The Crises of Postcoloniality in Africa

This book is a product of CODESRIA textbook project

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Edited by

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CODESRIA

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Debating Postcoloniality in Africa

Kenneth Omeje

Introduction

This chapter critically explores the debate on postcoloniality in Africa as the basis for delineating and enhancing the understanding of the nature of crises associated with the phenomenon on the continent. Being the introductory chapter of an edited volume, I will essentially try to map out the context of the debate, and the various intellectual and practical concerns that have engaged the attention of analysts. Further, I shall engage, interrogate, illuminate and hopefully attempt to coalesce into a coherent explanatory framework some of the contending perspectives on the historical and contemporary referents, dimensions and interconnections of the crises of postcoloniality in Africa.

The concept of postcoloniality is a highly divisive and ambiguous one. Postcoloniality means different things to different scholars, and sometimes for the same scholar or proponent, the concept has different alternative and contradictory connotations. Consequently, the concept is defined, conceptualized, contested, debated, studied and arguably de-studied by various disciplines, such as English literature and comparative philology, cultural studies, history, gender studies, Diaspora studies, area studies, politics and other disciplines that epistemically or methodologically interface with the self-proclaimed 'core stakeholders'. Further, the debate on the denotations and connotations of postcoloniality is antagonistically waged across various theories, paradigms, and schools of thought within and between fields – Marxism, dependency theory, nationalist historiography, subaltern school of history, postcolonial studies in African literature, as well as postmodernism and various shades of poststructuralism. Linked to the preceding complex debates is the more epistemological contestation regarding which of the competing concepts has a more appropriate explanatory power: 'postcoloniality', 'postcolonialism' or perhaps 'postmodernism'? Some critics have

challenged and questioned the meaning of the 'post' in these various concepts. Should the 'post' be understood in its literal or linear historical form to imply 'events after' in which case 'postcoloniality' or 'postcolonialism' becomes roughly synonymous with the seemingly de-emphasized concept of 'neocolonialism' – literally, 'a new form of colonialism after the end of the original form'. Does the prefix 'post' transformatively redefine 'coloniality' or 'colonialism' to represent some ordered kind of 'discursive practices, the construction of subjectivities and identities, or concrete historical processes' as some pundits have adumbrated (see Zeleza 2006:19). Clearly, this chapter cannot attempt to resolve these multiplex conundrums but at the same time it would amount to sheer intellectual cynicism to submit, as some scholars have done, that postcoloniality defies definition simply because it is a deeply controverted and troubled concept.

Context and Conceptualization

Colonial and postcolonial discourses have to be understood in their historical, genealogical, ideological and conceptual contexts. Whereas colonial discourses emerged out of specific historical, political and ideological constructions that witnessed their climax in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe, postcolonial discourses have mainly materialized from resistance (i.e. political and ideological) and critique (mainly intellectual) of post-nineteenth century imperialism and colonialism, including the legacies of Western exploits in the global South and the contemporary power relations between the latter and the global North. Imperialism, colonialism and postcolonialism are related in a complex way, but the precise nature of relationships or connection among these concepts depends on the theoretical and ideological persuasions of various theorists and commentators. Consequently, the historical and empirical referents of imperialism, colonialism, and postcolonialism have marked variations across different regions of the world.

Postcolonial debate has been fundamentally shaped by two dominant paradigms – leftist historical materialism (notably Marxist political economy and Dependency theories of history and political science) and trans-disciplinary postmodernism. In the African context, leftist historical materialism emerged as a critique of imperialist and nationalist historiographies on the nature, *raison d'être* and outcome of colonialism (Fanon 1965; Ake 1982; Mishra & Hodge 2005). Proponents articulated counter discourses of postcolonialism that aimed to reveal the historically entrenched and exploitative structures, institutions, networks and processes that tend to reproduce and perpetuate imperialist interests in the various African states and economies (see Rodney 1972; Ake 1996). Also significantly explored by proponents were transformative proposals for surmounting the constraints immanent on postcolonialism, redressing African underdevelopment and re-positioning the continent on the path to unfettered and robust development.

Beyond Africa, contributions to the leftist political economy debate are drawn from the greatest tri-continental (Africa, Asia and Latin America) anti-colonial theorists and intellectual activists (Young 2001:6). Since the dawn of decolonization, two major concepts have been used by proponents to theorize the outcomes of colonialism. These are: 'neocolonialism' (literally, 'new' form of colonialism) and 'postcolonialism' (literally, the time-space 'after' colonialism [see Tejumola 2005]).

Dating from the end of formal colonialism, Marxist intellectuals and statesmen (mostly from the global South) were of the view that the formal termination of colonial rule marked by the 'regaining' or granting of independence to the former European colonies was largely a superficial phenomenon that resulted in the inauguration of protégé regimes in the former colonies that maintained preponderant loyalty to the ex-colonial masters in the metropole and protected the latter's economic and strategic interests in the new independent states (see Rodney 1972; Bayart *et al.* 1999). Political independence or flag independence as it was often called was said to be devoid of economic independence and the metropolitan ex-colonial authorities were perceived as still calling the shots in their former colonies. This phenomenon was conceptually described as neocolonialism, which according to Kwame Nkrumah (1965), Ghana's foremost nationalist and post-independence leader, was 'the last stage of imperialism'. The logical remedy against the thraldom of neocolonialism, as exponents have argued, is that the newly independent states should 'delink' from the exploitative international capitalist system and pursue a socialist path to development. This radical view not only gained tremendous currency among Third World intellectuals, social activists and politicians between the late 1950s and 1980s, but also fed into the Cold War politics of that era.

The concept of neocolonialism has come under vigorous attack from critics of both Marxist and postmodernist intellectual orientations, especially since the late 1970s. Among other things, the concept is criticized as analytically inadequate, not least as a result of what critics perceive as its undue determinism and reductionism, which tend to limit the impact of colonialism to economic exploitation and disabilities (Lazarus 1999). Consequently, the sweep of leftist ideology and communist revolutions across many parts of the global South resulting in the inauguration of various shades of communist and nationalist regimes, which substantially severed allegiance to the metropole and limited the economic interests of the ex-colonial powers, were seen by Marxist critics of the neocolonial discourse as having not fundamentally affected the social, cultural and intellectual legacies of colonialism in the countries concerned (ibid.; see also Bayart *et al.* 1999). For these historical materialists, the legacies of colonialism have apparently not only persisted in post-independence era but have also aggravated in some instances, leading to conflicts of varied intensities. Africa is at the same time ravaged by the legacies of colonialism and the ravages of neocolonialism (Zeleza 2006:99).

Hence, the concept of postcolonialism is postulated as having greater explanatory power in helping to understand the broad legacies of colonialism, the contemporary international structures that tend to reinforce the colonial legacies and asymmetrical relationships, as well as their consequences and dynamics. Some scholars tend to make an analytic, if not semantic, distinction between postcolonialism and postcoloniality. In distinguishing 'postcoloniality' from 'postcolonialism', Graham Huggan (2001) has argued that the former term represents a regime of value that privileges the late capitalist system of commodity exchange, while the latter term represents a politics that resists the global processes of commodification (quoted in Jefferess *et al.* 2006). Huggan's distinction tends to create a dichotomy between the cultural and politico-economic legacies of colonialism and their dynamics. But such a dichotomy is questionable given the fact that postcolonialists (proponents of all narratives), as Zeleza (2006:98) succinctly observes, are generally concerned with the experiences associated with colonialism and its present effects for both the imperial powers and the ex-colonial societies. A marked ambivalence exists amongst scholars of various intellectual and ideological persuasions on both the meanings of, and distinctions between, postcoloniality and postcolonialism.

A number of Western-based post-structuralists and liberal internationalists tend to interpret the enduring power of neocolonialism and the overall significance of postcolonialism (in conceptual, chronological and empirical terms) differently. Proponents like Ranjana Khanna (2003), Crawford Young (2004) and Dabashi (2012) have proclaimed with remarkable audacity 'the demise of postcolonialism'. Describing postcolonialism as a melancholic discipline, Khanna maintains that the factors leading to announcements of its death – for instance, the failures of anti-colonial liberation projects and the current neo-imperial forces of globalization – have in fact been sites of engagement for a field characterized primarily by the paradox of impossibility (see Jefferess 2006). In a seminal article in the *African Affairs* of 2004 entitled 'The End of the Postcolonial State in Africa?' Young (2004:23-24) argues that there has been a demise of the 'postcolonial moment' in Africa since about the year 1990. He attributes the historic demise to the convoluted forces of market liberalization and democratization in Africa, which have eroded the silent incorporation of many defining characteristics of the colonial state in its post-independence successor for the preceding three decades (Young 2004:24-25). 1990 is designated the terminal postcolonial period because this was the year when the unfolding transformations supposedly came full swing with a multitude of new functional and dysfunctional actors (informal traders, smugglers, warlords, arms traffickers, youth militias, local associations, women's organizations, religious groups and refugees) entering the political space and interacting with state agents and international agencies (ibid.).

Writing with a remarkable sense of euphoria, Hamid Dabashi christened the montage of popular uprisings across the Arab world, which started in Tunisia in December 2010 and popularly regarded as the Arab Spring, 'the end of

postcolonialism'. Dabashi (2012:5) admits that the Arab uprisings are not 'conclusive revolutions' occasioning 'a radical shift in political power with an accompanying social and economic restructuring of society' 'as we have understood them in the exemplary models of the French, Russian, Chinese, Cuban or Iranian revolutions of the last three centuries'. But he argues that they are nonetheless significant 'open-ended revolutions, wherein national politics will have consequences transnationally, and vice versa'. Dabashi continues:

> The Tunisian revolt triggered the Arab Spring transnationally, and the transnational revolt across the region has had specific national consequences, such as the rapprochement between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine, which in turn has triggered a response from the Palestinians in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, who have goaded Israeli forces and stormed into their occupied homelands. These dynamics spell the end of the politics of despair and business-as-usual, in which the US and its European and regional allies on one side and the Islamic Republic and its subnational allies – Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Mahdi Army – on the other, held hostage the democratic aspirations of masses of millions of human beings (2012:12).

Dabashi and Young provide analytical details about the decay and disintegration of the postcolonial state in Africa and the Arab world but, in the end, fail to tell us what has replaced it and what has become of the sociocultural and sundry concomitants of postcolonialism in the regions. Whilst one may agree with Dabashi that the Arab Spring remains inconclusive given its contemporariness, the assertion that both the Arab Spring and the Sub-Saharan African neoliberal reforms of the 1990s have ended the postcolonial dispensation is to stretch the re-imagining of the postcolonial world too far. The Arab Spring could not have ended postcolonialism in North Africa and the Middle East when we do not yet know what has replaced the excavated and unsettled status quo. Similarly, earlier proponents of the death of postcolonialism like Young have not told us how significantly different and 'un-postcolonial' the new dispensation is (post-postcolonial?), The various contributions in this volume have tried to explore these issues by using both conceptual and empirical narratives from specific case studies.

Arguably, the greatest contributions to postcolonial studies, especially since the 1970s, have come from the field of English and literary studies where the preference is clearly for the term postcolonialism. Largely influenced by the post-structuralist and postmodernist revolution in Western liberal sciences, literary scholars of Third World origin have constructed or adopted postcolonial theory for three related reasons highlighted by Zeleza, among other scholars. The first is a political agenda – to craft a paradigm of scholarship deeply invested in the destruction and deconstruction of European hegemony spanning the economic and epistemic, as well as the political and paradigmatic aspects (Zeleza 2006:99). The second is a more practical goal of creating an applied sub-discipline that has not only expanded the canon by insisting that we read, consider, and teach literatures of

colonized peoples, but because it promised to give the so-called native people a place at the table; ultimately, the goal is that through exposure to new literatures and cultures and challenges to hegemonic assumptions and power structures, lives of the oppressed people of the Third World would be made better (Jefferess *et al.* 2006). The third is the predilection for a theory of colonial and postcolonial social formations, of concrete historical processes, as well as an ideological interrogation of texts, images and discourses (Zeleza 2006:98). Many mainstream theorists of the leftist political economy school are critical of Third World literary scholars' propensity to discursive interrogation of texts and images, arguing that such cannot substitute for a structural and even empirical understanding and analysis of global power relations.

The renowned Palestinian American and ex-Columbia University Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Edward Said, has made one of the most seminal contributions to the way postcolonialism has been conceptualized by literary studies. Said's contributions are contained in his groundbreaking books *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Although written largely with Middle Eastern and South Asian background, Said's works have been highly influential in helping to illuminate the 'complex and ongoing relationships between east and west, colonizer and colonized, white and black, and metropolitan and colonial societies' (Singh 2004). The latter is the essential preoccupation of the author in *Culture and Imperialism.*

In *Orientalism*, Said eloquently demonstrates how Western colonizers created a discursive myth or set of stereotypes that were over the years elevated to a sort of systematic knowledge and political vision about the Middle East and South Asia (ibid.). Western stereotypes about Oriental cultures and the Oriental were cast as binary contrasts between the civilized (West) and the uncivilized (Oriental – Asians, Arabs and Indians), the secularly rational and the superstitiously religious, the familiar and the strange.

The stereotypes assigned to Oriental cultures and 'Orientals' as individuals are pretty specific: Orientals are despotic and clannish. They are despotic when placed in positions of power, and sly and obsequious when in subservient positions. Orientals, so the stereotype goes, are impossible to trust. They are capable of sophisticated abstractions, but not of concrete, practical organization or rigorous, detail-oriented analysis. Their men are sexually incontinent, while their women are locked up behind bars. Orientals are, by definition, strange. The best summary of the Orientalist mindset would probably be: 'East is east and West is west, and never the twain shall meet' (ibid.).

In an avid Foucauldian thesis, Said (1978) argues that orientalism was not just a mythical idea but a powerful discourse produced, ingested, applied and perpetuated within the structures of unequal power relations between the colonizers and the colonized. The rest of Said's effort in *Orientalism* is about the interrogation, dismantling and deconstruction of some of the unfounded colonial stereotypes

that have for centuries been treasured in Western cultural and political thought as authoritative evidential knowledge.

Perhaps the greatest contribution by Said to postcolonial theory is the recognition that orientalism is a 'fully-fledged discourse' (Singh 2004) and in the light of that proceeding to unravel the underlying power relations behind the discourse, the interest it was designed to maximize, as well as why it is necessary to deconstruct the discourse and provide a more accurate narrative. Translated to the African setting, orientalism has a familiar resonance with the discourse of 'nativism' or simply the 'native'. The latter is discussed in the next section of this chapter. Like Said, many African scholars – literary experts, historians and social scientists alike – have used postcolonialism as a conceptual and ideological instrument to critique and challenge colonial and postcolonial discourses in Africa, and the attendant power relations they tend to reproduce between the hegemonic West and the ex-colonial societies. In so doing, the literary critics have stayed put with the concept of postcolonialism, which they have raised to a rather incoherent omnibus theory while most political historians and mainstream social scientists have favoured the concept of postcoloniality for no apparent reasons other than perhaps the need to be distinguishable from their longstanding rivals of the 'school of arts'. But more significantly, Zeleza (2006:120) has, among other criticisms, observed that postcolonialism as constructed and pursued in literary studies and the social sciences, to a lesser extent, 'does not provide us with the methodological and theoretical tools to examine African history – arguably the longest in the world – before the colonial interlude'. He submits that one might need to delve into approaches that emphasize historical materiality for a better understanding and analysis of African pre-colonial history. Have the political historians and social scientists been more coherent, focused and consistent in their use and understanding of the term postcoloniality? Not by any means! Consensus-building on the meaning and referents of postcolonial-ity/-ism has remained, for the most part, elusive to all the stakeholders involved in postcolonial studies regardless of their intellectual orientation and cross-disciplinary clusters. In a way, this lack of agreement on the epistemological and empirical content of the field is both its major strength and weakness. On the one hand, it helps the discipline to make unbounded growth but, on the other hand, it sustains seemingly irreconcilable ambiguities in terms of meaning, context, scope, content, temporality and existentiality.

Rooted largely (but not exclusively) in political history and the social sciences, this study adopts the concept of postcoloniality as a framework of analysis, keeping in mind that the intellectual heritage of postcoloniality – regardless of how one defines the concept – is integrative and transdisciplinary, incorporating some of the rich scholastic achievements in the literary disciplines. In spite of the observed lack of agreement on issues of definitional meaning and empirical referents, most scholars agree that a considerable number of the crises that have confronted African states since independence are rooted in colonial heritage and

the syndrome of postcoloniality. If postcoloniality is crisis-ridden then we can justifiably talk about the crises of postcoloniality – the nexus of interlocking, cross-cutting, embedded and enduring contradictions and conflicts in the postcolonial states directly or indirectly related to colonial heritage (political and economic structures, practices, modes of accumulation, education and cultural patterns), as well as the nature and constraints of postcoloniality itself. To further understand the crises of postcoloniality, we need to contextuate the discussion in the nature, discourse and legacy of colonialism.

Colonialism and its Antecedents

Most analyses and explanations of colonialism begin by exploring its relationship with imperialism, with the result that some scholars hardly make a distinction between the two concepts. It is important to stress that both concepts have a pretty long history and involve forms of subjugation (including actual exercise of behavioural influence) of one people or country by another (Young 2001:15). The term imperialism extends from the concept of empire. Empires, in turn, stem from significant power asymmetries among political units, and this inequality consequently enables the domination of, and control by one party, the strong (metropole or core), over the weak satellites (periphery) (Rapkin 2005:390). Both colonialism and imperialism are founded on the asymmetrical political and economic relations between the metropolitan centre and the subjected periphery.

   Pre-nineteenth century imperial and colonial projects (Holy Roman empire, Chinese empire, Medo-Persian empire, etc.) had sundry motives – notably, military and ethno-cultural domination, irredentism, religious inquisition, economic exploitation, and so forth. But they markedly differ from the imperial and colonial projects of the nineteenth century onwards because the latter were clearly economically driven (access to raw materials and markets), operated as state policies, backed by the overwhelming power and bureaucratic machinery of the metropolitan state, and nurtured a global ambition. It is this capitalist-inspired phase of colonialism and imperialism that is organically related to the postcolonial. Imperialism and colonialism have not always converged in history. Arguably, the classical colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was both predated and post-dated by imperialism or what some contemporary scholars describe as 'imperial governance' (see Rapkin 2005; Omeje 2008).

   Western imperialism took its heaviest toll on sub-Saharan Africa partly due to the debilitating antecedents of externally-induced slavery. The spadework for European conquest and subsequent colonization of sub-Saharan Africa was spearheaded by two devastating forms of externally-induced slavery in the region. The first was the trans-Saharan slave trade that lasted for over a period of 900 years (the ninth to nineteenth centuries) before colonial rule and in which Arab merchants bought and also conscripted slaves from various parts of sub-Saharan Africa (notably eastern Africa and the Sahel) and consequently sold them to the

Arab world (including north Africa) and parts of the Mediterranean. Most of the male slaves were used as foot soldiers, castrated harem guards, and domestic servants while the female slaves were employed as domestic servants, harem-bound mistresses and forced prostitutes. Black slaves in the Arab world were scarcely allowed any opportunity for normal family life and procreation. A limited number of slaves were also taken from eastern Africa across the Red Sea and Indian Ocean to the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent.

The second category was the trans-Atlantic slave trade which marked the first European scramble for Africa and in which hordes of slaves were taken from Africa to the Americas to predominantly work in plantation agriculture between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. For reasons of logistical convenience, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was for the most part restricted to Western Africa, omitting South Africa and Eastern Africa except for Mozambique and Madagascar; it produced fierce rivalries, as Portugal, the Dutch Republic, France, and Great Britain competed in the quest for black slave workers (Rawley 2003:6). European slave dealers conscripted their African victims by direct kidnapping, trickery, capture, and most of all, by threatening African chiefs and community leaders with conscription of themselves and their households if they did not produce the 'enslaveable' subjects. This persistent pressure, made credible by the occasional conscription of recalcitrant chiefs and royal households, instigated continuous inter-tribal raiding and warfare amongst chiefdoms competing to capture and deliver citizens of rival communities to the brutally armed and waiting slave masters and ships.

