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Ashis Nandy *The Unpredictable Scholar*

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Abstract

Il ya certainement un charme de l'imprévisible en Ashis Nandy, et en ceci très peu peuvent l'imiter. D.R. Nagaraj en est arrivé à la même conclusion. en introduisant Nandy, il a écrit: "A propos de Nandy rien ne peut être dit de manière définitive, il est totalement imprévisible." Il ya évidemment une image plus grande ici. Pour capturer cette image, le document met l'accent sur trois points - la méthode, le contexte et les attentes. Pour Une bonne compréhension de ceux-ci, le document conclut qu' une déclaration sur l'incertitude de l'âge , serait une excuse pour s'attaquer à la pensée de Nandy.

Several years ago, while conferencing in Delhi, Ashis Nandy pressed me to join Ziauddin Sardar, the physicist, Ajaya Dixit, the hydrologist, and him in another conference in Bangalore. I asked him what it was about? Puffing his pipe, he replied casually, 'Science and Epistemology.' I agreed immediately and a day or two later boarded the plane with all of them, reaching Bangalore in the evening. While on the plane, I thought of the conference and decided to speak on the 'Positivist Foundation of Marxist Dialectics in South Asia.' By the time we reached Bangalore, I had jotted down the key points of my presentation and I was quite happy with the topic, but decided not to disclose it until the day of the conference. And then the fun began!

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In the morning, while having breakfast in the hotel coffee shop, Nandy introduced me to some of the members organizing the conference. They came to pick us up. But, to my surprise, none of them spoke or looked like the 'science type'—pardon the stereotyping—that I had expected. We arrived at the conference venue only to find out that the morning session had already started and the banner behind the speakers (who included journalists Kuldip Nayyar, Sanjoy Hazarika, and one or two other known faces) reading: "North East: On Borders and Confinement"! Thoroughly surprised, I began to wonder but quickly concluded that the banner was for the morning session and would change in the afternoon, before we made our presentations. Morning went and afternoon came, but the banner did not change.

Nandy was the first to be called to the podium. He was given the task of presiding over the afternoon session. As the responsibility would dictate, Nandy called Sardar, Dixit and me to the podium. After a brief but colourful introduction of all three of us, Nandy turned his head and looked back at the banner and nonchalantly announced 'Imtiaz will speak first, yes...on the North East borders and confinement'! I still had my notes on 'positivist dialectics' in my hand! However, with no time to lose or correct my self-cultivated ignorance, I started thinking fast, indeed very fast—between the time Nandy announced my name and when I reached the rostrum after a very, very slow walk. Some of the things I had said at the Delhi conference that, to my good fortune, dealt with issues relating to national borders and the state of insecurity in the region. I got away that day, but also had a taste of Nandy's unpredictability, that too, in one of the most unpredictable circumstances, talking about borders in border-insensitive Bangalore! So what happened to the conference on 'science and epistemology'? Not a word was uttered on the subject, but knowing Nandy I am sure it would come one day, may be at a different location and in the midst of a wholly different but equally interesting people.

There is certainly a charm in Nandy's unpredictability, and this very few can excel or even copy.¹ The closest I can find are some of the sequences of Bollywood movies. These moves have now become contagious and unpredictability is what makes them supremely charming. Save the group-photo like happy-ending, it is almost impossible to predict the contents of a Bollywood movie. A hero shot dead could be brought back to life and the

¹ D. R. Nagaraj also came to the same conclusion. Once while introducing Nandy he commented: "About Nandy nothing can be said with any finality; he is totally unpredictable." See, D. R. Nagaraj, 'Introduction' in Ashis Nandy, *Exiled At Home* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. xx.

death could be blamed on the bad dream of the heroine or even that of the hero himself. A lovey-dovey Delhi couple can agree to meet in the Delhi's Lodhi Garden, and then suddenly choose a stopover in snow-clad Switzerland, with the heroine saucily dressed to suit the climatic conditions of the South and the erotic eyes of Southerners. Hundreds may join the lovers and passionately dance with them in a battlefield of love and ecstasy, while the very next sequence may show an equally passionate battle of blood and terror between the Hindus and Muslims, in the midst of which a Muslim Juliet reminds her Hindu Romeo the songs and the rendezvous of their childhood.

Bollywood however is not the sole custodian of unpredictability. Our receptivity and response to things of the past also help. Many years ago, a young friend of mine after watching P.C. Barua's *Devdas* (the one which Nandy eulogizes) remarked, "Barua's *Devdas* is absolutely boring.... Do you know *our* Bulbul [of Bangladesh] did a far better job as *Devdas*?" It took me a couple of years to understand why Bulbul appealed to him more than Barua when he abandoned the territorial and psychological domain of 'our Bulbul' by quietly leaving the country for good. His Bulbul now became the Barua of the past. Leaving the country and becoming a self-designed refugee in a faraway country was hard to predict in his case. Unpredictability is in the air.

However, some 'journeys' are not meant to end. Like that of *Devdas*. First, Phoni Burma was the silent *Devdas* in 1928; then came Barua and K.L. Saigal in 1935, Dilip Kumar in 1955, Habib in Pakistan in early 1960s, Bulbul in Bangladesh in 1982, and in 2002, we have two playing *Devdas*, Shahrukh Khan and Prasenjit. Of course, there have been six or seven more, including a Tamil, a Telegu and a Malayali *Devdas*, not to mention the one played by the perennial Bengali romantic, Soumitra. I do not know how Nandy reacts to the latest *Devdas*, particularly the one portrayed by Shahrukh Khan, but I am sure two discontinuities would intrigue him. First, the discontinuity represented by the blabbering of a drunken *Devdas* and, second, the opulence of the milieu and the discontinuity in the classification of the social actors (the *bhadra* Parvati, representing the Bengali gentry, dancing with the *abhadra* Chandramukhi, a sex-worker representing the lower orders). *Devdas*, too, is no longer the lovesick youth brought up in a self-disciplined zamindari; he has been elevated to the position of a lovesick Oxford alumnus, and placed between the nouveau riche and the seductive imagination of a globalized aristocracy. At the end, the twenty-first century *Devdas* justifiably hopes that the fast moving train would help him see 'Paro' for the last time, but the train turns out to be no better than the slow moving bullock cart that novelist Saratchandra Chattopadhyay condemned *Devdas* to ride. Both the discontinuities are products of the uncertainties that have entered our lives and are capable of reproducing them.

There is obviously a larger picture here and Nandy is aware of it. To capture that picture and for the sake of convenience, I shall divide my argument into three parts—*method*, *context* and *expectations*. Together they, we hope, would be as much a statement on the uncertainty of the age as an excuse for grappling with Nandy's thought.

II Method

George Bernard Shaw's play, *Shak vs Shav*, has only two characters—Shakespeare and Shaw himself. The play begins with a verbal duel between the two, each claiming to be the best playwright ever. They exchange verses from each other's plays and Shaw, finding it increasingly difficult to outsmart Shakespeare, finally resorts to fist fighting, arguing that his youth should prevail against the aged and crabbed Shakespeare. Shaw almost succeeds with a left hook until Shakespeare, already down, uses his memorable words from *Macbeth*: 'Out, out brief candle!' And out goes Shaw, vanishing into the thin air! Nandy's battle with the positivists is as Shakespearean in style. Some of its features could easily be identified. I restrict myself to four.

First, the positivist quest has separated writing both from the writer and the reader. A mechanistic model of writing has so pervaded post-twentieth century scholarship that writing is now assumed to be the end product of all research and thought. Seldom is there any recognition that writing is a means of communication, a means of catching up with the mind and the times of the writer and the reader.

Formal and formulaic writing not only makes the text boring, it induces the reader to either skip through the pages, glimpsing occasionally charts and tables, or to stop reading altogether after impatiently glossing over a few pages. He senses that the writer is missing from the text. As a result, both writing and reading become self-defeating, somewhat tragic, ventures, marking a breakdown in communication.

Secondly, creativity of the writer is subverted right from the start. The formal structure of a research paper or report hardly leaves any space for the writer to fashion thought according to his or her choice. Writing becomes a depersonalized vocation, with too many generalities and little scope for personal creativity. Computerized translation is the ultimate product of this trend. Robert Nisbet once said what very few admit in public, that there is hardly one instance of a theoretical breakthrough of some repute that has

resulted from following a formal 'scientific method.'² Yet, this formal scientific method is regularly taught as part of curricula, and many live their lives wholly committed to the method!

There is also question of who will benefit from the writing. The question is different from questions about the goal of writing. For instance, the goal could be to operationalize an idea and it could range from building a road for transporting heavy machinery to establishing a ministry for selling arms. In both instances, people do not figure, but in both the people could be affected. The ethical foundation of writing--and of all other activities--was best formulated by Gandhi when he told the members of the Shanti Sena Dal (Soldiers of Peace) that "Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away."³ Writing empowers, but it ought to empower the disempowered and not the already powerful.

The second feature involves the multi-layered meanings of a concept or a thing. Since the birth of the dictionary, meanings of concepts and things are becoming narrower and more fixed. Critics have pointed out that Samuel Johnson's dictionary sought to fix "univocal meanings in perpetuity, much like the univocal meanings of standard arithmetic terms,"⁴ hoping that an all-time, all-purpose language, with fixed and standard meanings of words, would simplify the understanding of reality. Few thought that, in the midst of changing realities this hope made no sense and was actually doomed. However, there was something more to it.

For instance, the etymology and the dictionary meaning of the word 'colour' differ considerably. Etymologically, the word comes from the Latin *celare*, meaning 'to conceal – more at Hell,' while the meaning, as found in the Webster's, dictionary is simply 'skin pigmentation esp. other than white characteristic of race.' The Webster obviously faithfully reproduces the

² Robert Nisbet, *Sociology as an Art Form* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 3.

³ See, Raghavan Iyer, ed., *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 609.

⁴ D. N. Levine, *The Flight from Ambiguity: Essays in Social and Cultural Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.4.

viewpoint of the non-coloured whites, at the same time reaffirming the hegemony of the West in the business of communicating across cultures.

From a slightly different perspective, Nandy makes a similar argument when conflating utopia with dystopia. Utopias can end up as dystopias, although commonsense rules out the reverse trajectory: dystopias less easily turn into utopias. An example of the first kind of transformation could be found in the civilizational quests of Europe, particularly the one that sometimes goes in the name of 'discovery,' and in the Christian ethos associated with that quest. Indeed, when faced with the 'American natives,' the very possibility of having groups of people outside the 'Christian brotherhood' became problematic.⁵ To avoid heresy, it was immediately proclaimed that the natives had migrated in earlier times from Eurasia or Africa (guarding thereby the Genesis version of the origin of humankind and the parentage of Adam and Eve) and were in a state of truncated development. Thus, the 'discovery' of American became a divine sanction for 'civilizing' the natives. And we know what went on in the name of that civilizing mission.

To give another example, the conceptualization of the game of cricket too is now multilayered, multiversed. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, we are told, once seeing children playing marbles in the streets, went straight to them and scolded them, saying: 'stop playing marble, play cricket!' This surely would be regarded as the vision of the father of the nation, fully conscious of what the children of the nation of Pakistan would one day excel in internationally. But there are also reasons to believe that Jinnah was familiar with the notion of 'fair and honourable behaviour' that attached to cricket, something that the game of marbles, lacking class, could never claim. But this is still the classical period in the conceptualization of cricket.

When World Cup soccer is played, hoisting a Brazilian or an Argentinean flag on a building top is as acceptable in South Asia as in the rest of the world. The same however is not true when it comes to World Cup cricket. Hoisting a Pakistani flag on the top of a building in India, or vice versa, by a fan or two is out of the question; it would simply amount to sedition. I guess the same would be true for Brazil or Argentina when the two sides play soccer with each other, but the South Asian case, some might say, is *uniquely* complex.

⁵ Arthur J. Vidich and Stanford M. Lyman, 'Qualitative Methods: Their History in Sociology and Anthropology', in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p.26.

In many of the Muslim dominated areas in India the riot police are brought in when there is a cricket match between India and Pakistan, and this is particularly the case when many Indian Muslims start celebrating a win by Pakistan, often with deafening sounds of crackers. The game of cricket soon boils down to issues of patriotism, communal affiliations, alienation and regional politics. Very few tend to take sides on the merit of the game or on the performance of the cricketers. The line-up however is not always predictable. For instance, in the case of Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim country, support for India and Pakistan in cricket is almost equally divided. Those supporting India mention 1971 for not supporting Pakistan. Yet, many of the supporters of Pakistan are former freedom fighters who directly fought against the Pakistan army. Bangladeshi fans of the Indian team say that communal affiliations of those who support Pakistan have remained intact despite the Pakistan's genocide in Bangladesh in 1971 and that is a shame. There is indeed room for serious thought on how fans are fanned!

The third feature is the non-hierarchical sources of knowledge. Nandy's disdain for the 'experts' is well known. And this not only because these expertocrats—experts and bureaucrats—pretend to know all and resolve all problems, but also because in practice they police the people, equipped with partial and fragmented knowledge and displaying crass confidence. If we take seventeenth century as the starting point of the fragmentation of knowledge, it was this imperial arrogance of the experts that the positivists transformed into a disciplinary quest. Actually the fragmentation led to the mushrooming of the experts.

When Marquis de Condorcet came up with the term 'social science' there was already the hundred-year-old practice of deliberately dividing the 'scientific' from the 'literary.' In fact, by the eighteenth century the attack on the latter by the scientific community was so thorough that even a person of the stature of David Hume went to the extent of calling the poets 'professional liars.'⁶ The goal was to distinguish facts from values and make use of pristine (valueless) facts in the most sophisticated manner possible and call it 'science.' But more the positivists tried to separate facts from values, the more they ended up with *valued* facts—unequivocally subjective, partial and fragmented. On them were grounded the rule of the expertocrats. Unfortunately, as long as there was 'social' in the social science, the discipline as well as the experts had to suffer the weakness of things being value-laden and unpredictable. Only by making social science more scientific could the

⁶ Quoted in from Laurel Richardson, 'Writing: A Method of Inquiry', in Denzin and Lincoln, *ibid.*, p. 518.

hegemony of the expertocrats be finally assured. The rupture between social science and economics is a case in point.

I know several economists who do not like to be called 'social scientists.' This is a way of telling the economists and the non-economists that the social sciences being more concerned with unpredictable social phenomena, are *less* scientific and less policy-oriented, while economics is more certain in its predictions and, therefore, can claim to be *more* scientific and policy relevant. The rupture between social science and economics did not end there; the field of economics itself got further fragmented.

There have been precise, qualitative transformations of the field of economics—as it has changed its name from *economy* (fifteenth century) to *political economy* (mid-eighteenth century)⁷ to *economics* (late eighteenth century but more widely used in the nineteenth century).⁸ The field actually began its journey as 'an art of managing a household.' In the eighteenth century, with the consolidation of the nation-state, it raised its analytical interests to the national level, beginning with mercantilism⁹ and focusing more on commerce, finance and trade. It was then that some ingeniously and appropriately began to call the discipline political economy. In the nineteenth century, however, there came the 'engineering approach to economics,' with emphasis on logistics and techniques-oriented analyses. By the twentieth century they had turned the discipline into the 'science of economics,' devoid of ethical and political considerations. Although the last phase has dazzled scholars and policymakers more, the field remains a complex reflection of the dialectics of its development. Its various disjointed parts—economy, political economy and economics—now jointly define the field. This only means that the social and the unpredictable are no less a part of the discipline than the seemingly scientific and the predictable. The rupture is in the disciplinary quest; it is more a surreal invention of the economist's mind. But it is this rupture on which the expertise of economists is based.

⁷ The first time a book appeared with that title was in 1767: *Principles of Political Economy* by Sir James Steuart. See, Lionel Robbins, *A History of Economic Thought: The LSE Lectures* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 122.

⁸ In this regard the contribution of Leon Walrus, a nineteenth century French engineer turned economist, has been highlighted by Amartya Sen, in *On Ethics and Economics* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 4-5.

⁹ Eli Heckscher defined *mercantilism* as "...the body of thought which was concerned with nation-building," coming at the time when the system of the Middle Ages was being transformed into the system of national States. See, Lionel Robbins, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

Economics is only an example here. Indeed, the question one is tempted to ask can be asked about any other discipline—can economics be salvaged from its economism? Or, for that matter, can the social science rebuild bridges with the literary? Amidst modernist goals and the positivist culture of hierarchical relationships, how holistic and defragmented are the non-hierarchical sources of knowledge? One way of answering this would be to take refuge in what Edward Said calls ‘contrapuntal reading’: “a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts.... The point is that contrapuntal reading must take account of both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it....”¹⁰ Phillip Wegner makes use of this principle when rereading Joseph Conrad’s *Lord Jim*:

The great irony here is that Patusan can serve as a ‘retreat’ for Jim only as long as it remains ‘separate’ from the European sphere of influence; and yet, the very activities that Jim performs guarantee that this spatial autonomy will very quickly come to an end. Indeed, the choice of a coffee-plantation for Jim’s primary ‘experiment’ is not accidental: for coffee is a trade export crop, one whose production cannot sustain the community independent from the larger global networks of exchange (in other words, you can’t eat coffee). Thus, the arrival of [demonic] Gentleman Brown and his men simply accelerates a process that Jim himself had already begun.¹¹

The risk of making oneself a target of the politically correct pedagogue is greater here but, then, this should not deter us from unmasking the veiled and the silent. Even on an issue as politically and civilizationally sensitive as genocide, there is a need to go beyond the victims and the witnesses and have an understanding that includes the perpetrators, too. The perpetrators are not always distinctive or separate from the victims and the witnesses. For instance, a witness, by remaining a silent witness, can end up being a passive perpetrator. Likewise, with non-state and state terrorism and state and non-state counter-terrorism using techniques like suicide bombing and/or indiscriminate aerial bombing, the perpetrator can end up being a victim, the

¹⁰ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 59, 79.

¹¹ See, Phillip E. Wegner, ‘Spatial Criticism: Critical Geography, Space, Place and Textuality’, in Julian Wolfreys (ed.), *Introducing Criticism at the 21st Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), p. 195.

victim a perpetrator. There is an inbuilt openness in non-hierarchical sources of knowledge, inviting tolerance and humane treatment.

Finally and most intriguingly, there are the creatively anarchic. Watching goddess Durga's three eyes (the third eye, the mind's eye) and ten hands in constant motion is one way of looking at it. The arch or the centre is nowhere but one could make a case that it is everywhere. In Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), the horror inflicted by the Nazi bombers on the town called Guernica seems to be missing in the painting mainly because the horror is everywhere. Rabindranath Tagore once said: 'For once be careless, timid traveller, and utterly lose your way....' As a poet, playwright, novelist, short-story writer, social activist, painter and political essayist, Tagore did manage to defy predictability and use his restless, anarchic mind creatively. Kazi Nazrul Islam could write poetry disowning the divine—'I'll paint my footprint on God's chest'—and at the same time faithfully own the divine, 'Bury me near a mosque where I can hear the *Azan*.'

Nandy would claim that the South Asian reality tends to defy the centralization and linearity. With 2,000 languages and dialects, 250,000 villages, 20,000 castes and subcastes, and having followers of all the major religions of the world,¹² South Asia is uniquely lost—or should I say, placed creatively—in a maze of marginalities and it is futile to force it to conform to a monolithic identity, whether religious, linguistic, or even administrative. But how does one work this out methodologically?

There is a clue in the chaos theory, devised to 'deal with the dynamics of non-linear systems,' and in what is popularly known as the *butterfly effect*: 'the beating of a butterfly's wings in one part of the world could, theoretically, be responsible for the formation of a hurricane thousands of miles away.'¹³ Since in chaotic systems both randomness and determinism are simultaneously present, there is also the simultaneous operation of the predictable and the unpredictable in such systems. This opens up, new possibilities. For instance, the forces unleashed by the end of the Cold War could be both predictable and unpredictable. The hegemony of the lone superpower was predictable, while the genocide in Bosnia and the birth of super-terrorism on 11 September 2002, were hardly predictable. One has to be simultaneously aware of contradictory processes having contradictory beginnings and

¹² See, Ashis Nandy, *An Ambiguous Journey to the City* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 130

¹³ See, Stuart Sim, 'Chaos Theory, Complexity theory and Criticism', in Julian Wolfreys, *ibid.*, pp. 89-102.

outcomes. And only through creative interventions could one hope to become conversant with the chaotic and the anarchic.

If we could make sense of the above, there is no way one could initiate any significant change by limiting oneself to a particular sphere. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Nandy grappling with issues and topics as diverse as cricket, cinema, medicine, education, state, violence, utopias, and water management, sexuality and childhood fantasies. Recently, I have been told that he is thinking of writing on gastronomy! Indeed, the attack on positivism must be multidirectional, multidimensional, multispheric and multi-layered.

One should not underestimate the positivist attack on such an approach. At the beginning the attack mainly takes the form of a campaign to consciously ignore the material coming out of the approach. Since the material does not die out but multiplies geometrically, and since co-option fails to make a difference, the campaign sinks to a politics of labelling. Nandy, for instance, has been labelled a Gandhian, fundamentalist, radical, anarchist, Marxist, traditionalist, nativist, post-structuralist, and post-modernist. The list goes on. Ironically, the labelling only draws attention to existing pluralities and helps proliferate approaches and worldviews. After a time, the collective weight of the latter only reconfirms that positivism can only be a 'brief candle' in the history of discourses!

III

'We are not poor people, we are Tepitanos!'

Of the two phases of colonialism, physical and intellectual, the intellectual has been more severe and damaging, because the demise of the colonial powers did not see the end of the colonialism of the mind. Indeed, the demise has reinforced the colonized mind, for the colonial power no longer shares its homegrown insights or self-doubts with the formerly physically colonized people on a day-to-day basis. As a result, colonized minds reproduce only colonized minds. Nandy calls this condition 'colonialism proper.' However, it is unfair to restrict the condition of colonialism proper to the formerly colonized, for one can well end up being 'colonized' by an idea or even a campaign without having a history of colonization. Wolfgang Sachs' experience with the Tepitanos is a telling example.

In the wake of the catastrophic earthquake in Mexico City in 1985, Sachs began to walk around Tepito, a dilapidated quarter in the centre of the city, mainly to acquaint himself with the destruction and wondering how best could one help those devastated by the earthquake. While doing so, he once remarked, 'these people are still terribly poor.' As Sachs tells it: "Promptly, one of our companions stiffened: '*No somos pobres, somos Tepitanos!*' (We are not poor, we are Tepitans)." Sachs goes on to say, "What a reprimand! Why had I made such an offensive remark? I had to admit to myself in embarrassment that, quite involuntarily, the clichés of development philosophy had triggered my reaction."¹⁴ Developmental colonialism, if we can label it so, has the power to imprison minds, and only a rebuttal of the kind Sachs received can possibly free one a little, by forcing one to recognize one's imprisonment. Put differently, the indifference of a 'colonized mind' to things outside its worldview can be as contemporary as it is fearful. In South Asia, three politically loaded concepts make this clear: *poor*, *passion* and *politics*.

The word 'poor' in South Asia has been transformed into a noun; it is no longer an adjective qualifying an anthropomorphic identity. This change has been brought about silently but remorselessly by those outside the category, including those responsible for creating the category. The noun is then dressed in statistics. India has 300 million people below the poverty line. Bangladesh some 60 million, that is, 50 per cent of its population, of which 30 per cent constitutes yet another category, the 'hardcore poor.' Pakistan has over 40 million people living in absolute poverty. Similar percentages and numbers can be found for other developing countries as well. What do the numbers signify?

John Ralston Saul has highlighted the unimaginability of numbers after a point. While pointing out that the annual international and national arms sales are worth some \$900 billion, Saul says, 'nobody, whether citizen or banker or minister, has any concrete idea of what \$900 billion means.' He then adds: "The problem involved is not unlike imagining a physical exploit. Almost everyone can imagine what it is like to jump over a bar raised 1 metre high, because almost everyone has done it. Many of us can imagine how we might jump 2.43 meters, which is the current world record, had fate only given us such things as longer legs and better muscles. We can even imagine jumping another metre or so higher. But 10 meters is not an

¹⁴ Wolfgang Sachs, 'The Archaeology of the Development Idea: Six Essays', in *Interculture* (undated). The original version has been published in *EPD-Entwicklungspolitik*, Francfort, June-Sept, 1989.

imaginable jump. It belongs to the world of comic books.”¹⁵ The lumping of the poor into ‘millions’ may not have the effect of being comical, but it certainly has the effect of being tragicomic, it ends up being ineffective. This can be stated in another way.

There is the usual palliative, offered by many that the population growth rate in South Asia has come down, thanks to aggressive government policies and modern birth control techniques. In the case of Bangladesh, for instance, the population growth rate has come down from 2.9 percent per annum in the mid-1970s to 1.5 percent in the late-1990s. A recent governmental report does not fail to take note of this trend and remarks: “Bangladesh has achieved impressive success in the area of population control.”¹⁶ Any literal reading of such comments could make one think that, since the population growth rate has come down, it is now all right to have one or two more children, though the rate has come down in a country that already has a population of 120 million staying in a flood-prone territory of only 55,126 sq. miles. Indeed, if the rate had come down in a country of identical size with 10 million people it would have made some sense. Size and ecology matter. Singapore, for instance, looks at the same growth rate with apprehension, mainly because the three million strong city-state has already reached a point of spatial saturation.

In developing countries, economic statistics tend to signify economic disempowerment, which in turn become an excuse for disempowerment in other areas—social, cultural, educational, and even political. Conversely, economic empowerment, when backed by numbers, has the power to brush aside the disempowerment in other sectors. The United States is a good case. People across the globe hardly notice that ‘72 million Americans are illiterate, the majority of them white.... One-quarter of American children live below the poverty level.... Twice as many children are born to American teenagers as to those of any other democracy. ... forty million Americans do not have access to medical care.’¹⁷ This, we may think, will make many in this region think that we are not that badly off. But the South Asians operate and will continue to operate as citizens of poor countries having low self-esteem, while the Americans, despite the statistics, operate and will continue to

¹⁵ John Ralston Saul, *Voltaire’s Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 142.

¹⁶ See, *Bangladesh: A National Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*, (Dhaka: Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh), April 2002, p. 2.

¹⁷ John Ralston Saul, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

operate as citizens of a rich country having high self-esteem. That, I believe, is the real achievement of the American Dream!

Such classifications have wider ramifications; they even ooze into the idea of the third world; those in the Third World find themselves downgraded and defeated to start with. As Nandy notes: "The concept of the third world is not a cultural category; it is a political and economic category born of poverty, exploitation, indignity and self-contempt."¹⁸ Even those who end up owning the concept and launch political campaigns in its name do not live up to it. China, for instance, when given the opportunity, joined hands with the "capitalist-roaders" internationally. The resurrection of the once-disgraced Deng Xiaoping was only the final stage of ridding China of the self-contempt of third-worldism.

As the poor may be categorized in terms of GDP, PPP, HCR, MPCE, PCI and other easy, if but baffling acronyms, it ultimately boils down to a simple Cartesian economism: 'I have a fat income, therefore, I am.' The bulk of the poor remain a non-entity; it is easy to ignore them economically and, worse, make them believe that contemporary economics and its categories justify that dismissive attitude. The poor cannot be salvaged or their dignity restored by using their own categories that have defined them but also demeaned them. They need a new method, a new logos and logocentrism, to walk and work with confidence in this world. Leopold Senghor tried to provide this when he declared on behalf of the non-whites: 'I feel, therefore I am.'¹⁹ But as long as such self-assertions recall the pangs and sufferings of the predominantly poor, brutalized non-whites, there is always the possibility of the latter only getting reproduced. This however does not exhaust the possibility of the new and the bold.

Several years ago, I ended up as a consultant of a fact-finding mission of a joint project of the Government of Bangladesh and the UNDP at a place called Kishoreganj in Bangladesh. The task was to find out how a micro-credit project was being run and how much did the target group, mainly women, benefit from the project. At one point, after I got acquainted with micro-credit, micro-disbursement, micro-savings, micro-interest payments and other micro-economic details, I asked some of the locals what would they like to do in the future? To the amazement of all, a woman beneficiary, who had studied up to class V, stood up and replied: "We would like to establish a

¹⁸ Ashis Nandy, *Traditions, Tyranny, and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 21.

¹⁹ Cited in Ashis Nandy, *ibid.*, p. 32.

textile industry!" What imagination! It tempted me to reformulate the Cartesian principle into something more profound and humane: "I dream, therefore I am." That she was not burdened by the economic categorization of her kind, made the insidiously challenging statement all the more charming.

Passions can complicate things further, for it can end up veiling the people. Gandhi once sent 'squads of his disciples' to destroy the erotic relics at Khajuraho. Only a last minute plea by Tagore 'managed to halt this iconoclastic massacre.'²⁰ But there were important lessons to learn from this encounter, not so much from Tagore, who saved the temples, but rather from Gandhi, who wanted them destroyed. Gandhi always sought to overcome passion, but often in his attempt to control and contain them he would end up unleashing them. In this context, his experience with sexuality, spuriously called *brahmacharya*, was no less a passion than the one with which the bulk of his 'disciples' sought and fought for *swaraj*.

It was during Gandhi's courageous campaign to contain the passions of Muslim-Hindu killings in Noakhali in the winter of 1946-47 that his passion of another kind surfaced and became public: 'word leaked out of Gandhi's peculiar practice of having attractive young women share his bed.'²¹ His explanation, which came in stages, shifted from the physiological to a somewhat baffling, but an ingenious, homegrown version of the spiritual. William Shirer writes with respect and awe: "The explanation at first by Gandhi and by his youthful women associates was that in the cold of a winter night he would take a shivering and that he had asked them to lie with him in order to receive their bodily warmth. But by Gandhi's own admission there was more to it than that. With that utter frankness which he had observed all his life, he admitted publicly that he had slept with the young women, often naked, in order to test his ability to keep his vow of *brahmacharya* and not succumb to temptation."²² In the midst of stormy criticism, I find two responses to Gandhi's relationship with sexuality intriguing.

The first came from those who actually had slept with Gandhi. Abha Gandhi, wife of Gandhi's grandnephew Kanu, says: "He [Gandhi] first asked me to sleep next to him when I was sixteen.... But two years later, in Noakhali, I began sleeping next to him regularly.... I think he said he wanted me as much

²⁰ See, too Alain Danielou, tr. Vatsayan, *The Complete Kama Sutra* (Vermont: Park Street Press, 1994), p. 10.

²¹ William L. Shirer, *Gandhi: A Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 234.

²² *Ibid.*

for the *brahmacharya* experiments as for the warmth. He said our sleeping together was a way of testing that he was as pure in mind as he was in body.”²³ Dr. Sushila Nayar, Gandhi’s personal physician also said:

There was nothing special about sleeping next to Babu [Gandhi].... But before Manu came into the picture I used to sleep with him, just as I would with my mother.... It was just part of the nature cure. Later on, when people started asking questions about his physical contact with women – with Manu, with Abha, with me – the idea of *brahmacharya* experiments was developed.²⁴

There seems to be more sexual passion and moral revulsion in the minds of those reading or hearing of the experiments than in those who actually had the experience of sleeping with Gandhi. There is no doubt that neither Gandhi nor Abha, Sushila, Manu and the rest could understand the fuss about *dispassionate* closeness of naked bodies. The closest example of identical dispassionateness is the Japanese custom of parents bathing naked with their children, including post-puberty daughters and sons. But then the fact remains that in the minds of those who are not party to them, the same situations may arouse passions that may come to rule unchecked, often with unexpected outcomes. Did Gandhi dislike the erotic temples of Khajuraho and seek their destruction for not being a part of them? And many years afterwards, did the Taliban destroy the Buddhist relics in Afghanistan also for not being a part of the relics? Is passion, then, an outcome of a void?

The second response, predating the Noakhali disclosure by some ten years, came from the arch modernist, Jawaharlal Nehru:

... I think Gandhiji is absolutely wrong in this matter. His advice may fit in with some cases, but as a general policy it can only lead to frustration, inhibition, neurosis, and all manner of physical and nervous ills.... I do not know why he is so obsessed by this problem of sex, important as it is... he takes up an extreme position which seems to me most abnormal and unnatural.... I presume I am a normal

²³ Cited in William L. Shirer, *ibid.*, p. 236.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

individual and sex has played its part in my life, but it has not obsessed me....²⁵

The same Nehru got 'irritated' when Alain Danielou published photographs of Indian 'sculptures showing homosexual relations dating from the eleventh century,' for Nehru thought that homosexuality and 'vices of such kinds' were a Western invention.²⁶ Nehru did not stop there. When in power, he promulgated a new penal code and brought sexuality for the first time under its purview. Article 377, for instance, punishes "sexual relations against nature with a man, woman or animal, whether the intercourse is anal or oral."²⁷ Was he reacting to his latent homosexuality, as Stanley Wolpert might suggest? It seems that in critiquing Gandhi's alleged obsession with sex, Nehru ended up internalizing the passion with no less intensity and vigour. In fact, he went to the extent of codifying the passion for all times as a state offence! His was only an attempt to fill up the void by making a private passion public. But once passion becomes public there is no way to tell where and how it will end.

There has been no dearth of public passion when it comes to cricketing and rioting. Often one could begin with one or end with the other. Given the majoritarian nature of the states of India and Pakistan, both cricketing and rioting end up being far less secular and much more national. They tend to get communalized, mainly of the Hindu-Muslim variant, and when one needs critical assessment of the game or of street violence, one often sees a rush to defend the state. Cricket star Kapil Dev's visits to the border to boost up the morale of Indian soldiers could be one example. There is hardly the same urgency on his part when the state goes berserk and kills innocents in Gujarat or Kashmir.

More telling nature is the partisan support in cricket. Seldom would a resident Pakistani support the Indian team, even when the game is between India and the former colonial power, England. The same would be the case of a resident Indian, when it comes to a game between Pakistan and England. In both the cases, spectators take the colonial era less seriously than the post-colonial era. There are some signs that prolonged non-residency is making a difference, but then, particularly in the case of England, one also has to take

²⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography: With Musings on Recent Events in India* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, [1936] 1938), p. 513.

²⁶ Alain Danielou, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

into account diasporic experiences involving the 'ethnically mixed' South Asian and the 'racially pure' English.

One-day cricket has further helped concentrate passion dispersed over five days into a single intense day. Nandy's position that "the game, like Hinduism, has too many options" seems to hold less with the rise of one-day cricket. I must hasten to add that, with the rapid rise of religious conformity, often with the direct connivance of the state, as in India under the BJP, the options are also becoming fewer for Hinduism. The same can also be said about Islam in Pakistan and Bangladesh. A day/night long game, when it goes in your favour, also makes victory look more effective, because you have to wait less to relish and celebrate it. On the other hand, if you lose, the pain is intense but you recover from it fairly quickly, thinking of the next one-day match only days away.

A quick victory is also telegenic; it has a high visual impact and is politically prudent. The recent obsession of the United States with a swift and confirmed victory, whether against the secular Iraqis or the fundamentalist Talibans, is critical for capturing the attention and support of the American public. The protracted war in Vietnam is something the United States wants to forget, not so much because it had to pull out its troops from Vietnam hurriedly, but because the war was creating the impression in the minds of the Americans that wars were futile. Peace studies and peace research institutes mushroomed in the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. The famous anti-war words of *The Mahabharata* can be read as the last word on protracted war too: "Alas, having defeated the enemy, we have ourselves been defeated.... The... defeated have become victorious.... Misery appears like prosperity, and prosperity looks like misery. This our victory is twined into defeat." This is something the United States, for that matter, all modern states, including India and Pakistan, dread. The fear is that without victory of one kind or another, the very foundation of the state, including the power of the military, may simply collapse.

But a quick victory, as in one-day cricket, also intensifies passion. Once passion intensifies in the minds of the people, it only takes a quarrel or two to organize a riot. Not that there was no passion in the genocidal partitions of British India in 1947 and Pakistan in 1971, but to emphasize that the recent, intensified passion has qualitatively transformed the very nature of violence; it has, for one, further brutalized killings. If the Tamil Tigers have made their contribution with the dispassionate suicide bomb, the recent rioters of Gujarat, have brought psychotic ingenuity to the art of killing:

What can you say about a woman eight months pregnant
who begged to be spared? Her assailants instead slit open

her stomach, pulled out her foetus and slaughtered it before her eyes. What can you say about a family of nineteen being killed by flooding their house with water and then electrocuting them with high-tension electricity? What can you say? A small boy of six in Juhapara camp described how his mother and six brothers and sisters were battered to death before his eyes. He survived only because he fell unconscious, and was taken for dead.... There were reports everywhere of gang rape, of young girls and women, often in the presence of members of their families, followed by their murder by burning alive, or by bludgeoning with a hammer and in one case with a screwdriver.²⁸

There is also a form of political engagement that passionately sustains violence, including mass murder. When passion dictates politics, politics ends up becoming a *passion* and not 'the conscious action or praxis in the pursuit of a common social goal' that Gramsci so fondly propounded and pursued.²⁹ With Gramsci ending up in the prison, many took fancy to his work than in following him. Politics is no longer what it used to be. In place of Aurobindo, Gandhi, Iqbal, and the like, we now have a surplus of Bal Thackerays, Laloo Prasad Yadavs and Joynal Hazaris, all passionately, often militantly shaping the destiny of their nations and the region. However, there is something infantile in passionate politics or in political expressions of passion. The first in the order of manoeuvres in politics of passions is *humiliation*.

