf/conference50/sg4.html

Barber, J., 2004, *Mandela's World: The International Dimensions of South Africa's Political Revolution* 1990-1999, Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Cape Town: David Philip.

Bratton M. and N. van de Walle, 1997, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in a Comparative Perspective,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carothers, T., 1999, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve,* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Carothers, T., 2006, 'The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April.

Clapham, C., 1996, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Daniel, J., 1995, 'The GNU's Foreign Policy Initiatives and Responses' in C. Landsberg, G. le Pere and A. van Nieuwkerk (eds.), *Mission Imperfect: Redirecting South Africa's Foreign Policy*, Johannesburg: Foundation for Global Dialogue/ Centre for Policy Studies.

Department of Foreign Affairs, 2006, 'Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Peace Agreement' Proceedings of the National Assembly: Questions to the President of the Republic of South Africa, Thursday 18 May ://www.dfa.gov.za/ docs/2006pq/pqp10.htm

Diescho, J., 1996, *The Limits of Foreign Policy Making in South Africa,* Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Du Preez, M., 2007, 'Take a stand on Zimbabwe now', News24.com 04/04 http:/ /www.news24.com/News24/Columnists/Max_du_Preez/0,,2-1630-2148_2093436,00.html

Evans, G., 1996, 'South Africa in Remission: The Foreign Policy of an Altered State'*, The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Jun.), pp. 249-269.

Evans, L.H., 1993, *South African Foreign Policy and the New World Order*, Pretoria:

Institute for Strategic Studies, Pretoria University, Paper 4.

Field, S., 2003, 'When Neighbours Stray: Political Implications for the SADC Region of the Situation in Zimbabwe' in K. Colvard and M. Lee (eds.) Unfinished Business: The Land Crisis in Southern Africa, Johannesburg: African Century Publications.

Friedman, S., 1993, (ed.) *The Long Journey: South Africa's Quest for A Negotiated Settlement*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Friedman, S., 1995, 'South Africa: Divided In a Special Way' in Diamond, L., J. Linz, and S. M. Lipset (eds.), *Politics in Developing Countries*, Lynne Rienner.

Friedman, S., 1999, 'No Easy Stroll to Dominance: Party Dominance, Opposition and Civil Society in South Africa' in H. Giliomee and C. Simkins (eds.) *The Awkward Embrace: One-Party Domination and Democracy*, Amsterdam: Harwood.

Friedman, S., 2004, 'South Africa: Building Democracy After Apartheid' in E. Gyimah-Boadi (ed.) *Democratic Reform in Africa: The Quality of Progress*, Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner.

Friedman, S., 2005, 'The Forgotten Sovereign: citizens, states and foreign policy in the south' in Justin Robertson and Maurice A East (eds.) *Diplomacy and Developing Nations: Post-Cold War Foreign Policy-making Structures and Processes,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Friedman, S., 2005b, 'Getting Better Than "World Class': The Challenge of Governing Postapartheid South Africa', *Social Research* Vol. 72, No. 3 Fall.

Harvey, E., 2002, 'Getting to Grips with a new Workers' Party', South African Labour Bulletin Vol. 6, No.1, February pp.15-19.

Human Rights Watch, 1996, *Nigeria: Human Rights Developments*, http://www.hrw.org/ reports/1996/WR96/Africa-07.htm

Johnson, K., 2003, 'Liberal or Liberation Framework? The Contradictions of ANC Rule in South Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 21, No.2, July, pp. 321-340.

Joseph R., 1998, 'Africa, 1990-1997: From *Abertura* to Closure': *Journal of Democracy* 1998 Vol. 9, No. 2, April pp. 3-18.

Kurlantzick, J., 2004, 'The Coup Connection', *Mother Jones,* November/December.

Landsberg, C., 1995, 'Directing from the Stalls: The international community and the South African Negotiating Forum' in S. Friedman and D. Atkinson (eds.) *The Small Miracle: South Africa's Negotiated Settlement*, Johannesburg: Ravan, pp. 276-300.

Lodge, T., 1984, 'The African National Congress, 1983' in *South African Review Two*, Johannesburg: Ravan, pp.21-25.

Lodge, T., no date, *Quiet Diplomacy in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of South Africa in Africa* www.polity.org.za/pdf/QuietDiplomacy.pdf

Mandela, N., 1993, 'South Africa's Future Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 72, No. 5, pp 86-97.

Mandela, N., 1997, *Statement by President Nelson Mandela Speaking as Chairperson of SADC at the Official Opening of the Summit of SADC Heads of State or Government,* Blantyre, 8 September http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/ 1997/ sp0908a.html

Marais, H., 1999, 'South Africa carries a big stick', *Le Monde Diplomatique,* March.

Mbeki, T., 1998, *Address by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to the 2nd Southern Africa International Dialogue on Smart Partnership for the Generation of Wealth, Swakopmund, Namibia 27 July* http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/

McKinley, D., 2006, 'Commodifying oppression: South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe under Mbeki' in Roger Southall (ed.) *South Africa's Role in Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Africa: Conference Proceedings,* Cape Town: Nelson Mandela Foundation, HSRC Press, pp.85-104.

Mills, G. and S. Baynham, 1994, 'South African Foreign Policy, 1945-1990' in G. Mills (ed.), *From Pariah to Participant: South Africa's Evolving Foreign Relations, 1990-1994*, Johannesburg: SA Institute for International Affairs, pp. 10-36.

Mkandawire, T. and C. Soludo, 1999, *Our Continent, Our Future,* Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, Asmara: Africa World Press Inc. and Ottawa: IDRC.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), 2001, October, http:// www.nepad.org/2005/files/documents/inbrief.pdf

Nzimande, B., 2006, 'The Swaziland situation calls for urgent action from all true democrats' SA Communist Party *Umsebenzi Online* Vol. 5 No. 54, 5 April http:// www.sacp.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1324&Itemid=77

Organisation of African Unity (OAU), 2002, 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU: *African Peer Review Mechanism* 8 July, 2002, Durban, South Africa.

Putnam, R., 1998, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games', *International Organization*, Number 42, Summer, pp. 427-460.

Reitzes, M. and S. Friedman, 2001, *Funding freedom?: synthesis report on the impact of foreign political aid to civil society organisations in South Africa,* Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies.

Roux, E., 1964, *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
Sachikonye, L.M., 2005, 'South Africa's quiet diplomacy: the case of Zimbabwe' in J. Daniel, R. Southall, J. Lutchman (eds.) *State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005,* Pretoria: HSRC Press pp. 569-585.
Sampson, A., 1999, *Mandela: The Authorised Biography*, New York: Harper Collins.
Seymour, V., 1996, *Global Dialogue, Human Rights and Foreign Policy: Will South Africa Please Lead?,* Southern African Perspectives, 55, Cape Town: Centre For Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape.
Solomon, H. (ed.), 1997, *Fairy-Godmother, Hegemon or Partner?: In Search of a South African Foreign Policy*, ISS Monograph No. 13, Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies, May.
Southall, R., 2003, 'An Unlikely Success: South Africa and Lesotho's election of 2002', *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 41,No. 2, pp. 269-297.
Thomas, S., 1996, *The diplomacy of liberation: the foreign relations of the African National Congress since 1960,* New York: St. Martin's Press.
US Department of State, 1996, 'Secretary Christopher's visit to South Africa - Secretary of State Warren Christopher, South African President Nelson Mandela – Transcript', U*S Department of State Dispatch* October 14.
Vale, P. and S. Maseko, 1998, 'South Africa and the African Renaissance', *International Affairs,* Vol. 74, No. 2.
Venter, D., 1996, 'Regional Security in sub-Saharan Africa', *Africa Insight,* Vol. 26, No. 2.
Walz, K., 1959, *Man, the State and War*, New York: Columbia University Press.
Wood, B., 1998, 'The Middle Powers and the General Interest' in *Middle Powers and the International System*, 1, Ottawa: The North-South Institute.
Youngs, R. (ed.), 2006, *Survey of European Democracy Promotion Policies 2000-2006*, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (Fride), Madrid.


African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2008, pp. 55–87

(ISSN 0850-7902)

'Big Think', Disjointed Incrementalism: Chinese Economic Success and Policy Lessons for Africa, or the Case for Pan-Africanism

Jean-Germain Gros*

Abstract

Chinese economic success is not the product of free market accidental coincidence. Rather, it is orchestrated by the State through a mixture of nationalism ('big think') and pragmatic decisions (disjointed incrementalism) in agriculture, finance and industry. Furthermore, these decisions build upon existing institutions (e.g. the Household Responsibility System, Township Village Enterprises, etc), some dating back to pre-revolutionary China (e.g. Special Economic Zones), rather than imported ones from outside China. The article explores the utility (and lack thereof) of the Chinese model in the African context, as well as the possibilities of an Africa-centred 'big think' (Pan-Africanism) capable of mobilizing the continent for development.

Résumé

L'essor de l'économie chinoise n'est pas le produit des miracles du marché libre. Au contraire, il est l'oeuvre de l'Etat chinois à travers un mélange heureux de nationalisme et d'une politique décisionnelle pragmatique portant sur l'agriculture, les finances et l'industrie. En outre, cette politique pragmatique est basée sur les institutions chinoises, comme, par exemple, le Système de Responsibilité des Ménages, les Entreprises Villes-Villages et les

* Department of Political Science, University of Missouri–Saint Louis, USA.
Email: jg.gros@umsl.edu

Zones de Libre-Echange, au lieu d'être basée sur les institutions importées. Cet article met en examen l'utilité du « modèle » chinois au contexte africain, et explore les possibilités d'un nationalisme africain axé sur le Pan-Africanisme comme moyen de mobiliser le continent pour le développement.

Introduction

When economic historians write the development record of the last decades of the twentieth century, they should have good cause for casting China as the success story of that *fin de siecle*. From 1979 to 1997 China's annual GDP grew by an average of 10 percent, an accomplishment matched (and surpassed) only by the former Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. Chinese industrial production in the late 1990s was seven times larger than in 1978, and total trade fourteen times larger. Economic growth in China has resulted in improved living standards: real income per capita more than quadrupled between 1979 and 1997, thereby lifting more than 200 million out of absolute poverty (World Bank 1997). Chinese steel production increased by 50 percent between 2000 and 2004, evidence of a buoyant industrial sector ready to churn out durable goods for the largest middle class in one country in history and for the world economy (Avery 2005).

Historians are less likely to be excited about Africa's economic performance during the same period, and indeed since decolonization in the 1960s. By every imaginable index of socio economic performance, Africa has been moving backward rather than forward. The statistics are telling, if not to say depressing: Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for just 1 percent of world industrial production, down from 4 percent in the 1960s. It experienced virtually no economic growth in the last two decades of the twentieth century, in spite of Structural Adjustments Programs (SAPS), which were supposed to set Africa on a path of sustainable development. Africa is home to more than half of the world's poorest countries. Naturally, the polarity in economic achievement between China, the world's fastest growing economy in recent years, and Africa, its poorest continent, invites scrutiny, as well it should. This article makes three points.

Firstly, Chinese economic success owes much to the state, which, through a mixture of nationalism ('big think') and pragmatic decisions (disjointed incrementalism) in specific policy areas, such as agriculture, finance, trade and industry, has catapulted China to economic super-

power status in less than 3 decades. It has done so not by absolute command and control of productive assets, but by centralizing macro-economic and social policy making while devolving policy implementation to regional and local officials of the Chinese Community Party, which of course remains an organ of the national state. This allows centralized authority to maintain control over the Chinese hinterland; the state can bring to heel local officials who bring disrepute to Communist Party rule, even while these same officials have been given wide latitude to bring development to their area without diktat from Beijing. Thus, China shows that centralization and decentralization are not mutually exclusive, but can be apportioned according to policy area.

Secondly, the success of China's developmental state[1] is based on innovations made on existing institutions – some predating the Chinese Revolution – rather than the creation of new institutions. Chinese leaders have proven to be particularly adroit at adapting social institutions to their vision of reform. The Household Responsibility System (HRS) and the Township and Village Enterprises (TVEs) are two examples of institutional innovations, which have largely resolved agency and soft budget constraint problems without privatization. China's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) show how capital-starved countries can attract capital through direct foreign investment (DFI), as well as how the latter can contribute to the development of host economies. These SEZs were established in areas (southern coastal China), which had served as China's window to the world economy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Shut to capitalists during the Mao Zedong era, these former trading outposts were reopened after 1979 and would become the industrial engines of China's economy with capital pouring in at first from overseas Chinese and later foreign investors.

Thirdly, certain aspects of the Chinese reform experience are of import to Africa. For example, China's centralization of development policy making and decentralization of implementation is extremely insightful for Africa, where one of the unfinished debates is the contention between nationalists, who favour a decentralized approach to economic development, and Pan-Africanists, who advocate a regional approach leading ultimately to continental economic development. China shows that, under the right circumstances, the dichotomy may be largely spurious.[2] Equally, an overarching ideology of 'big think' articulated by a strong state committed to development but willing to engage in policy experi-

mentation using sub-national officials and existing social institutions are not incompatible. China further demonstrates that it is possible to improve economic performance by substituting the incentives typically associated with markets with others so as to affect the behaviour of producers, consumers and investors (Taylor 2005).

The 'shock therapy' of neo-liberalism imposed by the West and its institutions (the World Bank) in the 1980s and 1990s, with its panoply of pro-market reforms (e.g. privatization, currency devaluation, trade liberalization, government retrenchment, etc.) is not the only option for Africa, and is quite possibly the wrong option. China, which has yet to make firm guarantees to private property rights, defies contemporary economic orthodoxy and may be all the better for it. Africa, which may have applied neo-liberalism's Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) more rigorously than any other continent with little to show, can learn from China's nuanced approach to development, which uses state and market, or, to use the idiom of administration, centralization and decentralization.

The article does not glorify China, whose development has not been without costs. Chinese economic success has been regionally and socially uneven, politically undemocratic and demographically inhumane. Thus China's one-child policy would never pass cultural muster in Africa (which is not to say that population growth should not be controlled; the question is how). It is true that, historically, economic transformation has never been achieved without severe human costs, but the latter must never be accepted as the inevitable price of progress. Economic development in Africa will have to grapple with the issue of equity; that is to say, instead of making some people rich first in the hope that their wealth will eventually trickle down to others, Africa will have to insure that the fruits of development are savoured by everyone, perhaps not equally but certainly equitably. For a country that still calls itself socialist, China tolerates a degree of socio-economic inequality that Africans should find unacceptable.

In addition, China is facing an ecological crisis because of the pollution wrought by rapid and poorly regulated industrialization. Water pollution alone is estimated to cost between 3.5 and 8 percent of GDP (World Bank 2007). Given the fragility of Africa's ecosystem, with one third of its landmass already claimed by the Sahara desert, the continent can ill afford additional ecological degradation as the price to pay for industrialization. Whatever economic development occurs in Africa in

the future has got to be environment-friendly; the natural abode is already too degraded in much of the continent to permit additional ravages by industry. In sum, the article recognizes the limits of China's development, and whatever positive lessons provided by the Chinese experience will have to be adjusted to the African condition (hence the call at the end for Pan-Africanism).

The article is organized as follows. The next section recognizes the methodological challenges of comparing China and Africa, while making what the writer thinks is a strong case for this type of research. The two sections after that discuss disjointed incrementalism and 'big think' in the Chinese context. As a policy instrument, disjointed incrementalism builds upon existing institutions rather than create new ones; it also dissipates some development decisions to subalterns, thereby facilitating policy experimentation. Alongside our focus on the application of disjointed incrementalism in China, we look in Africa for institutions upon which a similar approach to development policy might be built. The last section of the article is an examination of what an African version of 'big think' might look like, in the light of African reality.

Methodological Challenges

Any comparative analysis always runs the danger of examining phenomena that are so fundamentally different as to make the enterprise a risky endeavour. Where comparison between China and Africa is concerned, this study recognizes these limiting factors.

Firstly, and most obviously, China is a nation-state while Africa is a continent. This difference is very significant, inasmuch as one government makes authoritative decisions in China, while in Africa 50 do so. Hence, whatever the secrets to Chinese economic success, they may not be so easily unravelled by African governments of differing administrative capacities, ideologies and leaderships. Africa's political atomization also makes for more restricted movement of goods and people across space, as well as systemic differences in such important determinants of economic performance as natural resource endowment, law, money, security, human capital, etc.

Secondly, China and Africa do not have the same geography: one is on the western end of the East-West axis while much of the other pivots along the North-South axis. Differences in geographic location have development consequences, not least in terms of the receptivity of econo-

mies to technological innovation developed elsewhere, the compatibility of eco-systems (which facilitates the transplantation of new crops and animal species) and ease of travel (Diamond 1997). Geography may not be destiny but it is not a negligible quantity in economic history, or, for that matter, history *tout court*. It was kind to China, most unkind to Africa, in the late twentieth century. Specifically, China was fortunate to be surrendered by success stories from which it could learn and which were also major investors in its economy (e.g. Japan and Taiwan). African countries, by contrast, are beset by poverty in their neighbourhood.

Thirdly, it is possible that China's success may be due to factors that are unique to China, in which case it would be extremely difficult for any aspiring developer to use the Chinese model to its advantage. In some ways China has been the beneficiary of the self-fulfilling prophecy of high achievement, which works approximately as follows. The world expects China to be a great power and the largest market in one country in history. Consequently, foreign investors flock to China in the hope of establishing a presence before it is too late; they are even willing to incur short-term financial losses and put up with institutional shortcomings, often in return for little more than expectation of fabulous profit taking. In part, because of this (irrational?) exuberance, China becomes the success everyone predicted it would be, because it is the recipient of much needed direct foreign investment (DFI). No such expectation, of course, pertains to Africa, which lacks China's demographic clout (e.g. 22 percent of the world's population); as a result, investors stay away, the continent is starved for capital, and its development remains mired in the rut.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned limitations, there are strong arguments in support of the kind of comparative analysis undertaken in this article. China and Africa are (still) in the same geo-political and economic imaginary known as the Third World, whose existence as a theoretical construct scholars continue to accept, in spite of the fact that it is not a monolith. Officially, China's per capita Gross National Income or GNI ($2,010 in 2006 dollars) is much closer to (sub-Saharan) Africa's per capita GNI ($1,418) than it is to that of the developed world, as represented in the OEDC countries ($40,248) (International Finance Corporation n.d.). Thus, we are not talking about entities that are, in aggregate macroeconomic terms, in vastly different universes, which would therefore preclude useful comparison.

Further, it has long been a tenet in the social sciences that economic development, for good and ill, has 'demonstration effects'. Most of the great academic debates since World War II, from modernization theory to dependency theory, from neo-liberalism to post-modernism, have been underwritten by the exportability and desirability of this or that economic model. World policy makers have also erred in a similar direction by their actions. Indeed, the architecture of international relations since 1948, with its multilateral institutions strewn across the globe, reflects a profound belief in the transmutation of economic development and, on a less flattering note, a hubris in western capacity to bring it to the 'rest'. The Cold War was in part about how many countries in the periphery or Third World would adopt economic systems and ideologies developed in more advanced countries.

In brief, the kind of metastasized analysis expounded in this article is not the first, although this type of research is increasingly (and unfortunately) rare (for reasons discussed later). Metaphorically speaking, the aim of this paper is to find out the proverbial Chinese menu entrées that may have their equivalents in the African gastronomy. More concretely, it is not suggested that Africa should adopt – lock, stock and barrel – the Chinese 'model,' but this paper is interested in extracting from the Chinese experience broad lessons and principles, which, when adapted to the African milieu, may yield similar results. It is equally interested in investigating the pitfalls of economic development in China so they may be avoided in Africa, as well as examining where Africa may have gone wrong while China has not.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, there has been a profound gap in the social studies since at least the 1960s, when so-called experts invaded the academic scene. The net result has been not only the artificial separation of disciplines that should be natural allies (e.g. economics and political science; sociology and anthropology; geography and area studies, etc.), but their sequestration to enemy camps that increasingly engage in intestinal fights over dwindling resources, prestige and turf protection. In this environment of hyper-specialization, where a simulacrum of seemingly value-free data is conflated with true scientific objectivity, newly minted PhDs know a great deal about the limited areas in which they are trained, including the methods and mathematical models which they are told are so indispensable to 'scientific' work, and precious little about everything else. Worse, their training has desensitized them to thinking outside of the box. This is a real disservice in a

world where distance is literally being shrunk by communications and transportation technologies, not to mention the oft-stated phenomenon of globalization. In this world, China cannot be ignored. Its weight in the geo-political balance and rapid ascendance in the global economy militates against such an exclusion. Nor can Africa, arguably the world's richest continent in terms of natural resources and, perhaps because of this, the key to future prosperity, be sidelined. There are, therefore, strong reasons to study China and Africa in tandem rather than isolation.

This article brings together these two seemingly inchoate areas of the world economy, which, judging by their recent performance and growing ties, are as polar opposites as they are complementary. It has the further merit of attempting to bridge the gap between two spheres of inquiry (Sinotology and African Studies) that the intellectual ghettoization spoken of earlier has tended to widen. It is a 'thought' piece meant to resuscitate what has become a lost art – i.e. the examination of big ideas and challenges, using large units of analysis – as well as provoke debate among Africanists and Chinese specialists.

The author had the privilege of starting academic life as an Africanist, but serendipitously 'stumbled' upon China in the early 2000s, coincidentally the period during which China's economic engagement in Africa appears to have intensified, as its own economy went into overdrive. The net result has been the fusion of interest in these two areas and the production of a series of articles (published in both places), of which this one is the latest instalment. The method employed in this article is that of the participant-observer; the data are overwhelmingly secondary, with 'primary data' consisting of structured interviews and informal conversation with Chinese colleagues at the headquarters of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), the Institute of West Asian and African Studies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – all in Beijing.

The Chinese Way

China's approach to economic development is based neither on *laissez faire* nor command principles. The first suggests a political economy in which market forces totally dictate resource allocation, with government relegated to providing basic public goods including security. The second connotes the obliteration of markets and their total replacement by the state, which owns all productive assets and makes production decisions based (ostensibly) on social needs rather than profit making.

Chinese attempt at economic development since 1979 belies the aforementioned extremes. Many of China's reforms run counter to the tenets of neo-liberalism. At the same time, China has clearly moved away from a command economy, which historically has had these characteristics: central planning, collectivized agriculture, state control of industrial assets, an egalitarian ethos, etc. Chinese economic policy is largely non-socialist, even though Chinese officials in the Deng era occasionally give a wink and a nod to socialism (always with the qualifier: 'with Chinese characteristics' under Deng). It is very revealing that President Hu Jintao's imprint on Chinese ideology is called 'scientific development', as opposed to 'socialist development' or 'scientific socialism', as would have been the case under Mao Zedong. The current leadership in China has virtually expunged the word socialism from everyday discourse, and, more importantly, policy.

Instead, China has followed in the footsteps of other Asian developmental states, such as Japan and South Korea. In these countries, as well as Malaysia and Singapore, states 'intervene actively in the economy in order to guide or promote particular substantive goals e.g. full employment, export competitiveness, energy self-sufficiency' (Chan 1990) but do not own the means of production outright. There is more state ownership in China, because of its history of a command economy, but it is moving toward a mixed system, in which the state's role is akin to that of an orchestra conductor rather than one of its players. The so-called China way would seem to confirm the 'demonstration effects' thesis.

Chinese economic reforms have proceeded in broad stages, reflecting the inherent caution of incremental policy making, as well as the reality of sharp differences inside the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) between liberals (i.e., those who favoured market reforms) and conservatives (i.e., those who favoured state control through central planning). Thus the Chinese approach to economic development has not followed a straight, linear and unimpeded course. Rather, the path has been littered with obstructions, which the Chinese leadership has managed to overcome but not without making tactical concessions along the way. Chinese economic policy making has been described as 'crossing the river by feeling for stones', meaning making adjustments to policy as circumstances warrant. A preferable description would be disjointed incrementalism.

Disjointed incrementalism is a complex form of strategic analysis, which is based on Herbert Simon's concept of *bounded rationality*. It entails focusing on policy choices that differ incrementally from existing policies; using a relatively small number of policy alternatives (usually not more than three or four); evaluating policies on the basis of 'important' consequences, rather than the entire universe of possible consequences; countless end-means and means-end adjustments through trials and errors; and finding solutions that are 'good enough' to ameliorate current problems (Etzioni 1967). Karl Popper (1961) had perhaps the best definition of disjointed incrementalism, which he termed piecemeal social engineering. 'The piecemeal engineer will avoid undertaking reforms of a complexity and scope which make it impossible for him to disentangle causes and effects, and to know what he is really doing' (Popper 2002).

As a decision making type, incrementalism has been accused of conservatism, and, according to critics, there are circumstances in which bold actions, or synoptic decisions, are necessary. In addition, even incremental decisions need theory (Gordon and Waldner 1979). Incrementalism need be neither conservative in outcome nor indifferent to theory, or a larger picture. Modest steps, if taken often enough, can have important cumulative effects ushering in significant change. Furthermore, modest steps can take place against the larger backdrop of a foot race, hence the proverb about the 1,000-mile journey, or de la Fontaine's fable of the tortoise and the hare. On the other hand, major decisions made infrequently and erratically may give the illusion of change while maintaining the status quo. They can also be made by decision makers, who eschew theory and act purely on whims.

China's disjointed incrementalism has taken place in the larger context of 'theory' or 'big think', thus disputing critiques of the incremental model. Generically, 'big think' refers to attempts by a political community to rally its members around goals and objectives, whose achievement will ostensibly lead to collective welfare (typically defined in terms of security, stability and prosperity, or the goals of statecraft). In the modern age, where political communities are organized into nation-states, 'big think' is a euphemism for nationalism, the expression of which is conditioned by a variety of factors, including the history of the political community (e.g. how it experienced colonialism), the ideology of state elites and how they came to power (through violent revolution or some

type of negotiated transition) and the extent of the political community's integration into the international system.

In the case of China, 'big think' implies a conception of the country as a great power, probably from the very beginning. Thus, in ancient times China was the Central Kingdom (*Zhon Guo*), which presumably entails a political community whose pre-eminence surpassed all others.[3] In the 19th century, even when parts of China were conquered by imperialist powers and centralized authority in Beijing was extremely weak, this ethos persisted. In the early 1960s, disagreement between China and the former Soviet Union had more to do with Chinese nationalism than communist ideological differences. In the latest incarnation of Chinese 'big think', the state has ensconced development in improving economic performance, in order to maintain autonomy at home (self-reliance), project power and influence abroad, legitimize Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule and oversee China's 'peaceful rise' (to superpower status).

In sum, 'big think' in contemporary China is an ideology conceived by the state to sell the legitimacy of its control by the Chinese Communist Party, based on the latter's management of the economy, its ability to defend China against the historical humiliation of foreign occupations and the (re)unification of the Chinese mainland with prodigal territories such as Taiwan. Chinese 'big think' interprets the past, justifies the present and promises an even better future, but only if China remains united and under the leadership of the CCP. Simply put, 'big think' is 'classic' nationalism with a strong component of economic development as a means of preserving the social and territorial integrity of the Chinese community through the state.

The 'uniqueness' of China, even in comparison to Asian developers such as Japan and South Korea, is that in the past nationalism was often used as a justification for centralizing state power and pursuing economic development based on *dirigiste* principles. Chinese nationalism has accommodated administrative decentralization without political liberalization in the pursuit of a mixed economy. It has devolved considerable power to sub-national officials in a unitary, one-party state, who have infused competition in the economy but not in governing. What has made this coexistence possible is the legitimacy of the institutions of decentralization, which are examined next, respectively in agriculture, industry, finance and foreign investment.

Disjointed Incrementalism in Action

Agriculture

China has pursued land reform based on the so-called household responsibility system, which is tantamount to the state granting *de facto* private property rights through a long term lease of land while it retains *de jure* ownership. The lessee obtains user rights, which can be used to secure income, transfer or sell the leased land, although in the latter two cases transactions take the form of subletting. The state exacts various kinds of dues on lessees, which in effect become fixed property taxes (Chan 1990). The household responsibility system (henceforth HRS) infuses private incentives in Chinese agriculture, even while the state maintains property rights over land, which, in theory, gives it significant power in the rural economy. It can allocate land use rights based on criteria set by the Chinese government, raise land rent and taxes and even alienate land from agriculture and channel it toward other purposes (the Three Gorges Dam is a case in point).

The HRS has been introduced in China at least four times since the revolution. On every occasion, it was implemented on a limited basis, where it was tested before being expanded (again, further evidence of disjointed incrementalism). China allowed the so-called two-land system in Pingdu province, where plots were divided between those devoted to growing food for household consumption (*kouliang tian*) and those reserved for commercial farming (*chenbiao tian*). In the first equity was the driving principle for distribution, in the second efficiency was the overriding value. Farmers who had the inclination and ability were allocated larger parcels for commercial farming (which meant contract farming with the government). In Shunyi, collective farms (re)emerged in the 1980s. They were facilitated by their location in areas of high rural industrialization, as well near major cities with sound infrastructure where mass-produced agricultural commodities could be taken quickly to market. In Nanhai, farmers became land 'shareholders'. They could turn land use rights into land shares. In this way, individual plots could be amalgamated into bigger ones cultivated by farming teams. Individual farmers, now 'shareholders', received their benefits in the form of dividends. In this way, too, farmers did not have to give up their land use rights when they sought employment outside of the farming sector.

In other words, land reform in China was sensitive to local specificity, which gave the policy legitimacy and locals a stake in its success. China did not have a one-size-fits-all approach to agricultural reform, which might have been resisted, such as privatization or its antidote (collectivization), although the guiding philosophy embedded in the HRS was the same: providing farmers with the incentives to produce more, maintaining at least nominal state control over land, and creating synergy between agricultural production and industrialization (through the Township and Village Enterprise, discussed below).

More recently, China has invested massively in the agricultural sector. Agricultural lending more than doubled between 2000 and 2005, rising from 60 billion to 145 billion USD. In mid-2005 this represented 6.5 percent of all loans (Gale and Collender 2006). Given China's need for capital elsewhere, e.g. manufacturing, housing, energy and infrastructure, this substantial injection of capital in agriculture may seem surprising. But 'Chinese policymakers hold the view…that rural poverty can be solved by an infusion of cheap credit and they are attempting to reverse the historic outflow of funds from rural savers to urban borrowers' (ibid). In addition to boosting rural income, agricultural lending is aimed at increasing grain production, a priority of Chinese policymakers, who fear that importing large quantities of grain could negatively affect China's balance of trade and undermine the country's effort to achieve food self-sufficiency. The state's entrance in the agricultural sector as a provider of credit but not as a direct and active landowner underscores, once again, the fusion of centralization and decentralization, the marriage between 'big think' (exemplified in this case in the desire to make China self-sufficient in staple food) and disjointed incrementalism (the idea that farmers in China should ultimately be able to enjoy the fruit of their labour, and that farming activities should be based on local conditions).

What does China's approach to agriculture portend for Africa? Rural China and Africa are, in at least one important respect, similar. When one buys land in Ghana, for example, one enters, technically speaking, into a long-term leasing agreement with a traditional chief, who holds the land in trust on behalf of 'his' subjects and who should share the proceeds of the lease with them. Except for southern Africa, whose agriculture underwent significant capitalist transformation in the late nineteenth century, land is communally owned in much of Africa as it was (is) in China, with traditional authorities serving as fiduciaries. This

pattern of ownership does not necessarily create a 'tragedy of the commons', or severely impede economic performance. Famine does not seem to have been a frequent occurrence in pre-colonial Africa, although this may have been due to population growth rates that either remained stagnant or declined (in some cases, clearly because of the transatlantic slave trade). It did become a major problem during colonialism, when land was appropriated on a massive scale to create the large industrial farms (palm oil in Cameroon and Nigeria, rubber in Liberia and, especially, cotton in Lusophone Africa).

While land was (is) held by traditional authority on behalf of their subjects, the latter were (are) encouraged to practice self-reliance either individually, or more often, collectively through the extended family. The ubiquity of land use rights, as opposed to private property rights, in much of Africa must be seen as a compromise between the communitarian ideal of land as a sacred trust to which members of the community must have access and the more individualistic ideal of responsibility and self-reliance, which particularly in pastoral cultures were deemed necessary for males to marry. Traditional Africa had a wonderful capacity to craft hybrid institutions that rewarded individual talent and efforts and maintained communal interest and control.

For example, among the Peuls of northern Cameroon, a young man had to have so many head of cattle before his parents would agree to approach the family of the potential bride for a marriage proposal, this while much of the grazing land was communally owned. To be sure, marital status and biological reproduction were tied to personal achievement for males, but the individual remained firmly ensconced in the community through the institution of the arranged marriage and common ownership of pasture. Simply put, a potential groom could display industry through herd size, as this was a precondition for marriage, but was not expected to go off entirely on his own to accumulate wealth and (or) wives.

Even today and even in urban Africa, it is a rare African in whose success the community (meaning here mostly the extended family) did not participate and, consequently, is not expected to share. Any reform of agriculture in Africa, if it is to succeed, cannot run roughshod over this delicate balance between individualism and 'communitarianism'. The problem with land in much of Africa today (e.g. Ghana) is the fuzzy line among different forms of ownership – state, community and individual land – and the inconsistent enforcement of ownership rights (whatever

they may be), which raises the price of land via higher transaction costs. The solution to this brigandage is not privatization but more transparency in land ownership rights and greater willingness on the part of the state to enforce the rules.

China shows that it is possible to improve agricultural performance without overturning traditional land ownership patterns. It is always puzzling to hear the same analysts who correctly point to institutional mismatch as one of the sources of failure of collectivized agriculture in the former Second World, yet in the same breath uncritically embrace private property rights as the universal solution to improving agricultural performance in the Third World. Incentives are not a monopoly of the capitalist mode of production. Increasing farm output does not necessarily mean privatizing farmland. Private ownership of land is but one incentive to agricultural performance among many, and its ubiquity in the so-called West is a product of a particular historical experience, which cannot be assumed to have universal currency. China, once again, has yet to make firm guarantees to Western-style private property rights, but this ambiguity has not suffered economic performance. Other stimulants of agricultural performance include: liberalization of restrictions on farming surplus value, farmer access to credit and (or) intrants (e.g. fertilizers and improved seeds) and farmer ability to transport goods to market.

Along with the HRS the state encouraged the development of Township and Village Enterprises (TVEs), which were intended to break the historical dichotomy between agriculture and industry, by fostering the integration of these activities. This is reflected in the quintessentially Chinese dictum: leaving the land but not the countryside, entering the factory but not the city. TVEs were not invented by Chinese reformers; they were adaptations to the commune and brigade enterprises created during the Great Leap Forward, which were originally intended to absorb surplus labour in the rural areas. After 1978, agricultural reform in China led to such a sharp rise in rural incomes that the output of the TVE could be readily absorbed, thus creating a viable rural market for both goods and labour and, just as importantly, synergy between agriculture and industry. TVEs share these features: 'they are publicly owned but market oriented; they are small in size, enjoy a high degree of autonomy of operations; they are much more outward-oriented than state-owned enterprises (SOEs); they are subject to hard budget constraints' (Fu and Balasubramanyam 2002).