Estimates published by historians of how many Africans were carted away from the continent in the course of the different externally-induced slave trades vary remarkably but they are all in millions; perhaps as many as 9 million in the trans-Sahara/Oriental slave trade, and well over 12 million in the trans-Atlantic human trade (see M'Bokolo 1998). In fact, leading African historians like Cheikh Anta Diop (1978) estimate that as many as 100 to 200 million Africans were either killed or carried away during the trans-Atlantic slave trade (quoted in Baregu 2003:22). The consequences of the centuries of externally-induced human trade on the African economy, security and development have been well researched and documented by political economy historians (Rodney 1972; Ake 1982). Africa was systematically robbed of its labour force – the critical mass of people of the most productive age cluster required to engineer and sustain development at home – for the development of the countries and regions they were taken to. As a result, Africa stagnated in precoloniality while the rest of the beneficiary world (mostly Europe and the Americas in the case of the more devastating trans-Atlantic slave trade) made accelerated progress with the help of African labour.

Europe's quest for exploitable colonies sparked off the second scramble for Africa that culminated in the historic Berlin Conference of 1884-85 in which Africa was balkanized into colonizable parts by leading Western imperial powers.

Beyond Africa, many other parts of the world were also colonized by the Western powers. Colonial hegemony of the nineteenth and twentieth century Europe took different forms that fairly corresponded to the policy orientations and purposes of the major colonial powers. Major colonial powers like Britain, Spain, France and Portugal pursued and operated different colonial policies in different regions and colonial missions. Scholars have identified the following three broad forms of colonies and colonial practices (see Young 2001:17):

> The first, dominion colonies, are colonies predominantly established as dominions for the purpose or forms of settlement: e.g. British North America, Australia and New Zealand, diverse Portuguese colonies – Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, etc. Dominion colonies mainly involved systematic extermination and/or displacement of the indigenous populations and their violent ejection/confinement to hostile spaces like deserts and forests. Some have labelled this practice 'geographical violence' (ibid.).

The second is colonies established as dependencies for economic exploitation without a view to largescale and permanent settlement: e.g. most of the colonies in the high humidity tropics. Dependency colonies were mostly governed using such ideologies as the British direct and indirect rule, French assimilation theory and direct imposition of metropolitan culture, which was practiced by all colonial powers. Scholars like Jean-Francois Bayart *et al.* (1999) have argued that because a few European officials were involved in administering the vast colonial territories, all the colonial powers actually adopted a combination of direct and indirect rule even if some like the French and the Portuguese did not frame theirs in a pivotal policy as the British did.

The third is maritime enclaves, mostly islands, harbours and other strategic points acquired by imperial powers as bases for global military operations and protection of strategic interests in the outlying region: e.g. Dutch Batavia, Falkland Islands, etc.

Classical colonialism mostly involved the first two categories (dominion and dependency colonies) in the above typology. All colonial powers tended as a result to have in practice two distinct kinds of colonies within their empires, the settled and the exploited, the white and the black/coloured, which would be treated very differently (Young 2001:19). With respect to African experience of colonialism, Achille Mbembe (2001:32-35) has outlined some underlying features, which I have highlighted and illuminated in the following six thematic points:

• *First, the Instrumentality and Arrogance of Organized Violence:* Colonial rule, according to Mbembe, established systems of sovereignty that rested on three forms of violence (a) founding violence – the self-justifying right of conquest and to institute governance structures, roles, and laws by sovereign diktat; (b) justifying colonial sovereignty and violence by providing self-interpreting models for the necessity of the colonial order and its universalizing mission – discursive

violence aimed at 'converting the founding violence into authorizing authority'; (c) violence intermittently applied in accordance with need to ensure the maintenance, spread and permanence of colonial authority. More significantly, military violence was vital for creation and perpetuation of the enabling conditions to maximize the cheapest forms of resource extraction. The authoritarian predilection and unmitigated impunity of the colonial establishment has been a recurrent feature in most analyses of colonialism by virtually all trenches of historians – nationalists, 'post-nationalists', and the likes. Colonial rule was profoundly authoritarian, even though some facade of democracy was hurriedly instituted in most of the colonies towards the eve of independence. Authoritarianism was believe to be an appropriate mode of governance for the uncivilized Africans depicted as occupying the lowest rung of the evolutionary ladder of the human species, just a step above the wild apes. Ostensibly, the largely centralized political structures and authoritarian culture that characterized Africa's post-independence regimes were partly a legacy of colonial rule.

- *Second, Exercising Sovereignty with Impunity:* Colonial authorities were regimes of impunity defined by Mbembe as 'the arbitrariness and intrinsic unconditionality of colonial sovereignty; lack of justice as the means and lack of legitimacy as the ends of colonial projects'. The regime of impunity, the author argues, was a departure from the common law, individual rights and principles of legal justice that were already emerging in the metropole. Forced labour, compulsory cash crop production and delegation of sovereign power to trading companies and individuals were all part of the regime of impunity widespread in the colonies. The colonizers equipped many large companies with commercial and mining privileges and with the sovereign rights allowing them to raise taxes and maintain an armed force. On the part of the colonizers and their business associates (colonial trading companies), the regime of impunity, according to Mbembe, translated into and were actually construed as 'a regime of privileges and immunities'. Sovereignty was thereby privatized.

- *Third, 'Prebendal' Privatizing of the Public Sphere:* A corollary of the regime of impunity in the colonies, Mbembe aptly observes, was the confusion between the public and the private, the agents of the sovereign could at will usurp the law and in the name of the state, exercise it for purely private ends. The tendency to usurp the powers of the state for 'prebendal' purposes, according to the author (albeit the latter did not use the term 'prebendal'), was miniaturized and ubiquitous. It tended to occur in various disguises and everywhere. Both the colonizers and their local aides (catechists, interpreters, court clerks, office clerks, uniformed guards, butlers, etc), Mbembe insists, were all culprits of this phenomenon.

Nnoli (1978; 1989) has trenchantly theorized the historical tendency towards privatization of the public sphere by state office holders in Africa, dating from the disingenuous devices of the colonizers, and how the nationalist and postcolonial elites consequently instrumentalized ethnicity to abet their aggrandizement of power

and resources. The politics of systematic plunder that has characterized and blighted a large number of Africa's postcolonial states cannot be dissociated from the self-centred blurring of public and private spheres rampant during the colonial era. Richard Joseph (1987) was apparently the first scholar to use the concept of prebendalism to rigorously re-theorize this profoundly compromising political practice.

Based on a conceptual synthesis from a variety of relevant studies, Daniel Bach (2011) has re-theorized the familiar concept of neopatrimonialism to portray some meaningful distinction among African postcolonial states. Neopatrimonialism is a post-Weberian concept originally coined by Eisenstadt (1973) to describe the confusion observable in many developing countries between the public and private spheres; between public officer and the office holder in a state that is at least formally endowed with the Weberian modern legal-bureaucratic institutions. However, beyond the façade of the public bureaucratic institutions, the day-to-day running of state affairs, including the formulation and implementation of government policies, are conducted through informal clientelist networks (often rooted in clannish, ethno-cultural and other primordial tendencies) ultimately linked to a few powerful state office holders. Neopatrimonial rule is widely believed to be the core feature of politics in Africa and central to the crises of postcoloniality.

Bach makes a relevant analytical distinction between two polar contrasts of neopatrimonialism in Africa, the regulated and predatory forms of neopatrimonialism. According to the author (Bach 2011:277-280), the regulated neopatrimonial state is characterised by a combination of personal rule, elite co-optation and a re-distributive policy of ethno-regional balance (e.g. Cote d'Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny, and Kenya under Jomo Kenyatta), while predatory neopatrimonialism corresponds to a sultanic model where the kleptocratic patrimonialization of the state has become all-encompassing, with the consequent loss of any sense of public space or public policy (e.g. Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko). Regulated neopatrimonialism functions with significant bureaucratic institutionalization that enables the state to formulate and pursue well-meaning development policies and programmes. Predatory neopatrimonialism, on the other hand, is anti-development and a fundamental threat to the coherence and internal sovereignty of the state. Bach submits that there are a possible range of intermediate variations between the preceding two broad polar contrasts.

• *Fourth, the Native Discourse:* Famous scholars like Fanon (1965), Rodney (1972) and Memmi (1991) have all brilliantly expounded the discourse on nativism. Colonial rule thrived on a racial and cultural dichotomy between the colonizers and 'natives'. Intrinsic to this dichotomy was the colonizers' denigration of the natives' modes of social organization as primitive, and the use of brute force in the self-imposed mission to civilize the natives. To justify the civilizing mission, colonial discourses produced a string of derisive images of the African 'as sub-human species, unformed clay of primitive multitudes, a special human type – a child-like human – with a child psychology and outlook, a child race who can

never grow up, children with a bundle of drives and dysfunctional capacities that needed perpetual guides and guardians' (Mamdani 1996:4). In their state of nature, the natives lived as creatures of instinct, incapable of rational thinking and wallowed in unmitigated barbarism marked by wars of mutual destructions. Lacking in rational thought, the natives were incapable of any achievements in science, technology, literature, politics and government. The body of thought that comprise the theory of colonization can be found in some of the works and pronouncements of well-regarded political theorists, philosophers, historians, explorers, statesmen, Christian missionaries, novelists and other social thinkers of the late feudal/early modern Europe, as well as the early stages of colonialism. It is pertinent to reproduce three of the striking thoughts of early modern European thinkers about the Africans or natives (see Oluwole 2006:10 for the excerpts):

> It is a serious question among them whether [the Africans] are descended from monkeys or whether the monkeys come from them. Our wise men have said that man was created in the image of God. Now here is a lovely image of the Divine Maker: a flat and black nose with little or hardly any intelligence … If their understanding is not of a different nature from ours, it is at least greatly inferior. They are not capable of any great application or association of ideas, and seem formed neither in the advantages nor the abuses of our philosophy – Francois Marie Arouet Voltaire, eighteenth century French philosopher.

> The negroes of Africa have received from nature no intelligence that rises above the foolish. The difference between the two races is a substantial one. It appears to be just as great in respect to the faculties of the mind as in colour – Immanuel Kant, eighteenth century German philosopher.

> I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation. No indigenous manufacturer amongst them, no arts, no sciences. … On the one hand, the most rude and barbarous of the Whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men – David Hume, eighteenth century Scottish philosopher.

Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, the nineteenth century French public intellectual widely regarded as the father of modern Euro-Western racial ideology, historically classified humanity into three unequal races – the white, the yellow and the black – postulating that the Aryan-Germanic white are by dint of genetic superiority endowed with the creative genius directly or indirectly responsible for all the remarkable achievements in all human civilizations throughout history. It is indeed remarkable that even the famous civilization of ancient Egypt under the kingship of the Pharaohs, a widely acclaimed black civilization that predated the Arab-Muslim conquest of north Africa, was credited by Gobineau to the hegemony

of the Aryan-Germanic Diaspora. A few excerpts from one of Gobineau's classic works, *An Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* (1853-1855), will suffice to illustrate his pseudo-scientific racial ideology (quoted in Seilliere 1914; see also Ayoub 2012):

> Almost the whole of the Continent of Europe is inhabited at the present by groups of which the basis is white, but in which the non-Aryan elements are the most numerous. There is no true civilization, among the European peoples, where the Aryan branch is not predominant … No negro race is seen as the initiator of a civilization. Only when it is mixed with some other can it even be initiated into one …. Similarly, no spontaneous civilization is to be found among the yellow races; and when the Aryan blood is exhausted stagnation supervenes.

> The negroid variety is the lowest (*of the three races*) …

> The yellow races are … clearly superior to the black …

> We come now to the white peoples. These are gifted with reflective energy or rather with an energetic intelligence. They have a feeling for utility … a perseverance … a greater physical power, an extraordinary instinct for order … a remarkable, and even extreme, love of liberty …

> The white races are, further, distinguished by an extraordinary attachment to life. When they are cruel, they are conscious of their cruelty; it is very doubtful whether such a consciousness exists in the negro.

Fabricated bigotries of the preceding nature, which were widespread during the so-called Enlightenment Age in Europe, were powerful legitimizing ideologies of both colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade that preceded it.

During the colonial era, there was a deliberate and systematic destruction of different forms of social organization of the natives and outlawing of some cultural practices that existed prior to the advent of colonial rule. Through Christianization, Western education and direct imposition of metropolitan cultural forms, the colonizers aimed to civilize and groom the Africans to become 'proper' humans. These derogatory discourses and castigation of the African did not originate with colonialism, but, as already highlighted, was part of the philosophical rationalization of the trans-Atlantic slave trade that preceded colonial conquest. Every colonial authority had to come up with policies and conventions on how to deal with the native question (Mamdani 1996:4). One of the most prevalent policies was the promotion of separate settlement and development schemes for natives and European settlers in colonial urban centres. In some countries, the policy was extended to local indigenes and migrants from other ethno-cultural groups. 'Indirect rule' using native authorities and traditional institutions was another famous policy.

• *Fifth, the Fiction of Compassion and Benevolence:* The colonizers created the fiction of selfless humanitarian intervention to support the ideology of civilizing the natives. Left alone the natives were said to be defenceless against external forces,

the vagaries of nature, diseases and wild beasts (Mbembe 2001:33). The colonizers' intervention was therefore partly aimed to rescue the natives from self/enemy destruction, and from poverty and debased conditions. As a matter of fact, most of the colonizers' discourses of the motives and *raison d'être* of colonialism were deliberately intended to conceal its materialist purpose, namely – to secure resource enclaves for raw material extraction and other forms of economic exploitation (Musah 2002:915). It is significant to point out that all the arms of the colonial establishment – state officials, big businesses, and Christian missionaries and educationists – were united in creating and instilling the patronizing discourse that colonialism was a necessary and urgent humanitarian intervention. Victorian anthropologists of the evolutionist school reconstructed, disguised and elevated the discourse into a self-fulfilling theory of human and societal progress. Even the theory of modernization and political development vigorously promoted by American social scientists since the 1950s and repackaged by different Western agencies in contemporary history using various universalizing euphemisms (e.g. neoliberal peace, democratization, globalization, developmentalism, liberal internationalism, market reforms, etc) are essentially disguised offshoots of the classical colonial fiction of compassion and benevolence.

Sixth, the Progressive Distinction between 'Citizens' and 'Subjects': As colonialism developed to a stage where it was inevitable to gradually concede civil and political liberties to some of the vociferous and groomed natives, a distinction was progressively introduced between 'citizens' and 'subjects'. Originally, colonial subjects were the natives who were denied civil and political liberties, only meant for the 'citizens' - the colonizers and other European or white immigrants/settlers. But as Africans stepped up the anti-colonial struggle, limited citizenship status was progressively extended to some of the privileged natives. In many countries, this created a new stratum of Africans who prided themselves as 'mini-Europeans', the *evolue* as the French branded it under their famous Assimilation policy. Rodney (1972) and Mamdani (1996) are among the most noted scholars to have eloquently expounded the 'citizens and subjects' discourse.

Postcolonial Discourses

Postcolonial discourses are about particular paradigms of appreciating, engaging and critiquing the material and discursive legacies of colonialism (Young 2001; McEwan 2002). Although there are nuances in different scholars' appreciation and rendering of the material and intellectual legacies of colonialism, Cheryl McEwan (2002:127) has tried to identify four key pillars of postcolonial discourses, which I have outlined and elaborated as follows:

• The first is destabilizing or deconstructing the dominant intellectual discourses of imperial Europe believed to be rooted in European (post-) Enlightenment civilization and worldview, and which are implicitly or explicitly ethnocentric. The dominant intellectual discourses, McEwan argues, comprise

such disciplines as history, philosophy, development economics, anthropology, religion, politics, and linguistics. Critics challenge some of the assumptions at the heart of these disciplines – the values, biases, prejudices, distortions and misconceptions they promote.

• The second is challenging the constructions of power and, by implication, discursive violence inherent in many concepts, labels and classifications (mostly binary) found in colonial discourses, which in postcolonial history tend to pass as received knowledge. For definitional clarity, discursive violence refers to the barrage of intellectual and ideological discourses enunciated and propagated by the colonial establishment (European colonial officials, missionaries and scholars, especially colonial anthropologists) to justify colonial sovereignty, as well as the necessity of the colonial order and its universalizing mission. Discursive violence against the black race was ubiquitous before and during colonialism. During the era of colonialism especially, discursive violence was mostly about constructions of binary contrasts on the white and non-white races (in the case of Africa, the Black race) aimed at two mutually reinforcing objectives. The first objective was to denigrate, disparage, belittle, humiliate, ridicule, rubbish and pour scorn on everything about the 'natives' – their humanity, culture, religion, knowledge, history and civilization. The second objective of the binary discourses was to nurture, cultivate and transform the 'natives' into mini-Europeans or 'modern' persons living in a new civilization crafted in European image. Discursive violence was applied in tandem with coercive force, but in most cases preceded, followed and tried to justify the use of force in the colonial mission (McEwan 2002).

• The third pillar of postcolonial discourses identified by McEwan is a critique of the hegemonic accounting of history (time) and spatial distribution of knowledge (power) between the West and Third World employed in Western discourses. The Western sense of difference from other parts of the world and superiority (modernity) in both history and knowledge, the author observes, has often been presented by proponents as a timeless independent variable. As Zeleza has aptly captured the dominant thesis:

> … prior to the rise of postcolonial studies, there was a tendency to see the metropolitan-colonial connection in one direction; to emphasize the flow of ideas, influences, institutions, and even individuals from the metropole to the colony. Postcolonialism has stressed the importance of reverse flows, of flows in both directions. The metropole was made by the imperial project as much as the colonies; … More than commodities came from the colonies: new constructs of nation, race, gender, class, and modernity in the metropole were fashioned and refashioned in the combustible furnace of empire (Zeleza 2006:120).

Postcolonial critique highlights the dialectical interconnections between the developed world and the Third World and the multi-faceted contributions of the latter to the development of the former.

- The fourth and last pillar pinpointed by McEwan is that postcolonial scholarship attempts to recover the lost history and contemporary voices of the marginalized, the oppressed and the dominated through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production. It recognizes and tries to reconstruct the strong civilization of several parts of the developing world prior to European contact, the majority of which were distorted, disacknowledged and rubbished by colonialism.

Exploring the 'Post' in Postcolonial Discourses

On a global transhistorical scale, the 'post' in postcolonial discourses is still a subject of intellectual contestation because of the varied outcomes of colonialism in different parts of the world. As Robert Young (2001) has queried, if the 'post' in postcolonial refers to the disadvantaged circumstances of former colonies, for instance, how do we classify countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, to some extent, who today speak of themselves as having been formally colonized? Similarly, are the non-indigenous people of European extraction in the former colonies of north/south America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand colonizers or colonized given the nature of their historical relationships with the indigenous people and, in the case of the north/south America, relations with the 'imported' black populations? (See Young 2001 for further elaboration of these views). Other scholars like Tejumola (2005) have argued that postcoloniality might be inapplicable to Africa because the continent has not in reality surmounted or transcended coloniality. Tejumola similarly relates the metaphor to postmodernity and modernity, arguing that the former – a historical condition associated with the contradictions of overdeveloped modernity in the West – may not apply to Africa where modernity is still substantially a mirage. Tejumola's critique seems to presuppose a linear historical progression from coloniality to postcoloniality and from modernity to postmodernity, a perspective that many analysts do not share. Most experts tend to favour the idea of a more dialectical and concatenated transition or evolution as opposed to a linear succession of dispensations and temporalities. Mbembe (2010) asserts emphatically that 'as far as Africa is concerned, colonialism is over' and that 'Africans are now the free masters of their own destiny'. Seeing Africans as masters of their own destiny, Mbembe largely blames African leaders for the crises of postcoloniality. He depicts most of the African post-independence leaders as 'potentates' wielding 'necropower' – i.e. 'sovereign power deployed for maximum destruction of persons and for subjecting vast populations to a social existence of deathscapes or conditions of living dead' – and 'operating through capture, looting and predation' (ibid.). The African masses and the subject classes are not spared by Mbembe as he perceives them to be spellbound to the potentate through a mutually disempowering political culture that legitimates and celebrates elite

grandiosity, vulgarity, obscenity and banality of power expressed through predatory amassing of public resources at the expense of the impoverished gullible subjects. The dramatic pattern of relationship between the postcolonial potentate and his clientelistic elite on the one hand, and the downtrodden subjects on the other hand, is described by Mbembe as a paradox of 'conviviality' (ibid.). Mbembe's allusion to 'conviviality' is an essentialist meta-narrative that should not be understood as a total but partial (if not ambivalent) subjectivism. This critique is fore-grounded by the evident context-specific fragmentation, fluidity and pliability of social classes and class relations in Africa. However, the observed tendency towards circumstantial and partial conviviality is part of the nexus of 'practices, routines and mentalities' (Young 2004:23) that reinforces and reproduces what I have described elsewhere as 'the domestic social relations of postcoloniality' (Omeje 2008:91). The historically unequal and exploitative intercourse between the metropole and the hegemonic elites in the postcolonial states constitutes the 'external social relations of postcoloniality' (ibid.). Mbembe (2010) lampoons the 'pervasive discourse of victimization and resentment' in which African nativists, nationalists and Afro-Marxists tend to blindly 'blame everything on the (colonial) past', a discursive predilection the author likened to 'an endless process of sorcery or witchcraft'. Whether or not Africans are in charge of their own destiny and the extent to which they could be regarded as being in charge at different stages of the postcolonial era are some of the most controversial questions in the debate on postcoloniality. These are certainly not questions that could be resolved in a collective trans-disciplinary book project of this nature; however, the various chapters of this volume have made contributions to extend the frontiers of the debate.