Politicians love to humiliate their opponents—locally, nationally, and even regionally. Lot was made of the pee-drinking of Prime Minister Morarji Desai, particularly when he failed to revitalize the post-Congress India, but still one could claim that there was a touch of the medicinal input in his habit. More importantly, it became an anecdote when Desai was at the helm of the affairs of the state and not when in the opposition. The reverse happens more often. Those enjoying power, especially absolute power, now constantly seek to humiliate and, if possible, *thoroughly* defeat the opposition. The Awami League in Bangladesh, for instance, even with a two-third majority in Parliament, constantly looks for an opportunity to humiliate the opposition, the BNP, especially its leader. The same was true of the BNP when it was in power and the Awami League was in the opposition.

²⁸ Harsh Mander, 'Cry, the Beloved Country: Reflections on the Gujarat Massacre.' Circulated over the Internet on 21 March 2002.

²⁹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 326, fn.6.

In Sri Lanka, I am told, humiliation has taken an extreme form. There have been instances where the less powerful women candidates in elections have been literally disrobed and made to walk naked in the public. There is also the constant attempt by India and Pakistan to humiliate each other. When over a million troops were almost ready to go to war and possibly kill a million more, now that both countries are nuclear powers, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, amidst laughter in a large rally, sarcastically remarked: "Musharraf wants to talk. But what are we going to talk about? About the weather? Whether it is raining here? About his kith and kin? Do we need to call a meeting to talk such things?"³⁰ Many in that gathering wanted Pakistan to be defeated once and for all. They were happy that Vajpayee rejected talks so dismissively. I am sure that the same would be the mood in a similar gathering in Pakistan. But this is only one aspect of the infantilism in the politics of passion.

The second in order of manoeuvres is *polarity*. I have always been fascinated by the game of polarity. For instance, magnetic buttons are usually coloured black and white, to set them irreconcilably apart. But, then, a slight error in placement could bring them instantly together, with the sound of a click. I have always interpreted the click as an instant 'kiss,' although the game would have us believe that such attractions are marks of disqualification! And it is the latter that has prevailed both in the game and in the mind of the adult that refuses to grow. George Bush is, of course, a worthy exponent of it; he told to the world after the terrorist attack on the twin towers, 'If you are not with us, we would deem it that you are against us.' The timing could not have been more paradoxical. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, few questioned the power of the United States. But it took only a bunch of non-state terrorists to transform the worldview of the most powerful state in the world. Bush ended up affirming passionately the clear polarity of them and us; all fuzziness had to be avoided as a sign of disqualification!

Critics often refer to the colonial invent in the South Asian display of polarity. There is some element of truth in it. Since political society was controlled by the colonial power, it was the civil society that took the responsibility of waging the anti-colonial struggle. But in waging the struggle, the civil society itself became polarized and violent. Gandhi understood this matrix well but, in the end, even his non-violent campaign could not rid South Asia of violence and terror. Independence came against the backdrop of a genocidal

³⁰Author's not-so-literal translation of what Vajpayee said in Hindi. It was televised during the news hour at the height of Indo-Pakistan, crisis in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament.

partition. In the case of Bangladesh, the Pakistan period further accentuated the polarity, and independence came to Bangladesh against the backdrop of yet another genocide in 1971. In the post-independence India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, polarity in the form of polarized politics came to shape and nurture the political and civil spheres. Intolerance became the order of the day. By now, in Bangladesh, things have become hilarious, with the names of streets, parks, hospitals, and even stadiums undergoing changes with changes in regime! Few realize that this of course also means another round of changes with future changes in the regime. This brings us to the final infantilism in politics of passion—*immortality*.

God Dharma, we are told by Vyasa, did not want the Pandava brothers to drink water from the sacred pond without first answering his questions. Save Yudhishtira, none of the brothers heeded the call. In their hurry to quench thirst, and not amused by Dharma's demand, who at that point could not be seen but only heard, the brothers drank the water and died. Only Yudhishtira, despite his thirst, had the patience for a discourse; he began to answer Dharma's questions one by one. At the end, Dharma asked: 'What is the greatest wonder?' To which, Yudhishtira replied, 'Death strikes each day but we live as if we were immortal.' Dharma was satisfied, but that cannot be said about our present-day politicians.

The political campaign for immortality is not new and South Asia is not even an exception. At times, it produces results that the protagonists do not have in their mind or want. I remember once hearing a conversation when walking through the Agra Fort. While entering the bedroom where Shahjahan was interned by his ambitious, fratricidal son, Aurangzeb, a raggedly dressed traveller, wearing worn-out *chappals*, was telling his co-traveller: 'Did the mighty Emperor Shahjahan ever think that we would loiter around in his bedroom?' The other responded: 'And that, too, in our *chappals!*' It was as if Shahjahan had finally attained immortality by making his private domain public!

It is difficult not to be moved by the colonial infrastructures at Gorée. The island, some thirty minutes' ferry ride from Dakar in Senegal, was used for exporting slaves to the American continent. To house, select and trade the slaves, the Portuguese and, later on, the French had built forts, prisons, even torture chambers, the relics of which are still there. For the white American and European tourists and travellers, it has now become a pilgrimage of repentance for the things that their forefathers did to the people of Africa. The keepers of the Gorée Museum told me that even the Clintons were very much moved and a sense of shame seem to have haunted them throughout their trip to the island. Neither the black slaves nor the white slave-owners

ever thought that they too would become immortal, with only their roles in the history of civilization reversed.

Ironically the Communists, who prided on their materialism, too became obsessed with immortality. Not only did they embalm the body of Lenin, they also changed the name of St. Petersburg to Leningrad, replacing the god-fearing saint by a more earthly, atheistic one. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, when people seeking respite from uncertainty became all the more god-fearing, there was an overwhelming plea, particularly among the proletariat, to revert to the old name of the city. Lenin's life-long battle for the proletariat notwithstanding.

The campaign for immortality goes on. Once in power, the belief becomes ingrained in the rulers that they would remain in power forever. The rules they make, the laws they formulate, the educational texts they produce, the dogma they preach, the promises they make, the kind of wealth they seek and accumulate, all seem driven by the idea of permanence, in turn fed by their yearning for immortality. Passion is then built up to guard the domain and counter-passion, no less fearful and ruthless, to displace the domain. At the end, we are left with a politics that Gandhi described long back by saying: 'Eye for eye makes the whole world blind!' This is the context that makes the search for alternatives vital and pressing. Nandy understood this and made the search his life-long passion.

IV

The Future is Ours!

Disasters tend to kill expectations but also often produce different results. The difference between man-made and natural disasters is significant in this context, although there is the argument that the former often comes in the guise of the latter. Gandhi, in fact, went further and blamed an earthquake near his hometown on native sinners who had practiced untouchability! In any man-made disaster the outcome is violent, directly or indirectly. The same however is not true when it comes to natural disaster. During the last major flood in Bangladesh in 1998, for instance, it was found that the average incidents of violence had remained unusually stable. The law and order situation deteriorated only in 13 to 17 per cent of the villages; in over 80 per cent of the villages there was no deterioration.³¹ This possibly tells us that humans can change their being when faced with a non-human crisis.

³¹ See Imtiaz Ahmed, (ed.), *Living with Floods: An Exercise in Alternatives* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1999), p. xviii.

Humans are the only species on earth that can create structures, agencies, systems, regimes, disciplines, and a host of other artefacts for both protecting and destroying their own kind. More importantly, humans can structure, instrumentalize, regiment, discipline and define themselves and end up as human and anti-human at the same time. In fact, they have disciplined and defined themselves so much that Theodore Zeldin now pleads for the decentring of the human and the centering of the 'person': "humans need to be recognized as persons, he says."³² However, both *history* and *censorship*, to take two human artefacts, have constructed the awareness of the modern person in such a way that he or she is less of a 'person' and merely a member of the human species.

History has come to construct the person precisely. Even Rousseau's partial optimism, "*L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers*" (Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains), is now suspect. Humans have so structured themselves that they are now constructed even before they are born! In the wake of constructing the person, the discipline of history itself has become a victim of organized construction. Some like Partha Chatterjee see this problem more in terms of 'the present' using history, as happened in the case with the Hindu Right and the demolition in 1992 of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya.³³ Actually, the tragedy of history is greater.

Etymologically, history has little to do with the 'past' and in a sense it continues to be so. Having its roots in Latin *historia*, which in Greek meant 'inquiry,' history originally began as the task of 'knowing' the documents of the *present* and only gradually became a field inquiring into the documents thus collected. But history and past remain two different things. Keith Jenkins puts it lucidly:

History is one of a series of discourses about the world. These discourses do not create the world...but they do appropriate it and give it all the meanings it has. That bit of the world which is history's (ostensible) object of enquiry is the past. History as discourse is thus in a different category to that which it discourses about, that is, the past and history are different things. Additionally, the past and history are

³² Theodore Zeldin, *An Intimate History of Humanity* (London: Vintage, 1998), p. 469.

³³ See, Partha Chatterjee and Anjan Ghosh, eds., *History and the Present* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), p. 17.

not stitched into each other such that only one historical reading of the past is absolutely necessary. The past and history float free of each other, they are ages and miles apart. For the same object of enquiry can be read differently by different discursive practices....³⁴

However, gradually history has appropriated the past and now the past is what history is. Humans, as part of the past, are thereby historicized and this historicized human being now makes an entry into the present and, when required, into the future. This being is condemned to history and is therefore less of a person of the past, present and future, that is, less free.

Censorship too is a direct attack on the imagination and free spirit of the person. Its roots are predominantly western. In *The Republic* (fourth century BC) Plato outlined a comprehensive system of censorship, particularly for the arts, coupled with an authoritative notion of what is best for the society. On the other hand, the word censorship is not mentioned even once in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (also fourth century BC). Even when Kautilya proposes an elaborate system of surveillance for the *vijigishu* (one desirous of fresh conquests), the idea of censoring thought never enters. On the contrary, Kautilya proposes that:

Secret agents shall [ostensibly] enter into arguments with each other, whenever people gather together in places of pilgrimage, assemblies, communal gatherings, shows or festivals. One of them shall [start the argument] and say that, in spite of the king's reputation for virtue and nobility, he is totally without good qualities because he oppresses the people with taxes and fines. Other agents shall disagree with him and say that a king uses the taxes and fines for the welfare of the people.... (And also say that) kings shall never be insulted because divine punishment will be visited on whoever slights them. Thus, the people shall be discouraged from having seditious thoughts.³⁵

Since criticising the king is tolerated in public, it will be fair to say eastern wisdom laid more emphasis on openly discussing of an idea and, then, if necessary, discouraging it, rather than on censoring the idea from the

³⁴ Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 5.

³⁵ Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, edited by L. N. Rangarajan (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 510.

beginning. But the East is now the West and the West still remains the West, both having perfected the system of censorship through state censorship, public censorship and self-censorship.

State censorship is the one most widely known. It mainly comes both through legal acts and promulgations, and through institutions set up to oversee censorship. One of its earliest forms, one that still continues to have official sanction, is the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* of the Roman Catholic Church. Apart from listing proscribed books, including the one that brought Galileo to notoriety in 1633, the *Prohibitorum* acted as a model for the censorship-obsessed modern states. An apparently important, well-publicized exception has been the United States, but even there the provisions of the First Amendment (“Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press”) have long been circumvented by a series of court rulings. More importantly, since state censorship is backed by the power of the state, there is a tendency not only to use it often, but also to abuse it often.

Relatively less known is public censorship. It is different from state censorship in that the members of civil society make it their business to censor things, mainly in the service of the state. George Orwell’s experience at the BBC during the Second World War is a classic instance. So intrigued was Orwell by the experience that he immediately made it a theme in his novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). WJ West, after scanning through Orwell’s ‘lost writings,’ writes:

The BBC was subject to extensive censorship controlled by the Ministry of Information which was located, during the war, in the University of London’s headquarters building, Senate House, Malet Street. The building bears a close resemblance to the Ministry of Truth in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and acted as a direct model for it.³⁶

What intrigued Orwell most was the role of his colleagues at the BBC:

The fact that the lowest rank of censor, ‘delegate censors,’ were not from the Ministry of Information but colleagues within the BBC, indeed within one’s own department, could make life tense in the sort of situation in which people like Orwell often found themselves. More serious matters,

³⁶ W. J. West (ed.), *George Orwell: The Lost Writings* (New York: Arbor House, 1985), p. 279.

defined by precise instructions cabled every day from the Ministry of Information, were referred to the Ministry either for censorship there or for further consideration by other experts. In effect everyone could be seen as checking on everyone else, just as Orwell describes Comrade Tillotson in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* doing the same task as Winston Smith.³⁷

This seems to nullify the popular belief that Orwell wrote the book to portray socialism or the Soviet system. In fact, after the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell made it clear that 'he was not attacking socialism,' not even 'the British Labour Party.' He was 'giving a warning about deep-rooted fears for the very nature of English life, fears which stemmed largely from his wartime experience at the hands of the Ministry of Information.'³⁸

Yet, what came as a shock to Orwell—he almost found it *unEnglish*—was regularly practised by the English in their colonies, sometimes even in private companies to ensure the continuity of the power of the British Crown. When radio was introduced in British India in mid-1920s, a multi-layered network of censorship was devised to assuage the fear of the colonial power:

Each provincial government was to select a censoring officer, who was expected to work in close cooperation with the company. The needs of imperial control were ensured...the centre must keep the general control of any wireless censorship ... and that, under central guidelines the power of the provincial governments must clearly be a delegated power.³⁹

It is not difficult to relate the Indian experience during the colonial times with that of England during the Second World War. In fact, it can be said that the tradition of colonial censorship was so thoroughly internalized by the colonial power that, when England faced a crisis at home, that tradition re-emerged in the guise of public censorship. That tradition remains as significant for England as for colonial and post-colonial South Asia.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 280.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 67.

³⁹ See Partha Sarathi Gupta, *Power, Politics and the People: Studies in British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), p. 456.

The most dangerous form of censorship is self-censorship. It has obviously grown from the traditions of state and public censorship, strengthened in South Asia by the colonial experience. Self-censorship does not always bear a relationship with the state; often it is a feature of a person who feels disempowered or threatened. The fear may or may not be real. Examples of self-censorship are many; I shall limit myself to the one that I came across recently.

A mediagenic, eminent, elderly economist once published a collection of newspaper articles. Apart from an edited book, this was his first book and even then it had come out at the fag end of his scholarly life. During the launch of the book, his sycophants were vociferous and the book was reviewed in glorious terms. But not knowing why there was such a big *tamasha*, for some very general newspaper articles now turned into a book, I asked an economist friend of mine who was present at the occasion: Why didn't you say something? He kept quiet. I asked him, 'Have you read the book?' He said: 'Yes.' 'So, what do you think about the book?' He said, 'Pathetic!' 'Then, why didn't you say something?' He stiffened and replied: 'Are you crazy? Do you know how powerful the man is?' In state and public censorship, a human being can at least affirm his personhood; with self-censorship, even that possibility is lost.

Self-censorship prevails everywhere. In dealing with the state, more immediate authorities, in public meetings, research reports, newspaper columns, consultancies, even in dress and etiquette. It is the ultimate Orwellian 'Big brother' watching one and one therefore had to be extra-careful, in whatever one did, wrote and said. In such a milieu, expectations do not go far, nor do they have a chance to be realized. The critical task, therefore, is to rid the self, at least in this case, of its historicized, censored aspects, to restore self-confidence and allow for simultaneous creative interventions in all areas of life. This is, however, easier said than done.

Zeno's paradox about 'the flight of an arrow'—the arrow while in motion if photographed is always static—has for centuries stimulated fresh thought. Hegel too was excited by it and tried to resolve it by means of dialectics, that is, the flying arrow far from being static or motionless is actually a 'contradiction in reality.' The dynamic requires the static as much as the static requires the dynamic. Any exclusive focus on either the motion or the static is bound to make the interpretation of the motion and/or its absence partial. More so in this age of globalization, transcontinental migration and diaspora. It is almost like telling one to try to focus on the *dancing but composed* Shiva. Emmanuel Kant, in many ways, is a classical representation of this static motion or moving static. He is recognized as the 'Father of Modern Geography' but all his life he remained confined to a territory of about three

miles. Similarly, Aurobindo, while practically confined to Pondicherry for most of his life, could think of transcending the cosmic reality of the universe.

Disciplinary focus has always been on the motion and, even when attempts are made to focus on the static, they end up emphasizing motion. Statistics is a good example. Despite its name, the discipline collects and analyses facts and figures on things and events that are in motion. There is no doubt a certain charm in focusing on motion, because that is how all adventures are usually defined and narrated, and uncertainties removed or turned into certainties. Our training mesmerizes us not with the adventures and uncertainties but with exposure and the certainty. The annual flow of transcontinental migration, for instance is less than a million, but the focus remains on this miniscule number and not on the rest 99.83 per cent of the world population that stays home. It is this small number that is ridiculed, attacked, put into ghettos, and stopped at frontiers.

Uncertainties, in turn, tend to produce uncertain outcomes. Diasporic movements have begun to produce such outcomes. I give a few instances. First, there is the debate now taking place in the Dominican Republic of over the allotment of two parliamentary seats to New York's Dominican-American. This has the potential of not only redefining the constituency and residency of the Dominican people but also the Republic's idea of national sovereignty and all that goes by the name of a nationalist agenda.

Such experiments have become possible after the creation of a European Parliament. Though its potentials are yet to be fully realized, some of its outcomes have even caught the Europeans by surprise. One such surprise has been in respect of the Gypsies or, as they now call themselves, *Romas*. The gypsies are now a group with different languages, cultures and physical appearances. Possibly the only commonality that holds them together is their alienation from the host societies and their status as a stateless people in Europe. Apart from the 'Romanis' of the Balkans, central and eastern Europe, the gypsies now includes the 'Gitanos' of Spain, the 'Travellers' of England and Ireland, and the 'Sinti' of Germany and Italy.⁴⁰ It is now increasingly being argued that to resolve their statelessness without compromising their identity and way of life, possibly something like a 'European citizenship' has to be devised. As a group known for its mobility, the *Romas* then may contribute in real terms to the idea of mobility and stability at the same time. Will 'world citizenship' someday come from a creative understanding and combination of the two? It is worth a thought.

⁴⁰ For a detailed exposition see, James A. Goldston, 'Roma Rights, Roma Wrongs', *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 2002.

Finally, children tend to create their own journeys, their own sense of life and living, and also of death. Several years back some of us had organized a South Asian children's workshop on alternative water management at Dhaka. Children of Class VIII to X from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the workshop. I remember on the first day the Indian student was asked, what he thought about Pakistan? The answer was quick: 'Enemy Number One!' The same question was then put to a Pakistani student. Her reply was identical: India was Pakistan's Enemy Number One! On the third day, however, the Indian, Pakistani and other children became indistinguishable; they were all playing and, laughing together, sharing jokes, and roaming together. And when it came to devising plans for the future, they all joined hands and chalked out an action plan, even setting up a website, not from the standpoint of their nation or nationality, but from that of a South Asian. Nandy was present at that workshop. Visibly moved by the event, particularly the way the Indian and Pakistani children had been transformed in less than a week's time, he ended his presentation by saying: "The future is ours!" Amidst the thumping of hands of the South Asian children, I could only silently say that that was one goal worth pursuing in thought and action.



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An Anthropological Perspective on Afrikaner Narrative and Myths

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Abstract

Selon Webb-Mitchell (1995 : 219), homme est né avec la « capacité et le désir d'exprimer et recevoir des histoires ». Une des actions humaines les plus fondamentales dans l'existence de l'homme est de dire, interpréter, et raconter de nouveau l'interprétation dans les mots, volontairement, sous forme d'histoires. C'est un éternel, se développer en spirales et un processus socialement construit. Le « récit est crucial dans la vie humaine d'arrangement pour tous que nous soyons, et tous ce que nous faisons, et tout ce que nous pensons et la sensation est basé sur des histoires ; toutes les deux nos histoires personnelles et histoires de notre communauté significative » (1995:215 de Webb-Mitchell). Slabbert (1999 : 49-51) déclarer qu'une identité officielle d'Afrikaner a existé jusqu'à 1990, qui était principalement dû à un récit principal a construit autour de l'adhésion d'église, de l'engagement à la puissance politique et de l'adhésion au parti, comme l'attachement aux organismes culturels tels que le lien de Broeder. En résumé on peut affirmer que l'Afrikaner a perdu son récit principal en vue de l'identité d'Afrikaner, et qu'un certain nombre d'approches à l'identité d'Afrikaner sont suivies chez l'Afrikaner se range. Comme indiqué, la désintégration du récit de maître d'Afrikaner a pour mener à la promotion de la question si les récits alternatifs et plus petits d'Afrikaner se sont développés, comme exposé par Lyotard (1984 : 3-16). De la littérature elle semble que la réponse est « oui ».

Slabbert (1999:49-51) states that an official Afrikaner identity¹ existed up to 1990, which was mainly due to a master narrative constructed around church membership, commitment to political power and party membership, as well as dedication to cultural organizations such as the

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Broeder Bond. According to Vosloo (“Die Burger” 28 January 2005:12) and Roodt (<http://www.praag.org/menings17072005.html> - 2005/07/14:4 of 13) after 1994, the loss of this official identity marginalised and toppled the Afrikaner into an existence crisis. In regard to this, it must be pointed out that the Afrikaners’ emotional and intellectual bonds with the Afrikaans culture, churches, politics and Afrikaner language is changing, even narrowing, and that they are striving increasingly toward a new, cosmopolitan identity and way of life.

Other commentators, such as Du Preez, do not hold the same point of view (Du Preez 2005b:15). Du Preez is of the opinion that *“Afrikaans is experiencing a blossoming period in regard to rock music and publishing, and more Afrikaans books, newspapers and magazines have been released in the past two decades than in any other native language in Africa”*.

Even though commentators differ over what the influence the post-apartheid system had on the Afrikaner, and still has, it is a fact that the extensive political and social transformation in South Africa since 1994 has caught most Afrikaners off balance. Afrikaners clearly were not prepared for the changes, with the result that after 12 years they urgently need to reflect on their values, common purpose, identity, role and place in the new South Africa. On the one hand, Afrikaner core groups are now more likely to initiate overt activities (as observed on certain university campuses not long ago), and are also more prone to openly defending their language and Afrikaner identity. There is an inclination among the core Afrikaner youth to move towards international norms, practices, preferences and attitudes for career opportunities and wider exposure. The argument is more or less as follows: Due to the fact that there are less public organizations with an explicit Afrikaans character, identity and calling left, and because Afrikaners are being offered more positioning choices in regard to identity, language and culture, Afrikaner culture and identity is starting to lose its traditional meaning.

In summary it can be stated that the Afrikaner² has lost his master narrative in regard to Afrikaner identity, and that a number of approaches to Afrikaner identity are being followed within Afrikaner ranks. As indicated, the disintegration of the Afrikaner master narrative has led to promotion of the question whether alternative, smaller Afrikaner narratives have developed, as exposed by Lyotard (1984:3-16). From the literature it seems the answer is “Yes”. Two specific goals of this article includes exploring Afrikaner narratives further, as well as the opinions and categorization that have been fashioned in regard to about the Afrikaner.

VALUES AS NARRATIVE

According to Webb-Mitchell (1995:219), man is born with the *“ability and desire to express and receive stories”*. One of the most basic human actions in the existence of man is to tell, interpret, and retell the interpretation in words, willingly, in the form of stories. This is an unending, spiralling and socially constructed process. *“Narrative is crucial in understanding human life for all that we are, and all that we do, and all that we think and feel is based upon stories; both of our personal stories and the stories of our significant community”* (Webb-Mitchell 1995:215). Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995:6) are convinced that humans of all times and culture used narrative as a basic method to organise their experiences and give meaning to their lives. They use the metaphor of *“the person as a motivated storyteller”* in this regard. Hearne (1984:33) explains *“story”* as *“just something we tell ... the way things happen and the way we grasp them in some kind of pattern.”* Sarbin (1986:9) describes this as *“a way of organizing episodes, action and accounts of action in time and space”*.

From the literature concerning narrative it is clear, in the first place, that it always is about the retelling. There is no once-off telling - Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995:111) refer to *“essentially unfinished stories”*. In this regard, Müller (1996:30) maintains that the telling of a story can only be renewing and constructive, if the future account and the preceding account are in congruence. According to Müller (1998:9) the theme: *“telling a past, dreaming a future”* is the whole description of human existence, in other words the link between past, present and future. The larger the gap between the *“telling”* and the *“dreaming”* becomes, the higher the strain and the bigger the possibility of pathological behaviour (Müller 1998:9). On the other hand, where there is harmony between yesterday, today and tomorrow, integrity, well-being and maturity is found (Mead 1978:17-18). Thus, an intense seeking of values lies at the core of narrative - that which is seen as meaningful. When applied to the present article, it means there will be a focus on Afrikaner narrative in order to expose Afrikaner values and ideals. There is no interest in entertainment or information values in such narrative.

A second aspect of narrative that must be emphasised, is that the evoking tale - which becomes a personal account that is told, told again and retold, nuanced differently, internalised, experienced, has transformational powers (Bruner 1986:25 and Combs 1996:88). In different places, times and under different circumstances, certain people, affairs, or things made such an impression on an individual, that he/she thought it important enough to make it part of his/her personal chronicle. This core legend of a person is of utmost

importance – especially where the self is seen as an organizing process of values.

Thirdly, myths or the mythical plays an essential role in narrative. Campbell (1972:8) argues that myths illustrate man's search for truth, meaning and sense through the centuries. Malan (1978:39) agrees that myths are man's way of explaining the significance, relationship, aims, ancestry and the conclusion of the cosmos through simple tales. An important aspect of myths is that there is an "evasive core" to each myth that cannot be explained rationally (Conradie 1964:10). This "beyond-reason" aspect of myths is one of the critical factors that must be taken into account when values and identity are explored by way of narrative. A myth may be purely fictional in nature, but the power behind is an irrefutable reality that, for example, may change the course of history. The point is that a myth needn't necessarily be about what the truth is, or what we know, but is about what we believe or accept as the truth. The fundamental aspect of a myth is thus not the truth thereof. Even if it is not possible to prove the contents empirically, people accept myths because they do not dare question them, because it affects the significance of their existence.

Central to the discourse on myths is man's belief in the very authenticity of those myths he/she grew up with. Though myths can alter with time, be adjusted, or under certain circumstances become obsolete and disappear, the de-mything or even re-mything of myths does not take place in one generation. Campbell (1972:8) states that myth formation through socializing and shared historical veracity takes place over a relative long period of time in the collective subconscious of a group, before being acknowledged as the truth and internalised by the group. Thus myths are not created overnight, which is why an artificially created legend never attains the "truth-quality" of a true myth.

2. MYTHS AS PART OF THE AFRIKANER NARRATIVE

In my opinion it is impossible to speak about Afrikaner narrative without drawing on the issue of creating myths. When concentrating on myths, it does not matter whether the specific myth is true or not – or which myths are true and which are false – but rather what the impact of that myth is on the culture, identity and narrative of the Afrikaner. Further more, this article does not examine the relatively superficial present-day myth building that makes life interesting and pleasing for some people (e.g. the Cheetah rugby jersey, McDonald's-advert-boards, and the more than life-sized advertisements for favourite types of beer). The significance of the myths, which this article pays attention to, lies deeper than those of bobotie, beer and boerewors. This point of departure, as elucidated by a quote from Adam Small (*Nuwe Verse*

1994:12), is that the “*essentials*’ of the things” and the “*memories*” linger and in long last are reduced to a “story” – and within this discourse then to a myth. Myths that will be examined include:

- The creation myths of the Afrikaner, as well as myths in regard his/her heroes. In other words, myths aimed at instigating self-respect and a feeling of self-worth. These myths are or will be passed on as bedtime stories or lullabies by grandparents in children’s rooms or around campfires (every Afrikaner’s grandfather was a hero during the Anglo-Boer war!)
- Radical myths, especially those in regard to political myth building, which are aimed at de-mything the other group’s myths, or even demonising them. (To most Afrikaners, the Zulu king Dingaan was an arch villain and criminal).
- The myth concerning the “liberation” of Afrikaans, from the albatross around its neck, which was proclaimed post 1994.
- The myth of the rainbow nation – with English as the language of national unity – which directly contradicts one of the myths concerning Afrikaans, which is addressed in this article and for which people in some cases literally, and in other cases metaphorically, were willing to die.

In the discussion of the myths around Afrikaans, factual events will be examined anecdotally and through example. Facts are often the “fabric” from which myths are fed and grow. The myth regarding the Afrikaner nation, for example, developed and grew over a long period of time, but gained momentum and grew to mythical dimensions as result of the traumatic events of the Anglo-Boer war. The myth of Afrikaans as the language of the oppressor had a long expansion in the colonial history of South Africa, but in actuality gained real impetus after events such as Sharpeville (1960) and Soweto (1976), and especially due to the death of Hector Peterson on 16 June 1976.

The aim of working by example is to show that myth building around Afrikaans as language took place from different angles; and secondly, to expand on the impact of the specific myth as part of the “story of Afrikaners”.

The point of focus of this discourse will however, not be the events themselves, but the commencement and impact of the exact myth. The aim of this is to illustrate the degree to which myths regarding Afrikaans and the Afrikaner culture explain and illuminate their origins to individuals and groups. Because

of the legion of other myths which developed simultaneously to the main myth, it is not possible to investigate, or even list, all the myths and mythical figures which constitute part of the "story of Afrikaners" (due to the extent thereof).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRIKANER

Writers are often quick to consider the development and progression of the Afrikaner as a single, drastic quantum leap. For example, Giliomee (1999:14) suggests that the 1707 statement of Hendrik Biebouw, "*Ik ben een Africaander*", must be seen as an expression of an identity- or existential choice. Degenaar (1987:233) disagrees that the development of Afrikaner nationalism can be projected onto the history of seventeenth century Afrikaner. Van Jaarsveld (1980:222) and Steyn (1980:135) agree that national consciousness only evolved since 1877. Van Jaarsveld (1980:222) calls the annexation of the Transvaal and the First World War "electric shocks" that "coursed through the heart of all Afrikaners", and allowed a "mindset" to develop in which the "Afrikaner nation was placed centrally, as a spiritual unit".

Van der Merwe (1975:67) takes the Afrikaner history back to 6 April 1652, when the first whites from Europe landed in South Africa. He maintains that the first free burghers who settled in the Cape in 1654 were the introduction of the Afrikaner nation. The move of resigning from the "*Vereenighde Oost-Indische Compagnie*" (VOC) and settling on South African soil was the first (perhaps unconscious) step in the direction of accepting South Africa as fatherland. Before the end of the seventeenth century some of the free burghers were already indicating that they were not planning on leaving the country again (Van der Merwe 1975:67).

Very soon the free burghers realised that their concerns differed from that of the administration (the *Kompanjie*). They clashed with the authority sporadically. Initially, the clashes were mainly about economics, but gradually the burghers realised that political action was required to protect their concerns. The activities of the Cape Patriots (1779) demonstrated a high level of political sophistication and had a measurably wider impact (Van Jaarsveld 1980:218). By this time the VOC was already an aged and ineffectual company, with a crumbling Cape administration. The uprisings in Graaff-Reinet and Swellendam (1795) were symptoms of a growing feeling among the burghers that their welfare was no longer to be found in the Cape administration, which was administered from far away. They would rather see to their own concerns. The isolated and independent life of the border farmers contributed to this feeling of self-resourcefulness.

Under British rule a new element of discontent with the administration entered, especially after the advent of the British Settlers in 1820. The policy of Anglicisation now threatened not only economic welfare, but also the general culture, especially in regard to language and religion.

Giliomee (1999:13-20) argues that during this period there were signs of a growing consciousness of communal interest, which differed from that of the administration, and therefore an own identity. Furthermore, there was an impression that this personal identity was being threatened on a multitude of levels; a need to preserve this identity; and a sense that identity could only be preserved by shaping their own destiny. A sense of self-realization and a striving for self-preservation thus developed, and resolved into a need for self-dispensation.

Van der Merwe (1975:69) maintains that the level of self-dispensation reached from 1838 to 1910 was incomplete and of short duration. Britain maintained a powerful presence in the Cape, and from early on placed legal and *de facto* restrictions on the independence of the Boer republics in the interior. The republics had to refer to Britain as regards to internal matters, which was incompatible with self-determination. By the end of the nineteenth century the dream of self-determination was irrevocably and finally shattered (Van der Merwe 1975:69). With this, a new threat against the Afrikaner emerged: a renewed policy of Anglicisation by the government and (for the Afrikaner) a too-liberal strategy in regard to racial affairs.

Before and during the Second War of Independence the term “Afrikaner” had no nuanced significance, probably because it was used in alternative to the word “Boer”, by which was meant a “*Hollandsch sprekende kolonist van Zuid-Afrika, inzonderheid die van de Transvaal and de Oranje-Vrystaat*” (Van Dale 1915, *Handwoordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*).

The use of the word “Boer” during the Second War of Independence, especially in newsprint, is familiar by far. Furthermore, the word “Afrikaner” does not appear in the 1895 edition of the comprehensive standard dictionary of the Dutch Language (WNT). From 1915 it features in Van Dale, where an Afrikaner was defined as: “*in Zuid-Afrika geboren blanke van Europeeschen oorsprong*”. For Naudé and others (1969:98), the word “Afrikaner” “*in opposition to the broader designation ‘South African’*”, means “*indicative of the white population of South Africa who are descendants from the first colonists. This means Dutch from Calvinistic families, as well as Huguenots, Germans, and later especially the Scots, who intermarried with the Dutch – people whose language mainly developed from Dutch and who accepted the spiritual inheritance of Calvin as their own*”. In this study the

Afrikaner is shortly defined as a white group with an own culture and identity.

Even though it is not possible to associate the birth of the Afrikaner with a single moment or event in history, authors do distinguish various significant factors in this regard. The main factor is probably the significant impact that religious principles had on the builders of the Afrikaner nation. In 1652, the Dutch settlers to the southern tip of Africa brought their own religious dogma with them, namely the Heidelberg Catechism, the Confessio Belgica and the Canon of Dordt – known as the Three Formularies of Accord, to guide their thinking and behaviour in their new-found fatherland.

During the synod in Dordrecht in 1618/1619, the National Synod of the Reformed Churches of the United Netherlands laid down these explicit rules for the religious life and faith of all the Protestant-Reformed devout in the Netherlands. The synod in Dordrecht was primarily about choice. Those who believed as prescribed by the church in the Formularies were sure of their eternal selection by God – a selection that was irrevocable, as described in the Formularies. God's choice could never be recalled or declared invalid. Whoever did not believe as prescribed, was doomed to eternal judgement by the God of the Reformers – which was also binding. Thus, whoever was not selected was doomed to hell. They did not stand any chance of a blessed eternal life (Albertyn and others 1947:38-40 and Akenson 1992:104-110).

With this belief and certainty of their Godly predestination, the *first Dutch immigrants* settled themselves on African soil (Elphrick & Giliomee 1988:27-31). As the chosen of God, they were certain that God had accompanied them, and that they were in this far-off land because God wanted it so (Albertyn e.a. 1947:57-59). This was the binding foundation of the first Europeans who settled themselves as Reformed Protestants in the Cape, and this remained the foundation on which their descendants, the Afrikaners, would build their destiny in the far-off southerly land. According to this perception, the Colonists (and later the Afrikaners) were placed in South Africa to maintain justice and bring the light of the Gospel and civilisation to Africa.

Professor F.J.M. Potgieter, previously Dean of the Faculty of Theology in the Seminary of Stellenbosch, summed up the impact of the Synod of Dordrecht on the settlement of the Afrikaner as follows: *"It must be considered that the settlement at the Cape took place only decades after the famous Synod of Dordrecht. At that Synod it had been decided that a new translation of the Bible must be undertaken. This was published in 1637, and on the 6 April 1652 the flagships, the 'Drommedaris', 'Reyger' and 'De Goede Hoop' sailed into Table*

Bay with this edition board. The Dutch Authorised Edition ('Statebybel') is without a doubt the most precious possession of the Afrikaner nation. From inception, it was the guide for the life and doctrine of our ancestors. It shaped them: the child had to read from it and be spiritually fed; adults accepted the authority without question. So inextricably is the nation's founding, its being and existence interwoven with the Word of God, that the soul of the nation and nature of Afrikanership can never be calculated without it" (Naudé and others 1969:98).

Taking the abovementioned into account, Van Jaarsveld (1981:47-48) and Du Preez (2005a:2) argue that the conscious and subconscious knowledge that the Afrikaner was placed in Africa by God runs like a golden thread through the founding and developmental process of the Afrikaner. Reformational Protestantism can indeed be known to ground the cultural configuration of the Afrikaner.