The last feature of the TVEs comes from the fact that such organizations receive very little support from the state-owned banks and can go bankrupt if they are chronically unprofitable. This feature also solves the principal-agent problem, inasmuch as TVE managers (agents) are under pressure to perform, that is to say, to act as *de facto* owners cum local governments (principals) would have acted if they had the managers' alleged expertise. The agents cannot remain passive to firm performance, since their salaries and bonuses depend on profitability, and the principals cannot be indifferent, since profit sharing between the TVEs and local governments is an important source of the latter's revenue. The size of TVEs also makes for shrinking span of control by local government of management, thereby further reducing the agency problem. Finally, inasmuch as local governments act as interlocutors before regional and centralized authorities, as well as help to secure financing, labour and raw materials for TVEs, transaction costs are reduced, and, as Douglass North (2005) points out, where transaction costs are zero, the neoclassical assumption of optimal efficiency pertains.

The experience of China, where local governments own most TVEs, shows that reforming countries do not have to privatize industrial assets quickly, in order to achieve industrial efficiency and economic growth, in the same way that the HRS demonstrates that the privatization of farmland is not a *sine qua non* for improving agricultural performance. Assets can be transferred hierarchically, from one level of government to another, rather than laterally, from government to the private sector. In Africa in the 1980s, a major component of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) was the privatization of the state owned enterprises (SOEs), which in the eyes of donors had been one of the causes of the fiscal crisis of the African state, because their soft budget constraints meant that they could rely on their national treasuries for bailouts, even in the face of inefficiency and persistent financial losses. In retrospect, there may have been at least an interim solution situated somewhere between outright privatization and continued ownership of industrial assets by centralized authority, namely: the devolution of SOEs to local authority, especially those connected to agro-industrial processing, and joint administration of these enterprises between hired agents and local principals. Also, budget constraints can be hardened without privatization.

In China the TVE was successful in breaking the historical dichotomy between agriculture and industry, by fostering the integration of these activities. Agriculture and industrialization are not mutually exclusive.

This has enormous implication for Africa, which processes little of its raw materials into even the most basic of finished products. But what cannot be overemphasized here was the willingness of China to use institutions that had legitimacy among the Chinese people in the pursuit of economic development, rather to import wholesale others that may well have been resisted, because of their unfamiliarity and external sponsorship. It will be further demonstrated in the discussion below that this ability of the Chinese to jettison existing institutions is not limited to one sector; it runs through all the other policy areas and constitutes the essence of disjointed incrementalism.

There have been efforts in Africa to integrate agriculture and industry. In general, they have not worked for several reasons. Firstly, these initiatives entailed the creation of parastatals imposed by the central state; local officials, much less local farmers, had little stake in their success. In China's TVE the reverse pertains. Secondly, agro-industrial parastatals were often too large and had to confront the problem of unreliable supply. Inputs were sometimes in short supply or low in quality, because of improper monitoring of farm production and poor transportation. Thirdly, they operated under conditions of soft budget constraints. The experience of Cameroon Tannery near Ngaoundéré (Adamawa Province) in the 1980s was emblematic. Hide and skin needed by the firm to make leather would often arrive with blood and other residues of slaughtered animals; they were also mislabelled so that the finished product would be of inferior quality, which damaged the reputation of the firm. But as long as Cameroon Tannery could depend on its parent ministry (MINEPIA) and the central treasury (MINEFI), it had no incentive to engage in quality control of its supplies. China's TVEs, as seen earlier, faced hard budget constraints; they are completely decoupled from Beijing. The uncertainty occasioned by their independence provides a strong incentive to performance.

Finance

The financial system is the lubricant of any modern economy. When it ceases to grease the wheels, the economy grinds to a halt. A good financial system does two things: mobilize capital (i.e. savings) and direct it unto areas of high return on investment (ROI) and low risk. China's financial system is one of the best in the world at mobilizing resources. On average Chinese citizens save 35 percent of their disposable income,

most of which goes to bank deposits (checking accounts) and savings accounts. A number of factors help to explain China's high savings rate.

Government-backed postal savings accounts provide a safer place for Chinese citizens to put their money than teapots. The yuan renminbi (RNB) is not (yet) easily convertible, as the Chinese government limits citizen access to foreign currencies. This makes it extraordinarily difficult for small savers to keep accounts in foreign banks, which until 2006 were excluded from the Chinese banking system, where four state-owned banks intermediated 75 percent of all deposits. Until recently, bank deposits were the only option for Chinese savers, as opportunities for investment in the 'irrational exuberance' of stock ownership were foreclosed by the state. Finally, as China has reduced poverty and increased the size of its middle class, Chinese families simply have more disposable income to save.

China uses its financial system to channel capital into preferred areas of economic development, and the People's Bank of China relies on administrative control rather than market forces. Through the central bank the Chinese state maintains overall control of monetary policy and through the state-owned commercial banks it channels capital to specific industries, but regional and local officials can (and do) attract private, even foreign, capital to their area. They do not have to rely on financing from the institutions of the central state. In addition, thanks in large part to money transfers from overseas Chinese, China has a large informal lending market with estimated assets of 100 billion USD (Farrell and Lund 2006). Smaller firms are able to find capital for investment in the informal sector, when they cannot acquire foreign capital through joint ventures or domestic capital from the state-owned banks. Some TVEs also own banks and credit unions. These are further sources of capital for small business.

In sum, the market for capital in China evinces diversity through decentralization, precisely the features of disjointed incrementalism prevailing in other sectors of the economy. But the People's Bank of China, the central bank, continues to exert strong control over monetary policy and financial institutions, again, further evidence of disjointed incrementalism in action. Chinese monetary policy has been one of the reasons behind the success of China in international trade. But China did not officially embrace currency devaluation to stimulate export, the usual elixir of neo-liberals. This may have enabled Chinese officials to resist Western pressure to revalue the yuan in order to reduce China's huge

trade surplus. Rather, Chinese policy has been to keep the yuan stable while building China's already huge reserve account (over 1 trillion USD).

The pathologies of Africa's financial system are one of the causes of the continent's underdevelopment. Officially, savings rates throughout Africa are extremely low. As a result, banks lack capital to finance large scale investments. But even moderate scale investments cannot find financing. The environment in much of Africa is perceived as risky, therefore, banks levy high interest rates on loans and place cumbersome requirements on borrowers, which force many small firms to seek financing in the informal sector, forego expansion and (or) raise capital internally (through savings).

Furthermore, bank lending in Africa tends to be of a political, rather than commercial, character: politically connected 'big men' are lent money; 'small boys' are kicked to the sidewalk, or otherwise discouraged from even knocking on the door. Viable business plans are not financed, because banks do not take even reasonable risks or they unfairly discriminate among borrowers. Finally, in parts of Africa (Francophone Africa) central banks do not have autonomy in making monetary policy. In reality, they are local and regional subsidiaries of foreign monetary authorities (e.g. Bank of France). How can development take place under this condition, when its engine (capital) has been effectively removed from the control of Africans? The need for an African 'big think' (nationalism) is no more glaring than in this area.

Fortunately, there are in Africa, as in China, institutions that can play an important role in the financial sector. They are not necessarily state-owned institutions, such as central banks; still, African governments can influence how they work. In Ghana, traditional, pooled savings institutions (*essusus*) number 5,000 and are estimated to hold 140 million USD in total capital. The amount of periodic contributions to the common pool in an *essusu* (or *tontine* in Cameroon) varies. In principle, therefore, even the poorest Ghanaian can be a member of an *essusu*. Ghanaian banks, on the other hand, require customers to maintain a monthly minimum balance of 150,000 *cedis* in their account, or the equivalent of one-month salary (Marrot, Barrohi and Ghabi 2007). It should not be too hard for the reader to guess which savings institution ordinary Ghanaians prefer. Insofar as they remain largely in the informal sector, *essusus*, *tontines* and other institutions like them constitute a leakage out of the national savings stream, with deleterious consequences on investment. A relatively easy step by government would be to enact policy that brings pooled

savings institutions from under the shadow of informality. Encouraging *essusu* and *tontine* managers to embrace sound methods of bookkeeping and providing ordinary members legal titles to assets would increase credit worthiness and facilitate access to capital from banks and financial institutions.

Remittances are playing an important role in developing countries. In 2005, they were twice the amount of official development aid (ODA) at 188 billion USD (Gupta, Pattillo and Wagh 2007). They are the second largest source of foreign exchange earnings after gold in Ghana, and far surpass foreign aid (all sources combined). In Senegal, remittance inflows from 2000 to 2005 represented, on average, 7 percent of GDP and 22 percent of export earnings (ibid). However, in spite of their increasing importance, remittances in Africa suffer from the same deficiencies as remittances from immigrants elsewhere, namely, they are used mainly for consumption rather than investment and are not taxable. Yet, they could be an important source of capital for many capital-starved countries.

One of the critical sources of capital for China, especially during the early years of economic liberalization (1979-1989), was Hong Kong, then a British colony. Taiwan alternated with Japan as the biggest investor in China during this period as well. Simply put, overseas Chinese were not negligible in the success of China. The push of economic stagnation and population growth may have led to them to take physical leave of the homeland, but the emotional pull of nationalism and familial obligations compelled them to keep their wallets open. In the age of globalization, savings need not come from the citizens who live and work inside the borders of the states that claim them. African states have some distance to travel before they can 'capture' (perhaps a poor choice of word) the savings of their internal citizens for development, much less those living overseas. But the larger point is that there are in Africa sources of capital that are yet to be mobilized for development, some of which go back to the colonial period. The World Bank is expendable. Indeed, World Bank capital constitutes a very small fraction of annual capital flow, respectively 23 billion USD versus 647 billion USD in 2005. Africa may never develop, if it counts on the World Bank as its financier. The Bank played a very minimal role in China's development.

Industry and Direct Foreign Investment (DFI)

The development of an industrial sector in China was made possible in part by the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), whose history bears further testimony to incremental policy making. The State Council of China, the highest executive body in the PRC, authorized the creation of the first SEZs in 1979 in the provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. The choice was not entirely coincidental. These provinces were located in China's southeast coast, a geo-strategic area rich in labour resources and a cosmopolitan culture, which shared linguistic and economic ties to overseas Chinese business communities in Hong Kong, Taiwan and even Singapore (Wei 1999). These provinces were China's window to the outside world in the late nineteenth century, but the Chinese state could exercise control over the SEZs to a much greater extent than imperial authority could influence the 'Open Door Policy'.

In Guangdong the SEZs were located in Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shantou and in Fujian Province there was one SEZ in Xiamen. (For those unfamiliar with China, the four zones were located either near Hong Kong, Taiwan or Macao). The SEZs were not the usual free trade zones thrust upon developing countries by donors in the name of liberalization; they were more than semi industrial enclaves where multinational corporations received generous tax breaks in exchange for creating a limited number of jobs with few fringe benefits, and with no visible connection between their activities and the rest of the economy. Instead, the goal of the SEZs was 'to experiment with the development of an outward looking, market oriented economic system, and to serve the country as a "window" and a "base" along these lines ...The rest of the domestic economy could be connected to the outside world through the window, without leaving the door wide open' (ibid).

The SEZs were not created out of thin air. The Chinese government incurred significant start-up costs to bring them about. The SEZs were to be self-standing entities with their own sewer system, electrical power grid, housing stock, health facilities, schools and of course factories and storage facilities. In addition, the Chinese state issued a set of policies and regulations governing the operations of the SEZs that no doubt facilitated their success. China, in a limited way, reformed its property rights and contract laws, making them more transparent and predictable to foreign investors. According to one scholar, 'The regulations concerned such matters as equity ratios of foreign investors, the length of contract periods, employment and wages, land use, corporate and individual in-

come taxes, business regulation, entry and exit procedures, foreign exchange transactions, technology transfers, patent rights, and visa applications' (ibid). China did not simply designate parts of its territory as SEZs and blindly invite foreign investors to come in. It set conditions aimed at benefiting China as much as international capital.

At least two lessons stand out from China's experience with the SEZs. Firstly, the SEZs were adaptations to existing institutions. All of the first-generation SEZs were located in parts of China that had long been integrated into the world economy. Once again, the role played by overseas Chinese in Hong Kong and Taiwan cannot be underestimated. China did not decline capital from Taiwan because of political differences with the island's leaders. Thus, in the mid-1990s Hong Kong and Taiwan were, respectively, the two biggest investors in China, ahead of the United States (Sun and Tipton 1998). Secondly, China's SEZs demonstrate that comparative advantage is dynamic rather than static; but, more importantly, in the modern world system comparative advantage is *manufactured* by states rather than bestowed by nature. China had been the world's most populous country for centuries, but its bountiful supply of cheap labour did not suffice to attract foreign capital before 1978. The clincher was a series of policy decisions by the state, from limited reform of property rights to investment in fixed and human capital to decentralization that gave foreign capitalists the confidence that China was worth the risk.

China's experience with SEZs calls attention to the need for states to enact policies that actively promote direct foreign investment while insuring that it benefits the whole economy, not just enclaves thereof. China also demonstrates that it is unwise to inject state capital into industrial ventures indefinitely, lest this creates soft budget constraints. SEZs were supported by the state only in their infancy; they were expected to be self-sustaining soon thereafter. In other words, their budget constraints were hardened as soon as they started production. There have been attempts in Africa to create the institutional equivalents of SEZs and, more generally, attract direct foreign investment. Their failure is instructive and highlights the differences with China.

Firstly, these attempts, such as the former East African Community (EAC), did not bear fruit because of rivalry among African governments (socialist Tanzania versus capitalist Kenya). Secondly, they relied far too extensively on foreign capital for African industrialization. As a result, foreign capital often engaged in a kind of striptease, pitting one

solicitous African country against another, which no doubt exacerbated the first problem. Thirdly, inadequate infrastructure has impeded direct foreign investment in Africa, as have government inconsistencies in fiscal, monetary and investment policy, which create uncertainty among investors. Fourthly, and perhaps more importantly, industrial and free trade zones in Africa have tended to result in the creation of enclaves with little forward and backward linkage industries and, therefore, no serious connection to the rest of the economy. They have not been vectors of genuine technology transfer. Rather, they have been heavens for capital in search of cheap labour, raw materials and tax exemption.

China's experience with SEZs compels rethinking of the forces that may exist in Africa and the Diaspora that may facilitate capital penetration of the continent. Capital from overseas Africans, including African-Americans, could play a role in the development of the continent. Furthermore, certain groups in Africa known for their entrepreneurial spirit and extensive social networks (*réseaux*) may be of use in integrating the African continent in the grid of globalization. Because of their 'otherness', these groups have generally been considered suspect by African state elites, if not to say ordinary Africans (e.g. Lebanese and Syrians in West Africa, Indians and Pakistanis in East Africa). In turn, they may not have invested as much in the continent as they could have, which reinforces suspicion. Political uncertainty and popular envy always breed conservativeness in business practices by visible minorities. It may not be entirely coincidental that Uganda's economic performance improved in the wake of a more accommodating stance vis-à-vis entrepreneurs of Asian origin by President Yoweri Museveni.

Chinese Lessons, African Hope

There is nothing mystical about Chinese economic performance. In fact, many of China's reforms had antecedents elsewhere in Asia and well beyond. The enabling conditions for economic development are fairly well understood by now. They include an ability to produce food, which makes for a healthy population and 'primitive' capital accumulation; a working financial system, to mobilize savings and channel it to productive use, and stable monetary policy; an industrial sector that transforms raw materials into finished products that people want to buy; investment in human and fixed capital; controlled interaction with the outside world; and, above all, a working state that can facilitate the attainment of the aforementioned conditions, craft and enforce property rights that

are consonant with societal values, provide social services, maintain internal order and protect its border from external predators. This is a way of refuting ahistorical, culture-based and metaphysical explanations of Chinese economic success, and embracing agency in economic development. It is also an affirmation that Africa's challenges are not immutable; they, too, can be overcome by human action. Future generations may regard the continent's alleged neopatrimonialism, social capital deficit, bad geography and other expressions of Afro-pessimism with the same curiosity as the dour prognosis heaped upon Asia by Western thinkers (among them Karl Marx) for its 'despotism'.

The universality of the state as the dominant mode of socio-political organization entails that, for the foreseeable future, it is likely to remain the primary source of human agency in development. The fact is, in the modern age there has not been a single country that was poor and became rich without a state. Political order is a predicate for development and survival. 'Without order, there is no future' (Bates 2007). Therefore, economic development is essentially a state project. Globalization does not exclude the need for states but rather amplifies it. A market system does not vitiate the need for a state. On the contrary, inasmuch as competitive market economy entails a complex property rights system, this makes a working state all the more indispensable, in order to reduce transaction costs, which, in turn, facilitates efficiency. The benefits of the Chinese model, as compared to that of the neo-liberal model, are precisely that the former combines state and market, rather than chooses one over the other.

However, having a state does not guarantee development any more than having a market insures prosperity. The states that have succeeded in achieving development have been precisely those whose leaders have understood the connection between state making, prosperity and their own survival and have been willing to make the requisite decisions to achieve all three within an overarching discursive paradigm of nationalism. This is referred to as 'big think' in this article which shows how it has operated in the Chinese context. At the same time, to acknowledge that economic development has been (is) far too complex and important a matter to be left to the hazards of chance rather than the capable hands of human agency is not to suggest that there is one road to prosperity and only states have the map. The history of development is replete with well-meaning state plans that went awry with disastrous consequences, not least in China (Scott 1998). The centrality of the

state does not justify turning it into an object of idolatry, for, as the experience of China suggests, there is no magic wand in development, 'no do-it-yourself growth kits that one can simply borrow from others and apply'. (Mkandawire 2005)

Instead, development presents problems of the type that the late professor Martin Landau might have called 'wicked', that is to say, problems that engender concord in regards to ends but discord in regards to means (Landau 1986). In such cases, decision makers, Landau always counselled, should experiment, proceed with caution, respect social institutions that have withstood the test of time, and engage in trial and error. More importantly, they should create mechanisms for error detection and correction, a key element of which is 'redundancy', which localizes mistakes (Landau 1969). This approach to policy is referred to as disjointed incrementalism, in order to underscore its decentralized, experimental, and therefore tentative, character. But policy never takes place in a political vacuum. In the case of China, the political ideology of 'big think' (or nationalism) has largely informed the policy of disjointed incrementalism.

It is doubtful that without the vision provided by Mao Zedong of a strong, united, independent and self-reliant – in short, an erect – China, economic development could have been achieved. It is equally doubtful that without fragmentation of decisions and implementation – in sum, policy experimentation – China could have succeeded. China is simply too complex for the synoptic solutions embedded in previous reform efforts (e.g. Great Leap Forward) to have been successful. In the end, the main lesson provided by China to Africa may be this: make states that captivate the imagination of citizens and gain their support through a nationalist project, but have state leaders who, cognizant of their bounded rationality, are willing to pursue development resolutely but cautiously. What kind of state is likely to capture the imagination of Africans and gain their support?

Toward a Plausible African 'Big Think'

Because of the trauma wrought by the triple experience with the slave trade, colonialism and post-colonialism, and the yearning that all three naturally create for unity, Pan-Africanism is still the most potent, credible, political ideology among the masses in Africa today. It could, and probably must, be Africa's 'big think', if Africa has any realistic chance of being the world economy's next success story. In other words, Pan-

Africanism should be the organizing principle or ideology of a new African statecraft to replace the partitioning schemes of King Leopold II, Otto von Bismarck and other scramblers. An ideology, of course, 'is an economizing device by which individuals come to terms with their environment and are provided with a 'world view' so that the decision making process is simplified' (North 1981).

Thus, ideologies are like theories: they rationalize and explain a given situation, while providing possible alternatives that are adduced to be better than the status quo. An ideology therefore is always at least a latent call for action. What the African state, as it is currently constituted, lacks then is a credible ideology capable of explaining Africa's political balkanization, that is, its 50-odd states in light of potential mass support for considerably fewer, its underdevelopment in the midst of the bountiful natural resources bestowed by the gods (yes, the gods), its marginalization in the concert of nation-states in spite of a Diaspora that is truly global in character and relatively prosperous. Worse still, the modern African state, too Lilliputian in many places to be recognizable even on an African map, is not capable of providing strategies, or devising plans, that would liberate the continent's arrested development. Enter Pan-Africanism, the case for which is basically three-fold.

Firstly, ' "Africa" is probably the most emotionally evoked name of any continent. Its people sing about it, paint it, sculpt it more than any other continent. Its artists produce hundred of icons of this much "beloved continent". Even national anthems often evoke Africa much more than individual country names' (Mkandawire 2004). In other words, 'Africa' has a greater hold on the collective imagination than any other concept. It would be far easier to rally Africans around 'Africa' than any other social project, in the same way that Mao Zedong rallied the Chinese around 'China First.'

Secondly, de facto Pan-Africanism exists throughout the continent. It is to be found in the existence of formal and informal institutions – e.g. chieftaincies, secret societies, trade networks, land property rights, language families, religions, etc. – that cut through large swaths of the continent. In this connection, ordinary Africans are well ahead of their rulers, whose indifference, if not to say hostility, to the Pan-African project has been deleterious to its progress. The main obstacle to development in Africa may well be how to align the interests of territorially bound rulers with the transcendent institutions of citizens, who are more likely to

support development efforts if they are consonant with existing practices and values.

Thirdly, Pan-Africanism is firmly in line with trends in the world geopolitical economy, whose logic calls for large and transnational entities. These are legion: multinational corporations (GM and Wal-Mart), free trade blocs (NAFTA), confederations (EU), international financial institutions (World Bank, IMF), regulatory organizations (WTO), terrorist outfits (al-Qaeda), criminal syndicates (the Russian Mafia in Moscow, London and Brighton Beach, New York City), etc. In the age of globalization, bigger may not always be better (as the experience of Daimler-Chrysler demonstrates), however, it often provides greater insurance for survival in a turbulent environment.

The concrete benefits of Pan-Africanism have long been identified but they are worth summarizing. Pan-Africanism would allow Africa to take advantage of the economies of scale that accrue with larger markets (Green and Seidman 1967). It would allow Africa to better leverage its natural resources, some of which can only be found on the continent, in the same way that China has leveraged its population to attract capital. It would facilitate the connection of landlocked territories to the world economy and raise them up from poverty. Concomitantly, it would allow for easier sharing of resources between rich and poor communities, for the same reason that Germans have been willing, in effect, to transfer resources to Poles and Irishmen: 'Europe'. It would give the continent greater clout in the world economic order and on the tribune of international opinion (the UN), as it would be able to speak with one voice rather than many (Mandaza 2002). It would reduce interstate wars, in the same way that the EU has kept the peace among Europe's historical warring factions. It would reduce intra and interstate conflicts, by delocalizing identity (How many lives have been lost in Ivory Coast because of *Ivoirité,* which may have begun as little more than a cynical ploy by some Ivorian politicians to rally their electoral base but turned out to have deadly consequences?). It would increase democracy, as local scoundrels would no longer be able to take refuge in raison d'état and sovereignty. In sum, Pan-Africanism would facilitate development, by removing what may well be the main barrier to prosperity in the African context: the tension between the territorially bound, mostly debile, predatory African state and the transcendent and vibrant institutions of African civil society, which are also consonant with globalization. The

criticisms of Pan-Africanism have been heard before. They are refuted one-by-one here.

Pan-Africanism is not a pipe dream that is simply too complex to be implemented. It is seldom recalled today that the European Union, one of the most successful 'big think' products of our time, began modestly as a customs union of coal and steel among 6 countries of northern Europe, which more than 50 years later has its own currency, 27 member states, a parliament and perhaps soon a constitution. Nor is it remembered that before 1949, China was a virtual doormat of imperialist powers. All this began to change with one simple but solemn declaration in September of that year and China has never looked back (i.e. 'The Chinese people have stood up'). But Pan Africanism does not gainsay experimental policy making (disjointed incrementalism), beginning perhaps with economic institutions operating, at first, at regional levels. For example, South Africa's Rand could be the medium of exchange for the southern Africa region. China's SEZs, HRS and TVEs began as modest experiments in a larger framework of modernization.

Pan-Africanism does not immediately necessitate continental government, although in the long run this may well be the outcome. But even then such a government would almost certainly be the result of painstaking negotiations among local stakeholders. Therefore, it would likely be a federation or confederation, leaving significant powers to non-central authorities. Because many African states have undergone a democratic transition since 1990, such a (con)federation would also likely consist of democratic states. Pan-Africanism is not African Big Brother coming to consume its junior siblings. But there would have to be certain markers or, as the British like to say: red lines. These are fundamental principles *upon* which action aimed at achieving Pan-Africanism would be built, rather than principles Pan-Africanism would seek to avoid in the interest of amity and political correctness. One of these markers would be the integration of geo-political space, which would of course calls into question the secular sanctity of the borders drawn at the Berlin Conference, the proverbial elephant in the room at Casa Blanca and in Addis Ababa in 1961. Another is social inclusiveness.

Pan-Africanism cannot succeed unless it directly and concretely benefits ordinary Africans, in the same way that President Hu Jintao's recently enshrined concept of 'scientific development' is aimed at extending the benefits of economic growth to even more Chinese citizens while cleaning up the environment. Thus, Pan-Africanism should not be con-

ceived as some grand political project, whose utility to the African masses is largely emotive or symbolic. Fundamentally, then, Pan-Africanism would be a social project. It would put socialism 'back in' on the African agenda, in counter-distinction to donor-imposed efforts to integrate Africa in the global capitalist order as a primary commodity producer – still.

Pan-Africanism is the highest expression of African nationalism and clearly incompatible with the arbitrary borders that zigzag the African landscape, but it is not black racism. This would presuppose the strict equation of Africa with the black 'race', and no such infantile presumption is made here. As quite possibly the birthplace of humankind and the literal centre of planet Earth, Africa has always been a meeting point for all groups, the preponderance of the black epidermis in much of the continent having more to do with geography and nature's adaptation to disease threats than any propensity of Africans toward exclusivity. Racist, in fact, is the belief that Africans cannot undertake collective action to solve their own problems, and, therefore, will always need outsiders.

Pan-Africanism does not negate developmental states, on the contrary, it strengthens them through consolidation. One reason why developmental states in Africa would have a difficult time pursuing development on their own would be the expected pressure they would experience to open up their economies, in particular by the World Trade Organization and the United States. The Asian developmental states (Japan, South Korea) were either spared the unpleasantness of neo-liberal orthodoxy – – because of the special circumstances of the Cold War – or could resist it by their sheer weight in the world geo-political system (China).

No preferential treatment would likely be granted individual African developmental states, as the imposition of structural adjustment programs in the 1980s made clear. Simply put: individual African developmental states would have to sink or swim without life vests; Pan-Africanism, by amalgamating states into large blocs (and, why not, eventually into one), would enable them to better negotiate the treacherous currents. Furthermore, many countries in Africa have similar economic profiles as primary commodity producers. Untrammelled competition for capital could have effects akin to the behaviour of crabs in a basket, whereby those at the bottom trample on their neighbours to reach the top, only to be thrown overboard. As seen earlier, this was one of the problems with the old EAC. Because of division, African countries are reduced to being the political equivalents of stage performers in a burlesque show in a second-hand theatre where the rewards are mini-

mal in the end. Pan-Africanism would insure rationality and coordination in African developmental efforts. In sum, there may be no African future without the Pan-African developmental state.

Pan-Africanism has not *really* been tried in Africa in the post-colonial period, therefore, it cannot be said to have failed. Pan-African projects, from continent-wide efforts such as the OAU to regional initiatives such as, once again, the EAC, never received the strong and consistent support from African rulers that would have been necessary for their success. The leaders of these organizations never transcended parochial interests for the sake of collective wellbeing. Their adhesion to Pan-Africanism did not extend beyond the pageantry of the annual meetings, that is, if they showed up at all. Finally, post-colonial, so-called Pan-African efforts were all predicated on the acceptance of the imposed artificialities of the Berlin Conference, the very anti-theses of African development and Pan-Africanism itself.

Of course, there is no absolute guarantee that things would be better this time around, but perhaps Pan-Africanism could avoid the ignominy of its putative antecedent, given the ongoing democratization of the continent, which should facilitate the peaceful retirement of reactionaries, and the ubiquity of similar efforts elsewhere, which may have awaken Africans out of their stupor. In this connection, the decision to create a (Pan)-African parliament, *à la* European parliament, may be more than symbolic. For the first time in post-colonial Africa, the African masses would have an institution they can directly affect across borders. For Pan-Africanists, the task is clear under this dispensation: elect to the (Pan)-African parliament, whenever it becomes operational, committed Pan-Africanists, who would then use the institution as a launching pad to deepen Pan-Africanism in their 'home' country and continent-wide.

Obviously, Pan-Africanism would not be easy. There would be enormous problems integrating countries that are differentially endowed in natural and human resources, do not share the same geography, culture and so on. Yet, in spite of its unquestionable diversity, there is probably more that unites Africa than divides it. There would also be external resistance by imperialist powers that continue to regard large swaths of the continent as their exclusive *chasse gardée* (prey). Overall, the difficulties that Pan-Africanism can be expected to encounter by no means make its realization impossible, only marginally more difficult if there is strong leadership commitment. Besides, we are not suggesting that Pan-

Africanism can be built in the course of one generation; it would be *une marche à longue haleine*, a marathon that could take decades to complete.

In some ways, Africa is today where China was before 1949: weak and wracked by division and 'warlordism'. Just as it took a social revolution to unite and bring order to China under the authority of one state, the same may well be necessary in some African countries whose disintegration is probably past the point of ordinary reform (e.g. Nigeria and Congo). No matter the human costs of this possible denouement, those connected to continued misery and marginalization are probably much higher. But one last time, as the example of China shows, the price of development is state activism, big and disjointed, not immobility, supplication and unshaken belief in the power of the market.

Notes

1. A developmental state may be defined as a state that uses its authority to intervene significantly in the economy, in order to promote substantive goals, such as export competitiveness, industrialization and food self-sufficiency. More broadly, a developmental state is actively engaged not only in the traditional areas of statecraft, i.e. security and stability, but also in prosperity.
2. An administrative system that grants local officials substantial autonomy in implementing policy, by default, also grants them substantial ability in making policy. At the same time, inasmuch as centralized authority maintains penultimate power over local officials, as reflected in the carrying out of capital punishment against corrupt local apparachiks in China, the central state remains the formal/legal epicenter of policy making, even though, in practice, the latter may be surreptitiously appropriated by subalterns. This 'problem' is not unique to China. The general currently in charge of U.S. troops in Iraq, David Patraeus, is effectively making war policy as much as he is implementing it.
3. China may have been so blinded by illusion of its grandeur that it may have ultimately handed its occupiers the key to its own defeat. By failing to modernize China, based in part on the belief that China was already modern, the late Ming dynasty was in no position to resist foreign encroachment. The inability was further aggravated by nasty palace intrigues, which kept Chinese rulers isolated from their own retainers.

Bibliography

Avery, N., 2005, *Bloomberg News*, 9 August.

Bates, R. in G. Munck and R. Synder (eds.), 2007, *Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Brown, L., 2004, 'China's Shrinking Grain Harvest', *The Globalist*, Friday, March 12.

Chan, S., 1990, *East Asian Dynamism*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Chen, F., L. Wang and J. Davis, 1989, 'Land Reform in Rural China Since the Mid-1980s, Parts I and II', www.fao.org/sd/Ltdirect/Ltan0032.html.
Diamond, J., 1997, *Guns, Germs and Steel; The Fates of Human Societies*, New York: W.W. Norton.
Etzioni, A., 1967, 'Mixed-Scanning: A 'Third' Approach to Decision-Making', *Public Administration Review*, December, pp. 385-392.
Farrell D. and S. Lund, 2006, 'Putting China's Capital to Work', www.feer.com/articles1/2006/0605/free/p005.html.
French, H., 2006, 'As China Ages a Shortage of Cheap Labor Looms', *New York Times*, June 29, 2005.
Fu, X. and V.N. Balasubramanyam, 2002, 'Township and Village Enterprises in China' Lancaster University Management School, Working Paper, http://www.lums.co.uk/publications.
Gale, F. and R. Collender, 2006, 'New Directions in China's Agricultural Lending', *Electronic Outlook Report from the Economic Research Service*, www.usda.gov, January.
Gordon, R. and I. Waldner, 1979, 'Thinking Big, Thinking Small and Not Thinking At All', *Public Policy*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Winter. pp. 1-24.
Green, R. and A. Seidman, 1967, *The Economics of Pan-Africanism — Unity or Poverty*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.
Gros, J-G., 2003, 'Trouble in Paradise: Crime and Collapsed States in the Age of Globalization', *The British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 43, No. 1, Winter. 63-80.
Gupta, S. C. Pattillo and S. Wagh, 2007, 'Making Remittances Work for Africa', *Finance and Development*, Vol. 44, No. 2, June.
Haishun S. and F.B. Tipton, 1998, 'A Comparative Analysis of the Characteristics of Direct Foreign Investment in China, 1979-1995', *The Journal of Developing Areas*, Winter, pp. 159-186.
Hsu, I., 2000, *Rise of Modern China*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
International Finance Corporation, *Doing Business: Economy Characteristics*, http://www.doingbusiness.org/ExploreEconomies/Economy Characteristics.aspx.
Jeune Afrique l'Intelligent, 2004, 'Chic, les Chinois reviennent', 31 January.
Landau, M., 1969, 'Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap', *Public Administration Review*, July/August, pp. 346-358.
Landau, M., 1986, 'On Decision Strategies and Management Structures: With Special References to Experimentation', *ISARD-Ford Workshop on The Contribution of Management Science to Irrigation Systems*, Colorado State University, 15-18 April.
Lindblom, C., 1979, 'Still Muddling, Not Yet Through', *Public Administration Review*, 39, pp. 517-525.
Makandawire, T., 2004, 'Rethinking Pan-Africanism, 1st Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora', African Union, Dakar, Senegal, 7-9 October.
Makandawire, T., 2005, 'Toward a Development, Democratic and Social Inclusive Africa Once Again', *CODESRIA Bulletin*, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 47-49.
Mandaza, I. (ed.), 2002, *Pan-Africanism and Integration in Africa*, Zimbabwe: SAPES.