Postcolonial Theories, Transhistorical Ambivalence and the Legacies of Colonialism

It is significant to note that colonialism created an ambivalent position in the 'settler or dominion colonies' where the 'colonizers' at a point in the historical development of colonialism either metamorphosed into anti-colonial nationalists as in the case of north/south America or cooperated with the imperial metropole to gain political and economic independence as in the case of Australia, New Zealand and most ambiguously South Africa (see Young 2001:20). 'Many of the countries of south America, such as Chile or Peru, simply replaced Spanish colonial rule by a form of internal colonialism, the autocratic rule of a European settler minority' (ibid.).

Postcolonial theorists generally attribute the crises of postcoloniality to the multifaceted legacies of colonialism, including the variegated, ambivalent and ambiguous experiences of decolonization and declaration of independence in the ex-colonial states. In the African context, there is hardly any facet of life that was not affected by colonialism. The direction of the impact of colonialism on

African societies is arguably both positive and negative, although most Africanists on the left of the ideological spectrum argue that colonial rule had no intended constructive impact on Africa and that whatever positive outcomes that emerged from colonialism was essentially incidental, unintended and inevitable for the furtherance of the imperial dictatorships (see Fanon 1965; Rodney 1972).

Even though colonialism set out to *inter alia* destroy African indigenous systems and modes of social organization and to conversely impose metropolitan cultures and systems (the so-called 'modern' equivalents) on Africa, it is significant that most of the African institutions and cultural patterns survived the onslaught of colonial devastation, albeit not without significant metropolitan distortions and acculturation. Many factors accounted for the survival of a large number of indigenous systems and institutions. These include: the defiance and resistance of the 'natives'; the limited scope and lopsided nature of colonial penetration due largely to inadequate resources and local hostilities; the receding underground of some proscribed cultural practices, agencies and institutions; as well as the sheer absence of functional alternatives for some of the proscribed and denigrated social practices and institutions. The widespread conflicts between indigenous systems and their modern Western counterparts, which cut across the various spheres of state and society, are at the heart of the crises of postcoloniality in Africa. The role and interests of various local groups, especially the ruling and governing postcolonial elites often contribute to an exacerbation and deepening of the crises. The most critical in this respect is probably what Mbembe (2010) describes as the 'looting, brutality and predatory practices of the local elites' associated with the 'banality of power' in 'the potentate's postcolony'.

With the end of the Cold War and the evident failure of both the right-wing modernization project and left-wing (quasi)socialist experiments in Africa, the debate on postcoloniality seems to have moved on to a searching critique of African social formations. What is peculiar about African systems and institutions that seem to make them susceptible to failure? Ostensibly, one of the most intriguing critiques has come from the various shades of post-structuralism, notably the postmodernist school. With their avowed 'incredulity towards meta-narratives' (Lyotard 1984:7), most postmodernist commentators generally recognize the historical fact of colonial underdevelopment, but tend to place a greater weight of analysis on social fragmentation in Africa (i.e. ethnicity and other forms of identity, as well as politicization of fragmentation), the neopatrimonial nature of politics and the brazen misgovernance and corruption of the African hegemonic elites (see Monga 1996; Mbembe 2001; Tar & Durrani 2007). In other words, while recognizing historical antecedents and constraints imposed by inherited colonial structures, proponents are of the view that much of the tragedy of postcolonial Africa has to do with the perfidy, disservice and unwholesome activities of various African local actors (especially, but not exclusively, the privileged classes). Proponents further argue that to better appreciate and understand African

conditions, there is need for country-specific analysis as opposed to generalization given the differential impacts of colonialism and variations in the quality and style of postcolonial governance.

An Epilogue to this Volume

Postcoloniality is in deep-rooted crisis in Africa. But the crisis is neither monolithic nor has it just begun. It is a mosaic of transhistorical crises that, using biomedical metaphors, were in part conceived and constituted in the loins of precoloniality, mutated, incubated and produced in coloniality, and ultimately prolificated and aggravated through the incontinency of the postcolonial. Far from being an idyllic timespace of purity, geniality and communality as portrayed by the chief proponents of Negritude (Leopold Senghor, Aime Cesaire and Leon Damas), precolonial Africa had all the contrasts of transitional societies – intergroup cooperation and conflict, as well as configuration and reconfiguration of political authorities, formations and demographic boundaries, etc. In the absence of mutually-legitimated Westphalian-type states and an 'international society with distinctive rules, norms, and institutions that actors embrace in conducting international relations' (Jackson and Sørensen 2007), the propensity for rivalry between political communities, and wars of aggression and domination of weak communities by their more powerful counterparts (empires, principalities, chiefdoms, etc) was substantially high in precolonial Africa. The contribution by Raphael Njoku in this volume, among other things, succinctly explores the nature of African indigenous political systems, as well as the power game and attendant conflicts within and between them, prior to Western colonization. Internal slavery partly related to the montage of feudal wars and inter-community raiding with diverse motives were some of the processes through which domination and enslavement (sometimes of war prisoners) of the vulnerable were perpetuated for extraction of tributes and as cheap sources of labour. In contrast to internal slavery, two types of externally-induced slavery with far more devastating consequences were carried out in Africa south of the Sahara during the precolonial era, which have already been discussed in the preceding exposé.

Colonialism was ultimately conceived as a replacement for the seemingly more obnoxious trans-Atlantic slave trade to continue the acceleration of Western Europe's development at the expense of Africa's resources. The crises unleashed by colonial rule on Africa were monumental and have been extensively captured by many of the contributions to this volume, notably the chapters by Munene, Abubakar, Njoku, Machakanja, Onyango and Mutisi. Colonization in a nutshell arrested and unravelled African civilization, imposed Western imperial structures on Africa, and in the process, produced deleterious distorting, disorienting and disarticulating effects on the entire political, social, legal and economic structures of societies. Coloniality generated enough crises to go round, with a potential energy to outlive and reproduce itself in perpetuity.

Postcoloniality is logically linked to two levels of crises unleashed on Africa by colonial destabilization. The first level is the physical aspect and this is concerned with the political and economic structures inherited from the colonial dispensation, which privilege the metropole (ex-colonial masters and the West) and the local postcolonial political elites. The contributions by Yates, Keenan and Abubakar (to mention a few) to this volume have eloquently underscored the symbiotic relations between Africa's postcolonial elites and their Western allies, and how the self-serving exploitative relations have continued to reinforce Africa's strategic marginality, subservience and underdevelopment. In particular, Murithi and Kabia have extended the frontiers of the debate to African regional institutions (African Union and ECOWAS) by demonstrating the complex interplay of postcoloniality in conflict regionalization, as well as how the phenomenon has historically affected the efforts toward regional security, development, unity and integration. The second level of crises is the mental and social aspect, which has to do with the binary values and stereotypes, internalized behavioural patterns, attitudes, and idiosyncrasies that tend to reinforce the social relations of postcoloniality. The second level further extends to the structurally embedded, influential and continuing discourses of Africa and Africans in a (neo-) nativist sense. In the end, it is evident from the various contributions to this volume that, contrary to Crawford Young's proclamation in 2004 announcing 'the demise of the postcolonial moment', postcoloniality remains a contemporary African reality.

Contributors' Perspectives on the Crises of Postcoloniality in Africa

In Chapter 2, Raphael Chijioke Njoku explores the nature of precolonial politics in Africa, against the backdrop of which he illuminates the institutionalized disorder and complications brought about by colonialism. Njoku reviews a spectrum of precolonial political systems in Africa – from decentralized to centralized systems, which he observes were at different levels of evolution and essentially underscored by a political culture of accommodation, consensus, collective responsibility, and a people-centred sovereignty. The author argues that Africa's indigenous political development was arrested, distorted, and reversed by the imposition of colonial rule, which came with Western cultural values, institutions and normative standards. African postcolonial leaders, the chapter concludes, have been torn between conflicting imaginations of what could be salvaged from the convoluted colonial experience, their visions of how to restructure the postcolonial state and the vested interests of the powerful neocolonial forces.

Dauda Abubakar in Chapter 3 analyses how the historical insertion of Africa into the global economy has confined the continent to a marginal role in world politics, a continuing tendency that, as the author argues, is reinforced in the contemporary dispensation by the political economy of postcoloniality. Abubakar submits that 'Africa's incorporation into the global economy, the subsequent imposition of colonial rule and the plunder of Africa's human and material

resources significantly altered the social, economic, territorial and political relations on the continent'.

Writing in Chapter 4, Douglas Yates demonstrates how the postcolonial contexts in Africa have shaped and exacerbated the conditions for different forms of armed violence, especially among countries that are richly endowed with and dependent on oil resources (notably Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Nigeria, Chad, São Tomé & Príncipe, Cameroun and Angola). The author attributes the close association between oil and armed violence to Mbembe's theses that the postcolony is 'characterized by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion', and consequently 'has a series of corporate institutions and political machinery that constitute a distinctive regime of violence'.

In exploring the conflicts between traditionalism and modernity in postcolonial Africa in Chapter 5, Kenneth Omeje and Chis M. A. Kwaja argue that 'colonial rule had an extraverted agenda conceived to serve the overall interest of the colonizers at the expense of the colonized', an agenda which necessitated 'the tendency towards a systematic obliteration of the entire African social structures and the imposition of their Western equivalents or alternatives where such existed'. However, the authors argue that because colonial rule was not successful in displacing and destroying indigenous African social institutions considered to be primitive, postcolonial Africa has been particularly characterized by structural and often violent conflicts between 'indigenous social systems (alternatively conceptualized in extant literature as 'traditionalism') and modernity in all spheres of African life'. The conflicts, as the joint chapter demonstrates with a myriad of ethnographic illustrations, have far-reaching consequences for the various African states and societies.

Focusing on west Africa in Chapter 6, John M. Kabia analyses how the crises of postcoloniality is linked to incidents of failing and failed states, armed conflict, conflict intervention and post-conflict peace building. Kabia examines 'the impact of colonialism on the sub-region and how it laid the foundations of authoritarianism, state collapse and conflicts'. Focusing chiefly on Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau, the chapter further evaluates the conflict responses and humanitarian interventions of the regional body ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), its efforts to institutionalize conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms, as well as the challenges and opportunities facing security governance in the West African region.

Macharia Munene analyses how European imperialist interests, ideologies and strategies, among other negativities, fostered problematic identities in Eastern Africa and the Horn that have been the predominant basis for postcolonial conflicts in the zone (see Chapter 7). Having arrogated to themselves the rights to enslave and reshape the Africans to suit imperial whims, the West masterminded 'the mental enslavement of Africans, orchestrated ethnic divisions, invented *dysfunctional* ethnicities and nations, and cultivated loyalty to colonial masters; colonies in the

zone became states and plunged into prolonged disputes'. Because the struggle for independence in Africa was principally aimed at getting rid of white colonial rule, postcolonial Africa has for the most part retained the inherited divisive colonial structures, territorial boundaries and identity formations that have perpetuated virulent conflicts in eastern Africa and the Horn. The penchant of African regional institutions (e.g. African Union, Intergovernmental Authority for Development, and the International Conference on Great Lakes Region) to rigidly insist on the inelasticity of inherited colonial borders when addressing transnational border and identity-related conflicts, as Munene argues, seems not to be helpful in redressing the divisive colonial legacy. The result, as the author concludes, is that (pre)colonial identity fragmentation whereby the identity of the Kenyan Maasai is, for instance, different from that of the Tanzanian Maasai, and the Tigrean in Eritrea believes he is different from the Tigrean in Ethiopia, continues to have negative implications for both national and regional integration.

Jeremy Keenan in Chapter 8 explores postcolonial imperialism in Africa's Maghreb and Sahel region, arguing that the 9/11 2001 terrorist attacks on the US and the ensuing US-led global war on terror (GWOT) 'have played a key role in facilitating the renewed imperialization of the continent'. The concealed interest of the West in the regions is access to energy (oil and gas) and other valuable mineral resources. The author systematically documents and analyses how political regimes in the region (notably the sub regional hegemon Algeria) have played the role of willing collaborators in the 'new imperialism'. In the process, they often fabricate terrorist threats and securitize domestic opponents and insurgents as Islamist terrorists – all in a bid to ensure regime survival and attract sundry aid from America and its Western allies. The waging of this fictitious war, Keenan infers, has logically led to Washington's self-fulfilled prophesy of radical Islamist groups gravitating towards Al Qaeda, as well as the much hyped Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) increasingly attracting recruits in the region.

Writing in Chapter 9, Martha Mutisi 'appraises the role of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in conflict intervention in Zimbabwe, following the *protracted* conflict between the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)'. Based on a balanced evaluation of both the achievements and challenges of the mediation effort by the sub-regional body, the author posits that SADC's experience in intervening in the Zimbabwean conflict impels a rethink of the philosophy and role of regional organizations, particularly in the context of intra-state conflicts that are rooted in colonial legacy and which have significant regional consequences. While acknowledging that SADC's conflict mediation diplomacy was instrumental in achieving a negotiated settlement that prevented the descent into a full-scale civil war in Zimbabwe, Mutisi argues that, on the downside, SADC's intervention paradigm tends to essentially serve the interests of the heads of state at the expense of the citizens of the sub-region.

Moses Onyango sets out in Chapter 10 to demonstrate how precolonial antecedents, and especially colonial heritage, have fundamentally conditioned postcolonial political discourses and struggles in Kenya. Two major consequential features of colonial politics in Kenya were: (a) the structural exclusion of the colonized; and (b) the forcible expropriation of the vast arable farmlands owned by various ethnic communities, such as the Maasia and the Kalenjin communities, to promote cash crop capitalist agriculture. Whilst the recovery of land from the colonial imperialist served as a popular mass mobilization rhetoric in the Kenyan anti-colonial liberation war, Onyango argues that Kenya's post-independence rulers used their control of state power to distribute among themselves, their family members and cronies, the vast tracts of land abandoned by or recovered from the ex-colonial masters. In effect, the postcolonial leaders who have invariably tended to articulate and represent some narrow ethno cultural, elitist interests essentially replaced the interests of the colonial masters in the land economy with their self-serving interests to the betrayal and consternation of the common people. This unjust land grabbing, which subsequent political regimes have perpetuated and politicized rather than redressing, according to the author, is at the heart of the crises of postcoloniality in contemporary Kenya.

Pamela Machakanja examines the historical transitions in the role of women in the indigenous African political systems, including the effects of colonialism on African women, and the challenges and opportunities facing women in contemporary African societies (see Chapter 11). Using various ethnographic examples, the author argues that the various African indigenous political systems respected the rights and dignity of women, stressing that the crises of gender inequality and subsequent impoverishment and denigration of women were largely an outcome of colonial destruction of the indigenous Africa social structures. To restore gender equity and women's dignity, Machakanja emphasizes the need for the reconstruction of the African state based on Africa cultural values, history, traditions, priorities and needs in a manner that will be responsive to the day-to-day realism and challenges of the people.

In Chapter 12, Tim Murithi evaluates how Pan-Africanism relates to, and attempts to address, the crises of postcoloniality. He argues that in the postcolonial dispensation, 'the crises of postcoloniality in Africa manifest as the internal issues of social and political exclusion, authoritarianism, economic mismanagement and the misappropriation of state resources'. All of these manifest tendencies are squarely an indictment on the *modus operandi* and banality of purpose of the African postcolonial elites who principally exercise political power for their selfish and inordinate aggrandizement. Murithi traces the evolution of pan-Africanism from the precolonial to colonial and postcolonial stages where the ideology has *inter alia* represented a philosophical rally for the liberation, dialogue and unity of both the Africans in the Diaspora and on the continent. With particular reference to the

present circumstantial dispensation, 'the underlying agenda of the creation of the African Union (AU) was to promote solidarity, cooperation and support among African countries and peoples in order to address the crises of postcoloniality'. The AU has also established a range of institutions designed to redress the crises. Murithi concludes that 'the ability of the African Union to address the crises of postcoloniality will largely depend on the extent to which it can transform the extensive range of principles, norms and values that it has adopted over the years into practical implementable policies'. Leadership on the part of the African leaders and their conscientious partnership with the people will be key to such a desired transformation on the continent.

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2

Interrogating Discursive Constructions of African Political History: From the Precolonial to the Postcolonial

Raphael Chijioke Njoku

Whither is fled the visionary gleam,
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Oh for that historian who, with open pen of truth
Will bring to Africa's claim the strength of written proof.

– Pixley Seme, 'The Regeneration of Africa' (1906)

This chapter focuses on the constellation of idioms, ideas, and questions that scholars and practitioners have brought to the expanding literature on African political history. The present dialogue that is encapsulated in the quest for modernity has been as old as the rise of Black western-educated intelligentsia beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Through their writings, speeches and actions, the emergent generation of Black thinkers like Edward W. Blyden (1888), James Africanus Horton (1868:17-30), W.E.B. Du Bois, and others assumed the burden of advancing ideas for Africa's progress. The debate grew exponentially from the 1940s through the 1960s as the succeeding generations of African educated elite and leaders of opinion, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Leopold Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Frantz Fanon, Cheik Anta Diop, and their peers continued the discussion.

Across time and space, the same questions originally raised among the inhabitants of the coastal enclaves of 'Victorian' Freetown, Lagos, Banjul, Monrovia, and Accra have been re-echoed by such writers as Chinua Achebe (1983; 2010b), Achille Mbembe (2001; 2010), and Toyin Falola (2001:19-20). How can Africa develop? Can Africa be self-sustaining? Can capitalism, liberal democracy, socialism and other socio-political 'isms' be redefined so that they can grow on African soil? The responses to these questions have crisscrossed a

wide range of issues, including the crisis of tradition (confusions over what is indigenous or alien culture), inherited political cultures such as western-style democracy and socialism, and the structures of power, ethnicity, corruption of leadership and failure. Other themes mirror widespread anxiety over democratic instability, dictatorships, and human rights abuse. As the discussion expands, the brand of ethnicity and ethno-nationalist consciousness engendered by colonial contacts has also been analyzed. There is further the contentious idea that African unity, in the form of mega statehood, holds the key to Africa's future. The quest for a 'United States of Africa' was originally pursued by the pioneers of modern African political thought, as represented by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana from the late 1950s through the 1960s (NAK FO 371/108193 1954; NAK DO 195/ 212 1963-1965). The movement was somehow revived and supported by Muammar Gaddafi (1942-2011) of Libya. In a 2007 African Union Summit in Accra, Ghana, Gadaffi called for 'an immediate formation of United States of Africa' (Accra Mail 2010).