The awareness of a historical vocation and the reconstruction of Afrikaner history is a second, central factor in regard to ethnogenesis which can be distinguished in the Afrikaner. Especially Marais (1980:12) is an outspoken exponent in this regard. The meaning of the history, in regard to ethnogenesis, can be illustrated in different ways. Cattell (2001:14-15), for example, focuses on the mythical role of national heroes, while Van der Merwe (1975:66-72) concentrates on central themes. To him, the struggle for self-determination is the golden thread, which weaves through the Afrikaner's history. He differentiates the following four time periods in the Afrikaner history:

- (i) 1652 to 1838, where the premise of self-preservation becomes evident in a struggle for self-determination;
- (ii) 1838 tot 1910, where the premise of self-preservation becomes obvious as an understanding of the necessity of national unity;
- (iii) 1910 tot 1961, where national unity as a requirement of self-preservation was mostly achieved; and
- (iv) a period starting around 1961, where it concerned the preservation of national unity.

According to Van der Merwe (1975:69) at the end of the second period (1838-1910) the Afrikaner found himself in a radically changing world. Self-preservation through self-determination was a bygone dream – the Afrikaner had to share the same constituency with other nations who were not participants to his unique national interests. Through circumstances, a new weapon for self-preservation was placed in his hands, however. After unification, the Afrikaner was in the majority according to the

“democratically” organised political unity (because it was confined to the white population of the country). This majority placed the grasp of political power and self-preservation within the reach of the Afrikaner. A new potential struggle was thus born: national unity. Because only through accord could the Afrikaner achieve power.

Van der Merwe (1975:70-71) maintains that the start of the third period was characterised by everything but unity. There was no consensus among leaders as to the need or benefit of sequestering political power by the Afrikaner as an exclusive group. Prime Minister Louis Botha saw the advantage for the Afrikaner in conciliation with the English speaking population and the overpowering authority of Britain, and the construction of a new South African nation. General Jan Smuts saw progressive benefit in the amalgamation of the Afrikaner nation into the greater unity of the British Empire – thus relinquishing own identity. General J.B.M. Hertzog, supported by former president M.T. Steyn, saw a threat to the Afrikaner identity and concerns in Botha’s reconciliation policy (Van der Merwe 1975:71). Especially the English-speaking fraction of the white population was in a strong economic and cultural position. Hertzog believed that conciliation would mean capitulation by the Afrikaner. For him the opinions of Smuts and Botha had the same end result – disappearance of the Afrikaner.

The apparent initial unity in the Afrikaner ranks started to crumble by December 1912, during the break between Botha and Hertzog. Of political determination for the sake of self-preservation there was little chance before and immediately after 1912.

The events after 1912 (the Rebellion of 1914, die South West Campaign, the strikes of 1912 to 1922) alienated more Afrikaners from Smuts, and encouraged them to Hertzog’s point of view. During the elections of 1924, Hertzog took over the government in coalition with the Labour Party (LP) of Creswell. From 1924 tot 1929 the Afrikaners played a dominant political role, but they had to make important concessions to their Labour partners. From 1929 to 1933 Hertzog held an all-out majority, but decided to carry on in the spirit of the coalition.

Van der Merwe (1975:72) maintains that from 1934 to 1939 (and up to 1948) the government cannot be seen as an Afrikaner administration, because a significant portion of Afrikaners distanced themselves from it, and the government included a major portion of the English speaking population. There was no indication of Afrikaner unity in politics.

As did the First World War, the Second World War increased the separation within the Afrikaner ranks. Some Afrikaners enlisted in the armed

forces, others joined the 'Ossewa-Brandwag', while others distanced themselves from both. General Hertzog left the United Party (UP) to join Malan in the United National Party (UNP). Between Hertzog and Malan there were deep-cutting divergences however, and soon Hertzog resigned from politics.

According to Van der Merwe (1975:71), by 1947 an important group of Afrikaners saw the Smuts government as a threat to their self-preservation, partly because many Afrikaners associated Smuts with the English speaking population and the vision of the British Empire, as well as Smuts' "let-it-be" policy in regard to "non-whites". The Afrikaners' language was marginalized in the cities and in government, and it was felt that the Smuts' government paid no consideration to language equality. Afrikaans was losing track against a far more culture-compelling English. This was largely attributed to government actions. The Afrikaners felt threatened on all sides.

The realisation slowly dawned that Afrikaners' primary national concerns would not be maintained if they did not have the political power to ensure this themselves (Van der Merwe 1975:72). They also picked the bitter fruits of earlier division during and after the war years. The writing was on the wall, especially in regard to language rights and the relationship with "non-whites". This gave rise to an agreement in 1947 between Malan and Havenga, which led to an election victory in 1948 for the parties in which Afrikaners were predominant. The 1948 victory was unexpected and from all sides the belief was expressed that Malan's government would not last long – probably no longer than one term. Even though the Afrikaner's majority in the House of Assembly was very small (it was based on a minority of votes at the poll), the Malan cabinet of 1948 was the first that was totally represented by Afrikaners (Van der Merwe 1975:72).

In 1951 the UP and the LP merged to form the former National Party (NP). The NP gradually began to gain ground, and up to 1966 won each subsequent election under different prime ministers, managed to gain more votes at the ballot-box and enlarge their majority in the House of Assembly. Only in 1961, after 13 years of rule, the NP could announce an outright majority (even if small) at the poll for the first time. Due to the overwhelming support the NP collected out of Afrikaner ranks in 1961, Van der Merwe (1975:72) argues that the ideal of gaining political power to ensure self-preservation was achieved.

After achievement of the republican ideal in 1961, the Afrikaner politics entered a new time frame. Constitutional ideals were attained. The Afrikaner was in a strong political position. Afrikaans as language achieved higher levels of acceptance than ever before, and was firmly entrenched in public

service. From 1961 the Afrikaner felt strong enough to afford stretching out a hand of cooperation to non-Afrikaners (Van der Merwe 1975:72). This time, contrary to 1910, 1924 or 1933, the NP did not place its basic character as an Afrikaans party on the line. Up to 1980 it had gained little active support from members of other groups due to the primary Afrikaans character.

In summary, Van der Merwe (1975:73) states that it can be argued that through their developmental history, the Afrikaners realised that their survival could only be assured as long as they retained political control of the country. Van der Merwe claims that Afrikaner political control was dependent upon national unity until 1994.

Racial concern was the third factor that played a role in the foundation and development of the Afrikaner. Although Degenaar (1987:233) states that it would be incorrect to project the development of the Afrikaner purely on the history of the seventeenth century Afrikaner, it would also not be acceptable to disregard the facts, events and declarations of that time. In this regard Dalcanton (1973:305-306), Rhoodie (1969:6-26) and Tatz (1962:1-3) emphasize that the initial foundation of the (Cape) Afrikaner was not about settlement of an independent political system (read culture), but rather racial questions. This was a complex issue in the eighteenth century Cape. Even so, Degenaar (1984:52) is of the opinion that one of the margin characteristics of the Afrikaners is their descendency. He expresses it as follows: *“These cultural, ethnic and religious differences which coincided with social, political and economic distinctions came to be seen in dominantly racial terms in the popular mind; the racial factor being the most visible and easily conceptualised index of group differentiation.”*

Various statements confirm that the Afrikaner was/is racially aware. For example, Swart (1981:77) states unequivocally: *“Afrikanership meant white.”* Jooste (1997a:61 and 1997b:102) and Marais (1980:166) confirm that the Afrikaner was concerned with biological heritage and appearance, as well as mutual relationship. Thus inbreeding and assimilation (culturally or biological) was rejected (Coertze 1983:52 and Marais 1980:124-130). The unsavoury debate about whether the so-called Coloureds are part of the Afrikaner or not, is evidence of the severity with which the Afrikaner saw the racial question (according to Coertze 1982:138, Botha 1938:1 and Sparks 1990:424).

From the preceding information it can firstly be deduced that representatives from different European nations were marshalled, and that the Afrikaners, with their own culture and identity developed from this combination. The role and environment (the southern tip of Africa), as well as a definite historical context were of particular importance, and played a significant role in the

ethnogenesis of the Afrikaner. Secondly it must be noted that it cannot be assumed without question that higher cultural considerations, including language, was the only or most significant factor in regard to the ethnogenesis of the Afrikaner. The inclination to distinguish “us” from “them” on the ground of negative racial considerations is a factor that was present from the beginning, and has left a mark on the values, culture and identity of the Afrikaner.

AFRIKANER NARRATIVE AND MYTHS IN THE PRE-1994 ERA

In connection to Van der Merwe’s (1975) typing of the Afrikaner history as a striving for self-preservation, it is understandable that themes such as national unity and political control over a region would feature prominently in Afrikaner narratives. For example, Van Wyk (1994:305) emphasises that Afrikaner narrative contains characteristic epic material, especially in regard to the scattering and large-scale migration to the South African interior, battles with indigenous peoples, the commandos, strong leadership figures, as well as the perception of the protection and intervention of God. The continual narrative interpretation and reiteration of this past – in the form of political rhetoric and literature – did not only sharpen the Afrikaner’s historical awareness, but also the strengthened the bond of the nation to the national place of origin (Cattell 2001:13). In connection to the narrative integration of the present with the past, the adoption of history in the present in the form of national symbols, e.g. the erection of monuments and rituals, of which the most important according to Moodie (1975:20-21), was the celebration of the Day of the Covenant, lead to a general dedication of the Afrikaner past. Pienaar (1964:235) maintains that the sentiments that were conjured up by the continuity of the mythical origin of the nation come to the forefront in statements such as that of D.F. Malan in 1937. Malan described the Afrikaner history as the “greatest artwork of the century” and “a miracle”.

AFRIKANER NARRATIVE AND MYTHS IN THE POST –1994 ERA

According to André P. Brink (in Van Zyl 2000:117), during the last decade there was a near obsessive fixation with the past in the Afrikaans literature. He says that the story of the Afrikaner is repeatedly re-examined and re-told. Where there used to be a large measure of analogy around the shared tale (e.g. the path that “we” travelled up to now, with a Jan van Riebeeck, Free Burghers, the Great Trek, Boer Republics, Boer War and the Rebellion), this has come under pressure and are there progressively more Afrikaners who do not feel that this saga is “our story” any longer.

Professor Nico Smith's (<http://www.litnet.co.za> - 2005/11/25:1 of 23) interpretation of the Afrikaner's origin legend is an example of a new type of Afrikaner narratology. For the obvious reasons, not all Afrikaners agree with his version. The point, however, is that for various reasons, progressively more Afrikaners may start to accept it – and thus award it the status of truth.

Smith (<http://www.litnet.co.za> - 2005/11/25:2 van 23) is of the opinion that the Afrikaners' ancestors made themselves at home on the African soil without an invitation, no negotiations with whoever had birth-right on the region, and thus without permission. To him, they were squatters in the true sense of the word, and they would have remained such if they had kept to the original goal of why they came here. Their lords, of who there were seventeen in the Netherlands, and with that their LORD, of who there was Three, sent them to settle a refreshment post (a Hamburger Hut, as Casper de Vries called it) here at the southern tip of Africa, and at the same time, to expand the kingdom of their LORD. Under the leadership of their "chief-induna", Jan van Riebeeck, they came squatting here to accumulate profit for their lords and their LORD, in order to enrich the motherland, Nederland, and to subjugate the "wild" and "brutal" people in Africa to their LORD.

Smith explains that the first whites (the ancestors of the Afrikaners) initially lived in informal settlements and then immediately started to build a fort – an indication that their stay would be permanent. He continues: *"... that the first permanent structure which was built was a fort, was an indication that they felt threatened because they knew that they had committed an illegality and they had to defend themselves against those against which they had misbehaved – the legal inhabitants of the land. They therefore knew well that their squatting was not acceptable to the original owners of the land and had to defend their uninvited presence. And when the legal owners had been driven off the farm or tamed, the fort became a castle in which the kings (or in African terms: indunas) of the squatters could reside. And kings (indunas) want to create subjects and rule. That is why a simple refreshment station was soon no longer sufficient. The refreshment post had to be extended. So Van Riebeeck gave permission for some of the squatters to start occupying farms. From squatting status the squatters progressed to a new status – that of farm occupancy"* (<http://www.litnet.co.za> - 2005/11/25:3 of 23).

Smith refers to the settling of the whites at the Cape in 1652 as die start of the squatting. He says: *"The humble start in 1652, as Giliomee calls the commencement of the squatting, progressed after only five years of squatting in the refreshment post, to brutal farm occupancy. The nine squatters to who Van Riebeeck gave the right to go and occupy farms in 1657, were rightly called free burghers, 'free' farmers – free to work out an own living on their gratis acquired property. Ten years later there were 35 free farmers and another 20*

years later, 260. At the start of the eighteenth century there were 2 000 free farm occupiers and at the end of the eighteenth century 25 000. When the farm occupancy eventually came to an end, 87% of the land belonged to the free farmers and only 13% to the original owners of South Africa. Indeed a freedom in squatting that knew no bounds. There were also no bounds to their crusade to invade and occupy, because 'God's goodness' towards them, as they saw it and sang in one of their church hymns, knew no bounds. When bounds were justly placed on the free farmers, they simply packed up and moved – northwards. *Dat vrije volk zijn wij!* They wanted to be free and accepted no Property Limited. They wanted to be a free company, which could privately and limitlessly work out a living of their own choice and contemplation..."

"But in the end history caught up with the Afrikaners and their appointment to reign was withdrawn. What an irony. God placed the Afrikaners in Africa to reign, appointed them to maintain right and order, and Christianise the wild and rude people, and when they had done all this, and built up the land with offerings of blood and goods, God took the reign away from them and gave the land back to the wild and rude people from whom they had taken it." According to Smith, history is indeed a cruel judge who rightly decides the destiny of nations and people in the end. Or rather, history only fulfils the judgement, which people construct for themselves.

Previously it was indicated that identification contains an element of self-ascribing, as well as ascribing by "others". Applied to this study, it means that the narrative of other culture groups regarding their experiences, opinions and perceptions of the Afrikaners are important if the Afrikaner wants to understand their own identity. It is only when the Afrikaners take note of the narrative that they can make a sensible re-evaluation of their own value-evaluation and identity. The story of Tiro is a narrative that tells how the "others" experienced the Afrikaner in the apartheid era:

"5 Februarie 1974 ...

daar was 'n swart man sy naam was Tiro
 (en Tiro lê in sy eie bloed)
 wou mos geleerdheid gaan haal by 'n 'universiteit'
 (en Tiro lê in sy eie bloed)
 waar hy hardegat getrek het om sy opvoeding tóe te pás
 (en Tiro lê in sy eie bloed)
 toe voor hy nog verban kon word tot die staat van leefdoories
 het hy sy geboortegrond se stof afgeskud
 vir 'n dorp met die naam Gaborone in 'n land
 met die naam van Botswana in die woestyn
 met oral vlammetjies van 'n stryd-om-vryheid
 wat sy woorde laat ontbrand het ...

*en die baas moes toon dat 'n windgat kaffer
 sy plek moet ken, of so nié ...
 en die baas het vir Tiro 'n slim boek gepos
 en Tiro lê in sy eie bloed
 en Tiro lê in sy eie bloed
 en Tiro is die binnevlam binne die rooi
 ('boeke is bomme, vir my dooie broer, Abraham')*

(Breytenbach 1981:19)

[Free translation for the sake of this study:

“5 February 1974 ...

*there was a black man his name was Tiro
 (and Tiro lies in his own blood)
 wanted to get a learning from a 'university'
 (and Tiro lies in his own blood)
 where he took a hard line to apply his learning
 (and Tiro lies in his own blood)
 then before he could even be banned to the status of living-death
 he shook off the dust of his fatherland
 for a town with the name Gaborone in a land
 with the name Botswana in the desert
 with flames of a struggle-for-freedom all around
 that caught his words on fire ...
 and the boss had to show that a windbag kaffir
 must know his place, or else
 and the boss posted a clever book to Tiro
 and Tiro lies in his own blood
 and Tiro lies in his own blood
 and Tiro is the inner flame inside the scarlet
 ('books are bombs, for my dead brother, Abraham')*

(Breytenbach 1981:19)]

In a sense, the narrative of Tiro can be seen as “lesser history”, because it never gained as much attention in the “official” (white) historical account as that of Steve Biko, for example, or because the full saga of his life and death was unknown or even suppressed. Figures such as Abraham Tiro count among the many black people who died under questionable conditions during the hegemony of the apartheid government, whose names were never made known or forgotten in time. Sometimes such lesser history and narrative is utilised in fictional format: Tiro, as (among others) Ephraim Tiro in Jeanette Ferreira’s (1985:64) *Citation of a revolution*. In Breytenbach’s poem, the fictionalising process is forestalled, not only by the date at the top and the footnote below the verse, but also by the compound method of storytelling.

From the preceding information it is clear that standard, traditional narrative can no longer be accepted as the only adequate narrative of the Afrikaner. Among Afrikaners, the need has arisen to re-shape their narrative, as well as to take note of the narrative of other countrymen about them.

CONCLUSION

The Afrikaners are undergoing since 1994 extensive changes in culture, values, identity, and narrative. This is mainly due to the change in the environment in which the Afrikaners find themselves, namely the so-called “new” South Africa, which has greatly changed since the scheduled date, and is still doing so. In the anthropology (and more precisely cultural ecology) it is accepted that culture is the result of adaptation to a definite environment. If the contemporary Afrikaner wants to be anthropologically understood, attention will have to be given to the context in which the Afrikaner exists and functions, namely the “new” South Africa, and what influence this has (had) on the Afrikaner.

A second comment is that the process of adaptation, re-examination and redefining of the Afrikaner is in full swing. It has not yet been completed, thus no final answers can be given about the outcome. The fact that the Afrikaner is caught in a fluid situation leads to uncertainty, which is reflected in the multitude of dialogues that rage within Afrikaner ranks. Given these realities, it is understandable that the former Afrikaner narratives have become obsolete, and that an urgent need has arisen for new narratives for the Afrikaner in a post-apartheid South Africa.

¹ Notwithstanding the problems in constructing definitions, especially in a post modernistic context, it was decided that the departure point of this article would be that the Afrikaner is a white group with an own culture. Afrikaners are probably one of the most recent examples of ethnogenesis. Representatives of different nations from Europe were unified in a defined context, in a definite locality, and developed an own identity. The role of the locality (the southern most tip of Africa), is of special importance and has contributed specifically to the Afrikaner identity.

² In this article the male form has been applied consistently, although the meaning is inclusive, and not genderistic (Mouton 2003:131).

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The Hijab in Educational Institutions and Human Rights: Perspectives from Nigeria and Beyond

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Abstract

L'Islam met beaucoup d'accent sur la modestie et la chasteté. L'Islam le rend forcé pour que tous les musulmans s'habillent avec la grande modestie. Le dressage modeste pour des femelles désigné sous le nom du hijab. L'AMBIT exact du hijab est sujet des polémiques. Au cours des années, conformément à cette injonction divine, les femmes musulmanes ont adopté tous ou un ou plusieurs combinaison de ces derniers : vêtement externe lâche (jilbab), foulards (khimar), voile de visage (niqab), et bas pour couvrir leurs pieds. N'importe quel femme musulman pieux se sentirait fortement, l'impératif pour adopter ces derniers. Les nombres Teeming d'étudiants dans les établissements tertiaires au Nigéria se tournent maintenant vers le hijab. Cependant, quelques établissements ont essayé de renverser le hijab en présentant codes vestimentaires pour leurs étudiants. Ceux-ci ont causé des frottements dans beaucoup d'établissements. Les étudiants affectés arguent du fait entre autres que codes vestimentaires violent leur droit fondamental constitutionnellement garanti de pratiquer et observer les principes de leur religion et de leur droit à l'absence de la discrimination pour des raisons de religion. Ce document semble que les frottements produits par le désaccord entre les impératifs et les codes vestimentaires religieux dans les établissements tertiaires (universités, universités d'éducation, écoles secondaires, et l'école de droit nigérienne) dans le cadre des droits religieux au Nigéria, et l'attitude des cours là-dessus. Le papier examine également la position en vertu du droit international de droits de l'homme et dans d'autres pays à travers le monde.

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Islam places much emphasis on modesty and chastity. These demand respect for nudity. Islam makes it compulsory for all Muslims to dress with great modesty. The modest dressing for females is referred to as the *hijab*.¹ The exact ambit of the *hijab* is subject of controversies but there is a consensus among all Islamic scholars that all mature females when in a place where non-*mahrims*² would see them must dress in a way that all their bodies are covered with loose clothing which does not expose the shape of the body and which is not transparent. In addition, the covering of the head in a manner that the hair, the neck and the shape of the bosom are not exposed is considered mandatory. The areas of controversy are rather narrow. Majority of the scholars would permit the exposure of the face and feet while other scholars are of the view that these should be covered also.³ The differences between the scholars are not based on their private whims and caprices but on the different interpretations they give to the same texts of the *Qur'an* and *hadith*⁴. The practical result is that some Muslim women apart from adopting the long loose outer garment (*jilbab*) and headscarves (*Khimar*⁵) that cover the head, neck and the upper body, also adopt the face veil (*niqab*). Others go further by covering their hands with gloves and their feet with stockings. In this way, no part of the body is exposed to the gaze of strangers. Some others do this but leave the hands, feet, and face exposed.

¹ Literally *hijab* means "woman's veil", "cover", "wrap", "drape", "partition", or "curtain": J. Milton Cowan (ed.), *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, reprint 1980). In this paper, the headscarf, which we have also referred to as '*hijab*', is distinguished by the inverted commas

² A *mahrim* is a close relative with whom marriage is prohibited.

³ The majority relies essentially on the following, which was reported from the Prophet (SAW): "Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, entered upon the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) wearing thin clothes. The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) turned his attention from her. He said: O Asma', when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it does not suit her that she displays her parts of body except this and this, and he pointed to her face and hands": Abu Dawood, *Sunan* (Dar Ihyau al-Sunnah Al-Tabauyat, undated) Hadith No. 4092. See the detailed consideration of this view in Al-Muhajabah, *Opinion of scholars in favour of displaying the face and hands at* <<http://www.muhaajabah.com/scholars.htm>> (accessed on 3 September 2006). Also see generally Murtaza Mutahhari, *On the Islamic Hijab* (Tehran: Islamic Propagation Organization, 1987).

⁴ *Hadith*: the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). These are regarded by Muslims as part of the binding aspects of the Islamic faith.

⁵ Abdul Rahman Abdullah, formerly Raymond J. Manderola (ed.), *Islamic Dress Code for Women* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam, 1999) pp. 10 – 11, Ayub Azhar Hamid, *Unveiling The Commandments: The Truth About Hijaab, Jilbaab and Khimar* (Canada: Bayaan Communications and Publications, 2004) 25 -26 and Manisuli Ssenyonjo, "Moslem Women, Religion and the Hijab: A Human Rights Perspective" *East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights* Vol. 14 No, 1, 2008, 148, at 155.

Muslims constitute a sizeable percent of the Nigerian populace.⁶ The northern Nigeria is overwhelmingly Islamic with pockets of Christians and adherents of traditional religions. Muslims constitute the majority in the southwestern part of the country. Although, Christians and adherents of traditional religion dominate the southeast, a few communities are largely Muslims. The position in the South South is similar to that of the southeastern except that only few individuals are Muslims. The level of compliance of female Muslims in the country with the Islamic dress code varies from the *purdah* (seclusion) and the 'full' *hijab* to nominal headscarf covering just the head. Some do not use the *jilbab* but adopt traditional or western mode of dressing and use scarves to cover their heads. The sizes of these scarves vary from the "cape *hijab*" which merely covers the head and the shoulders to the one extending beyond the knees. It is not all Muslim women in the country that comply with the requirements of the *hijab*. Some do not comply at all and there is no difference at all between these Muslims and non-Muslims in terms of dressing.

Islam recognizes as a factual matter that Muslims are of varying degrees of faith but enjoins every Muslim to strive to greater heights of faith.⁷ A Muslim cannot claim to be a true believer (*Mumin*), that is, a person with faith (*iman*) unless he or she complies or strives to the utmost of his or her ability to comply with all the tenets of Islam.⁸ Any pious Muslim woman would therefore feel strongly, the imperative to adopt the *hijab*. This is because it is a great sin not to do so. It is therefore not surprising that many enlightened and highly educated Muslim women are now turning to the *hijab*. The *hijab* has become the foremost symbol of Islamic revivalism (or to some "political Islam") in the modern era. It has also become the symbol of the clash, which some predicted between Islam and western civilization.⁹

⁶ See the statistics in Abdulumuni A. Oba, "Religious Rights and the Corporate World in Nigeria: Products and Personnel Perspectives" *Recht in Afrika* 2004, 195 at pp. 195 - 196.

⁷ The various categories are determined by a person's the level of *Islam* (surrender), *Iman* (faith), *taqwa* (God-consciousness), and *Ihsan* (godliness): Khurram Murad, "Introduction" in Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change* (London: The Islamic Foundation, new English version, 1984) p. 11.

⁸ The Qur'an says concerning some new converts: "The desert Arabs say, "We believe" Say: "Ye have no faith (*iman*); but ye (only) say, "We have submitted our wills to Allah," for not yet has Faith entered your hearts... only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and His Apostle, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the cause of Allah: such are the sincere ones": Qur'an 49: 14 - 15. Again, the Qur'an says: "But no, by thy Lord, they can have no (real) faith until they make thee judge in all disputes between them and find in their souls no resistance against thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction": Qur'an 4:65.

⁹ See the clash of civilization thesis in Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization? Foreign Affairs" Vol. 72, 1993, 2993 and Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order* (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1996).

Islamic revivalism is very strong in Nigeria particularly in northern part of the country where in the post 1999 era majority of the states formally declared Islamic law as their basic and official law. It is equally strong in the southwest even though there, Islam is grudgingly accorded official recognition only as a personal law.¹⁰ Throughout the country, more and more Muslim students are turning to Islamic values. The most visible expression of this revivalism is perhaps the adoption of the *hijab* by many female students. The number of such students is growing daily. Today, teeming numbers of women in *hijab* are present in tertiary institutions in the north and southwest. Even in institutions in the southeast and south-south, students in *hijab* are seen. The whole spectrum of the *hijab* is represented among these students. The reaction of the authorities of tertiary institutions in the country to the increasing use of the *hijab* by students varies. Many institutions simply ignored the development. However, in some institutions the authorities have attempted to subvert the *hijab* by introducing dress codes for their students. These dress codes are not uniform across the country. While some institutions prohibit only the *niqab*, others prohibit both the *niqab* and the *khimar* and a few prohibit both and even the *jilbab*. The dress codes and the *hijab* prohibition have caused many frictions in the institutions. The affected students argue inter-alia that the dress codes violate their constitutionally guaranteed fundamental right to practice and observe the tenets of their religion. Religious rights as fundamental rights in Nigeria stand on two constitutionally guaranteed human rights. The first is the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion contained in section 38 (1) of the 1999 Constitution:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to change religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

The second is the right to freedom from discrimination on grounds of religion articulated in section 42 (1) of the Constitution:

¹⁰ Muri Okunola, "The Relevance of Sharia to Nigeria" in Nura Alkali, et al (eds), *Islam in Africa – Proceedings of the Islam in Africa Conference*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1993) 23 – 36 and Muri Okunola, "Relationship between Islamic Law and Customary Law of Succession in Southern Nigeria" in Yemi Osinbajo and Awa. U. Kalu (eds.), *Towards A Restatement of Nigerian Customary Law* (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Justice, 1991) pp. 157 – 173.

A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person

- (a) be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions or political opinions are not made subject; or
- (b) be accorded either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action any privilege or advantage that is not accorded to citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions or political opinions.

Religious rights like other human rights are not without limits. The only constitutional limits to religious rights are specified in section 45 of the Constitution:

- (1) Nothing in sections 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 of this Constitution shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society –
 - (a) in the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health; or
 - (b) for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedom of other persons.¹¹

International human rights provide additional sources of freedom of religion. Nigeria is a party to many international human rights documents that guarantee religious freedom.¹² These include general human rights treaties which include the right to freedom of religion among other rights such as the

¹¹ See an overview of some of the legislations covered by these provisions in A. A. Oba, "The Relevance of Religion in Nigeria, *Punjab University Law Journal* 1997 Vol. LIV, 23 at pp 37 – 39.

¹² See the general review of some of these documents in R. P. Dhokalia, "The Human Right to Religious Freedom: Problems of Effective Enjoyment", *Calabar Law Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (1986) 90 at pp. 97 - 98.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948¹³, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights¹⁴, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹⁵, and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities¹⁶ and treaties dealing specifically with religious rights such as the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.¹⁷ The Constitution stipulates that treaties have the force of law in the country only if enacted into law by the National Assembly.¹⁸ The African Charter is the only human rights treaty that has been so domesticated and has become part of Nigerian law¹⁹

This paper looks at the frictions generated by the clash between religious imperatives and dress codes in tertiary institutions (universities, colleges of education, secondary schools, and the Nigerian Law School) in the context of religious rights in Nigeria and in other countries across the world.

THE HIJAB IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. Universities

The ostensible reason for the introduction of dress codes in some Nigerian universities is the need to maintain decent dressing among the student populace. It is indisputable that many female students make indecent display of their bodies by the scant dresses they wear on the campuses and to lectures. Nonetheless, some of the dress codes that have emerged went well beyond the curtailment of immorality and clearly targeted the *hijab*. The

¹³ Adopted on 10 December 1948, G.A. Res. 217A (III). UN Doc. A/810, at 71 (1948). Article 18 of the Declaration provides for freedom of religion.

¹⁴ Adopted on 27 June 1981, entered into force 21 October 1986, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/57/3 Rev. 5 reprinted in (1982) 21 *International Legal Materials* 58. Article 8 provides for freedom of religion.

¹⁵ Adopted 16 Dec. 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976, G. A. Res. 2200A (XXI), UN Doc. A/6316 (1966), 999 UNTS 171 reprinted in (1967) 6 *International Legal Materials* 368. Article 18 provides for freedom of religion

¹⁶ Adopted 18 December 1992, G. A. Res. 47/135, reprinted in (1993) 32 *International Legal Materials* 911.

¹⁷ Adopted 25 November 1981, G. A. Res. 36/55, 35 UN GOAR, Supp. (No. 51), UN Doc. A/36/51, at 171 (1981).

¹⁸ Section 12, 1999 Constitution.

¹⁹ See the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Enforcement and Ratification) Act, *supra*, *General Sani Abacha & Ors v Chief Gani Fawehinmi* [2000] 4 S.C.N.J. 401, U. O. Umzurike 'The Application of International Human Rights Norms to Nigeria' (1997) 18 *The Advocate* 36–37 and A. A. Oba, "The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Ouster Clauses under the Military Regimes in Nigeria: Before and after 11 September" *African Human Rights Law Journal* Vol. 4 No. 2, 2004, 275 at pp. 279.

Obafemi Awolowo University provides a good example of this.²⁰ The University's guidelines regarding dressing forbid the wearing by students on the campus of dresses that are "sexually provocative" and which "exposes vital parts of the body that are supposed to be hidden (such as the chest, navel and thighs)". The guidelines also stated:

The identity of all students must, at all times, be visible, i.e. their faces must be fully visible. The form of dressing that obscures identification poses serious security problems.

This no doubt targeted the *niqab*. The guidelines further permitted the faculties "to draw up additional guidelines that are relevant to their academic activities". Pursuant to this, the Faculty of Pharmacy issued a dress code, which extended the prohibition to the *jilbab* and gave the following as justification:

Wearing a flowing dress is prohibited in the laboratory because it has been found to cause dispensed and corrosive chemicals to pour on another student or pour on the wood bench. Such spill-over usually eats up the laboratory benches and often skin. In the case of concentrated sulphuric acid, the burn it causes leaves a wound that takes a long time to heal with a permanent scar.²¹

In response, some students filed a suit challenging the university's dress code.²² In granting the plaintiffs an interim injunction against the defendants, the court held that the dress code was "most unwarranted, unfair, discriminatory, oppressive, baseless, a gross violation of the rules of natural justice and of the Applicants' respective Constitutional rights, unlawful, unconstitutional, null and void".²³ However, this injunction was later discharged and the *status quo ante* was restored by the court.²⁴

It is interesting that the Faculty of Pharmacy adopted its prohibition of "flowing dresses" from the dress code in force at the Kuwait University. This may be because the faculty felt it needed to pre-empt accusations of religious intolerance. The attitude of the Kuwait University to the *hijab* is an

²⁰ The information on the position at this university was derived essentially from Kayode Fayokun, "Limits to the Campus Dress Codes" *Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vol. 7, 2003, 1, at pp. 13 - 14.

²¹ *Ibid.*.

²² *S. J. Bamigbade v Vice Chancellor, Obafemi Awolowo University* (Unreported) Suit No. HIF/MISC/20/2002 delivered by Awotoye J., at the Ile-Ife High Court on 9/5/2002. The case was cited and discussed extensively in Fayokun, *supra* note 20, 13 - 14.

²³ *Id.*, at 13 -14.

²⁴ *Id.*

example of the total capitulation of some Muslims and the authorities in some Islamic countries to western values. This attitude is not a popular one and is definitely not representative of the past and modern trends in the Islamic nation (*Ummah*). The Obafemi Awolowo University's Faculty of Pharmacy could have adopted a more progressive approach by taking after the universities in other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Malaysia²⁵ that permit the *hijab*. The University of Ilorin provides a good example for other universities in the country. At the 2006 induction ceremony of medical students in University of Ilorin, two of the doctors inducted wore face veils. It was the first time this happened. Although, there was no official reaction to this by the College of Medicine to which these graduating students belong or by the university authorities, it no doubt generated some controversy. It was rumoured that the last minute behind-the-scene attempt by the college to prevent the induction of the two students was repulsed by the Vice Chancellor who prudently and wisely did not want a religious controversy in his campus. The Vice Chancellor was said to have dismissed the objections by pointing out that these students went through the faculty, passed their examinations and qualified as a medical doctors in the college and its faculties wearing the face veil and that the induction ceremony could not in these circumstances be the appropriate forum to raise the face veil issue against the students.

2. Polytechnics and Colleges of Education

The issue of dress codes with special reference to the "full *hijab*" was considered by the Ilorin High Court in *Bashirat Salisu and Ors v The Provost, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin and ors*²⁶ where the court struck down the regulation prohibiting female Muslim students from wearing veils on the College of Education, Ilorin campus. The facts of the case as found by the court are that the three applicants (plaintiffs) are "female Muslim students of College of Education Ilorin whose life is guided purely by Islamic doctrines of which require them to cover their body with *hijab* or 'veil'". On 28 September

²⁵ For example according to the International Islamic University, Malaysia Students' Discipline Rules 2004 guidebook, only female Muslim students' attire should cover the whole body except the face and palms: the full text of the handbook is available at the university's website <http://www.edu.my/currentstudent/images/st_attire.pdf>. See also the news report Sharmilla Ganesan, "Non-Muslim IUM students need not wear *tudung* [*hijab*]" at <<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2005/11/10/nation/12554244&sec=nation>> (accessed on 22 Aug 2006).

²⁶ (Unreported) Suit No. KWS/28M/2006 delivered by Kawu J. on 8 May 2006. See the news report of the case in Nigeria: "Coe Ilorin: Muslim Students Floor Provost Over Dress Code Law" *Daily Trust* (Abuja), 9 May 2006, also available online at <<http://www.dailytrust.com/news1d.htm>> and <<http://allAfrica.com/stories/200605090734.htm>> both accessed on 22 May, 2006.

2005, the respondent college issued a circular titled “Dress Code for students of the College”. Article J of Code prohibits the wearing of “dresses/apparels that cover the entire face of an individual thereby making the immediate identity of the person impossible”. Acting pursuant to this article, the respondents prevented the applicants from attending lectures and writing examinations. The applicants therefore went to court. The arguments in the case are quite interesting. The applicants contended that since the veil is part of their religion, it falls within the ambit of their fundamental right to religion as enshrined in section 38 (1) of the Constitution quoted above

The respondents argued that it is not compulsory in Islam for a Muslim woman to cover her face completely and that the three respondents are the only ones who insisted on the putting on the veil out of the respondents’ total Muslim population of 4000 students. They argued further that article J of the dress code is justified since effective communication between students and lecturers would require that the faces and eyes of the student been seen by the lecturers. They also contended that veils could aid cheating at examinations. Finally, they contended that the applicants could not complain since they have taken the College’s matriculation oath whereby they affirmed that they would abide by the College rules and regulation.

The court upheld the contention that the regulation violated the freedom of religion of the applicants. The court interpreting sub-section 1 of section 38 held:

According to the LONGMAN DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH NEW EDITION at page 867, the word “manifest” means to show, or to appear or become easy to see while “OBSERVANCE” is defined at page 973 to mean “... a part of a religious ceremony; ritual observances”. The word “practice” is defined at page 1104 to mean “Something that you do often because of your religion or... religions beliefs and practices.”²⁷

The court pointed out that fundamental rights granted by the constitution could only be limited by the constitution. It held that the prohibition of the veil by the respondents could not be brought within the permitted limits to freedom of religion stipulated under section 45 of the Constitution (quoted above). The section provides that the right to freedom of religion (and other fundamental rights) could be limited by any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health and for protecting the rights and freedom of

²⁷ *Id.*, at 6.

others. The court also held that the fact that other female Muslim students in the school do not wear the veil could not defeat the rights of the applicants. The court held that the *hijab* cannot be brought under the "... arrogant, indecent and embarrassing modes of dressing ..." which the respondents' dress code sought to prevent. According to the court, a matriculation oath is not "a blank cheque signed by the students in favour of the college allowing it to withdraw as many rights of the students as the college fancy under the excuse that such rights have been waived",²⁸ The court declared that a matriculation oath could not abridge fundamental rights or imply a waiver of fundamental rights.