Marrot, J-B., A. Barrohi and S. Ghabi. 2007, 'Ghana: les collecteurs soussous bancarisés', *Jeune-Afrique*, 25 February.
Melka, J., 2006, 'La Chine usurpe-t-elle sa place de nouvelle puissance commerciale?' *Le Monde Economie*, 23 May.
Nkrumah, K., 1998, *Africa Must Unite*, UK: PANAF.
North, D., 1981, *Structure and Change in Economic History*, New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
North, D., 2005, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Popper, K., 1961, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York, NY: Scientific Editions.
Popper, K. 2002, *The Poverty of Historicism*, New York: Routledge Classics.
Scott, J.C., 1998, *Seeing Like a State*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Taylor, I., 2005, 'Can Africa Produce Developmental States', *CODESRIA Bulletin*, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 51-52.
Wei, G., 1999, *Special Economic Zones and the Economic Transition in China*, Singapore University: World Scientific Publishing Co.
World Bank, 1997, *China 2020: Development Challenges in the New Century*, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
Yardley, J. and J. Kahn, 2005, 'China's Great Divide: Rural Poor and Urban Rich', New York Times, 12/18 – 12/23.


African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2008, pp. 89–114

(ISSN 0850-7902)

The War on Terror and the Crisis of Postcoloniality in Africa

Kenneth Omeje*

Abstract

Back in the early 1990s when a section of the American foreign policy think tank and the intelligentsia were euphorically forecasting scenarios for the consolidation of western victory in the Cold War, James Woolsey, then head of the US Central Intelligence Agency forewarned that the widely celebrated victory and transition to the post-Cold War era was akin to the West, having slain the dragon (of Soviet threat), now living in a jungle full of poisonous snakes (Woolsey 1993). There can hardly be a better metaphoric representation of the post-9/11 projection of American power in the postcolonial world, especially in Africa. This article argues that the US-led war on terror tends to reinforce the crisis of postcoloniality in Africa by deliberately producing metaphors, images, discourses, doctrines and policies aimed at magnifying and mainstreaming terrorism scares on the turbulent politico-economic landscape of Africa, as a means to justify imperial governance and supervision. It is a project that ideologically feeds into influential transhistorical discourses and portrayal of Africa as a timespace of infantilism, requiring endless western propping and chaperoning. Evidently, African political regimes serve as satellite collaborators in the enterprise in a trajectory that the author captures within the discursive framework of postcoloniality.

Résumé

Au début des années 1990, lorsqu'une partie du groupe de réflexion américain en matière de politique étrangère et l'intelligentsia prévoyaient

* Professor of International Relations, United States International University, Nairobi, Kenya. Email: komeje@usiu.ac.ke

euphoriquement des scénarios pour la consolidation de la victoire de l'Occident dans la guerre froide, James Woolsey, qui était alors le chef de l'Agence centrale de renseignement (CIA) des États-Unis, avait averti que la victoire largement célébrée, ainsi que la transition vers la période d'après-guerre froide, était à l'image de l'Occident, qui, après avoir tué le dragon (la menace soviétique), vit maintenant dans une jungle pleine de serpents venimeux. Il ne peut guère y avoir une meilleure représentation métaphorique de l'image post-11 septembre de la puissance américaine dans le monde postcolonial, en particulier en Afrique. Cet article soutient que la guerre contre la terreur menée par les États-Unis d'Amérique tend à renforcer la crise de la postcolonialité en Afrique en produisant délibérément des métaphores, des images, des discours, des doctrines et des politiques visant à amplifier la peur du terrorisme dans le turbulent paysage politico-économique de l'Afrique. Ceci se trouve être un moyen de justifier la gouvernance et la supervision impériales. Il s'agit d'un projet qui est idéologiquement fondé sur des discours transhistoriques influents et la représentation de l'Afrique comme un espace d'infantilisme, qui nécessite le soutien et le chaperonnage interminables de l'Occident. Evidemment, les régimes politiques africains servent de collaborateurs satellites dans cette entreprise, dans une trajectoire que l'auteur place dans le cadre discursif de la postcolonialité.

Introduction

Contrary to Crawford Young's (2004) postulate proclaiming the [probable] demise of the postcolonial moment, the postcolonial era has not passed. It has basically been reconfigured and reinvented. Young (2004:23-24) speculates that there has been a demise of the 'postcolonial moment' in Africa since about the year 1990. He attributes the historic demise to the convoluted forces of market liberalisation and democratisation in Africa, which have eroded the silent incorporation of many defining characteristics of the colonial state in its post independence successor for the preceding three decades. 1990 is designated as the terminal postcolonial period because this was the year when the unfolding transformations came full cycle with a multitude of new functional and dysfunctional actors (informal traders, smugglers, warlords, arms traffickers, youth militias, local associations, women's organisations, religious groups and refugees) entering the political space and interacting with state agents and international agencies (Young 2004:24-25). In the end, Young details the decay and disintegration of the postcolonial state but fails to tell us what has replaced it and what has become of the sociocultural and sundry concomitants of postcoloniality in Africa.

I argue in this article that the emerging politics and discourses of imperial chaperoning in Africa and how African political regimes relate to them, midwifing, facilitating and trying to maximise the political and economic opportunities and possibilities attendant to the process attest to the contemporary reinvention of postcoloniality. Incidentally, these processes were already unfolding when Young declared in 2004 that 'the postcolonial moment has passed.' Perhaps, he only needed to have searched a little deeper. Reminiscent of the famous essays of Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History', and Charles Krauthammer, 'The Unipolar Moment', that both celebrated the end of the Cold War, Young's article presumes that the onset of the crisis of patrimonial decline in the 1980s and the backlash of developmentalism in the 1990s, culminating in the emergency of failed and turbulent states, have conspired to erode the currency and discourse of the postcolonial state, if not the entire project of 'stateness' in Africa (Young 2004:23-49).

The postcolonial state and postcoloniality could not have ended in a sudden 'moment' as the Cold War did when its essential underlying structures (mostly physical) in the communist bloc and the Soviet Union disintegrated. The structures of postcoloniality are both physical and mental/social, such that even if the physical disintegrates, the mental and social component could still sustain and perpetuate the phenomenon for a long time, perhaps for generations. The physical aspect is the political and economic structures inherited from the colonial dispensation, which privilege the metropole (ex-colonial masters and the West) and the local postcolonial political elites. The mental and social aspect, elaborately analysed by Mbembe (2001) and which Young ironically acknowledged, are 'the practices, routines and mentalities' (see Young 2004:23) that reinforce the social relations of postcoloniality. There are two sides to these social relations. The first is the relations between the metropole and postcolonial state, especially the subservient local hegemonic elites. The second is the relations between the postcolonial elites and the subject classes – relations that involve a nexus of coercion, cooptation, manipulation and cooperation, depending on the rhythm of balance of power between the local elite and the disparate subject groups and political constituencies. It is the occasional tendency by many subject communities and groups to cooperate with, and to hero-worship, the hegemonic potentates as 'a fetish to which the subject is bound' that Mbembe (2001:104-110) generalised as the 'logic of conviviality' facilitating the smooth running of the potentate's postcolony.

Suffice it to argue that postcoloniality and the postcolonial state still thrive in both their physical and mental/social forms. The post 9/11 discourses, systems and structures of imperial supervision and governance have contributed significantly to a strengthening of the external social relations and structures of postcoloniality. However, the processes tend to weaken the domestic aspect of postcolonial social fabric given the marked resentment and opposition of many African (un)civil societies to the intrigues and role of their political leaders in the anti-terrorism campaign. Put differently, it is apparent that the war on terror is accelerating the breakdown of structures of Mbembe's perceived 'conviviality' between African rulers and sections of their subjects while conversely consolidating the logic of conviviality between the postcolonial political elites in Africa and the metropolitan hegemonies.

Pattern of Underlying Intellectual and Policy Discourses

Many African states are evidently beleaguered, fractured and straggling. As such, discourses of postcoloniality are awash with concepts, representations and qualifiers that depict most postcolonial and African states as strictly non-state and sub-state human and institutional entities. International Relations (IR) theories, Comparative Political Economy (CPE) and neo-Weberian Historical Sociology (n-WHS) are some of the dominant specialisms that have extensively studied contemporary postcolonial states – their nature, problems and challenges. A dominant feature of many influential studies on the African states within the above specialisms is their western-centric epistemology and its associated tendency to generalise, exaggerate and deride the dysfunctionality of the state in Africa, including their security vulnerabilities and the so-called threats to the outside world. Fragile, malleable, weak, regressive, failed or in the danger of failing – the state in Africa (sometimes categorised without exceptions) is portrayed by mainstream western-centric theorists as posing mortal threats to both its citizens and the 'civilized world'. In the post-9/11 world of threat-mongering, there has been a significant and perplexing high level policy buy-in to this philosophy. African security vulnerabilities (real, imagined or exaggerated) are reconstructed into rhetoric of pathological danger. Terror pervades the 'dark continent'. Discourses, doctrines, policies and scenarios of imperial intervention, supervision and governance are developed and unfolded to tame the untamed (i.e. the 'micro-jungle'[1] and its teeming 'poisonous snakes'). The vulnerable and unruly infant cannot be left unchaperoned.

Placed in a historical perspective from their establishment under colonial rule to the era of political independence, from decolonisation to the tribulations of state-making, most African and postcolonial states have hardly ceased to fall under direct and indirect western imperial stereotyping, supervision, subjection and governance. Whether in the precolonial (trans-Atlantic slave trade), colonial and postcolonial eras, Africans have been depicted as 'a special human type,' 'a child type' – 'with child psychology and outlook' - 'who can never grow up, a child race' (see Mamdani 1996:4). This vein of ideological construction has provided practical justifications for imperialist interventions in Africa, which have often been couched in such humanitarian discourses and disguises as the necessity to 'civilise', 'reform', 'modernise', 'develop', 'protect', 'liberate', 'emancipate,' and 'strengthen'. In this ideology and discourse of 'help from above' (the West), Africa is portrayed as a timespace of infantilism, requiring endless western propping and chaperoning. The consequence of this is a montage of imperiums that paradoxically 'reform' and 'deform', 'modernise' and 'destabilise', 'develop' and 'underdevelop'. From (pre)colonial mercantilism to the *laissez faire* imperialism of the Victorian era, from 'post-Second World War liberal internationalism' (Gardner 1990; Mosley 2005) to the post-Cold War unipolar triumphalism (see Krauthammer 2003), African social fabrics are arbitrarily disfigured, unsettled and reconfigured to meet a complexus of 'extraverted interests' (Bayart 2000). African states, peoples and hegemonic elites are consigned to constantly grapple with the changing paradigms of the politics of extraversion, subjection and chaperoning, as well as to compete for the nuanced empowering opportunities and possibilities that unfold.

Until the tragic 9/11 terrorist incidents, expectations that the end of the Cold War could lead to a 'peace dividend' in the international system remained considerably high, not least among the American public. The successive US administrations, however, did not share this illusion and as such remained committed to what General John M. Shalikashvili (then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) in 1996 termed 'full spectrum dominance' (Bacevich 2002:127), marked by a worldwide projection of American military power. Nonetheless, the illusion of the White House and the US foreign policy think-tank that 'the international community is far more likely to enjoy peace under the power projections of a single hegemon' – a phenomenon gratuitously described by Charles

Krauthammer as 'a uniquely benign imperium' (quoted in Rogers 2002:116) – was all shattered by the gruesome events of 9/11 2001.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 incidents, America's post-Cold War unipolar triumphalism and 'full spectrum dominance' have apparently reclined to a systematic militaristic imperium over the vast postcolonial states of Africa and elsewhere in the South. The principal rhetoric of the sprawling imperium is the security of American citizens, American strategic interests and those of its western allies. Within this new configuration of post-9/11 imperial governance, African postcolonies, especially the vast Sahalian belt and the interlocking areas of the Arab Maghreb, West Africa, the Horn and Great Lakes regions, with large Islamic populations, are depicted and castigated with a profusion of cognomens and phraseologies aimed to justify US and, to lesser extent, western intrusion, subjection, manipulation and chaperoning and, if necessary, military invasion and occupation. In the foreign policy industries of the US, UK and many EU governments, as well as in mainstream IR, CPE and n-WHS literature, narratives of most African postcolonial states are inundated with despicable images and pathological references such as: 'chaos and barbarism', 'criminal anarchy', 'large uncontrolled and ungoverned territories', 'breeding ground for international terrorists', 'potential havens for terrorist activities', 'hotbeds of instability', '*Tora Bora* for *talibanisation*', 'incorrigibly delinquent countries'(Kaplan 1994; Keenan 2004).

Furthermore, and at a more ideological level, pathological constructions of Africa as a site for terror, insurgency and anarchy have even transcended proposals on the urgency of American imperial governance under the aegis of the war on terror, to some seemingly bizarre discourses on scenarios and possible justifications for 'benign recolonisation.' Robert Jackson, Andrew Linklater, Gerald Helman and Steve Ratner, and other proponents of this view advocate a 'reformation of decolonisation' through 'new instruments of global stewardship' or 'some forms of international government' akin to the mandate system of the defunct League of Nations over 'failed states and failing states and weak states', 'not able to stand on their feet in the international system' (Linklater 1996). Helman and Ratner (1993:12) argue that these forms of 'guardianship and trusteeship' are 'a common response to broken families, serious mental or physical illness or economic destitution' and thus should be invoked on the plight of failed states, preferably by the UN. Benign recolonisation arising from discourses of pathological danger and infan-

tilism, as in all preceding historical discourses of African vulnerability, is rationalised by a humanitarian rhetoric, notably to bolster state sovereignty and to protect vulnerable populations on the grounds that sovereignty wrongly privileges order over justice (Linklater 1996:108-109; see Morton 2005 for a critique of these views). Proposing a regime of imperial governance to combat terrorism, spread development and salvage failed and failing states, the British ex-Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, articulates for the West a hypothetical scenario for division of governance responsibilities over 'the new and old Third Worlds.'[2] 'This could mean', argued Straw, 'the EU, NATO or the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) taking the lead in dealing with problems around the margins of Europe; the French or ourselves (perhaps jointly), in parts of Africa and countries like Canada or the US under the OAS (organisation of American States) in the America' (Chandler 2002).

Most discourses and narratives of 'benign recolonisation' (an apparent disguise for imperial diktat) and imperial governance are riddled with superficialities. Pertinent questions such as the underlying socio-economic circumstances and political specificities of the failed states, as well as the role of disparate conflict stakeholders, including local political elites, regional and external forces are usually glossed over. Instead, state decline, disintegration and breakdown are construed as inexorable congenital and pathological processes. Also, more legitimate possibilities of conflict resolution and state reconstruction such as constructive capacitation and use of regional organisations such as ECOWAS, AU, and SADC are hardly contemplated by these African sympathisers and this is in spite of the recent considerable peacekeeping successes achieved by ECOMOG (the ECOWAS intervention force) in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Iviore.[3] Consequently, a growing number of 'complex political emergencies' (CPEs) in the South (e.g. Cambodia, Somalia, Congo DR, Haiti), including the US preemptive (in reality preventive) wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that it is indeed more difficult to achieve the recomposition and restoration of failed states through a quasi-colonial or neo-imperial extraversion and internationalisation of sovereignty than otherwise. State sovereignty by its very nature – the Westphalia legacy or benchmark – is wary of, and resistant to, internationalisation. The sovereignty of fractured states can be best fixed through proactive processes of 'intra-nationalisation' and regionalisation. Regionalisation of the sovereignty of failed states has

basically worked in Africa for two apparent reasons. The first is that a large number of civil wars and contemporary CPEs in Africa have profound regional content, a phenomenon associated with the fluidity of peoples among ethnonational groups and communities straddling international borders, the arbitrary nature of most international boundaries and the centrality of lootable natural resources (conflict goods) to African political economies. The second factor is largely sociocultural – the idiom and principles of fraternity, collectivism and synergism, which obligates the African to help extinguish the raging 'fire next door' (Francis 2001:1), thereby 'checkmating' its spread and ruinous effects. This factor is empirically enhanced by the existence of some relatively viable diplomatic and political channels and structures for dispute settlement within African regional organisations, coupled with the use of semi-formal processes of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

Rhetoric of Violence, Ungoverned Spaces and Danger

Extensive consensus exists in the post 9/11 IR literature that the terrorist events of that fateful day have radically changed how America and Americans perceive the world – that the world is indeed 'a jungle full of poisonous snakes' in which a hegemonic power has never been as despised and vulnerable. It seems to be the case, however, that this dominant discourse is overly generalising. The 9/11 incidents have no doubt affected America's perspectives, perceptions and policies in a radical way but this change is mostly in relation to the Third World, not the world in general. The reason is not far-fetched. The architects of the 9/11 attacks were members of an extremist Islamist terrorist group from the Third World – a region that given the extensive asymmetrical power relations between the global North and South should by no rational calculation be able to accomplish a colossal security assault on a world power on its own soil. Hence, despite the obvious political discord between the Bush administration and some of the EU states (notably France and Germany), especially over the Iraq war and the wider contempt of the White House for multilateralism in the name of upholding America's national interests, America's foreign policy and relations with Europe have not changed in any significant manner.

One of the specific consequences of 9/11 for Africa, observes Ali Mazrui (2005:15), is a dawning realisation in the western world that the Muslim presence on the African continent is far more extensive than previously imagined. Nearly the entire Arab Maghreb and Sahel regions,

a greater part of West Africa and the Horn, as well as significant parts of Central-Eastern and Southern Africa are Muslim populated. Juxtaposed to the pre-9/11 terrorist bombing of two US embassies in East Africa in August 1998, the prolonged asylum of Osama Bin Laden in Sudan in the mid-1990s where Al Qaeda was believed to have been born, and the perennial Islamist militancy in Algeria, Egypt, Sudan and northern Nigeria, this new knowledge informed a disquieting discourse of 'danger' to the US and its western allies. Paranoia was not far from the scene.

The US invasion of Afghanistan to dislodge the Taliban regime and apprehend Al Qaeda terrorists and the re-securitisation of the entire Middle East and Pakistan at the onset of the war on terror further meant that Africa must be fully drafted in. Senior officials of US European Command (EUCOM), senior US government officials, CIA counter-intelligence reports and western media played a big part in the mainstreaming of Africa using rhetoric and idioms that depicted and blackmailed Africa as 'a potential breeding ground' for Islamist militancy and 'a safe haven for terrorists'. EUCOM has been chiefly instrumental in sensitising the Washington administration to the huge security gaps in Africa, 'emphasizing the vulnerability of US interests to terror, criminality and instability' in the region (CSIS 2005:vii). EUCOM and other protagonists have spoken 'in increasingly exaggerated language of terrorists' 'fleeing the war in Afghanistan' and 'the crackdown in Pakistan' 'swarming across the vast, ungoverned and desolate regions of the Sahara desert – through Chad, Niger, Mali and Mauritania' (Keenan 2004a:477; 2007). Specifically, US European Deputy Commander, Air Force, General Charles Wald reportedly declared:

> Although most Americans know very little about the African continent and understand even less about its politics, it is critical that the nation focus on this area now to stem the growth of terrorism. Northern Africa serves as a transit route for terrorists headed to Europe … East Africa, particularly, has become a hotbed of Al Qaeda elements. Western Africa has witnessed dramatic rises in anti-American and extremist Islamic rhetoric, particularly in northern Nigeria. And in parts of South Africa, we have no clues what is going on … (Diallo 2005:42).

General James L. Jones, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and the Commander of EUCOM, pointed this out:

> We are seeing evidence that terrorism is moving into Africa, especially the radical, fundamentalist type. The countries on the rim of the

> Mediterranean Sea … Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco …are the most pressing concern for the Command, but failed states further south also pose problems. Terrorists see the continent as a place to hide, a place to train and a place to organize new attacks. While terrorism based in Africa is a long-term threat to the United States, it is a more immediate one to Europe. The Mediterranean that separates Africa from Europe is no longer a physical barrier; it's a pond that people can step over (Noticias. info, September 2004).

Richard Haass (2005), Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the US State Department, added that:

> The attacks of September 11 2001 reminds us that weak states can threaten our security as much as strong ones, by providing breeding grounds for extremism and havens for criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists. Such lawlessness abroad can bring devastation here at home. One of our most pressing tasks is to prevent today's troubled countries from becoming tomorrow's failed states.

Appraising the terrorist threat in Africa in February 2004, General Charles Ford declared that 'the threat is not weakening, it is growing' and 'we can't just sit back and let it grow'(ETaiwannews.com, 2004). With no central government for over 14 years, the failed state of Somalia fell swiftly into the bad faith of protagonists. Somalia has been hyped as a safe haven for terrorists uprooted from the Middle East and the various warlords and militia groups in the country are said to be funded by Middle Eastern terrorist mafia. Nearly all Islamist fundamentalist groups in North Africa and the Sahel, including those waging political struggles prior to 9/11 have been branded 'Al Qaeda subsidiaries', 'surrogates', 'sympathisers,' 'subcontractors' and 'beneficiaries of international Jihadist funding.' The proximity of North Africa to Europe and the Middle East has also been exaggerated to allege that terrorist organisations and Al Qaeda cells from the Sahara are infiltrating Europe through the backdoor (Diallo 2005:25-30). Subsequent incidents of terrorist bombings in Djerba-Tunisia (April 2002), Mombassa-Kenya (November 2002), Casablanca-Morocco (May 2003), the repeated terrorist attacks on western tourists in Egypt before and after 9/11, and the kidnapping of 32 western tourists (mostly Germans and Austrians) in the Algerian desert (April 2003) have been high-profiled by the US and its allies to declare Africa north of the equator a zone of terror. A large part of the redefined 'zone of terror', especially the Sahel-Central Africa-Great Lakes axis, is evidently blighted by a convolution of HIV/AIDS pandemic, food defi-

cits, and paramilitary insurgencies. These trends not only support an apparent theory that many are vulnerable to recruitment into terrorist violence in Africa, but also add pathologies of 'disease,' 'peonage', and 'disorder' to the rhetoric of 'danger,' *ipso facto* fulfilling the ideological conditions for a systematic military securitisation.

Politics of Hegemony and Subjection

US hegemony in the international system and the subjugation and chaperoning of Africa and the Third World is clearly an old game that preceded 9/11 and even the demise of the Cold War. The imposition of neo-liberal economic reform and structural adjustment programmes (with all their devastating conditionalities) on many developing countries using the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a familiar discourse in 'international political economy' (IPE) literature (Hoogvelt 1997; Abrahamson 2000). The 'invisible hand' of the US administration in the prescription and implementation of the IMF/World Bank neo-liberal therapies in the South from the early 1980s onwards is best captured by what is known in IPE as 'the Washington Consensus' – referring to the alliance of the two Bretton Woods institutions and the White House in the programmed manipulation, control and exploitation of the economies of Third World-policy beneficiaries, using such neo-liberal measures as privatisation of state enterprises, currency devaluation, cuts in social spending, crippling credit facilities, debt-equity swap, and sundry patterns of deregulations. There is an avalanche of well-grounded empirical studies in both CPE and IPE linking a great deal of the contemporary economic hardship, state failure, insurgencies, breakdown in state governing institutions and civil wars in Africa and elsewhere in the South to the devastating effects of the World Bank/IMF neo-liberal economic policies.

The Bush administration came to power with a clear agenda of how to spread, entrench and consolidate American hegemony – a discourse eloquently articulated in its September 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS), promulgated one year after 9/11. It suffices to underscore that the NSS was largely a synthesis of preceding neo-conservative manifestos on the projection of American global hegemony, notably the 1992 Defence Policy Guidance of the older Bush Administration and the 2000 report of the Project for the American Century. Influential drivers of these preceding manifestos included ex-Deputy Defence Secretary and until recently World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz, ex-Defence Sec-

retary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney. Among the major policy discourses of the NSS are to:

- Maintain America's unparalleled military strength and dominance;
- Combat global terror, if necessary, by pre-emptive action;
- Enhance American energy security by expanding sources and types of global energy supplied, especially from the Western hemisphere, Africa, Central Asia and the Caspian region;
- Deter threats against US interests, allies and friends (US State Department 2002).

Whilst these discourses and guidelines could theoretically be well-meaning and constructive, it is, however, evident from unfolding realities that they represent the hegemonic ideology and imperial project of post 9/11 neo-conservative America. How do the NSS policy discourses interlink the rhetoric of danger and the imperatives of hegemonic domination and chaperoning of Africa?

Having mapped out Africa north of the equator as a zone of terror, the US administration has promulgated a range of counter-terrorism doctrines, policies and strategies. The central aim of the new US initiative or at least the official rhetoric behind it is to develop the counter-terrorism capacity of African states, enhance state capacities to secure their borders, and to generally 'help Africans to help themselves' (Noticias. info). But beyond the smokescreen and rhetoric of 'helping Africans to help themselves' lies America's strategic design to project its national power and ensure the domination, chaperoning, supervision and conformity of Africa to the goal and imperatives of US imperial governance. African governments and regional organisations have all been mobilised in pursuit of the American post 9/11 imperial vision and are now being constantly pressured, blackmailed and monitored to stay on track. At the behest of the US administration, the AU has established in Algiers an African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) to bolster the capacity of the Union in the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa through research, documentation, information dissemination, training, and seminars. The ACSRT is largely funded by the US and other western partners. The choice of Algiers as location for the ACSRT is strategic. The main reason for the choice is that the Algerian government is one of the staunchest allies of the Bush

administration in the war on terror in Africa and there is a logic of vital mutual interests at play in the bilateral engagement. For its part, the US is interested in securing Algerian oil and gas resources for both itself and major European allies. Consequently, Washington is interested in keeping the Islamists in Algeria and North Africa at bay to ensure that they do not pose any serious threats to US and western energy security interests as they have done in the Persian Gulf. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's government in Algeria, on the other hand, is desperate to acquire modern American military weapons to strengthen its underequipped army embroiled in a long-drawn-out battle with various local Islamist groups since 1992. The armed struggle arose in the aftermath of the government's annulment of the January 1992 Algerian parliamentary elections in a bid to prevent the radical Islamic Salvation Front (known by its French acronym, FIS) from ascending to power and possibly imposing an Iranian Islamic republic model. France (Algeria's former colonial power) and the US have backed the Algerian government in the ensuing disruptive insurgency, which have claimed more than 100,000 lives and many analysts have also implied a Washington-Paris complicity in the 1992 election annulment. The pro-establishment position of France and US in the conflict has been used by insurgents as an excuse to specifically target and attack western nationals and tourists in Algeria. Boutefilka and senior Algerian government officials have paid repeated visits to Washington since 9/11 to register support for the war on terror and negotiate military assistance while senior US government officials have also paid reciprocal visits to Algiers. Under the influence of the American government and in a bid to attract expanded military assistance (from the Algerian government's perspective, US military and financial assistance is still considered inadequate) the Bouteflika government has intensified its crackdown on local opposition and Islamist groups who are all labelled Al Qaeda affiliates (CFR 2004). Despite the deplorable human rights conditions, the Algerian government's massive crackdown (killing, torture, incarceration) has considerably mitigated local insurgency and the activities of radical Islamic groups, notably the Armed Islamic Group (GIA – the paramilitary wing of FIS) and its splinter group, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), that both seek to overthrow the regime in Algiers.

Whereas Algiers is America's outpost for 'imperial policing' of the Arab Maghreb, Bamako-Mali (where the US has an airbase) occupies a similar position in the Sahel as headquarters for the US Pan-Sahel Ini-

tiative (PSI) established in November 2002 by the State Department. Another US 'policing' initiative, the East African Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI), has its operational base in Djibouti. EACTI comes under the US Joint Task Force for the Horn of Africa created in 2002 and comprises Djibouti, Uganda, Tanzania, Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya. EACTI is coordinated by some 1,800 US troops from their Camp Lemonier base in Djibouti and the strategic importance of the base lies in its proximity to the Arab Peninsula, especially Saudi Arabia and Yemen – two countries perceived by the US as breeding grounds for international terrorism (Diallo 2005). In June 2003, President Bush announced a $100 million financial provision for the EACTI. Since June 2005, The Algerian project and PSI have been loosely coalesced to form the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative with the aim of fostering co-operation between the various states of the two regions classified as 'terrorist hotbeds and safe havens' – Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria and Tunisia, with possibilities of Libya coming on board as Washington-Tripoli relations improve (Global Security 2005). Top military officers of most of the above countries have taken part in strategic meetings and training programmes at the EUCOM headquarters in Stuttgart (March 2004) and elsewhere in the west on the war on terror. EUCOM in partnership with Pentagon and the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism is the central coordinating agency and clearing-house for all the counter-terrorism projects in Africa. Through these projects, the US provides military training and equipment (night vision devices and surveillances systems, assorted conventional weapons, tactical communication gadgets, patrol jeeps, etc.) to enhance the states' capacity for rapid response, border patrol, intelligence monitoring and security cooperation among states. Thousands of Special US forces, marines and security contractors have been despatched into various countries to help strengthen the capacity of local security forces in counter-terrorism. All participating member states have been compelled to establish counter-terrorism security structures, mostly involving special departments, field outposts, task forces and combat squads.

More recently in July 2007, President Bush announced the establishment, with effect from 30 September 2007, of a separate unified combatant Command – the United States' African Command (AFRICOM), naming distinguished Army General William E. Ward as its first Commander. The Command, which is said to have a trans-military mandate

(i.e. health, humanitarian aid, diplomacy, and most importantly, military) will temporarily operate from the EUCOM facilities in Stuttgart, Germany until sometime in 2008 when it will eventually be headquartered in Africa. The Liberian government has already offered to host AFRICOM amidst pockets of apprehension and opposition from a number of African states (notably Nigeria) concerning the implications that the stationing of American forces in the Gulf of Guinea under any guise would have for state sovereignty and security of the region (*This Day* 14.09.07).

In a broad sense, funding of the US counter-terrorism projects in Africa is interfaced with the US and EU general funding for security sector reforms (SSR) and support for the development of peacekeeping capacities of states and regional organisations, and in terms of concrete dividends, only a few countries have derived significant support (Washinton Post 2004). As part of the initiatives to support the African Union peacekeeping operations, especially in Darfur, the US government pledged $660 million aid to Africa over a five-year period, out of which approximately $480 million is targeted for the military sector, including expanding capacities for counter-terrorism and peacekeeping (Martin 2004:588; Kitissou 2005:22). A variety of other US tokenistic aid benefits (mostly bilateral) have followed since then. No doubt, the enthusiasm (including manifest rhetorical and ideological support) of participating African governments in the anti-terror campaign remains substantially high and most regimes are hopeful that the exercise has prospects of yielding more concrete benefits in due course. As part of the growing war on terror, President Bush has moved farther and faster than any recent US administration in constructing a network of military and political alliance, with military-to-military linkages being expanded all across the continent (Martin 2004:587).

Another dimension of the post-9/11 stretching of the anti-terrorist dragnet is that sections of American intelligentsia (and the rest of the West, to a lesser extent) have increasingly tried to draw a connection between the African diaspora populations and allegations/potential of both terrorism and political insurgency in their home countries on the African continent. The intellectual precursor of this 'wild chase' goes back to the various works of the World Bank Development Research Group in the 1990s to early 2000s suggesting that through their financial remittances to their families, relatives and so forth, the African diaspora plays a prominent role in promoting domestic insurgencies and armed conflicts in their home countries (cf. Collier & Hoefller 2000;

Collier 2000a; Collier 2000b). Expounding the viewpoint that the African diaspora provide 'financial safe havens' conducive to terrorist activities, Andre Le Sage (2007:9-10) of the US National Defence University – an ideological think-tank of the Pentagon – argues that:

> African countries are [also] vulnerable to terrorist efforts to mobilize and transfer funds for their operational purposes. An estimated $125 billion moves through the remittance, or *hawala*, economy each year, and many countries are highly dependent on remittances for their financial well-being. Remittance systems are largely unregulated arrangements for money transfers based on trust. They are particularly popular among diaspora communities to send relatively small amounts of money to family abroad in a way that helps avoid taxes and fees and reaches locations where traditional banks are not present. International pressure has induced larger remittance companies to adopt some minimum standards of information collection regarding customers. However, efforts that over-regulate or close remittance companies do not stop the practice of *hawala*, but rather they push it further underground and out of sight. There is also the special case of South Africa …, which has sophisticated financial systems that are not yet adequately monitored or regulated and may be subject to abuse.

It is *a priori* connections and exaggerations such as the above that account for the growing tendency of undue suspicion, profiling, surveillance, monitoring and persecution of many Africans by the state security apparatuses in the US and a number of other western countries in the aftermath of the events of 9/11 2001.

It is significant that while the US administration largely (but not exclusively) securitises the military aspects of the war on terror in Africa, its closest western ally, the UK government mainly securitises the developmental aspect – problems of economic decline and poverty believed to catalyse Africans' vulnerability to recruitment into international terrorism. Ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair's Commission for Africa and his G8 diplomacy have solidly articulated the rhetoric of 'war against poverty' in Africa, and these initiatives are not without some positive impact or prospect. 'For the British government, the "war on terrorism" and the "war on poverty" are two sides of the same coin' (Abrahamson 2004:681). Both allies also operate a bit of each other's specialism in the anti-terrorism campaign. The Bush administration has considerably increased its development budget for Africa while the Blair government launched a mainstream counter-terrorism programme for Africa, Asia and the Middle East in May 2003.

Exaggeration, Deception, Manipulation and Counter-hegemony

Clearly, one is not saying that there are no terrorists in Africa. To make any such claim or denial would be as ridiculous as asserting that there are no terrorists in the Middle East or Europe for that matter. At the same time, there are gradations of conflict-prone, war-torn and dysfunctional states in Africa. Indisputably, many African states lack the capacity and resources to extend state governance institutions and *de facto* political power to the entire geodemographic space that falls under the juridical sovereignty of the state. Also, the porosity of African states' national borders is a well-known fact. In effect, the case built up to securitise and mainstream Africa into the war on terror has considerable elements of truth. But one must hasten to add that these are half-truths. The narratives of protagonists of post-9/11 imperial governance and anti-terrorism campaign in Africa are founded on the age-old axiom that 'it is easier to twist a half-truth than to tell an outright lie'. Given Africa's position of weakness (in political, economic and discursive terms) one would almost certainly get away with a twisted allegation that terrorists are roaming the vast open Sahara as opposed, for instance, to a similar allegation that terrorists are marauding the vast open Australian desert. Whereas the Australian government could easily navigate and investigate its desert to ascertain the veracity of the report, most states in the Sahara may not bother to verify the news in the first place, not only because they may not have the resources to do so, but also because the Sahara is a shared open desert with more than nine state stakeholders. Shared deserts are by nature difficult to police, not least by poor and beleaguered states. It is such natural and structural disadvantages that protagonists of the war on terror exploit to twist and exaggerate charges of terrorism in Africa.

A related point is that allegations of terrorism and the campaign to combat it serve the dual interests of the neopatrimonial elites and governments of most countries in the terror zone who are also loyal allies in the war on terror. Firstly and on the external front, the phenomena help the African political regimes to hobnob and romance with the US and its western allies with the aim of securing financial and military aid, as well as debt forgiveness and general support for development programmes. From the perspective of the African governments, supporting the US-led anti-terrorism campaign is a much preferred conditionality for external aid than the World Bank/IMF stricture – a more rigorous and crip-

pling package that the anti-terror alliance has shown prospects of abating. In his review of how the US Africa policy has changed post 9/11, William Martin pointed out that in the starker post 9/11 era, the language of imposing neo-liberal development and democratisation has been replaced by the language of demand for support for the war on terror (Martin 2004:586).