The point is not necessarily that such visions as those held by Gaddafi were right or wrong. Rather, the problem is that by trying to mimic the European Union, the designs for Africa betray the lack of originality, while underestimating the resilient nature of the indigenous culture of decentralization and liberalization. At best, the quest for a single union brings to the debate nothing but an emotional endorsement of an alien system for African issues. As Achille Mbembe counsels in an insightful commentary on the 'postcolony', such views betray 'a tremendous labour of bad faith that social science discourse does not know how to deal with' (see Christian Hoeller 2001; 2010). W.E.B. Du Bois, in 1965, warned Africans, as a people, not to believe 'without an argument or reflection that the cultural status of the people of Europe and North America represented … the best civilization which the world has ever known' (Du Bois 1965:1-2). In other words, those engaged in the production of knowledge must consider synergies of Western/colonial practices that gave birth to the Leviathan state in Africa. Only when this caution is applied can thinkers offer practical steps for a more stable political order.

The approach to this chapter is to first take a quick look at pre-colonial political developments and leadership as a platform for elucidating and analysing the hybridized nature of contemporary African political systems. This will illuminate an understanding on the disorders and complications brought about by colonialism - and more importantly - allow us to reflect carefully on whether Africa has truly arrived at the end of the 'colony' or not. In the popular idiom of Chinua Achebe's picturesque writing, a grasp of the changes brought about by colonialism on the political culture of Black Africa will throw some light on when and how the rain of crisis began to beat the continent in the current order of things (*The Sun Newspaper* 2010; *The Standard Newspaper* 2010).

Epistemology and Genetic Code of Political Culture

African societies are marked by different patterns of cultural dynamics evolving over several centuries. One of the institutions that has continued to attract profound interest is the precolonial pattern of politics, which at present is encountered in diverse forms within village communal politics. In his pioneering study of the indigenous political systems in 1868, Horton identified three principal forms of governmental systems in west Africa, which also applies to other parts of precolonial Africa (Horton 1868).

In the first category were systems that vested power in a single individual called *basileus* or king. Such sovereigns as found among the Ashante (Asante), Bini (Benin), Oyo, and Dahomey kingdoms, for instance, enjoyed implicit power over life and property and were as such held in awe by their subjects. The kings were surrounded by a number of headmen, who pledged their loyalty to his power (Horton 1868:19). Horton's account of the exercise of power appears a bit embellished because the indigenous belief system provided astute checks and balances that made absolutism, as practiced in eighteenth century France, for instance, nearly impossible in Africa (NAE ONPROF/8/1/4702 1931; NAE CSE/1/85/4596A 1931; NAE AWDIST/2/2/177 1926; Feierman 1974).

While some governments were centralized, several others remained decentralized, meaning that they were not governed by hierarchical and powerful rulers. Notable among these were the Igbo (*anglicised* Ibo), Ibibio, Birom, and Angas of modern Nigeria, the Nuer, western Dinka, and Mandari (or Mundu) of Sudan, the Nguni of southern Africa, the Tonga of Zambia, the Lugbara of Congo, the Langi of Uganda, the Tallensi of modern Ghana, the Gikuyu (or Kikuyu) of Kenya, the Dogon of modern Mali, the Dan and Kru of the Guinea coast, the Berber of north Africa, the Fulani pastoralists of west Africa and the Mbuti, Efe, Aka or Baka pygmies of central Africa. Each of these groups organized their politics in village units (NAK CO 583/213/19 1936-37; NAK CO 927/158/3 1950). A number of the villages sharing a common history of descent made up a village group or town. In some areas, the towns and villages were typically presided over by a council of elders that in some places worked with a tutelary chief. Among the highly decentralized Mbuti, Efe and Aka (Baka) societies of central Africa, there were no such chiefs or even Headmen.

From the above, one may begin to underline the cultural fabrics of indigenous politics as an organic institution. First is the understanding that Africans were, and still are, politically very conscious or alert. This was also the apt observation made in 1965 by Sir Arthur Lewis (1915-1991), the eminent St. Lucien economist and 1979 Nobel Laureate who resided in Ghana from 1957-1963 as a UN economic adviser to the President of Ghana. Lewis noted that because of the strong interest in how the affairs of the state are conducted, popular participation should be the norm because no one powerful group can successfully dictate terms of political

co-operation for others. He advised the newly independent states to embrace non-majoritarian politics because each of Africa's 'numerous and politically conscious (ethnic) groups' are determined to control their separate destinies. He particularly recommended federalism, multiparty systems, grand coalition cabinets, and autonomy as the pathways to harmony (Lewis 1965:51). While this political wisdom had been tragically ignored by the governing elites, only a handful of scholars engaged in the analysis of postcolonial politics have shown commitment to the consociational/federalist approach to decentralization alluded to by Lewis.

The few exceptions that have attempted to bring this to prominence include works by Arend Lijphart (1998:144-150), Donald Horowitz (1991) and Andrew Reynolds (2002:40-47) – all non-Africans – that focus mostly on South Africa. The present writer has previously offered strategies for consociational building in Nigeria, and Rwanda (Njoku 1999:1-35; 2005:82-101). Recognizing the critical relevance of the consociational model of decentralization, Timothy Sisk, an expert on power sharing in multi-ethnic societies, has called for a 'Complex power-sharing arrangements' – an amalgam of the consociational and integrative approaches to power sharing in the politics of multi-ethnic societies. The system recognizes that at different levels of government, different strategies may be required in engendering peace and stability. It also seeks to underline the importance of all actors (both elite and non-elite) as being potentially instrumental to success (Sisk 1996:vii). This point problematizes the practice of liberal/majoritarian democracy in Africa as anchored in the results of elections. Elizabeth Clark (2003), an expert on democratic transitions, claims that it is time to rethink international norms and standards for democracy in non-western societies, and 'how transitional elections are evaluated'.

By way of emphasis, the second point to note, which is directly linked to the first, is that African politics is intricately wired with a micro-level culture of decentralizations as encountered with kinship, village, and town units. The system governed an estimated two-third of precolonial societies. The culture points to the amount of value with which the African cherished his natural freedom, human rights, and participation in the decision-making process of his land. It would amount to an error of romanticism to suggest in any manner that the indigenous politics was devoid of the usual rancour, backbiting, innuendos, and violent struggles that politicians in all human societies use to gain political advantages over rivals. These aspects of exercise of power were dynamic and often expressed more to preserve than to destroy social harmony. Among the Igbo, for instance, the procedure for counselling, gaining political advantage or shaping of public opinion was varied. Sometimes it followed the usual and secretive acts of political lobbying; in other times the elders employed more secretive but illegal forms of intimation, including threats, poisoning, and/or psychological warfare (NAK CO 927/74/5 1940-1947). Yet the most effective form of swerving public opinion depended upon the ability of the elders to deploy the wisdom of sages and

proverbs, a sober and thoughtful deportment of ideas – the kind harnessed by President Barack Obama to claim a historical victory in the 2008 US presidential elections.

Thirdly, African precolonial politics was founded on the principle of accommodation. As Victor Uchendu, the eminent anthropologist, illustrates with the example of his Igbo people, politics was approached as the mutual accommodation of differences; the concept of sovereign power was understood as everybody's business; the need to rotate power and authority among politically competing units was the philosophy of engagement; and the importance of political discourse among individuals was emphasized (Uchendu 1995). While management of diversity has remained a critical issue facing the postcolonial state, the precolonial politics showed how decentralization could moderate diversities with 'minimum consensus' rather than recourse to such strategies as suppression and genocide.

Fourthly, the principle of consensus implicates the concept of sovereign power as a mutual responsibility – a people-centred sovereignty. In this sense, a collective responsibility required that power should be and must be shared. African indigenous politics was concerned about domination, as a solution, rendering public debate among equals in the public square as an arena where open covenants are openly arrived at, and developing speech to pre-eminence over the instruments of power (Uchendu 1995). In contrast, the postcolonial state, like the colonial state, strives on practices of centralization and censorship on local movements for self-determination. This negates not only the established decentralized political culture of precolonial African states, but also promotes majoritarian tyranny. By viewing the development of the postcolonial state only through western lenses – that is the idea that modern statehood must conform to western models –, it appears as if there was no political life in the precolonial era. The retention of the colonial system tends to ignore the fate of those precolonial states like Zulu and the kingdoms of Oyo and Benin that were constituted by imperial force. As evident in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the troubles that plagued these kingdoms, imperial powers claimed control over sovereign minorities at their eternal peril. These empires could neither sustain the minorities' loyalties nor successfully assimilate them into the majority culture. That explains why precolonial boundaries of the state in Africa shifted too often. Such political alignments were a constant part of the dynamism integral to idioms of freedom, collective territorial sovereignty and individual and group rights (Njoku 2010:350-395).

From 1900 onwards when Africa encountered colonial authoritarianism and criminal use of state power, the postcolonial order was programmed for crisis and conflict. These problems that now mitigate efficient management of the postcolonial state began in the colonial period with Belgium's grand theft in the Congo, and Britain's robbery of master artworks from the kingdoms of Benin and Ife, among other examples (NAK WO 107/10 1897; Hochschild 1998).

Since leadership failures and corruption victimizes individuals and groups alike, colonialism further gave birth to postcolonial forms of ethnic nationalism. Politicians with vested interests began to mobilize group identities on the eve of independence. Writing in 1970 on the emergence of 'tribalism', Nkrumah (1970:59) stressed a distinction between 'tribes' (ethnic groups) and 'tribalism' (ethnicity). 'There were tribes in Africa before imperialist penetration, but no tribalism in the modern sense'. Tribalism arose from colonialism, which exploited the anxieties of competing groups to facilitate exploitation and combat the growth of national liberation movements. Differences between groups, therefore, were often deliberately encouraged by the colonial state when it served to strengthen the hands of administrators. This view has been re-echoed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009:16) when he argued that 'the notion of tribe was a colonial creation'.

Such arguments that blame colonialism for ethnic politics in Africa have remained as ever controversial especially in light of the contemporary debates among African leaders who have refused to recognize the crucial importance of addressing the issue in a positive rather than dismissive and uncompromising manner. Most instructive is the unwavering belief held by Samora Machel (former Mozambican freedom fighter) that 'For the nation to live, the tribe must die' (Mamdani 1996:135). This form of strong-headed dictum informed the treatment of ethnicity by both African leaders and intellectuals as an evil spirit that 'refuses to obey laws of social and political change' (Vail 1989:1-3).

The overriding analysis on ethnicity corroborates the primordialist/essentialist perspective on nationalism and separatist movements. In the popular 'tribal' idiom the primordialists claim that ethnic groups are givens; a sort of an 'archaic reality underlying modernity, resurfacing when modernization fails or cracks' (Pierterse 1996:27). Here is a good case of an attempt to obfuscate a social reality; the tragic continuation of the colonial state system of centralization rather than decentralization; the stubborn resolution to crush rather than respect the rights of minority groups like the Berber in Morocco, the Ogoni in Nigeria, and the Baka in the entire Central African region.

So far an attempt has been made to understand the livewire or what might be referred to here as the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) of African politics and the context in which 'bad water entered into the coconut' (Igbo Proverb). Originally the indigenous society strived on political consciousness, popular participation in the decision-making process, decentralization, consensus and accommodation. While the precolonial order shared some characteristics of hot politics in other societies, it was however operated in a manner that primarily placed a premium on respect, accountability and social justice. Under colonial rule, things began to go awry following the introduction of the new dynamics of a political culture of intimidation, and criminal abuse of state power.

The challenge now is to highlight and interpret some of the diverse ideas scholars and commentators have brought to our conception of postcolonial

African political history. This exercise requires three main tasks: hermeneutic (a method or principle of interpretation), analytical (interpretative diagnostic), and critical inventory (factual deduction) (Hensbroek 1999:2-4). Observing these tasks will enable discourses in their proper families in order to grasp their inherent lessons. The implication for scholars is to note that although thinkers may be separated by decades or centuries, yet they share common ideological kinships. Three models of discourses can be identified: (1) the Contemporary Africa discourse, (2) the Liberated Africa discourse, and (3) Authentic/Regenerative Africa discourse (Hensbroek 1999:2-6). While each discourse may stride across two or more families of discourses, grouping them is necessary to enforce some measure of order.

Modern Africa Discourse

The discourse on 'modernity', which has become synonymous with remaking non-Western societies after western systems, as it applies to African people, has roots in the mid-nineteenth century Victorian optimism of intellectual figures like Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1882), who was one of the African émigrés and a pioneer in west African nationalism of Igbo parentage. Residing in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Horton was the first medical doctor of African descent employed in the services of the British army. Contrary to the claims of colonial anthropologists and the mainstream literature, Horton pioneered a study of West African indigenous political systems in the 1860s. With a degree in medicine from the University of Edinburgh in 1859, Horton shaped his ideas on the possibility of African progress – therefore integral to his thoughts for Africa was modernity. His detailed study, *West African Countries and Peoples*, outlined possible political arrangements for new states in West Africa as a blueprint for the Select Committee of British House of Commons appointed in 1865 to draw a report on the future of British West African settlements (Horton 1868).

While Horton, a Universalist thinker, disputed the idea of a separate identity for the African in the comity of human civilization, more to his credit is the submission that 'On historical, cultural and economic grounds, Africans are capable of self-government and national independence' (Horton 1868:24). In another essay, 'Refutation of the Alleged Inferiority of the Negro Race', he asserted that the 'Negro backwardness was not an intrinsic (problem) but the result of adverse circumstances and lack of opportunity (Horton 1868:17-18)' The 'opportunity' sought by Horton was for expansion of western-style education for the Negro. Yet historians counsel that a civilization is not tied to one specific way of life. Nor is it completely comprehensive through one specific method of analysis. This was predominant in the mind of Du Bois in 1919 when he wondered aloud whether 'a civilization is naturally backward because it is different?' (Du Bois 1971).

Speaking at the 2001 Ahiajoku lecture festivals, E. N. Emenanjo, a distinguished Igbo language icon and apparently a student of the modernization theory, described illiteracy as a deadly sin and a capital crime. Emenanjo then branded illiterate people 'liabilities with neither dreams, nor theoretical thinking, nor strategic planning' (Emenanjo 2001). He further maintained that illiterate people have neither focus nor durable ideals and they cannot use language to articulate ideas. 'They cannot engage in geometric reasoning and can neither be proactive nor synergize. They lack the effectiveness, and the desirable virtues needed to steer (Africa) into modernity and economic prosperity' (Emenanjo 2001).

Emenanjo overstated his point since western education is not, and cannot be, the only yardstick for measuring human wisdom and intelligence. Without Western education, precolonial Africans 'made and unmade gods and achieved accommodation with those they could not control' (Emenanjo 2001; NAK CO 583/213/19 1936-1937). This understanding explains the 'otherness' of African customs, its strength and contributions to the pool of human civilization. Emenanjo's error of words, however, should not be allowed to diminish the good intentions of that lecture, which included the point that this generation must recognize education as a tool for development (Emenanjo 2001). Civilization transcends large empires and monarchies, military campaigns and conquests, big feats and the subjugation of others. R. O. Ohuche, an eminent educationist hit the point with his contention that:

> Civilization for us is a mental construct populated by ideals, fired by ideas which are …. respect for traditional authority in age and in other institutions including constituted authority; the inscrutability and fear of God, reverence for life and the awe and usefulness of death; wisdom to appreciate that man, nations and civilizations are not great by the virtue of their wealth but by the wealth of their virtues; wisdom to distinguish between appearance and reality, and the ephemeral from the wastrel; from the permanent (Ohuche 1991).

In fact, the philosophy of modernity behind this model of discourse should be analyzed against the background of hope for advancement, prosperity, and independence. As Hensbroek (1999:34) aptly noted, 'it exemplifies in all its aspects the fiery and self-conscious discourse of a people who perceive themselves at the threshold of a new and better world'. African thinkers no doubt see society at the threshold of a new and better advancement. It is in light of this that scholars like Achebe (1983, 2010a); Ngugi (1993) and Wole Soyinka (1997) have called for the liberation of African, if possible by revolutionary means, from bad leadership, dictatorships and human rights abuse.

Liberated Africa Discourse

In the family of liberated Africa discourse models are those aimed at weaning ideas and thought processes from alien clouds. The liberated discourse is most

pervasive in the intellectual dialogue, given the resentment brought about by colonial domination and its erosion and reordering of every aspect of African life. Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah perhaps represent both symbols and spokesmen of the African liberated discourse, although each of them approached the question of African liberation from slightly different positions. While Fanon (1963:37-38, 41, 45, 51-52) saw the colonial world as a Manichean space of separation, compartments and alienation, and thus recommended a psychological method of cure through violence against the system, Nkrumah (NAK DO 195/212 1965) observed that underdevelopment and alienation are only symptoms of Africa's real problem, which is subjugation. Ngugi (1993:60-77) argues passionately that for the expected African renaissance to come, the writer in a neo-colonial state must align himself with the people through conformity to the language spoken by the people. If one relates the idioms of alienation, violence and subjugation to the burden of deprivations then we clearly begin to understand the need to also liberate the masses from unending practices of socioeconomic violence dating back to the 1900s.

With a strong passion for African progress, Achebe submits that the question of leadership is 'pre-eminent, in my view, among Nigeria's numerous problems' (*The Sun Newspaper* 2010). He thus charges that the youth should rise and bring about a new order through revolution. In a similar tone, Soyinka has condemned the succeeding dictatorial and undemocratic regimes in Africa in general and Nigeria particularly (Soyinka 2007). While neither Achebe nor Soyinka could be faulted from the standpoint of their Universalist discourse, they did not fully acknowledge the nuances of disconnection between precolonial political culture and the postcolonial hiatus brought about by colonialism.

This is where thinkers like Pixley Seme (1881-1951), and Casely J.E. Hayford (1866-1930), the famed Gold Coast lawyer, distinguished their thoughts as both students of the African Liberated Discourse as well as the Authentic African Discourse. For instance, Seme had argued in 1906 that it was completely wrong to compare Africa with Europe or any other place, asking whether Africa must be like Europe (Document 20 1906). Similarly, Hayford had decried this fetish act of 'always looking at one's self through the eyes of others; of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity' (Hayford 1911:180). Such ideas are laudable and are set apart from the others because thinkers like Seme and Hayford are not ashamed to acknowledge their African identity, and thus tie the quest for progress with the historical realities of their local society. When people are unenthusiastic to acknowledge who they are, it implies among other things that they are ashamed of their past, their history, and their heritage. This tendency leads to a crisis of identity which ultimately leads to a crisis of institution. The point here is the angle on tradition, adaptation and continuity which by implication honours the ancestry of ideas. This reminds us of Emmanuel Obiechina's (1994) lecture on 'Nchetaka: The Story, Memory and

Continuity in Igbo Culture'. Given the focus on memory and continuity, this lecture could have fitted into the Authentic/ Regenerative Africa Discourse. The relevance here is found in Obiechina's unshaken belief in the 'ancestry of ideas' and disbelief that there is a tree of universal civilization upon which one may graft an individual or group future at any stage or time. Such a narrow and idealistic notion of universalism, according to Obiechina, is mistaken.

There is no tree of universal civilization. What there is a universal garden where every people bring their own seed to plant and tend. The soil is indifferent. Every seed planted there will germinate and grow. How it fares will depend on how much skill, industry and conscious labour the group bring with them to tend and husband their tree. Some people will forget altogether that they have a tree of their own and will labour assiduously and sleepless tending other people's trees (Obiechina 1994).

Indeed, African scholars engaged in the political discourse have tended to tend political models nurtured in alien lands. Thus, a discourse of this nature framed by Obiechina to assert a 'We' and 'They' context is reminiscent of Fanon's perception of the colonial situation as a world of opposites. It is in this understanding that Fanon had offered his liberation discourse from the degradations of the alien culture and the psychological impact on the colonized people, offering violence as a medicine for overcoming the problem of African disunity and the attendant psychological ravages of alien oppression.