It is important to note however that the court did not strike down the dress code *in toto* as its decision relates only to Article J which they applicants challenged before the court:

... let me state for the sake of clarity that the applicants have approached the court for redress only in respect of article J of the dress code which prohibits the use of dresses or apparels which cover the entire face. It is therefore only article J which has been adjudged offensive to the provisions of section 38 of the constitution that should and is hereby struck down from the dress code. All other articles in the dress code therefore remains operative so far as they have not been pronounced otherwise by the court.²⁹

3. Secondary Schools

All secondary schools in the country have dress codes for their students. Mandatory school uniform is standard in all schools. Some schools have additional regulations such as hairstyles and hair lengths for both male and female students. Most schools insist on short haircuts for boys and will overlook stylish haircuts provided the styles are not too flamboyant or conspicuous. The large varieties of hairstyles available to the girls, which range from the different traditional styles of wearing and plaiting to the modern western styles of perming and curls present more problems for schools. Most schools will not permit perming and curls but virtually all will allow plaiting and weaving. Some schools stipulate mandatory plaiting or weaving patterns on a weekly basis. In *Onyinyeka M. Enoch v Mary U.*

²⁸ *Id.*, at 9.

²⁹ *Id.*, at 12.

*Akobi*³⁰, the High Court of Anambra State considered hairstyle regulations in secondary schools vis-à-vis religious rights. In the case, a fresh female student spotting a “newly permed hair” contrary to school regulations was refused registration by a Federal Government College. The school insisted that she cut her hair short in compliance with the student regulation. The student argues citing the Biblical Chapters 11 Verses 5 – 6 and 10 – 15 of the Book of Corinthians that her Christian faith requires her never to “cut, shorn or shave her hair”. The Court interpreting religion solely a system of belief and dismissing summarily without any reason the biblical passages cited by the applicant held that the religious rights of the applicant have not been violated.³¹ The court held that the school’s regulation relating to keeping the hair short is “not only reasonable, but accords with proper and basic discipline in a model educational institution”.³² This decision was heavily criticized, and rightly too. For one thing, the court introduced without any basis, the limitation of “reasonableness” to freedom of religion. Professor Okonkwo rightly pointed out:

But even if the requirement that lower form students should shorn their hair was prescribed by law, it is submitted that the law would be unconstitutional because it would not be founded on any of the exceptions in section 41 (1) i.e. defence, public safety, public morality, public health or protecting the rights and freedoms of other persons. The closest, if at all, may be public morality but it is difficult to appreciate how exempting a lower form student from cutting short her hair will affect public morality in a school where upper form students may wear their hair long (and as alleged, some foreign lower form students have been exempted).³³

Nwauche agrees with Professor Okonkwo adding that “if the learned trial judge had averted his mind to the effect of section 39 (1) of the 1979 Constitution [now section 45, 1999 Constitution quoted *supra*] the process of balancing interest may have been dispensed with since the facts in the case were not disputed, the court should have reached a verdict that the plaintiffs

³⁰ (1994) A.N.S.L.R. 338 cited and discussed extensively in E. S. Nwauche, “A Note on Manifesting the Right to Freedom of Religion in Nigeria” *Calabar Law Journal* Vol. 4 no. 1, 1999, 97 at pp. 104 – 105.

³¹ At 352 of the judgment cited in *supra* note 30.

³² *Id.*, at 353.

³³ C. O. Okonkwo, “Religious Freedom – *Onyinyeka M. Enoch v Okobi*: A Comment” *Nigerian Juridical Review*, Vol. 6, 1994 – 1997, 214 at p. 217 quoted in Nwauche, *supra* note 30, 105

fundamental rights have been infringed”.³⁴ Another problem is that the court did not avert its mind to what properly constitute a religious tenet. The court held that the requirement that students cut their hairs short is an “innocuous, humane, fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory” requirement, which has no religious connotation.³⁵ With due respect to the learned judge this cannot be correct. The case of some Christians leaving their hair unshorn is not strange in Nigeria. Many spiritual churches believe that children born naturally with matted hair similar to the dreadlocks popular among Rastafarians and Jamaican reggae artists³⁶ have spiritual powers of prophesy and that they retain this power only if their hair remains unshorn. However, the applicant’s case was not based on this well-known practice but on a general relatively unknown and little practiced direction to Christian women. May be this was why the court insinuated that the applicant’s contention are not part of the “lawful tenets of her chosen faith”.³⁷ The court did not explain how it came about this. The court ought to have considered the biblical passages cited by the applicant (which were not in any way controverted or denied by the respondents) to determine whether the contention of the applicant is correct. May be the court was biased because the applicant’s hair was permed. However, the court could have affirmed the applicant’s right to leave her hair unshorn but without perming. After all, perming is not part of the religious tenet in question.

In the north, for most schools the headscarf is part of the school uniform. In other schools, the headscarves of stated colours are permitted options for female students. This position was attained in some schools only after much controversy.³⁸ In the south, the controversy was more heated. The incident at a school in Ibadan in 2003 provided the worst example of the acrimonious nature of the opposition to the *hijab* in schools. The students who refused to remove their head scarves when so ordered by the school authorities and who allegedly shouted what the school authorities described as “Islamic

³⁴ Nwauche, *supra* note 30, 105.

³⁵ At p. 355 of the judgment cited in *supra* note 30.

³⁶ Bob Marley is perhaps the most popular of such reggae artist. He popularized reggae music and the Rastafarian creed.

³⁷ At 355 of the judgment cited in *supra* note 30.

³⁸ The controversy is by no means settled especially in the schools founded by Christian missions. For example there another *hijab* controversy in the ECWA LGU BEA School, Oja Iya, Ilorin in November 2006. This controversy was eventually settled in favour of the right of the pupils to wear the *hijab* if they so wish. Interestingly, although the school was founded by the ECWA Mission, the student population is 78.5% Muslims and 21.5% Christians. Source: “Letter of Notification and Appeal” written by the PTA Association of Kwara State to the headmaster of the School. The date of the letter is not clear in the copy seen by this author.

Slogans” were charged to court for “conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace”!³⁹

There has been a considerable reduction in the tension in relation to the *hijab* in secondary schools due to three main factors. The first is that now most public schools have accepted the *hijab* as an optional part of their school uniforms. Secondly, Muslims are establishing more and more private schools where the *hijab* is allowed. Lastly, generally Muslim parents no longer enrol their children in schools they consider hostile to the Islam

4. Nigerian Law School

The Nigerian Law School is responsible for the professional training of lawyers in the country. It is part of the Call to Bar requirements that the students must attend at least three mandatory dinners organized in the school. Students are expected to attend the dinners wearing the “regulation dress”. This for the males has been interpreted to mean a white shirt, black tie, and dark suit.⁴⁰ For the females, the regulation dress in England from which the Nigerian position derived was stated by Boulton:

Women barristers should wear ordinary gowns and wig which should completely cover and conceal the hair and hands. Dress should be plain black or very dark, high to the neck with long sleeves and not higher than the gown, with a high plain white collar. Alternatively, plain coats and skirts may be worn black or very dark, not higher than the gown, with plain shirts and high collars.⁴¹

The Council of Legal Education in Nigeria and the Nigerian Law School interpreted this thus:

For female students, white blouse, dark jacket and black skirts covering the knees (dark suit) or dark ladies dress and black shoes are to be worn. There should be no embroidery and trimmings of any type and only moderate jewellery (ear – rings, and watches) are allowed to be worn.⁴²

³⁹ See the news report in Yemi Banjo, *35 Students charged with rioting* THE PUNCH, Tuesday, March 20, 2003, p. 10 and comments in Oba, *supra* note 5, 210.

⁴⁰ Circular issued by the Council of Legal Education to the students of the Nigeria Law School quoted in Fayokun, *supra* note 20, 25. See also J. Ola Orojo, *Conduct and Etiquette for Legal Practitioners* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1979) p. 76.

⁴¹ W. W. Boulton, *Conduct and Etiquette at the Bar of England and Wales* (3rd ed,) p. 77.

⁴² Circular issued by the Council of Legal Education quoted in Fayokun, *supra* note 20, 25.

Thus, regulation dress for women is either black dress or black dress suit over white blouses. In both cases, the women are to leave their head bare without any head covering in the manner of English women as a matter of *practice* even though there is nothing in the *rules*, which require this. The prohibition of head covering became controversial when female students in *khimar* started gaining admission into the Law School. This has remained a continuing controversy. In some campuses of the Law School, women are permitted to wear a black skull cap, which they purchase at exorbitant prices. In other campuses, the caps are not allowed. In any case, the cap does not meet the minimum Islamic requirement for head covering for the caps leave part of the hair, the ears and the neck bare. Although there is a strong opposition to the law school's policy on the *hijab*,⁴³ the law school has not been challenged in court. This may be due to the fear of aggrieved students as to the possible consequences on their careers. The Nigerian Law School together with its controlling body the Council of Legal Education enjoys a monopoly of legal education in the country and an unfettered discretion on whom to admit to the Nigerian Bar. Once a student incurs the wrath of the authorities of the School and the Council, he or she could forget about becoming a lawyer in the country.

Although the law school has not been challenged in court on the *hijab* issue, the law school would do well to relax its attitude on the *khimar*. This is because if the law school were challenged in court, the result would most likely to be no different from *Bashirat Saliu's* case since the same arguments and laws would apply.

The main reason why the hostility to the *khimar* has persisted in the Law School is the attitude of many senior Muslim judges and lawyers who have taken the conservative attitude that female Muslim students should comply strictly and without questions with the rules of the law school.⁴⁴ This attitude

⁴³ Mariam Bayero, "The Prescribed Mode of Female Dressing by Allah's Shari'ah: A Case for Muslim Lawyers", *Al-Maslaha – A Journal of Law and Religion* Vol. 1, 1998, pp. 92 - 109, Abdulmumini A. Oba, "Lawyers, Legal Education and Shari'ah Courts in Nigeria" *Journal Legal Pluralism* Vol. 49, 2004, 113 at pp. 140 – 141, Oba, *supra* note 5, 202 – 203, Nimatallah Modupe Abdulraheem, "The *Hijab*, Barristers' Dress Code and Religious Freedom in the Legal Profession in Nigeria" *IJUM LAW JOURNAL* Vol. 14 No. 2, 2006, 253 and Juwairiyya Bint Badamasuy, "Dressing and Women in the Legal Profession: Legal and Islamic Perspectives" *Al-Maslaha - Journal of Law and Religion* Vol. 3, 2004 – 2006, pp. 150 - 154.

⁴⁴ Attempts over the years by the Muslim Students Society (Nigerian Law School Branch) and the National Association of Muslim Law Students (NAMLAS) to enlist the support of these categories of Muslims in the struggle to protect the *khimar* in the Law School have been fruitless for this reason. The very few who support the *khimar* are virtually powerless in the face of the strong opposition by their more influential, more powerful and more numerous colleagues.

probably reflects the older generation of Muslims elites whose wives and probably daughters do not wear the *hijab*. There is manifestly an overwhelming support for the *hijab* among the younger generation of lawyers and judges in the country.⁴⁵ Many of the women in these categories are themselves *Mahjubah* (wearers of *hijab*) and so are many of the wives and daughters of the men. With the gradual but steady exit of members of the older generation, the future no doubt portends good for the *hijab* in the Law School.

5. Hijab as a Religious Tenet in Nigeria

We have pointed out earlier that the practice among Muslims in relation to the *hijab* varies. This variation is also found in the practice among Muslim countries. In Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, the use of *niqab* is widespread. Yet this has not prevented women from attending co-educational institutions in Saudi Arabia. In Iran and Malaysia, the *jilbab* and *khimar* are standard among students but the *niqab* is not common.

Given the different practices among Muslims, questions could be asked about the status of *niqab* in Islam. Would the *niqab* be on a lesser category than the *jilbab* and the *khimar*? Perhaps this and other similar questions may be of concern to Islamic jurists; they are irrelevant when it comes to the issue of freedom of religion in the context of modern human rights. The pertinent question here would be: Is the *niqab* known to Islam? The answer to this cannot but be in the affirmative. It is apt to point out that in Nigeria, the *niqab* and even *pardah* are well known even in the pre-colonial era. This is so not only in parts of northern Nigeria but also among Yoruba Muslims in the southwestern part of the country.⁴⁶ The juristic basis of the *hijab* is found in the Qur'an and the Hadith.⁴⁷ The status of the *jilbab*, *khimar* and *niqab* as part of the tenets of Islam is indisputable. For this reason, they form part of the religious tenets protected by the Constitution. The tenets of any religion for

⁴⁵ A good example here is the judge in *Bashirat's case* who belongs to the younger generation. His lordship's decision aptly expressed the attitude of the younger generation.

⁴⁶ For accounts of *pardah* in Nigeria see generally, Yakubu Zakaria, "Entrepreneurs at Home: Secluded Muslim Women and Hidden Economic Activities in Northern Nigeria" *Nordic Journal of African Studies* Vol. 10 No. 1, 2001, 107, Fatima L. Adamu, "Gender Myth about Secluded Women in Hausa Society of Nigeria" in Mary E. Modupe Kolawole (ed.), *Gender Perceptions and Development in Africa* (Lagos: Arrabon Academic Publishers, 1998) 231 and Abdurrahman I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corpartion, 1984) 286, and 291 - 291.

⁴⁷ Qur'an 24:31 and 33:59. See a detailed analysis these and other hadiths in Abu Bilal Mustafa Al-Kanadi, *The Islamic Ruling Regarding Women's Dress according to the Qur'an and Sunnah* (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Abul-Qasim Publishing House, 1991) and Ssenyonjo, *supra* note 5, 154 - 158.

the purpose of freedom of religion are not limited by the practice of some of the adherents of that religion but by reference to the religion itself. Consequently, the freedom of members of any religious group to practice their religion cannot be construed with reference to what the less zealous members of the group do and do not. In *Jenebu Ojonye v Aleyi Adegbudu*⁴⁸ the court explained the categories of religious tenets recognized for the purpose of the freedom of religion guaranteed under the Nigerian Constitution:

We wish to explain for the guidance of lower courts that no court, authority or person has the power to compel anybody to practise what is not recognized or allowed by his religion so long as that practice is generally known not to be allowed by his religion. This is so because a person should not be allowed to escape from his civil responsibility or civil obligations to other people on the pretext of his freedom of religion unless what is sought to be avoided is well known not to be allowed by the religion in question and the religion itself is well known so that the matter does not revolve on the capricious choice of the individual person concerned.⁴⁹

Although *Jenebu Ojonye* and *Bashirat Saliu* are High Court decisions which can be overruled by the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court⁵⁰, the principles enunciated therein are apparently unassailable and may be taken to represent the true state of the law in the country.

THE HIJAB IN OTHER COUNTRIES⁵¹

Religious affiliation is important but not always decisive in the reaction to the *hijab*.⁵² Opposition to the *khimar* may result from religious bigotry or extreme

⁴⁸ (1983) 4 N.C.L.R. 492 (HC, Otukpo - Ogebe, Idoko, JJ).

⁴⁹ *Id.*, at 494.

⁵⁰ Apparently, there was no appeal in *Jenebu Ojonye*. An appeal in *Bashirat Saliu*'s case was filed in the Court of Appeal but was reportedly abandoned.

⁵¹ The reaction to the *hijab* is a continuing unfolding phenomenon. Hence, the situation in some of the countries discussed in this section could have changed.

⁵² See generally the overview in Fahad Ansari and Uzma Kari, *Hijab and Democracy: The Ways of, and Against Secular Fundamentalism* (England, Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2004).

secularism as in the case of the French ban on the *khimar* in public schools.⁵³ Other western nations that have followed the French example include some states in Germany,⁵⁴ Bulgaria,⁵⁵ Azerbaijan,⁵⁶ and Albania.⁵⁷

However, not all Christians are opposed to Muslim women wearing the *hijab*. A few non-Muslims in Nigeria - for various reasons such as safety from sexual violence and sexual harassment, which are allegedly rife in the campuses - have adopted the *khimar* and sometimes with the veil without becoming Muslims. Western countries that have accommodated the *khimar* in public schools include United Kingdom, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Austria, United States and Canada.⁵⁸ The acceptance of the *niqab* and *jilbab* is narrower than that of the *khimar*. Countries that permit

⁵³ In March 2004, France banned the wearing of headscarves in its elementary and secondary schools: Mukul Saxena *The Manifestation of Belief and the Display of Ostentatious Religious Symbols in France* EXPRESSO PREPRINT SERIES (2006) Paper 901 at <<http://law.bepress.com/expresso/eps/901>>, Human Rights Watch press release, *France: Headscarf Ban Violates Religious Freedom* February 27, 2004 and Oba, *supra* note 5, 202 – 203.

⁵⁴ Ansari and Kari, *supra* note 52, p. 5. In *B v R* 1436/02 of 24 September 2003, the court ruled in favour of an elementary schoolteacher wearing the *khimar* in her working place only because the state in question (Baden-Wurtemberg) did not specifically banned the *hijab* in schools. The court indicated that it would uphold any such legislative ban on the *hijab*. The State subsequently enacted a law banning the *khimar* in 2004. See the analysis of the case and review of the position in Germany in Robert A. Kahn, “The Headscarf as Threat? A Comparison of German and American Legal Discourses” *Expresso Reprint Series* No 1504, 2006 available at <<http://law.bepress.com/expresso/eps/1504>> and Axel Frhr. von Campenhausen, “The German Headscarf Debate” *Brigham Young University Law Review*, Summer 2004, 665.

⁵⁵ Islamic Human Rights Commission, “URGENT ALERT: Protest Hijab ban in Bulgaria” available at <<http://www.ihr.org.uk/show.php?id=2064>> (accessed on 10 September 2006).

⁵⁶ See *Leyla Sahin v Turkey*, *infra* note 74, at ¶ 55.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ Ansari and Kari, *supra* note 52, 12 – 17. The Quebec Human Rights Commission has held that private schools cannot forbid the *hijab*, skullcaps, See the news item “Quebec private schools must allow *hijabs*, skullcaps” at <www.cbc.ca/ottawa/story/07-hijab20050616.html> accessed on 17 September 2006.

the *khimar* but not the *jilbab* and/or *niqab* as part of school uniforms include England,⁵⁹ Norway,⁶⁰ and Netherlands.⁶¹

Although some profess Islam and perform some of the religious requirements of Islam such as the canonical prayers (*salat*) and fasting (*saum*), they are opposed to the *khimar* generally or the *niqab* in particular. An example is the secularist Egypt where in 1994 the Minister of Education issued a Ministerial Edict banning the *hijab* and *niqab* in all schools below university level, although, after much public protest, the ban was limited to the *niqab* alone.⁶² The more secularist Turkey followed in 1998 by banning the wearing of

⁵⁹ In *R. (on the application of Begum) v. The Headteacher and Governors of Denbigh High School*, [2006] 2 WLR 719; [2006] UKHL 15, the English House of Lords reversing the Court of Appeal upheld a *jilbab* ban by a high school. The government has subsequently issued a directive that allows head teachers to ban the *niqab* in their respective schools: Islamic Human Rights Commission, *Press Release: IHRC Statement in Response to New Government Guidelines which give Head Teachers the Right to Ban Face Veil in Schools* (20 March 2007) at <<http://www.ihrc.org.uk/show.php?id=2554>> accessed on 31 March 2007. See criticism of the House of Lords' decision in Gareth Davies, "(Not Yet) Taking Rights Seriously: The House of Lords in *Begum v Headteacher and Governors of Denbigh High School*" *Human Rights and Human Welfare Working Papers* Working Paper no. 37 posted on 13 November 2006 at <<http://www.du.edu/gsis/hrhw/working/2006/37-davies-2006.pdf>> accessed on 31 March 2007 and support for the government's position in Joan Smith, "Our schools are no place for the *jilbab*. Or for the Creationists" *Independent.co.uk Online Edition: Home* published on 26 March 2006 at <http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_m_z/joan_smith/article353601.ece> accessed on 31 March 2007 and Ali Khan, *The Veil and the British Male Elite* MWC NEWS (October 26, 2006) at <<http://mwcnews.net/content/view/10415/42>> (see also THE AMERICAN MUSLIM (October 26, 2006) at <http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/the_veil_and_the_british_male_elite_/001395>; and BALTIMORE CHRONICLE & SENTINEL (online edition) (October 26, 2006) at <<http://baltimorechronicle.com/2006/102606ALIKHAN.shtml>>).

⁶⁰ Norway prohibits students from the wearing of the *niqab* in schools: Western Resistance, *Norway: Oslo To Ban Muslim Veil In Schools* (June 21, 2006) at <<http://www.westernresistance.com/blog/archives/002394.html>> accessed on 17 September 2006 and Islamic Human Rights Commission, *URGENT ALERT: Protest Nikab ban in Norway* (19 July 2006) <<http://www.ihrc.org.uk/how.php?id=1951>> accessed on 18 September 2006.

⁶¹ *Leyla Sahin v Turkey*, note 74 below, at ¶ 64

⁶² After widespread opposition to the ban, the edict was amended to allow schoolgirls wear the *hijab* provided they have their parents' consent to do so. The *niqab* ban however remained and was contested in the courts. Even though article 2 of the Egyptian Constitution provides that "Islamic Sharia will be the principal source of Egyptian legislation", the Supreme Constitutional Court upheld the ministerial edict banning *niqab* in schools. See the detailed analysis of this controversy and the decision of the Supreme Constitutional Court in Clark Benner Lombardi, "Islamic Law as a Source of Constitutional Law in Egypt: the Constitutionalization of the Sharia in a Modern Arab State" *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* Vol. 37, 1998, 81 at 106 – 113.

khimar in public places in the country.⁶³ Other examples in the Muslim world that have banned the *khimar* in their educational institutions include Tunisia and Algeria.⁶⁴ *Bashirat Saliu's* case where the defendants either are Muslims or are based in a predominately-Islamic environment provides a local example in Nigeria. From the Islamic perspective, any Muslim who opposes or prevents Muslim women from adopting any aspect of the *hijab* has committed a grievous sin that puts his or her Islam in question. According to the Qur'an, those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are "unbelievers ... wrongdoers ... [and]... rebels".⁶⁵ Such conduct may also amount to hypocrisy (*nifaq*).⁶⁶

Although, the central issue in the *hijab* and the dress code controversies in some educational institutions in Nigeria and elsewhere relates to freedom of religion, there are other vital issues. There is the question of culture shock for westernized Nigerians to whom western values represent the ultimate values attainable by man. To them, anything inconsistent with these values stands condemned. There is also the issue of religious intolerance for those who equate any development favorable to Islam in the country as evidence of further Islamisation of the country.⁶⁷ There is the right to freedom of expression. After all, mode of dressing could also be a vehicle for self-expression. Thus, there is the right to choose how one wants to express one's self in terms of dressing. There is also the right to education. Any policy that

⁶³ Hundreds of Turkish women who defiantly insisted on wearing the *khimar* have either been prevented from attending educational institutions or have been jailed for violating the *hijab* ban. See the example in Islamic Human Rights Commission, *Huda Kaya And Her Daughters* at <http://www.ihr.org.uk/file/PRISONERSOF_FAITHHUDA.pdf>. The ban on *hijab* by the Turkish government has been upheld by the European court, see *infra* notes 69 - 78.

⁶⁴ Ansari and Kari, *supra* note 52, 12 – 17.

⁶⁵ Qur'an 5: 44, 45 and 47. See further Abdulmalik Bappa Mahmud, *A Brief History of Shari'ah in the Defunct Northern Nigeria* (Jos University Press, 1988) 54 – 61.

⁶⁶ *Nifaq* is the sin of pretending to be a Muslim when one does not actually believe in Islam. *Nifaq* is worse than *kufr* (disbelief): "The Hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Hell fire" Qur'an 4:145.

⁶⁷ Some Christians have consistently opposed any extension of the application of Islamic law in the country even when this relates exclusively to the personal law of Muslims: Abdulumuni Adebayo Oba, "Sharia Court of Appeal in Northern Nigeria: The Continuing Crises of Jurisdiction" *American Journal of Comparative Law* Vol. 52 No. 4, 2005, 859 at 888 – 891.

disallows the *hijab* in educational institutions by implication excludes practicing Muslim women for obtaining formal education.⁶⁸

HIJAB AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

The *hijab* has been subject of attention at international human rights tribunals. The European Commission for Human Rights, European Court of Human Rights and the United Nations Human Rights Committee have given rulings on the *hijab* as relates to educational institutions. In 1993, the European Commission for Human Rights⁶⁹ held inadmissible two applications by Turkish students who were refused their certificates by their universities because they wore *khimar* in the photographs they submitted to be affixed to the certificates.⁷⁰ More recently, the European Court rejected two separate complaints relating to prohibition of the *hijab*.⁷¹ The first case, *Dahlab v Switzerland*⁷², concerned a Muslim primary school teacher. The Court held that it "appears difficult to reconcile the wearing of an Islamic headscarf with the message of tolerance, respect for others and, above all, equality and non-discrimination that all teachers in a democratic society must convey to their pupils".⁷³ The second case, *Leyla Sahin v Turkey*⁷⁴ concerned a medical student at a university. The court held that a ban on *khimar* applied in furtherance of the separation of Church and State should be regarded as "necessary in a democratic society"⁷⁵ and that the effect that "wearing such a symbol, which was presented or perceived as a compulsory religious duty, could have on those who chose not to wear it" must also be taken into consideration.⁷⁶ The

⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Memorandum To The Turkish Government On Human Rights Watch's Concerns With Regard To Academic Freedom In Higher Education, And Access To Higher Education For Women Who Wear The Headscarf* (Human Rights Watch, 2004), and Elizabeth Chamblee Burch, "Rhetoric or Rights?: When Culture and Religion Bar Girls' Right to Education" *Virginia Journal of International Law* Vol. 44, 2004, 1073. (also available at: <http://works.bepress.com/elizabeth_burch/4> at pp. 42 - 43).

⁶⁹ The Commission used to determine the admissibility of applications made to the European Court of Human Rights. The Commission was abolished in 1998 and applications are now made directly to the court: Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 68, 36.

⁷⁰ *Bulut v Turkey* (Application No. 18783/91, 3 May 1993) and *Karaduman v Turkey* (Application No. 16278/90, 3 May 1993).

⁷¹ See the news items in *European Union Rights Court Backs Turkey's Hijab Ban* at <<http://www.islamonline.org/English/News/2004-06/29/article05.shtml>> and Raphael Minder and Metin Munir, *Muslim Students Lose Headscarf Ban Case* <<http://news.ft.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=FT.com/StoryFT/FullStory&c=StoryFT&ci=1087373360021>> both accessed on 10 September 2006.

⁷² Decision of 15 February 2001, Application No. 42393/98, 2001-V. ECHR 447.

⁷³ *Id.*, at 463.

⁷⁴ Judgment of 10 November 2005, Application No. 4474/98 (Grand Chamber) affirming *Sahin v Turkey* (2005) 41 EHRR 8 (Chamber).

⁷⁵ *Id.*, paras. 99 – 116.

⁷⁶ *Id.*, para 115.

decisions of the European Court are very disappointing. The European Court's interpretation of the right to freedom of religion as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights makes nonsense of this right. Not surprising, these decisions have met a barrage of criticisms.⁷⁷ Apart from being logical incomprehensible, the decisions send out the signal that Islam is not compatible with the values of the European Union and that *khimar* is a troublesome and vexatious matter to the court and to member States of the Council of Europe.⁷⁸ The decisions may also have a negative impact on religious rights in countries where there is manifest hostility to 'political Islam' and on African countries such as Nigeria whose constitutionally entrenched bills of rights on freedom of religion are couched on the same terms as those in the European Convention.

The conclusion on *hijab* reached by the Human Rights Committee was different from those of the European Court. In *Hudoyberganova v Uzbekistan*⁷⁹ the complaint before the Committee was that the complainant was prevented from attending lectures and finally expelled from the Tashkent State Institute for Eastern Languages because of her insistence on wearing the *hijab*. Between her expulsion and her filing the complaint, a new law "On the Liberty of Conscience and Religious Organizations" entered into force. Article 14 of the law forbids Uzbek nationals from wearing religious dresses in public places. The basis of her complaint was that her right to freedom to practice her religion under article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) has been violated by the actions of her School and the State Party. The Committee by a majority upheld her claim.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁷ See generally T. Jeremy Gunn, *Fearful Symbols: The Islamic Headscarf and the European Court of Human Rights* paper posted at <strasbourgconference.org/papers/Sahin%20by%20Gunn%2021%20by%20T.%20Jeremy%20Gunn.pdf>, Njal Hostmaelingen, *Hijab in Strasbourg: Clear conclusions, unclear reasoning* paper posted at <www.strasbourgconference.org/papers/Sahin_IslamInEurope_060217TLrev.doc>, Tore Lindholm, *Comments on the Case of Leyla Şahin v. Turkey: Political and Public Morality Aspects* paper posted at <www.strasbourgconference.org/papers/LindholmCommentsEnglishFINAL.doc>, and Christian Moe, *Refah Revisited: Strasbourg's Construction of Islam* at: <www.strasbourgconference.org>; "Analysis and Review"; "Papers and Scholarly Documents" Carolyn Evans, "The 'Islamic Scarf' in the European Court of Human Rights" *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 2006, 4.

⁷⁷ Hostmaelingen, *supra* note 74 and Ssenyonjo, *supra* note 5, 180 – 191.

⁷⁸ Hostmaelingen, *supra* note 77.

⁷⁹ Human Rights Committee, Communication No. 931/2000 of 5 November 2004, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/82/D/931/2000 (2004).

⁸⁰ By a majority of 13 to 1. One member (Mr. Hipolito Solari-Yrigoyen) dissented while two others (Sir Nigel Rodley and Ms. Ruth Wedgewood.) filed individual opinions disagreeing with aspects of the majority verdict.

decision however left many loose ends. First, it is not clear whether the type of *hijab* in dispute was the *jilbab*, *khimar* or *niqab*.⁸¹ Secondly, the State Party did not advance any reasons for the *hijab* ban.⁸² The implication is that it is still technically possible in future for the HRC to rule in favour of a state party that provides “justifiable” reasons for prohibiting the *hijab* in its universities.⁸³

HIJAB, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

The *hijab* is very central to the human rights dialogue between Islam and the West. The *hijab* has become the symbol of the conflict in the construction of human rights in the West and among Muslims. The arguments in favour of the *hijab* are often premised on the right to practice religion but opponents see the *hijab* as a violation of women rights.⁸⁴ The former is the view of women who wear the *hijab* and who perceive the opposition to the *hijab* as an expression of religious intolerance while the latter is the view of women (mostly non-Muslim women based in the West) who do not wear the *hijab* and who believe that it is their indisputable duty to emancipate women worldwide. It is beyond the widest imagination of these opponents of the *hijab* that a woman could adopt the *hijab* voluntarily without any compulsion from others. They believe that the women in *hijab* are sorely in need of the ‘women liberation’ that has become the norm in the West.⁸⁵ For practising Muslim women, the *hijab* frees them from being perceived as mere sexual objects.⁸⁶ It diverts attention away from their sexuality to their personality. For them, the *hijab* is also a passport to emancipation of Muslim women for it allows them to move freely and work outside their homes.⁸⁷ Thus, for many modern educated and successful Muslim women, the *hijab* is “a statement of

⁸¹ *Id*, Individual opinion by Committee member Ms. Ruth Wedgwood.

⁸² *Id*, Individual opinion by Committee member Sir Nigel Rodley

⁸³ *Id*, Individual opinion by Committee member Ms. Ruth Wedgwood.

⁸⁴ For an overview of the competing arguments, see Bahja Tahzib-Lie, “Applying a Gender Perspective in the Area of the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief” *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2000, 967 at 977 – 983.

⁸⁵ See for example Alice Walker, “A World Where Womanhood Reigns Supreme (The Seeds of My own Re-Evaluations)” available at <http://www.islamfortoday.co/mary_walker.htm> (accessed on 27 September 2008).

⁸⁶ Rukaiyah Hill Abdulsalam, *Women’s Ideal Liberation: Islamic Versus Western Understanding* (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Abul-Qasim Publishing House, 1998) 71 - 78 and Samuel Cole, “Donning the Hijab (how not to be a sex object)” available at <<http://www.ibiblio.org/prism/mar98/donning.html>> (accessed on 27 August 2006).

⁸⁷ Abdulraheem, *supra* note 43, 268 - 269.

religious affiliation, and even of independence and empowerment”.⁸⁸ To the Muslim woman, her western counterpart is no more than a sex object – a mere object of entertainment obliged to primp and deck out herself in perpetual pursuit of the approval of men,⁸⁹ and whose worth rarely outlives her relevance and usefulness as a sexual tool.⁹⁰ Hijab bans in educational institutions negatively impact on the formation of identity, self-worth, and educational achievements of female Muslims students.⁹¹ To the Muslim woman, the hijab is an indispensable component of feminism – Islamic feminism. Thus, the differences between Westernised women and Muslim women are very fundamental and touch on the very meaning of human rights. The western approach to *hijab* again questions the relevance of human rights (as currently formulated in the West) to Islamic societies in particular and to non-western societies generally.

The West insists on the universality of human rights but as illustrated by the hijab cases, the West is far from having a consensus in the interpretation of freedom of religion. The “margin of appreciation” in the interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights applied in *Leyla Sahin* is a *de facto* and a *de jure* recognition of cultural relativism or diversity in the matter of its States practice regarding human rights.

The reasons given for non-acceptability of the *hijab* in the West do not really matter. *Hijab* is a fundamental aspect of the Islamic faith.⁹² Many Muslims rightly perceive the opposition to the *hijab* as a continuation of the long

⁸⁸ Davies, *supra* note 59, 18 citing also E. Tarlo, “Reconsidering Stereotypes: Anthropological Reflections on the Jilbab Controversy” *Anthropology Today* Vol. 21, 2005, 13 and D. Lyon and D. Spini, “Unveiling the Headscarf Debate” *Feminist Legal Studies* Vol. 12, 2004, 333.

⁸⁹ Walker, *supra* note 85 and Cole, *supra* note 86. How else can one rationalise the inconveniences women in the West endure and the healthy risks they take so as to stay ‘beautiful’? The list of non-therapeutic plastic or ‘beauty’ surgeries is almost endless and ever expanding: breast augmentation, vaginal surgeries, fat reduction procedures, and so on. Many of these procedures are expensive and often entail painful and life threatening consequences.

⁹⁰ It is often disgusting how the press media in the West torments aging celebrities - singers and actresses - by publishing pictorial evidence and physical signs of their aging. A recent example is the close-up picture of the singer Madonna’s “veiny hand” in Angelina Jolie Watch, *Angelina and Madonna are BOTH so vein at* <<http://www.angelinajoliewatch.com/angelina-and-madonna-are-both-so-vein/>> accessed on 08 April, 2007. How many newscasters and anchorwomen in television shows and in the cable networks programmes lose their prime spot the moment they can no longer conceal the natural signs of aging?

⁹¹ Amani Hamdan, “The Issue of Hijab in France: Reflections and Analysis” *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* Vol. 4, Issue 2, 2007, Article 4.

⁹² Ssenyonjo, *supra* note 5, 150 – 151 and 154 – 162.

standing hostility for Islam and its values in the West. After all, the *khimar* presents no culture shock to the West which has for centuries lived with and tolerated the Nun's habit. The insistence on non-acceptability of *hijab* by the West and its inability to include the right to *hijab* firmly among the bundle of rights called "freedom of religion" could simply mean that the West and the Islamic world will never agree on human rights and this could alienate Muslims and Islamic nations from the so-called international human rights system.

CONCLUSION

The newly introduced dress codes in some educational institutions in Nigeria obviously targeted the *hijab*. For many years, these institutions have ignored the sexually provocative dresses on their campuses. They spurred into action only when the *hijab* started gaining converts in the country's educational institutions. To this extent, the dress codes cannot be said to have been made *bona fide*. The requirement of *hijab* for Muslim women is a recognized tenet of Islam. To deny Muslim women the right to any aspect of the *hijab* would be tantamount to denying them the right to be Muslims. The longing of female students to comply fully with the Islamic mode of dressing is a legitimate human right, a fundamental right, and a constitutional right in Nigeria.