On the domestic front, the anti-terror campaign provides Africa's political regimes with a great opportunity to, with the blessings of the west, persecute and liquidate political opposition, including rival ethnonational groups and communities, under trumped-up terrorism charges. Under the disguise of fighting terrorism, old political scores are unravelled and news frontiers of opposition are imagined and confronted with brutality by regimes already profoundly threatened by a nemesis of chronic corruption and misrule. The governments of Mali and Niger have increasingly incriminated their disgruntled Tuareg minorities and other excluded nomadic desert tribes in the war on terror – potentially restive groups that have protested their exclusion with mass rebellions in the 1990s – and have on that premise carried out a systematic persecution of these groups (Keenan 2004b:693; 2006). Occasional incidents of ordinary highway and desert robbery in these minority regions have been blown-up and attributed to 'local terrorists'. The embattled governments of Mauritania and Chad have linked recent incidents of attempted military coups in their countries to dissidents of local and external Islamist elements opposed to their pro-western stance on the war on terror. These fictitious explanations that say nothing about the crony capitalism, tribal prebendalism and unpopular foreign policies of these regimes – palpable symptoms of misgovernance that have fuelled local discontent and rebellion – have been used as an excuse to crackdown on disgruntled desert nomads, as well as to blackmail unfriendly neighbouring governments alleged to have sponsored the terrorism-related abortive coups. The desperate initiatives of some local African governments overwhelmed by the challenges of regime survival in orchestrating and twisting allegations of terrorism is always a welcome news for western governments and media because they reinforce the discourse of 'danger in the jungle' and the need for anti-terror militarisation. In a similar vein, Jeremy Keenan and other recent researchers have uncovered an increasing amount of evidence to suggest that the high-profiled Algerian hostage-taking incident of April 2003 variously attributed to Mokhtar ben Mokhtar (a local Islamist warlord) and famous GSPC leaders like Hassan Hattab

and Abderrezak Lamari, was initiated and orchestrated by elements within the Algerian military establishment, with a possible US complicity, to hype the vulnerability of the Sahara to terrorism (Keenan 2004a:482-485). This sort of conspiracy is not far-fetched because deception, exaggeration and alarmism are all a well acknowledged part of the stylistics of the anti-terror crusade.

From Nouakchott to Djibouti, from Abuja to Cairo, African governments are chaperoned to prove what Mazrui (2005:15) calls 'their anti-terrorist credentials to the United States' and this pressure drives many regimes to step up repression of sections of the local Muslim populations. State-society relations become more fractured and fragmented. Intense pressure has also been brought on many African states to adopt and implement anti-terrorism legislation, a process that the State Department supervises through the various counter-terrorism initiatives. The US is expanding the number of its air bases and landing rights in Africa and elsewhere in the global South.

A major fallout of the anti-terrorist campaign in Africa is its inflammation of Islamist fundamentalism and anti-Americanism. In other words, the campaign activates and inflames discourses and activisms of counter-hegemony. The civil and uncivil societies in Africa are increasingly incensed by America's invasion and arrogant display of power, and this has led to protests against satellite regimes entangled in the imperial agenda. Consequently, anti-American and, to a lesser extent, anti-western sentiments have fed into and aggravated Christian-Muslim relations because of the evident import of 'civilisational warfare' that derives from the campaign. It also pitches radical Islam against the moderate wing, further proliferating the frontiers of violent and structural sectarian conflicts. The structures of these religious conflicts often intersect with other structures of identity and fragmentation in both the state and society (notably race and ethnicity), which potentially make them more deadly and devastating. The impact of these devastating conflicts could be seen in Sudan, Guinea, northern Nigeria, Algeria, Mauritania, Chad, and Mali.

At another level, the repeated rhetoric of 'danger in the jungle' yammered by international media and various western governments in their travel advice to their nationals has extensively damaged the desert, beach and safari economies of the Maghreb, Horn and Great Lakes regions that are largely dependent on international tourism. This phenomenon has thrown many locals out of jobs and reduced the fortune of the local tourist economies. People are naturally exasperated. Discourses and effu-

sion of counter-hegemony sentiments and anti-Americanism are inevitable in the circumstance. Vulnerability to terrorist recruitment – the very thing dreaded by the West – becomes more likely.

The strong connection between the war on terror and the US energy security, especially the need to secure expanded and uninterrupted oil supplies from the Gulf of Guinea and elsewhere in Africa to compensate for the intermittent shortfalls from the highly volatile Persian Gulf is well documented in IPE literature and cannot be revisited here for lack of space. Suffice it to highlight that America is currently energising the Gulf of Guinea Commission, a regional security organisation proposed by ex-President Obasanjo of Nigeria for the key oil-producing states of Angola, Cameroun, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville and Nigeria to help co-ordinate peace and security programme within the region. In 2004, EUCOM commenced the development of a coastal security programme in the region known as the Gulf of Guinea Guard on account of its estimation of vulnerability and threats to the US extensive oil investments in the region (CSIS 2005:14). The ultimate plan of EUCOM is to integrate the Gulf of Guinea security agenda into the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative. 'According to the US National Intelligence Council, the United States, in diversifying its sources of oil, can be expected to increase its reliance on the Gulf of Guinea from the current level of 15 per cent to 25 per cent of US oil imports by 2015' (CSIS 2005:13). US strategic energy sources estimate that the Gulf of Guinea will enjoy over $33 billion in onshore and offshore oil investments from 2005-2015, more than 40 per cent of which must come from American companies (CSIS 2005:24). The US partly wants to use its vast military and political influence over the Gulf of Guinean states to keep the Chinese at bay against the backdrop of the dramatic increase in Chinese competition and the share of African oil investments and supplies in recent years.

Conclusion

The US-led war on terror marks the apogee of American imperial governance, global domination and politics of chaperoning the relatively weak African states – processes that tend to aggravate the crisis of postcoloniality on the continent. Antecedents of this phenomenon abound in the past and contemporary projects of western imperial stereotyping, subjection, supervision and governance of Africa and the Third World. The war on terror converges and expresses the various strands of this

hegemonic politics – international militarism, preemptive warfare, unilaterialism, expanded control over external oil resources, and 'embellished' developmentalism. To deliver this imperial project in Africa, transhistorical discourses and metaphors that portray the continent as a timespace of unmitigated danger and infantilism are reinvented to win support and justification for the project. Like in preceding phases and dispensations of extraversion, most African post-colonial governments have cashed in on the opportunities and possibilities intrinsic to the anti-terror campaign (albeit, not without considerable pressure from the western protagonists) to shore up their highly beleaguered regimes and re-assert their hegemonies.

The current wave of Islamist terrorism with its proclivity to suicide bombing clearly horrifies and puzzles modern western sensibilities. From the perspective of right wing conservative America and the west, it is only the modernity-resistant bad Muslims of African and Middle Eastern origin that are capable of such savagery (see Mamdani 2004:19). Without delving into the historical antecedents and motivations of Islamist terrorism, it suffices to say that Islamist terrorism and terrorist attacks of all kinds are bad for the west, bad for Africa and the Middle East and bad for humanity. As Boroumand and Boroumand (2002:6) have argued, contemporary forms of Islamist terrorism are an ideological and moral challenge to both traditional Islam and liberal democracy woven from appeals to tradition, ethnicity and historical grievances both old and new, along with a powerful set of religious sounding references to 'infidels', 'idolaters', 'crusaders', 'martyrs', 'holy wars', 'sacred soil', 'enemies of Islam', 'the party of God', and the 'great Satan'. These discourses, rhetoric and metaphors are as unsavoury as some of the transhistorical discourses and stereotypes on Africa highlighted in the forgoing analysis. Such constructs and discourses would always lead to hate and contempt, domination and resistance, violence and war. What we see in the war on terror is a 'hysterical overreaction' (Mueller 2005:229) to an exaggerated security threat. John Mueller (2005:208) has demonstrated in a recent empirical study that exaggeration of foreign threats and overreaction to them, as exemplified by the current concerns over international terrorism, have remained a common feature of the US foreign policy, at least since 1945. As the consequences have shown, the present war on terror is apparently a bad response to a bad phenomenon, hence the seemingly bad outcome.

In the final analysis, the war on terror is its own nemesis. The campaign is conducted and conveyed in a manner and style that seems calculated to humiliate, subjugate and infuriate the Third World. The German news magazine *Der Spiegel* pre-9/11 criticism that by its military unilateralism the US was conducting itself 'as the Schwarzenegger of international politics: showing off muscle, obtrusive, intimidating' (quoted in Rapkin, 2005:396) cannot be more appropriate. Unlike previous conventional wars and the Cold War prosecuted by the US that had clearly identifiable adversaries, America has today stretched itself too thinly in a costly and seemingly endless war against more or less globalised invisible adversaries. If the war drags on, one cannot rule out the tendency that many children yet unborn in parts of the global South could grow up, become radicalised and opt to continue the guerrilla fight because of its intrinsic Armageddonic discourse. Given that this is a war unlikely to ever produce a decisive winner in both the short and long run, it is almost inevitable that the US government would at some point rethink its present bellicose foreign policy. With more than 3,800 American soldiers killed and over 8,000 wounded in the Iraq war (figures as at September 2007), the Bush administration has come under increasing domestic pressure from sections of the American public and Congress to withdraw American troops from the war-torn Gulf state. But markedly concerned with face-saving, it is unlikely that the present tough-talking, neo-conservative regime in Washington would easily yield to domestic pressure and pull out American forces from Iraq. Unless the insurgents in Iraq are able to gain and maintain a devastating combat advantage over the US-led coalition forces – a scenario that is most unlikely – domestic political pressure in the US may not succeed in compelling the Bush administration to withdraw American forces. A post-Bush White House is therefore more likely to rethink, reinvent and mellow America's imperial governance project, and possibly bring the Iraq war to an end – most likely, without a decisive winner. But whether that is likely to fundamentally affect the way Africa is perceived, constructed, portrayed and chaperoned is a completely different ball game. The politics and methods of imperial supervision could change, but one cannot be so certain about the underlying philosophy, ideology and stereotypes.

Acknowledgement

I gratefully acknowledge the Allan & Nesta Ferguson Trust for funding my 2-year research fellowship in the Africa Centre, University of Bradford during which this study was carried out.

Notes

1 The international system is the metaphoric 'macro-jungle'.

2. Mohammed Ayoob has reclassified the Third World into two. The new Third World refers to states in Central Asia, Caucasus and the Balkans that have emerged out of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the dismemberment of Yugoslavia. The post-colonial states of Africa, Asia and Latin America traditionally considered as the Third World are re-defined as the old Third World. The two Third Worlds are described as broadly sharing similar characteristics. See, M. Ayoob, 2001, 'State Making, State Breaking and State Failure' in Chester A. Crocker *et al*, eds., *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. Washington, USIP Press, pp. 127-128.

3 ECOWAS stands for Economic Community of West African States, AU is the African Union and SADC is the Southern African Development Community.

References

Abrahamson, R., 2000, *Disciplining Capitalism: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa,* London: Zed Books.

Abrahamson, R., 2004, 'A Breeding Ground for Terrorists? Africa and Britain's War on Terrorism', *Review of Africa's Political Economy*, 31/102, pp. 677-684.

Ayoob, M., 2001, 'State Making, State Breaking and State Failure' in Chester A. Crocker *et al* eds., *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. Washington, USIP Press, pp. 127-128.

Bacevich, A. C., 2002, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of US Diplomacy*, Cambridge-Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.

Boroumand L. & Boroumand R., 2002, 'Terror, Islam and Democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, 13/2, pp. 5-20.

CFR, 2004, 'Armed Islamic Group and Algerian Islamists,' Council on Foreign Relations, http://cfrterrorism.org/groups/gia2.html#Q13, Website accessed in August 2005. BBC, 2004, 'Algeria Gives US Terror List', BBC, 'Algeria Winning from the War on Terror', BBC News, 26 April, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3659555.stm, Website accessed in August 2005.

Chandler, D., 2002, 'Jack Staw's Colonial Discourse', *Spiked Politics*, 10 September, http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/00000006DA2A.htm, Website accessed on 11 September 2005.

Collier, P. and A. Hoefller, 2000, *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*. World Bank, http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/greedgrievance_23oct.pdf, Website accessed on 28 April 2006.

Collier, P., 2000a, 'Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective', in M. Berdal and D. Malone eds. *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, pp. 91-111.

Collier, P., 2000b, 'Economic Causes of Civil Conflicts and their Implications for Policy.' World Bank Development Research Group. http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/civilconflict.pdf, website accessed on 19 September 2007.

CSIS, 2005, *A Strategic US Approach to Governance and Security in the Gulf of Guinea*, A report of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington DC, Task Force on the Gulf of Guinea Security, July.

David Chandler, 2002, 'Jack Staw's Colonial Discourse', *Spiked Politics*, 10 September, http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/00000006DA2A.htm, Website accessed on 11 September 2005.

Diallo, G., 2005, 'Terrorism in Africa is the New Name of the Game', *Africa Renaissance'*, 2/1, January/February, pp. 38-49.

ETaiwannews.com, 2004, 'United States Increases its Military Clout across Africa', 29 February, http://www.etaiwannews.com/World/2004/02/29/1078026919.htm, Website accessed on 1 September 2005.

Francis, D. J., 2001, 'The Fire Next Door: Regional Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in West Africa,' *African Review of Foreign Policy,* 2/2, January, pp. 1-28.

Gardner, R. N., 1990, 'The Comeback of Liberal Internationalism', *The Washington Quarterly*, 13/3, September, pp. 23-39.

Global Security, 2005, 'Trans-Sahara counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI)', June, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/tscti.htm, Website assessed in September 2005.

Haass, R. N., 2003, 'Planning Policy in Today's World', 22 May. http://www.State.gov/s/p/rem/2003/20910.htm, Website accessed on 5 September 2005.

Helman G. B. & Ratner, S. R., 1992-93, 'Saving Failed States', *Foreign Policy*, 89, Winter, pp. 3-20.

Hoogvelt, A., 1997, *Globalisation and the Post-colonial World*, London: Macmillan.

Jackson, H. R., 2000, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States*. London: Oxford University Press.

Jean-Francois, B., 2000, 'Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion', *African Affairs*, 99/395, pp. 217-267.

Kaplan, R. D., 1994, 'The Coming Anarchy', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 273/2, pp. 44-76.

Keenan, J., 2004a, 'Terror in the Sahara: the Implications of US Imperialism for North & West Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, 101/31, pp. 497-511.

Keenan, J., 2004b, 'Political Destabilisation and Blowback in the Sahel', *Review of African Political Economy*, 31/102, December, pp. 691-698.

Keenan, J., 2006, 'Security and Insecurity in North Africa.' *Review of African Political Economy*, 33/108, pp. 269 -296.

Keenan, J., 2007, 'The Banana Theory of Terrorism: Alternative Truths and the Collapse of the 'Second' (Saharan) Front in the War on Terror', *Journal of Contemporary Africa Studies*, 25/1, pp. 31-58.

Kitissou, M., 2005, 'Political Violence, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism in Africa in the Global Context', *African Renaissance*, 2/1, pp. 19-24.

Krauthammer, C., 2002/2003, 'The Unipolar Moment Revisited', *The National Interest*, Winter, pp. 5-17.

Linklater, A., 1996, 'Rationalism', in Scott Burchill *et al* eds., *Theories of International Relations*, London: Macmillan, pp. 93-118.

Mamdani, M., 1996, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mamdani, M., 2004, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror,* New York: Pantheon Books.

Martin, W., 2004, 'Beyond Bush: The Future of Popular Movements & US Africa Policy', *Review of African Political Economy*, 31/102, pp. 585-597.

Mazrui, A., 2005, 'Between Global Governance and Global War: Africa Before and After September 11', *African Renaissance*, 2/1, January/February, pp. 9-18.

Mbembe, A., 2001, *On the Postcolony,* California: University of California Press.

Morton, A. D., 2005, 'The Failed State of International Relations', *New Political Economy*, 10/3, September, pp. 371-380.

Mosley, L., 2005, 'Globalisation and the State: Still Room to Move?', *New Political Economy,* 10/3, pp. 355-362.

Mueller, L., 2005, 'Simplicity and Spook: Terrorism and the Dynamics of Threat Exaggeration', *International Studies Perspectives*, 6, pp. 208-234.

Omeje, K., 2005, 'Terrorism in Africa Post 9/11: Beyond the Emerging Western Consensus', *Africa Renaissance'*, 2/1, pp. 25-30.

Noticias.info, 2004, 'European Command Combating Terror Threats in Africa', 8 October. http://www.noticias.info/Archivo/2004/200410/20041009/20041009_35557.shtm, Website accessed on 1 September 2005.

Rapkin, D. P., 2005, 'Empire and its Discontents', *New Political Economy*, 10/3, September, pp. 389-412.

Rogers, P., 2002, 'The United Nations and the Promotion of Peace', *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, 18, pp. 110-119.

Sage, A. L., 2007, 'Terrorism Threats and Vulnerabilities in Africa' in Andre Le Sage (ed.) *African Counterterrorism Cooperation: Assessing Regional and Subregional Initiatives.* Washington: African Centre for Strategic Studies (ACSS), National Defence University & Potomac Books Inc., pp. 1-38.

This Day, 2007, 'Nigeria Moves to Halt US Military' *This Day* 14.09.07. http://allafrica.com/stories/200709140010.html, Website accessed on 15.09.07.

US State Department, 2002, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September, http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf, Website accessed on 2 September 2005.

Washington Post, 2004, 19 April. See also, Kitissou, K., 2005, 'Political Violence, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism in Africa in the Global Context', *African Renaissance*, 2/1, pp. 19-24.

Woolsey, J., 1993. 'Testimony to Senate Hearing', Washington DC, February. Quoted in Rogers, P., 2002, 'The United Nations and the Promotion of Peace', *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, 18, p. 116.

Young, Y., 2004, 'The End of the Postcolonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics,' *African Affairs* 103, pp. 23-49.


African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2008, pp. 115–156

(ISSN 0850-7902)

Millennial Democracy and Spectral Reality in Post-colonial Africa

Basile Ndjio*

Abstract

One could not pertinently speak about the recent experience of multi-partyism in Africa without acknowledging the 'teleological meta-narratives' of democracy. That is, a system of knowledge and a series of discourses, theories and ideologies that were constructed around the very idea of political liberalization, and that helped to frame its principles, as well as to orientate its form, expression, mode of functioning and representation. But whatever their orientations, assumptions or theoretical oppositions, all these *savoirs* shared the same messianic approach to democracy and the same uni-linear evolutionist vision about the social and political adjustment which many African countries were going through in the early 1990s. Indeed, political liberalization, as envisaged by both developmentalist and modernist philosophies, assumed not only the universal principle of elective representation, good governance, freedom, fair competition and alternation, but also embraced the enlightenment ideals of emancipation, progress, change and betterment.

In this contribution, which does not claim to assess the experience of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, we want to examine how these grand narratives have affected Africans' imaginations and the way they represent multi-party politics, and how, as a result of these millenarian ideologies, many of them have transformed the political adjustment into a sort of mythology of redemption. However, what is much more important to us is to demonstrate that modernist (developmentalist and evolutionist) formulations of the democratization process of the early 1990s, as a simple replica-

* Basile Ndjio teaches Social and Political Anthropology at the University of Douala in Cameroon. Email: ndjio23@yahoo.fr

tion of western modernity, have failed to take up the conceptual and methodological challenges which these theories encountered when they travelled from the West to sub-Saharan Africa.

Résumé

On ne saurait parler avec pertinence de l'expérience récente du multipartisme en Afrique sans reconnaitre les « métarécits téléologiques » de la démocratie. Il s'agit d'un système de connaissances et d'une série de discours, de théories et d'idéologies qui ont été construits autour de l'idée même de la libéralisation politique, et qui ont permis de formuler ses principes et d'orienter sa forme, son expression, son mode de fonctionnement et de représentation. Mais quelles que soient leurs orientations, leurs hypothèses ou leurs oppositions théoriques, tous ces *savoirs* partageaient la même approche messianique de la démocratie et la même vision unilinéaire évolutionniste sur l'ajustement social et politique que de nombreux pays africains subissaient au début des années 1990. En effet, la libéralisation politique, comme envisagée par les philosophies développementaliste et moderniste, a non seulement adopté le principe universel de la représentation élective, de la bonne gouvernance, de la liberté, de la concurrence loyale et de l'alternance, mais a aussi épousé les idéaux d'émancipation, de progrès, de changement et d'amélioration du siècle des lumières.

Dans cette contribution, qui n'a pas la prétention d'évaluer l'expérience de la démocratie en Afrique sub-saharienne, nous voulons examiner comment ces grands récits ont affecté les imaginations des Africains et la façon dont ils représentent les politiques multipartites, et comment, du fait de ces idéologies millénaristes, nombre d'entre eux ont transformé la politique d'ajustement en une sorte de mythologie de la rédemption. Cependant, ce qui est beaucoup plus important pour nous, c'est de démontrer que les formulations modernistes (développementaliste et évolutionniste) du processus de démocratisation du début des années 1990 comme une simple reproduction de la modernité occidentale n'ont pas réussi à relever les défis conceptuel et méthodologique auxquels ces théories ont été confrontés quand elles ont voyagé de l'Occident vers l'Afrique sub-saharienne.

Introduction

In November 2003, I attended a political rally organized at the Douala Reunification stadium by two main opposition parties in Cameroon (the Social Democratic Front and Cameroon Democratic Union). The objective of the meeting was to explain to their supporters their recent alliance in preparation for the presidential election which was then scheduled to be held on 11 October 2004. Before a meagre crowd who seemingly

was much more interested in the performance of nearly denuded young female dancers who were spinning their backsides and wriggling their hips to the rhythm of Makossa and Mdombolo, the Chairman of the Social Democratic Front (the main opposition party in Cameroon) expressed his disappointment about people's loss of interest in politics. He was particularly concerned with what he called 'Cameroonians' indifference and insensibility to the desperate condition the ruling CPDM (Cameroon People's Democratic Movement) regime has plunged many of them into.' Commenting on this failure of the opposition coalition to win popular support to its cause, the editor of the newspaper *Le Messager* observed that many Douala city dwellers preferred to attend to their daily business rather than waste their time listening to politicians who had got them used to their double-speech and 'compromise of principle' (*compromissions*).[1] This setback was reminiscent of a flop experienced in March 2003 by the Togolese opposition, which failed to mobilize its sympathizers for a general strike. Its call for a civil disobedience followed the decision of the Parliament to concede to the nearly 40 year-ruling President (Gnasimbé Eyadema) the right to stay *à vie* in power, or at least to die in power,[2] as many of his Cameroonian, Gabonese, Burkinabe, Zimbabwean, Equatorial Guinean, Chadian, Guinean, Congolese, Libyan, Egyptian and Tunisian counterparts also wish. Undoubtedly, very few people were willing to take to the streets to challenge the man whom Togolese derisively called 'the Bull of Kara' (*Taureau de Kara*) and his horde of 'bleeders' (*saigneurs*).[3]

These two examples are far from being isolated cases. If one acknowledges the present general disaffection of the large majority of Africans with politics, as many have been disappointed with the mythology of democracy (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Hermet 1998; Jaffrelot 2000; Njamnjoh 2000:1-44), they constitute a typical case for any study of the experience of the democratization process in contemporary Africa. Indeed, when we observe today the political landscape in most African countries, there is one truth that emerges as the most memorable of any acknowledgment one can make, whether about the *esprit militant* of Africans[4] or about their relationship with their political elites: the days are gone when thousands of people willingly crammed into the football stadiums or the main squares of the towns just to listen to the flights of fancy of the opposition leaders, and their usual recriminations against those in power they generally described as tyrants and kleptomaniacs. We have to admit that we are also now far away from the golden time of

the democratization process of the early 1990s when a determined crowd of young 'freedom fighters' and 'combatants' could defiantly take to the streets and ask for the organization of a Sovereign National Conference, a sort of popular tribunal where the despots and their cliques would be judged for their crimes. The former heroes have become the true 'zeros,' or are *fatigués*, as one Cameroonian newspaper derisively put it.[5]

The rebirth of the multi-party system in many African countries in the early 1990s, or what came to be known as the democratization process, was of particular interest to policy makers, politicians, subaltern groups, and especially social thinkers. For the former, the demand for democracy or 'authoritarian decompression' (Bayart 1993) corresponded with the pervasive developmentalist ideology of the late 1980s, and the insidious policy of guardianship and supervision of the black continent by 'experts' of the IMF and World Bank.[6] Indeed, the ideal of democracy and good governance, as forecast by some gurus and apostles of neo-liberal policy was considered a panacea that supposedly had the magical power of turning the highly indebted poor African countries into newly-developed countries like the six dragons of South-eastern Asia or would at least help ill-governed African states and their despotic rulers achieve what O' Donnell and Schnitter (1999) call 'transitions from authoritarian rule'. That is why for lack of being what Hermet (1998) has called 'democrats by conviction,' African obscure despots, then in power, were forced to be or become 'democrats by convenience.' Had they any choice, since access by their impoverished and cash-strapped countries to foreign aid was conditional on their adoption of the newly fashionable notions of liberalization, democracy, good governance, and structural adjustment?

For political elites, notably the ruling classes, this new mode of *governmentality* called 'democracy' was seen as an opportunity to formulate new strategies of domination and accumulation, or simply to restructure old formulas of authority built on other foundations, logics and imaginaries (Mbembe 1993:345-74, 1990:7-24; see also *Politique Africaine* 1991). As will be discussed in this paper, it is all this 'capacity-building' or *bricolages* that later enabled African rulers to reinforce their hegemonic position over their subjects.

As regards the subaltern groups, which welcomed the rhetoric of political changes with excitement which sometimes bordered on fanaticism, the democratization process was rather looked upon as the embodiment of the historical perspective to dissent from the postcolonial rule. Moreo-

ver, many of them equated this process with the prospect to deconstruct the social and political order that made possible the maintenance of the prevailing ignoble system, and its continuation over the *longue durée*. In other words, for many Africans, the restoration of the multi-party system represented the dreams of getting rid of their despotic, predatory and kleptomaniac regimes (Monga 1995:359-79; Mpom 1994).

Yet one could not pertinently speak about the experience of multipartyism in post-colonial Africa without acknowledging or mentioning what I call after James Ferguson[7] the 'teleological meta-narratives' of democracy. By this expression, I mean a system of knowledge, and a series of discourses, theories and ideologies that were constructed around the idea of political liberalization in Africa, and that helped to frame or systematize its principles, moreover to orientate its form, expression, mode of functioning and representation (Nyang'oro 1994). But whatever their orientations, assumptions, tenets or theoretical oppositions, all these *savoirs* shared the same messianic approach to democracy and the same uni-linear evolutionist vision about the social and political adjustment many African countries were going through in the early 1990s. Indeed political liberalization, as envisaged by both developmentalist and modernist philosophies, assumed not only the universal principle of elective representative, good governance, freedom, fair competition and alternation, but also embraced the enlightenment ideals of change and betterment. Neo-liberal ideologues held multi-party politics and democracy up as a condition *sine qua non* to any sustainable advancement in the economic, social and political domains in Africa. That is why, the catchphrase that western *maîtres-penseurs* regularly repeated to their African pupils was: 'No development without democracy.' The reason was that democracy and liberal politics suggested for these self-proclaimed 'visionaries' the end of corruption, nepotism, patrimonialism, favouritism, clientelism, dictatorship, etc. in Africa. But what was pervasive in these modernist meta-narratives of democracy was the naïve certainty that the ongoing democratization process would move African countries from an old system to a New Age: from crisis to progress, backward societies to modern nations, stagnation to sustainable growth, etc (World Bank 1989). The optimistic and sometimes excessive account of the democratization process in many sub-Saharan countries indicated the extent to which what some analysts hastily called the 'second decolonization', or 'African revolution' (Kamto 1997:177-95) had captivated the modernist thought of the early 1990s.

In this contribution, which does not claim to assess the experience of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, I want to examine how these grand narratives have affected Africans' imagination and the way they represent multi-party politics, and how as a result of these millenarian ideologies, many of them have transformed the political adjustment into a sort of mythology of redemption. However, what is much more important to me is to demonstrate that modernist (developmentalist and evolutionist) formulations of the democratization process in Africa as what Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:27) call a 'replay of euro-capitalist modernity' have failed to take up theoretical and methodological challenges that these theories encountered when they travelled from the West to the post-colonial Africa. Moreover, 'the fault of analytic hurry' which, according to Callaghy (1994:248), is the weakness of most Africanists, has prevented them from paying attention to: (1) the amazing ability of African rulers to adapt to modern changes; (2) their inventive spirit, and their art of resourcefulness and hustling; (3) their skill at regaining control over people and local spaces through the manipulation of the collective memory, and the reactivation of ethnic, regional, religious and parochial solidarities; (4) their capacity to reformulate the old modes of accumulation and domination and redistribution of state resources; (5) their talent for 'capturing' their political opponents; (6) their gift for transforming the political adjustment into a despotic adjustment, etc. In short, what I want to stress in this paper is the ability of African autocrats to invent their own democracy. What the African popular imagination now derisively refers to as 'the rule by military' (*militocracy*), 'ethnodemocracy' (*ethnocracy*) or 'democracy of the mouth and belly' (*mangecrati*e) is the product of the African genius.

I will use the Cameroonian case to illustrate this form of *demo-cracy* that has become the constitutive dimension of many African regimes' mode of governance. Cameroon's experience is interesting for several reasons: first, right from the beginning, the experience of the multi-party system in this country has been simply downgraded to a sheer struggle for power, or has taken a Manichean pattern of good and evil. Second, Cameroonian *demo-cracy,*[8] as I will be discussing in the following pages, is the archetype of these new forms of *kratos* (powers) that today sustain both the hegemonic and accumulative project of the dominant classes in sub-Saharan Africa. These new forms of domination which emerged for the most part in the early 1990s are often translated by disenchanted but nonetheless humorous Africans, and notably Cameroonians as

ethnocracy, warlord-cracy, *kleptocracy*, *poverty-cracy*, *NGO-cracy*, *AID-cracy*. All these systems or *dispositifs*, to use Foucault's words (1979), enable a handful of people (whether from the ruling class, the opposition or the so-called civil society) to maintain their dominant position, thanks to their control over state resources and international donations.[9] Last but not least, this country exemplifies Africa's 'fiddle system of democracy' (traficotage de la démocratie). It also gives a good illustration of the ability of the Biya regime to defraud democratic principles, outwit or mislead international organizations (Banoch 1992; Mbarga 1993; van der Walle 1990). I will focus my analysis on what the official rhetoric in Cameroon has initially called 'advanced democracy' (*démocratie avancée*), and then 'pacified or appeased democracy' (*démocratie apaisée*), not only to give an insight into this Cameroonian system of *gouvernorat*, but also to decode a routinized procedure that since 1991 has been mediating the relationship between the ruling CPDM regime and the civil society at large in this country.

Democratization Process: The Power of the *Sans-culottes*

In many respects, the experience of political liberalization in Cameroon was distinctive from what many African countries were going through in the early 1990s. This singularity could be related to a number of factors: the strong opposition of the conservative ruling class to what its members perceived as an adventure and a great threat to the stability of the country and the national unity; the violence and uncertainty that paved the way for its birth, and continues even today to impinge on its practices and modes of expression; the tragedy and disaster it brought about; the bloodshed and deaths that macadamized its path; the fervour and enthusiasm it aroused; the energy and strength it mobilized; the radicalism and fanaticism it led to; the ethnic withdrawals and parochial solidarities it exacerbated, the confusion and upheaval it created; the dreams and expectancies it stimulated, and finally the disappointment and frustration it gave rise to.

In some other African countries, the democratization process came about as a result of arrangements between different groups of interests[10] willing to remodel the absolutist authoritarian state. However, in Cameroon the political liberalization rested neither on any deal between the ruling CPDM party on the one hand, and the opposition movement and the civil society on the other hand, or between the holders of political power and ordinary people (Courade and Sindjoun 1996; Gros 2003;

Sindjoun 1996:27-51; Sindjoun and Owona 1997:217-45). Nor did it emerge as the consequence of an agreement between these social protagonists to 'good-govern' the Cameroonian society, at least to set up a political public sphere where free citizens and 'autonomous public body,' to use Habermas's expression (1989:145, 1984), could enjoy a freedom of speech, assembly, movement, etc. It is not exaggerating to say that in Cameroon, the demand for political liberalization rather engendered a misunderstanding between the pro-democracy movement and the conventional CPDM regime, which was reluctant to give up its unlimited privileges and monopolistic rights to the state resources (Monga 1998).

While the pro-opposition movement and the population from the grassroots welcomed the democratization process and the upsurge of the oppositional policy as promising social and political transformations, the conservative Biya regime rather viewed them as threatening and dangerous for its maintenance in power. This dissension was all the more exacerbated by the CPDM government's strong belief that there was no need to adopt the multi-party system so passionately claimed by pro-democracy activists because since 1985, the country had had democracy and freedom of expression within the ruling CPDM party whose Chairman – who is also the Cameroonian Head of State – once described it as a 'democratic and liberal party open to all trends'.[11] As a result of this professed dogma which claimed a divine truth beyond dispute, any overt attempt to oppose the deification of the Head of State, the man who allegedly was in power by the grace of God,[12] or any vague desire to found a political party was automatically understood as an act of subversion, public order offence and even breach of national security: a 'crime' which in the context of authoritarianism was liable to a life imprisonment or death penalty. Fortunately, the resistance to multi-party politics vanished when, under increasing domestic difficulties and foreign pressures, notably from France and international organizations (IMF and the World Bank), the Biya regime was forced to decompress the former authoritarian one-party system.

But the political adjustment that the conservative Biya regime finally conceded did not put an end to the disagreement between the ruling party and the opposition movement which imagined change and democracy in Cameroon differently. Indeed, for all these young men and women who from May 1990 onwards heroically entered into rebellion against the authoritarian 'Regime of New Deal' (*Regime du Renouveau*), as the ruling CPDM regime is officially designated, or courageously voiced their

exasperation against the Father of the Nation, the new era called 'age of democracy' was the time of defiance and insubordination. It signalled a resistance against a system which, for over 30 years, had silenced people or fossilized their thought, and an opposition to a form of governance that transformed citizens into mere subjects. The social protest movement that came to be popularized in Cameroon as 'ghost town operation' (*opération villes mortes*) exemplified both the aesthetics of indiscipline and subversion, and the front of refusal instigated by the opposition movement. This 'ghost town operation,' which Cameroonians experienced between 1991 and 1993, was a collective action that engaged subaltern groups in a ritual of deconstruction of the established authority, or in the process of what Bayart (1993:247) calls 'de-totalization of power.' If in some regions of the country the social movement was peaceful and well organized, in other areas, it rather degenerated into a culture of riot that often led to violent confrontations between security forces and pro-democracy activists, most notably young 'freedom fighters' and 'combatants'.