Authentic/Regenerative Africa Discourse

This model is a family of ideas designed to remind Africans who they are. Authentic discourse is intrinsically a discourse on identity, and as the example of Steve Biko, the leader of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in Apartheid South Africa, teaches, this genre of thoughts is intended to bring about a cultural renewal, to breathe new life into empty shells whose humanity have been degraded through racism, oppression and violence (Biko 1978:87-98). This was the true spirit behind the thoughts of Edward W. Blyden (1832-1912), the pioneer of authentic/regenerative African discourse, who laboured assiduously to create an African-centred or African renaissance discourse, a cultural self-consciousness that was aimed to counter the racialist abolitionist-humanitarian 'civilizers' discourse of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While calling for efforts to improve conditions in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Africa in the face of the new impetus from Europe, Blyden was also an out-and-out cultural nationalist who extolled the indigenous culture for its authenticity, and thus he advocated for a program of progress that would be nurtured on African culture (Blyden 1878; 1908).

The wisdom inherent in Blyden's discourse stands out as an antithesis to the polemics of George Ayittey (1998), a Washington DC publicist who often blames the African political elite solely for the ills that have befallen the continent. While a portion of the blame for Africa's failures may as well be heaped on the feet of

postcolonial leaders, it is also true that visions held by postcolonial leaders like Nkrumah and Nyerere, to mention but two, have been imperilled by neocolonial and hegemonic practices of Britain, France, the United States of America, Belgium, Italy and Portugal (NAK DO 195/6 1961-1962; NAK DO 195/7 1961-1962; NAK DO 195/222 1965). In the postcolony, each of these western powers remains an ethnic group in their areas of influence. And woe betides any African leader who fails to acknowledge their vested interests in the economic, social and political lives of the emergent nations. Ayittey's error of judgment falls within what Stefan Andreasson (2005:971-986) has aptly described as the 'reductive repetition motif' in theories of African underdevelopment.

Indeed, African thinkers must strive to establish their knowledge on a sound historical foundation while avoiding the mainstream discourses produced with the neo-colonialist agenda of obfuscation and confusion. In this context, ethnicity, especially as it relates to Africa, remains one of the most abused concepts in politics in the postcolony. The common view on ethnicity has generally tended to follow a rather conformist notion that it is a bad omen, and an impediment to development and to political stability. Yet ethnic forms of mobilization and family-centric values are social capital that could be harnessed for socio-political advancement in Africa.

The road forward is to manage ethnicity with a high level of decentralization in the form of a village-based federal system. This paradigm will involve a combination of power-sharing principles with a high degree of decentralization and constitutional autonomy built on structures of African village networks. In the system, each village government will have the right to democratically elect its leaders and enjoy certain constitutionally guaranteed prerogatives as obtained in some federal systems. In other words, the existing structures of the state constituted in forms of sub-states or regional governments will be abrogated and replaced with village governments. Consequently, city capitals will be governed by municipal authorities of elected mayors. The form of grassroots decentralization advocated here will further the development of democracy by improving the quality of political participation which was an important element of social organization in precolonial Africa. This will create multiple centres of power that will involve a greater number of people in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Considering the resilience of kinship loyalties, this model holds one of the best prospects for a more peaceful political future in sub-Saharan Africa. While the envisaged peace will not be automatic, it is one of the most viable models that could provide the arena in which competing groups – ethnic, religious, professional, political parties, and so on – could seek accommodation in the decision-making process of their countries. The failure to explore the potential benefits of ethnicity and familism, and integrate these into policies and developmental programs substantially explains part of the reasons why the postcolonial state has been trapped in an unending spiral of crisis.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to examine the discursive constructions of African political history in order to highlight their inherent idioms for the continent's future. The major argument is that unless practitioners and thinkers fully grasp the tangled web of historical factors underlying the current order of things, thinkers may neither be able to appreciate nor provide a viable solution to Africa's problems no matter how sophisticated the logic they bring to the debate. For the purpose of analysis, it has identified the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) of African politics – namely, that Africans are very alert politically and watchful of who pilots their political affairs and how well s/he performs; they cherish their inherited freedom, democratic culture, and accommodative and participatory politics. In light of this, the argument has been made that colonial rule badly damaged this track record of cultural evolution by enthroning criminal and corrupt use of power. This observation corroborates Crawford Young's comprehensive study which showed that the current crisis in African development could be traced directly to the legacies of colonial rule (Young 1997).

Furthermore, the chapter has analyzed the constellation of idioms and ideas scholars have brought to the debate into three families of discourses: Modern, Liberated and Authentic/Regenerative. Obviously each discourse could fit into more than one model given the range of issues covered. Altogether, the African/ Black intellectuals and educated elite share a common concern and purpose for the progress of Africa and people of African descent. However, this aspiration may be difficult to attain unless it is harnessed within the historical realities of Africa's social milieu.

To usher in a new spirit in African politics, caution must be exercised in the ways leaders of opinion read and interpret analysis inspired by alien culture. An example of such analysis that has proved disastrous in both motivation and inspiration is Chika Onyeani's (2000:17-26) *Capitalist Nigger*. An explosive and daring indictment of the entire Black race, the author challenges Africans and people of African descent to wake up from their slumber. Indeed, as Fanon (1963:47-48) reminds us in his *The Wretched of the Earth*, 'self-criticism has been much talked about of late but few people realize that it is an African institution'. While the author declares with apparent anger that he is tired of Africans' complaints, unfortunately, what Onyeani does not seem to appreciate is that the crisis of the African world is largely a product of colonial mutilations, which has left the masses to mock at the values the colonial order bequeathed, 'insult them, and vomit them up' (Fanon 1963:43). No society has achieved its aspirations of development without a sound cultural base. This point has been strongly stressed by Osabu-Kle (2000) with the contention that only a culture-sensitive political model will bring peace and harmony to African politics.

Secondly, African politics needs a better sense of leadership, civility, and followership. This will come with a reinvigorated sense of consciousness/identity and a clear sense of direction and purpose. The identity question has become a priority in the modern world of globalism. 'Think globally while acting locally', a popular slogan goes.

Thirdly, one of the crucial tasks for the contemporary generation would be to develop new institutional frameworks of group action built on knowledge, and not on the meaningless parade of irrelevant and extinct cultural forms. Modernity and development both call for the need to question cultural practices in order to find their relevance within the context of change (Njoku 2008:67-86). It is the mission of this generation of Africans to rebuild the 'centre' of African life, according to the logic of the new times.

Overall, one may conclude, after Fanon, that each generation has the burden of discovering its mission and then either fulfilling it or betraying it. This overview of Africa's political history should be a reminder that Africans are the inheritors of a unique political culture that flourished with great success before colonial rule. That culture must be rediscovered, reinvented and rebuilt into the practice of contemporary politics. One idea is that a village-based consociational federalism holds a lot of promise for the future.

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3

Africa in World Politics and the Political Economy of Postcoloniality

Dauda Abubakar

Introduction

Scholarly analyses of the history of Africa and its contributions in global affairs have, over the centuries, generated debate. Two dominant paradigms in this continuing discourse on the African imagination can be delineated as follows. The works of Eurocentrists such as Hegel (1830) contend that Africa is fundamentally a place that '…has remained cut off from all contacts with the rest of the world; it is the land of gold, forever pressing in upon itself, and the land of childhood, removed from the light of self-conscious history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night.' The metaphors of 'childhood' and pervasive 'darkness' enunciated by Hegel in the early 19th century would subsequently metamorphose into the imperial project of the 'Whiteman's burden' and 'civilizing mission' into the 'heart of darkness.' It is within this fragment of Western philosophical teleology of progress that we can grasp the horrendous violence that was unleashed against non-western societies, like Africa, in the form of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and related forms of denial of humanity and subjection. That Hegel himself recognized that Africa 'is the land of gold' is pertinent, as the entanglement of the continent into the circuits of global coloniality has revolved around the pillage of its human and material resources.

The second related dominant representation of the African subject asserts that the continent and its postcolonial states constitute domains of marginality, institutional failure, criminality, rising anarchy, piracy, and brutalization of the human body that threaten not only the continent and its people, but also 'civil order' and the international community (Reno 2000; Rotberg 2003; Chabal & Daloz 1999). Mbembe (2001a:3) argues that, within this genre of Africanist theorization, Africa is portrayed as '…a headless figure threatened with madness and quite innocent

of any notion of center, hierarchy, or stability....a vast dark cave where every benchmark and distinction come together in total confusion...a bottomless abyss where everything is noise, yawning gap, and primordial chaos.' This state-centric perspective as enunciated by General Smuts claims: 'The political system of the native was ruthlessly destroyed in order to incorporate them as equals into the white system. The African was as good as a potential European; his social and political culture was bad, barbarous, and only deserved to be stamped out root and branch… (so that) …the native can be accepted as an equal citizen with full political rights along with the whites' (Mamdani 2002:5). While we do not contest, from an empirical perspective, some of the descriptions in this canonical paradigm of 'state failure', 'primordial chaos', fragmentation of authority and the 'instrumentalization of disorder' (Chabal & Daloz 1999) unleashed by the African potentate elite on their subjects, the problem with this mode of analysis is that it is not only reductionist, but, even more fundamentally, it legitimizes external interventionism by major powers in Africa's so-called ungovernable spaces, thereby reinforcing the domination of the continent as well as persistent predation, and pillage of its people and resources. With approximately five decades of political independence, Africa remains behind in almost all the indices of human development and security ranging from maternal and infant mortality, access to education and healthcare, as well as the challenges of indebtedness to Western financial institutions, and global inequity. The unequal structure of power distribution and hierarchy of state actors in global politics increasingly marginalizes Africa in the international system. As I argue in this chapter, at the root of the simultaneous processes of Africa's domination, incorporation and extraversion in world economy are the twin dilemmas of colonial legacies, structures of global inequity as well as entrenchment of predatory elites that appropriate state power for personal gains, thereby unleashing violence in the postcolony.

Although Africa's incorporation into the global economy and international society predates the era of formal colonization in the late 19th century, it is important to note that the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 remains the fulcrum of Africa's partition and subordination under European colonial rule. It was not until the 1960s that African states, through concerted nationalist struggles, regained their independence from colonialism. Conscious of the challenges of nation-building and artificiality of inherited colonial boundaries, the ideological rivalries of the Cold War, as well as their weak and dependent economies, African states adapted the 1963 Organization of African Unity (now African Union) Charter which emphasizes the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of each state. Furthermore, as Clapham (1996, 1999) observed, the OAU Charter not only recognized the sovereign equality of member states and the respect for the territorial integrity of each other, but also the '…inalienable right to independent existence; the peaceful settlement of disputes; and an unambiguous condemnation of subversive activities carried out by one state against another' (Clapham 1999).

Apart from defining their identity as autonomous actors in international society through the OAU, African states were also active members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Their involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement can partly be explained by their desire to assert sovereign autonomy from the divisive ideological super power rivalry of post-World War II. However, the internal institutional weaknesses of African post-colonial states, their dependence for economic survival on the hegemonic colonial powers, increasing indebtedness, coupled with the entrenchment of authoritarian regimes and the privatization of state power by the ruling elites all contributed significantly to the gradual erosion of the legitimacy of African states. The Cold War rivalry and major interventions in African crisis areas such as the DR Congo (formerly Zaire) post-independence conflicts, the Angolan civil war, the decolonization struggles in southern Africa as well as the Ethiopia-Somali Ogaden conflicts exacerbated the process of post-colonial state disintegration in these regions. For scholars such as R.H. Jackson (1990) and Christopher Clapham (1996), the failure of African states to effectively exert control over their territorial boundaries, along with their dependence on external powers for economic survival, indicates that their sovereignty is only at the juridical realm rather than being an empirical reality. African states, they argue, lack empirical sovereignty on the grounds that their very existence in international society derives its legitimacy from recognition by the international community.

While Jackson and Clapham's perspective on African state juridical sovereignty provides us with a glimpse into the dilemmas of postcolonial statehood, their conceptualization neglects the dominant role of inequities in the structural distribution of power and hierarchy in world politics. Thus, in order to effectively comprehend the challenges of African post-colonial states in world affairs, this chapter contends that it is imperative to examine not only the legacies and practices of European colonial rule in Africa, but also the persisting predatory strategies of African rulers (more often than not supported by Western patrons and institutions), the pillage of African resources by Western multinational corporations, and the support for authoritarian regimes, exemplified by the late Mobutu Sese Seko of DR Congo (formerly Zaire). Belgian colonial legacies of repression followed by the intervention of major powers in post-colonial DR Congo along with the plunder of its resources by national, regional and diverse global actors provides us with a glimpse for comprehending how the structures of power and hierarchy in world politics systematically incorporates Africa into the world economy and undermines the sovereignty of African states. I draw on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as an analytical tool to unpack the complex structured processes of domination and exploitation that is entrenched through power hierarchies at national and global levels.

This chapter contends that an interrogation of the subordination of Africa in world politics must necessarily bring on board not only the insertion of the continent into the global economy through the complex processes of the trans-

Saharan trade routes, the establishment of coastal trading posts by European countries, the emergence of the market-driven trans-Atlantic slave trade and the consequent intensification of violence and 'social death' that these unleashed, but even more importantly, the late 19th century parcelling and demarcation of boundaries, territories and redefinition of sovereignties along with the subjection of the people under colonial rule. The rise of the potentate in the postcolonial epoch has neither fundamentally altered the structures and hierarchies of ideological and political domination, nor Africa's insertion and subjection in the global economy (Bourdieu 1977, 1985). What is currently repackaged as democratic transition following the imposition of the neo-liberal agenda of the Structural adjustment program and its conditionalities, further entrenches the subordination of Africa and its people in an ever increasingly complex system of global domination. The processes of globalization in the world economy driven by the Bretton Woods International Financial Institutions (IFIs), technological transformations driven by private capital in hegemonic states, along with the rampant thirst for, and extraction of, Africa's mineral resources all deepen the unequal insertion of the continent in the world economy. The increasing rise of violent insurgencies and transnational crime in the form of arms trafficking, money laundering, piracy, child soldiering, narcotics and human trafficking in some of these enclave economies are not inherent pathologies of postcoloniality, but rather the emerging transformative phases of Africa's dual insertion and extraversion in the new global division of labour and subjection (Bayart 1993, 2000). In the words of Bayart, 'Africa's contemporary political struggles and wars are not the consequences of a radical rupture …but are symptomatic of a historical line of continuity, namely, a practice of extraversion. They are not an expression of the marginalization of Africa within the world economy but of older dynamics …generated by the manner of its insertion into this world economy'.

The chapter is divided into three related sections. The introduction in the first section sketches a theoretical framework by drawing from Bourdieu's theory of habitus (Crossley 2001) that will help unravel the mechanisms of ideological, economic, political and cultural domination inscribed through Europe's colonial 'entanglement' (Mbembe 2001a) with the African native, and sustained for decades, under the aegis of the postcolonial potentate. The goal here is to situate, within a conceptual and historical context, the parameters for a clearer interrogation of the crisis of postcoloniality in Africa. The second section provides specific examples on the complex challenges of postcoloniality in Africa by examining diverse forms of contested sovereignties as played out in Nigeria and the Great Lakes region (particularly DR Congo), patterns of predatory resource extraction, the role of transnational actors, insurgency violence and the implications for state coherence. The third section concludes with some remarks on the imperatives of reconstituting institutional technologies of power in the African postcolonial state to serve the social needs and livelihoods of the citizenry, rather than being a

mechanism of corporeal *commandement*, 'perpetual brutalization' (Mbembe 1992; 2003) and warfare against the innocent multitude by the potentate.

Habitus and Subjection in the Postcolony: A Theoretical Framework

An analysis of the crises of postcoloniality in Africa must necessarily begin with conceptual clarification not only of the notion of the postcolony, but also its entanglement in the global hierarchy of power and practices of colonial subjection. The notion of postcoloniality and African subjectivity has been extensively debated by several scholars (Radhakrishnan 1993; Quayson 2001; Geschiere 2009). A clear definition of the concept of postcolony, for the purpose of our discussion in this chapter, has been provided by Mbembe who asserts that it signifies a:

> …specifically given historical trajectory – that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence which the colonial relationship involves. But the postcolony is also made up of a series of corporate institutions and apolitical machinery that, once in place, constitute a distinctive regime of violence (against the citizenry). In this sense, the postcolony is a particularly revealing, and rather dramatic, stage on which are played out wider problems of subjection and its corollary, discipline (Mbembe 2001a:102).

Mbembe's perspective on the postcolony describes the practices and strategies by which African rulers abuse state power and unleash violence against the citizenry. The case of Mobutu's regime, as I show later in this chapter, was based on the criminalization of state power, including, the appropriation of state resources for personal grandiosity, patronage as well as violence to extract 'obedience' from the citizenry under the pretext of 'nation-building' (Mbembe 2001b, 2002, 2003; Young and Turner 1985). However, it is pertinent to indicate at the outset that grotesque corruption and the pillage of state resources were not just the hallmark of the regime, but also complicity with external patrons and Western powers such as Belgium, France and the USA in the expropriation of national resources for the benefit of local and global elites who had stakes in the perpetuation orchestration of the Mobutu carnival (Grovogui 2002).

However, in the broader context of the African postcolonial state, the key question that still remains unanswered by Mbembe's theorization on the postcolony is: why does the subject population continue to accept and even celebrate the regime of the potentate? In other words, how can we understand the sources of 'structured hegemony' (Gramsci 1971) that entrenches mutual zombification in the postcolony and simultaneously deepen its insertion and extraversion in the hierarchy of global capital? I argue, in this context, that Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* fills this analytical gap in explaining the strategies and practices of power in the postcolony, as exemplified by Mobutu's regime in DR Congo (formerly Zaire). I argue that Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* and social field provides us with relevant insight into the *raison d'être* for the corporeal enthronement of convivial domination

and subjection in the African postcolony, as well as an understanding of the structured incorporation of the post-colonial state in the world economy. According to Bourdieu, '…the social world can be represented as a space (with several dimensions) constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active within the social universe in question i.e. capable of conferring strength, power within that universe, on their holder. Agents and group of agents are thus defined by their relative positions within that space' (Bourdieu 1985:724). The notion of field in Bourdieu's theorization refers to:

> …a network or a configuration of objective relations between positions. These positions are defined objectively in their existence and in the determinations that they impose on their occupants, agents or institutions, by their current and potential situations…in the (wider) structure of distribution of different currencies of power (or of capital), possession of which provides access to specific profits that are up for grabs in the field, at the same time, by their objective relations to other positions (domination, subordination, equivalents etc.). In highly differentiated societies, the social cosmos is constituted by the sum of these relatively autonomous social microcosms, spaces of objective relations which have a logic and a necessity that is specific and irreducible to those that govern other fields (Jackson 2008:166).

Thus, at the root of colonial entanglement with the African native is not only the imposition of political and economic domination, but even more fundamentally, ensuring that the dominated subjects recognize the immense 'disciplinary' violence that can be unleashed in the event of 'disobedience'. It is this structured system of hierarchy and fields of power, backed by the machinery of imperial state violence that defined the colonial state project, which, in the context of King Leopold's Congo, was metaphorically described as 'Bula Matari' or the rock crusher (Young 1994). As discussed later, the violence in the DR Congo which erupted in the mid-1990s demonstrates how the postcolonial state unleashes violence against the citizenry (Turner 2007; Jackson 2002; Vlassenroot 2002). Thus, even in its postcolonial moment under the African potentate, the state that was inherited from European colonial powers has not fundamentally been altered in terms of coercion, subjection and the deployment of the technologies of power. The concept of field as theorized by Bourdieu, therefore, helps not only to unpack the mechanisms by which domination, pillage and subjection are entrenched, but also why these processes persist, even after decades of political independence in Africa. The notion of *habitus* in Bourdieu's theoretical approach refers to 'durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisation' that constitute the engine of social, political and cultural action (Bourdieu 1977; Jackson 2008:164). Thus, for Bourdieu, objective structures do, indeed, exist, but, even more fundamentally, he insists that 'our comprehension of these structures and our orientation towards them (and other fields of power) is mediated through our habitus' (Jackson

2008:164). As a basis for practice, habitus not only animates the action of collective actors, but also individuals, and is central in the production and reproduction of systemic hierarchies in power relations. As Jackson (2008:164) cogently puts it:

> Habitus is [simultaneously] constituted by conscious and unconscious learned experience on the one hand, and by cumulative impact of practices on the other … The effect of the habitus is to provide the actor with an ingrained set of orientations that influence not only in the intellect but also in the physical relationship of the social actor to the external world. Acquired through a process of inculcation (and embedded practices), the disposition of the habitus become second nature and generates understandings and expectations which in turn set the parameters for strategies of social action.