Religious tolerance and acceptance of otherness are indispensable to the survival of Nigeria as a corporate entity given its multifarious religious, ethnic, and legal pluralism. As the court in *Jenebu Ojonye v Aleyi Adegbudu* (*supra*) puts it:

The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to every citizen and the courts must guard jealously any attempt directly or indirectly to erode this freedom which is essential to maintain peace and stability in a multi-religious society like Nigeria.⁹³

Such attitude is equally indispensable in the modern world. It is a condition precedent to peaceful co-existence in today's global village. To this extent, the judicial decisions affirming religious rights to the *hijab* in Nigeria and in other places across the world are in order. Ultimately, Nigerians and others throughout the world should develop a culture of tolerance and acceptance of, and even respect for otherness in matters of religion.

⁹³ *Jenebu Ojonye v Aleyi Adegbudu*, *supra* note 48, 494.



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Symbolically Speaking: The Use of Semiotics in Marketing Politics in Ghana

Kobby Mensah *

Abstract

Le retour du Ghana à la démocratie depuis 1992, a apporté dans le domaine politique, électoral et celui de l'organisation de campagnes de nombreux changements, notamment une sophistication croissante des campagnes. Les partis politiques cherchent de nouveaux modes d'utilisation de la sémiotique - signes, de sons et de symboles. La simplification des messages ainsi qu'il est d'usage dans le domaine de la publicité commerciale est l'un de ces moyens. Bien que la pratique existe depuis des décennies, elle n'a à peine touché les discours politiques du Ghana comme littérature surtout comme un moyen d'attirer des électeurs et d'influer sur les résultats des campagnes électorales. Depuis les élections de 2000, lorsque le New Patriotic Party (NPP) lança le célèbre slogan "ASEE ho" (littéralement, le fond en la langue Akan), l'utilisation des signes, des sons et de symboles pour promouvoir les messages politiques locaux s'est développé au Ghana au fur et à mesure des élections. Depuis les signes, les sons et les symboles servent à montrer les prises de position ou à résumer les positions des partis politiques. Ainsi s'impose la nécessité d'étudier scientifiquement ces aspects et c'est l'objectif de cet article.

Symbolism had been an essential part of the Ghanaian society; and in politics, it has played enormous role in political campaigning since 1947 when Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, formed the CPP party (Apter, 1968a; Monfils, 1977). In the just ended Ghanaian election 2008, parties that contested the elections in Ghana, NPP, NDC, CPP, PNC etc (Ghana E.C, 2008) made enormous use of **semiotics** – signs, sounds and

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symbols – to drum home their message and to market their candidates. Aside the traditional symbol of the NPP, the *elephant* signifying a supposed dominance in Ghanaian politics, the party adopted also the “*hopping kangaroo dance*” of the national football team, the black stars and a popular gospel song, *go high*, as their campaign song, all to reinforce their message: “*yee – ko ye – nim*,” which means, “*we are moving forward*.”

The two main opposition parties, NDC and CPP with the *umbrella* and the *cockereel* as traditional party symbols respectively, also adopted the signs that football coaches and fans do at tournaments: “finger wriggling” of both hands lifted upwards to indicate a desire to change a player. A move to reinforce the two parties’ message of ‘*ye – re se sa – mu*,’ meaning, “change” in the Akan language. Although the use of semiotics in Ghana’s electioneering campaigns is decades old (Monfils, 1977; Mensah, 2007), the recent craze could largely be traced to the electoral fortunes of the NPP party in 2000. The party managed to cause momentum to its campaign with their “*asee ho*” (the bottom, in Akan language) slogan to depicts their ballot paper position.

The “*asee ho*” (the bottom) and the “*esoro ho*” (the top) “theories,” as they later came to be known in the Ghanaian political parlance (Sekyi-Addo, 2004), with the thumb pointing downwards in regards to “*asee ho*” and pointing upwards in the case of “*esoro ho*,” were to direct voters, especially the about 40% illiterate (UIS, 2006), where to look and place their thumb on the ballot paper. And in a country of such a high illiteracy rate, local political observers believe the “*asee ho*” did work for NPP’s candidate at the time, John Kufour who occupied the bottom position on the ballot paper. Of course, the reverse “*esoro ho*” however disappointed the NDC’s candidate as there could only be one winner.

Although it will be too amateur for any one to seriously attribute the electoral fortunes of the NPP to the “*asee ho*” slogan, it nevertheless contributed in two significant ways to their success. Firstly, it injected an incredible amount of excitement amongst the base of the NPP that truly the party was alive and had a winning mentality, giving the *viral effect*, as in viral marketing (Wilson, 2005), created by the sign as many people engaged it whenever the party’s slogan was invoked. The viral effect, according to Wilson, is when individuals are encouraged ‘to pass on marketing messages to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the messages’ exposure and influence;’ and ‘like viruses, such strategies take advantage of rapid multiplication to explode the message to thousands, to millions’ etc (Wilson, 2005). In fact, the NPP party actually owes the popularity of the “*asee ho*” sign and chants to one popular Ghanaian musician, *Lumba* who had hit the airwaves with the hit song, “*asee ho*” that same year 2000, well ahead of the campaign period.

Secondly, the “asee ho” had become a *directional sign* to many of the illiterate voters, especially in the hinterland where the NPP commanded most support. With fears of they not able to read and thumb print appropriately, the “asee ho” offered the faithfuls the most helping hand needed to ensure that they voted their candidate. Since then, the use of semiotics to reinforce the political message is gaining currency in Ghanaian politics. Each and every election year has brought its own signs, sounds and symbols either depicting ballot positions or summing up issue positions of political parties.

For its objective, the paper is intended to contribute to drawing the attention of both academia and practitioner audience on the importance of symbolism to political campaigning in Africa, using Ghana as a case in point. Hence the need for its study and consideration as essential part of campaign planning. As methods, it dwells on extant literature on Ghanaian politics and culture (Austin, 1961; Apter, 1968a; Monfils, 1977; Oquaye, 1995; Ninsin, 1996; Jonah, 1998; Arthur, 2001; Carbone, 2003). The subjects of the study (NDC, NPP, Nkrumah and Rawlings) were purposively chosen based on their historic and current level of campaign sophistry, blending semiotics and marketing as campaign technique. Finally, the paper uses the 4ps of marketing mix (Dibb et al, 2001; Gilligan and Wilson, 2003) and the theory of semiotics (Saussure, 1916 - 1983; Peirce, 1931-58; Morris, 1938-1970; Barthes, 1964-1967; Eco, 1976) to showcase how political parties and their operatives have marketed themselves in Ghana.

Semiotics – the theory of signs, sounds and symbols

The study of signs, sounds and symbols is centuries old and could be located in *Semiotology* by the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1916 - 1983). It was also referred to as *Semiotics* by the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (1931-58); it is his version of the term which is widely used. Semiotics or semiotology, suggests that signs and symbols are essential part of language and that they broaden our understanding in either composing or decoding messages.

The theory of semiotics is defined in many ways by different writers (Saussure, 1916 - 1983; Peirce, 1931-58; Morris, 1938-1970; Barthes, 1964-1967; Eco, 1976). However, Augustine (1958) defines signs (semiotics) as “a thing which causes us to think of something beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon the senses” (p. 34). Augustine classifies signs as *natural*, *sacred* and *conventional*. The first two, natural and sacred signs, Augustine explains, are “*meta human*” – beyond human order. However, conventional signs such as gestures, sounds and symbols are made by human and are fundamental to human’s own need, enabling us to refer to and

remember the world. The conventional signs and its value to aiding comprehension, as Augustine explains, could be argued to have contributed to the rise of theories that make use of symbolism, such as branding, promotion, advertising and the likes of marketing – and in many ways, of politics for that matter (Kress, 1996).

Why the rise of semiotics in marketing politics?

The relationships between semiotics and marketing and semiotics and marketing politics, are well noted in literature (Levy, 1959; Kotler, 1972; 1987; Umiker-Sebeok, 1987; Aaker 1991; Popkin, 1994; Schmidt, 1995; Kavanagh, 1995; Ries & Trout, 2000; Smith, 2001; Floch, 2005). Sidney Levy (1959), in 'Symbols for Sale,' noted that 'people buy products not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean' (p. 118). Hence, the reasons behind the rise of signs, sounds and symbols, of Augustine included, in spheres such as commerce and politics, could be attributed to a plethora of things, including human's general susceptibility to imagery and effect as well as illiteracy. In illiteracy for example, politicians and their operatives, at least in Ghana, are aware of how little in meaning ideology, economic indices and many other related political discourses are to a large section of the voting public. Hence, politicians resort to the use of certain images of relevance that could transmit these same messages to the voting public.

In other words, politicians communicate to voters their ideological positions, policy statements etc through signs, sounds and symbols understandable and identifiable to them. In the Ghanaian election 2000, the NPP party, in their effort to let the masses understand how bad the country's debt situation was, trumpeted to Ghanaians that they owe the international community, "*opipi-pi-i-pi-i*," literally means, an amount one can not name, in the Akan language. The *opipi-pi-i-pi-i* figure certainly was not the friendliest of sounds in many people's ears. Not when the impression as though the individual Ghanaian could be asked to pay the money owed the international community was created by the NPP party. And coupled with alleged and confirmed abuses of power and flamboyancy of some government officials of the NDC then, such pronouncements certainly sent chills through the spine of many Ghanaians, making them feel content of having the "positive change" agenda promised by the NPP party to correct the mess although were oblivious of what the party could offer.

Aside illiteracy, many are those who also refer the growth of signs, sounds and symbols in political, public and institutional communications to the shift of society towards capitalism, with the market at the helm influencing our way of life (Kress, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Richards, 2004). Those of the market view

have noted the plethora of information being bombarded the “consumer citizen” in today’s media society. Cameron (2001), for example noted that ‘kinds of discourses that were once primarily “informational,” designed to “tell,” have now become more “promotional,” also to “sell”’ (cited in Baab, 2007, p. 24).

Perhaps, the most sophisticated in this ‘market mentality’ society (Baab, 2007, p. 24) is the growth and influence of advertising, employing the ‘psychology of emotions’ (Richards, 2004) to affect people’s behaviour. Advertising has succeeded in “planting” needs and “causing” satisfaction in people, psychologically – or virtually. Literature (Levy, 1959; Richards, 2004) suggests that consumer needs (citizens, in this case) have largely been created and satisfied by (political) products and services through symbolic associations. These (political) products and services, through advertisements, can create “the need to belong,” “to feel secure” and “to have,” in the consumer (citizen) using public figures and popular culture that they can identify with. Through the same medium, a (political) product or service is seen to satisfy those “virtually-created” needs in an attempt to mitigate any ‘cognition of dissonance’ (Festinger, 1957) one may experience after purchase. This virtual creation and satisfaction of needs, advertisers believe, impact on consumers’ (citizens) response in demanding (political) products and services. And Ghana is no exception in this development.

Semiotics in Ghanaian Politics – historic and socio-cultural perspectives

According to G. F. Kojo Arthur (2001), signs, sounds and symbols were fundamental to the ancient Ghanaian social fabric through which indigenes recorded and expressed their thoughts, beliefs and feelings. Storytelling for example, was embedded in various forms of African artefacts, myths and ceremonies. These art forms included graphic systems such as the *adinkra*; one art form in which the Akans narrated, characterised and vocalized several stories. Arthur observes that ever since ancient times, storytelling in African culture in particular has been a way of passing on traditions and beliefs of a society from one generation to the next. It has also been used as means of passing on codes of behaviour, history, philosophy, and moral laws of the people in maintaining social order. And so is the case in politics.

Akin to the Ghanaian socio-cultural sphere and its use of signs, sounds and symbols, the political sphere had, since pre-colonial days, seen signs, sounds and symbols as fundamental part of political discourse to demonstrate dominance, power, bravery etc. The *golden stool* and *the divine sword* of Okomfo Anokye (a deity), for example, demonstrate the power of the Ashanti

Kingdom in Ghana and in fact, the whole of Africa during the formative years of the continent. In the upper western part of Ghana, a war dance, *takai* symbolizes *bravery* and *preparedness* to defend the people of Dagomba. The ‘*gye Nyami*’ (except God) symbol adopted by Jerry Rawlings and embossed on the country’s legal tender after seizing power in Ghana was enough statement to scare off any prospective attempt on his life.

In colonial party politics, the tradition of the use of signs, sounds and symbols was also passed on. Kwame Nkrumah’s use of white handkerchief and the walking stick signified victory and power; his flirtation with popular culture – *Tradition, Christianity, Islam* and *Modernity* symbolized his inclusive personality (Monfils, 1977; IJIMA, 1998 Apter, 1968a) and reaffirmed his preparedness to work with all manner of people. At CPP party rallies, religious symbolism was felt through the invocation of the name of God and singing of hymns (IJIMA, 1998). In his autobiography, Nkrumah observed that when he announced his resignation as secretary of the UGCC at a rally, a woman became enthusiastic and started blessing him, noting that:

The reaction was immediate and their cheers were deafening. Then one of the women supporters jumped up on the platform and led the singing of the hymn ‘Lead Kindly Light,’ a hymn which from that time onwards has been sung at most C.P.P. rallies. What with the strain of it all and the excitement, the singing of this hymn was as much as I felt I could take (Nkrumah, 1957: 107, cited in IJIMA, 1998).

Further on after Nkrumah’s era, successive administrations were unable to win hearts and minds nationwide until the arrival of Jerry John Rawlings (J.J. Rawlings) and his PNDC government in 1981. Although Nkrumah and Rawlings differed on many grounds, including their points of entry into political prominence – democratic and military means respectively – many believe Nkrumah and Jerry Rawlings had some characteristic resemblance. Jerry Rawlings, just as Nkrumah, was a left leaning progressive in ideological terms and adopted the all inclusive personality approach that famed Nkrumah. J.J., as he is affectionately known by many Ghanaians, especially the rural part, endeavoured to cast himself as the people’s leader; fluent in English, part fluent in Ga and in Ewe, his native dialect, and less so in Twi, the language of the Ashanti, the largest tribe in Ghana. Jerry Rawlings is trademarked in Ghanaian political discourse with his attempt to address local audience in their own language instead of the English language as many politicians do when not familiar with the local dialect of the area they have gone to speak. Amongst the most popular of Jerry Rawlings’ trademark discourse in Twi are: “me – nua num,” meaning, “fellow brethren”; “se – bio ta fe – ra – kye,” meaning, “excuse me to say.”

The most ubiquitous and most remembered is his version of the proverbial “lazy hand goes hungry,” which he said it in the Twi language as: “ano – maa entu – aa, ogyina ho,” literally means, “if a bird does not fly, it stands.” In fact, the proverb should read in Twi as: “ano – maa entu – aa, obua – da,” meaning, “if a bird does not fly in search of food, it goes hungry,” which is what President Rawlings at the time wanted to say. People loved him for this, whether he misfired or was on target; he inspired many, especially the rural folks, the urban poor and the youth across the country. His rhetoric power, one may argue, was unleashed with all intent to reinforce his personality as all inclusive and anti – establishment regardless of the consequences, just as progressives do. Other part of Rawlings’ symbolic past that reinforced his political personality and won him the hearts and minds, was his communal spirit. In television news and on radio, he was seen or heard on many occasions working with rail workers to fix broken rail lines; at ports and harbours loading cargo ship with cocoa and at the suburbs, desilting blocked gutters with the locals.

Although some, especially of the ideological right, may dismiss the above accounts of Rawlings’ relationship with the masses as propaganda, – which they already have as Kufour of the NPP party, which is the party of the right, once said he will not descend the presidency into the gutters (Ghana Palaver, 2006) – they certainly influenced the perception of the masses about Rawlings, the democrat of recent years and his relationship with the people of Ghana. Most of these images, captured during the hard economic times of the 1980’s, made the masses believe he (Rawlings) had been with them during the hardships; and in reverse, question those who are now fighting for political power their whereabouts in those times of crisis. Thus, just like Nkrumah, Rawlings’ popularity – and those associations of him – is still alive till this day although had relinquished power for almost a decade.

In recent times, since the return of multi party democracy in 1992, the importance and the exuberance surrounding signs, sounds and symbols at campaign rallies of the past have not diminished despite the advancement of television and radio as principal campaign battle fields. They have instead grown into a new level of importance to the extent that ballot paper position is deemed divine to a party’s electoral fortune (Sekyi-Addo, 2004; AFP, 2008). The next section will look at the effect of semiotics in marketing political parties and political operatives in the just ended Ghanaian elections 2008.

The use of semiotics as political marketing technique – Ghana's election 2008

Political marketing in simple terms is a marriage between two social sciences - political science and marketing (Lees-Marshment, 2001). It is commonly referred to as the 'adoption' (Butler and Collins, 1999) or 'adaptation' (Scammell, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001) of commercial marketing concepts and techniques by political actors to organise, implement and manage political activities to realise political goals.

In its formative years, the discipline was considered a policy of political communications and message development, which includes image building, issue tracking, voter targeting and timing of elections (Maarek, 1995; Smith and Saunders, 1990). Although these activities are political marketing, they however share border with promotion, a marketing technique, and are largely confined to campaigning. They are thus found insufficient to define the entire discipline of political marketing.

In recent years, experts (Butler and Collins, 1999; Scammell, 1999; O'Shaughnessy, 1999) suggest that political marketing includes managerial, planning and control elements as well as organizational issues (Bowler and Farrell, 1992) before, during and after electioneering campaigning and even well into governance (Nimmo, 1999). The phenomenon, they argue, 'could not only be confined to the stylized period called the campaigning' (Butler and Collins, 1996). Political marketing argues that through ideological positions, candidates' characteristics, and issue positions, political parties offer an imaginary representation of governance in exchange of the electorates' trust through votes well before they are voted into power. Kotler (1972) demonstrates this position in his explanation to the question: what is the political product? This, he deems as the promise of 'honest government' (p. 47) in exchange of votes. To clarify Kotler's view on the political product, perhaps, is helpful using Susan Hart's (2001) definition of the product in commerce.

According to Hart, a product can be an idea, a service, a good, or any combination of these (Hart, in Dibb et al 2001, p. 249). Where as the "good" aspect of the product is tangible, the "idea" and "service" aspects are intangible, needing human and mechanical application to affect a result. The political product however, is mainly referred to as a service and or an idea in political marketing as defined by Kotler due to its intangible character where *promises, images* and *appearance* of *symbolic* value facilitate customers' judgment and offer psychological stimulus to purchase. Therefore, the political product, like services and ideas in service marketing, is bought on

the premise of “promised satisfaction” yet to be experienced. Having illustrated semiotics and its relationship with marketing and explained the tenets of political marketing in sections above, the following paragraphs will demonstrate, using the marketing mix principles of the 4Ps, how semiotics and marketing were used in a sophisticated blend as a political marketing technique in Ghana by the parties in campaigning.

Product – as a consumption function, one could argue that voters who are of the opinion that the country had been managed well and are confident of further progress are likely to pitch sides with – or consume – the NPPs “we are moving forward” message. Their judgment of the NPP as the best party going forward, is reinforced by images of the party’s performance during Kufour’s term in office; its claim as “the sole beholder of true democracy” in Ghanaian politics and its candidate’s characteristics as a life time civil right activist. These values associated with the NPP and its candidate, offer the party’s supporters the needed psychological stimulus to reinforce their belief that they have made the right choice and to combat any dissonance they may experience as a result of external actions directed at them, such as opposition parties’ campaign messages.

Put differently, through the values of the NPP party and its candidate, those electorates who decide to vote NPP, it could be argued, do so because they are assured of the “good and honest governance” Kotler talks about. The reverse is the case to those who are on the “ye – re se – sa – mu” (change) camp of the NDC. Their choice to changing the government is reinforced by the opposite images of the Kufour years – images of mismanagement, corruption etc directed at them from the NDC campaign. It is therefore not surprising when the NPP leadership declared the 2008 elections as the *battle for comparing records*, in the hope that voters may see their performance in government as much better than that of the NDC, from 1992 – 2000 and vote accordingly. This notion led to the NPPs strategy of showing, across the country, elaborate images of developments, on television, billboards and newspapers, executed during Kufour’s eight years in government.

Place – as a distribution function, Hanneberg (2003) categorizes it into two main sub groups: *campaign delivery* and *offering delivery*. The campaign delivery, according to him, provides the primary exchange partner (the electorates) with access to all relevant information regarding crucial political policies and important agenda points. The campaign delivery channel is the means of conveying political messages to voters, availability of candidate in communities to interact with the electorates and the use of simple and common language identifiable and understandable to them. On the other hand, the offering delivery is referred to as the fulfillment of the political promises (Hanneberg, 2003; Harrop, 1990; Palmer, 2002). However, the

offering delivery can only occur, in most part, when the party has the political and legal mandate to fulfill the promises, i.e. when in government.

In the first instance, the campaign delivery, Hanneberg sees the candidate and the ranks and file members of the party as the haulage. The “distribution of the political candidate as a product surrogate” (Hanneberg, 2003), criss-crossing the political market to speak at radio and TV shows, conferences, rallies and many other events in an attempt to secure the mandate of the people come election day is an important part of the political distribution function. However, to the NPP and NDC parties, the rank and file members of the party as distribution function was equally important and played a crucial role in the just ended elections 2008. They provided local campaign and electioneering support, canvassing and leafleting for the parties’ campaign (Harris, 2001b; Wring, 2000a).

Just like the NPPs success in energizing their base in the 2000 elections with the ‘asee ho’ sign as explained above, the 2008 elections saw a multiple fold of that energy for both parties with the introduction of the ‘hopping kangaroo’ and the ‘finger wriggling’ signs as an embodiment of what the two parties stood for; and were the summation of what the political messengers wanted to tell their audience. The audience ended up being political messengers themselves as they invoke the parties’ campaign signs and the related sounds unconsciously at public spaces whenever they come into contact with party messengers. These signs and their related sounds that come along with them had a ‘viral effect’ connecting people whenever they are invoked by the political messenger, the foot soldier, making the parties’ support network wider and wider, or so it seemed, at least, as people were seen responding to the chants and engaging the signs.

Price – as a cost function, Hanneberg (2003) refers to the price as the management of actual and perceived attitudinal and behavioural barriers on the part of voters. He argues that for the price factor to reflect well on the political character, there is the need for redefining price element to mean “cost” or “sacrifice” (Hanneberg, 2003). Niffenegger (1989 p. 179), on the other hand, defines the political price/cost concept as the psychological construct made up of “voters feelings of national, economic, and psychological hope or insecurity.” In reference to Ghana’s election 2008, both parties sought to manage voters’ attitudes either to reinforce confidence, as in the case of the incumbent NPPs ‘we are moving forward’ agenda, depicting progress and growth in Ghana’s economic and social fronts; or to inject dissonance and insecurity in the minds of voters, as was the case of the opposition NDCs change agenda, signaling how costly it will be for Ghanaians to vote the NPP back to power.

Promotion – as a communication function, it informs the primary exchange partners (the voter in this case) of the offer and its availability (Hanneberg, 2003). It is characterized by the provision of political content – image and cues – and aids the interpretation and sense making of the complex political market (Kotler and Kotler, 1999). Its aim, among others as explained in sections above, is to simplify the political message and to form succinct political stances and pageantry capable of injecting excitement to engage the political consumer. And in the case of the NDC and the NPP parties in Ghana's elections 2008, the hopping kangaroo dance and the finger wriggling act did just that.

Conclusion

Evidently, Ghana's democracy is maturing (Kokutse, 2009) as the country conducts its fifth successive elections since 1992; so are certain party political management functions such as electioneering campaigning, as illustrated in this study. However, development in campaign management alone is limited and unsustainable to ensure political parties' endurance in the long term (Butler and Collins, 1996). It is only when most strategic activities such as fund raising, membership recruitment and retention, voter-centred issue development and delivery of campaign promises (Bowler and Farrell, 1992; Butler and Collins, 1996; Scammell, 1999; O'Shaughnessy, 1999; Steen, 1999; Nimmo, 1999) are well developed and managed as part of the entire party political management process, could parties survive the pressures of the political market and function as organs of a mature democracy. Until then, the sophistication in electioneering campaigning will continue to be 'a concocted pageantry for the hoi polloi,' says Todd Gitlin (1991) never to be remembered after the elections. Hence politicians will have to go full circle, come the next election cycle in search of support, again.

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Whither the State? Pressures from above, below and the flank

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Abstract

Un point de vue commun est de dire que , selon une approche traditionnelle, le pouvoir de l'État-nation est en voie d'érosion, du fait de la mondialisation par le haut , et par le bas, par la déliquescence. Ce document examine l'influence limitative des forces contradictoires sur l'État, à savoir la globalisation et les institutions mondiales et régionales par le haut et la diversité et la décentralisation des forces venant d'en bas. En dehors de ces deux fortes pressions, la réduction des effectifs de l'État à la suite de la privatisation et du transfert horizontal des compétences pour le secteur non gouvernemental a aussi une influence importante. Le document tente également d'évaluer le développement de la société civile et de sa valeur dans le discours.

En tentant d'aller au-delà de la thèse selon laquelle la mondialisation rend obsolète l'État-nation, la politique peu pertinente et la souveraineté nationale une coquille vide, cette étude aborde également la question de savoir si la mondialisation rend les États-nations inutiles. Est-ce le prélude à un ordre post-westphalien?

The distinctive historical transformations of the state in the late twentieth century is reflected in a set of megaprocesses characterised by changes in the global production systems, new technologies, a spatial reorganisation of global capitalism, the end of the Cold War etc. These have contributed to the reshaping of the limits of state sovereignty, if not outright a decomposition of the state. States today are subject to triple pressures. From above, there is the impact of global standard-setting that is eroding national

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competence (World Bank, IMF and the WTO). Domestically, smaller government and privatisation are compounding this further as the state cedes to the civil society and the private sector. The third pressure is from below in terms of devolution to local bodies, and special safety nets for minorities and the disadvantaged within the polity. In some cases, regional languages and cultures are enjoying a renaissance. In short, the power of the nation state is eroding from above, by globalisation, and from below, by devolution. The third factor is more horizontal and is related to globalisation working at the domestic level to erode the competence of the state.

Decades ago, in his book "The End of Ideology", Daniel Bell asserted that the state was becoming too small to handle really big problems and too large to deal effectively with small ones. Canadian economist and public servant Sylvia Ostry feels that Bell's vision, perhaps, is now manifest. In any event, she holds that the accelerating pace of structural transformation of the global economy places increasing strain on the adaptive capacity, and hence legitimacy, of governments and international institutions. The basic problem of policy lag is now different by a quantum degree. She speaks of two clocks ticking - the clock of accelerating interdependence and the clock of domestic and multilateral decision-making, without there being any sign of synchronisation.¹

We take on first the issue of erosion from above, by globalisation although the devolutionary pressures are not entirely independent phenomena. The challenges presented by globalisation have now spawned a new "space" - the virtual country². This was no doubt inevitable with the earlier success of the famous "end of history" intellectual fad that greeted the fall of the Berlin Wall. In a world of virtual countries, so the story goes, there is only one hegemon - capitalism. This updated version of the end of history, albeit equally simplistic, does however rest on an important fact - the growing ubiquitousness and power of the main agent of globalization, the multinational enterprise (MNE). The initial part of this section attempts to sketch out, after Sylvia Ostry, the key features of investment-led globalisation and then to describe some of the implications of globalisation for the new international agenda of deeper integration.

¹ See Sylvia Ostry, "Globalisation and the nation-state: erosion from above" (Timlin Lecture, University of Saskatchewan, Feb 1998); "The deepening integration of the Global Economy" (Havana, January 1999); "Globalisation and Sovereignty" (J.R. Mallory Annual Lecture, McGill University, March 1999); "Globalisation: what does it mean?" (G-78 Annual Conference, Econiche House, Ottawa, October 1999)

²Richard Rosencrance, "The Rise of the Virtual State," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1996, pp. 45-61.

It must however, be borne in mind that the MNEs, powerful as they are, are not the only new global actors challenging the power of the nation state. The international non-governmental organisations, or INGOs, are also playing an increasingly important role in policy-making - both domestic and international. The main features of this important, but little understood, development will also be dwelt upon in the subsequent subsections. In the concluding part, some of the arguments which question the benefits of globalisation will be briefly reviewed. The growing backlash which is now emerging in the rich industrialised countries has not yet spawned a coherent policy response to the deepening integration of the global economy - not surprisingly since the debate has only begun. But judged in the light of history, it would be unwise to ignore the new signs of discord.

I

Pressures from above

It is only appropriate that this discourse begin by tracking the globalisation process. This could provide the context for understanding, even prognosticating, the trajectories along which states would evolve, reshape and reorganise competencies, and recreate common identities for their citizens.

The international economy was beginning a process of dramatic transformation almost precisely at the time that the Uruguay Round (the eighth round of multilateral trade negotiations since the GATT) was launched in September 1986. The term globalisation was first used in 1986 and was spawned by the investment surge of the second half of the decade which involved all the leading countries of the OECD and not, as in the earlier postwar period, just the U.S. Most of it was in capital- and technology-intensive sectors and services. Hence, technology flows (as captured from the very inadequate measure of royalties and fees) also exploded, increasing from an annual negative growth rate of 0.1 to 22 percent between the first and second half of the decade. After a slowdown in the early 1990s (because of recession in the OECD countries), investment flows started to pick up again, but this time with a difference. No longer overwhelmingly dominated by the OECD countries of the Triad (Europe, Japan and the U.S.), non-OECD countries, especially China, are now increasingly important host and home countries. Further, a new type of "investment", in the form of strategic technology alliances (STAs), also proliferated during the 1980s and 1990s. Although data are scarce, there is enough evidence to show that some, albeit a minority, of these alliances involve both Triad and non-OECD firms.

The growing importance of foreign investment is highlighted by a few facts. In 1995, worldwide sales of foreign affiliates were over \$6 trillion - 30% higher than world exports. Between 1985 and 1996, investment outflows increased by nearly 20 percent, twice the growth rate of exports or output. The total global stock almost quadrupled - from \$679 billion in 1985, it rose to \$3.2 trillion in 1996. Trade and investment are increasingly linked. An estimated one-third of exports are intra-firm, but that global average is far higher for capital and technology-intensive industries and 70 percent of technology earning are intra-firm transactions. Thus for the U.S., nearly half of manufacturing exports and over 60% of imports flow within the firm. Once licensing and royalty payments as well as franchising fees are taken into account, in the mid-1990s, 80% of earnings for U.S. goods and services sold abroad are linked to the activities of American multinationals.³

Most of the intra-firm trade is in intermediate goods and reflects the creation of vertical intra- or inter-firm global networks which link different parts of the value-added chain. Even within service industries, rapid developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) have increased tradability and enabled firms to allocate portions of the production process to foreign affiliates. With international rivalry intensifying, global integration of production will grow as firms seek to capture the economies of geographic diversification. Their ability to do so is enhanced by the ongoing revolution in ICT, which is both an enabling factor and a driver. Moreover, in industrial sectors where product customisation is essential for market penetration, horizontal integration, which involves geographic differentiation of products, is now of growing importance, especially in the rich industrialised countries of the OECD. Thus, if we think of linkages among countries in terms of successive stages of global integration, the postwar linkages were strengthened by successive rounds of trade liberalisation which reduced the border barriers of interwar protectionism. The second was the linkage by vastly increased financial flows spurred by the recycling of the OPEC surpluses of the 1970s and the wave of deregulation of the 1980s. And the third is investment-led globalisation which is leading to global production networks. Hence, the use of the term "deeper integration".

Before going into some of the policy implications of deeper integration, it is worthwhile to look into the role of the ICT revolution in the globalisation process. While previous technological revolutions had profound effects not only on the economy but on the broader society, there is a plausible case for the claim that the ICT revolution is the "biggest technological juggernaut that

³ UNCTAD, World Investment Report, 1995, p. 38.

ever rolled."⁴ The convergence of information, communication and computer technologies differs from previous techno-economic paradigms, both because of the speed of transformation and the pervasiveness of impact, not only on manufacturing but, for the first time in economic development, on many services industries, including governments, the biggest service provider of all.

In the manufacturing sector or more traditional industrial production, which would include services such as transport, wholesale and retail trade, the impact of ICT on both enterprise and industrial organisation has been to reduce the "middle layers". The result has been flatter organisations with fewer middle managers, the spread of just-in-time production systems and closer integration of production with demand thus reducing storage and inventory costs as well as intermediaries such as wholesalers. This shake-out restructuring has proceeded much further in the U.S. than elsewhere, but the ongoing job loss has been mitigated by growth stimulated largely by investment in ICT equipment. In other countries, where the full impact of restructuring is yet to be experienced and investment in ICT has lagged, the effects of job loss are likely to be more serious. Finally, in the manufacturing sector, the ICT revolution has made it cheaper and easier to manage far-flung and widely dispersed production networks leading to, as already noted, the ongoing vertical integration.

The impact of ICT on services has been to increase their tradability - in effect to make services more like manufacturing. The traditional notion of services highlighted their immaterial, intangible nature which required that they be consumed when and where produced. Because ICTs rest on the "codification" and storage of information, they provide the means of separating by time and space the production and consumption of a large number of service activities such as financial services, consulting and engineering, professional services, international reservation services in air transport and hotels, research and development, education and health services etc. This permits more tradability and more transnational networking.

However, it is easier to codify information to be embodied in material goods - dishwashers, robots or cars - and routine information management tasks in any sector than those "soft" skills crucial to the information services which require talent, creativity and continuous learning. There is thus an inherent tendency to widening inequality in the technology (in entertainment and in financial services innovation, for example, with the "winner takes all" income

⁴The term, adapted from George Gilder, as quoted in Chris Freeman and Luc Soete, "Work for all or mass unemployment?", London, 1994, p. 44. The analysis of the new information revolution is comprehensively documented by the authors.

paradigm). Finally, this move to a new growth trajectory driven by the soft rather than the hard side of ICT clearly enhances the comparative advantage of the U.S., for a variety of reasons including its dynamism, flexibility, and English language. This strongly affects the policy dimensions of deeper integration.

▪ *The Deeper Integration Policy Agenda*

The "shallow integration" of the GATT was focused mainly on transparent border impediments (or proxies for such impediments) to trade flows. Reducing these barriers through successive rounds of negotiations clearly involved some degree of constraint on governmental freedom of action but, based as it was on the exchange of roughly equal offers of tariff reductions, or broad reciprocity, this constraint was limited. Indeed the original, if implicit, concept underlying the GATT was the preservation of national diversity and a variety of "interface" mechanisms were included to ensure that domestic priorities could be balanced with international obligations.

The erosion of national autonomy took a different form in the second stage of interdependence - the liberalisation of financial flows. Policy autonomy at the macro level, i.e. monetary and fiscal policy, began to shrink at a rapid rate when deregulation of financial markets and the acceleration of the ICT revolution spurred a torrent of round the clock financial flows which vastly outweigh trade flows among countries. The flows of foreign exchange have been estimated to be over one and one-quarter trillion dollars a day and fear of capital flight has made the foreign exchange market far more powerful than any finance minister or central banker. Ostry argues that efforts to mitigate the impact of these flows so as to provide governments with more room to manoeuvre, especially in implementing fiscal policy, have led to repeated calls for some form of tax on short-term spot transactions.

In response to the Mexican crisis in 1995, these proposals were revived before the 1995 Economic Summit in Halifax, but rejected as unworkable in a global economy where new technologies can create offshore sites almost instantaneously. New forms of surveillance for the IMF were, however, adopted as a result of Halifax, as a means of preventing further crises. Their first test - in Thailand in the summer of 1997 – failed, and criticism of the IMF grew as the currency turmoil in Asia spread. According to Ostry, the Asian crisis was, however, of a fundamentally different nature than the Mexican, centred not on sovereign debt and macro policies, but on "soft infrastructure" – basic structural issues which include regulatory deficiencies, corporate governance, legal regimes and political governance. The genie was out of the bottle. Thus, the second stage of interdependence has and will continue to

severely constrain national room for macro policy, whether for good or for evil.

The third stage of interdependence, to which the term deeper integration or globalisation has been affixed, however, is of a different nature and order of magnitude. In large degree, this relates to the role of the MNEs and their policy influence, especially in the U.S. Market entry by means of trade and investment is essential for MNEs, especially in high-tech sectors and services. The two modes are complements rather than alternatives, and market presence by investment is a two-way channel for both technology diffusion and technology access. Most importantly, impediments to market access by either mode of entry are no longer confined to overt border barriers to trade or explicit restrictions that limit foreign investment and would thus also prevent access to advancements in knowledge generated by universities or research laboratories. Rather, impediments to effective access can often arise from domestic regulatory policies, legal cultures, private sector actions, the structure of financial markets or innovation systems which have an exclusionary effect by accident or design - by system differences in the broadest sense of that term which encompasses institutional arrangements and historical legacies. The agenda of deeper integration therefore, must cover both trade in goods and services as well as investment; and will involve an intrinsic pressure for harmonisation. In a meaningful sense, the destination of the path of deeper integration is a global single market. This directional push is reinforced by locational competition for investment so that the MNEs building production networks around the world can exert greater pressure on governments to lower taxes, provide fiscal and other incentives and reduce transactions costs associated with different regulations and legal regimes.