However, the most remarkable feature of this deconstructive process was the shift from what James Scott (1990) calls a 'hidden transcript' of resistance, which was the main characteristic of the mode of dissidence of the past, to an overt or public practice of indiscipline and subversion: truth was no longer spoken behind the backs of the officials as people used to in the old days, but rather to their face. The practice of insubordination was no longer concealed or disguised through rumours, slander, gossip, jokes and dissimulation which insinuated a critique of the dominant classes, while hiding behind anonymity and malice, but was rather publicized through popular songs or music, paintings, graffiti on the walls, newspaper articles or cartoons, etc (Monga 1997:146-69; Nyamnjoh 1999:93-106). Power incarnated by the figure of the despot or what the man in the street calls the 'Lion-man' (*L'Homme-lion*), was depicted in the popular literature as bestial, ferocious, murderous, sadistic, malevolent, diabolic, etc. Sometimes, it was sketched as voracious, greedy and grotesque (Mbembe 2001; Ndedi Penda 1992). For the young 'freedom fighters' and 'revolutionaries' who were at the forefront of what I have elsewhere called 'the practice of *ungovernmentality*' (Ndjio 2002), this devilish power which was 'eating' the state or starving Cameroonians, deserved nothing but a red card that would send it off. To the best of my knowledge, it was the first time in the history of this post-colonial state that the ruler was publicly questioned, shouted at, vilified or slandered:

'Who is the thief? Paul Biya' (*Thief man na wou?* Paul Biya); 'people are suffering, while Paul Biya enjoys a happy life' (*People di sofa,* Paul Biya *di chop m*oni), yelled the protesters vociferously and defiantly as they took to the streets in Douala and Yaounde (the main cities of Cameroon) and in other cities of the country.

From mid-1990 up to the late 1993, the daily performance of what James Scott (1990:18) calls the 'infrapolitics of the subordinate groups' was reduced to the rudimentary action of desecrating the state power, but above all of symbolically killing the despot. People did it by defiling his countless *doubles* (images), which generally invaded the public space, or by turning them into objects of derision and laughter. In some cities or towns of the country where the experience of the ghost town operation was most dramatic, young people expressed their anger by taking it out on the Head of State's giant portraits, after a violent clash with the forces of law and order: they would put out the President's eyes on his images with points or nails, pour drinks on his face, tear his picture up and use it as toilet paper, or coat his face with their excrement. This provocation could go further when the offenders in a general frenzy would simply cut his head off. It seems as if through these symbolic acts, these 'delinquents' wanted to drive the 'Father of the Nation,' his cumbersome phantoms and harmful *totems* (images) out of the public domain. In many respects, this practice of *ungovernmentality* went along with the culture of 'pleasure' (*jouissance*) that entailed above all new uses of bodies, new forms of desire and happiness, or new ways of living and dying (Ndjio 2005:265-94). Thanks to this Dionysian culture, the postcolonial subjects found themselves engaged in a moral 'economy of ejaculation' (de Boeck 1998:790), which exalted vicious pleasure, drunkenness, debauchery and lechery, or made the apology of ludicrousness, obscenity and vulgarity. In this world of ecstasy and fantasy, the public space itself became a site of invention of new forms of indiscipline and indocility that primarily resorted to a popular use of sex and body as a privileged mode of challenging established logics that guided the post-colonial public sphere (Ndjio 2005:277-8).

Another important aspect of the 'ghost town operation' is that it prompted the emergence of a 'collective will of people' (Foucault 1991, 1979), whose action was less motivated by what some analysts simplistically call the 'logic of clientelistic and patrimonial reciprocity' (Chabal and Daloz 1999:37-39) than their will to pull down one of the most conservative and corrupt regimes in Africa. Through this revolutionary

project, the newly emerging 'civil society' (see Kamto 1997:177-95; Monga 1998) plotted the elaboration of a 'counter-memory' of the postcolonial state, as Michel Foucault (1979) would have put it. Moreover, it attempted to reverse or undermine what I call, after Gayatri Spivak (1985:342) the official 'historiographic metalepsis' which sanctified the postcolonial ruler and his power. For example, when the despot made himself appear as the 'Incarnation of Rigour' (*L'Incarnation de la Rigueur*), 'Father of the Nation' (*Père de la Nation*), 'Providential Guide' (*Guide Providentiel*), 'Grand Helmsman' (*Grand Timonier*) or 'Apostle of Peace' (*L'Apôtre de la Paix*), the popular imagination mischievously misrepresented him as 'the incarnation of the Cameroonian predicament' (*Incarnation du mal Camerounais*), 'bogeyman' (*père fouettard*) or 'big thief' (*chef bandit*). When the governmental propaganda boasted the incumbent regime as 'advanced democracy' (*démocratie avancée*), the commoners strongly believed that they were instead experiencing 'advanced autocracy' (*autocratie avancée*). November 1982, which, according to official exegetes signalled the beginning of a new age called the era of 'rigor and moralization' (*rigueur et moralisation*), was rather interpreted by the subaltern groups as the birth of tragedy, the debut of suffering, despair and demoralization.

However, the main singularity of this newly constituted civil society was its capacity to transcend parochial solidarities and ethnic boundaries, and to rise above the 'politics of the belly' (Bayart 1993). As far as one can go back to the history of the post-independent Cameroon, it was the first time that political actions were driven less by the 'need to acquire the patrimonial means of one's political legitimacy' (Chabal and Daloz 1999:37) than a powerful utopia that united common people against their rulers: 'change' (*changement*). For the pro-democracy movement, change meant, not only normalizing the political situation in the country but also changing the existing political order, the method of government together with the renewal of the political leadership. The holding of the Sovereign National Conference, that many people were insistently asking for,[13] embodied the project to reframe the postcolonial state, to restore a state of law or to transform the way of making politics in this country (see Eboussi Boulaga 1993; Kamto 1997:177-95; Sindjoun and Owona 1997:217-45). Even a cursory and superficial examination of the opposition movement of the early 1990s would corroborate that its radicalization, notably between 1990-1993,[14] and the culture of riot and martyrdom it engendered, left no room for political

calculus, clientelistic transactions or dealings with the ruling CPDM regime. Indeed, the period of 'ghost town operation' (1991-1993) inaugurated an era when political elites, especially those who were connected to the opposition primarily drew their legitimacy and prestige, not from their aptitude at building up clientelistic and patrimonial networks from the local to the national level, but rather from their radicalism and fierce opposition to the incumbent regime. The more intransigent and extremist an opposition leader was, the more popular. At that time when the relationship between the governmental coalition and its opposition was dominated by the dynamics of hostility and confrontation, colluding with the scornful CPDM regime was equivalent to political suicide. While for the CPDM leaders, making any concession to the opposition was likely to be interpreted by their sympathizers as a weakness and lack of authority; those politicians (whether from the opposition or the ruling party) who transgressed this principle endured a political setback from their supporters.

There are many former prominent opposition leaders who lost popular support, and even undermined their political careers, just for having played what James Rush (1990) aptly calls 'the dance of collaboration' with the incumbent CPDM regime. In many respects, collaborating with the CPDM government or practicing the 'politics of the belly,' meant accepting a ministerial or administrative post, or 'eating the CPDM's 'dirty money' (*argent sale*),' as one local newspaper once formulated (see *Le Messager*, 25 June 1994). What came to be popularized in the country as *toum man* embodied the figure of the traitor who 'goes over to the enemy'. A *toum man* was not only a 'chameleon-politician or turn-coat politician' (*politicien caméléon*), a 'political nomad' (*transhumant politique*) or a 'political prostitute' (*prostitué politique*) who switched from one party or client to another, but also a renegade who gave up his commitment or who betrayed a good cause for personal interests (*Challenge-Hebdo* 21 June 1991). But what did the mythology of democracy and political liberalization mean for these young men and women who everyday were clashing with the police and gendarmes, and at the very worst were shot dead?

Democracy and Collective Fantasies

We cannot dissociate the call for democracy that gripped almost the entire African continent from the mythology that the democratization process embodied from the very beginning, or from the dreams and utopias that multi-party system came to incarnate in the early 1990s. Nor

could we have a better understanding of the experience of political liberalization in this part of the world, unless we pay attention to what Comaroff and Comaroff (2000:330) cogently call the 'millennial optimism' and the gospel atonement with which multi-party politics was associated. Indeed, this messianic vision that spread all over the Black continent in the early 1990s invested the liberal politics with the capacity to transform the living conditions of marginalized Africans who were caught in the nets of dictatorship and authoritarianism. In a context essentially marked by wretchedness and anxiety, liberal democracy presented itself to the powerless and other second-class citizens as a millennial project that provided them with optimism, self-confidence and positive expectations for their future. Only the acknowledgment of the enthusiasm and exuberance with which many Africans in general, and Cameroonians in particular, welcomed the restoration of multipartyism in their country, could inform us about the perspective to achieve through the democratization process the eagerly awaiting '30 *glorieuses*' that an unachieved de-colonization had relegated to what Denis Jeambar rightly calls '30 *ignominieuses*'[15].

This redemptive narrative of both democracy and multi-party politics influenced even the dynamic popular culture, which became by the end of 1990 the vivid expression of the general faith that suffering, poverty and distress, which were commonplace for ordinary Cameroonians, would soon be forgotten. Take, for example, cartoons caricatures and sketches that were extremely popular in the early 1990s (Monga 1997:146-69; Njamnjoh 1999:93-106). Most of these figurative expressions, which regularly appeared in pro-opposition newspapers, did not content themselves with narrating the social drama experienced by many Cameroonians. They also imagined a free, egalitarian and prosperous society that contrasted with the prevailing inhuman and vicious society. In many respects, the democratic Cameroon, about which this popular culture fantasized, was a society where broken subjects became the masters of their own destiny; where tamed bodies slowly moved from the process of crucifixion to that of resurrection and redemption, from social alienation and abjection to social promotion, from a spectral condition to a pleasant one, etc. In this fantastic world projected in satirical newspapers such as *Le Messager Popoli*, *Challenge-Hebdo*, *Porc-epic* or *Mami Wata*, the 'sovereign people' seized (or could seize) the power, got the autocrat arrested, and dragged him by force before a popular assembly presided over by leaders of the opposition and pro-democracy activists;

they would force him to give back the money he had stolen from the people (see also Mbembe 2001:149-53).

Another example of this imagined society are furnished by Lapiro de Mbanga's well-known songs, *Mimba we* (Remember us) and *Don lefam Tara* (Don't give up my friend) that enchanted the slum dwellers of New Bell in Douala or Madagascar and Briqueterie in Yaounde, or Anne-Marie Ndzié's famous freedom chant, *Liberté*, that became the rallying song of many young 'freedom fighters' who regularly took to the streets during the period of 'ghost town operation' and civil disobedience campaigns of the early 1990s. These chants attracted people, not only because they enabled the populace to be serene in the face of tragedy and affliction inflicted on them by the 'Regime of New Deal' but also because they conveyed powerful messages of courage, resourcefulness, hope, optimism and self-reliance. In short, they prophesied a better tomorrow for the underprivileged and the powerless. No surprise then that pro-democracy activists and opposition members who challenged the security forces daily chanted these popular freedom songs each time they endured police brutality: 'No condition is permanent in this world; one day, one day situation must change in this country, 'Liberty, liberty, thanks to Mighty God, at last we are free' (*Liberté, liberté, Dieu Tout-Puissant, nous sommes enfin libres merci*).[16] No wonder that militants of the Social Democratic Front translated their party's acronym as *Suffer Don Finish* (Suffering is over). By this, they meant that the institution of the multiparty system would put an end to the kleptocratic and corrupt 'Regime of New Deal', once described as a regime whose main goal was to 'make Cameroonians become definitely poor', to quote one young motorbike-taxi driver from Douala.

Yet, for all these enthusiastic and fanatical opposition supporters, this mythology of political liberalization was not simply a matter of liberty, good governance, freedom of expression and assembly. It conveyed above all a redemptive promise that was manifest in the ideal of 'change' (*changement*), as Cameroonians called it. The quest for change was not only the main obsession of many of them. It was also what they were fighting for, and were even ready to die for: people courageously took to the streets and asked for the resignation of the 'Father of the Nation,' because they wanted change; they defied the state authority because of 'change'; they challenged the established logics that guided the post-colonial public sphere for the same purpose. Between 1990 and 1993, the only political discourses that interested people were precisely those

that echoed their expectations of change, or those that promised them a new beginning. At that time when everybody was obsessed with the idea of 'change' and that all political debates were centred on this matter,[17] the opposition movement had nothing on its political agenda but the achievement of this change. The term 'change' was so fashionable that none of its leaders could end his/her speech without referring to this magical theme or giving a pledge to 'make things change in the country': a commitment that generally stirred up thunderous applause from the crowd. How could it be otherwise when the more convincing discourses of that epoch were the most radical ones, or those that emphatically advocated the replacement of the ever-lasting Biya regime? In addition, acknowledging the dedication of the pro-democracy movement to change, it seems as if the struggle for democracy that mobilized many Cameroonians at that time was simply the fight for change in this country. No wonder that the coalition of the opposition parties was called the 'Union for Change' (*Union pour le changement*), and that all pro-democracy activists were dubbed the 'Front Allies for Change' (*Fronts alliés pour le changement*), in opposition to the CPDM barons who were disdainfully labelled the 'Conservative Forces or Opposition to Change' (*Forces conservatrices* ou *de l' immobilisme*). But the question one may ask here is: why were people so obsessed with the idea of *changement*? Why did the quest for a democratic society come to be simplified or narrowed to a struggle for change?

The answer might be that, this fantastic ideal of 'change' touched the imagination of the population at large, because it augured the return to the fatherland of thousands of Cameroonian nationalists who had been forced to go into exile by the authoritarian regimes of Amadou Ahidjo, and his successor Paul Biya. Moreover, the dream of 'change' revived the old nationalist aspiration to create an egalitarian society, or to make Cameroon 'a land of hope and happiness' for all Cameroonians, and not an archipelago of injustice and despair (Joseph 1977; Mbembe 1996; Um Nyobe 1989, 1984). However, many people came to associate the democratization process with that of 'change' because the latter supposedly would change people's desperate living conditions. As a market woman from the Douala central market explained in the local newspaper, *Challenge-Hebdo*,

> The *changement* will bring job and money to people. People will no longer endure poverty and suffering. Everyone will live a better life like when the *Kassa'a* (she meant the former President Amadou Ahidjo)

> was in power. Not that some eat alone, while others have nothing to eat. This is not fair. We want change in this country.[18]

The lady's opinion reminded me of the snatches of conversation I picked up by chance in April 1991 between two middle-aged men who were hotly discussing in a bar in New Bell, the most populated district of Douala. In reaction to his partner who wondered why the word 'change' was on everybody's lips,' one of the two who was named Tagni said that it was because 'the *changement* would prevent Paul Biya and his cliques from stealing people's money and keep it in the banks in Switzerland.' He added that, the coming 'change' would send all the 'thieves' (*thiefmans*) to prison, if they did not give back all the money they had embezzled. But his friend who was rather sceptical, questioned whether 'the 'change' would bring a real change in the country,' and whether once in power, 'the opposition leaders would not misappropriate the public funds or deprive too the populations from their money as CPDM dignitaries did.' Tagni's response was that the opposition could not replicate the former predatory system because 'the *changement* would give power to people and not to *longs crayons'* (educated elites).

These different statements only expressed a collective fantasy that transformed the ideal of change into a panacea that would solve any existential problem the natives were confronted with, a cry of 'Open Sesame' that had a magic power to make even the impossible become possible. In many respects, the holding of a SNC (sovereign national conference) that people were insistently asking for would assumedly bring about the eagerly awaited great transformation, or 'would make the real change possible in the country,' as one leader of the opposition movement explained in a local newspaper (*L'opinion,* 6 June 1991). That is why by March 1991, 40 opposition parties (out of 47 political parties that were registered at that time) formed a coalition which main goal was to compel the ruling CPDM regime to convene a SNC, which was proclaimed mandatory for the country. However the conservative President declared it 'baseless,' because he strongly believed that his regime was already a well-established democratic system, and therefore needed no transitional government, much less the holding of a SNC. Thus, the general civil disobedience and the protracted and devastating 'ghost town operation' of the early 1990s aimed at forcing the reluctant CPDM government to concede to their demands for a SNC.

For the university students who played a decisive role in the social movements of the early 1990s, the SNC would presumably bring a solu-

tion to the anachronism of the higher education system in Cameroon, the inadequate infrastructures of the university, the language barriers between Anglophone and Francophone students, the poor material conditions of the students, the growing unemployment rates among university graduates and the militarization of the university campus following the 26 May 1990 students' demonstration (Konings 2002:179-204). As one leader of the National Coordination of Cameroon Students, popularly known as *Parlement* put it:

> A Sovereign National Conference is a forum for collective self-confession, a platform to point out our past mistakes and elaborate new codes of conduct; a process that will inevitably lead to a positive restructuring of our unadapted education system and its mediocre university, and that will eventually lay the foundation for the resolution of post-university problem such as unemployment.[19]

But if the call for the SNC gained a tremendous support from the grassroots or took a particular tone in this country, it was because many people considered the SNC a godsend that the discriminatory regime prevented them from enjoying. According to Mono Djana, one of the ideologues of the ruling CPDM, people were ready to die for the SNC, because the opposition leaders made illiterate peasants and poor urban populations believe that it was a big coffer full of money. President Paul Biya allegedly refused to open this case and inject the money it contained into the national economy which was cash-strapped at that time. Moreover, it was said that he kept the case closed to other people, while at the same time he generously opened it to his own Beti kinsmen, or let the money only flow towards his native region in the South Province of the country. This explains, according to Mono Djana (1997:24-26), why many people were determined to force Paul Biya, not only to release the coffer which held the 'magic money' but also to step down (see also Mono Djana 1999, 1992). The success of the SNC in other African countries like Benin (Nzouankeu 1993; Takougang and Krieger 1998) comforted people in their faith that 'want it or not, the Sovereign National Conference must be held' (*faire quoi, faire quoi Conférence Nationale Souveraine, il y aura*) or that 'Biya must go'.

Undoubtedly, the charismatic leader of the SDF, Ni John Fru Ndi, was the leading figure of the 'Front of Allies for Change.' The aura, courage and popularity of the man positioned his party at the top of the opposition movement in the country. Never before had a local politician been as glorified as the leader of the SDF was at his heyday. Between

1991 and 1996, he was so popular with both the rural populations and the underprivileged of the urban areas that his fame sometimes took a form of idolatry or a religious cult. In a number of houses, private offices or squares, the portraits and pictures of the man whose sympathizers affectionately called 'Chairman' had replaced those of the Head of State.

In July 1992 when I travelled to my village a few months before the controversial presidential election of October of the same year, I was really amazed to discover that most villagers were wearing clothes with Fru Ndi's images or were considered SDF supporters. Even my old grandmother had the man's icon at the head of her bed. For her, as with other people I talked to, Ni John Fru Ndi was more than a simple political leader whose supporters were attracted by his political program or discourse. He was above all a national hero who united many Cameroonians against their common enemy: the Biya regime. Many people referred to his party (SDF) as a salvation political party that would put an end to people's distress and suffering. As one of my relatives who was a faithful SDF militant explained to me,

> When Ni John Fru Ndi will unseat Paul Biya and achieve the *changement,* people no longer pay tax, electricity bills, and other charges that go into the pockets of the *thiefman* from Yaounde (he referred to the Head of State who lives in Yaounde). The price of cocoa and coffee will be increased. You too will enjoy the *changement*, because when you finish your studies, you will find a good job and earn lots of money. Everybody will be happy, not like the present day where you go to school, but you cannot get a job when you graduate. And even when you do find some, you work but they don't pay you.

Other people considered Ni John Fru Ndi a redeemer-prophet who was entrusted with the messianic mission to lead his people to the eagerly awaited SNC, which was seen by many as the ultimate achievement of the political struggle in the country. More importantly, if the man was able to magnetize the public, it was because many people perceived him as the only powerful fetish which could help them fulfil their main aspiration: remove the ghostly Paul Biya who was held responsible for people's misfortune and suffering from power. No wonder that in the regions favourable to the opposition movement or which were in the frontline of the *ghost town operation*, Ni John Fru Ndi received almost a plebiscite during the aforementioned controversial presidential election of October 1992.[20] In the following pages, I want to examine the two dominant modes of rationality employed by the Biya regime, not only to corrupt

the democratization process in this country, but also to strangle or suppress the opposition movement, at least to render it less effective. These two modes of *governmentality* took respectively the euphemistic and formal appellation of 'advanced democracy' (*démocratie avancée*) and later 'appeased or pacified democracy' (*démocratie apaisée*).

Démocratie avancée: The Birth of the Tragedy

First of all, it is useful to emphasize that the political reform of the early 1990s that is improperly called a democratization process did not really affect the legal or judicial structure of the former authoritarian system,[21] nor did it have a positive impact on the political public sphere. In many respects, it seemed rather to marshal the project to reinforce the state's authority or to extend its scope of domination and control over the citizens and the political landscape. As I have shown in a previous article (Ndjio 2005:265-94), the democratization process in Cameroon did not lead to the constitution of a democratic and liberal public sphere which guaranteed freedom of assembly and association, and the rights of citizens to freely express and publicize their opinion about matters of general interest, etc.[22] Instead, it had given way in this country to the establishment of a 'manipulated public sphere,' not in the sense Habermas (1989) understands it, but rather as a politically structured space which was permanently overloaded with signs and symbols that articulated the state authority or represented its power, as well as dramatized its importance. One can recall in this respect the presidential thoughts and declarations of principles printed on notice boards or written on the facade of main state buildings, or his speeches which were constantly and repeatedly echoed or commented by the state-controlled media.

If the introduction of multi-party politics in 1990 changed anything in this country, it was the perversion of the political liberalization by the ruling CPDM regime, or at least its transformation into what came to be institutionalized from 1991 onwards as 'advanced democracy'. This tropical democracy which had negatively affected the lives of many Cameroonians meant recourse to violence, intimidation and manoeuvres in order to muzzle or ostracize the opposition, notably members of the hardcore opposition mentioned earlier. At the time of the 'advanced democracy', opposition was only tolerated if its members were 'moderate' or 'responsible,' and did not advocate the dismissal of the 'Father of the Nation,' the holding of the SNC or the organization of fair and democratic elections in the country. The Biya regime also put up with a

'responsible opposition' or a 'civilised civic society', which did not denounce the kleptomaniac behaviour of the politico-bureaucratic elites. Along the same lines, for this regime, the conscientious and responsible political opponents were what people derisively called the 'oppositionists to the opposition' (*opposants de l'opposition*); that is, political opponents who were 'willing to have talks with the government and constituted authorities,' or were opposed to members of the hardcore opposition coalition who formed the 'Front Allies for Change'.[23] This was the case for members of the opposition group known as the 'moderates' (*modérés*) whose collusion with the ruling CPDM was generally praised by state officials and pro-government media as a sign of responsibility and patriotism. It was also the case for members of the so-called 'civil society' who were 'neutrally' connected to the ruling CPDM party, or members of many figurative human rights associations hastily created by the government in order to mislead the international community.

This new mode of *governmentality* implied as well the conversion of the public space into a militarized and martial space in which order and peace had to be maintained by all means (*militocracy*). At the time of the advanced democracy, the state power strove, not only to recapture the public sphere that was once controlled by young 'freedom fighters' and 'revolutionaries' but also to dramatize its presence where its authority was less perceptible. One could mention in this respect the formation in July 1991 of a special armed force unit baptized *Commandement Opérationnel* in regions mostly favourable to the opposition movement, the creation of new administrative units, military legions, the increase of the number of armed forces, administrators and magistrates, the constitution of ethnic militias and vigilante groups, and above all the *retour en force* of some caciques of the conservative ruling CPDM regime. This was the case of Gilbert Andzé Tchoungui, the former Minister of Territorial Administration and patron of the police, who was appointed as Deputy-Prime Minister in charge of the Territorial Administration, and Jean Fochivé, the dreaded former boss of the intelligence service, who became Secretary of State for Internal Security. The promotion of these two hardliners fit into the government's scheme of 'restoring the state power', as the official rhetoric called the violence that the postcolonial state permanently exercised on its subjects. These different measures were above all part of the government's effort to create submissive and docile citizens who had to subjugate their rights to the state authority. At that time of the advanced democracy, sympathizers of the opposition

only experienced the state power in its cruellest and most cynical visage. For these men and women who were constantly chased, arrested, tortured, or at the very worst killed by security forces or ethnic militias, - because of their political conviction or ethnic origins- , the experience of life was intrinsically linked to the art of escaping death and tragedy everyday. [24] Yet, even in its ferocity and intemperance, power was never banal or trivial in this country. The permanent assaults that this authoritarian power exerted on the oppositionists' bodies were always meant to remind them that the state authority has 'the will and the means', as Mr Fochivé liked to say.

One imposing aspect of this advanced democracy was that it had oversimplified the procedures of authority, and the means of violence and coercion in this country. In deed, from 1991 to 1996, the daily exercise of (state) power in Cameroon was abridged to the elementary act of banning, constraint, force, prohibition, confinement, surveillance and punishment, but also authorization, permission, rewarding, etc. Any person, thought, action or movement that was likely to challenge the gospel truth professed by His Excellency and his honourable Ministers was ostracized. For example, 1991 and 1992 witnessed the detention of many activist leaders who were subjected after their arrest to a humiliating and savage treatment by security forces. The same period also heralded the interdiction of a great number of independent newspapers which were very critical about the Biya regime,[25] or many independent human rights organizations, such as CAP-Liberté, OCDH, Human Watch, True Democracy which played a decisive role in increasing national and international awareness about the abuse of human rights in Cameroon. These associations were suspected by the administration of being connected to the main opposition parties (SDF, UNDP, UPC), and especially of being manipulated by the *Laka'am* association, a powerful Bamiléké lobby-group which was reputed for its strong hostility to the CPDM government. This period also recorded the dismantlement of all student movements, most notably the popular *Parlement* (an active and radical student movement) whose leaders were expelled from all state universities, jailed or tracked down by security services and ethnic militias in the government's pay (*Collectif Changer le Cameroun* 1992). At the same time, the officials managed to create or promote some amenable organizations, or some private newspapers, such as *Le Patriote, La Caravane, Le Témoin*, *Le Devoir, Elimbi*, etc, which enabled them to maintain a democracy de facade.

Yet this mode of exercising power entailed above all a policy of stick-and-carrot towards the government's opponents. On the one hand, this policy referred to an ineradicable custom of bringing members of the radical opposition, who were contemptuously depicted by pro-CPDM barons as a 'bunch of vandals and rioting demonstrators', under the endless process of pacification. In many respects, this art of discipline and castigation of the political opponents took the form of a real hunt in which the forces of law and order were the hunters and opposition supporters the quarry. As a matter of fact, from 1991 to 1996 the main task of the security forces consisted in hunting, tracking down, trapping and taming Biya' s political opponents, in the same way that a hunter deals with its prey. And each time the gendarmes or police 'captured' the oppositionists, they took a cynical delight in exhibiting them on the state-controlled television as a spoil of war, or humiliating them in public, so as to remind them that '*L'Homme-lion* is stronger than them,' or to make them become less 'irresponsible and stubborn'. Sometimes, they required their victims to sing the praises of 'the Man of the New Deal' (*L'Homme du Renouveau*), as the despot is affectionately called.

However, not all these structures of repression or hunting (police, gendarmes, army, magistrates, etc.) had a legal or official status. Some of them were informal, private or extra-judiciary. This was the case of the Committee for Self-Defence, Commando Delta, Direct Action, the National Front for Beti Liberation and Essingan Group, the five most notorious and extremist Beti militias created in the early 1990s by some Beti officials, and the Presby group (President Biya's youth organization), a fanatic organization closely connected to the ruling CPDM party. Most of these groups were formed along ethnic or regional lines. More precisely, they recruited their members exclusively among young Beti students or unemployed to whom fine promises (government's assistance, job opportunities in the administration or the army, etc) were made in order to win their support. Between 1991 and 1996, these associations played a crucial role in helping the government to implement its martial policy against the opposition movement, notably members of the students' *Parlement* organization. For example, on several occasions, the government authority had recourse to these ethnic militias to achieve various tasks, i.e. maintaining or restoring order in the university campuses, disturbing opposition rallies or demonstrations, but also repressing young pro-democracy activists who were at the forefront of 'the ghost town operation' in the main towns of the country. Most of the victims of

these ethnic militias who were defined as 'the New Deal's defenders' (*défenseurs du Renouveau*) were populations from other regions or ethnic groups which were singled out as 'enemies' of the New Deal' or as 'strangers' (*allogènes*) in opposition to the so-called Beti 'natives' (*autochthones*).

Nonetheless, we will miss another important dimension of this advanced democracy policy, if we only limit it to a regime of disciplinary power or a routinized use of violence and coercion which was just one aspect of the whole complex of what Michel Foucault (1991) has called 'bio-power.' As he has cogently demonstrated in *Discipline and Punish* (1979), for power to work, it must be able to manage, to control, and even create details: the more detail, real power, management breeding, and management units, which in turn breeds more detailed and finely controlling knowledge. From this Foucauldian perspective, one can read the advanced democracy policy as an elaborate system of representations of the Other (opposition members) and a sophisticated construction of ideological knowledge that enabled between 1991 and 1996 the CPDM regime to legitimize the violence and humiliation it constantly inflicted on its political opponents. I will focus my analysis on two main discursive formations that underpinned this mode of governing people in the country known as Cameroon.

The first discourse that aimed above all at manipulating the collective consciousness was associated with the mythology of national unity: a federal term on which Cameroonians generally agree, regardless of their ethnic, political or religious affiliations (Sindjoun 1996:27-51). As developed above, unlike the opposition movement which perceived the multi-party politics as hopeful because it embodied the project of 'change', the ruling CPDM regime rather viewed the democratization process as threatening for its maintenance in power. Therefore, throughout 1991, confronted with unprecedented social and political unrest, the CPDM government strove through images, pictures, sounds and statements to systematize a coherent discourse that emphasized the need to preserve what supposedly brought Cameroonians together: the 'national unity' and their pride of belonging to 'one and indivisible country.' Eventually this mythology became the repository of official discourses on peace, public order and security. In all respects, the (re) invention of this mythology of national unity, which since 1960 has been providing ideological support for the institutionalization of an autocratic regime in this country (Alima 1977; Kegne Pokam 1986), went hand in hand with the government's project, not only to supersede the ideal of 'change' by the

logics of peace, but also to alter the ongoing democratization process. Not surprising that, during the presidential election of October 1992, one of the main slogans of the ruling CPDM party was 'Vote Paul Biya for Peace' or 'Paul Biya for peace.' On the other hand, the outgoing President Paul Biya passed himself off as 'the candidate for gathering and unity' (*candidat du rassemblement et de l'unité*), in contrast to his political opponents who were dubbed 'apostles of division and enemies to peace' (*apôtres de la division et ennemis de la paix*). Cameroonians were called upon to make their choice, not between 'change' (*changement)* and 'opposition to change' (*immobilisme*), as the opposition members stressed, but rather between unity and division, order and disorder, peace and chaos, stability and instability, etc, as the state-controlled media endlessly reminded the public.

In the wake of the brainwashing campaigns initiated by state officials in order to discredit the opposition movement or to hamper the impact of the devastating civil disobedience, special programs were regularly broadcast on the national TV or radio channels on civil wars that were devastating some African countries. In most cases, these shows were accompanied by dithyrambic songs that either paid tribute to the 'Initiator of the New Deal policy,' or urged Cameroonians to 'give priority to peace and stability, whatever their political disagreement.' Furthermore, government officials appealed to some actors of the reunification of the two former French and British Cameroons, not only to explain how Cameroonians from the two borders of the Moungo river decided after the Reunification of October 1961 to live in common but also to warn those 'irresponsible fellows whose actions were likely to jeopardize the national unity gained at great cost.' No wonder that the mythology of national unity became one of the main justifications for the militarization of the power that marked the debut of the advanced democracy of the early 1990s, or the systematization of the policy of 'pacifying' and 'stabilizing' the country by all means.

Indeed, it was for the sake of national unity and peace that unlimited rights were given to the forces of law and order to bring the oppositionists' bodies under the endless process of discipline, or that the Biya regime reinforced its repressive tendencies that have contributed to its hegemonic stability (Courade and Sindjoun 1996). It was under the pretext of preservation of national unity and territorial integrity that the CPDM government was strongly opposed to the holding of SNC or dismissed the claims of some Anglophone populations for the reintroduction of a fed-

eral system (Anglophone and Francophone States) or the outright secession of the former Southern Cameroon from the present Republic of Cameroon. Instead, the Constitution of January 1996 preferred a formative decentralization system that espoused the form of the ten existing provinces to federalism, viewed by the regime ideologues as a step to secession (Awasom 2001).

Another aspect of the 'advanced democracy' is that it embodied the dichotomizing representation of Cameroonians or their classification into two categories: supporters and opponents, good and bad citizens, responsible and irresponsible subjects, patriots and the non-patriots, autochthons and allochthons, allies and enemies, natives and strangers, etc (Awasom 1999; Konings 2001:169-94; Socpa 2002). This classificatory policy primarily aimed at exacerbating regional, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences. In practice, this process gave way for instance to the invention of the *Beti* or *Essigan* clan that encompassed populations of the forest region of Cameroon (Centre, Southern and Eastern Provinces), the *Sawa* group that gathered peoples from the coastal region (Littoral and South-western provinces), the *Anglo-Bami* group that assembled populations from the Grassfields region (West and Northwest Provinces), and finally the *Nordistes* that grouped peoples from the Northern region of the country. Beti and Sawa populations were generally associated with the ruling CPDM party, while the Anglo-Bamileke and the Nordistes were connected with the opposition, notably SDF and UNPD (Union National for Democracy and Progress). At the time of the advanced democracy, the political status, privileges and rights one could enjoy or not, depended above all on one's position either as a CPDM supporter or opponent, as a member of *Pays Organisateur* (the Beti lobby group which allegedly holds the political power in Cameroon) or *Anglo-Bami,* or as an 'autochthon' or 'allochthon.' Reflecting on this policy, one can say that what some analysts have rightly termed 'ethnopolitics' or 'autochthony governmentality' (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000:423-52) can be seen above all as the art of (re) inventing difference. As a matter of fact, political opposition was equated with regional and ethnic differences: the *opposant* was the *allogène* or the 'alien,' while the supporter of the ruling CPDM party was the *autochtone* or the 'son of the soil,' who needed to be protected against the invasion and cumbersome presence of the *allochthons* from the Grassfields region (Awasom 2001; Socpa 2002).