Fatton (2011) further provides us with a clarification on the concept of *habitus* as a '…system of dispositions acquired through experience that shapes particular behaviour at particular historical moments' and that while *habitus* should not be confused with habit or political culture, '…it simultaneously structures and is structured by historical realities,…grounded in the material matrix of a particular period.' As I show later in the chapter, the Belgian colonial encounter with the native population in the Congo Free State was shaped by the structures of domination entrenched for the extraction of rubber and other mineral resources. At independence, the elite who inherited power also received their education within the context of the Belgian colonial system and thus, their world view, knowledge, perceptions and orientations were grounded within the practices of the colonial hierarchy of inequality and domination. It is no wonder that the post-colonial state in DR Congo, in particular, and Africa in general has not fundamentally changed.

From the above, it is clear that the concept of *habitus* not only illuminates why entrenched structures and practices of presidential grandiosity, obscene pillage of public resources and predatory violence in the African postcolony acquire the currency of normalcy, but also how the postcolonial potentate accentuates the insertion of the continent and its subordination in the hierarchy and fields of global division of labour. I argue that the authoritarian potentate which controls state power in postcolonial Africa under the façade of globalist canons of neo-liberal democratization and economic reforms, serves not only its own elite-driven interests through reciprocal conviviality with the erstwhile colonial powers, but also unleashes arbitrary violence and repression that further disempowers the citizenry (Appadurai 1998). For example, during Obasanjo's regime (1999-2007) in Nigeria, the Minister of Finance, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (then a high ranking official in the World Bank hierarchy) renegotiated Nigeria's debt in which Nigeria made a cash payment of approximately $18 billion to the London and Paris Club of Creditors. It is a classic instance of wealth extraction and transfer from a postcolony to the global North under a market-driven neo-liberal agenda, which

pauperizes the citizenry. Similarly, as Michela Wrong reveals, when the Mobutu regime was chased from power by Laurent Kabila and the insurgency movement in 1997, Mobutu's personal fortune of approximately $14.5 billion was equal to the total foreign debt of the country (Wrong 2001). Even when the International Financial Institutions and Western powers knew that Mobutu was pillaging the financial resources of DR Congo into Swiss banks for personal gain, they continued to provide loans and aid to the kleptocratic regime (Grovogui 2002). As the bulwark of anti-communism during the Cold War, President Mobutu was a direct beneficiary of U.S, French and Belgian financial, military and diplomatic support, even though his policies glaringly plunged the country into the abyss and continuing violence that has caused the death of about 6 million people. Both Obasanjo and Mobutu in their different spaces of social and political action in the postcolony reveal important dimensions of the behaviour and kleptocratic practices of the potentate in terms of grandiosity, arbitrariness in the use of power, convivial zombification of the state and subjection of the citizenry.

In the section that follows, I turn to a discussion of the structured practices of post-colonial elites and its implications for Africa in world politics. Specifically, I examine Belgian colonial rule in the Congo, particularly Mobutu's predatory rule, to show how the practices of *habitus,* as displayed in the Mobutu regime of grandiosity, exacerbated the entrenchment of violence in DR Congo. Thus, state collapse and violence in the Congo are symptomatic of the contradictions of sovereignty in world politics, where African post-colonial states may have juridical autonomy, but still lack the capacity to ensure internal cohesion, political stability and development, as a result of the structured hierarchy of inequities in the international system (Grovogui 2002; Ayoob 2002, 2010). Comparative examples will also be drawn from Nigeria, especially on the role of transnational corporations, the state and elites in resource extraction to support my arguments on the impact of global economic forces in the incorporation of African countries within the world economy.

Contested Sovereignty, Resource Extraction and Transnational Violence in Africa

Recent literature and debates on the postcolonial state and violence in Africa have focused on the linkage between resources and the rising tide of identity politics as well as predatory insurgency that challenge sovereign authority of the centralized state (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002; Fearon & Laitin 2003; Ross 2006). While scholars like Zartman (1995), Rotberg (2003) and Young and Turner (2002) conceptualize the phenomena of state failure in Africa from the perspective of ethno-nationalist and identity challenges to postcolonial autocracy that undermine the nation-building project, scholars such as Reno (2000), Willet (2005), and Vlassenroot (2002) suggest that the phenomenon of insurgency violence in African postcolonial formations

represent a specific modality of predatory extraction and profiteering not only at local, but also regional and international levels. The economics of war paradigm is anchored in the fundamental premise that militant groups that engage in the illicit extraction of mineral resources such as diamonds, gold, coltan, and lumber have networks and markets not only within their zones of operation, but are linked with the larger global commodity markets. According to Ballentine and Sherman (2003), the ascendance of neo-liberal globalization and the

> …replacement of state-led development with market-driven free trade have created new and abundant opportunities for more systematic forms of combatant self-financing…(in which) …natural resources …become a major source of war revenues, contributing to a vicious cycle of poor governance and conflict. The ability of combatants to transform these captured assets into revenues and war material has been facilitated by a parallel increase of their access to poorly regulated global trade and investment markets, both licit and illicit, through often overlapping business, criminal, and diaspora networks.

In postcolonial Africa, the increasing phenomenon of insurgency against the state ranging from the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda to the former Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta in Nigeria (MEND), the Alliance for the Liberation of Congo, and so forth are all symptomatic of contestations, not only over issues of identity, citizenship, and economic resources, but also territorial sovereignty and political power. As Susan Willett (2005) perceptively puts it, the emerging political economy of violence

> …suggest that African conflicts are the function of the power hierarchies of the global system and more to do with resource control and economic survival than with struggles over …ethnicity, religion or ideology (albeit these variables do, indeed, factor into some of the conflicts). War in Africa, in all its complex manifestations, functions as an important means of social reordering and transformation- an axis around which new social, economic and political relations are formed at the local and global level.

While communities are displaced and turned into refugees supported by humanitarian agencies, insurgency and predatory elites as well as their clandestine sponsors in the global North profit from African wars. For example, it is estimated that between 1992 and 1996, Charles Taylor made approximately $450 million per year and through French companies supplied about a third of France's hardwood requirement. Similarly, during the violent Angolan civil war in which thousands of civilians were killed and others maimed by landmines, Jonas Savimbi's UNITA was largely financed by the diamond conglomerate De Beers. It is estimated that during the conflict, UNITA controlled about 60-70 per cent of Angola's diamonds, and made about $3.7 billion from illicit diamond sales and investments (Duffield 2000:82).

The war in eastern DR Congo represents another classic illustration of Africa's political economy of networked wars driven by a complex of enclave economies, predatory elites, warlords and insurgents at local, regional and transnational levels. However, to clearly unravel the complexity of the Great Lakes crisis, and specifically the DR Congo war, we must interrogate the historical processes of state formation in the region, paying close attention to the impact of King Leopold's entrenchment of a coercive colonial state that for the last two hundred years has unleashed violence against the populace. Above all, King Leopold II under the aegis of Congo Free State, set the pace for the systematic plunder of the Congo through what Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002) describes as partition and pillage. Mobutu Sese Seko's over thirty years of authoritarian rule, supported by Western powers (especially Belgium, France and the US) and the subsequent emergence of Laurent Kabila's short-lived regime (supported by Western powers and regional states such as Uganda, Rwanda, Angola and Zimbabwe) all intensified the plunder of DR Congo's natural resources and the simultaneous insertion and extraversion of the state in the global economy. As Turner (2007) puts it: 'Pillage of Congo's resources is not just a manner of speaking. It is a reality.'

As the monarch of Belgium, King Leopold 11 once canvassed that 'Belgium needs a colony', and though he considered places such as Taiwan and Guatemala, he settled for a vast territory in Central Africa which he named 'Congo Free State'. As Turner put it, 'This new state was Leopold's property' that '…had to pay for its own colonization, and produce a profit for those backers Leopold had found, in Belgium and elsewhere. It did so, and even financed prestige projects in Brussels, including the Royal Museum of Central Africa, a veritable monument to colonialism' (Turner 2007). Extraction of 'red rubber' through the imposition of colonial taxation became the primary mechanism of exploitation, terror and labour discipline in the colony. As Turner cogently describes this process, the Free State established monopolies for extraction of ivory and wild rubber and organized a system of taxes in kind:

> In forest areas, each village had to bring a certain number of kilos of ivory or raw rubber, or risk punishment. As each village used up stored ivory and killed off nearby elephants, hunters had to roam further. Similarly, as each village exhausted nearby supplies of latex-bearing plants, villagers were forced to range further and further into the forest. The (ever) expanding circumferences eventually overlapped, meaning that men of several villages were competing for the small amount of remaining rubber or ivory. As villages failed to meet their quotas, punishment escalated. Many Congolese lost their lives (Turner 2007:27).

Another important aspect of colonial state formation in the Great Lakes region is the movement of the population, particularly under Belgian rule, from Ruanda-Urundi into eastern Congo. Colonial stereotypes of 'suitable' populations and 'hard working' Africans entered the Belgian narrative of population and labour

recruitment. Hence the Luba of Kasai as well as the Banyarwanda of Hutu extraction were recruited in their thousands to work in the copper industry of Katanga. Also, in the pre-colonial epoch, independent Tutsi aristocrats that refused to submit to the Rwabugiri monarchy settled in the Mulenge plateau of South Kivu, thus setting the stage for the emergence of a Banyamulenge identity in eastern Congo. A third important aspect of the colonial state formation in the Congo is the introduction of the Native Authority system under Belgian Indirect Rule. According to Turner (2007), Belgian colonial policy of territorialization of ethnicity which involved using '…ethnicity as an organizational variable in creating administrative units…reinforced the sense of ethnic identity on the part of these communities'. Those communities who had their Native Authority entrenched their presence as Indigenes while those who were migrants became Settlers. Thus, as Mamdani (2001) persuasively argues, the narrative of autochthony entrenched through the politicization of indigeneity by the colonial state '…set in motion a process with the potential of endlessly spawning identities animated by the distinctions indigenous and nonindigenous, and polarizing them. This indeed set the context in which political violence unfolded in Africa, colonial as well as postcolonial.' In addition to the struggles over the control of mineral resources and territory, the question of citizenship became a critical variable in the eastern DR Congo war (Mamdani 2001; Turner 2007; Lemarchand 2009). In his incisive analysis of the impact of Belgian colonial policy on identity formation and citizenship crises in contemporary eastern DR Congo, Vlassenroot (2002) asserts that Belgian colonial policy not only transformed the pattern of territorial organization, but also introduced new ways of using economic space in its colonies. Like the British system of indirect rule, the Belgian version of colonial *commandement* (Mbembe 2001a) was anchored in restructuring, integrating and controlling rural society through the Native Authority system supervised by traditional authorities. Thus, rural communities that were considered indigenous were entitled to their own Native Authority, while those that were non-indigenous, were not. Herein, therefore, is the root of the pervasive autochthony conflicts in the Great Lakes. The Banyamulenge whose antecedent is traced to Rwandaphone Tutsis were not given a Native Authority. Their citizenship in DR Congo remains a contentious aspect of the conflict in the Great Lakes Region (Dunn 2009; Mamdani 2001; Prunier 2009).

Following the overthrow of the Mobutu regime, DR Congo gradually descended into anarchy as other insurgency groups from the Kivu region challenged the Kabila regime in Kinshasa, and strived in the hinterland to carve out swathes of territory for the extraction of mineral resources, especially diamonds, gold and coltan, a rare metal found in the Kivus (columbite and tantalite mixed with cassiterite) – an essential ingredient in the manufacture of rocket engines, satellite engineering armaments and particularly mobile phone technology (Jackson 2002). But what led to the implosion of the Mobutist state? Like other African

authoritarian regimes such as Siad Barre of Somalia and Mengistu of Ethiopia, at the end of the Cold War in 1990 Mobutu lost his strategic relevance to his Western benefactors. Following the accumulation of arrears of $70 million, the IMF and other donors suspended loans and economic assistance to the country. As spiralling inflation drove the economy to a standstill, the regime in Kinshasa could neither pay its public servants (including the military) nor meet its obligations for providing social services and above all, security, for its citizenry. In the words of Lemarchand (2009:218):

> Plausible though it is to detect historical continuities between the horrors of the Leopoldian system and Mobutu's brutally exploitative dictatorship, or between the sheer oppressiveness of Belgian rule and the excesses of the successor state, in the last analysis, Mobutu himself … must be seen as the determining agent(s) behind this vertiginous descent into abyss. What set Mobutu apart from other neopatrimonial rulers was his unparalleled capacity to institutionalize kleptocracy at every level of the social pyramid and his unrivalled talent for transforming personal rule into a cult, and political clientelism into cronyism. Stealing was not so much a perversion of the ethos of public service as it was its *raison d'être*. The failure of the Zairean state was thus inscribed in the logic of a system in which money was the only political tool for rewarding loyalty, a system that set its own limitations on the capacity of the state to provide public goods, institutionalize civil service norms, and effectively mediate ethno-regional conflicts.

As Mobutu fled the Congo into exile with debilitating cancer, Laurent Kabila and his AFDL insurgents marched into Kinshasa as the new President but the historic Leopoldian logic of predation and pillage persisted. Laurent Kabila's insurgency, it must be noted, was not just logistically sponsored by Uganda and Rwanda, it was also bankrolled by transnational corporations such as American Mineral Fields (AMF), Banro Resource Corporation and American Diamond Buyers. A UN Panel of Experts on 'Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the DR Congo' revealed that from November 1998 to April 1999 approximately 2,000-3,000 tons of cassiterite and about 1,000-1,500 tons of coltan were exploited and removed from eastern Congo. Once coltan and cassiterite are separated and packed in oil drums, the product is '…ready for export and final sale on the international market- buyers in London, Brussels and Amsterdam are the prominent destination…' (Jackson 2002). High-ranking officers in the Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) such as Generals Salim Saleh (President Museveni's brother) and James Kazini were all involved in the looting of Congo's mineral resources during the war for personal enrichment and further intensification of the conflict (Jackson 2002; Turner 2007:41). The table below, for example, reveals how Rwanda and the top echelon of its army that were involved in the invasion of DR Congo boosted the export of gold, cassiterite, coltan and diamonds between 1995-2000, even though the country does not have any significant quantities of these mineral resources.

Table 3.1: Rwanda's Mineral Production, 1995- 2000

Year	Gold production (kg)	Cassiterite production (tons)	Coltan production (tons)	Diamond exports (US $)
1995	1	247	54	—
1996	1	330	97	—
1997	10	327	224	720, 425
1998	17	330	224	16, 606
1999	10	309	122	439, 347
2000 (to Oct.)	10	437	83	1,788, 036

Sources: Coltan, cassiterite and gold figures derived from Rwanda Official Statistics (No. 227/01/10/MIN); diamond figures from the Diamond High Council. All figures originally appeared in the UN Panel of Inquiry Report, 2001. The table is extracted from: Stephen Jackson 2002, 'Making a Killing: Criminality and Coping in the Kivu War Economy', *Review of Africa Political Economy,* 93/94, p.525.

The phenomena of kleptocracy, clientelism and elite predation of national wealth in postcolonial Africa is not restricted to Mobutu and Kabila's Congo. In countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, to mention a few, militarism and one-party dictatorships have been entrenched from the 1960s into the early 1990s with devastating consequences for the citizenry. Kenya's presidential election debacle of 2007-08, for example, degenerated into ethnic cleansing in which approximately 1,500 people lost their lives and thousands were displaced as refugees in the Rift Valley. Under the postcolonial regime of impunity, power has remained unaccountable to the citizenry, in spite of the claims of democratization and elections. The entrenchment of impunity, elite-driven violence and predation in postcolonial Africa not only undermines national cohesion but also destroys human capital and the prospects of development. As the table below reveals, Sub-Saharan African countries that have been affected by years of violent conflict or dictatorship generally have a low level of life expectancy (mostly less than fifty years, with the exception of Eritrea, Sudan and Togo). Gross National Income per capita in 2002 is also below $550, except for Cote d'Ivoire and Uganda, which stood at $687 and $1,383 respectively. These two cases could be explained by their high level of dependence on external development assistance to finance their annual budgets. The table also reveals that countries which have experienced insurgency violence and predatory pillaging such as Cote d'Ivoire, DR Congo,

Liberia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone all have a life expectancy below forty five years, and are part of the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC).

Table 3.2: Selected Statistics for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Conflict

Country	GNI per capita $ 2002	Life expectancy 2002-05	FDI $m 2002	ODA $m 2002	External debt as % of GDP	Debt service as %of exports
Algeria	523	40	1,312.1	421	90	10
Burundi	110	41	0.0	172	168	59
CAR	277	40	4.3	60	102	—
Chad	203	45	900.7	233	64	—
Cote d'Ivoire	677	42	—	1,000	82	—
DR Congo	100	42	31.9	807	153	—
Eritrea	190	53	21.0	230	82	5
Ethiopia	100	45	75.0	1,307	108	10
Guinea	447	49	30.0	250	106	14
Guinea Bissau	170	45	1.0	59	344	—
Liberia	285	41	-65.1	52	414	1
Mali	230	48	102.2	472	83	7
Mozambique	220	38	4,05.9	2,058	128	6
Niger	180	46	7.9	298	83	—
Rwanda	230	39	2.6	356	83	15
Sierra Leone	130	34	4.7	26	185	—
Somalia	177	48	-0.2	351	—	—
Sudan	333	56	681.0	51	1,211	
Togo	293	50	74.7	12	—	—
Uganda	1,383	46	74.8	1,233	71	7

Source: Data selected from the Least Developed Countries Report UNCTAD 2004. Table is extracted from: Susan Willet, 2005, 'New Barbarians at the Gate: Losing the Liberal Peace in Africa'. *Review of African Political Economy*, 106, p. 577.

An analysis of postcolonial African elite kleptocracy, resource violence and networked conflicts that degrade the local community through commodity insertion into global trade must necessarily incorporate the intractable oil conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta. As a former British colony administered through the system of Indirect Rule, postcolonial Nigeria continues to experience identity conflicts not only over oil resource re-distribution, but also sectarian, religious as well as Indigene versus Settler conflicts over land, territory, and control of political

power. Since the 1990s, the Nigerian state along with oil transnational corporations have been vigorously challenged by diverse ethnic militia groups fighting for 'resource control' and environmental rights. These insurgency groups include the Egbesu Boys of Africa, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, Ijaw Youth Council, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Obi 2001; Agbu 2004, 2008; Omeje 2004, 2008). The most violent militia group in the Niger Delta that has inflicted enormous damage to the export capacity of crude oil by the Nigerian state is the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND). As an amalgam of armed militia groups in the Niger Delta, MEND represents a '…metaphor of a decentralized broad alliance of local resistance…and a growing threat to the hegemony of the Nigerian federal state, the extractive interests of oil companies and the energy security of the world's powers' (Obi 2008). It is estimated that between1999-2004, assaults on oil infrastructure by insurgency groups in the Niger-Delta amounted to $6.8 billion in lost revenue to the Nigerian government. From 2005-2008, damages and lost oil revenues amounted to roughly $4 billion (Watts 2008). According to Watts (2007) and Obi (2000, 2009), the interrelationship between the democratic process and violence was complicated as political incumbents, candidates and political parties armed youths and militias in the contest for access and control of power at local and state levels. Thus, the instrumentalization of violence and the criminalization of power find their convergence in the pillage and predation that persists in the Niger Delta (Watts 1999, 2004b). The alliance between the Nigerian state, its governing elites and their strategic sector allies entrenches the hegemony of capital and profit in the oil industry to the detriment of the Nigerian populace, particularly the oil-producing minorities of the Niger Delta. The claim by the Nigerian federal government, especially under the Obasanjo regime (1999-2007) that militia groups in the Niger-Delta are 'terrorists' plays into the Western narrative of 'war against terror' and undermines the possibilities of peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue.