The full impact of the ICT revolution clearly has some distance to go and a fourth phase of global integration is now visible in the growth of electronic commerce. This new world of cyberspace, reflective of the underlying shift in the technology trajectory from "hard" to "soft", and the growing importance of "network markets" - especially telecommunication - literally eliminates borders so that the term "domestic policy", according to Ostry, could become an oxymoron. Be that as it may, the main issue for the subject at hand is that the steadily deepening integration of the global economy is in effect creating a momentum to a global single market. Of course, we may never arrive at that destination, but the pressure for system convergence - harmonisation of domestic policies and institutions - will be fed by locational competition for investment, regulatory arbitrage by MNEs, rapidly changing communication modes, and international economic policy in both multilateral and regional fora.

In sum, the deeper integration agenda is far more intrusive and erosive of national sovereignty than the founders of the GATT could have ever imagined. The original GATT mode of negotiation by broad reciprocity will be less and less relevant. Ostry also argues that because of system differences, which include structural asymmetries of access, with the U.S. being the most porous, deregulated and transparent in the legalistic sense, the new protectionism will take the form of system friction, as the US-Japan high tech battles of the 1980s so amply demonstrated. More broadly, with a wide diversity of inherited legal institutions in Asian countries - from indigenous or colonial regimes, system harmonisation seems unlikely and it will take patience and skill to negotiate rules which spell out the lines between "efficiency" and "sovereignty". And it will require considerable reinforcement of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), seriously ill-equipped to "govern" a global single market. Moreover, changes are now underway in both the IMF and the World Bank that will increasingly target soft infrastructure, which in turn, will require better coordination between these two institutions and the WTO.

▪ *New global players: International NGOs*

The deeper integration agenda at present largely reflects the agenda of the MNEs, but there are also other new global players of growing significance - the International Non-Governmental Organisations or INGOs. Virtually non-existent at the onset of the century, they grew to over 500 by 1990 with most of the growth taking place after the Second World War. By way of comparison, intergovernmental organisations and states numbered around 300 and also grew, although at a far slower pace, after WWII as a result of postwar reforms in international policy and the demise of colonialism. So the INGOs are a relatively new but increasingly pervasive institutional phenomenon.

The INGOs are very diverse in nature but have certain characteristics in common. They are flourishing today in part because of ICT which permits rapid and inexpensive global networking. And they are very skilled in dealing with the media, especially television. Sylvia Ostry terms them also as "transformational coalitions" that are less concerned with traditional interest group issues like the division of the pie than with the recipe for making it, and thus their agenda is often at odds with the other players - governments and the MNEs. In a sense, they are post-Enlightenment, linked less by a rule of reason than by a rule of morality or values. The most prominent INGOs at present are the Greens and their influence was already evident at the Marrakesh meeting which concluded the Uruguay Round in April 1994 and also established a Committee on Trade and Environment to report to the first WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore in December 1996.

It is no accident that the Greens were the first to play a role in trade policy at the launch of the renewed multilateral rules-based trading system. In 1994, the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) included specific environmental provisions: the first in trade history. And the 1994 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) - the Rio Earth Summit – because of its endorsement of the INGOs' role in international policy-making, has been described as a watershed event for nongovernmental organisations. It would be recalled that they were actively involved in the preparatory process, in national government official delegations, and in drafting. New international alliances were launched, thus expanding their transnational scope.

Perhaps most importantly over the longer-run, UNCED requested the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to formalise the rules for INGO participation in the policy process of the United Nations institutions. The Report of the Working Group on the Review of Arrangements for Consultations with Non-Governmental Organisations was issued in July 1996 and spells out in considerable detail the status and role of NGOs in the U.N. system. The effort to draw a fine line between the role of member governments and the NGOs is reflected in the complex and detailed drafting during what were no doubt a highly contentious series of meetings. Nonetheless, the report marks a potentially major transformation of the postwar international policy-making architecture.

While the environmental groups are the most prominent and most active in the global arena, they are part of a much broader phenomenon now receiving increasing attention under the rather broad and perhaps ill-defined term "civil society", to include all manner of non-governmental institutions or even informal group interactions from philanthropic bodies and professional societies to community sports clubs. A distinction is sometimes made between community-based associations organised around mutual social interests, and mass membership organisations – like the environmental, human rights, women's groups - based on single interests and more akin to the traditional business and trade union lobbyists. These latter groups are, by definition, policy oriented and thus more relevant in the context of the issue at hand. But even within this category of non-market, non-governmental organisations, the World Bank differentiates between advocacy NGOs, both national and international and operational NGOs engaged in the delivery of services largely at the local level. The World Bank, Ostry notes, is increasingly engaging with both these institutions as it has been under sustained attack to incorporate environmental considerations into its overall policy framework and to utilise NGOs rather than government agencies in recipient countries

for service delivery as a means of building "social capital", another ill-defined, but currently in vogue term.

It should be stressed that the influence of the INGOs, as exemplified by the environmental groups, has been greatly enhanced by the ICT revolution, both by agile and skilled use of the media (especially television) and by the low cost and global span of communication linkages such as e-mail. While the environmental movement is decades old, their impact on policy has been gathering force only in the past few years. Rio, NAFTA, Greenpeace's stunning victory over Shell in 1995;⁵ and the equally stunning impact that same year of animal rights groups in the U.K. on the long-standing European Commission policy with respect to the transport of live animals - provide plausible evidence to support this assertion of growing policy impact. Of course, such "victories" can be matched by equally significant "defeats", such as the growing dismay that the post-Rio policy results have been less than expected. There is an ongoing struggle within the environmental movement between the more radical activists and the more pragmatic "realists" that promise to intensify and the outcome is by no means clear. The "realists" have formed alliances with business in some sectors to add to the weight of "green" approaches in policy formation and to explore technical solutions to environmental problems. This of course has been derided as "collaboration" by their more assertive colleagues. Further, since the most powerful INGOs are based in the OECD countries, and especially in the English-speaking countries, it is also not clear how "universal" their messages really are. For this and other reasons, indigenous INGOs are proliferating in some Latin American and Asian countries.

Finally, the media-based advantage of the radicals - the attraction of apocalyptic messages in the age of sound bites - has produced the inevitable backlash from another INGO, the scientific community. The so-called Heidelberg Appeal, signed by 218 scientists from different countries, including 27 Nobel Prize winners, issued on the eve of the Rio conference, is illustrative. While asserting support for the objectives of the Earth Summit, the declaration stated: "We are however worried, at the dawn of the 21st century, at the emergence of an irrational ideology which is opposed to scientific and industrial progress and impedes economic and social development."⁶ For "irrational and ideology", Ostry prefers the more neutral "post-Enlightenment". Descartes said, "I think therefore I am." The new

⁵See "Shell to consult pressure groups," *Financial Times*, March 17, 1997, p. 19. The high-profile event involved abandonment of years of planning by a powerful MNE and forced a fundamental change in corporate strategy by including environmental and human rights groups as formal advisors on new projects.

⁶ *Wall Street Journal*, June 1, 1992, p. A12

information age equivalent, according to her, could be: "I'm on the Internet, therefore I am."

The view that there is a fundamental conflict between a paradigm of faith or values and that of science or reason as the fundamental basis for policy discourse and practice demonstrates how difficult it will be to integrate these new transnational actors into the "establishment" which has dominated the Western world for two centuries. In a broader sense, the proliferation of NGOs and INGOs does reflect an often inchoate and implicit reaction to the impact of globalisation in, for example, the erosion of national sovereignty by global market forces and of the legitimacy of political parties. And no doubt, the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet state have diverted the energy of dissent into new "causes". In fact, one reason for the popularity of the NGOs in the OECD countries is the sense of "empowerment", which implies a further intrusion into state authority. In developing countries, operational NGOs are seen as a substitute for "incompetent or corrupt" governmental institutions. Finally, the ongoing crisis of the postwar welfare state in all the OECD countries, rightly or wrongly attributed to the forces of globalisation, has no doubt added to the attractiveness of both advocacy and operational NGOs. Thus, Ostry argues, that the increasing power of non-governmental actors in both the domestic and international arena, in part at least, is indicative of a growing backlash to globalisation.

▪ *Globalism Revisited*

The triumphalism which greeted the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet state is beginning to sound quaint as the pictures of the "new world disorder" and the return of history flood the television screens and choke the internet. In the field of international economics, a torrent of new books questions the benefits of globalism or decry its malign effects. Part of this outpouring no doubt simply reflects millennial angst as we embark on a voyage into the alien territory of the 21st century. Part of it is also a reaction to the triumphalism which equates globalism with Nirvana and a sense that something is missing. Ostry, however, would not dismiss the angst and anger as overheated rhetoric which insists that globalism is Armageddon. She points to several substantive features of this debate which has only just begun.

One of the more questionable assertions about globalism is that it provides a unifying set of norms, principles and values - the new hegemon capitalism. Apart from the fact that the Cold War acted as a powerful constraint on trade disputes by creating a spillover from "high" to "low" policy and that in the future, with the disappearance of the "evil empire", the spillover may be reversed, this single hegemon thesis is vapid in other important respects.

Market models may vary significantly from country to country as do institutions and historical heritages and the pressure for convergence to one model - the "unique" American model - has and will continue to generate system friction. More to the point, as was clear in the development of American trade policy in the 1980s, this will sometimes generate aggressive unilateralism which undermines the multilateral rules-based trading system. This is not to suggest a likely replay of the protectionist upsurge of the 1930s with its disastrous economic and political consequences. Rather, the more likely outcome would be continuing instability and uncertainty and an undermining of global growth.

But a protectionist backlash stemming from system friction and unilateralism is only part of the story. The investment-led globalisation trend is, as argued earlier, pushing in the direction of a global single market. The compelling arguments for a global single market are economic. Consumers would be able to buy the best products at the lowest prices anywhere and everywhere. The gains stem not only from the static, once-and-for-all efficiency gains from eliminating barriers but also, and more importantly, from dynamic efficiencies which would increase growth and create new jobs as global competition forced firms to restructure, network, and innovate. A global single market would, in other words, de-link the economic optic of the nation state and the global corporation. Global distribution of production would blur the national identity of any particular product. "Global" growth would increase, "global" consumers would benefit, but the distributional effects of these gains, the distribution of winners and losers both among and within countries, would affect the immobile factors of production - the land and, most of all, the labour of the nation state. It is, indeed, the impact of globalisation on labour markets which lies at the heart of much of the recent attack on globalisation. Since the mid-1980s, the demand for less-skilled and less-educated workers has fallen in all OECD countries. In Europe, this has resulted in increased, long-term unemployment while in the U.S., it has shown up in a decline in average real wages at the bottom of the scale and a huge rise in earnings inequality.

Since these labour market maladies are unlikely to be short-lived and both the economic and political consequences will be serious, the basic causal factors have been the subject of a growing number of studies both by academics and by international institutions such as the OECD.

At the risk of oversimplification, most mainstream economists have argued that technological change, which is biased in favour of the highly skilled and highly educated, is the main factor explaining these developments, with trade playing a very minor role. More recently, however, a number of new studies present a strikingly different scenario. First, by taking into account not just

trade but also immigration and investment flows, globalisation contributes to a much more significant proportion of the increase in earnings inequality. And, more importantly, because an increasing number of unskilled jobs can be shifted to other countries (whether developing or developed), the demand for labour has become far more elastic and this has and will continue to bring downward pressure on earnings.⁷ So far this effect is most apparent in manufacturing; but, as has been noted, intra-firm global networks are now being established in a number of service sectors where the jobs are not unskilled in the traditional "blue collar" sense but require considerably higher levels of technical expertise. Only the most educated and most skilled - who are also the most mobile and can therefore, command the highest rewards - are likely to be immune to this globalisation effect. As time goes on, Ostry asserts, it will not be so easy to sneer about "globaloney"!

She is quick to state also that it would be wrong to dismiss the impact of continuing technological change as a factor. The new technologies require higher levels of cognitive and interactive skills. And, although there are industry variations, the new technologies both reduce the skill content and share of low-skill jobs, while increasing the skill content and share of high-skill jobs, especially in service industries - the main source of new jobs in the future and especially those jobs with non-codifiable information characteristics. The fastest growing jobs in services will be at the high end, which requires non-codifiable talent and creativity and at the low end in retail, healthcare, domestic service, gardening, janitorial work, etc. which are likely to increase significantly because of demographics. Thus, the new technology will be a continuing source of inequality in the future.

As noted earlier, until now, this mismatch between the relative demand for and supply of the unskilled has had different outcomes in Europe and the United States. The basic reason usually provided for the difference is that in Europe, labour market institutions set a floor for real wages and unemployment results, while in the U.S., real wages are remarkably flexible and declining earnings are the outcome. The contrast however, is more complex. The transatlantic difference in labour market maladies is but one, albeit profoundly important, aspect of far broader systemic differences between Europe and the U.S. The American paradigm - fluid, flexible and disposable, with a far greater tolerance for inequality and far greater scepticism (or hostility) to government - is deeply rooted in America's historical origins. The continental European model includes a far more extensive welfare state inherited from the postwar period and indeed

⁷For a review of published and unpublished studies as well as analysis of the demand elasticity argument see Dani Rodrik, *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?*, Institute for International Economics, Washington, D.C., 1997.

created largely because of the bitter experience of the interwar years. The contrast between the U.S. and Europe has been characterised as a contrast between Exit and Voice.⁸ An Exit paradigm is far more adaptable in a period of rapid change because in Exit, social change is ensured through an anonymous mechanism that ensures victory for the most efficient - winners are rewarded and losers appear to disappear.⁹ But when losers have a Voice and governments must engage in a long and difficult process of political renegotiation of the postwar social contract, the "rigidities" which were not terribly important when growth was high, and moving in established channels become powerful impediments to adaptability in a time of ongoing and pervasive transformation. The renegotiation of the European postwar social contract which would be formidable even in the best of times is made far more difficult today because of slow growth, fiscal and monetary constraints and the erosion of the tax base by locational competition for jobs. One logical and expected response to these explosive political pressures would be to round up the usual suspects - foreigners, whether immigrants or traders or countries with lower wages. And this is now a feature of the European scene - the backlash against globalisation.

What is more significant - being more surprising - is the backlash building in the U.S. As the NAFTA debate illustrated, the losers seem to have found a Voice, or rather a strange collection of voices including, for example, Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan on the right and, among many others, Ralph Nader on the left. Nader attacked "unaccountable transnational corporations": Buchanan railed against "amoral behemoths". The failure at the end of 1996 to achieve approval for a renewal of "fast track" - the right to negotiate trade agreements which require an up or down vote by Congress - may have been an early warning signal.

So where does all this leave us? Globalisation is presented as an unstoppable force and it no doubt is. But the search for some set of policy options which would seek to maximise its undoubted benefits, but also mitigate its equally undoubted damaging effects on the losers, has really not begun. The transatlantic discord on the "best" model, while muted, is growing, not receding. The widely proclaimed death of the Asian model which is being

⁸ A. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Cambridge, 1971 and Alexis Jacquemin and David Wright, *Corporate Strategies and European Challenges Post-1992* Journal of Common Market Studies, December 1993.

⁹An excellent example of the dynamic adaptability of the American model is the new retailing strategy to maximise the growing bifurcation of the consumer market into the wealthy top and the poorer bottom (60%) - the "Tiffany-Wal-Mart" strategy. If the middle-class is disappearing, why bother trying to sell to them? See "Two-Tier Marketing," *Business Week*, Mar. 17, 1997, pp. 82-90.

heralded in the American media will hardly help. So consensus on a policy approach is remote in the absence of vigorous policy leadership. Ostry sees an obvious paradox here. The demands on countries for policy innovation at home and for more effective international policy cooperation and coordination are far greater in the world of deeper integration than they were in the postwar years when the role of government was expanded and the postwar international institutions created. But that was the golden age of growth when OECD growth rates were two or three times the current trend rates. As already noted, adapting to change, especially change which involves wrenching adjustments in the lives of many citizens, is far easier in a growth-friendlier environment. The challenge is magnified because these citizens, especially in democratic societies bombarded by sound bites, daily perceive the decline in national authority and this continues to undermine the credibility of governments and feeds the erosion of social cohesion. So the real question here is not whether the nation state is becoming a minor bit player on a global stage where the starring roles are assigned to the MNEs, and the INGOs are mounting larger and louder demonstrations outside the theatre, but whether there is the political will and skill to re-invent government and global governance. If there is, Ostry sees the heralding of not the end of history but the beginning of a new future. If there is not, the triumphalist tenor of the original assertion, she insists, will sound increasingly foolish, if not worse.

II

Pressures from below

The formal political system today faces a new geography of power. Globalisation and the new technologies have contributed to the shrinking of state authority and the explosion of a whole series of new actors engaged in governance activities.¹⁰

Professor Saskia Sassen of the University of Columbia sees in the current phase of the world economy significant discontinuities with the preceding periods and radically new arrangements. This becomes particularly evident in the impact of globalisation on the geography of economic activity and on the organisation of political power. There is an incipient unbundling of the exclusive authority over its territory that has long been associated with the nation-state. The most strategic instantiations of this unbundling she identifies as:

¹⁰ Sassen, Saskia; *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in the Age of Globalization* (Columbia University Press, 1996)

- a. the global city, which operates as a partly de-nationalised zone for economic, political and cultural activities; and
- b. the Internet as a space for civil society that escapes all conventional jurisdictions and is also incipiently de-nationalised.

At a lower order of complexity, the transnational corporation and global markets in finance can also be seen as such instantiations through their cross-border activities and the new semi-private transnational legal regimes which frame these activities.

Briefly, the major dynamics leading to these new conditions are the following. Privatization and deregulation - two key features of economic globalisation - have shifted power away from public bureaucracies and onto the world of private corporations and markets. Shrinking state functions linked to social welfare broadly understood have relocated a growing range of responsibilities in this domain onto civil society. The weakening of international public law and the strengthening of market forces in the international system have produced growing inequalities in the socio-economic situation of people worldwide and a diminished will and fewer resources in the formal political system to address these. A growing number of international and non governmental organisations have stepped in. Finally, the enormous growth of the Internet represents an expanding zone where most established jurisdictions (i.e. various state authorities) are neutralised.

In her reading, the impact of globalisation on state authority or sovereignty has been significant in creating operational and conceptual openings for other actors and subjects¹¹. At the limit, this means that the state is no longer the only site for sovereignty and the normativity that comes with it, and further, that the state is no longer the exclusive subject for international law and the only actor in international relations. Other actors, from NGOs and minority populations to supranational organisations, are increasingly emerging as subjects of international law and actors in international relations. The growth of the Internet keeps strengthening the options of non-state actors.

The ascendance of a large variety of non-state actors in the international arena signals the expansion of an international civil society. This is clearly a contested space, particularly when we consider the logic of the capital market - profitability at all costs - against that of the human rights regime. But it does represent a space where other actors can gain visibility as

¹¹ See Sassen, Saskia; *Globalisation and Its Discontent* (1997); New York: New Press.

individuals and as collective actors, and come out of the invisibility of aggregate membership in a nation-state exclusively represented by the sovereign. There are two strategic dynamics that Sassen isolates here, viz.:

- a. The formation of conceptual (including rhetorical) and operational openings for actors other than the national state in cross-border political dynamics, particularly the new global corporate actors, NGOs, and those collectivities whose experience of membership has not been subsumed fully under nationhood in its modern conception, e.g. minorities, immigrants, indigenous people, and many feminists.
- b. the fact that this dynamic brings with it an incipient de-nationalising of specific types of power that used to be embedded in the national state and have now been relocated, at least partially to global corporations and markets, NGOs, international organisations and sub-national structures, particularly global cities, and transnational spaces, particularly the Internet.

She identifies the large city of today emerging as a strategic site for these new types of operations. It is one of the nexuses where the formation of new claims materialises and assumes concrete forms. The loss of power at the national level produces the possibility for new forms of power and politics at the subnational level. The national as container of social process and power is cracked. This cracked casing opens up possibilities for a geography of politics that links subnational spaces. Cities are foremost in this new geography.

One question this engenders is how and whether we are seeing the formation of a new type of transnational politics that localises in these cities but is part of a transnational network of such localisations. The local is today part of cross-border networks rather than simply the bottom or smallest level in the conventional spatial hierarchies that have dominated formal political systems, i.e. local-national-international. The Internet plays a strategic role in this re-positioning of the local.

There is little doubt that the Internet is an enormously important tool and space for democratic participation at all levels, the strengthening of civil society, and the formation of a whole new world of transnational political and civic projects. But it has also become clear over the last few years that the Internet is no longer what it was in the 1970s or 1980s; it has become a contested space with considerable possibilities for segmentation and privatisation. We cannot take its democratic potential as a given simply

because of its interconnectivity. We cannot take its "seamlessness" as a given simply because of its technical properties. And we cannot take its bandwidth availability as a given simply because of the putative exponential growth in network capacity with each added network.

This is a particular moment in the history of digital networks, one when powerful corporate actors and high performance networks are strengthening the role of private digital space and altering the structure of public digital space. Digital space has emerged not simply as a means for communicating, but as a major new theater for capital accumulation and the operations of global capital. But civil society - in all its various incarnations - is also an increasingly energetic presence in cyberspace. The greater the diversity of cultures and groups the better for this larger political and civic inhabitation of the Internet, the more effective the resistance to the risk that the corporate world might set the standards. From struggles around human rights, the environment and workers strikes around the world to genuinely trivial pursuits, the Internet has emerged as a powerful medium for non-elites to communicate, support each other's struggles and create the equivalent of insider groups at scales going from the local to the global.

The political and civic potential of these trends is enormous. It offers the possibility for interested citizens to act in concert across the globe. It signals the possibility of a new form of politics, namely, local politics with a difference - simultaneous action in multiple localities or local action with an awareness of many other localities struggling around similar issues. We are seeing the formation of a whole new world of transnational political and civic projects.

These developments in the transnational networks that connect cities and in the digital space of the Internet bring with them a series of new interactions between what has been constituted as the private and the public, the domestic and the international. The public can now operate through the private and the private through the public. For instance, markets are taking over many of the functions that used to be in public bureaucracies and so are NGOs. On the other hand, market forces and corporations can now influence public agendas to a much larger extent than was the case twenty years ago - powerful corporations always did influence public policy, but what we are seeing today is on another scale. Similarly, NGOs have grown in number and in influence. The large international organisations such as the World Bank now are expected to consult with NGOs and large western donors now often prefer to fund NGOs in developing countries for development and public work rather than the governments.

▪ *Civil Society and the Future of the Nation-State*

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been around for fairly a long time. Today, however, they occupy centrestage due to their diversity, breadth of coverage, and, perhaps most interestingly, the transnational networks that they are forming. One issue that has emerged forcefully in recent years is that of NGO influence on states. Recent research reveals that it is only a small minority of mostly the very large western NGOs that lobby states. Some of the lobbying has a global circuit. Further, we also see innovative strategies for influencing governments that go beyond western style lobbying. For instance, NGOs delegating part of their staff to governments and trying to change the government position on specific issues from the inside. There are also joint venturing with state agencies, which is another way of shaping a government's agenda on specific issues. These cases also represent the increasingly ambiguous distinction of private/public in the contemporary context.

Evidence shows that NGOs can effect power redistribution even though they do so slowly and often at micro scales: e.g. micro-credit extended to women has done more to empower them than government legislation and Bureaus of Women's Affairs. More generally, today NGOs often directly engage questions of democracy, empowerment and redistribution in a way that they did not in the past.

There is an emergent hyper-critique of NGOs today, focused particularly on the large western NGOs that are well financed, operate globally and have basically technocratic organisational standards. They are basically depoliticising the motivations and objectives of NGO activists and, more broadly, depoliticising international political movements¹². The large, well-funded NGOs have developed multiple standards that they implement in their work and expect compliance with on the part of workers and beneficiary communities all over the world --and embedded in specific cultures. They have the effect of "westernising" what they get engaged with; they do so through the implementation of organisational standards and codes across borders and through imposition on people who may have a very different experience or perspective on an event or notion of politics. This leads to the formation of an elite stratum of NGOs that become the favourites of large Western donors and set the standards for other NGOs if they are to be funded.

¹² Cooley, A and Ron, James (2002); *The NGO Scramble: Organisational Insecurity and the Political economy of Transnational Action* (International Security, vol. 27, issue 1 pp 5-39)

In addition, this world of NGOs is often seen as a part of the West's hegemonic project - by instituting standards and aiming at strengthening western style liberal democracy, they have the effect of making places safe for western-style capitalism. These elite NGOs often by-pass national governments in developing countries arguing that they want to institute standards and western style democracy in places where the national and local governments are not oriented in this manner.

A lot of NGOs may have started in opposition to the state, but have become mutually constitutive with it. Today, they wind up augmenting the capacities of states, providing the equivalent of welfare services, generally subcontracting "state work." Consider the case of ISO-14000 (the environmental protection series of standards in the International Standards Organization). In the US, it deploys more inspectors going from factory to factory checking on compliance with standards than the government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). But one question is whether there is capture of national environmental agendas by specific interests, notably corporate interests embedded in the state. By acting as enforcer of national law, ISO does not function as a critic, potentially in opposition to the state, but merely as an entity augmenting the inspection capacities of the state.

Some of the depoliticisation of NGOs evident in the above series of examples is emblematic of a broader pattern of depoliticisation of power generally, e.g. the privatisation of public bureaucracy functions and relocation of these functions onto the world of corporate agendas.

But some of these developments may also be pointing to new forms of the political, forms which are not embedded in state forms or privatised forms. The distributed power made possible by the Internet and the types of NGOs that can benefit from this do represent, it would appear, a new world of the political. Securing distributed power, its reproduction, its diversification, its growth and multiplication will mean we need to invent new forms. There are crucial examples of this inventing, notably open-source operating systems and "insurgent technologies." This line of thinking does also raise a question about the need to find new ways of naming what it is that we are describing when we speak today of the world of NGOs, with their enormous diversity, resources and relations to the formal political apparatus. It is clear that simply saying NGOs has become inadequate because we are grouping many different political projects, some related to existing power and others in opposition to it. In this regard, the concept of Post-governmental Organisations (PGOs) is an intriguing one.

▪ ***Civil Society and the Future of the Nation-State: The other view***

Civil society is a broad term denoting the wide range of organisations operating outside the governmental and business sectors. It has taken on greater significance in a world in which the state is increasingly beset from within by armed rebellions and ethnic tensions and from without by the border-leaping forces of globalisation. Civil society has come, simultaneously, to be thought of as encompassing everything that is not the state and as exemplifying a set of inherently democratic values. And hence, the dogma holding that strengthening civil society is the key to creating or sustaining a healthy polity has come to dominate the thinking of major charitable foundations, as well as human rights and humanitarian organisations¹³. In the framework of development aid in particular, the shift from channeling assistance to governments, as had been the case well into the 1980s, to offering it to local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) has been justified not simply as the inevitable prudential response to states misusing aid but as a way of building civil society.

That this emphasis on local "capacity building" and on fostering civil society arose at exactly the moment when development aid from most major donor countries was plummeting (in many countries, including the United States, they are now at historic lows) may, of course, be coincidental. But in the development sphere, at least, ideological commitment to making states "responsive" to civil society seems to have been accompanied by a determination to cut funding. Viewed from this angle, to David Rieff, the idea of civil society begins to look less like a way of fostering democratic rights and responsive governments and more like part of the dominant ideology of the post-cold war period: liberal market capitalism. A perfect example of this synthesis of emancipatory sentiments and faith in free markets can be found in the pivotal role assigned to civil society in the prevention of deadly conflict in strategic thinking in the late 1990s. One such report reads: "Many elements of civil society can work to reduce hatred and violence and to encourage attitudes of concern, social responsibility and mutual aid within and between groups. In difficult economic and political transitions, the organisations of civil society are of crucial importance in alleviating the dangers of mass violence."¹⁴ The paragraph then argues, without break or transition, into the following assertion: "Many elements in the private sector around the world are dedicated to helping prevent deadly conflict."

¹³David Rieff, *The False Dawn of Civil Society* (The Nation 1999)

¹⁴ Executive Summary of the 1997 Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict

Obviously, the communitarians, human rights activists and liberal foundation executives who first raised the banner of civil society were no more interested in helping refurbish liberal capitalism's ideological superstructure than was the human rights movement in making its cause the quasi-religious faith of the international new class, but this is nonetheless exactly what they have done. Reiff argues that it is a safe assumption that any term that can be embraced as warmly by the Clinton Administration and the European Commission as "civil society" has been, threatens no important vested interests in the rich world.

Again, there is no question of a subterfuge. The idea of civil society simply coincides with the tropism toward privatisation that has been the hallmark of these post-cold war times. Far from being oppositional, it is perfectly in tune with the Zeitgeist of an age that has seen the growth of what proponents like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair are pleased to call the "Third Way" and what might more un sentimentally be called "Thatcherism with a human face." As these countries go about privatising prisons, or development assistance and are in the process, Reiff apprehends, of privatising military interventions into places like New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Angola by armies raised by companies like Sandline and Executive Outcomes, so also the notion of privatising democracy-building. The thesis is to give up on the state's ability to establish the rule of law or democracy through elections and legislation, and instead give civic associations - the political equivalent of the private sector - a chance to do their thing.

The fact that all this comes couched in the language (and the imaginative framework) of emancipation does not, in and of itself, make it emancipatory. Indeed, there are times when writers like Reiff wonder if the advocates of civil society are the useful agents of globalisation. In further undermining the state, they undermine the only remaining power that has at least the potential to stand in opposition to globalisation (Reiff chooses to call it "the privatisation of the world").

All the major nations seem to have emerged from the cold war weaker and more incoherent than they were when they entered it. And for good reason. The course of the world economy has been deeply subversive of the established structures of power. Such perceived and real loss of power has been followed by a loss of legitimacy. It is now politicians who are the supplicants and corporate executives who are viewed as the dispensers of wisdom and authority and the holders of real power. The European Union countries were not able to muster the resolve to end the Bosnian war, but they were able to launch European monetary union at the behest of corporate Europe - an event that in many ways was European capitalism's end run

around a half-century-old social contract between capital and labour, now seen to be interfering with the corporate bottom line.

In the United States, a renewed ethnic consciousness has led to what seems like a flowering of a multiplicity of allegiances; in Western Europe, the subsumption of nation-states in the project of the European Union, as well as the arrival of large numbers of nonwhite immigrants for the first time in several centuries, has produced similarly subversive effects on the legitimacy of the nation. Faced with such confusions, David Reiff wonders if the ideal of civil society, which does not seek to oppose this fragmentation but rather to capitalise on it, should have become so important.

Reiff also sees in this blend of economic and democratic determinism the easy combination of a deep fatalism about the future of the nation-state. Political scientists constantly assure that we have been going through the most profound change in international relations since the establishment of the Westphalian order. Nations have been clearly less and less able to affect investment flows and have thus been judged to be turning into hollow shells. And the future of supranational institutions like the UN system is seen as being, if anything, bleaker still. Better make a virtue of necessity and insist that the new medievalism of civil society, with the NGOs playing the role of the guilds in fourteenth-century Italy, would be an improvement over a world of etiolated nation-states in which even that *sine qua non* of state power, a monopoly on violence, is in many cases no longer assured.

Proponents of the effectiveness of civil society point to examples of the successful opposition of popular action to repressive regimes or state policies. Civil society is less equipped to confront the challenges of globalisation than nations are, and more likely to be wracked by divisions based on region and the self-interest of the single-issue groups that form the nucleus of the civil society movement. Viewed coldly, the concept of civil society is based on the fundamentally apolitical, or even antipolitical, concept of single-issue activism. And yet, surely one person's civil society group is another person's pressure group. When it is said that civil society must be recognised as a new force in international politics, what is meant is a certain kind of civil society - in other words, a certain kind of political movement.

In any case, to make the claim that civil society is bound to be, or is even likely to be, a force for good is roughly akin to claiming that people, at least when left to their own devices, are good. In contrast, proponents of civil society are often mesmerised by the depredations of states and seem to assume that states, by their nature, are malign or impotent or both. But there are other predators besides government officials, other ills besides those unleashed by untrammelled state power.

One other issue is that of democracy. Leaders of associations, pressure groups and NGOs - unlike politicians in democracies - are accountable to no one except their members and those who provide them with funds. That may seem a minor question to adherents of a particular cause. Does it matter that Jody Williams was never elected to lead the campaign against landmines? Perhaps it does not. But proponents of civil society are claiming that it offers a better alternative, or at least an important additional voice, to that of governments and parliaments, not just on a single issue but on all the pressing questions of our time. And leaders of such groups, unlike politicians, do not have to campaign, hold office, allow the public to see their tax returns or stand for re-election. It is, indeed, the new medievalism, with the leaders of the NGOs as feudal lords.

This, of course, is hardly what most advocates of civil society have in mind. And yet, as things stand, it is this unaccountable, undemocratic congeries of single-interest groups that is being proposed as the only viable alternative to the nation-state. Those who aspire to the better world that the magic bullet of civil society is supposed to engineer would, in Reiff's consideration, do better to fight the political battles they believe need fighting in the full knowledge that we do not all agree on what should be done or how societies should be organised, and we never will.

III

Pressures from the flank

States' control over their domestic societies and economies is waning. For much of the 19th and 20th Centuries, states "grew." They took on more and more economic activities and social responsibilities. Some states, under Communism, assumed exceptionally large control over their societies, but states' growth trend proved nearly universal. From modest beginnings with tax and military authorities in centuries past, states later added postal services, police forces, water authorities and school systems. More recently, they added central banks and took control of many industries and financial institutions. And they offered social protections like unemployment insurance, pensions, public health services, universities, public transportation and much more.

According to World Bank data, government spending in the world's richest states (OECD members) grew on average from less than 10% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in about 1870 to 20% by 1937 and 47% by 1995. (These figures include local governments as well as social security funds for

pensions, health care and unemployment.) From 1937 to 1995, government spending in the United States grew from 9% of GDP to 34%, in the Netherlands from 19% to 54% and in Sweden from 10% to 69%. Though the Bank may be inclined to exaggerate the trend, the general pattern until recently was unquestionably sharply upward.

Increasingly, though, the pressures of global capital on the tax system have drained states' resources, reducing the funds available for social and economic programs. At the same time, powerful conservative ideology has gained the upper hand, persuading officials and parliamentarians that states are inefficient and private markets more cost-effective and consumer-friendly. And intense pressure from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral financial and trade institutions has forced governments to cut social spending and privatize state companies.

In a frenzy of downsizing, governments have sold off thousands of public companies and privatized state services that represent very large economic sectors. Mexico, for instance, had 1,155 public sector enterprises in late 1982 when it signed a loan agreement with the IMF with privatisation measures as a basic condition. By July 1996, only some 252 companies remained in state hands and some of those were already on the road to partial or complete privatisation.

Since the mid-1980s, governments in nearly every country have downsized and privatised. Even major countries like Germany, Britain, France and the United States have followed this course. States have sold off manufacturing enterprises like steel, petrochemical and automobile companies as well as raw material extraction and refining corporations in fields such as coal, mineral ores, and petroleum. They have shed utilities such as electricity, telephones, gas and coal, as well as such core utilities as water supplies and postal services. They have privatised transport including state airlines, railroads and ocean shipping lines, as well as urban trolley and bus services. They have sold public housing and office buildings built by public authorities and privatized major financial institutions like banks, postal savings and mortgage lenders.

In many countries, governments have privatised public pensions and they have partially privatised health services too. In a few cases, governments have experimented with privatisation of schools and the substitution of private mediation services for civil courts. More and more, public safety is insured by private guard services rather than public police. Governments are even experimenting with contracting out their prison services, social services, air traffic control, garbage collection, computer record-keeping and even tax

collection. In the UK, the computer records of the Inland Revenue (tax service) and the county court system have recently been taken over by EDS, the giant US-based computer services company founded by Texas billionaire Ross Perot.

Along with these trends are parallel moves: to reduce or eliminate state regulation of private markets and to abolish (or radically downsize) public research and regulatory bodies that oversee workplace safety, food safety, environmental and public health, financial market probity, product safety and the like. The UK has closed its government laboratory on the environment, for example, while the US has scaled back its Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Radical free-market theorists, backed by corporate money, argue that near-total elimination of regulation would be best for "human freedom."

States are also beginning to charge fees for public services previously free - like education and health care. An initiative by the World Bank has forced fee-based services on many poor countries, on the theory that fees provide more "consumer control" over public services at the local level. In practice, however, fees often mean that the poorest people cannot afford these services at all. Consequently, after decades of progress, school enrollment percentages are beginning to fall in many countries.

States are even dismantling their own tax base - creating a variety of new tax exemption opportunities for corporations and high-income individuals - like tax-free zones, employment "incentives," reduced top-rates for income and capital gains; drastically reduced inheritance taxes and so on. These weaken the state's finances, forcing further cuts in public services to ordinary citizens.

Quite visibly, the state is shrinking, often quite dramatically. Harvard political economist Dani Rodrik speaks of "receding government, deregulation and the shrinking of social obligations." And there can be no question that those at the bottom are paying a high price. But at the same time, states should not be idealised. Although privatisation has often had negative results and led to the erosion of democracy, it has occasionally reduced costs and provided services more effectively than before. Telecoms and airlines may be cases where overall results have been positive. In some cases, while citizen "consumers" may have benefitted, public workers have had to pay the price. Many have lost their jobs or been forced to accept pay cuts in post-privatisation downsizing. Meanwhile, wealthy investors have made huge profits from privatisation and the number of the super-rich has claimed dramatically in most countries.