For example, between 1991 and 1996, the Biya regime enacted a series of laws, which were purportedly and ostensibly designed to protect the 'autochthons' and the 'natives' who allegedly feared of being overwhelming or outvoting by Anglo-Bami 'settlers' or '*came no gos,*' in their native region (see Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000:434-45). This was the case with the Electoral Code of 1992 and the January 1996 Constitution which not only institutionalized the ethno-politics in this country but also endorsed the CPDM regime's divide-and-rule policy, which was based above all on the exclusion or marginalization of a cross-section of populations. For example, the Electoral Code required that the list of candidates to be presented by political parties in a constituency must reflect the sociological components of this constituency. This means the mandatory inclusion of 'autochthon' populations or the 'sons of the soil' in the list of candidates presented by a political party. In the same lines, in its preamble and in Article 57(3), the Constitution of January 1996 upheld the state's obligation to 'protect minorities and preserve the rights of *indigenous* populations.' Moreover, this law stated that 'the Chairperson of each Regional Council and Local Government region shall be an indigene of the area.' As Awasom (2001:22) rightly puts it, 'the emphasis of the 1996 Constitution was on the rights of 'indigenes' and 'minorities' against other nationals considered 'outsiders' and 'strangers.'' To phrase it differently, priority was given to 'ethnic,' 'indigenous' or 'autochthonous' citizens, while the concept of national citizenship was relegated to the background. This constitution, as Awasom (2001:23-4) further explains, 'stratified citizenship by starting first with belonging to an ethnic group, district or province before any national consideration.'

What deserves to be stressed here is that these different laws have been instrumental in the conservative CPDM regime's bid not only to distort the democratic principles, but also to maintain its hegemonic stability, by impeding through 'legal' means individuals or groups who were likely to pose a threat to its conservation of power. For example between 1992 and 1996, the CPDM government had many times recourse to these judiciary and electioneering procedures to prevent 'Anglo-Bamis' and Nordistes strangers from standing for election in the regions where they were born or had lived for several decades, because their status allegedly did not comply with the policy of belonging. On several occasions, the CPDM regime used similar stratagems either to disqualify the list of the opposition candidates from the electoral competition, or

to invalidate the opposition's victory under the pretext that it was predominantly made up of '*allogènes*' at the expense of the 'autochthons.' For example, prior to the January 1996 municipal elections, the Minister of Territorial Administration disqualified the list of SDF candidates in 150 local government constituencies on the grounds that it did not reflect the sociological components of the respective areas, or that the 'natives' were less represented in those lists than the 'aliens'.[26]

Under the advanced democracy, the invention of ethnic and cultural differences also took the form of *demonization*, *anathemization* and *pathologization* of the ruling party's opponents, notably members of the radical opposition reunited under the banner of the SDF. Indeed, militants or leaders of this party were generally considered a bunch of 'vandals' and 'irresponsible fellows' who deserved no respect on the part of the state officials. For example, Mr Kontchou Kouemegni, the former Minister of Communication (1990-2000) had once called this political movement a 'fascist party,' which was indoctrinating young Cameroonians, and had planned to plunge the country into chaos and tragedy. Twice, Ni John Fru Ndi, the chairman of this party escaped a murder attempt by the security forces who shot at his car and wounded the man and one of his bodyguards. In the line of such a policy, CPDM regime's political opponents and members of some radical Anglophone movements, such as the South Cameroon National Council (SCNC), Free West Cameroon Movement (FWCM) or Ambazonia Movement, which advocated the return to the former federated states, were depicted as 'adventurers', 'traitors in the enemy's pay', 'power-mongers', 'enemies to peace,' 'trouble-makers,' 'apostles of division,' 'secessionists' or 'undesirable elements' (Konings and Nyamnjoh 2003, 2000:5-32). Likewise, extremist members of the ruling CPDM and pro-governmental newspapers generally referred to 'Anglo-Bami' populations as 'ethnofascists,' 'black imperialists,' 'exploitative and unscrupulous fellows,' 'domineering settlers,' 'land-grabbers,' 'ingrate peoples,' 'deceitful peoples,' etc. They were accused of sowing disorder in the country, or of plotting to overthrow the CPDM regime by means of 'ghost town operation' and SNC, as Mono Djana (1997:23-25) stated. In the following pages, I will focus my analysis on the second mode of *governmentality* that has enabled Biya regime to cannibalize the pretty siren of democracy, or to 'capture' its political opponents, who have been turned into mere ceremonial figures. This new formula of domination took by the end of 1997 the official appellation of 'pacified democracy' (*démocratie apaisée*).[27]

Démocratie apaisée: The End of the Political Struggle

In December 2001, I had the opportunity to dine in a smart restaurant in Paris with a group of Cameroonian mayors from the CPDM and SDF parties, who were participating in a meeting on local government in the French capital. Both the CPDM and SDF mayors, who had been put up at a luxurious hotel at the Place de Clichy, were calling each other 'colleagues' or 'comrades.' Some of them even planned together to ship the fancy cars that they had just bought into Cameroon. Their trip and daily expenses were supported by a government institution (FEICOM), which provides financial assistance to local councils. A couple of months earlier in July, Ni John Fru Ndi, the Chairman of the former radical SDF was the CPDM' s special guest during the ruling party's 2nd extraordinary congress. For many participants and viewers, it was memorable to see the man who was formerly cast in the role of the villain, seating alongside the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet, or holding a friendly conversation with the ruling party's Secretary General. It was the same CPDM regime that in 1997 and 2002 helped the SDF Chairman to thwart his former collaborators' plan to unseat him for 'high treason and collusion with the 'enemy' (meaning the CPDM party).[28]

Paul Biya's unexpected support for his former 'enemy' was above all a politically motivated action. On the one hand, his intervention in favour of the leader of the so-called radical opposition party enabled his regime to keep up its 'cosmetic democracy' to use Njamnjoh's words (2004), since without an 'active and responsible opposition,' as state-controlled media often say, the democracy made in Cameroon would not catch fire. On the other hand, Paul Biya's backing of an Anglophone fellow that his regime has been promoting since 1996 as the everlasting leader of the opposition in the country was part of his strategy to maintain an illusionary equilibrium of power between a dominated-Francophone government and a pro-Anglophone opposition. This fragile balance might have been undermined, if a Francophone Bamileke or Nordiste fellow who was lusting after the chairmanship of the main opposition party in the country, had replaced the old Anglophone leader. Moreover, ousting Ni John Fru Ndi would have compounded the Anglophones' resentment against their Francophone counterparts they often accused of marginalizing them (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997:207-29). As one analyst commented, 'for the Biya regime, it was a matter of choosing the lesser of two evils: between the long-time *opposant* whose

bark was worse than his bite, and especially was willing to negotiate with the ruling CPDM regime, and embittered politicians who had a score to settle with the same regime'.[29]

In many respects, the government's surprising support for the leader of the former radical party tied in with its policy of 'appeasement' which embodied the Second Coming of the democratization process in this country: that of the 'advanced democracy'. This 'pacified democracy' moved the political struggle in this postcolonial state from the former logics of confrontation and opposition of the early 1990s to that of collaboration and connivance. The 'ghost town operation' was over, the SNC was postponed indefinitely, the former radical opposition had become 'responsible,' and order and peace were restored at the expense of the former 'freedom fighters' and 'combatants.' To paraphrase Bayart (1993), the policy of *appeasement* initiated by the CPDM government in the late 1997 dramatized the logics of reciprocity and mutuality that now inscribes both the ruling party and its opposition within the same episteme of belly euphemistically called government of 'large consensus' or 'national reconciliation.' Like a good father, the 'Enlightened Guide' in his paternalist magnanimity, refused to banish or ostracize anyone, not even the 'lost sons' who had once dishonoured him or slammed the door of the communal house behind them. As Zacharie Ngniman (1998:12), one of the apologists of the CPDM regime, explains,

> On the 12 October 1997, Paul Biya was re-elected as President following his large victory (92.57 per cent of recorded votes) during the presidential election. For many observers, there was no doubt that, unlike the 1992 presidential election during which he only cast 39. 97 per cent of the votes, this time, he had elbowroom to govern with his CPDM party alone. All the more reason that at that time, he already enjoyed a comfortable majority at the *National Assembly* (the Cameroonian Parliament). But he did not. In his inaugural speech, President Paul Biya rather chose to associate all political trends to his power. In addition to the ruling CPDM, other political parties joined the government (UPC, UNDP, UPR). Official talks began with the SDF, the long-standing rival, with more or less success. Despite the divergence of opinion and some minor clashes, the trend was irreversible. The new option signalled the end of the democratic transition and the beginning of the '*démocratie apaisée*' in Cameroon. On the eve of the 3rd Millennium, and with regard to what we witnessed in the neighbouring countries, the President's policy of appeasement was an advantage that one had to preserve jealously (translation by the author).

As the above quotation shows, the 'pacified democracy' embodied the shift, not only in the style of power and the CPDM regime's mode of *governance* but also in the way in which it dealt with its opposition. Unlike the advanced democracy of the early 1990s which was predominately marked by the policy of stick, the pacified democracy of the late 1990s was rather guided by the policy of carrot towards opposition members. It means that, if in the past years (1991-1996) boot, truncheon, tear gas, bayonet, bullets, beatings and imprisonments were the privileged means for keeping the opposition movement in check, after October 1997 incorporation in the state apparatuses, money and reward became the principal instrument for domesticating the opposition. Even though this corruptive practice was not really new, as in March 1992 the CPDM government resorted to bribe to break up the former *Coordination* (a coalition of 40 opposition parties),[30] it had never been as conventional and prevalent as it became under the pacified democracy. In other respects, the spirit of appeasement changed even the official representation of the hardcore opposition: its leaders were no longer considered 'troublemakers,' 'apostles of division,' 'enemies to peace,' but were called 'our friends of the opposition,' 'challengers' (*concurrents*), 'political adversaries,' etc. Take, for example, Ni John Fru Ndi who was formerly called all the names under the sun by state-controlled media. With the advent of the pacified democracy, he became in the same official media's representation the 'leader of the opposition' or the 'Chairman of the SDF.' Moreover, he was now invited to join state or ruling CPDM officials in their display of majesty and grandeur, while his party's militants were now allowed to hold their meeting or to march past the Head of State during the National Day celebration.

However, one of the main achievements of this pacified democracy is that it has established an *entente cordiale* or a whirlwind romance between the former 'enemies' who have (re) discovered 'the virtues of dialogue and consultation,' as Mr Achidi Achu, the former Prime Minister (1992-1996), liked to say. Moreover, it has contributed to a fusion between the ruling CPDM and its opposition, or their 'reciprocal assimilation'[31] in the matrix of what some Cameroonian officials have felicitously called 'mutual aid policy' ('*njangui* politics')'.[32] It means that both the government and the opposition no longer view themselves as adversaries or political opponents, but rather as partners or allies who are trying to make the most of the accumulative opportunities provided by the millennial democracy. In practice, this alliance operates in the form of

share of the 'national cake,' or what Bayart (1993:155-179) has called 'the resources of extraversion:' for the greater good of the country, and for the sake of national unity and peace, the opposition allows the ruling CPDM party to rig the elections or to distort their results. In turn, for the sake of national reconciliation and appeasement, its leaders are showered with money and other gratifications, or are allotted a less important position in the government or in the executive board of the National Assembly, while some of them are appointed to some lucrative posts in one of the state-owned companies (Mbuagbo 2002:431-38; Mbuagbo and Akoko 2004:1-12).

Indeed, since 1997, both the Parliament and the government have been serving as spaces, not only for mediation between the ruling CPDM regime and its opposition but also for reconciliation between political actors who were formerly divided by the advanced democracy. It is useful to recall that since the implementation of the pacified democracy in October 1997, both the CPDM and the SDF have been controlling the government body of the National Assembly: the National Bureau and the Commissions. For example, to compensate for the absence of its main challenger in 'the government of national union,' the ruling party has promoted the 'election' of some SDF's Members of Parliament as Deputy-Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer of the Parliament, or as Secretary of one of the nine Commissions. As the official leader of the opposition, the SDF Chairman receives the state allowances (*Mutations*, 27 September 2004). As Tenfack Ofegé, a Cameroonian journalist cogently writes,

> Under the pretext that they are the guarantors of peace and stability in Cameroon the CPDM operates a kleptocracy wherein 10% of the population or less controls 90% of the resources. And under the pretext that they are not part of the CPDM racket, but they are the guarantors of a democracy, the current SDF leadership sponsors a system wherein 10% of the party's leadership, not even the masses, benefits from the graft with the CPDM.[33]

No wonder that the former whining *opposants* have fallen silent. To Thomas Frank's pertinent question, 'Why Johnny can't dissent'?[34] No doubt the answer of many disenchanted Cameroonians would be because 'the full mouth is silent' (*la bouche qui parle ne mange pas*), as 'the talkative mouth is empty' (*bouche qui parle ne mange pas*).

In many respects, the *njangui* politics that is one of the main characteristics of the pacified democracy seems to take the form of a democ-

racy of the belly (*démocratie du ventre*) and a corruptive democracy, if one acknowledges the present propensity of opposition leaders to lust after ministerial posts, and the inclination of the ruling party to bribe its political opponents in order to calm them down. Indeed, with the newly institutionalized pacified democracy, a new practice of politics has emerged in Cameroon in which making politics is abridged to the art of fending for oneself, or of 'eating one's portion' (*manger sa part*), as the man in the street ironically comments. Unlike the early 1990s when the political struggle was essentially driven by the mythology of change, and when making politics was above all a matter of changing the existing political order or reframing the postcolonial state, that of the late 1990s was primary prompted by the 'need to acquire the patrimonial means of one's political legitimacy,' as Chabal and Daloz (1999:37) would have put it, or to share the spoils. Reflecting on the vegetative and primal behaviour of many of them, one can rightly say that nowadays, Cameroonian political actors are not far from what Bayart (1993:243) felicitously describes as 'glutinous enzymes motivated by the sole desire of stuffing themselves as quickly as possible with the fruits of western modernism' or with international aid.

Even the vivid popular culture in Cameroon reflects this rush for spoils in which almost all local political entrepreneurs participate today. For example, in one of his successful sketches that is in fact a political satire about the democratization process in Cameroon, the popular comedian *Chop-Chop* derisively describes the ongoing pacified democracy as the 'democracy for personal interests' (*démocratie du gombo*) or '*mangecratie*:' the democracy for the mouth and the belly, as he explains. According to him, the government and its opposition are engaged in what he calls the '*chop-chop démocratie*.' That is why he too has created a party, which is named 'Chop-Chop Democratic Party,' and his militants are called 'chop-chop people'. The party's motto is: 'I *chop,* you *chop*' (I eat, you eat). The main objective of the party's leader is to get some 'money or financial retributions' (*chops* or *gombos*) from the CPDM government or international donors. In many respects, his manoeuvre consists of ranting at the government in order to draw its attention. His overt opposition to the ruling CPDM power is only a hidden transcript of his collusion with the same regime. More explicitly, in public, the cunning politician passes himself off as a radical *opposant* who regularly criticizes the CPDM regime for keeping people in poverty and destitution. But in private, he lives off the same government that offers him opportunities to tap into

state-controlled resources permitting him to enjoy an easy life. The strategy of the leader of the Chop-Chop Democratic Party is informed by the fact that the prevailing pacified democracy works because there are (responsible) political opponents who legitimize it through 'elections,' votes of laws in the National Assembly, or through formal institutions (Parliament, government, local council) or through actions such as critiques, demonstrations, marches, etc. He is also aware of the fact that under the pacified democracy, to get access to the state resources, you have to play-act as a vehement political opponent: a turbulent *opposant* who shouts angrily at the government or casts aspersions on the ruling CDPM regime, is likely to be called to the government, ironically translated by Cameroonians as a 'big dish' (*mangeoire nationale*).

One can find here a striking similarity between the Chairman of the Chop-Chop Democratic Party and many 'ventriloquist political opponents' (*opposants du ventre*), as the popular literature in Cameroon calls it. Their political struggle is no longer subjected to a double logic of 'totalitarianizing and de-totalitarianizing' (Bayart 1993:249), but rather to a double process of collaboration and integration, as exemplified by the note released on 27 October 2002 by the Chairman of the SDF. In this message, the leader of this opposition party 'directs the Secretary General of the party to send an official letter to the Secretary General of the CPDM to invite his party to another round of CPDM/SDF talks, like the one they initiated in 1997/98'.[35] The declared purpose of these talks engaged in since November 1997 was 'to seek avenues to perfect the electoral system in Cameroon,' as stated by the aforementioned message. But their hidden objective aspired to consolidate the place of the former radical party in the banquet of the pacified democracy which today offers to all the *opposants du ventre* a fresh field in which to graze: allocations of micro-projects, lucrative public contracts, highly marketable import-export licenses, etc.

Conclusion: From Millennial to Spectral Democracy

In the early 1990s, Cameroonians, like many Africans, fantasized about a democracy that supposedly would bring about a real change in their country, which would at least prevent their old Enlightened Guide from dying in power. Indeed, the millennial democracy in its messianic and enchanting manifestations promised to put an end to the tragedy and suffering Cameroonians in particular, and Africans at large, have been experiencing since the so-called de-colonization process of the late 1950s

and early 1960s. The (magical) word 'changement' embodied people's expectations of better life, justice and freedom. But in the end, the 'Father of the Nation' succeeded in turning the pretty siren of democracy into a kind of spectre which since 1991 has been traumatizing people, except the cunning politicians who have been able to make the most of the pacified democracy that has been preferred to democracy. The prevailing *mangecracy* and *ethnocracy* which have become the dominant manifestations of the Cameroonian *governance* bear witness to the failure of a democratization process that has changed everything in this country, except what it was supposed to change: corruption, nepotism, patrimonialism, favoritism, clientelism, tribalism, dictatorship, etc. Moreover, the steady process of *autocraticization* and *criminalization* of the Cameroonian state, like in many other African countries (Bayart et al. 1999), instead of democratization and good-governance as predicted by many analysts, is an unpleasant reminder that the modernist discourses have failed to understand the mutations that were taking place in Africa in the early 1990s. Once again, Africanists and social scientists at large have let themselves be led up the garden path by the mysterious Black continent and its people who seem to take a wicked delight in playing a trick on them, deconstructing their theoretical constructions, spoiling their project or shaking their certitudes and truths.

In the early 1990s, Ni John Fru Ndi and his SDF party were the incarnation of the millennial democracy. But today the former radical *opposant* turned *nouveau riche* has become the icon of the opportunist politicians who have sold the dreams of Cameroonians for change in favour of a system which today allows 'kleptocrats and con men to live long and prosper,' as Sani Aladji, the former SDF coordinator for the Centre Province, points out.[36] Both the fall of the man who formerly magnetized many Cameroonians, and the slowing down of the former 'people's party', as Cameroonians used to call it, bear today the historical consciousness of a general disenchantment with the mythology of change in this country. Many Cameroonians, who feel that con artist politicians have bamboozled them, translate today's democracy as *demoncracy*, for the former salvific democracy is now associated with tragedy, misfortune and distress, or with a horrible 'thing' (*machin*) that only exacerbates people's suffering, as many slum-dwellers of New Bell in Douala strongly believe. No wonder that the 'calls on the Cameroonian people neither to resign themselves to their frustrations and anxieties, nor loose interests in politics, as this would be acceptance of Biya's mockery of Cameroon

and its people,' like the one the SDF National Executive Committee made in October 2002,[37] only leave people impassive. No surprising too that when, during the campaign for the presidential election of October 2004, Paul Biya (the then CPDM candidate and outgoing President) talks of his 'greater ambitions' (*grandes ambitions*) that will magically transform the 'kleptocratic and felonious' *Regime du Renouveau* (Bayart et al. 1999) into a democratic one, sceptic Cameroonians disdainfully considered them another 'greater illusion' (*grandes illusions)*'[38] *(Le Messager* on line 13 February 2005*)*.

Notes

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to Sara Dorman and Edlyne Agnuwon for helping me to edit this text. I am also grateful to Peter Pels and the two anonymous reviewers for kindly reading and commenting on the first draft of this work. This paper was written during my academic affiliation with the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research of the University of Amsterdam, and reflects somehow the 'spirit' and vitality of the extraordinary group of scholars and postgraduate students to whom I am intellectually indebted.

1. *Messager*, no 1785, 14 November 2003:4.
2. He finally died in power on 5 February 2005, following a heart attack.
3. See Toulabor 1991:55-71.
4. Their political engagement which entails, to a certain extent, their political consciousness.
5. See *Mutations*, 12 March 1999:5.
6. This developmentalist and modernist ideology can be found in the writings of some leading figures in political sciences such as Azarya 1994; Azarya and Chazan 1987; Bratton 1989; Bayart 1986; Haberson, Rothchild and Chazan 1994; and Fatton Jr. 1987. For a critical analysis of this western liberal policy, see Badie 1992; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Frank 1991; Hibou 1998; and Touraine 1992.
7. See Ferguson 1999.
8. By *demo-cracy*, I mean a legitimate or legal form of domination that politico-administrative elites or those who have control over state resources and international funds exert over subaltern groups. In short, this concept refers to a form of power *on* people.
9. See Hibou 1999.
10. In many African countries, National Conference, Roundtable or National Debate offered a framework for mediations between various political actors. See Eboussi Boulaga 1993; Nzouankeu 1993; Clark 1998.
11. See his interview with the French journalist Yves Mourousi in February 1990. See also Mono Djana 1992.

12. *See Cameroon* Tribune, 5 December 1990:3.
13. This will be discussed in detail in the next section.
14. Following the refusal of the ruling party and its president to concede the organization of the sovereign national conference. On 21 March 1991, the Political Bureau of this party issued a communiqué in which it expressed its strong opposition to the sovereign national conference that was declared *sans object* (groundless). On 27 July 1991, Paul Biya reiterated his refusal. Moreover, he created a special armed force unit baptised C*ommandement Opérationnel*. See Sindjoun and Owona 1997:218-19.
15. In *L'Express*, 8 March 2004
16. See Konings 2002:179-204.
17. Even the conservative ruling CPDM regime was not indifferent to this idea of 'change' for its leader claimed paternity for the introduction of 'change' into the country. As Paul Biya declared in a provocative speech he delivered on 27 June 1991 at the National Assembly: 'Do you want to change he who brought change into the country? I maintain that the national conference is pointless in Cameroon. Order will be maintained by all means'. Cf. *Cameroon Tribune*, 4916, 1991:2-3.
18. Cf. *Challenge-Hebdo*, 37, 1991:4.
19. In *The Messenger,* 18 April 1991:4 (quoted by Konings 2002:187).
20. During these elections which were marked by massive frauds organized by the incumbent regime, the candidate of the U*nion for Change*, Ni John Fru Ndi, obtained respectively 86% in the Northwest, 52% in the South-west, 68% in the West and 68% in the Littoral Provinces, while his main challenger, the outgoing president (Paul Biya) only scored 8%, 21%, 12% and 14% in these regions.
21. It is useful to underline that the new 'democratic laws' continue to cope with legal systems and institutions inherited from the former authoritarian system or copied from former colonial powers. These institutions remain under the authority or superintendency of the Head of State. For example, the amended 1996 Constitution has endorsed the control of the executive power over the so-called 'judicial power' by which members are appointed, transferred, dismissed, suspended by the administration.
22. For example, the alleged 'revolutionary' Mass Communication Law of November 1990 continues to restrict the freedom of expression through administrative and judicial controls over newspapers or to impose censorship through various procedures. See Nyamnjoh 1998:29-35.
23. See *Cameroon Post*, 27 June 1991.
24. For example, between April and November 1991 more than 500 protesters were shot dead by the security forces, while more than 3000 were arrested or detained without any trial. See *La Messagère*, 12 August 1991.
25. This was the case of *Le Messager, La Nouvelle Expression, La Vision, Challenge-Hebdo, Cameroon Today, Cameroon Post*, etc., which were generally accused by Cameroonian officials of spreading false information, incitement to violence and hatred and outrage to the Head of State.

26. See *The Herald*, 4 January 1996; *L' Expression*, 23 January 1996.
27. I thank Peter Pels for suggesting this translation, even if for the CPDM' s ideologues, the *démocratie apaisée* indicates above all that Cameroon has moved from the former democracy of riot and violence of the period of 'ghost town operation' and civil disobedience to a 'peaceful democracy' (Ngniman 1998:12).
28. See *Mutations,* 28 September 2004.
29. See the article of Jean-Baptiste Sipa in *Le Messager*, 19 October 2002.
30. See Takougang and Krieger 1998.
31. On the fusion and reciprocal assimilation of the political elites, see Bayart 1993:150-179.
32. Receiving in 1994 a delegation of traditional leaders from his native region (Northwest Province), who came to express their grievances to him, Simon Achidi Achu, the then Prime Minister of Cameroon told them that they had to support the CPDM regime, should they want the state resources to flow towards their regions or villages. As he put it: 'politics *na njangui*' (politics is a mutual aid); you watch my back I watch your own.' Three years later, his successor, Peter Mafany Musonge repeated the same principle to his village fellows (Southwest Province) who came to congratulate him, following his appointment as Prime Minister. As he declared, 'by appointing one of the sons of our soil to this important post, the President has scratched our back, and we shall scratch the Head of State's back when the time comes' (Akoko and Mbuagbo 2003:6).
33. See *Postwatch*, 15 September 2004:3
34. This witticism is in fact a sharp critic against the so-called counter-hegemonic culture. See Frank 1997[1995]:31-45.
35. Cf. Resolutions of the SDF National Executive Committee on 27 October 2002.
36. See *Le Messager*, June 2001; *Mutations,* 27 September 2004.
37. See www.sdfparty.org/english/resolutions/345.php, 23 June 2005.
38. *Le Messager* on line (13 February 2005).

References

Akoko, M. R. and Mbuagbo, O. T., 2003, 'Motions of support' and Ethno-regional Politics in Cameroon', unpublished paper.

Alima, J. B., 1977, *Les Chemins de l'Unité: Comment se forge une nation: L'exemple camerounais,* Paris: ABC.

Awasom, N. F., 1999, 'From Migrants to Nationals and from Nationals to Undesirable Elements: The Case of the Fulani (Mbororo) in the Northwest Province of Cameroon', paper presented at the International Colloquium on 'Être Étranger et Migrant en Afrique au XXe siècle', Paris: 9-11 December.

Awasom, N. F., 2001, 'Autochthony and Citizenship in Postcolonial Africa: A critical perspective on Cameroon', Leiden: Africa Studies Centre Seminar.

Azarya, V., 1994, 'Civil Society and Disengagement in Africa', in J. W. Harbeson, D.R. Rothchild, N. Chazan, eds., *Civil Society and the State in Africa,* Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, pp. 83-100.

Azarya, V. and Chazan, N., 1987, 'Disengagement from the State in Africa: Reflections on the Experience of Ghana and Guinea', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 106-31.

Badie, B., 1992, *L'Etat importé: L' Occidentalisation de l'ordre politique,* Paris: Fayard.

Banoch, M., 1992, *Le Processus de démocratisation en Afrique*: *Le cas Camerounais,* Paris: L'Harmattan.

Bayart, J.-F., Ellis, S. and Hibou, B., 1999, *Criminalization of the State in Africa,* London: James Currey.

Bayart, J.-F., 1993, *The State in Africa: the Politics of the Belly,* trans. by Mary Harper, London and New York: Longman.

Bayart, J.-F., Mbembe, A. and Toulabor, C., 1992, *Le Politique par le bas en Afrique noire: Contributions à une problématique de la démocratie,* Paris: Karthala.

Bayart, J.-F., 1986, 'Civil Society in Africa', in P. Chabal, ed., *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.104-19.

Bratton, M., 1989, 'Beyond the State: Civil Society and Associational Life in Africa', *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 407-29.

Callaghy, M. T., 1994, 'Civil Society, Democracy, and Economic Change in Africa: a Dissenting Opinion about Resurgent Societies', in J. W. Harbeson, D.R. Rothchild, N. Chazan, eds., *Civil Society and the State in Africa,* Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner. pp. 231-53.

Chabal, P. and Dalloz, D., 1999, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument,* Oxford and Bloomington: James Currey/Indiana University Press.

Chabal, P., ed., 1996, *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chazan, N. Mortimer, R. Ravenhill, J. and Rothchild, D., 1992, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa,* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Clark, J.F., 1998, 'National Conferences and Democratization in Africa' in J. Mukum Mbaku and J. O. Ihonvbere, eds., *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change. Constraints to Democratisation in Africa,* Aldershot, Brookfeld: Ashate.

Collectif Changer le Cameroun, 1990, *Changer le Cameroun: pourquoi pas*? Yaounde: Edition c3.

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. L., 2000, 'Millennial Capitalism: The first Thoughts on a Second Coming', in *Public Culture*, Vol. 12, No 2, pp. 291-343.

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. L., eds., 1999, *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives,* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. L., eds., 1993, *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Courade, G. and Sindjoun, L., 1996, *Le Cameroun dans l'entre-deux,* special issue, Politique Africaine, No. 62.

de Boeck, F., 1998, 'Domesticating Diamonds and Dollars: Identity, Expenditure and Sharing in Southwestern Zaire (1984-1997)', in B. Meyer and P. Geschiere,

eds., *Development and Change,* Special issue on 'Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flows and Closures', Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 777-809.
Eboussi Boulaga, F., 1993, *Les Conférences nationales: Une affaire à suivre,* Paris: Karthala.
Fatton, R. Jr., 1987, *The Making of a Liberal Democracy: Senegal's passive revolution, 1975-1985,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
Ferguson, J., 1999, *Expectations of Modernity*: *Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt,* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Foucault, M., 1991, 'Governmentality,' in G. Burchell et al., eds., *The Foucault Effects,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Foucault, M., 1979, *Discipline and Punish: The birth of Prison,* trans. by Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage/Random House.
Frank, A.G., 1991, 'No. Escape from the Laws of World Economics,' in *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 50, pp. 21-32.
Frank, T., 1997[1995], 'Why Johnny can't Dissent?' in T. Frank, and M. Weiland, eds., *Commodify your Dissent: Salvos from the Baffler*, New York: Norton, p.31-45
Geschiere P. and Njamnjoh, F.B., 2000, 'Capitalism and Autochthony: the Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging', in *Public Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 423-452
Habermas, J., 1984, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. I, *Of Reason and the Rationalization of Society,* trans. by Thomas McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press.
Habermas, J., 1989, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. *An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Harbeson, J. W., 1994,' Civil Society and Political Renaissance in Africa' in J.W. Harberson, and D. R. Rothchild, and N. Chazan, eds., *Civil Society and the State in Africa*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp.1-29.
Harbeson, J. W., Rothchild, D. R., and Chazan, N., eds., 1994, *Civil Society and the State in Africa,* Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
Harbeson, J. W. and Rothchild, D. R., eds., 1991, *Africa in World Politics,* Boulder: Westview Press.
Hermet, G., 1998, *La Trahison démocratique: politiques républicaines et démocrates,* Paris : Flammarion.
Hibou, B., ed., 1999, *La privatisation des Etats,* Paris: Karthala
Hibou, B., 1998, 'The Political Economy of the World Bank's Discourse: From Economic Catechism to Missionary Deeds (and Misdeeds)', *Les Etudes du CERI*, Vol. 39.
Jaffrelot, C., eds., 2000, *Démocraties d'ailleurs*. Paris: Karthala.
Joseph, R. 1977. *Radical Nationalism in Cameroon. Social Origins of the UPC Rebellion,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Jewsiewicki, J., 1992, 'Jeux d'argent et de pouvoir au Zaire: La 'bindomanie' et le crépuscule de la deuxième République', *Politique Africaine*, Vol. 46.
Kamto, M., 1997, 'Les Conférences nationales africaines ou la création révolutionnaire des constitutions', in D. Darbon, and J. du Bois de Gaudusson, eds., *La Création du droit en Afrique,* Paris: Karthala, pp. 177-96.
Kegne Pokam, J.-P., 1986, *La problématique de l'unité nationale au Cameroun: Dichotomie entre discours et pratiques dans un système monolithique,* Paris: L' Harmattan.

Konings, P., 2001, 'Mobility and Exclusion: Conflicts Between Autochthons and Allochthons during the Political Liberalization in Cameroon', in M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk and D. Foeken, eds., *Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movements in Africa and Beyond,* Leiden: Brill, pp. 169-94.

Konings, P., 2002, 'University Students Revolt, Ethnic Militia and Violence During Political Liberalism in Cameroon', in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 45, No. 2, pp. 179-204.

Konings, P. and Nyamnjoh, F. B., 1997, 'The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies, V*ol. 35, No. 2, pp. 207-29.

Konings, P. and Nyamnjoh, F. B., 2000, 'Construction and Deconstruction: Anglophones or Autochthons'? in *The African Anthropologist*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 5-32.

Konings, P. and Nyamnjoh, F. B., 2003, *Negotiating Anglophone Identity: A Study in the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon,* Leiden: Brill.

Le Quotidien, 1998, ' Les Villes-mortes de 1991: Le feu, Les Casses, les Morts', 29-31 May.

Markovitz, I. L., 1987, *Studies of Power and Class in Africa,* New York: Oxford University Press.

Mbaku, J. M., 2002, 'Cameroon's Stalled Transition to Democratic Governance: Lessons for Africa's New Democrats', in *Africa and Asia studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Leiden: Brill.

Mbarga, Ndi, 1993, *Ruptures et continuité au Cameroun,* Paris: L'Harmattan.

Mbembe, A., 2001, *On the Postcolony,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mbembe, A., 1996, *La Naissance du Maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun: Histoire d'indisciplines,* Paris: Karthala

Mbembe, A., 1993, 'Crise de légitimité, restauration autoritaire et déliquescence de l 'Etat,' in P. Geschiere and P. Konings, eds., *Itinéraires d'accumulation au Cameroun/Pathways to Accumulation in Cameroon*., Leiden/Paris: ASC/Karthala, pp. 345-74.

Mbuagbo, O. T. and Akoko, M. R., 2004, 'Roll-Back: Democratization and Social Fragmentation in Cameroon', in *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 1-12.

Monga, C., 1995, 'Civil society and democratisation in Francophone Africa', *The Journal of Modern African studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 359-79.

Monga, C., 1997, 'Cartoons in Cameroon: Anger and Political Derision under monocracy', in Anyidoho, K., ed., *The Word Behind the Bars and the Paradox of Exile,* Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, , pp. 146-69.

Monga, C., 1998, *Anthropology of Anger. The Civil Society and Democracy in Africa,* Boulda, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Mono Djana, H., 1999, *Le temps des Clarifications,* Yaounde: Liberté.