Conclusion

Africa's incorporation into the global economy and the subsequent imposition of colonial rule and the plunder of Africa's human and material resources significantly altered social, economic, territorial and political relations on the continent. While Mbembe's perspective on the contradictions of postcoloniality where, as he argues, the postcolonial elite along with the citizenry are engaged in mutual zombification characterized by grotesque presidential grandiosity and its acceptance by the citizenry throws some light on the practice of domination and subjection, it does not clearly explain why such hegemony persists. As stated earlier, Bourdieu's theory of habitus denote the inscription of systematized practices, behaviours and habits in the exercise of power in the postcolony legitimated through transnational structures into the global system of exchange and domination help us to

comprehend and explain the contradictions of political power in postcolonial Africa. While in the case of DR Congo, we observed that the enthronement of the Leopoldian predatory rule was not fundamentally altered under Mobutuism or the Kabilas, the intervention of regional actors, foreign powers, corporations and regional elites in search of profits through pillage in eastern DR Congo has exacerbated the crises of postcoloniality in the Great Lakes. Although Mobutu and his acolytes, indeed, fit into Mbembe's description of presidential grandiosity and the banality of power, Mobutu's predation and pillage of Congo's resources would not have been possible without the active support and complicity of France, Belgium and the U.S. along with transnational corporations that continue to plunder the country. In their daily struggles for survival, most Congolese citizenry have been exposed to poverty, pillage, insurgency warfare, displacement, rape and extermination. They have, for decades, been turned into refugees in their own country and their socio-economic livelihood disrupted. In the case of Nigeria's Niger-Delta, it has been argued that the intensification of petro-violence and pillage by the federal government under both military and civilian regimes along with oil multinational corporations is indicative of a new modality of the instrumentalization of resource violence at local, national and global levels with implications for sovereignty, territoriality, citizenship and human rights. From the civil wars in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sudan to DR Congo and Nigeria's Niger Delta it is increasingly evident that the insertion of African postcolonial states into the emerging system of globalized coloniality is intensifying violence and state disintegration while simultaneously profiting corporate interests, local elites and their clientele.

The resolution of this dilemma of violent globalized coloniality necessarily calls for a fundamental reconstitution of the logic of the postcolonial state where power is not only devolved to local communities through genuinely robust and vibrant democratic institutions and practices, but there isconscious empowerment of the citizenry through broad-based programs of civic engagement in local processes of institution building. Simply put, African peoples at local, regional and national levels as well as community-based groups whether they represent ethnic, religious, trade unions, students, gender or youth agendas must be empowered to design platformsof active participation and involvement in decision-making processes, within the framework of a proposed agenda of reconstituting the institutions of state power in the postcolony. This requires a conscious effort on the part of civil society groups and communities to build transparent (from the bottom up) institutions of democratic accountability that are representative of the interests and aspirations of the citizenry in African states. Curbing presidential grandiosity, corruption, resource pillage and predation in Africa must, therefore, involve all segments of the society. It is through this process of deliberate opening up of the political space for active participation and engagement by society and its groups that legitimate and vibrant democratic

institutions can be built from the bottom up and ensure accountability to the citizenry. As the recent experiences of elections in Nigeria, Kenya, DR Congo, Zimbabwe, and Cote d'Ivoire suggest, electoralism as practiced in the current democratization agenda is not enough to ensure accountability and curb impunity. Failure to take the path of building institutions of accountability that will check impunity will only expose Africa and its peoples to the rapacious pillage of the potentate elite and the deepening of subjection to a complex globalized system of coloniality.

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4

Oil Conflicts in the Postcolony

Douglas A. Yates

Is oil dependency a cause of war in Africa? Or are both symptoms of something else? Research on the question of the relationship between oil and violence has traditionally been framed in terms of oil as a causal factor. The dominant model has been the limited factor approach, where oil and a small number of other controlling variables are isolated in a large number of cases, then statistically correlated. The alternative approach has been the qualitative case study with its focus on a thick description of context. New thinking has argued for a multi-factor-multi-context approach (Tar 2008). How can context explain conflict? It is the purpose of this chapter to explore one causal context of violence in natural-resource-rich Africa: the postcolonial condition.

As elaborated by Achille Mbembe (2001:102) in his *On the Postcolony*, the notion of 'postcolony' identifies a specifically given historical trajectory: 'that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence which the colonial relationship involves'. Mbembe outlines a series of characteristics of the postcolony in Africa, including: the *commandement*, the potentate, the fetish, the aesthetics of vulgarity, and private indirect government. These concepts will be used as a template to explore several mainstream narratives common to the literature on oil-rentier regimes in Africa. The aim is to show that violence in oil-dependent African regimes, like their dependence on oil, may be as much the result of the postcolonial context as it is the effect of oil dependency.

Why focus on oil? 'Of all the resources, none is more likely to provoke conflict between states in the twenty-first century than oil. Petroleum stands out from other materials – water, minerals, timber, and so on – because of its pivotal role in the global economy and its capacity to ignite large-scale combat' (Klare 2001:27). Oil is critical to the global economy because it is the world's major source of primary energy, and because it is extremely lucrative to producer countries. It is also a vital factor in the military strength of nations, in that it supplies most of the

energy used to power tanks, planes, missiles, ships, armoured vehicles, and other instruments of war. Geopolitically it is highly concentrated in a few large reservoirs, and many of those reservoirs are approaching exhaustion. On top of all this, it appears that the world is approaching 'peak oil'. For all of these reasons, the risk of armed conflict over valuable oil supplies is likely to grow in the years to come (Klare 2004).

Oil and Violence

A growing body of scholarly literature has concerned itself with the measurable association between oil and war in Africa. Contemporary research published by highly regarded scholars and leading international financial institutions like the World Bank have shown that developing economies with high rates of dependence on extraction and export of natural resources have a correspondingly high propensity to violent conflict, be it either full civil war (Collier & Hoeffler 2001; Le Billon 2001; Ross 2004) or just another external intervention by major powers (Klare 2001; Le Billon & Khatib 2004). High dependency on oil *is* correlated with war. However, since most of the wars in the world today are occurring in Africa, should we then say that, statistically, Africa is correlated with war? Before answering 'Of course not!', consider that critics of pioneer correlation studies on resource conflicts have long argued that 'context matters' (Basedau 2005). Pointing to peaceful oil producers like Norway or Brunei, which have high rates of dependence on petroleum but have no correspondingly high propensity to violent conflict, and pointing to war-torn societies like Afghanistan or Somalia, which have a high propensity to conflict but are not dependent on oil, it must be recognized that oil is not, *sine qua non*, the cause of war. What really matters are the historical, geopolitical, and socioeconomic contexts in which oil exportersmust survive.

One such contextual cause of resource wars in Africa may be the postcolonial condition. Rather than being the *casus belli*, oil dependency may be – like war– another effect of the 'displacement' and 'entanglement' pervasive in the postcolony (Mbembe 2001:15). Certainly we have reached a stage in the emerging literature where no one claims that oil is, *per se*, a cause of any complex social phenomena like war.

In their sensational grab for publication and attention, many scientific studies on 'oil war' (Klare 2004; Heinberg 2003; Kaldor, Karl & Said 2007) have also failed to differentiate between war and other forms of violence. Quantitative correlations between oil and war (Collier and Hoeffler 2001) did not address the qualitative varieties of oil-related violence. Some oil conflicts were armed struggles about ownership and control over resources that could be called 'resource wars', like the Bakassi Peninsula conflict between Niger and Cameroon. But others were struggles over the distribution of revenues derived from natural resources. These were not resource wars, but 'revenue conflicts'. Some were about the inability of

weak state institutions to cope with looting, misappropriation and exclusion of significant sectors of society leading to violent protests. These were not wars, but domestic 'police matters' of maintaining public order. Others were about states using their resource revenues to build up repressive security machinery and embarking on violent terror against their own people. These were not wars, but one-sided 'violent tyrannies'. Some were illegal uses of resource revenues by disgruntled factions of the governing elite to sponsor anti-government insurgencies or secession movements. These were not wars, but 'factional politics' using violence as leverage. Others were organized predation and extortion of big businesses in the resource extraction sector by aggrieved groups. These were not wars, but 'organized crime'. Some were military interventions by foreign stakeholders to protect their investments. These were not (called) wars, but 'peacekeeping operations' (Omeje 2008:14-15).

The pervasiveness of violence in postcolonial oil regimes in Africa may be a heritage of a colonial rationality used to rule, a very specific state sovereignty Achille Mbembe called '*commandement*,' which rested on three sorts of violence: (1) the founding violence, which played an instituting role for the regime; (2) the violence produced after, that had to do with legitimation; and (3) the violence designed to ensure this authority's maintenance, spread, and permanence. 'Falling well short of what is properly called 'war', it recurred again and again in the most banal and ordinary situations' (Mbembe 2001:25).

Soldiers and Oil

Six out of eight (or 75%) of the rulers in African oil-rentier states are soldiers by profession, and came to power by a *coup d'état* or by winning a violent civil war. This is much higher than the overall average for Africa where twenty-two out of fifty-two rulers (or 42%) came to power by a *coup d'état* (Gaddafi, Nguema, Konate, Compaoré, Déby, Jammeh, Museveni, Sanha, Rajoelina, Bozizé, Aziz, and Al Bashir), through violent civil war (Dos Santos, Mugabe, Afwerki, Sassou-Nguesso, Kagame, Ahmed, and Zenawi), or were installed by the military (Gnassingbe and Kabila) or secret police (Guelleh). But it is not unusually high.

Oil was neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of military rule in Africa. It was not, strictly speaking, the *cause* of these military dictatorships. There are military rulers in African countries that do not have oil, and there are oil-dependent countries not ruled by the military. And the same country has alternating periods of civilian and military rule.

As one scholar noted over forty years ago, when statistically correlating the structural characteristics of regimes that had suffered military coups, 'it is impossible to specify as a class countries where coups have occurred from others which have so far been spared' (Zolberg 1966:71). This led Decalo to conclude that the search for the structural causes of coups was erroneous. 'The core analytic flaw is the confusion of very real and existing systemic tensions in African states (which

are, however, the universal *backdrop* of all political life on the continent) with other factors – often the *prime* reasons for a military upheaval – lodged in the internal dynamics of the officer corps' (Decalo 1976:13). Oil-dependency is a contextual factor where military rule is empirically more probable in Africa (75% to 42%), without being a *causa sine qua non*.

Table 4.1: Coups d'Etat and Civil Wars in African Oil-Rentier States

	Coups d'Etat	Civil Wars
Angola	-	1975-2002
Cameroon	-	
Chad	1975, 1990	1960-1990
Congo-Brazzaville	1963, 1968, 1977, 1979	1993-1997
Equatorial Guinea	1979	-
Gabon	1964	-
Mauritania	1978, 1980, 1984	-
Nigeria	1966, 1975, 1983, 1985, 1993	1967-1970
São Tomé & Príncipe	1995	-
Sudan	1958, 1964, 1969, 1985, 1989	1956-72, 1982

Soldiers presiding over the African oil exporting countries can be perceived as elaborately armed and violent gas-station attendants for rich oil-consuming world powers. Alternatively, military rule may be viewed as a modern version of the process of state formation in Africa. As early as the seventeenth century, writes Mbembe, a tradition of predatory states living by raiding, capturing and selling captives was reinforced: 'Against a background of territorial fragmentation and structural stagnation, slaving military regimes, devoid of civil responsibility, had come into being, and provided themselves with means, not necessarily of conquering territory and extending their rule, but of seizing resources in men and goods' (2001:69). The model of domination – 'half-suzerain, half-sultanic' – that resulted from these upheavals produced a general insolvency and material devastation almost everywhere in the region and 'left a situation in which the state was unable to make necessary decisions on who is to get what' (2001:75). 'Soldiers and policemen live off the inhabitants', writes Mbembe (2001:80): 'The question is how such a manner of ruling becomes institutionalized and becomes part of that form of government we are describing as indirect private government'.

Oil and Violence in Nigeria

Oil in Nigeria has been a 'motor for deepening inequalities' (Mbembe 2001:41) and has certainly played a role in the continual violence. The first association between oil and violence in Nigeria was the armed secession of Biafra and the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). Lagos and Enugu (the capital of Biafra) contested the rights to the oil. Some suspected that French strategic support for Biafra was calculated to scramble for the oil. After the victorious federal government suppressed the Igbo rebellion, Lagos embarked on a struggle to 'nationalize' its oil industry. This next struggle to wrest control from foreign corporations was legitimized by a post-war nationality discourse: i.e. a conflict between Nigerian and foreign capitalists.

This second conflict influenced the trend towards greater state involvement and attempts at nationalizing the oil industry. The underlying idea was to dilute foreign control through increased participation by Nigerian capital, and also to nationalize the very identity of oil. Nationalization meant 'Bonny light sweet crude' would thereafter be called 'Nigerian' oil. The creation of a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) promised that all Nigerians would be entitled to production revenues, to promote *national* unity after the civil war (Ukiwo 2008:78). As the Civil War had demonstrated, Nigeria was a state without a nation. Oil was to serve as its main instrument of nation-building.

Challenges to the concept of 'Nigerian' oil later came from the aggrieved peoples of the oil-rich Niger Delta. Some preferred a designation such as 'Bonny light' that specified the place from which the oil was being exploited. They argued that indigenous people of the oil-producing communities should be given privileged access to the rent derived from their natural resources. They saw the 'nationalization' discourse as a hypocritical disguise for internal colonialism, and developed a critical 'indigenization' discourse that challenged the foundations of Nigerian federalism (Ukiwo 2008; Naanen 1995). Indigenization strategies took many forms. Sometimes the local peoples living around the oil facilities approached the multinationals for community projects. Other times they attempted to stop production by occupying flow stations or blocking roads. Sometimes local elites demanded that jobs be reserved for them. Others agitated for a larger share of the oil revenues. At its most extreme, indigenization called for exclusion of non-indigenous peoples from occupying posts, claiming that local jobs should be reserved exclusively for local people (Ukiwo 2008:82). Perhaps the most famous indigenous-rights activist was Ken Saro-Wiwa, executed by the military regime for speaking this discourse on behalf of Ogoniland. After his execution (with the complicity of Shell) was revealed, he became an international symbol for the rights of all indigenous peoples in Niger Delta.

In 1990 a local Shell employee was informed that there was going to be an Ogoni protest against the abuses of the company, which included several thousand oil spills in the region. Shell called the state police commissioner to warn him about the impending protest, and demanded the police provide protection. The police responded to this request by arriving, armed, and shooting 80 Ogoni villagers dead. This was the opening of the struggle for emancipation of Ogoniland from the foreign oil industry and its domestic collaborators.

Ken Saro-Wiwa wrote a book entitled *On a Darkening Plain* (1989) which described how the oil companies, in particular Shell, had turned the Niger Delta into an 'ecological disaster' and 'inhumanized' its inhabitants. At the point in time, few people in the outside world knew how bad pollution had become in the oil region. The international press paid little attention to the grievances of the Niger Delta people, and was at any rate more concerned with the broader abuses of the military regime. But Saro-Wiwa managed to get international media attention, and as a founding member and president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) published the now famous 'Ogoni Bill of Rights'. In January 1993 he rallied 300,000 people, nearly two-thirds of all the Ogoni population to participate in a manifestation he called 'Ogoni Day'. He gave a speech in which he declared Shell *persona non grata* and urged all the minorities in the Niger Delta to 'rise up now and fight for your rights' (Shaxson 2008:198). The rally was an immense success, on both the spiritual and material front, and resulted in extended protests against the oil company that forced Shell to shut down its operations. This stopped 30,000 barrels of day from flowing to foreign consumers, who now understood there was a problem.

The reaction was predictable, and emblematic of how military regimes and multinational oil companies collaborate in violent repression in Africa. A memo written by the commander of the Internal Security Task Force (a secret police created to suppress dissidents) explained that: 'Shell operations still impossible unless ruthless military operations are carried out'(sic) and recommended 'wasting operations' (Shaxson 2008:198). In May 1994 this task force went on a bloody rampage across Ogoniland, killing four Ogoni chiefs, and at least 50 other civilians. It arrested Saro-Wiwa and fifteen Ogoni activists, and held them without any access to their lawyers, charging *them* with having killed the Ogoni chiefs! Saro-Wiwa was convicted in November 1995, despite pleadings by Nelson Mandela and others, and was publicly hanged, with eight other Ogoni activists, in a warning to anyone who dared to challenge the right of foreigners to exploit and pollute their lands in collaboration with the military regime.

Shell in fact colluded with the military in this mock trial by bribing witnesses to give false testimony against the Ogoni activists. We know this because, fifteen years later, a successful civil action was brought against Shell in a Manhattan court of appeals that charged the company with complicity in the execution of Saro-Wiwa (*Wiwa v Shell*). Wishing to avoid more bad publicity, Shell agreed to pay

$15 million to Saro-Wiwa's son and other relatives of the executed activists, a portion of which went into a trust for social programs in the region affected by Shell's oil spills and gas flaring (New York Times 2009; BBC 2009). But Shell's settlement did not provide an admission of guilt. It avoided a trial in which its collusion and pollution would have been aired in court for the whole world to see. Besides, $15 million was like lunch money to a multinational.

The reason this sad story is dragged up here and now is to reflect on the historical sequence unfolding in Africa, 'the direct link that now exists between, on the one hand, deregulation and the primacy of the market and, on the other, the rise of violence and the creation of private military' (Mbembe 2001:79). Shell's violent rule over Ogoniland is an example of what Mbembe (2001:67) has called 'private indirect government'.

Oil and Coup d'Etat in Chad

'The fragmentation of public authority and emergence of multiple forms of private indirect government', writes Mbembe (2001:67), is one of the major developments in postcolonial Africa: 'Through these apparently novel forms of integration into the international system and the concomitant modes of economic exploitation, equally novel technologies of domination are taking shape over almost the entire continent'. Perhaps the best example of postcolonial commandment under international governance was the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline project. All the country experts recognized a real possibility of its failure from the very start. The risks were high, because Chad was the prototypical case study of a 'collapsed state'.

Readers should be reminded that in those days Chad was famous as the very first chapter of William Zartman's seminal book, *Collapsed States* (1995), that coined the term. Analysts, scholars, and educated people at the World Bank most certainly knew that Chad had suffered from a large number of revolts, rebellions, assassinations, extra-judicial killings, *coups d'état*, foreign military interventions, regional successions, and a civil war that touched every corner of the country. As William Foltz wrote in the opening chapter, 'No part of the country escaped armed violence; no Chadian family escaped the violence unscathed' (Zartman 1995:15).

Several explanations have been given for state failure and collapse in Chad. First, it has one of the most *ethnically diverse* social mosaics in Africa. While his figures are contested by some scholars as widely exaggerated, Foltz (1995) counted between 72 and 110 different language groups. CIA *World Factbook* estimates over 200 ethnicities. These ethnic groups have fractionalized into highly segmented politico-guerrilla groups where 'bloody fights *between* fractions of the same ethnic group' were more common than conflicts 'in which ethnic groups confronted one another as *blocs*' (Zartman 1995:17).

Playing on this ethnic division, Mohammar Kaddafi of Libya crossed the northern border at the Aouzou Strip and annexed one third of Chad's territory in the chaos. This raises the second major explanation for state collapse. Chad had *no natural borders* and six neighbours (Libya, Sudan, Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and CAR) so it required 'hard' military and 'soft' diplomatic power to keep the lines on the map that colonialism had drawn. Finally, the colonial legacy of France had done little to build state capacity. Chad was 'France's Cinderella colony' (Buijtenhuijs 1989:54), utterly neglected economically and educationally. Chad suffered from a dramatic lack of well-trained civil servants in the beginning of the 1960s, people to man the state apparatus, especially at the regional and local level. After de-colonization France had used Chad as a neo-colonial battlefield in its regional struggle against Libya for mastery of the Sahel, and civil war collapsed the state. All the government buildings in N'djamena were sacked and pillaged. All government functionaries eventually fled the capital city for their lives. The last government salaries were paid in August 1979, and State authority definitively collapsed in 1980.