In many cases, privatisation has directly hurt citizen beneficiaries, especially the poorest. Privatisation of public pensions, health services, water utilities and schools may be the most striking examples. Privatisation in other sectors has led to greater unemployment, more economic instability, and a reduced capacity of the state to manage the national economy. Rising income polarisation also seems to be a result of privatisation.

But ordinary people have not been passive observers in this process. As state-sponsored social protections have disappeared, citizens have mounted protest movements on a scale unknown since the 1930s. Public protests have also targetted the unprecedented wave of corruption and malfeasance that has engulfed even states previously known for the probity of their public officials. More and more, democratic elections have seemed merely contests of big money interests. Enormous public scandals rocked France, Italy, Spain, Japan and Britain in the mid-1990s, while criminality and mafia-style politics engulfed the former Soviet Union and most of the other states "in transition." Public cynicism and declining participation in elections resulted. Corruption and scandal even seriously tainted the judiciaries, the most respected and "non-political" branch of government. After a serious scandal in Belgium in 1996, public polls showed that less than 10% of the population still had faith in the courts.

While state activities in most areas are on the wane, one area remains robust - the military and police forces. Worldwide, these budgets have declined only slightly from peaks in the mid-1980s. In fact, most of the decrease in global military spending can be attributed to the swift decline in the budgets in just a few countries - the former Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. Some observers think that in the post-welfare-state future, military and police will be more important than ever as "defenders of the status quo", and bastions against gathering public protests. Why else, they ask, would these instruments of official violence remain so enormous even though the cold war is over and few enemies are in sight? And since the cataclysmic nine-eleven, security exigencies of states have overtaken everything else, including values and ideologies that were for them articles of faith.

IV Epilogue

The paper looked at the restricting influence of opposing forces on the state, viz. globalisation and global/regional institution building from above and of diversity and devolution from below. Apart from these two pre-eminent pressures, there is also the downsizing of the state as a result of privatisation

and horizontal transfer of competencies to the non-governmental sector. It also attempted to assess the rise of the civil society and its value in the discourse. And now the question as to whether globalisation is indeed making nation states redundant.

Noëlle Burgi and Philip S. Golub refer to Europe's politicians from Gerhard Schroder to Tony Blair and the apostles of the Third Way and how they go on and on about less government and the weak state. They also point to scholars who argue about the nation state being a thing of the past. Burgi and Golub, on the contrary, consider these to be high sounding myths that do not stand up to analysis. They go somewhat further in search of the new configuration of power in the international system and how these myths lend legitimacy to the "antisocial policies" accompanying globalisation.¹⁵

They trace the linkage of the nation state with capitalism over the last 200 years. It emerged, they assert, in the form of national markets, was based on national territories and relied on the state for support. Two nation states - Britain in the 19th century and the United States in the 20th - successively formed the hegemonic core of capitalism: each of them set the technological pace, set the rules of trade and production, and imposed the constraints of the world system. The current thesis (with which Burgi and Golub take issue) is that the bond between the nation state and capitalism is now coming to an end. Globalisation is said to be making the nation state obsolete, politics irrelevant and national sovereignty an empty shell.

This "demise" of the nation state and national sovereignty is part and parcel, they argue, of the universalist claims of contemporary capitalism. For the first time in history, capitalism has spread its reach to the remotest parts of the world and posits itself as a global system. Neither British capitalism in the 19th century nor even the American post-1945 version was truly universal. Today, capitalism is said to have finally broken away from its national moorings. It has become, as it were, extra-territorial, rootless, identity-less. And hence the thesis - the withering away of the nation state. Reduced to a managerial role in which it strives to cope with economic constraints that are beyond its control, the state now watches helplessly as the balance of forces swings towards the global markets. Within its historical borders it has ceased to be the locus of political action and identity, of social cohesion and the general interest. Beyond its frontiers it often retains only the formal attributes of sovereignty. In short, the state is supposed to have become, at best, just one among a number of otherwise private players in the international system;

¹⁵Noëlle Burgi and Philip S. Golub, *Has Globalisation Really Made Nations Redundant* (Le Monde Diplomatique, April 2000)

at worst, to have lost control altogether and to be no longer capable of influencing the course of events.

Globalisation, they argue, is tearing apart this post-war social contract. They note that the creation of a worldwide free market is rooted in a series of decisions taken by the US over the last 30 plus years which dismantled the post-war international monetary system, liberalised world markets and granted the financial sector an autonomy and power unparalleled since the golden age of British finance. The US began by abandoning the system of fixed exchange rates established by the Bretton Woods Agreements in 1944¹⁶ and introducing a system of generalised floating exchange rates. The floating exchange rate system provided a flexible and efficient monetary tool that enabled them to avoid the adjustments that would otherwise have been required by America's new situation as a debtor. The new system also allowed the US to maintain a high standard of living at home by dipping into the global savings. The burgeoning US deficit was funded for decades by Japan and Europe.

A decisive step was taken in the 1980s with the deregulation of the US finance industry, which paved the way for its globalisation via the Wall Street banks, brokers, hedge funds¹⁷ and pension funds that dominate the world's financial flows. Worldwide liberalisation in the 1980s and 1990s gave the US finance industry access to the savings of the newly industrialised and emerging countries, where rates of return were very high. In short, the establishment of a global free capital market was essential for the economic and financial wellbeing of the world's leading debtor.¹⁸

This explains the continuity of US policy on financial liberalization - the "Washington consensus". In 1985, Ronald Reagan set out to knock down barriers to trade, foreign investment and the free movement of capital between industrialised countries, especially in Japan. The US secured the liberalisation of the Japanese financial system and the revaluation of the yen under the 1985 Plaza Accords through a mixture of coercion and cooperation typical of a hegemonic power.

Burgi and Golub also dwell on the many faces of hegemony. In the early 1990s, Washington set itself three objectives: to maintain the global balance resulting from the end of the Cold War, to ensure its technological lead and

¹⁶ The Bretton Woods Agreements of 1944 laid the basis for the post-war international institutional set-up (IMF, BIRD, etc.)

¹⁷ Speculative funds that avoid federal regulation by having fewer than 99 investors.

¹⁸ The net US deficit now stands at \$1.5 trillion, i.e. 20% of GDP.

military supremacy, and to create an economic environment favourable to its own interests. For the most part, they observe, these objectives have been achieved. As political Thomas Friedman puts it: "In the globalisation system, the United States is now the sole and dominant superpower and all other nations are subordinate to it to one degree or another".¹⁹ US hegemony is a fundamental reality that conditions the international political economy. The worldwide free market is strengthening the American model, which today relies on its strong comparative advantages in the post-industrial sectors of financial and cultural services, communications, leading-edge technologies and scientific-technical production. At the same time, a normative world culture is emerging in the realms of economic activity, social practice and private international law. And, Burgi and Golub argue, it is the US which is laying down the new ground rules.

Globalisation is institutionalising a new balance of power between states that hardens the sovereignty of some while reducing the autonomy of the others. The worldwide free market accentuates the disparity between the centres of capital and the peripheries. The players with knowledge and power lay down the rules; the others fall into line. Trapped in an international division of labour that forces them into often harmful specialisation, the most vulnerable third-world countries are losing the last remnants of their sovereignty, while the newly industrialised countries have become even more dependent over the last few years, as recent experience in East Asia proves

While the European Union is an active participant in the worldwide free-market utopia, at the same time it constitutes a potential counterweight. Since the early 1980s, European unification has been directed towards the creation of an entity capable of competing with the US, rather than opposing it. By combining forces in a larger unit, the member states have been attempting to assert their sovereignty jointly in response to globalisation, since none of them is any longer able to do so individually. If sovereignty is considered as relative autonomy within the inter-state system, there is little doubt that the national executives have been able to exercise it through the EU institutions, at least in key areas relating to the world economy. If there is one subject of European consensus, it is free competition, which has been raised to the status of an absolute good.

Burgi and Golub believe that the growth of inequalities raises more than ethical issues. In the end, it always holds back economic development and undermines social cohesion. The transnational dynamics of the EU could

¹⁹ Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 1999.

provide an opportunity for upward social harmonisation in line with the most favourable rules and practices (on working conditions, wages, employment, social protection, etc.). That, they feel, would however, require political determination that is currently lacking; but, if it could be mustered, would set an excellent example. Failing that, they predict that the establishment of a European free-trade empire in the face of US hegemony may perhaps result in multipolarity, but will certainly not lead to a fairer world.



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Construction of the 'Sellout' Identity during Zimbabwe's war of liberation: A Case Study of the Dandawa Community of Hurungwe district, c1975-1980

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Abstract

Cette étude s'intéresse à l'expression orale des recherches menées dans les chefferies Dandawa afin de comprendre quelles sont les effets de la guerre de libération sur cette communauté. Un aspect qui a été souligné au cours de mon travail sur le terrain est celle de capitulards, une identité qui est devenue si fréquente au cours de l'ensemble de la période de la lutte de libération au Zimbabwe. Ce document examine donc comment cette identité a été construite pendant la guerre du Zimbabwe de la libération affectueusement connu sous le nom de la Deuxième Chimurenga. Il fait valoir que l'identité capitulard a été créée par la société pour répondre aux besoins de l'époque. A ce jour cette identité est devenue fortement politique utilisée contre ceux accusés d'être des ennemis de l'Etat. Cette étude fait valoir que, dans le Zimbabwe, l'identité capitulard prend racine sous la colonisation, en particulier vers le milieu des années 1970. Il affirme en outre qu' à l'indépendance, cette identité loin de disparaître, sera ravivée avec l'émergence du Mouvement pour le changement démocratique (MDC).

There are clear instances where identities have been created by others and bestowed upon some people. Quick examples include that of the coloureds in former British colonies or the mesticos/mulattoes in former Portuguese colonies. This is the similar situation in which the sellout identity has emerged, developed and has become accepted in the Zimbabwean society

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today. The history of the issue of sellout is not anything new to the vocabulary of Zimbabwean language dialects but the difference is in the weight and significance that has become attached to the word. The term sellout(s) pronounced mutengesi (sing.) or vatengesi (plural) in Shona dialects has a general understanding attached to it. Generally, it means one whose business concerns disclosing plans, strategies or ideas not necessarily to the enemy but to an opposite camp. In the historical existence of the Zimbabwean societies, instances where their plans or ideas were made known to the opposite camp are numerous. However, as already highlighted such cases were not frequent and their intensity was minimal. The scenario changed with the arrival and establishment of colonialism in Zimbabwe. At a time when Black Zimbabweans were brought together under the banner of nationalism with the zeal of fighting colonialism for Independence, also saw the social creation of a concrete sellout identity. The existence of this identity since then has culminated in the evolution of the sellout culture. In Zimbabwe the sellout identity exists where there is an up surge of nationalism. The two, that is, nationalism and sellouts, exist side by side and are evident where there is a common denominator particularly in the face of presumed threat to nationhood and sovereignty.

Defining Sellouts/Vatengesi in Dandawa

To use the word sellout as a way of othering other people is quite easy, but to define the term is quite difficult. The term is not stable in its use depending on who is using it and where they want it applied. The definition of a sellout is like a chameleon that changes colour in relation to the surrounding environment. During the liberation struggle, sellouts existed at three different levels and occurred from different angles. The levels from which sellouts existed concerned rendering support either to the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (Zanla), the Zimbabwe People's revolutionary Army (Zipra) or to the Rhodesian Front (R.F.) or its auxiliary forces, the Pfumo reVanhu (P.R.V.). The angles had to do with who applied the concept, that is, the Zanla could use it against Zipra, P.R.V. and the R.F. while the Zipra could use it against Zanla, P.R.V. and the R.F. and the R.F. and the P.R.V. used it against the nationalist parties. For this paper, the sellout identity will be limited to those parties involved in the liberation struggle in Dandawa, that is, the general povo, the Zipra and the P.R.V. to examine how the identity was defined crafted and understood in the area.

This paper is just part of an agenda to discuss this identity but not whole in its conclusions since it is using examples based on a single community though that is juxtaposed to generalized ideas from around Zimbabwe. What is true and acceptable is the idea raised by Marowa that the existence of the liberation struggle in any community in Zimbabwe was synonymous with the presence of

sellouts.¹ The idea of sellout has been a topical issue in discussions about the interaction between the guerrillas and the communities in which they operated. This part is not meant to define the word 'sellout' itself but to stipulate or identify the person classified as a sellout and how that identification came about. The categorisation of people as sellouts has never been one of self-realisation or self-given.

Manungo has highlighted and tried to discuss the idea of sellouts in his study of the peasants of Chiweshe and the liberation war. He points out that during the war of liberation there were a few people who dissented from the (objectives of) war of liberation but instead threw their support to the Rhodesian government². It was these people whom Manungo classifies as sellouts/vatengesi. Manungo's definition is correct in as far as it remains a nationalist interpretation of Zimbabwe's liberation war, out of that context, his definition leaves out a number of issues. It fails to consider that society is not homogeneous but is made up of different classes of people who convey reactions and believe in different ideologies. Moreover, Manungo does not problematise the he calls, 'the people who dissented' as this would sound as if there was no option with everything being universally accepted. The question to Manungo would be, 'which people was he talking about?', considering that sellouts existed at different levels and from different angles. It further seems his people are homogeneous and acting in unison without analysing factors that create the sellout identity. Where would one place people like Ndabaningi Sithole by 1979 or those who defected from either Zipra to Zanla or Zanla to Zipra?

The people in areas where the war was fought reacted variously to different activities that happened during the liberation struggle. In Katerere, David Maxwell notes that there were conflicting peasant agendas based on ethnicity, social stratification, gender and generation³. The Katerere people responded differently to the arrival of Zanla politicisation. Some supported it to square their differences with their enemies while others remained aloof. A huge mitigating factor to Zanla mobilisation arose from the fact that the

¹ I. Marowa, 'Landscape and memory: Understanding rural heritage of the Second Chimurenga in the Dandawa area of Hurungwe district, c1975-1980.', M.A. thesis, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, 2006, p56

² K.D. Manungo, 'Role peasants played in Zimbabwe war of liberation with special emphasis on Chiweshe district,' PhD Thesis, Department of History, Ohio University, 1991, p179

³ D.J. Maxwell 'Local politics and the war of liberation in North-east Zimbabwe' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol.19, No.3, 1993, p363, A similar point is emphasised in D. Maxwell, *Christians and chiefs in Zimbabwe: A social history of the Hwesa people c1870s-1990s*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999, pp119-120

people in Manicaland already belonged to other nationalist parties like ZAPU and UANC. Maxwell gives an example of the spirit mediums and claims that

It would be wrong to give the impression that all Katerere mediums willingly offered the Zanla comrades their powers to bestow religious legitimacy upon them. Some mediums only reluctantly offered support to the comrades whilst others were unable or unwilling to transform their cults into radical wartime movements.⁴

In Katerere the people's response was determined by several factors such as the geographical location, the social base, personal inclinations and so on. Maxwell makes it apparent that the Katerere area had experienced little state repression and the response was therefore not wholesome but mixed.⁵ The Zanla comrades had to work extra hard to win the sympathy and hearts of the people and in most cases it was within such situations that people would be labelled sell-outs for not rendering their support to a nationalist party.

As the Zipra entered Dandawa the major things they demanded from the people were their support in the struggle through giving them food, clothes, blankets and wanted the people to zip their mouths or risk their wrath. The idea of supporting guerrillas found no problem with most Dandawa inhabitants but the way Zipra demanded that support culminated in the creation of depressions and gulfs with the people. Initially it seems the people responded positively cooking food for the guerrillas and giving them clothes and blankets because they had understood their mission. The Zipra guerrillas are quoted to have said that 'we have come to free you to go back to the farms. We are not being given money for this and we stay in the bush during rain periods.'⁶ This explanation became a cause for concern for the people and everybody seemed to have sympathised with the guerrillas. However with the passage of time the exercise of supporting the guerrillas became a hurting one especially when victimisation and the label of selling out began to be employed.

⁴ D.J. Maxwell 'Local politics and war of liberation' p376

⁵ D. Maxwell, *Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe*, p38-Maxwell here expresses the marginality of the North-east related to its continued inaccessibility. It was not until the 1950s that roads and bridges were properly constructed. On the first page he makes it clear that the area remained untouched by mission christianity until 1951.

⁶ Interview with Murangani Katsekera Nyamahwe village, Badze, 2 February 2006.

Defining a sellout is rather cumbersome because it has everything to do with the ideology of the definer and above all it is simply a matter of othering others. The idea of sellouts was not one of self-realisation but a categorisation bestowed upon an individual by others just as people were named 'river people' or 'mountain people' by others. The people concerned never offered any effort in their categorisation hence the question is, did the people call themselves sellouts or believe to be what people called them? Or it has come as a forced self-actualisation of the identification they acquired through perceptions raised about them. Dandawa is one case study where sellouts were identified, tortured and killed.

Sellouts in the Dandawa context

The sellout identity developed differently in the different socio-geographical regions of Zimbabwe. Here, I centre on the Dandawa area of Hurungwe district to understand how the sellout identity was developed and analyse how people reacted to such categorisation. Dandawa became a theatre of the liberation war around 1976. Three warring parties operated in the area and these were the Rhodesian Security Forces (R.S.F.), Pfumo reVanhu (P.R.V.) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). Out of the three, real confrontation and fighting took place between the P.R.V. and the Zipra forces and it was between these two that a tag of war over branding the Dandawa people as sellouts can be understood.

In Dandawa, the definition of an individual as a sellout followed certain trends. One way used to categorise people as sellouts, had to do with the employment of person in the Rhodesian government departments. According to Pedi Guvheya, people in Dandawa were being harassed and killed because they had children who had joined the P.R.V.⁷ The recruitment of the people's children or relatives into the P.R.V. made them to be labelled sellouts. Guvheya's parents at one point found themselves in the sellout bracket because their son, Pedi, was a member of the P.R.V. They evaded being killed by the guerrillas by a whisker as a result of the news that were spread that Pedi Guvheya had been killed in Zvipani area. Soon after the cease-fire Guvheya's parents were astonished to see their alleged dead son returning home. This was the same bracket of sellouts that culminated in the killing and burning of ten members of the Marecha family which will be discussed later. In this case, people were branded sellouts not by their own act but by the act of their children or relatives. Truly speaking were these

⁷Interview with Pedi Guvheya, Chagadama village, Rengwe, 3 February 2006

people sellouts? This is why I have argued initially that defining a sellout is difficult because it depends upon the person applying the concept.

Another case where a sellout was found is that of one Kapungu who had both legs burnt by the Zipra guerrillas using hot bricks because his two wives had gone to the white settler's farms to look for tobacco⁸. The wives' going to the farms was seen as an issue of selling out because they were maintaining an interaction with the people's enemy and Kapungu was tortured for that act. Fortunately Kapungu was taken by the P.R.V. to their Chidamoyo base for treatment. These are some of the cases where sellouts were identified and tortured or victimised by being mistakenly defined as a consequence of certain trends that were set by the Zipra guerrillas. Even in a case where the P.R.V. asked for help from the people, the people could not withhold rendering that support but once the Zipra knew about it, the person(s) would be defined as sellouts. One example of this sort involved Voster Machacha who was killed for offering a wheelbarrow to the P.R.V. to use to ferry their injured to their camp after a skirmish occurred between the Zipra guerrillas and the P.R.V. Voster's assistance to the P.R.V. made him to be defined as a sellout because he helped the enemy. He was labelled a sellout for rendering that service to the enemy and was killed. According to Jameson Matiirira the P.R.V. were also labelled sellouts because they supported the Rhodesian government⁹. The idea of the P.R.V. being sellouts was being thrown on to them but they believed, even to this day, that they were not sellouts. The P.R.V. believed that the Zipra were forcing the people to do the Zipra's will without their consent and they never saw that as bad.

The Musukwe river also played a major role in the categorisation of people as sellouts after it had been declared a borderland. There are people who are remembered to have lost their lives during the liberation struggle as a result of Musukwe. Sarikosi Matiirira, a relative to Jameson Matiirira, was caught up in this Musukwe issue and was killed by the Zipra guerrillas¹⁰. Sarikosi Matiirira lived near the banks of Musukwe river and one day he went to Rengwe Township selling tobacco. Unfortunately guerrillas were at the township drinking beer and when they knew that he lived near Musukwe, he was branded a sellout because they thought he was a Selous Scout sent by the P.R.V. The Zipra guerrillas asked him,

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Interview with Jameson Matiirira, Chidamoyo Township, 2 February 2006

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Kamhembwe kana kachitambira kwakateewa waya kanenge Kachida kuita sei? (When a buck finds itself loitering recklessly in trapped territory, what would be the outcome?)

Sarikosi's reply was, 'kanenge kachida kubatiwa' (it will be dicing with its death)¹¹

Sarikosi was told that 'you are a mutengesi' and they gunned him in the head and he died. This is one case in which the borderland resulted in a person being branded a sellout and killed. Staying near Musukwe did not necessarily mean Sarikosi was a 'mutengesi' as was thought by the Zipra guerrillas. According to Jameson Matiirira, the Zipra guerrillas killed more people in Dandawa as sellouts because of the Musukwe border but this emanated from their misunderstanding of the people¹². The river became a monster to the Dandawa people's lives because of the tag it got associated with and because the people were defenseless. Another victim of the Musukwe borderland was Zondasi Makamera who was shot dead by the Zipra guerrillas after crossing Musukwe river going to see relatives across the river¹³. Zondasi had a brother named Daniel Mudzongachiso who was a P.R.V. and it could be probable that he was going to see his brother. Or he could have been under guerrilla surveillance for sometime because he is said to have been oftenly crossing Musukwe river. As Zondasi was crossing the river, the Zipra guerrillas spotted him and they fired from their concealed position and killed him. His relatives back home heard of his death but to this day they know not where his grave is. This is another way Musukwe can be read to understand the liberation struggle in Dandawa apart from being simply a borderland or defining a frontier.

However, the issue of sellouts was never restricted to crossing the Musukwe river alone, but it came in different packages. If one refused to cook food for the Zipra guerrillas, the person would be categorised as a sellout. According to Murangani Katsekera, a sellout also included those people who supplied false information about others to the Zipra guerrillas¹⁴. For example, if Zipra guerrillas suspected foul play or hear any rumour, they would inquire from the whole village about the person under suspicion. In that process if one

¹¹ Interview with Pedi Guvheya

¹² Interview with Jameson Matiirira

¹³ Interviews with: Sarah Siyaya, Chagadama village, Rengwe, 31 January 2006; Siveria Washanyika, Mudzongachiso village, Fuleche, 1 February 2006

¹⁴ Interview with Murangani Katsekera

person gave information opposite to the rest of the village, that person would be seen as harbouring bad intentions and would be categorised as a sellout and would be punished. The P.R.V. also employed the idea of sellouts but at a small scale when compared to the Zipras. For the P.R.V., sellouts referred to those who were cooking for the Zipra guerrillas whom they called the people's in-laws (Vakuwasha vavo).

In Dandawa, oral research failed to give concrete examples of persons who went to the P.R.V. with the intention of divulging information concerning the Zipra guerrillas. Those who got caught up in the crossfire of sellouts, have the people's understanding that they were not sellouts, the likes of Sithole, Mupositori Josiah, Zondasi, Mhenduru's father, Sarikosi, Voster and many others. During that time some Dandawa inhabitants began leaving the area as a result of the Zipra treatment. It seems that emotions worked more during the liberation struggle than the highly acclaimed idea that the people were the sea (water) in which the fish (guerrillas) should swim. The emotions of staying in the bush, missing their beloved ones whom they also thought were being harassed and at times going for days without good food and necessary clothing and blankets could have caused the guerrillas to be so bitter. According to Gann and Henriksen when the guerrillas set out on their struggle, they had no theory of violence but were anxious to draw popular support from the African society¹⁵. However, that belief never materialised as it was proven wrong in the actual conduct of the war.

It was the reality on the ground which made the guerrillas to adopt more violent methods and to identify some people as sellouts. Gann and Henriksen further point out that the African society far from being united in the struggle, was fragmented¹⁶. The guerrillas therefore found themselves in face of a complicated puzzle where they had to cope with black opposition as well as white opposition. Such a scenario produced the emotions and sort of violence that characterised particularly the late 1970s because it was necessary to accomplish the objectives of taking to the bush without fail. This was also the same period the idea of sellouts gained momentum. The pro-Rhodesians on the other hand saw those who dissented to the guerrillas as sellouts and such persons were offered the same treatment of torture and death. The people had no option but to dance according to the tune of the time and to the one they thought cushioned their life against the forces of death, torture and

¹⁵ L.H. Gann and T.H. Henriksen, *The struggle for Zimbabwe: Battle in the bush*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1981, p90

¹⁶ *ibid.*

violence. The issue of sellouts is a complicated puzzle on its own for it depends on which side of analysis one is coming from.

Musukwe as a border could no longer allow relatives either side to visit each other. A simple bath or fishing in Musukwe became a dangerous exercise as one could be mistaken for the wrong intentions and could end up in dire trouble with the Zipra guerrillas. The idea was also used the P.R.V. on people who were coming from across the river. Those individuals they suspected to have been sent by the guerrillas to gather information about their plans were also taken to task. In this context the war made Musukwe appear a monster to the Dandawa people just as it did during its flooding times. During its flooding time, crossing the river meant risking being carried away and drowned by the floodwaters. At the time of the liberation war, crossing the river meant risking one's life if labelled a sellout, which was punishable in most cases, by death. Those labelled sellouts were not good neighbors with no reason to survive hence they were tortured/killed to warn others of the dangers of crossing the border. In Dandawa sellouts were identified and defined through the Musukwe river in its capacity as a borderland. Musukwe river thus became a dangerous landscape to the Dandawa community. The definition attached to Musukwe river left bad expressions on the faces of the interviewees, a sign that tell how cruel the time was to the Dandawa inhabitants.

The Marecha Incident

It is quite interesting to note that all events that are icons in Dandawa heritage of the Second Chimurenga took place in 1979. The Marecha incident is one other occurrence that carries a black history for the Dandawa chieftaincy. Marecha was a family that was found in the Chirengwa area of Rengwe. The Marecha massacre is not clear but what is known is that the Marecha incident occurred after the Chapanduka incident. The Marecha incident happened after Leonard had left for Karoi following the Chapanduka incident¹⁷. The two occurred in succession with a slightest break. According to Tamari the Marecha incident occurred when harvesting time was by the corner around beginning of April and they were the ones who harvested the Marecha fields following a directive from the Zipra

¹⁷Interview with Leonard Chioma, Mushoshoma village, Rengwe, 31 January 2006

guerrillas¹⁸. This seems correct because the Musukwe battle, which was a brainchild of the Marecha killings, occurred in April 1979.

The incident came about as a result of a letter which had been written by Medios Marecha, a P.R.V. soldier. Pedi Guvheya, a colleague to Medios highlighted that, it was Medios who caused the family members to be murdered¹⁹. The letter that Medios wrote was sent by bus and left at Rengwe Township, where Stanley Tambaoga intercepted it and handed it to Zipra comrades.²⁰ The Zipra guerrillas opened the letter and read its contents, which are believed to have been reading as follows,

Magandanga ari kukunetsai here ikoko? Musatya henyu nokuti tiri kuuya ikoko kuzovagadzirisa, chii chavanoita ava vanhu vemusango, vachapera kurawa nemasoja. (Are the guerrillas troubling you there in Rengwe? Do not be afraid because we will be coming there for the guerrillas. What can bush people do, we will teach them a lesson)²¹

However, some people like Tamari believe the Marecha incident was caused by an act of selling out by some of the Marecha family members who wrote a letter informing Medios of people and villages cooking and looking after the Zipras²². However, most inhabitants have pointed to the letter from Medios as the source of the Marecha massacres.

After the Zipra guerrilla had read the letter, they got furious and went to Marecha homestead. When the guerrillas arrived at Marecha homestead, they killed the members of the family. Tamari argues that the guerrillas before carrying out their task, they asked the family members that 'wanzi wafirei? (what are you dying for?) and were to answer saying, 'hutengesii' (selling out)²³. This question was asked each member of the family before being killed. It was framed in a way to clear the blame of the massacres on the guerrillas but to have it bestowed upon the Marecha family's agenda of selling out. The letter resulted in 9 members of the Marecha family being killed and only 3 children of between 4-8 years escaped. After the massacres, the dead bodies were then put inside one of the houses and were burnt to ashes. It was this incident which resulted in the already discussed battle between the Zipra and P.R.V. at Musukwe. It was the P.R.V. who came and buried the ashes of the burnt bodies in one grave.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Interview with Pedi Guvheya

²⁰ Interview with Jameson Matiirira

²¹ Interview with Sarah Siyaya

²² Interview with Tamari Karenga, Glen Norah A, Harare, 28 December 2005

²³ *ibid.*

The Marecha incident is another hurting heritage for the Dandawa inhabitants. The space where the massacres and burning of the family members occurred is now a 'dongo.' The dongo of Marecha tells and exhibits evidence of the brutality, which the Zipra guerrillas did at times. The Zipra guerrillas' treatment of the Marecha family is a ripple effect from the Chapanduka military contact where the Zipra were attacked unexpectedly and incurred heavy losses. There is no way one can give a historical interpretation to the Musukwe battle without making reference to the Marecha killings and the dongo itself. The dongo of Marecha is one space that exhibits evidence of one grave where nine dead human bodies were buried in the form of ashes. The dongo is also space that exhibits the complication in understanding the identification of sellouts by the guerrillas in Dandawa. There is no evidence that Marecha family members had clandestinely supplied information to the P.R.V or their son Medios. The Marecha family suffered because of their son who had joined the P.R.V., a wrong side.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to follow how events unfolded in Dandawa area outlining the various ways the identity of sell-outs was constructed. The major point that has been made concerns the realisation that the landscape is a socialised concept in an African setting as it plays a significant role in human history. The river landscape has proved here that although it can be used beneficially by the society, it is also a menace when employed wrongly. In Dandawa, the Musukwe river landscape became a measure of an identity during the liberation struggle used by both warring parties and the general populace found themselves in a tight position. The river was used in constructing a sell-out identity which people found difficult to evade as they had relatives or business to take care of across the river. Apart from the river there were also other ways the sell-out identity was constructed like working for the enemy or having a relative who was helping the enemy. The definition of the enemy was never one way but both parties referred to the other as an enemy hence the people were always labelled sell-outs from either side.



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Georgia and Russia: What Caused the August War?

Mohammad Sajjadur Rahman*

Abstract

Ce document est une analyse systématique des causes de la guerre entre la Géorgie et la Russie en 2008. La première section donne un bref historique du conflit. La deuxième section propose trois hypothèses pour déterminer la cause immédiate de la guerre. La dernière section analyse la validité des hypothèses sur les effets de l'évolution des structures de pouvoir, la rhétorique nationaliste et de faux optimisme sur la guerre et ce sur la base des discussions théoriques.

On August 8th, 2008, Russia took unilateral action and invaded South Ossetia, a secessionist region of the internationally recognized state of Georgia. What followed was a five-day military conflict that would challenge the geopolitical setting of the Caucasus region. The complex and multifaceted nature of this conflict has important implications for regional and international power politics.

The decisive military move by Russia was the first of its kind, beyond Russian borders, since the Afghan war of the 1970's and 1980's. The war apparently served to restore Moscow's control over the geopolitically crucial region of the South Caucasus, which is enormously important for Europe since it enables the transportation of Caspian oil to the West. However, it also raised critical questions over the tension between Russian identity and other

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ethnic groups living in the Caucasus region, nationalistic rhetoric within the domestic politics of Russia and Georgia, the role of the United States in the region where important allies are expecting NATO membership, and finally, the image of Russia as a resurgent Great Power. This paper attempts to answer the questions: what motivated Russia and Georgia to believe that a war was necessary to meet their national interests and how critical was the influence of domestic politics in making those decisions? The paper has three parts in total. The first part gives a brief overview of the events that resulted in war between Georgia and Russia; the second part is about the research design; and the concluding part critically analyzes the causes of this war from theoretical perspectives.

Background of the Conflict

Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, a handful of territorial struggles have been playing out within the Caucasus region. Conflicts have been driven primarily by quests for independence and manifested themselves through continuous fighting over territorial borders, the redefining of ethnic identities, and domestic power-politics (Tishkov, 2008: 23). The breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, both situated within Georgian territory, have declared de facto independence from Georgia since the early 1990's. The influential role played by Russia during this decade in shaping the peace process transformed the separatist conflicts into a dispute between Georgia and Russia. Most residents of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were granted Russian citizenship and passports, and it became increasingly clear that Russia was playing the identity politics well. Both Abkhazia and South Ossetia became politically aligned with Russia and both wanted their regions to be part of Russia.¹

Despite continuing efforts by the United Nations Secretary-General, the OSCE, and the EU to negotiate a peace settlement, the relations between the breakaway regions and the Georgian government have remained stalled. Friction has been escalating since the 2004 election of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili who focused on furthering democratic reforms and pushing for Georgia's accession into NATO, as two of his top priorities for national policy. This hero of the so-called "Rose Revolution" increased pressure on South Ossetia in 2004 by tightening border controls and

¹ This section (background of the conflict) is written on the basis of information provided by the Congressional Research Service. See, Nichol, Jim (2008), "Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for U.S. interests", *CRS Report for Congress* RL34618 (Oct 24), pp. 1-35.[available at <http://openocrs.com/document/RL34618>]

dismantling a large-scale smuggling operation in which Russian organized crime groups and corrupt Georgian officials were allegedly involved. He also reportedly sent several hundred police, military and intelligence personnel into South Ossetia and argued that the move was made in order to bolster the peacekeeping contingent set up by the previous peacekeeping agreement. Russia, on the other hand, reportedly assisted paramilitary elements from Abkhazia, Transnistria and Russia to enter into South Ossetia. The subsequent clashes between the paramilitary groups were inconclusive, and by late 2004 both Russia and Georgia pulled back most of the guerrillas and paramilitary forces, and the quick intervention by the international community deescalated the crisis.

In July 2005, when President Saakashvili pronounced a new peace plan regarding South Ossetia, the 'president' of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoiti, discarded it. Later in October of that year, Kokoiti asserted, "we [South Ossetians] are citizens of Russia."² However, in December 2005, Kokoiti proffered a South Ossetian peace proposal presuming that South Ossetia would be independent. It is worth mentioning here that the South Ossetians, who had Russian citizenship, voted in both the 2004 and 2008 Russian presidential elections. President Putin, it seemed, was very popular with the South Ossetians. In 2006, a popular referendum was held in South Ossetia to reassert its 'independence' from Georgia, and in a separate vote, Kokoiti was reelected as president. But the U.S. State Department and the OSCE did not recognize the 2006 vote. However, an alternative balloting allowed the ethnic Georgians of South Ossetia – who were displaced from South Ossetia – to elect pro-Georgian Dmitriy Sanakoyev as governor and to approve a referendum that called for the preservation of Georgia's territorial integrity.

President Saakashvili again proposed another peace plan in March 2007, which called for creating transitional administrative districts throughout the region. In July, he decreed the formation of a commission, which would work out the status of South Ossetia as a part of Georgia. But a subsequent meeting in October 2007 did not produce any result because the Russian Foreign Ministry claimed that the Georgian emissaries made objectionable demands with the purpose of deliberately sabotaging the outcome of the meeting.

In July 2008, Russia conducted a military exercise that involved more than 8000 troops (code named – Caucasus 2008) near its border with Georgia.

² Open Source Center (2005), *Central Eurasia: Daily Report*, CEDR, Oct 7, Doc. No. CEP-15001. [available at <https://www.opensource.gov/>]

The exercise included a hypothetical attack by ‘unnamed’ forces on Georgia’s breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Concomitantly 600 Georgian troops, along with 1000 U.S. troops and token forces from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine conducted an exercise in Georgia aimed at, at least officially, increasing troop interoperability for NATO operations and coalition actions in Iraq. This operation was code named – immediate Response 2008. Both the parties blamed each other for rising tensions and many observers saw these events as a rehearsal of a war likely to be fought soon.

On July 3, 2008, an Ossetian village police chief was killed by a bomb, and Dmitriy Sanakoyev – the head of the pro-Georgian ‘government’ in South Ossetia - escaped injury by a roadside mine. During that night both the Georgians and South Ossetians launched artillery attacks on each other’s villages and checkpoints killing and injuring dozens. The European Union, the OSCE and the Council of Europe (COE) urged both parties to resume peace talks. On July 21, 2008, the UN Security Council discussed the violation of Georgian airspace by the Russian military planes that occurred on the 8th of July. While the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, was in Georgia for two days of discussions on ways to defuse the tension, she called for Russia to respect Georgia’s territorial integrity.³

During the last week of July 2008, paramilitary forces from both sides escalated what had been an on-going and consistent level of moderate violence. Georgia claimed that paramilitary volunteers were coming from Russian North Ossetia to attack Georgian villages. On the evening of August 7, 2008, South Ossetia again accused Georgia of launching a massive bombardment against Tskhinvali. On that evening Saakashvili announced a unilateral ceasefire and reaffirmed that Georgia would give South Ossetia maximum autonomy within Georgia as part of a peace settlement. But on the morning of August 8th, the Georgian military decided to officially respond with military force, arguing that South Ossetian forces did not end their shelling of Georgian villages. Georgian troops soon controlled much of South Ossetia, including Tskhinvali.