Mono Djana, H., 1992, *La Mutation: Essai sur le changement politique au Cameroun,* Yaounde/Bruxelles: Carrefour/Y. Priguot.

Mono Djana, H., 1997, *Les Proverbes de Paul Biya*., Yaounde: Carrefour.

Mpom, I., 1994, 'Indocilité géneralisée', in *Génération*, No. 2, p. 4.

Mukum Mbaku, J. and Ihonvbere, J. O., eds., 1998, *Multiparty Democracy and Political Change. Constraints to Democratisation in Africa,* Aldershot, Brookfeld: Ashate.
Ndedi Penda, P., 1992, *Le Pouvoir aux deux visages: La Terreur et la Prospérité,* Douala: Publications Galaxie.
Ndjio, B., 2002, 'Space of pleasure and practice of *ungovernmentality* in the Postcolonial Africa', paper presented during the Conference on 'Mediatizing the public sphere', Amsterdam, 3 May.
Ndjio, B., 2005, 'Carrefour de la joie: Popular deconstruction of the African postcolonial public sphere', in *Africa*, Vol. 75, No. 3, pp. 265-94.
Ngniman, Z., 1998, *Paul Biya: La Magistrature présidentielle apaisée*? Yaoundé: Edit'action.
Nyamnjoh, F. B., 1998, 'Media Ownership and Control in Cameroon: Constraints on Media Freedom', in *Media Development , V*ol. XLV, No. 4, pp. 29-35.
Nyamnjoh, F. B., 1999, 'Press Cartoons and Politics in Cameroon' in *Cahier de L'UCAC,* No. 2, pp. 93-106.
Nyamnjoh, F. B., 2000, 'For many are called but few are chosen: Globalisation and Popular Disenchantment in Africa', in *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie, Vol.* 4, No. 2, p. 1-44.
Nyamnjoh, F. B., 2004, 'Cameroon: over twelve years of cosmetic democracy', paper presented at the *Nordic Africa Institute*, December.
Nyanmjoh, F. B. and Fokwang, J., 2003, 'Politics and Music in Cameroon', in J.-G. Gros, ed. *Cameroon: Politics and Society in Critical Perspective*, Lanham: University Press of America, pp. 185-208.
Nyang'oro, J. E., 1994, 'Reforms, Politics and Democratization process in Africa', in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 133-49.
Nzouankeu, J. M., 1993, 'The role of the National Conference in the Transition to Democracy in Africa: The cases of Benin and Mali,' Special Issue, *A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 21, No.1-2, pp. 44-50.
O'Donnell, G. and Schnitter, P., 1989, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
Politique Africaine, Vol. 42, No. 2, 1991, *Pouvoir et Violence*, special issue.
Rothchild, D. R. and Chazan, N., eds., 1988, *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa,* Boulder: Westview Press.
Rush, J., 1990, *Opium to Java: Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1860-1910,* Ithaca, NJ: Cornell University Press.
Sindjoun, L., 1996, 'Le Champ social camerounais:désordre inventif, mythes simplicateurs et stabilité hégémonique de l'Etat', in *Politique Africaine*, Vol. 62, No. 1, pp. 27-51.
Sindjoun, L. and Owona Nguini, E. M. 1997, 'Politisation du droit et juridicisation de la politique: l'esprit sociologique du droit de la transition démocratique au Cameroon', in D. Darbon and J. du Bois de Gaudusson, eds. *La Création du droit en Afrique,* Paris: Karthala, pp. 217-245.
Schatzberg, M. G., 1993, 'Power, legitimacy and « democratisation » in Africa,' *Africa*, Vol. 61, No. 4, pp. 445-61.

Scott, J., 1990, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Scott, J., 1985, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance,* New Haven: Yale University Press.
Socpa, A., 2002, 'Démocratisation et autochtonie au Cameroun: Trajectoires régionales divergentes', PhD Dissertation, CNWS/ University of Leiden
Spivak C. G., 1985, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography', in R. Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.330-63.
Stallybrass, P. and White, A., 1989, *The politics and Poetics of Transgression,* Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.
Takougang, J. and Krieger, M., 1998, *African State and Society in the 1990s: Cameroon Political Crossroads,* Oxford, Westview Press.
Tenfack, O., 1994, *Postwatch* on line, 15 September.
Toulabor, C., 1991, 'Jeux de mots, jeux de vilain: Lexique de la dérision politique au Togo', in *Politique Africaine*, No. 3, pp. 55-71.
Touraine, A., 1992, *Critique de la Modernité,* Paris: Fayard.
Um Nyombe R., 1989, *Ecrits sous le Maquis,* edited by J. A. Mbembe. Paris: L'Harmattan.
Um Nyombe R., 1984, *Le Problème national Camerounais,* edited by A. Mbembe, Paris: L'Harmattan.
Van der Walle, N., 1990, 'The Politics of Non-Reforms in Cameroon,' *African governance in the 1990s: Objectives, Resources and Constraints,* Working paper of the second annual Seminar of the African governance program, The Carter Center of Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, March 23.
World Bank Report, 1989, *From Crisis to a sustainable Development*, Washington DC.

African Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2008, pp. 157–187

(ISSN 0850-7902)

Islamism: What is New, What is Not? Lessons from West Africa

Ousmane Kane*

Abstract

In the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution in Iran of 1979, a marked scholarly interest in Islam driven by policy concerns developed in Western countries. Hitherto the monopoly of a few Orientalists, Islamic studies soon became a multidisciplinary field, attracting experts across the spectrum of the social sciences and the humanities, and indeed beyond academia, and many studies were carried out on Islamism. This article, which focuses on West Africa, questions some of the widely held assumptions on Islamism. The author's main argument is that Islamism is not a new phenomenon. A second point made here is that 'Islamist' movements are not primarily Salafi. A third point is that 'Islamists' are not inherently violent. What is new, according to the author, is the perception of Islamism as a threat in the West.

Résumé

Au lendemain de la révolution islamique iranienne de 1979, une abondante litérature a été produite en Occident sur l'islamisme en réponse à la demande des décideurs politiques. Jusque là l'apanage de quelques orientalistes, l'étude de l'islam est devenue un champ de recherches multidisciplinaire impliquant des chercheurs dans toutes les branches des sciences humaines et sociales. Cet article, qui est axé sur l'Afrique de Ouest, questionne de nombreuses idées recues concernant l'islamisme. L'idée maîtresse de l'article est que l'islamisme n'est pas un nouveau phénomène. L'auteur fait également valoir

* School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, New York, N.Y 10027. Email: ok2009@columbia.edu.

que les islamistes ne sont pas majoritairement salafi. Enfin, il défend l'idée que les islamistes ne sont pas violent par essence. Ce qui est nouveau, d'après l'auteur, c'est la perception que l'Occident a de l'islam comme danger en Occident.

Introduction

As a graduate student in Islamic Studies in Europe, I learnt from the works of the European experts on modern Islam that 'Islamism' is a twentieth-century phenomenon starting with the rise of Egyptian society of the Muslim Brothers of Egypt and reaching its peak in the 1970s after the decline of Arab nationalism in the aftermath of the defeat of Arab armies in their war with Israel. This grand narrative has contributed largely to setting the terms of the debate on 'Islamism' in France in particular. Olivier Roy, for instance, argues that: 'Beginning in the 1930s, Hasan al-Banna, the founder in Egypt of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Abul-Ala Mawdudi the creator of the Indo-Pakistani Jamaat-i-Islami party, introduced *a new movement of thought*[1] that endeavored to define Islam primarily as a political system, in keeping with the major ideologies of the twentieth century' (Roy 1994:viii). In the same vein, Gilles Kepel argues that 'In the Muslim countries of the Mediterranean Basin and its environs, re-Islamization movements[2] took over from groups inspired by Marxism in challenging the foundational values of the social order. This was during the 1990s' (Kepel 1994:13) Another French Islamicist, François Burgat[3] wrote that: 'The Muslim Brothers organized as a party stating explicitly this-worldly ambition are the first to want to capture political power and to provide to the projects of the reformist trend the logistics of a state apparatus. In this sense, they may appear as the first Islamists' [4](Burgat 1988:46 my translation). This narrative is not limited to French Islamic studies. In his *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, which among other things, analyzes different historical Islamic militant movements qualified as 'jihad movements', Columbia University's Mahmood Mamdani states that 'political Islam was born during the colonial period' (Mamdani 2004:14).

While my own earlier work has been informed by this grand narrative (Kane 1998, 2003), the more I compare so-called Islamist movements of the twentieth century to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century 'movements of revival and reform' (Rahman 1977) the more common denominators I find. In this article, I will first show the similarities between the rhetoric and strategies of twentieth-century Islamist movements and that of earlier ones. A second goal of this article is to ques-

tion the widely held assumption that Islamism is primarily a Salafi phenomenon driven by Wahhabi ideology and Saudi oil wealth. The third and final goal of this article is to challenge the portrayal of Islamist movements by the Western media in particular as inherently violent and non-pragmatic. In conclusion, I will argue that what is really new is not so much the goals and strategies of Islamic militant movements, as much the Western perception of Islam as a threat.

'Islamist' Movements are Not New

In the last few decades, a multitude of terms have been used to describe the phenomenon of political Islam, by which I mean: the ideology of religio-political movements striving to establish an Islamic political order either by capturing political power or by initiating a societal transformation, which would ultimately lead to the rise of an Islamic socio-political order. These terms include 'Islamic fundamentalism', 'Islamic activism', 'Islamic integrism', 'Islamic radicalism', 'Islamic renewal', 'Islamic resurgence', 'Islamic revivalism', and 'new Islamic radicalism'. To avoid terms with a Christian connotation, some authors have reinvented the term 'Islamism'. In fact, the term is not new, at least in the French language. In writings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the French word '*islamisme*' was used as a synonym of Islam (Houdas 1908; Bonet-Maury 1906). 'Islamism' gained wide currency not only in Western languages, but also ironically in Arabic, where the term has been translated as 'Islamiyya' for Islamism and 'Islamiyyun' or 'Islamawiyyun' for 'Islamists'. In the twentieth century, 'Islamists' are identified in the literature as Muslim militant groups that challenged the secularization of Muslim societies and polities and advocated Islamization of the law, the economy and the state as the solution.

It has been suggested that Islamist groups could be divided into two categories. First, there are groups with a stated political agenda aimed at capturing political power, labeled 'state-centered Islamists' (Mamdani 2004) or 'movements of re-Islamization from above' (Kepel 1991). Second, there are militants who emphasized the necessity to correct religious and social practices, known as 'society-centered Islamists' (Mamdani 2004) or 'movements of re-Islamization from below' (Kepel 1991). As we will discuss below, some movements blur this distinction. In what follows, we will consider the rise to prominence of militant Muslim movements in the postcolonial Muslim world and then compare them with earlier militant Islamic movements in Africa in particular to show the similarities.

After the consolidation of their rule, European colonial masters forbade the implementation of what some deemed inhumane bodily punishments contained in Islamic criminal law, such as the amputation of hands as punishment reserved for thieves and death by stoning for adulterers. But legal reform did not extend to all spheres of social life. Regardless of the colonial power and its preferred type of rule (indirect or direct), the colonial state in Africa and Asia allowed Muslims to settle matters relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, custody, as well as some commercial transactions, according to the dispositions of Islamic law, as codified by one of the main so-called Islamic schools of law.

After independence, the modernizing elites of virtually all predominantly Muslim countries undertook radical reform of family law, notably to empower women. They targeted *inter alia* the aspects of Islamic family law relating to polygamy, unilateral repudiation and unequal gender distribution of inheritance. Tunisia went further than other countries in its efforts at legal reform. A host of new laws were adopted to promote women's rights, including the criminalization of polygamy and unilateral repudiation. Senegal restricted polygamy and imposed the first wife's acceptance as a precondition to polygamy. However, the scope of implementation of the new family laws was limited. In Senegal, according to a survey conducted by Amsatou Sow Sidibe, more than 90 per cent of Muslims have ignored the new codes and continue to settle family law matters according to Islamic laws (Sidibe, cited in Villalon 1995:229). However, in many spheres, postcolonial state-building required the adoption of Western civil and commercial codes, which did not face serious challenges in the early postcolonial period, as they were central to the project of modernization and development. This is particularly true for the realm of commercial transactions, largely inspired by Western practices.

To achieve the goal of 're-Islamizing' postcolonial Muslim societies, militant Muslims have adopted diverse strategies from peaceful proselytization to armed opposition. Some groups focused on re-Islamizing society, on the assumption that the Islamization of the state would follow after the society became 'Islamic'. This has been the case for most militant Islamic groups in Morocco, for example. Other groups, such as the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, combined charity work to gain and retain members with military operations in the 1960s (Mitchell 1969). As their spectacular and unexpected success in the Egyptian parliamentary elections of December 2005 has shown, they seem to be willing to play the democratic rules of the game. The result is that they are emerg-

ing as the strongest opposition group in the Egyptian parliament. Other groups, such as the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria in the 1990s, started peacefully and then resorted to violence when they faced repression (Martinez 2000). Among the most successful groups in capturing supreme political power or exercising great influence in government, one can cite the Ayatollahs under the leadership of Khomeini in Iran, the Jammat Islami in Pakistan, the Muslim Brothers in the Sudan under the leadership of Hasan Al-Turabi before he fell into disgrace, the Taliban in Afghanistan until they were for a period driven underground by the US invasion following the September 11 attacks in the US, Hizbullah in Lebanon, and finally Hamas in Palestine, the first Muslim political movement to be elected democratically in the Arab world.

Before the 1960s, with a few exceptions, the potential constituencies of militant 'Islamist' movements were quite limited. Since the mid-1960s, many Muslim nations have experienced both a series of setbacks in the development process and successive military defeats in the war of Arab countries against Israel, prompting some to engage in a kind of soul-searching, leading them to identify the causes of these failures in the internal weaknesses of Muslim societies. Leftists who still had faith in Marxism attributed the failures to conservative forces that delayed the formation of a militant working class that would have promoted revolution. Liberals attributed the failure to the absence of the rule of law and a weak civil society that could not hold the state in check. Although the end of the Cold War and the triumph of neo-liberalism created hope in the 1990s that most nations were in transition to democracy, a growing consensus has emerged in the last few years that the consolidation of democracy is far from granted and that most so-called regimes in transition still maintain many attributes of authoritarianism (Carothers 2002; Levitsky and Way 2002). A third group, which had a strong appeal to sections of the Muslim youth and the middle class, came to diagnose the developmental failure and 'decline' of Muslim societies in their adoption of Western civil and commercial codes and institutions and suggested that the dismantling of such codes and their replacement by Islamic ones would be the panacea. For most of them, the Islamic Revolution of Iran became the tangible corroboration that greater self-reliance and Islam could indeed provide an alternative (Esposito 1984:169; Esposito and Piscatori 1990:319).

When a new vocabulary gains currency, the question that requires an answer is whether it successfully captures a new class of people or activi-

ties. If not, there is a compelling case for a new term. In the case of Islamism, I doubt that this is the case. The twentieth century has witnessed the most dramatic changes in all aspects of human life, including European colonization of much of the developing world, two world wars and several other wars of decolonization, tremendous technological progress, the rise and decline of authoritarian regimes, and the spread of new forms of social organizations and technologies of rule. All this had had a tremendous impact in the world in general, and in Muslim societies in particular. Alongside change, however, there have also been remarkable continuities, including in the rhetoric and strategies of Islamic social movements. To highlight such continuities, I will turn to the discussion of Islamic revival in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century West Africa, a region relatively neglected in the debate about 'Islamism', which has largely focused on the so-called Central Muslim lands to the detriment of the periphery.

Revival and Reform in West Africa

From North Africa across the Sahara, Islam made inroads into the Western Bilad al-Sudan from the ninth century.[5] From the ninth to the sixteenth centuries, the spread of Islam was very slow and much of the conversion was limited to the royal courts and circles of merchants involved in the trans-Saharan trade (Hiskett 1984:19; Triaud and Robinson 1997:10; Levtzion and Pouwels 2000:2). Rulers who converted to Islam did not attempt to Islamize their subjects, not least because their legitimacy rested largely on local values and beliefs. Muslim clerics who staffed the administration of many of these African precolonial kingdoms did little to challenge non-Islamic practices of nominally Muslim rulers whom they served. The attitude of learned Muslims towards their non-Muslim neighbors was that of peaceful coexistence. This was partially explained by the fact that Muslims were a minority and therefore could hardly impose their religion (Triaud and Robinson 1997:10). However, it also rested on an ideological justification elaborated by al-Hajj Salim Suwari, who lived in the late fifteenth century and originated from Masina (in present-day Mali). Many hagiographies on Suwari circulated widely in Senegambia, and in particular among the clerical group known as the Jakhanke. Suwari's teachings were based on the principles that unbelief was the consequence of ignorance and that God's grand design for the world is such that some people would remain longer in the 'state of ignorance' than others. Conversion would occur in due course, accord-

ing to God's plans (Wilks 2000:98). Consequently, both proselytizing and military jihads were unacceptable interference with God's will. Suwari also taught that non-Muslim rule was not only acceptable to Muslims, but should be supported by the latter insofar as it enabled them to follow the Sunna of the Prophet (Wilks 2000:98). Above all, Suwari believed that Muslims should pursue the search for education and provide 'unbelievers' with a model that they could emulate in due course when the time of conversion came, according to God's plans (Wilks 2000:98). Such a worldview enabled the Juula to engage in peaceful trade with the Gentiles for several generations (Hiskett 1984:170).

The seventeenth century witnessed a pattern of change as some Muslim clerics began to challenge 'non-Islamic rule'. Coming from the southwest of present-day Mauritania, the first cleric to advocate and fight for reform was the Berber scholar Awbek b. Aschfaghu, known as Imam Nasir al-Din (Robinson 2000:133), who belonged to the maraboutic tribe of Banu Dayman. He rebelled against the domination of the Bani Hassan, Arab-speaking warrior peoples, whom he portrayed as bad Muslims. The key ideas that influenced Nasir al-Din were the anticipation of the end of time and the arrival of a Muslim eschatological figure known as the awaited Mahdi and the notion of the Prophet Muhammad as a perfect man, which provided ideological justification for perfection to be realized through Islamic reform (Hiskett 1984:140).

Nasir al-Din's goal was to set up a unified community living according to Islamic sharia under the leadership of an imam, namely Nasir al-Din himself. He recruited Wolof and Fulbe followers in the Senegambian region, who in 1670 succeeded in overthrowing the ruling dynasties in the neighboring Senegambian states of Cajoor, Jolof, Walo, and Fuuta Toro. The reform movement led by Nasir al-Din is known as the Shurbubba war, a term that refers to the war of clerics to establish a state governed by Islam.

Early efforts for reform were not successful in establishing lasting Islamic entities in the Western Sudan as Nasir al-Din was ultimately killed in a battle and the Bani Hassan reasserted their domination in southwestern Mauritania. Likewise, his followers' domination over Senegambian kingdoms lasted barely ten years as former rulers of these kingdoms garnered support from the French to reconquer their lands. However, the jihadist impulse in the spirit of 'Shurbubba' remained alive among some disciples of Nasir al-Din who strove to communicate their vision of an ideal Islamic society to future generations.

Unlike Juula Muslims whose main mode of subsistence was commerce and who stayed away from subversive movements that would upset these profitable business arrangements (Hiskett 1984:170), the revolutionary movements of reform and state-building in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century West Africa were largely led and backed by the agriculturalist/pastoralist Fulbe (Triaud and Robinson 1997:11; Robinson 2000:131; Last:1987 *passim*). That they longed for the Islamic ideal described in the books of the classical period they had read is obvious. However, their movements did not emerge in a social or economic vacuum. The increasing levels of violence, taxation, and enslavement of Muslims were key factors that shaped the emerging jihadist attitude among Muslim clerics (Robinson 2000). Unlike court *ulama*, jihadist-minded clerics operated far from state courts. They were able to organize themselves and to train enough disciples to pursue jihad. From the beginning of the eighteenth century until the 'scramble for Africa' in the late nineteenth century, these militant Muslims waged a number of successful movements of reform, captured supreme political power, and created Islamic states in West Africa. The Fulbe revealed themselves to be much more aggressive and less tolerant than Mandinka-speaking clerics in the Suwarian tradition of peaceful coexistence with the Gentiles. Five of the Fulbe movements deserve particular mention: the jihads of Karamokho Alpha in Fuuta Jallon, the Torodbe Revolution in Fuuta Toro and Fuuta Jallon, the Jihad of Al-Hajj Umar and that of Usuman dan Fodio in present-day Northern Nigeria.[6]

The leaders and contexts of these West African revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries share many commonalities with each other and with those of so-called Islamist movements of more recent times, including the sense of alienation vis-à-vis their environment, their attribution of economic and social problems to the failure to establish God's rule, and their critical attitude towards the court *ulama*.

Regarding their sense of alienation vis-à-vis their environment, Nasir al-Din, Sulayman Bal, Karamokho Alpha, Usman DanFodio, and Ahmadu Lobbo charged respectively the rulers of the Fuuta Toro, Fuuta Jallon, Masina, and Gobir with failing to govern according to the methods that Allah had revealed. This argument is identical to more contemporary thinkers of political Islam. One such thinker is Sayyid Qutb (1906–66), one of the most famous 'Islamist' theorists and activists of the twentieth century. Unlike previous Muslim reformers who had attempted to build a bridge between Islam and the West, such as Al-Afghani,

Muhammad 'Abduh, or Rashid Rida, Sayyid Qutb saw nothing good in the West whose influence he thought Muslims should avoid. In his book *Signposts on the Road*, *Ma'alim fi al-tariq* (1964), Qutb, who had studied at Stanford University and the University of Colorado, submitted that sovereignty belongs only to God and based his claim among other arguments, on the reinterpretation of three verses of the Koran:5.44, 5.45, and 5.47. These verses respectively read as follows: 'he/she who does not judge by which Allah has revealed, such are the unjust; he/she who does not judge by which Allah had revealed such are the evil-doers; he/she who does not judge by which Allah has revealed, such are the unbelievers'.

To the Arabic word 'hkm', which occurs in all three verses, earlier interpretations attributed the meaning of 'to judge'. In contrast, Qutb interpreted 'hkm' as 'to rule' and concluded that only those who rule as Allah has revealed are legitimate and must be obeyed. Conversely, he argued, societies not governed by Islamic constitutional, civil, commercial, and penal laws fall in the realm of what he qualified as 'Jahiliyya', ignorance. True Muslims must withdraw from such a society in the same way as the Prophet Muhammad, who left Mecca in the 622, to seek refuge in Medina. Furthermore, true Muslims should make it a priority to bring down those illegitimate rulers and have them replaced by real Muslims who would establish the rule of God.

The authoritarian socialist/nationalist regime of President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt under which Qutb lived was the primary target of this criticism, but Qutb also included all other regimes not governed by Islamic law. Sayyid Qutb was ultimately hanged by Nasser's regime, but his writings were translated into several languages and exercised a profound influence on late twentieth-century militant Islam, not only in the Arab world, but also in Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and among Muslim communities in the West. In Egypt, the Society of Muslims, known also as Takfir wal hijra, led by Shukri Mustafa is one such group, which withdrew from Egyptian society to live in autarky. Qutb was also a source of influence on the Brothers in Nigeria led by Ibrahim al-Zakzaky, whose members abstain from working in any government on the grounds that the secular government is a system based on unbelief (i.e. a *kufr*-oriented system).

Another common denominator is that West African Muslim reformers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and so-called Islamists of the twentieth century both operated in the context of social and eco-

nomic deprivation, which, they held, was the responsibility of their rulers. Their perspective was religious in the sense that they worshipped God to gain salvation in the Hereafter. But it was also political as it served the purpose of capturing political power. Modern 'Islamists' spoke vehemently against elite corruption and the failure of rulers to cater for the need of populations. They criticized the failure of the postcolonial development project, the aggravation of poverty and unemployment and the enrichment of political elites. They also organized networks of self-help to relieve impoverished populations. Likewise, West African Muslim reformers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries spoke against the many taxes levied by rulers on populations and attempted to mobilize marginalized groups against rulers in a project of social and political transformation that would transfer power from oppressive rulers to reformers and their followers.

A third common denominator is their critical attitude towards court *ulama* for the latter's compromising attitudes towards a non-Islamic order. As highlighted in the earlier discussion of the Suwarian tradition, for centuries many learned Muslims worked in the courts of kings. They provided the latter with protective talismans, helped them chronicle history, and so forth. But most of them did not preach a 'strict religion' to the many nominally Muslim kings whom they served. Yet the latter, alongside Islam, continued to practice pagan cults, drink alcohol, which is forbidden in Islam, and entertained a harem, which exceeded the allocation of four wives. Unlike urban-based court *ulama* or merchant *ulama*, who had a vested interest in preserving the status quo, most West African leaders and rank and file members of revival and reform movements were based in rural and self-sufficient agricultural communities. They emphasized the acquisition of knowledge and the strict observance of faith according to the Maliki school of law. They harshly criticized court *ulama* for failing to fulfill the duty of commanding right and forbidding wrong (*amr bi-il ma'ruf wa al-nahy an al-munkar* in Arabic). Likewise some contemporary 'Islamists' have also criticized establishment *ulama* for implicitly endorsing the perpetuation of a non-Islamic status quo by not preaching against it. A case in point is the Egyptian 'Islamist' ideologue Abdusalam Faraj, who in the tradition of Sayyid Qutb, published in 1981 a pamphlet entitled *Al-farida al-gha'iba* (the hidden imperative). The core of Faraj's argument was that Islam not only rests on five fundamental pillars (faith, prayer, tithe, fasting, and pilgrimage), but there is a sixth obligation that 'status quo' *ulama* failed to emphasize: to dismiss a

ruler who does not rule as Allah has revealed. Khalid Islambuli, who assassinated the former Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat in 1981, claimed to have killed Pharoah, thereby fulfilling the sixth imperative of the faith.

As argued by Mervyn Hiskett, the common denominator of Islamic precolonial jihads in West Africa is that 'they had a vision of a single worldwide Islam, in which the way of life, the way of government, the morality and social behavior of all individuals were regulated strictly according to the Shari'a and the Sunna, the Law and the Tradition of the Prophet' (Hiskett 1984:170). This vision is a major common denominator between Muslim militant movements of the precolonial period who rose against unjust and impious rulers, Muslim militants who resisted against European colonial domination, as well as postcolonial Muslim militant movements that challenged secular governments in predominantly Muslim countries. This leads to the discussion of the claim that political Islam is predominantly Salafi.

'Islamist' Movements Are Not Primarily Salafi

Derived from the Arabic root *salaf*, which means to precede, the term *Salafiyya* designates 'the pious forefathers', *al-salaf al-salih*. *Salafiyya* is based on the belief that earlier generations closely followed the teachings of the Prophet in the Koran and the Sunna (Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad). Central to the Salafi creed is the notion that many Muslim problems arise from the fact that Muslims have gone astray by committing innovation (*bid'a*), by which is meant beliefs and practices that could neither be traced to the Prophet Muhammad nor to the *salaf* or pious forefathers. Such innovations resulted either from foreign influences introduced by converts to Islam or popular beliefs, superstitions and practices that were remnants of the pre-Islamic era.[71] The solution to the predicament of Muslim societies was to get rid of all these blameworthy innovations.

Two leading types of *Salafiyya* can be distinguished. First was a moderate *Salafiyya*, an intellectual and political trend represented by the teachings of Jamaladdin al-Afghani (1838–97), Muhammad Abduh (1848–1905), and Rashid Rida (1865–1935), which attempted to build a bridge between Islam and the West. Second, a more radical *Salafiyya* can be traced to the teachings of thinkers such as Ibn Hanbal (780–855), Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), and Muhamamad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–92). This branch of *Salafiyya*, which influences the thinking of

such modern groups as the Wahhabi or the Taliban, tends to have a very rigid and literal interpretation of the Koran. Although there is some overlap between these radical Salafists and political Islam, by no means are all 'Islamists' Salafi. I contend that what has made the argument equating Salafism and 'Islamism' gain so much currency is the perception of Wahhabi-minded groups as a threat.

The increasing wealth of the conservative Persian Gulf nations and the commitment to supporting the spread of Wahhabism motivated many Saudi charities and NGOs, with the blessing of the Saudi state, to fund groups committed to proselytizing. During the Cold War, the US Central Intelligence Agency and the Pakistani secret services infiltrated these Islamic organizations to recruit jihadists to fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Although most of these jihadists were devout Muslims and anti-imperialists, who were convinced they were fighting for a just cause, they were nevertheless on the side of the US and its allies during the Cold War. Subsequently, some fought in Chechnya and Algeria. After the end of the Cold War, jihadists targeted Western interests as well as their own government. Their activities attracted the attention of the Western media, the general public and numerous scholars.

Gilles Kepel (2000), for instance, painstakingly analyzes the context of the rise of political Islam in the Muslim world in the 1970s. Drawing evidence from North Africa to Egypt, Turkey, South and South-East Asia, Kepel situates the rise of Islamism within the context of the decline of Arab nationalism and the rise of Saudi Arabia to prominence. To make sense of Islamism, he surveys the role of immigration, pilgrimage from different parts of the Muslim world to the Gulf, the rise of the Islamic banking system and the proliferation of Saudi charities. In the final analysis, however, Kepel lays considerable emphasis on the role of Saudi Arabia in the rise of the new Islamic radicalism. After the oil boom, argues Kepel, inexhaustible funds were now available to promote the *da'wa* or call to Islam, through Wahhabite preaching' (Kepel 2000:72).

While the diffusion of Saudi oil wealth has no doubt played a role in the expansion of political Islam, its importance has been largely exaggerated. The argument equating 'Islamism' to Salafism and tracing it to the diffusion of Saudi generosity is flawed for at least three reasons.

First, it assumes that Saudi funding went primarily to Wahhabi-oriented groups. Some pro-Wahhabi groups did get financial support from Saudi religious authorities, but they did not enjoy a monopoly of Saudi funding. Prominent Muslim leaders throughout the Muslim world ben-

efited from Saudi largesse. Saudi Pan-Islamist policy can be traced to the 1960s during King Faysal's rule. Although committed to a certain extent to spread Wahhabism globally, Pan-Islamism also aimed to curtail the influence of Nasser's nationalist Pan-Arabism, which conservative monarchies perceived as a threat. Within that framework, Saudi Pan-Islamism searched for a broader legitimacy than Wahhabi-minded groups could provide. It targeted prominent Muslim groups throughout the Muslim world, and not only Wahhabi-minded groups. Some of the founding members of the Muslim World League, which is the instrument par excellence of Saudi Pan-Islamism, were not Wahhabi at all. For example, take the Sufi Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse from Senegal (1900–75), a towering figure in the history of West African Islam in the twentieth century (Seeseman 2004:v) and who in the early 1960s was a founding member and Vice-President of the MWL (Schultze 1990:192).

Second, no matter how generous, Saudi Arabian NGOs have not been able to fund all Wahhabi-minded groups in the Muslim world. Most of them, I would argue, did not receive significant funds from Saudi Arabia for proselytization purposes. Rather, they raised their funds locally. This was certainly true of the Society for the Removal of Heresy and Reinstatement of Tradition, which is the largest single Muslim reform organization in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kane 2003; Loimeir 1997).

Third, many Wahhabi groups in Nigeria, Mali, Senegal and elsewhere emphasized the reform of religious practices but abstained from challenging ruling elites in their countries and did not seek to capture political power.

The literature arguing that Salafism is a fundamental feature of political Islam tends to distinguish Sufi orders from 'Islamists' for at least four reasons:

- the orders are viewed as syncretic whereas so-called 'Islamist' movements emphasize the return to the fundamental sources of Islam, namely the Koran and Sunna;
- the orders are construed as conservative and pro-status quo whereas so-called Islamist movements are construed as subversive (Kepel 2000:48–50);
- the orders are said to appeal primarily to illiterate people whereas 'Islamists' are said to be the product of modern or Westernized education (Kepel 2000);

- the orders are believed to recruit largely among so-called traditional peoples (in rural or 'tribal' areas) whereas so-called Islamist constituencies are urban and modern (Kepel 2000).

This dichotomous construction has gained wide currency thanks to the writings of influential anthropologists of Muslim societies, notably Clifford Geertz and Ernest Gellner (see Geertz 1968; Gellner 1969, 1981). Both scholars tend to present these two forms of Islam as polar opposites. In reality, there is a great deal of diversity among the Sufi orders. The popular Sufism presented as an archetype by Geertz and Gellner is only one variant of Sufism. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Africa, at least three expressions of Sufi Islam could be found (Brenner 1987:81).

The highly individualized variant is the first and oldest expression of Sufism. Its adepts focused on devotional and spiritual practices and did not employ the orders as a basis for social or political action (Brenner 1987:82). Pre-nineteenth century Mauritanian and other West African orders are cases in point (Brenner 1987:82; Salih 1992:103–24). The second type of Sufi orders conceived of themselves as a corporate group, but were loosely structured and above all subsumed within other communal structures such as the family, tribe, ethnic group, etc. (Brenner 1987). A third category comprises highly structured and politically active Sufi groups (Brenner 1987). These new orders developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and provided the inspiration for reform and state-building movements that swept across 'Sudanic' Africa. They were centralized; their leaders as well as many rank and file members were highly educated; they also recruited massively and operated autonomous agricultural organizations independent of royal courts; Finally, they were active in protest movements. Therefore, they blurred the boundaries between mystical, legal and political Islam. Their emergence was part of an effort of revival and reform that reached its climax during the second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century (Rahman:2000; Esposito 1984:30–57; Voll:1994:24–83). As Bradford Martin rightly argues:

> … dedication to mysticism in no way hindered many of them from being practical leaders of causes quite as much as being mystics or intellectuals, and that most of them had expressed ideas in writing. Also, most of them were very much in the contemporary intellectual mainstream, they rejected blind imitation of what earlier thinkers had done. They very often showed their great intellectual

> independence over such matters as *hijra* ('removal', 'withdrawal'), particularly in the face of a colonial takeover by some alien power, and expressly opted for a form of juridical freedom (*ijtihad*) when it was appropriate (Martin 2003:ix).

The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century movements of revival and reform in Islam took place as the dying Ottoman Empire, last rampart of past Muslim glory, was undertaking radical reforms to halt its own decline, including the adoption of three constitutions known as Tanzimat. These measures fell short of curing the Sick Man of Europe, as Turkey was named by Western chancelleries engrossed in debate about the fate of the empire. The preoccupation with reform was certainly not limited to official circles of the Ottoman Empire as many Muslim intellectuals and activists believed that something ought to be done. As Albert Hourani has documented so well in his seminal work on Arabic thought (Hourani 1983), some Muslims strove to bridge the growing divide between Islam and the West (the moderate Salafis), while others submitted that the return to the model of the Prophet was the only solution (the radical *Salafis*).

Sufi orders were also part of this general effort of revival and reform. They envisioned reform as the combination of devotional Sufi spiritual exercises based on individual and collective recitation of litanies aimed at purifying their soul; the study of the *Sunna* (tradition of the Prophet Muhammad), which should serve as a model for all believers; and the waging of the jihad of the mouth (*jihad al-qawl*) to spread the right faith, and when it fails, the resort to the jihad of the sword to topple 'unjust' rulers and establish the rule of God.

The organizational structures of these centralized orders differed. The Tijaniyya, a widespread Sufi order in contemporary Africa, was organized as follows: at the summit of the hierarchy, was the supreme shaykh. This position was occupied by Ahmad al-Tijani of North Africa during his lifetime, and his heir after his death. Before his death, the supreme shaykh usually appoints a successor, often his oldest son, but sometime a trusted lieutenant. He also appoints first-class deputies known as *khalifa* (pl. *khulafa*) to represent the order in other regions or countries. *Khulafa* are awarded the *itlaq* (authorization to initiate disciples, transmit esoteric knowledge and even to deliver supreme *ijaza*). The appointed representative of the Tijaniyya in Black Africa, Al-Hajj Umar Tall (1797–1864) of West Africa, is a case in point. A rank lower is that of second-class deputies (*muqaddam*), who are only allowed to initiate a limited

number of aspirants to the order. Finally, aspirants receive initiation and are allowed to recite basic rituals but do not enjoy the privilege to initiate or transmit knowledge. Deserving aspirants could, of course, rise in this ladder to the rank of *muqaddam* of *khalifa*.

This hierarchical structure of the orders allowed for geographical decentralization of authority. Deputies would pay allegiance to the supreme shaykh, but enjoy considerable autonomy in dealing with their own constituencies. Most of these orders emphasized the study of the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) and the necessity to transcend the narrow jurisprudence of the four legal Sunni schools of law through a resort to *ijitihad* or attempt to find a solution to the social and political problems of the day (Brenner 1987:82).

Usman Dan Fodio wrote on Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*), political activism (issues related to the jihad), theology and jurisprudence (Martin 2003:23–4). His writings were influenced by the teachings of his master, Jibril b. Umar, a radical Tuareg teacher from Agades (Martin 2003), but his indignation towards the exploitation of the masses by Habe rulers shaped the course of his life as reformer and state-builder. The spearheads of the jihad in early nineteenth-century Hausaland, although not Wahhabi, had an agenda of reform. They mastered the Islamic jurisprudence and preached its rigorous implementation. They also anathemized 'venal' scholars who manufactured talismans for, or worked in the court of kings (Bradford 2003:28). In general, these so-called venal scholars did not see as contradictory the combination of Islamic and local African thaumaturgy. As Africans of different faiths believed in the efficiency of local talismanic sciences that combined Islamic and African magical knowledge, both Muslim and non-Muslims cooperated (Brenner 2000), finding magical solutions to the hardships encountered in their daily lives, caused by disease, climatic phenomena such as drought, hunger and the general insecurity related to slave-raiding. Unlike the Wahhabi whose Salafism entailed the rejection of Sufism, West African Sufi reformers believed that Sufism was the highest expression of Islamic 'orthodoxy' and criticized syncretism.

The ideal types (rural/urban, literate/illiterate, conservative/subversive, syncretic/Salafi*)* that serve to contrast Sufi and 'Islamists' do not withstand careful historical scrutiny. The Sufi milieu is well known for its diversity and complexity. If Salafi movements are essentially urban-based and appeal to literate strata, Sufi orders recruited across the geographical and social spectrum. If 'Islamists' tend to be subversive, they

do not have the monopoly of this political orientation because some Sufi organizations have attempted to capture political power by force. Moreover, the propensity towards subversion or conservatism is inherent neither in Sufi orders nor among 'Islamists', but rather is contingent on the political circumstances in which they operate.

The point can be illustrated by the Tijaniyya Sufi order. In Algeria, the Tijaniyya allied with the French, not because of any inherent inclination towards collaboration but in order to counter two enemies. On one hand were the Ottoman Turks who defeated Tijani forces and publicly decapitated the leader of the Tijaniyya, Muhammad al-Kabir al-Tijani. The other enemy was Emir Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri, a Qadiri who was supported by other rival Qadiri groups. The subsequent alliance of the Tijaniyya with the French during colonial rule served strategic purposes. The Algerian Salafi were very much part of the struggle for independence from colonial rule. It was no wonder that postcolonial official Algerian rhetoric demonized Tijaniyya shaykhs, labeling them colonial collaborators and accusing them of practicing a syncretic Islam.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the spearhead of the same Tijaniyya, al-Hajj Umar, fought against French expansion in West Africa. So did his son and successor Ahmad al-Kabir. However, after the collapse of his empire, his grandson, Sa'id Nur Tall, became the closest ally to the French colonial rule of the entire Muslim establishment. Not only was he awarded the highest and most prestigious medals and distinctions of the French colonial state, but he was also appointed Khalif General for West Africa, in effect the highest Islamic authority in West Africa (Garcia 1997). In Mauritania, Sufi families were divided regarding the attitude to adopt towards the French colonizers. The Qadiriyya Fadiliyya is a case in point. Shaykh Saad Buh was an ardent supporter of French colonial rule whereas his brother Ma al-Aynayn vigorously opposed French expansion and fought with his troops against them (Ould Abdallah 1997). During colonial rule, some Sufi orders were part of the colonial establishment in West Africa while others maintained minimum contact with colonial rulers.

There is no doubt that Sufi groups appealed to the illiterate and those inclined to worship local saints, but they also provided networks of schools in which both esoteric and exoteric knowledge were offered. Most Sufi lodges (*zawiyas*) operated schools and provided Islamic knowledge to members in search of knowledge. They emphasized the study of Islamic law and like modern 'Islamists' they retain the right to *ijtihad*. The growth

of literacy was largely due to the efforts deployed by Sufi orders, particularly in the aftermaths of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century jihads. As revealed in the manuscript heritage of West Africa, Sufi shaykhs produced a literature in Arabic, Fulfulde, Hausa, Kanembu, Wolof and other African languages with the Arabic script. This literature includes devotional poems praising the Prophet in the tradition of Sufism, legal opinions (*fatwa*), and political writings (Bobboyi 2008). Usually in the form of poems condemning the arbitrary and exploitative rule of the precolonial Hausa kings of northern Nigeria, this literature served to mobilize a community of the Faithful longing for the overthrow of Hausa rulers and establishing a just society (Bobboyi 2008).

As rightly argued by Mervyn Hiskett (Hiskett 1984:242) the West African jihads of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not only political, but also intellectual revolutions. The emergence of an Islamic clergy provided the sociological foundations for these revolutions. For the first time in West African history, Muslim clerics, hitherto a tolerated minority, overthrew many rulers, many of whom were illiterate, and replaced them. Therefore, some Sufi orders were undoubtedly politically active and stood against Western imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But a question that requires an answer is whether Sufi groups have contributed to the recent Islamic revival. To answer this question, I will address the Islamic revival in Senegal and Nigeria.

The Senegalese *Da'irat al-mustarshidin wa 'l-mustarshidat* (Circle of men and women seeking guidance) is one of the largest 'Islamist' movements in West Africa (Samson 2005). It claims half a million members, based mostly in Senegal with branches in neighboring West African countries, Europe and the USA. Although this claim has not been independently confirmed, the Mustarshidin movement remains the largest neo-Sufi movement in Senegal. It was founded by Cheikh Tidiane Sy and his son Moustapha Sy, both members of a major Senegalese Tijani lineage. They have at times supported the former ruling party of Senegal (*Parti socialiste sénégalais*), and at other times led movements of protest against it. During the campaign for the Senegalese presidential elections of 1993, the Mustarshidin mobilized the youth to protest against the ruling party and constituted the most serious religious and political opposition to face the ruling party since Senegal became independent in 1960 (Kane and Villallon 1998).

Northern Nigeria is another case where 'Islamism' is not predominantly Salafi. After Nigerian independence in 1960, Nigerian Muslims adopted a largely secular criminal code. They also accepted the idea of a federation in which no religion would be a state religion. Only a small minority of Muslim students spoke out against the secular state and advocated throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s that Nigeria should become an Islamic state. In 1999, the governor of the tiny northern state of Zamfara re-enacted Islamic criminal law. Subsequently, Muslims of all persuasions, including members of Sufi orders, in all other predominantly Islamized states of northern Nigeria voiced demands for the reintroduction of Islamic criminal law. As a result of popular pressure, eleven of the northern states of the Nigerian federation introduced some form of Islamic law in their criminal legislation. Thus, no particular doctrinal persuasion has been more prone than others to political mobilization. Rather, it is the specific political contexts of struggle for influence and resources, which determine the political agenda of Muslim groups. This leads to the discussion of the perception of 'Islamism' as violent and irrational.

'Islamist' *Movements Are Not Inherently Violent*

From the late 1970s, a number of events in the Middle East contributed towards a growing fear about political Islam, and indeed about Islam in general in the West. Starting with the summary execution of members of the establishment of the former regime without due process of justice to the imposition of the veil on women, these excesses culminated with the storming on 4 October 1979 of the American embassy in Tehran by Iranian Muslim militants, who held 70 Americans captive for fifteen months. The kidnapping of Western hostages in Lebanon by the pro-Iranian Shiite group Hizbullah and the killing of almost a hundred Western tourists in Egypt between 1990 and 1995 did nothing to alleviate the fears inspired by some militant Muslim groups. In the 1990s, 'Islamists' became an even bigger threat. In 1993, a group of 'Islamists' attempted to bomb the World Trade Center in New York, causing minimum casualties as compared to what would happen on 11 September. In the interim, Usama Bin Laden, a former American ally in the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, declared a war against America. His followers, known as operatives of al-Qa'ida, attacked the US embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in 1998, bombed the destroyer *USS Cole* in October 2000, and finally carried out the destruction of the World Trade

Center on 9/11. These events were certainly the most audacious and devastating in the history of modern terrorism. To these developments, one must add the adoption of suicide-bombing tactics by Palestinians fighting against the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The media coverage of these events has provided many of the ingredients for equating 'Islamism' (and sometimes Islam in its entirety) with bigotry, violence and terrorism.

There are two main schools of thought that have attempted to make sense of the violence with which 'Islamist' movements are associated. For want of better terms I will call them respectively the culturalist and 'political talk' schools for lack of better terms.[8]

This classification is based on my personal interpretation and does not necessarily reflect the self-identification of the scholars whose views I discuss in this section.

Inspired by Weberian analysis along the lines of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the culturalist school of thought is based on the assumption that culture shapes the behavior of individuals. It argues that socio-economic factors are not determinant in understanding the violent nature of al-Qa'ida and other jihadist organizations. It is rather the extremely intolerant Wahhabi doctrine that incites people to murder and violence (Gold 2003; Schwarz 2000). A more sophisticated variant of what I call the 'culturalist' school distinguishes between tangible and intangible incentives to join radical Islamist movements. Without dismissing the importance of tangible material benefits, this line of interpretation argues that: 'movement ideologies offer strategies for fulfilling duties and maximizing the prospects of salvation on judgment day' (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenhalter 2006:295). And: 'Indoctrinated individuals viewed activism or even risk itself as a means to achieve salvation and entrance into Paradise. Guided by the movement ideology, participants viewed suffering and effort as a testament to the certitude of belief (assurance that they would achieve the spiritual payoffs). From this perspective, the strategy of high cost/risk is strategically rational' (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenhalter 2006:302).

The second school of thought, which emphasizes political talk, is informed by the assumption that what is at stake is not religion or culture, but grievances rooted in the deployment of imperial power (Mamdani 2004) and that the objective of terrorist groups is to force these powers to withdraw their military troops from a specific region (Pape 2005). According to Mamdani (2004:253–4), Bin Laden is not a

theologian, but a politician, and nobody follows him for religious reasons (Mamdani 2004:253–4). The most important political motivation is their opposition to US imperialist policies in the Middle East, its unflinching support to the State of Israel and the violation of international law by both the US and Israel.

However, both lines of arguments tell only one part of the story. The Wahhabi doctrine has been elaborated over two centuries. During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, many people of Wahhabi inspiration spent their lives without ever being involved in acts of terror, either in Saudi Arabia or elsewhere. Until now, the majority of the people who claim to be Wahhabi have never resorted to violence. Therefore, the culturalist explanation is weak.

Typically inspired by secularization theory, the second explanation also poses a problem, as it overlooks the fact that religion and politics are not easy to separate if we want to understand Islamic politics. Religion, I argue, is an integral part of politics. Believers would typically pursue two goals in their lives: on the one hand, they participate in politics, defined as 'who gets 'what, when and how', and on the other hand, they strive to do what pleases God to gain salvation in the Hereafter. These two goals are inextricably interwoven.

Contemporary Saudi politics demonstrates that power needs religious legitimation as much as resistance does. Given that most al-Qa'ida operatives are Saudi, I will illustrate my points with the discussion of Saudi Islamic politics. The political and epistemological foundations of modern Saudi Arabia is based on an alliance between two individuals Ibn Sa'ud (d. 1765) and Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792), and subsequently between their descendants, al-Saud and al-Shaykh. The alliance between these two families not only entailed power-sharing agreements, but also intermarriages between these families. The class of Muslim clerics dominated by the al-Shaykh has been consulted in the most important decisions taken by the Saudi authorities (El-Tahri 2005). When, in the early 1930s, King Abd al-Aziz b. Sa'ud, the founder of the modern Saudi Kingdom, introduced technological innovations such as railways, cars and motorcycles in an effort to modernize the country, he faced strong opposition from the Ikhwan, the spiritual sons of the Wahhabiyya. The Ikhwan perceived new technology as an innovation contrary to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. King Abd al-Aziz turned to the *ulama* to seek legitimacy. The latter issued legal advice allowing the use of technology to serve the purpose of nation-building

and to legitimize the crackdown on all those who opposed it, and hence the suppression of the Ikhwan (El-Tahri 2005). When Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud needed resources to modernize his country and wanted to cut deals with Americans for oil exploration, he had to convince the *ulama* that there was nothing wrong in collaborating with non-Muslims as the Prophet Muhammad collaborated with Jews and Christians when he relocated to Medina (El-Tahri 2005). When King Saud, who succeeded King Abd al-Aziz, turned out to be incapable of governing, the ruling Saudi family concluded that deposing him was the only way out. They turned to the *ulama*, who issued a legal *fatwa* allowing them to depose King Saud. He was then exiled to Greece where he later died. In the late 1970s, when a group of extremists Saudis took over the Holy Mosque of Mecca and their leader claimed to be the awaited Mahdi, the Saudi regime had to seek legal advice again from the *ulama* before taking action. The latter declared that the insurgents were apostates. Only then did the Saudi troops with logistical help from the French attack the mosque and put down the revolt (El-Tahri 2005). When Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait and upset the geopolitical balance of the Persian Gulf, the Saudi were not confident about the capacity of their troops to protect the kingdom. They turned once again to the *ulama*, who legitimized the coming of American troops to defend the country (El-Tahri 2005).

Similarly, opponents to power seek *fatwa* from some *ulama* to legitimize their opposition. Any attempt of analysis that separates political and religious factors would fail to accurately capture Muslim politics because the two are intimately interwoven. Suicide-bombers have received *fatwas* from *ulama* in support of the act of 'suicide'. When blowing themselves up, most of them (perhaps not all) are absolutely convinced that they are pleasing God. It is not suicide that they are committing (*intihar* in Arabic), but martyrdom that they are seeking (*istishhad* in Arabic).

However, to say that religion matters is neither a support for 'the clash of civilizations' argument, nor to argue that religious convictions can explain everything. As some of the preceding examples show, religious conservatism does not rule out collaborating with people from other religions or even with those without religion to promote strategic interests. The ideology of Wahhabi Islam did not prevent Saudi leaders from becoming the best collaborators of the US during the twentieth century since the strategic interests of the Saudi were at stake. Undoubtedly, religion is part of the political culture of 'Islamist' movements. Yet

the ideology of religious radicalism does not necessarily lead to strong political opposition movements without grievances. In this respect, 'Islamist' politics is not any different from non-Islamic politics. It is also often largely based on rational calculation and pragmatism.

I argue that 'Islamist' movements are not more likely than secular political organizations to resort to violence. If the political terrain is democratic enough to allow fair political participation, 'Islamist' movements are likely to be driven to moderation (Kalyvas 2000). Lisa Anderson has rightly argued that 'the absence of a reliable, transparent institutional framework for political opposition to work within not only hampers the routinization of opposition of all kinds but magnifies the profile and broadens the constituency of "rejectionists" or "disloyal" parties' (Anderson 1997:19). She further argued that: 'as a general rule, the closer the [Muslim militant] movements were to the prospects of sharing power, the more pragmatic they are' (Anderson 1997:26). Conversely, under regimes of despotism, which have been the rule not the exception in the Arab/Muslim world, 'Islamists' are likely to go underground. For example, the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, who are one of the first mass militant Islamic movements in the twentieth century, started as a branch of a Sufi order committed to promoting the faith. They initially did not have a goal of bringing down the Egyptian monarchy, but sought to promote an Islamic ideal for society. After the coup d'état of the Free Officers in 1952, the Muslim Brothers sided with the military and emphasized social work to recruit membership. Their goal was to moralize public life and to preach for an Islamic purity. However, the autocratic rule of President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt criminalized all forms of dissent and caused the political alienation of the Muslim Brothers, driving the latter towards a political radicalization.

In Morocco and Jordan, a large segment of Muslim militants participate in electoral politics and are not involved in organized violence. In Turkey, 'Islamists' won the elections in 2003 and formed a government, which does not differ in any way from the governments of other secular countries. Although its leaders are devout Muslims in their private life, they remain committed to secularism. The Turkish 'Islamist' government (a secular ruling party with 'Islamist' roots as it is called by some) is much more committed to joining the European Union than to promoting pan-Islamism. It is presiding over a fundamental reform of Turkish laws and mores in order to prepare the country for membership in the EU. In the field of family law, it has recently repealed a law

criminalizing adultery, which is one aspect of the Islamic legacy. The current Turkish 'Islamist' government has taken more steps towards granting cultural and political rights to minorities than any preceding 'non-Islamist government'. For the first time since the creation of modern Turkey, Kurds are allowed to speak their language and operate radio and television programs in Kurdish. Hitherto, the mere mention of the name Kurd exposed people to repression. Indeed, the current Turkish government is likely to take other measures required to 'Europeanize' the country.

Hizbullah in Lebanon is another militant Muslim party, which tries to combine the use of military power to fight against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, including the use of human bombs, with subtle political negotiation and alliances with Christians whenever this serves their strategic interests. Between 1982 and 1986, Hizbullah conducted 36 suicide terrorist attacks against French, American, and Israeli targets, killing 659 people (Alagha 2005:35; Pape 2005:129). In the parliamentary elections of June 2005, Shaykh Hassan Nasrallahn, the leader of Hizbullah, exhorted his followers to vote for candidates of the outlawed Christian militia, the Lebanese forces (Kifner 2005:16). I argue that 'Islamist' movements are neither irrational nor inherently violent. Where they can peacefully accede to power and influence society, they are as likely as any secular political groups to seek power through peaceful means. Most have resorted to violence when the terrain did not allow for peaceful political action. However, I must emphasize that I am not arguing that 'Islamist' movements are inherently democratic as there is no guarantee that once in control of government, they would not be tempted, like nationalist and socialist regimes, to monopolize power and criminalize political opposition.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have argued that there are many similarities between contemporary Muslim militant movements referred to as 'Islamist' and movements of revival and reform of the nineteenth century, and that there is no compelling case to use a new term to qualify the former. Had 'Islamism' been defined broadly to include earlier movements of preceding centuries, I would not have taken issue with the term. But defined as a twentieth-century ideology, the term 'Islamism' fails the test of providing new insights. I have also argued that Muslim militants striving

to transform society or take power are not primarily Salafi, nor inherently violent. To refute the notion of the newness of 'Islamism', I have argued that the rhetoric of leaders of West African jihads in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shows a striking similarity to so-called Islamist movements of the twentieth century: a strong opposition to European hegemony, a denunciation of exploitation, and a commitment to fostering a political system governed by Islamic laws. With regard to anti-colonialism, the Sanusiyya in Libya, Niger and Chad opposed the British, the French, and the Italians. Similarly, the Tijaniyya of Umar Tall fought fiercely against French colonial domination in West Africa. The anti-colonial dimensions of their actions parallel very much the opposition to Westernization by many contemporary 'Islamists'. Nineteenth-century Islamic militants in West Africa aimed at replacing the dominant forms of mixed Islam in West Africa with a legal system based on the Shar'ia. Similarly, contemporary 'Islamists' have as their principal aim the dismantling of modern European-inspired legal codes and constitutions and replacing them with Shar'ia law.

Olivier Roy's point that Islamism was conceived to 'keeping with the major ideologies of the twentieth century' is an interesting one. It alerts to the influence that twentieth century ideologies may have had on 'Islamist ideologues'. Arguments along those lines have emphasized that contemporary political Islam is indebted to other ideologies such as socialism, constitutionalism and third-worldism for ideas of social justice, revolt against an unjust ruler or anti-imperialism. I concur that postcolonial Muslim militants were aware of competing ideologies, not least because they engaged in debates with communists, liberals and others on university campuses. It is also true that many contemporary ideologues of Islamism are quite at home with various ideologies born in the twentieth century. From Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rashid Rida in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to Qutb, Mawdudi, Ghannouchi, Abbasi Madani and Hasan Al-Turabi, many Islamist ideologues have been steeped in Western liberal traditions. Hasan Al-Turabi obtained his Ph.D. in Law at the Sorbonne, Abbasi Madani his Ph.D. in Education in Britain, Mawdudi was a journalist and Sayyid Qutb studied in the USA. Different ideologies may have had some influence on some contemporary Islamist ideologues. Such an influence, however, need not be exaggerated. As shown in the analysis of the worldview of eighteenth-and nineteenth-century militant 'movements of revival and reform', ideas of greater social justice, of the necessity to

overthrow an unjust ruler, or to resist foreign occupation and exploitation are not foreign to the classical tradition of Islam and cannot be argued to date from the twentieth century. The fact that such ideas are articulated in contemporary 'Islamist' discourse does not result exclusively from the influence of various twentieth-century ideologies.

I have also argued that 'Islamist' movements are not primarily Salafi and that the opposition Sufi/Salafi is misleading since the whole purpose of the politically active and highly structured Sufi orders since the late eighteenth century has been to reconcile the divisions between a speculative and ecstatic Sufism and a more strict observance of the Shari'a. Here again, I have provided examples from West Africa to illustrate my point. I have also argued that Sufism does not only appeal to illiterate people looking for a personal incarnation of the sacred, as Gellner puts it, but also to the educated in society. In West Africa in particular, much of the growth of literacy is rooted in the educational efforts of the Sufi orders. Sufi Shaykhs wrote not only devotional literature: they also produced political writings criticizing the oppression and exploitation that many populations were suffering during the precolonial period. Indeed, they sometimes led wars of liberation in favor of those populations. I have also briefly documented the existence of this form of Sufi 'Islamism' in West Africa.

Finally, I have argued that 'Islamists' are not inherently violent and that 'Islamist' politics is no less pragmatic than secular politics. The resources and constraints of the milieu in which they operate determine to a great extent what strategy they adopt for their struggle, and whether the moderates or the hardliners within each 'Islamist' group would impose their agenda. If 'Islamists' can achieve their goals through peaceful means, they are not likely to rush underground.

The unanswered question remains: what is fundamentally new about Islamic militantism? No doubt that the context of their rise is new: the new Islamic movements born in the twentieth century appeared in the context of secularization of Muslim societies. While the project of secularization was introduced by European colonial rulers, it was pursued after independence by authoritarian and corrupt local rulers who not only failed to provide for their peoples, but also restricted their freedoms, and criminalized all forms of opposition. In voicing their opposition against secularized Muslim governments, new Muslim militants used a rhetoric that emphasized the return to pristine Islam and social justice rooted in a similar milieu to that of their predecessors.

Another new development was the impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran on international affairs. The successful 1979 Islamic Revolution led by Khomeini in what was previously considered as one of the most pro-Western countries in the Middle East was unquestionably a watershed in Western/Muslim relations. It came as a great shock to many Westerners because the revolution ousted a trusted ally of the Cold War. It also contributed to creating the image of Islam as a threat to the West.

A third new development is the new Islamic presence in the West. Increasing numbers of labor migrants, students and refugees from Muslim countries have settled in Western Europe and North America in the last three decades. The number of such Muslims in the early twenty-first century is estimated at some 30 million, an unparalleled presence in history. During the same period, proselytizing groups from Muslim countries such as the Tablighi Jama'at, the World Muslim League and many others have been committed to re-Islamizing Muslim communities in the West. They have made inroads in the suburbs of Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, New York and London. With the help of devout students from Muslim countries, they strive to carve out a Muslim space in the West. Their efforts focus on establishing shops and restaurants providing Muslim *halal* food, mosques, on Islamic schools and cultural centers, research institutes, newspapers and charities. These Islamic institutions have proliferated in large European cities. In France alone, the number of mosques increased from 10 to almost 1,000 between 1960 and 1975 (Kepel 1991).

The efforts of recent immigrants are echoed in the public space by second-generation Muslims. Facing racism and exclusion in the West, some Arabs, Turks and African Muslims born in the West have started to assert their Islamic identity and are making claims that suddenly alert the host society to take notice of their presence. New Muslim claims include the right to build new mosques, the demand for separate burial grounds, the right to wear 'decent clothes' and the right not to face job discrimination because of their origins. The combination of this assertive Islamic presence in the West and the challenges to secularism in Iran and Afghanistan are what prompted many Western decision-makers and scholars to misconstrue 'Islamism' as new and different from the expressions of political Islam in the past.

Notes

1. Italics mine.
2. This is another term for 'Islamist movements' in Kepel's work.
3. Burgat does argue that 'the political mobilisation of traditional religious mystics is not without rapport to Islamism. The Senusiyya was one of the first vectors to the resistance against French colonial invasion. A simple recollection of the role of the Sufi brotherhoods in the resistance to colonialism from Algeria to Sudan to the Libyan Senoussi is enough to justify nuances' ('la mobilisation des mystiques religieux de type traditionnel n'est pas sans rapport avec l'islamisme. La Senousissya fut l'un des premiers vecteurs à la résistance à la pénétration française …(Burgat 1988:19, n.18). Yet he does not draw the full implications of this as he concurs with the notion that the Muslim Brothers are the first Islamists.
4. This movement of thought is identified in Roy's work as 'Islamism'.
5. The Arab medieval writers gave the name Bilad al-Sudan (Land of the Blacks) to Sub-Saharan Africa.
6. Because of lack of space the availability of a substantial body of literature on these revolutions, I will not discuss them in detail here, but I refer to Curtin 1971; Last 1987; Robinson 2000.
7. Islamic theologians have utmost contempt of the pre-Islamic era, which they have named as Jahiliyya, literally 'ignorance' in reference to the fact that people did not worship one God.
8. This classification is based on my personal interpretation and does not necessarily reflect the self-identification of the scholars whose views I discuss in this section.

Bibliography

Alagha Joseph, 2005, 'Hizballah After the Syrian Withdrawal', *Middle East Report*, 237, Winter: 34–39.

Alagha Joseph, 2006, *The Shifts in Hizbullah's Ideology: Religions Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Anderson, Lisa, 1997, *Fulfilling Prophecies: State Policy and Islamist Radicalism,* in John L. Esposito, ed., *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform,* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner: 17–33.

Beinin, Joel and Joe Stork, 1997, *Political Islam.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Bobboyi, Hamid, 2008, 'Ajami Literature and the Study of the Sokoto Caliphate', in Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne, eds, *The Meanings of Timbuktu,* Cape Town: HSRC Press in association with CODESRIA, 123–34.

Bonet-Maury, G., 1906, *L'islamisme et le christianisme en Afrique*, Paris: Hachette.

Brenner, Louis, 1987, 'Sufism in Africa in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century', in *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara*, No. 2: 80–92.

Brenner, Louis, 2000, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society,* London: Hurst.
Burgat, François, 1988, *L'islamisme au Maghreb: La voie du Sud*. Paris: Karthala.
Carothers, Thomas, 2002, 'The End of the Transition Paradigm', *Journal of Democracy*, 13/2: 5–21.
Curtin, Philip, 1977, 'Jihad in West Africa: Early phases and inter-relations in Mauritania and Senegal', *Journal of African History*, 12/1: 11–24.
El-Tahri Jihan [producer and director], 2005 *The House of Saud,* Videodisc: Frontline co-production with Alegria and Rain Media, Inc. in association with the BBC and Arte.
Esposito, John L., 1984, *Islam and Politics*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
Esposito, John L. and James Piscatori, 1990 'The Global Impact of the Iranian Revolution: A Policy Perspective', in John L. Esposito, ed., *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact,* Miami: Florida International University Press: 317–28.
Garcia, Sylvianne, 1997, 'Al-Hajj Seydou Nourou Tall, "grand marabout" tijani: L'histoire d'une carrière (v. 1880–1980)', in Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson, eds, *Le temps des marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française v. 1881–1960,* Paris: Karthala.
Geertz, Clifford, 1968, *Islam Observed,* Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.
Gellner, Ernest, 1969, *Saints of the Atlas,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
Gellner, Ernest, 1981 *Muslim Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Gill, Anthony and Arang Keshavarzian, 1999, 'State Building and Religious Resources: An institutional theory of church–state relations in Iran and Mexico', *Politics & Society*, 27/3: 431–65.
Gold, Dore, 2003, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism,* Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing.
Hiskett, Mervyn, 1984, *The Development of Islam in West Africa,* London: Longman.
Houdas, Octave, 1908, *L'islamisme,* Paris: Ernest Leroux.
Hourani, Albert, 1983, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789–1939,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kalyvas, Stathis, 2000, 'Commitment Problems in Emerging Democracies: The case of religious parties', *Comparative Politics*, 32/4: 379–98.
Kane, Ousmane, 2003, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria,* Leiden: E. J. Brill.
Kane, Ousmane and Leonardo Villalon, 1998, 'Entre confrérisme, réformisme et islamisme', in Ousmane Kane and Jean-Louis Triaud, eds, *Islam et islamisme au sud du Sahara,* Paris: Karthala: 263–310.
Kepel, Gilles, 1991, *Les banlieues de l'islam,* Paris: Seuil.
Kepel, Gilles, 1991, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World* (trans. Alan Braley), University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Kepel, Gilles, 2000, *Jihad: expansion et déclin de l'islamisme,* Paris: Gallimard.
Kepel, Gilles, 2004, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kifner, John, 2005, 'Lebanese Rivals, in a Tangled Web of Alliances, Face Off in a Crucial Stage in Elections', *The New York Times*, 12 June: 16.
Kurzman, Charles, ed., 1998, *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook,* New York: Oxford University Press.
Last, Murray, 1987, 'The Jihad Movements of the Nineteenth Century', in J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder, eds, *History of West Africa*, Vol. 2. London: Longman: 1–47.
Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way, 2002, 'Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, 13/2: 51–65.
Levtzion, Nehemia and Randall Pouwels, 2000, 'Patterns of Islamization and Varieties of Religious Experience among Muslims of Africa', in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa,* Athens, OH/Oxford/Cape Town: Ohio University Press/James Currey/David Philip.
Loimeir, Roman, 2003, 'Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 33/3: 237–62.
Loimeir, Roman, 2005, 'Is There Something like "Protestant Islam"?', *Die Welt des Islams*, 45/2: 216–54.
Mamdani, Mahmood, 2004, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War and the Roots of Terror,* New York: Pantheon Books.
Martin, Bradford, 2003, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth Century Africa,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Martinez, Luis, 2000, *Algerian Civil War 1900–1998,* London: Hurst.
Meier, Fritz, 1985, 'Eine Auferstehung Mohammads bei Suyuti', *Der Islam: Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orient*, 62: 20–58.
Mitchell, Richard Paul, 1969, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers,* London: Oxford University Press.
Ould Abdallah, Deddoud, 1997, 'Guerre sainte ou sédition blâmable: un débat entre cheikh Sa'd Buh et son frère cheikh Ma al-Ainin', in Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson, eds, *Le temps des marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française v. 1881–1960,* Paris: Karthala: 119–53.
Pape, Robert, 2005, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,* New York: Random House.
Rahman, Fazlur, 1977, 'Revival and Reform', in P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis, eds, *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rahman, Fazlur, 2000, *Revival and Reform: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism,* Oxford: Oneworld.
Rashid, Ahmed, 2000, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Robinson, David, 2000, 'Revolutions in the Western Sudan', in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa,* Athens, OH/Oxford/Cape Town: Ohio University Press/James Currey/David Philip: 131–52.
Roy, Olivier, 1994, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Carol Volk trans), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Roy, Olivier, 2004, *Globalized Islam: The Search for New Ummah,* New York: Columbia University Press.
Salih, Ali Karrar, 1992, *The Sufi Brotherhoods in the Sudan,* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
Samson, Fabienne, 2005, *Les marabouts de l'islam politique: le Dahiratoul Moustarchina wal Moustarchidaty: un mouvement néo-confrérique sénégalais,* Paris: Karthala.
Schultze, Reinhard, 1990, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert : Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Islamischen Weltliga,* Leiden: E. J. Brill.
Schwartz, Stephen, 2002, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Saud from Tradition to Terror,* New York: Doubleday.
Seeseman, Rudiger, 2004, 'Nach Der "Flut" Ibrahim Niasse (1900–1975) Sufik und Gessellschaft in Westafrika', Habilitationsschrift, Universität Bayreuth, Sprach und Literaturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät.
Triaud, Jean-Louis, 1995, *La légende noire de la Sanûsiyya: Une confrérie musulmane sous le regard français (1840–1930*), Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, tomes 1 & 2.
Triaud, Jean-Louis and David Robinson, 1997, *Le temps des marabouts: itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française v. 1881–1960,* Paris: Karthala.
Triaud, Jean-Louis and David Robinson eds, 2000, La Tijaniyya: une confrérie soufie à la conquête de l'Afrique, Paris: Karthala.
Villalon, Leonardo, 1995, *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Villalon, Leonardo and Ousmane Kane, 1998 'Senegal: The Crisis of Democracy and the Emergence of an Islamic Opposition', in Leonardo Villalon and Phillip Huxtable, eds, *The African State at A Critical Juncture: Between Disintegration and Reconfiguration,* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner: 143–66.
Voll, John, 1994, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World,* Syracuse: New York University Press.
Wiktorowicz Quintan and Karl Kaltenthaler, 2006, 'The Rationality of Radical Islam', *Political Science Quarterly*, 121/2: 295–319.
Wilks, Ivor, 2000, 'The Juula and the Expansion of Islam into the Forest', in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa,* Athens, OH/Oxford/Cape Town: Ohio University Press/James Currey/David Philip.