Russian military, which had been steadily advancing into the breakaway regions, quickly responded to South Ossetia’s defense with a massive-counter attack, leading to five days of intense fighting throughout the region. Russian

³ U.S. Department of State. Press Release. (2008), *Secretary’s Remarks: Remarks En Route Prague, Czech Republic*, (July 8), [Available at: http://nato.usmission.gov/Recent_Speeches.htm]

warplanes destroyed Georgian airfields near the capital Tbilisi, recaptured Tskhinvali, occupied the bulk of South Ossetia, and reached its border with the rest of Georgia. It was reported that thousands of volunteer military men from North Ossetia fought along with the Russian troops. Faced with this overwhelming show of firepower by Russia, Georgian officials requested Secretary Rice to act as a mediator to settle the conflict. They also informed Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, that Georgian forces had been withdrawn from South Ossetia. However, Lavrov countered that Georgian troops were still in Tskhinvali. Later, Russia extended the attacks to include Gori - situated within undisputed Georgian territory - and occupied that city on August 11, 2008. At the same time, it was alleged that the Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia allowed the Abkhaz forces to fight against the Georgian forces in Kodori Valley, Gali region, and Zugdidi district. Russia also sent ships from its Black Sea Fleet to deliver troops to Abkhazia. After securing positions along Georgia's coastline, Russian troops occupied a Georgian military base in the town of Senaki, near Poti.

On August 12, the Russian government announced that the aim of their military operation - coercing the Georgian side to peace - had been achieved and that the operation had been concluded. On August 26th, Russia formally issued a press release recognizing both Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. In doing so, Russia justified its actions under the principle of the responsibility to protect Russian citizens, regardless of where they live. French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, played a leading role in the mediation efforts to create a "six-point plan" and the August 12th cease-fire agreement. The post-war situation is still very unstable and as many observers believe, it will take years to ease the tensions within the region.⁴

Research Design

While analyzing the actions of both Georgia and Russia to understand the causes of the August war, this research paper evaluates three testable hypotheses:

- Russia felt convinced that a quick victory would improve Russia's image as a resurgent power.

⁴ For an excellent overview of the conflict, see International Crisis Group report, (2008), "Russia vs Georgia: The Fallout", Europe Report No. 195, (22 August), pp. 1-29. [Available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org>]

- Putin's manipulative identity politics over Russianness and Saakashvili's nationalistic rhetoric within Georgia caused the war.
- Saakashvili's false optimism over the U.S. involvement in the conflict led him to risk the war.

In order to test the hypotheses, several factors are taken into consideration. First, the changed international setting after the Cold War is critical in understanding Russia's present behavior. Putins' evident desire to elevate Russia's Great Power image in global politics is also an important indicator of the motivations that guided the decision to engage in war with Georgia. Furthermore, the politics over pipelines had significant impact on Putin's confidence to invade Georgia since Russia is enjoying relative prosperity due to her large oil and gas reserves. Realism, the most dominant theory of International Relations, can be applied in analyzing Russian behavior in this war. According to realist worldview, the survival of states must be guaranteed by promoting national interests and strengthening military capabilities (Dunne & Schimdt, 2008: 93). War, from this viewpoint, is a legitimate instrument of statecraft. Moreover, states cannot rely on other states or international institutions to ensure their own security. Russia's self-help approach in this war and its sheer negligence of the international community clearly indicates the realist worldview of Kremlin. Second, the power struggle within Georgian politics and the nationalistic rhetoric of Saakashvili seem to have made things worse just before the war broke out. On the other hand, Putin's frequent rhetoric regarding Russian identity had manipulative impact on the escalation of the crisis. Chris Hedges discussion on the politics of nationalism, as this paper will show, is quite relevant here. His analysis of the Argentinean and the Serbian war illustrates how nationalistic rhetoric can undermine reality and how the public become the prisoner of that kind of politics (Hedges, 2002: 45). Third, the unwarranted optimism of President Saakashvili that led him to risk a war with a major regional power is the most critical issue in discussing the causes of this August war. According to Geoffrey Blainey, optimism is a vital prelude to war and anything, which increases that optimism is a cause of war (Blainey, 1988: 53). Therefore, Saakashvili's personal relationship with the United States has important implications for understanding his decision to go to war. This paper, thus, looks beyond the dyadic level to consider the influence of third parties, particularly the influence of the United States on the actions of Saakashvili. Questions will be asked whether his decision was based on considering relative military capability, rational miscalculation or just on non-rational thinking. Finally, the paper will probe into the question of whether this war could have been avoided. Differences between necessary and sufficient

causes will also be analyzed. Furthermore, the paper will raise critical questions such as why these two democracies, albeit ostensible, fought each other and whether this war refutes the democratic peace theory that essentially says that democracies never fight wars with each other. In this respect, the argument over the likeliness of young democracies to engage in war, made by Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder⁵, will be taken into consideration. These theoretical perspectives are essential in answering the very research question of this study and testing the hypotheses that it proposes. However, attempts will be made to distinguish between the ultimate causes of the conflict and the proximate causes of the fighting in order to construct a logical chain that includes all of the hypotheses.

Analysis

Understanding the Russian motivation and objectives that influenced its decision to engage in the August War is crucial for an assessment of the causes of the war. And any such assessment has to take into account the timing and form of the Russian military incursion into South Ossetia⁶. This paper hypothesizes that Russia wanted a quick and decisive victory over Georgia in order to improve its Great Power image. Let us consider a few counterfactual issues that might challenge the validity of this first hypothesis. For example, according to Moscow, Russia engaged in war in response to Georgia's attack on Tshkinvali and on the Russian peacekeeping forces. Therefore, Russia's action was defensive and retaliatory and the war has nothing to do with Russia's image as a resurgent power. Such a simplistic explanation on the cause of Russia's engagement can be refuted by the fact that, long before the war broke out, Russia had established the infrastructure and logistical support for a military invasion. During June-July 2008, a battalion of Russian railroad troops repaired a 54 kilometers of a strategic railway in Abkhazia that enabled the rapid forward deployment of troops and armour during the August war with Georgia. Besides, the integrated combat planning provides strong evidence that the Russian invasion of South Ossetia and then deeper into Georgia was indeed planned long before the actual military conflict broke out. Furthermore, the Russian claim that its war

⁵ Mansfield, Edward; Snyder, Jack (1995), "Democratization and War", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74 No. 3 (May), pp. 79-97

⁶ Allison, Roy (2008), "Russia Resurgent? Moscow's campaign to coerce Georgia to peace", *International Affairs*, Vol. 86 No. 6, (Nov), pp. 1145-1171.

was in fact a 'peace coercion operation'⁷ could be challenged by the fact that 'international agreements limited Russia's peacekeeping role in South Ossetia to monitoring the ceasefire, with no provision for peace enforcement'.⁸

The above discussion suggests that Russia must have had other deep rooted reasons to engage in a war with Georgia. Putin's decision, it seems, had been guided by a number of geopolitical interests that Russia sought to advance through a decisive victory. Russia considers Georgia to be a revisionist state that has the potential to challenge the kind of balance of power in the Caucasus, which fits Russia's doctrine of 'spheres of influence'. Furthermore, Russia feels threatened by the eastward expansion of NATO and the increasing presence of US military in the Caucasus. Moscow, in recent years, showed antipathy towards the building of twin oil and gas pipelines from Azerbaijan to Turkey across Georgia. This fresh conflict will act as a deterrent against building any further pipelines along the same route, specifically the EU initiated Nabucco project that would connect Turkmen or Kazakh reserves to Europe via the South Caucasus energy corridor.

This war has also enabled Russia to halt the process of NATO membership that Georgia has been seeking for a long time. Russian military adventurism also sent a strong signal to Ukraine, another candidate for NATO membership. Since spring of 2008, Russia has also been talking about claims to the Crimean peninsula which is home to its Black Sea fleet and where a large number of ethnic Russians live. Besides, it is widely believed that Russia's move toward recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is directed against the recognition of Kosovo by the Western powers. Therefore, by 'punishing' Georgia, Russia wanted to consolidate its strategic independence that would ultimately confirm Russia's status as a potential global power.⁹ The causes of Russia's war with Georgia, thus, are not about territorial domination, but about image, respect and above all – recognition. However, Russia's decision to engage in war was not free from strategic miscalculations. For example, the war exposed Russia's failure to accomplish

⁷ The Russian Officials even describing its troops of the 58th Army and other units to South Ossetia as a 'reinforced Russian peacekeeping contingent'.

⁸ See, Allison, Roy (2008), "Russia Resurgent? Moscow's campaign to coerce Georgia to peace", *International Affairs*, Vol. 86 No. 6, pp. 1145-1171

⁹ For a detailed discussion on Russia's role in the war, see, Stephen Sestanovich (2008), "What has Moscow Done?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue. 6 (Nov-Dec), P. 12. And Charles King (2008), "The Five-Day War", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue. 6 (Nov-Dec), p. 10.

political objectives without recourse to violence. Furthermore, Georgia's fate has been closely monitored by other neighbors, and it is very likely that Poland and Ukraine will act more closely with EU and NATO out of security concerns. Many observers have warned Russia that its complete disregard for international organizations and law may result in international isolation. Besides, the Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, soon after the war, had little impact and could not attract international support.

Now, if the lust for power and prestige guided Russia's decision to engage in the war, then Realist scholars would point out that such behavior is not uncommon to major powers. Neo-realist scholars¹⁰ would argue that the cause of Russia's war lies within the structure of the regional power system where countries like Georgia and Ukraine are challenging Russia's hegemonic position by their increased interest in the Western security system. Russia certainly wants to remain the only security provider in the larger Caucasus region. Neo-realists would also argue that the dynamics of balance of power, especially the changes that take place in the distribution of power, is a key tool for understanding the causes of wars initiated by the major powers. Russia's economic recovery in recent years and the enormous dependence of European countries on Russia's energy sources put Russia in an advantageous position from which it can act, at least regionally, to secure its geostrategic interests. Russia's negligence of the international organizations during the war also indicates the realist worldview of the Kremlin that Russia will act on its own if its interests clash with the desires of the international community. The war with Georgia, thus, provided Russia the opportunity to shift the balance of power, once again, in its favor. But critics would point out that Russia's action in Georgia has also created a 'security dilemma' for other CIS states that might force them into creating a new alliance system with active support from the West. However, Russia's desire to be respected as a global power and its impact on the decision to go to war can be regarded as an ultimate cause of the war. It is, albeit, a necessary cause, but this cause alone is not sufficient enough to bring about this war since the aspiration of Russia to become a resurgent power is not a new phenomenon. Therefore, the first hypothesis cannot explain the proximate cause of the war.

¹⁰ For a discussion on Realism and Neo-realism, see, Dunne, Tim & Schimdt Brian C. (2008), *Realism*; in Baylis, John et al (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 93.

In order to understand the second hypothesis of this study, it would be helpful to consider the ideas of Chris Hedges¹¹, one of the most insightful observers of modern-day warfare. He analyzed how nationalist regimes and populist leaders use rhetoric in order to create and sustain support for wartime violence. While describing the 'nationalist triumphalism' during the Serbian war, he showed how state-controlled media can create a past in order to legitimize the present. Myths became facts and history became a tool for nationalists to construct identity of enemies and to instill hatred against them. Even the intellectuals served the nationalists and the masses began to see themselves only as victims, not as killers. Citing examples from the Argentinean war in the Falklands, Hedges also showed how nationalistic rhetoric during the war helped to sustain a collapsing military regime. Criticism against the state's policy over war became impossible. Conspiracy theories became popular and people could hardly imagine that Argentina was losing the war. It would be interesting to see what role nationalistic politics played in making the decision to engage in the August war that we are dealing with in this paper. And the second hypothesis is that both Putin and Saakashvili used identity politics and provoked ethnic/nationalist tensions that led to the outbreak of the war.

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili spoke frequently about the territorial integrity of Georgia during the last two elections held in January and May of 2008. It is not at all surprising that he, quite consciously, modeled himself on the medieval Georgian king, David Agmashenebeli ('the Builder')¹². Saakashvili's nationalist rhetoric concerning the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia¹³ became the primary tool for maintaining support for his government. But the rhetoric put local and regional politics onto a perilous course toward each other. His anti-Russian approach won him support from the masses, and even when Georgia lost miserably in the war, thousands of people rallied in the street showing solidarity toward his government. On the other hand, Putin's rhetoric about Russian identity and protecting Russian

¹¹ See, Hedges, Chris (2002), *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, New York: Anchor Books, pp. 43-61.

¹² For a detailed discussion on the identity politics, see, Rayfield Donald (2008), "The Georgia-Russia conflict: lost territory, found nation", *Open Democracy*, (August 18), [Available at <http://www.opendemocracy.net>]

¹³ See, Krastev Ivan (2008), "Russia and the Georgia war: the great-power trap", *Open Democracy*, (August 31), [Available at <http://www.opendemocracy.net>]

citizens heightened the tension as well¹⁴. The state-controlled media in Russia was much active in informing the Russians about the Georgian 'aggression' and 'genocide' against South Ossetians, a large number of whom has Russian passports. Russia's war was depicted as a response to the humanitarian disaster brought about by Georgia. In an attempt to appeal to a higher normative agenda, Russian leaders frequently talked about upholding international norms regarding the 'responsibility to protect'. Conspiracy theories, popularized by the leaders, informed the Russian public that President Bush planned the war in order to secure the victory of the Presidential candidate, John McCain, and also that the US needed the war to convince Poland to sign a missile defense agreement. Although hundreds of people died and thousands of people were displaced from South Ossetia and Georgia, Putin and Saakashvili kept telling about the victimization of 'their people', while remaining silent about the crimes committed by their armies on both sides. Putin became more popular after the war and he is certainly very much in charge of his country, now more than ever. Few people have forgotten that it was the 1999 war in Chechnya that brought Putin to power.

Thus, it can be safely said that nationalistic politics is crucial in understanding the causes of the August war as this politics provided both Putin and Saakashvili the much needed public support in waging a war. Again, nationalistic politics is a necessary cause of the war in question, not a sufficient cause because the tension between Georgians and South Ossetians or between Georgians and Russians existed long before the war started. The existence of nationalistic politics or ethnic tension cannot by itself trigger a war. Therefore, the identity politics behind the war can be regarded as an ultimate cause of the war, not a proximate one.

The third hypothesis of this paper suggests that the unwarranted optimism of President Saakashvili led him to risk the war with Russia. This is perhaps the most important cause of the war since it is now known that it was Saakashvili who first initiated the war. Before discussing Saakashvili's motivations and strategy behind the war, it would be appropriate to analyze Geoffrey Blainey's concept of optimism which he discussed in his classic 'The Causes of War'. According to Blainey, optimism operates beyond rationality: that is, it does not rely on a rational assessment of relative capability. Optimism can even come from a 'failure to imagine what war is like'. Moreover, the prospect for foreign intervention can also increase optimism, which in turn

¹⁴ For a discussion on Putin's legacy, see, Kathryn Stoner-Weiss (2008), "It is Still Putin's Russia", *Current History*, Vol. 107 Issue. 711 (October), pp. 315-321

influences the predicted outcome of the war. All of these seem to be applicable in Saakashvili's case. Let us consider, for the moment, Saakashvili's version of the causes of the Georgian war. He claimed that his was a pre-emptive attack in the face of an advancing Russian army on the borders with South Ossetia. But the way Georgian army attacked the densely populated Tskhinvali can hardly be described as pre-emptive. It is highly probable that Saakashvili wanted to make the 'frozen conflict' of South Ossetia into an international crisis in which the West, especially the US, would intervene and settle the issue in Georgia's favor. Officials in Georgia have admitted that they did not expect the massive response from Russia and thought that Russia would only 'assist' the South Ossetian paramilitary groups. Sympathizers with Saakashvili might argue that there were reasons to be optimistic. For example, from Russia's perspective, Abkhazia has far more strategic importance than South Ossetia, and Saakashvili thought if a war ever breaks out between Georgia and Russia, it would be fought in Abkhazia, not in South Ossetia. Secondly, Saakashvili's decision to wage war can be seen as an opportunistic move and calculated gamble or even a rational miscalculation in the sense that he might have thought that Georgia needed a 'CNN moment' to position itself in the global spotlight (Antonenko, 2008: 25). He expected that the West would intervene and Russia's position as a mediator in the conflict would be discredited forever. Furthermore, both the US and the EU failed to send a strong signal to Saakashvili that risking a war with Russia would not be supported by them.

Whatever strategic goals might have guided Saakashvili's decision to go to war, it is certain that he clearly failed to imagine what the outcome of the war would be. Political scientists, thus, would find it difficult to judge his decision to risk a war with Russia as rational. Therefore, Saakashvili's optimism over possible U.S. involvement can be regarded as the proximate cause of the war since it was his wishful thinking about the outcome of his adventurism that ultimately triggered the war.

Conclusion

Could this war have been avoided at all? One possible answer is that if Saakashvili's optimism could have been checked, then war could have been avoided. In this connection, the role of the United States needs more scrutiny (Alexander & Lincoln, 2009: 35). The US, for the past few years, stood firm in support of Saakashvili in spite of the fact that his regime became increasingly authoritarian. The US military assistance to Tbilisi continued at a time when its leaders were employing increasingly bellicose rhetoric towards the breakaway regions. Georgia's unilateral 'peace plans' also got unconditional US support although Saakashvili did little to promote peace

and reconciliation. And most surprisingly, the US did nothing to stop Saakashvili from starting a military strike against South Ossetia that ultimately dragged Russia into the war.

From a larger perspective, it can be argued, that the cause of the August war is also a product of the type of regimes that both Russia¹⁵ and Georgia have. Supporters of the 'democratic peace theory' would feel upset about this war since both Russia and Georgia are democracies. But as Mansfield and Snyder showed in their research that transitional democracies, in which nationalist politics go hand in hand with authoritarian elite politics, have high probability to engage in wars.¹⁶ Because in those young democracies, nationalist sentiments and the politics over the legitimacy of the ruling class tend to be intense and militarism becomes a popular tool for gaining mass support for the regimes. Therefore, the root cause of the Georgia-Russia war of August 2008 can be attributed to the transitional nature of their democracies¹⁷.

In summary, the causes of the August war were indeed complex and multifaceted. From Russia's perspective, the war was necessary not only to show that it is capable to act as a great power, but also to advance its geo-strategic interests through a quick victory over Georgia. From Georgia's perspective, the war failed to bring about the expected outcome that Saakashvili wished for. Domestic politics, especially the nationalist rhetoric of the leaders and growing militarism in both Russia and Georgia played a crucial role in the decision of a military solution to the conflict. The failure of the Western nations, particularly the US, in deescalating the tension also contributed to the outbreak of this limited war that has far-reaching consequences for the security and stability of the region.

¹⁵ For a discussion on Putin's power-politics within Russia, see, Zbigniew Brzezinski (2008), "Putin's Choice", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31 No. 2 (Spring), pp. 95-116

¹⁶ See, Mansfield, Edward & Snyder, Jack (1995), "Democratization and War", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74 No. 3 (May), pp. 79-97

¹⁷ For a discussion on Russia's problems with democratization, see, Sarah E. Mendelson and Theodore P. Gerber (2005-6), "Soviet Nostalgia: An Impediment to Russian Democratization", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29 No. 1 (Winter), pp. 83-96.

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Book Review

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The History of Ethiopia

Saheed A. Adejumobi

Westport: Greenwood Press. pp. 219 (2007)

The recent book by Adejumobi will no doubt exert a pull on, among others, those social scientists who get interest in the history of Ethiopia and the globalization discourse. The author's focus on the latter is indeed commendable, given the paucity of such an analysis in the account of Ethiopian history. The reviewer of this book has especially found the work interesting, given the fact that he had finished, a little earlier than the publishing of Adejumobi's book, a work on a very similar topic, *viz*, the interaction of the global and the local in the establishment and development of Ethiopia¹. A number of instances in Ethiopian history raised in the thesis to show the global-local dynamics are profusely mentioned in this book also, except that they are well-elaborated and decidedly expanded in the latter. But a major gap divides the two studies in the conceptualization of the globalization dynamics, which will be detailed later in this review.

The book, divided into seven chapters and a biographic section, covers a plethora of issues in Ethiopian history. These include the early history of Ethiopia along with the myths and legends associated with its existence; extensive cultural, geographic and demographic descriptions about it; its connections with the African and black world and movements; and other

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¹ Semir Yusuf, (2007), "The Ethiopian Nation-State and Contending Nationalisms in a Global Era", (MA thesis), Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa

developments during the Solomonic era, down to the current conditions, all seen in the light of global and local forces, from socio-economic and political angles, with a special emphasis on the dilemmas and efforts of building a modern state and nation. The last part of the book has incorporated short biographies of “notable” personalities in Ethiopia’s past and present.

Exciting as it might appear, Adejumbi’s output should have undergone a lot more reconsideration than it actually seems to have gone through. The serious deficiencies in the work can be examined from four aspects, all of them related to theoretical underpinnings. It would indeed be disturbing to find a book whose most important and unique contributions are intended to be paradigmatic and conceptual, gravely lacking even preliminary discussions thereof. The author contents himself in lavishly using very ambiguous and vastly debated concepts, without even trying to explicitly and coherently charting the paths he is delving into. The result came out to be the obvious: an artistically-authored history of Ethiopia, without any significantly informative or unequivocal paradigmatic contribution in understanding the past and present of the country.

First comes his oft-repeated terminology “modern”, along with its derivatives (“modernity”, “post modernity”, “Afro modernity”...). He tries to graph the uneven drift Ethiopia passed through in search of modernity. He gets satisfaction with the skill the past Ethiopian emperors until Emperor Menelik demonstrated to keep up the politico-cultural integrity of the country. They were wise, he thinks, in balancing the intake of Western modernity and moulding it with the Ethiopian one, the ever-increasing devastating pressure the former posed to the latter notwithstanding. This pressure or challenge, after a long-running repulsive vigor of the Ethiopians, finally managed to gradually permeate the Ethiopian scene, until it caused the debilitating dilemma on the part of the decision-makers. Ever since the later part of Hailesellasié’s reign down to the current regime, Ethiopia has been suffering from a crisis of confusion and adulteration, primarily because of the international’s (particularly Western) depressing infiltration of the hitherto selectively pervious gates of Ethiopia.

All these discourses are caged in thick concepts. We can witness in the book, for example, the adjective “Afro”, as in “Afro modernity” and “Afro Marxism”. The author establishes (he is by no means the first, of course) a discursive alliance system, which encases Ethiopian modernity as part of, nay as an enduring psycho-cultural representative of, “African” modernity, and its nationalist corollary, pan-Africanism. Ethiopia has always been the refuge for the hapless, African or/and black in general. The latter have, as a result, responded magnificently when their spatial refuge has been desecrated by the onslaught of European imperialism. Thus, he argues, Afro-modernity, as

particularly manifested in the realization of Ethiopia, has served to fortunately defy the adoption of the overwhelming monotonous modernity of the West by producing and living its own way of life.

These claims can fall victim to appalling criticisms. What is “modernity”, to begin with? What are the characteristics of Afro-modernity? Do all Africans belong to a specific jacket of modernity? How is, more importantly, “Ethiopian” modernity related to Afro-modernity? What characteristic features does make this categorization valid? After all, is there a coherent, inherently Ethiopian modernity, which deserves the name? The book under review disparagingly offers very little or no answers to these pressing questions.

Let’s complement the arguments developed in the book by encapsulating them in a conceptual framework. The discourse of “modernity” got bloated with the modernization theory around the first and early second half of the twentieth century. Attempting to serve as a grand theory encompassing the social sciences, this paradigm is, risking an abrupt summary, known to have been underpinned by the fundamental assumption that the evolution of modern industrial societies signalled the demise of certain forms of solidarity of a traditional nature and the rise of new forms. These new, “modern” societies are predicated by a bundle of core processes such as nation-state formation, social differentiation, individualization, capitalist development, political modernization and secularization. (Kivisto, 2002). All these and attendant developments will later on inundate the whole world, leading to a homogenized world community.

Modernization’s linear and Euro-centric path, among other things, has been discredited from different angles, and its intellectual and policy-related vigor has receded ever since the 1970s. We need not discuss here all the counter-hegemonic paradigms developed to this end. However, two subsequent developments in conceptualizing the modern and modernization need some mentioning in the following lines. The first was the “multiple modernities” paradigm, set in the academic stage as an antithesis to the modernization project, the second being the “varieties of modernity” alternative which emerged very recently, as a critical rejoinder to the *multiple modernities* mentioned above. It is to the former that Adejumbi seems to largely but unacknowledgedly subscribe.

The multiple modernities paradigm (Eisenstadt, 2000; 1998; Spohn, 2003) goes to gainsay the modernization theory at the core. Accusing it of Eurocentrism and teleology, it affirms that each non-Western society has a developmental path of its own, which it does and should follow in its lifetime. What we observe in terms of diversity in different parts of our world today

is not the likeness of the primitive past of the West, but a manifestation of the multiple modernization process of different societies in their own path of development. We do not, therefore, envision a homogenized world, but the proliferation of diversities.

These ideas seem to impress Adejumobi much. He celebrates diversity, instead of congruity; fencing of borders rather than their dissolution. Afromodernity, as mentioned above, through its epitomic, and sometimes vestigial, materialization—i.e., Ethiopian modernity--has for long diversified the otherwise domineering and universalizing tendency of Western modernity. While this argument discloses his theoretical assumptions, however, he does not seem to be quite orthodox about any of its versions. In his book, one can sense, for instance, an odour of soreness with the mushrooming of ethnic nationalisms in Ethiopia since the 1960s, looking at them from an instrumentalist-constructivist (again explicitly unstated) angle. This phenomenon is seen by some Africanists who tend to endorse the multiple modernities approach as non-ephemeral with the advance of global modernity, but rather represents critical aspects of that particular region's experiences of modernity itself (see, for example, Berman, *et. al.*, 2004). While we may not justifiably scold Adejumobi for staying just a “nuanced” advocate of multiple modernities, he may be censured for not arguing in favour of this position of his.

In any case, we need to problematize the theoretical/conceptual framework itself which Adejumobi subscribes to, to the extent that he does, in the light of another approach to understand “modernity”. A *la* varieties of modernity, while still believing that diversity does exist in the world, it is yet worth to ask *what we make of it* (Schmidt, 2005). Does it really make sense to speak of the “modernities” of any non-Western country, say those of Ethiopia or Japan, as distinct from that of the West? Aren't there, instead, differences between the two artificial categories just as there are between a group of countries coming from other civilizations or within what we call the “West” itself? The problem with the multiple modernities is that it does not exactly tell us what the divergences consist in, how significant they are and why they might warrant speaking of modernity in the plural, rather than in the singular (*Ibid*).

Since we are not aware of the responses to these inquiries, we can hardly:

judge whether Japan--or the West or India or whichever region or country one may consider--is so unique as to justify...the conceptualization of its institutional and cultural outlook in its own and...even in civilizational terms--so different that something would be missed if Japan were treated as one of several members of a common family of modern societies.... [After all], is

Japan significantly more different from Spain than Denmark or Britain or Greece are (*Ibid*: 81)?

Further, having studied the World Values Report, Inglehart (in *Ibid*: 85) argues that, “economic modernization and cultural modernization tend to go together in coherent syndromes around the world and that the more fundamental differences in worldviews are not among industrialized societies but between pre-industrial and industrial societies”. Therefore, we may ask, has Ethiopia anything more similar to its pre-modern form than to its modern contemporaries in other parts of the world?

Moreover, where have the internal diversities gone to justify our claim that Ethiopia enjoyed one modernity? Whose modernity (given the ethnic, religious, class, regional...diversities within Ethiopia itself), the modernity based on which culture, are we speaking about? Whether or not we have an answer for this (Adejumobi seems to have one; see below), we will but remain highly biased and exclusive, and therefore render political, rather than academic, the whole literature. It is also from here that the postmodernist would take an issue of Adejumobi’s essentialist categorizations, to which we will come towards the end.

These are questions which Adejumobi never tried to address properly or did so far from impartiality. Taking for granted the widely spread common knowledge that Africa is different from the West, he added into the equation the question of modernity, without precisely outlining its basic features. Ethiopia also joined this confrontation as a major player without having got a clear identity of its modernity. This would severely diminish the validity of all that is built upon it.

Let’s illustrate this confusion with an example. Adejumobi, on the one hand, claims that Ethiopian modernity is something positive (for example, p.155) just as the fact that it has had one is. On the other hand, he is seen uncomfortable with some of the practices and cultures Ethiopians have been (re)producing in their political life. He seems to be against the centralization of authority ²(p. 51); the role of the Church in inhibiting radical reconstruction of Ethiopian traditions (p. 62); the hierarchical structure of the Ethiopian state (p.108); Ethiopia’s culture of extremism (p.153); the fact that Ethiopian

² Adejumobi is of the opinion that “power concentrated in the hands of the state is not truly African” (p. 127). Questions worth-asking include: which region, country, locality, district in Africa? How sure can we be about this? How can he defend the well-known assumption that Ethiopia has had an authoritarian political culture? Above all, won’t this contradict with his earlier and later statements about Ethiopia’s authoritarian political culture, and the role of religion in it? Why shouldn’t this be Ethiopian?

political dialogue and activity is often filled with ...diatribes and vituperations (p. 153); and that many Ethiopian rulers have been absolutist (p. xii).

One would, at this juncture, question: aren't these "problems" Ethiopian? Won't they represent "Ethiopian" modernity? If so, doesn't that contradict with the whole project of immaculating and eulogizing Ethiopian culture and modernity? If not, why not? Which ethos and cultures, then, do constitute "Ethiopian" modernity? Which and whose modernity is referred to, for example, in his stand that "centralization of authority is an anomaly in a society with ...*modernist* aspiration" (p.51)? In whose culture, another instance, does the "ether of modernity" include "individualism, the centrality of reason, government by consent" (pp.61-62)? Or should we take everything seen as politically comfortable as "Ethiopian" and disown every other thing clashing with currently fashionable notions as unEthiopian?

It is befitting to mention, at this juncture, that there can also be other alternatives between Adejumobi's *modernities*, and Schmidt's *modernity*. Accepting in general some of the latter's ideas, one can tend, at the same time, to remain somewhat aloof of some of his modernization-leaned convictions. These include, for instance, the expectation that we are moving towards homogenization, and that some differences in the socio-cultural conditions of developing nations from the developed ones represents the latter's past, waiting to be bridged in time. This looks either too "certainist" or/and too shallow a claim. It is the former because we don't have a strong foundation to stand on and prefer to consider these differences and not those; it is the latter because homogenization and heterogenization are two sides of the same coin in our glob/cal world of today.

This takes me to Adejumobi's understanding of the global-local dynamics. Although, again, forming a major part of his objectives, he does not present a sophisticated analytical framework--not even a proper definition of these two concepts, by the way-- to understand this dynamics. He is content to show the practical aspect of it as witnessed in the interaction of the West, Africa, and Ethiopia, and other important actors as well. Despite some discussions which show how interlaced the global and the local in fact are, his major assumptions are hinged on the belief that the West has been potentially or/and actually antithetical to Ethiopia, while the African public, and the black one in general, have remained to be loyal in their support for the latter. His major, though not entire, thesis lies in the assumption that the global is contradictory with the local, the former represented by the (imperialist?) West, and the latter by the (victimized?) Africans and Ethiopians, in particular.

Consider such impressions of his as “Ethiopia posited an alternative way to modernization for Africans” (pp. 41-2); Ethiopia’s “defensive attitude towards external incursions” (p. 42); “clash between the imperial ambitions of Europe and Ethiopia’s modernist aspirations” (p. 45); “Ethiopia saved from colonization because of its own unique modernity” (p. 47); “Christianity secured the sovereignty of Ethiopia” (p. 62); the Italian imperial globality against Ethiopian locality (chapter 4) ; and above all, globalization’s contribution to the failure of modernity in Ethiopia (p.157) and so on.

These, when taken at their face value, are too simplistic cases to make. The concept of ‘glocalization’ [as developed, among others, by Robertson (1995)], which, while rejecting the strict bifurcation between ‘the local’ and ‘the global’, asserts that identity formation on a global scale involves the ‘particularization of universalism’ and the ‘universalization of particularism’. In our world today, similar processes of localization are taking place universally, and universalizing processes are being played locally. Hence, neither the clear distinction nor the counterpoise between “the local” and “the global” can be tenable. This can, therefore, be best seen as an attempt to transcend the ‘homogenization-heterogenization’ debate by considering both, at a given time-space, as two aspects of the same movement.

By the same token, a glocalist would find Adejumbi’s above-mentioned impression about the global and the local superficial. Each one of the quotations would invoke rather long reactions, which won’t be dealt with here. Suffice it to mention, in general, that they neglect how identity (Ethiopian, African, or otherwise) is formed dialogically; that “reverse discourse” (see Appiah, in *Ibid*) entails the reaction to one’s enemy (this case, Ethiopia’s reaction to foreigners) in the same way and form as the latter’s attack; that the notion of the Ethiopian “nation” and modernity are glocal creations, learnt partly from Europe’s post-Reformation experiences and the like³. In short, such conflictual portrayal of the “global” and the “local” ignores that “Ethiopian” (or “African”) identity, modernity, reaction, realism, and so on are all, in a sense, partial by-products of globalization. Puritanist and localist stances are increasingly considered untenable in academic circles, although they may make sense in political ones.

Adejumbi’s hard core Ethiopianism will also provoke a reaction among some antagonists of this thesis, whether ethnonationalists or postmodernists. Ethiopia for him is an antique, pure, and unified entity with a glorious independent history of existence. The long/prehistoric, “core”-based, northcentric history

³ For a more detailed, albeit sketchy, discussions on all these, see Semir (2007), “The Ethiopian Nation-State and Contending...”.

and identity of Ethiopia and Ethiopian culture (the latter represented peculiarly by Christianity, and not least by the “national” dress, *shamma*, and the “national” dish, *injera!* (p. 18)), all palpably painted in the book, will be rebuked for being footed on both ultra-essentialist and extremely one-sided assumptions.

There is, however, nothing new in such a depiction of Ethiopia. It had been the “standard” history and identity of the country until it met its serious nemesis in the 60s. The unfortunate thing about its (crude?) recapitulation now is that its veracity is taken for granted at a time when it can no more be considered as the *only* way of looking at Ethiopia. The different scathing criticisms launched against it should have been argued against before its discursive regeneration sets in. By no means would it be enough to pass over the ethnonationalist histories as re-constructed historiographies of other peoples (p. 108). It was as well essential to show how and why they are so and how “natural” and “real” the Ethiopianist version of history is⁴.

The final thematic note would be on the Ethiopian “nation”. Although Ethiopia is stretched back into prehistory, no elaboration is given whether it has been so as a “nation” or not. Adejumobi does not even give a clear indication of the term until page p. 161, where Ethiopia is referred to as a “modern nation”. He does not, as usual, go into a conceptual discussion of what makes a nation so. In fact, in this case, he does not show the process by which the Ethiopian nation was constructed. But the most intriguing question one would posit is, why is Ethiopia ever pictured as a unified, compact whole if and when it acquired the status of a nation relatively recently?

Finally, some informational errors in the book include the deeming of Kaffa and Sidamo as predominantly Oromo provinces (p. 103); Tigre province as the residing place of the Oromo (p. 111); and Dr. Merera and Prof. Beyene Petros as the leaders of the CUD (p. 146). Moreover, his data on the number of the Oromo is contradictory, rounding them to 45-50 percent at one place (p. 111) and 32% at another (p.140).

Penultimately, Adejumobi was quite right when he said, “narratives of modernity are often canonized in the forms that are culturally and politically

⁴ Adejumobi’s stand on the question of “ethnic oppression” in the country is conspicuous primarily because it is contradictory. On the one hand, he believes that the injustice in Ethiopia has been of class and regional in nature and not ethnic (). On the other hand, however, he talks about the “hierarchical...structure of the Ethiopian state... [which] was anchored upon Amhara cultural domination” (p. 108). Specifically, he mentions that the “Oromo had been historically marginalized in cultural, political and economic relations within the Ethiopian empire”(p.111).

exclusive and thus hegemonic" (p. xi). He was trying to attack the partiality and overbearingness of the West, without realizing that the same applies even to him, as a modernist writer himself. However much he tried to distance himself from modernity by advocating a non-Western version, there are things common to all "modernities", things which the post-modernist turn abhors: essentialization, selection, categorization, and domination. Although he wished to transcend the modernist aporia with the help of the above-mentioned quotation, it is highly doubtful whether he succeeded in doing so.

Finally, we should not, however, neglect what has been mentioned earlier: its well-written composition, its comprehensive coverage, and its integrated attempt in terms of reading Ethiopia's past and present from a global perspective. The last biographic part may be found to be interesting for some, although the criteria of the selection (of the "notable" people listed) are left unclear.

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