Reconstruction started in 1982, when Hissein Habré *Forces Armées du Nord* (FAN) took the capital from a weak transitional government, a hydra of ethno-political factions. Foltz (1995) claims that Habré managed to accomplish basic elements of state reconstruction in his eight years of rule, before he was overthrown in a *coup d'état* in November 1990. Nobody has written poetry about the beauty of the Habré regime. But he left behind something to command to his successor.

Idris Déby, that successor, was a professional soldier who came to power by *coup d'état*, and who had the good fortune to be potentate at an historical moment in time when the international community (represented by international financial organizations and the multinational oil corporations) became seriously interested in exploiting Chad's oil. To bring this oil to market, however, it was necessary to build an enormous pipeline from Doba in Southern Chad to Kribi along the coastline of Cameroon. Investors were assured by the participation of the World Bank that they would recover their fixed capital investments. The multinationals were provided with public relations by the World Bank, who touted the project as a model operation of using oil for poverty alleviation.

By the time the Doba-Kribi pipeline was finished in 2003, a series of grievances from local communities affected by the pipeline (and not just those entirely wiped off the map by the football-field-wide corridor cut through the forest) included a significant migration of people from other regions who spontaneously settled in their region. There were complaints about excessive dust caused by the construction, and the contamination of water reservoirs by the underground burial of the pipe. Inflation in the prices of basic commodities and housing also occurred as foreign workers arrived in their villages. Located in the middle of an equatorial rainforest, oil-worker salaries largely exceeded the entire income of

these rural villages. Locals also complained about the long delays in the delivery of promised aid programs to help local entrepreneurs to sub-contract. Finally, and most poignant, were the complaints that the village school teachers were leaving their schools to take well-paid construction jobs on the pipeline. The oil consortium had to manage this public relations catastrophe by agreeing to devote significant resources to social and environmental 'safeguards'.

The first thing that ExxonMobil did to meet environmental concerns about oil spills and the possibility of bunkering by gangs of disgruntled youths (like in the Niger Delta) was to bury the pipeline underground. Next the consortium hired 112 professional staff members to work in its environmental group, who processed 4,120 'compensation' claims from villagers who lived along the corridor. The consortium also paid 226 villages an additional 'regional' compensation payment for overall 'externalities'. Furthermore, the consortium re-routed the pipeline from its initial path in such a way as to avoid 'environmentally sensitive' areas and to protect 'indigenous communities'. One group that received special attention from this effort was the Pygmies. The government of Cameroon even created two national parks in compensation for the environmental damage caused by the pipeline's construction (Gary & Karl 2003:65).

The Déby regime, however, had a less rosy plan for Doba than a game park for tourists. The World Bank management argued that administrative capacity could be built in Chad at the same time as the pipeline, rather than preceding the start of construction. But its own International Advisory Group doubted the ability to develop both at the same pace, and called it a two-speed problem: 'The commercial project is moving forward, while the institutions are limping along' (Gary & Karl 2003:65). In its project appraisal document on the pipeline, the World Bank claimed, contrary to the evidence, 'Chad has successfully put in place democratic political institutions' but Chad's republican institutions were flagrantly violated during presidential (2001, 2006) and legislative (2002, 2006) elections which even the US State Department has reported to be 'fraudulent,' with 'widespread vote rigging' and 'local irregularities', that permitted President Déby to later amend the Constitution so as to remove the term limits on his office, and to hold an unbeatable majority of seats in the National Assembly. Only a completely blind eye to this spectacle of electoral authoritarianism allowed the World Bank to give its approval that Chad was improving its democratic 'voice and accountability.'

The cause of oil corruption is no great mystery, but a collection of institutional incentives and inducements, where government agents are not held accountable for their acts, they have wide discretionary power, and they have exclusive power over the oil sector. This opportunity to be corrupt is institutional; but the choice to be corrupt is human. The first evidence of oil corruption in Chad came in late 2000, three years before the first drop of oil was exported, when the government announced that it had spent the first $4.5 million of a $25 million signature bonus

on military weapons. The revenue management law did not technically cover such signatory bonuses, which were paid by the oil consortium whenever a government signed a contract. But clearly this was a violation of everything the World Bank had promised. Chad had known 30 years of bloody civil war. Its government at that time was fighting rebellions against rebel Zaghawa clansmen in the East (enraged that President Déby was not doing enough to protect his ethnic kinsmen from massacres in Darfur). Furthermore, a potential conflict was brewing with Sudan itself. As Doba reached peak oil production, Déby found himself in need of more weapons to fight off no less than three separate coup attempts coming from the East (2007, 2008, and 2009). Surely good governance does not mean that international financial institutions perform all of the good governance, and domestic government performs all of the bad. 'If the history of development assistance teaches us anything,' admitted the World Bank in 1999, 'it is that external support can achieve little where the domestic will to reform is lacking'. Déby paid back his loan to the World Bank, and suspended its participation in EITI in 2009.

Oil and Armed Resistance

Can Africans living in an oil-rich region emancipate themselves from 'violent tyranny' by means of armed resistance when that regime is supported financially, diplomatically, and militarily by foreign powers? When foreign powers crave their oil, when international governance initiatives prove insufficient, when their states are unwilling or incapable of changing themselves, when opposition parties lack democratic elections, when the press is not free, then can armed struggles succeed in fighting their 'paradox of plenty' from below?

Table 4.2 shows that most armed struggles for independence of oil-rich regions of Africa have failed to achieve their goals of self-determination. After four decades of low-intensity conflict by the FLEC in the Cabinda Enclave (formerly known as 'Portuguese Congo') the native Kongo people failed to emancipate themselves from the military regime in Angola. Similarly, the UPC guerrillas who fought for the peoples of the Western Region (formerly 'British Cameroons') were defeated militarily by the French-backed central government. The indigenous Bubi people of Bioko island (formerly 'Fernando Poo') struggled for independence from Equatorial Guinea and were massacred by the Fang regime, and today over two-thirds of them live in exile, where they run their underground movement. In the Nigerian civil war the federal government crushed the rebellious Igbo people who declared their independence as the Republic of Biafra (formerly 'Oil River States'). While these regions are oil-rich, it would be unfair to say that their armed struggles were motivated simply by greed for oil. These were genuine liberation struggles.

Table 4.2: Selected Armed Struggles for Self-Determination in Oil-
Rich Regions of African States

Angola	Cabinda Enclave Liberation Front (FLEC)	1963-2006	Failed to achieve independence of Cabinda Enclave
Cameroon	Union of the Populations of Cameroon (UPC)	1948-1971	Failed to achieve autonomy of the Western Province
Equatorial Guinea	Movement for the Self-Determination of Bioko Island (MAIB)	1994-present	Failed to achieve independence of Bioko Island
Nigeria	Republic of Biafra	1967-1970	Failed to achieve independence of Eastern Region
Sudan	Sudan People's Liberation Movement & Army (SPLM/A)	1983-2005	Achieved legal autonomy of Southern Sudan

They were different from other African struggles whose goal was not regional secession, but overthrowing a regime in power. The numerous civil wars in Chad were never about achieving regional independence from Ndjamena, but about overthrowing its corrupt rulers. The same is true for the rebel movements in Angola and Congo. Neither Angola's UNITA nor Congo's 'Ninjas' were about regional secession but rather national unity under a new regime. What is interesting is that the only successful armed struggle for regional self-determination in oil-producing Africa – the SPLM/A of Southern Sudan – came after it changed its strategy from *regional* secession to *national* liberation. Instead of fighting exclusively for the liberation of Southern Sudan, the rebels changed their goal to the liberation of all the people of Sudan. There is a lesson in their victory for other similarly situated armed struggles in oil-rich regions of Africa and the rest of the world.

The second phase of the Sudanese civil war (post-1985) was more than a continuation of hostilities. It was a different kind of liberation struggle. For if the Southern Sudanese Liberation Movement (SSLM) had been fighting a regional war exclusively for independence of Southern Sudan, the new Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its Army (SPLA) instead chose to fight for the liberation of all the Sudanese peoples from the regime in Khartoum. This change of strategy was accomplished by a heroic Dinka leader, John Garang de Mabior (1945-2005), whose really big idea was that the South should stop thinking of itself as a victim trying to flee from the hands of a violent Northern state and start believing in its own abilities to change the destiny of their country. In 1985 he

outlined his vision of what he called the 'New Sudan': (1) the establishment of democracy, social justice, and human rights, (2) secular nationalism, (3) regional autonomy and/or federalism, (3) radical restructuring of power, (4) balanced regional development, and (5) the elimination of institutional racism (Khalid 1987).

None of these goals were based on a singular Southern identity. Rather than conducting another ethno-regional struggle seeking only to preserve historical traditions from the past, Garang based his struggle on ideological objectives that offered a vision of a better future. He defined the aims of the struggle in terms of democracy and human rights instead of rejecting them as being 'Western' and not appropriate for 'Africa.' He defined the aims of the struggle as redressing regional inequalities in the East, the West, and the far North that ended the false amalgam of all non-Southerners as 'Northern'. He defined the enemy not as Northerners, but as particular 'family dynasties' and 'political parties' who had monopolized power to the detriment of all Sudanese people (even those in the Centre). By redefining the goals of the struggle for liberation, his vision of a 'New Sudan' allowed the SPLM/A to build multiregional alliances against a common enemy: i.e. a singular Arabic-Islamic nationalism that had divided the Sudan and caused three decades of civil war.

The internal divisions in the ruling junta in Khartoum allowed the Southerners to gain the upper hand, and by 1999-2000 the SPLA forces had regained much of its lost territory. Khartoum found itself fighting a war against all of the peripheral regions at once, in a million-square-mile territory that it barely controlled. One of those regions – Darfur – became a symbol of the depravity of the second phase of the civil war. The tragic events that brought Darfur to the forefront of international attention, the barbarities committed by the government-backed *Janjaweed* militia, culminated in the most appalling humanitarian disaster, resulting in the displacement of over twomillion people, in addition to 200,000-300,000 who fled to neighbouring Chad and CAR. It is estimated that more than 300,000 people have been killed in Darfur since the outbreak of ethnic hostilities in 2003 (Press TV 2013).

The power of Garang's vision is that, for the first time, people in the peripheral regions could seek to build alliances not only with one another, but with Sudanese from the supposedly privileged core. It transformed the struggle from a regional conflict between the core and the periphery to a national struggle for liberation from a ruling oligarchy led by three tribes. You may be asking, where is the *oil* in all this conflict? The Sudanese Civil Wars were not resource wars, nor should we think about the other numerous armed rebellions as primarily being motivated by greed. The reality is that civil war came first, and then the oil came after. The cause of national liberation movements in African oil-dependent countries is contextual: i.e. their postcolonial condition. Oil has simply fuelled the flames.

Oil and Civil War in Congo Brazzaville

Congo-Brazzaville is more reminiscent of the postcolony described by Mbembe in Cameroon, although the violence has been more pronounced. For the former French Congo has suffered numerous coup d'états, long periods of military rule, and a violent civil war. At the end of the Cold War, two southern civilian politicians, Bernard Kolélas and Pascal Lissouba, rose to prominence in the legislative and presidential elections of 1992. But the ethno-regional character of those elections invalidated their legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Kolélas won the Pool region and those parts of Brazzaville where the Lari and his Bakongo peoples predominated. Pascal Lissouba, a Njabi, won the southern vote in Niari, Bouenza, and Lékouma.

The former military dictator, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who had reluctantly handed over power in a bloodless national conference, won the northern regions of Cuvette, Sangha, Likoula and Plateaux. Since the northern regions were the least populated, Sassou-Nguesso was eliminated in the first round, leaving Kolélas and Lissouba to fight it out in the second round. Lissouba won, and in 1992 became the first democratically elected president of Congo since Youlou. But divisions between Lissouba and Kolélas quickly turned into a vote of no confidence that required new legislative elections to be held in 1993. Accusations of vote rigging led Kolélas to withdraw from the second round, and both sides began acquiring arms. There were a number of deaths in this period as the capital became the scene of numerous skirmishes among the Congolese militia and a variety of armed political forces representing Lissouba, Kolélas, and Sassou-Nguesso.

The military did not stage a coup d'état. Sassou-Nguesso left Oyo for a mansion outside Paris, beginning a three-year period of self-imposed exile (1994-7), where he offered his services to French businessmen, and enjoyed a lavish lifestyle that was difficult to explain for a former Marxist-Leninist dictator.

Although it is common to date the civil war to 1997, two Swedish scholars doing research in Brazzaville reported widespread ethnic violence by 1994: 'The victims were burned, buried alive, shot, thrown into the river, decapitated and/or slashed with machetes. Among the victims were men, women and children … Women and very young girls, sometimes mothers and daughters, were gang raped' (Clark 1997:74).

The illegal fortune accumulated by Sassou-Nguesso over his three decades of despotism has led to scandalous revelations in France, including a highly celebrated court case launched by Transparency International revealing the Congolese dictator possessed several multimillion dollar properties in France and had amassed an estimated $700 million in offshore bank accounts (CCFD 2007:16). Sassou-Nguesso's million-dollar spending sprees in Paris and New York, where he would run up hotel bills of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and purchase diamonds

for his girlfriends and wives, were a form of conspicuous consumption that, in the context, resemble a form of violence. His lavish lifestyle contrasts starkly with the severe poverty of his people, but as Mbembe (2001:109) writes, 'the *commandement* must be extravagant … it must furnish public proof of its prestige and glory by sumptuous (yet burdensome) presentation of its symbols of status, displaying the heights of luxury in dress and lifestyle, turning prodigal acts of generosity into grand theatre'. A civilianized Sassou-Nguesso was by then wearing elegant suits (tailored in Paris) and presenting himself again as candidate in the 1999 presidential elections. After three years of intrigue and delay, Lissouba and Kolélas boycotted these elections when they were finally held in 2002. Sassou-Nguesso took 90 per cent of the vote, a notable improvement on his 17 per cent in 1992. Southern-based rebels, realizing they had no foreign allies to help them, finally agreed to a peace accord in 2003. However, Kolelas' 'Ninjas' remain active, and continue to camp in the jungle on the outskirts of Brazzaville, where they live on banditry and smuggling to make ends meet.

Oil and Tyranny

'The postcolony is characterized by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion', writes Mbembe (2001:102): 'But the postcolony is also made up of a series of corporate institutions and a political machinery that, once in place, constitute a distinctive regime of violence'. In the postcolony the commandement seeks to institutionalize itself, to achieve legitimation and hegemony, in the form of a fetish.

In case you never heard of him, Francisco Macias Nguema was a paranoid schizophrenic sociopath who declared himself president for life. The cinematic depravity of his regime was legendary. In 1975 for example he celebrated Christmas Day by lining up 150 of his political opponents in a soccer stadium and shooting them dead while a macabre brass band played 'Those Were the Days My Friend' (Shaxson 2008:34). 'On another occasion, thirty-five prisoners were told to dig a ditch and stand in it. The trench was then filled so that only the men's heads stood out of the ground. Within twenty-four hours, ants had slowly eaten the prisoners' heads, and only two men remained alive' (Ghazvinian 2007:171-172). Most of the tiny educated class was killed, approximately one-third of the population fled the country, and the formal education system ceased to function.

As a result of the madness of Macias Nguema's regime, GDP per capita fell from $260 in 1970 to around $170 in 1979. Devastation of the economy in the 1970s was accompanied by complete disarray of public finances. 'Public financial transactions were recorded only sporadically, and the accounts of the Treasury, the Bank of Equatorial Guinea – the former Central Bank – and public enterprises were not kept separately' (Same 2008:5). Macias Nguema was finally overthrown in a 1979 *coup d'état* led by his nephew Teodoro Obiang Nguema, the military

governor of the island and director of its infamous Playa Negra prison. It is said that Macias Nguema fled into the forest with a suitcase full of cash containing the entire national treasury. Surrounded in a cabin hideaway and unable to escape, he reportedly burned this money in a final act of mad vengeance (Klitgaard 1990), before being captured, tried, and executed by his nephew.

Since 1979, Obiang Nguema and his military junta have run one of the most despotic tyrannies on the African continent. Although it seems hard to believe that anything could have been worse than his uncle Macias Nguema's reign of terror, Obiang had been the head of state security under the old regime, and continued its bloody policies once he took power himself (Liniger-Goumaz 1997, 2000 & 2005). What makes this hard to accept, especially for those who focus narrowly on the macroeconomic figures, is that the country has enjoyed one of the highest rates of economic growth on the continent. Ever since oil started flowing, this tiny country of around one and a half million inhabitants has been reporting rising per capita income figures. Those who are able to read between the lines of such fictional averages (which ignore the unequal distribution of oil wealth) are nevertheless likely to have read glowing reports about the regime in glossy special issues of *Jeune Afrique,* orchestrated by public relations firms and paid for by oil revenues. But a glance at human rights reports will quickly reveal that the arrival of big oil has enriched its kleptocratic rulers, funded the oppression of a miserably impoverished people, and maintained a brutal police state behind a façade of slick public relations paid for by oil.

Although the oil and gas reserves are located offshore around the archipelago, the Bubi and other island peoples have had their resources brutally expropriated by the mainland Fang. The Bubi, it should be said, have demanded an autonomous status since before independence, first refused by Madrid, then later by the Nguemists. When they formed a political party Movimiento para la Autonomía de la Isla de Bioko (MAIB) in 1993 the regime refused to recognize it. When they tried to assault military bases in 1998, the Fang junta arrested 550 Bubi activists, and massacred 150 innocent civilians in their villages. Soldiers patrolled the streets of Malabo, indiscriminately beating and raping their women. 'Some of the women had forks thrust in their vaginas and were told, 'From now on, that's your husband' (Global Witness 2004:66). After the initial deaths of numerous Bubi prisoners, without autopsy or investigation, 110 remained incarcerated at the infamous *Playa Negra* prison, where, according to one human rights report, 'a large number were submitted to interminable tortures, attested by the wounds all over their bodies, arms and legs' (Liniger-Goumaz 2003:179). According to the 1999 U.S. State Department Human Rights Report, 'Police urinated on prisoners, kicked them in the ribs, sliced their ears with knives, and smeared oil over their naked bodies in order to attract stinging ants', all of this directed personally by Obiang's brother Armengol, 'who taunted prisoners by describing the suffering that they were about to endure' (Amnesty International 1999).

In describing the regime as a postcolony, we are making reference to a previous colonial regime that served, in a sense, as a model. In the case of Equatorial Guinea, the colonial model was the Spanish fascist regime, in which the Mongomo clan was assimilated and educated. 'The lack of justice of the means, and the lack of legitimacy of the ends, conspired to allow an arbitrariness and intrinsic unconditionality that may be said to have been the distinctive feature of colonial sovereignty. Postcolonial state forms have inherited this unconditionality and the regime of impunity that was its corollary' (Mbembe 2001:26).

To summarize, there is an empirical relationship between resource (specifically oil) conflicts and the crisis of postcoloniality. First, the pervasiveness of violence in postcolonial oil regimes may be attributed, in part, to the unusually high incidence of military rule and police states. Second, the very high levels of economic inequality, intensified by sudden concentrated oil fortunes in the estates of ruling clans, aggravates the already fragile states. Third, the failure of nation-building reduces nationalization policies to predatory internal colonialism by ethnic-oriented patrimonial rulers. Fourth, the emergence of international governance initiatives has provided public relations cover for these postcolonial tyrannies. Fifth, their record high levels of corruption prevent meaningful development from changing the poverty that feeds local grievances against the central government. Sixth, the efforts at armed resistance have in almost all cases failed to overthrow these paradoxically 'successful failed states' (Soares de Oliveira 2007). Seventh, the male domination inherent in postcolonial rule reduces public expenditure to conspicuous consumption by the kleptocratic ruler in order to achieve hisphallic spectacle. Eighth, the cinematic depravity of human rights abuses in these regimes appears to be premised on the need to institutionalize violence in the form of a fetish, making all but the most marginal evolutions inhumane government impossible. In the end, the madness of the Macias regime is probably emblematic of the postcolonial context, and its decay into the tyranny of Obiang perhaps symptomatic of the oil curse.

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5

Exploring the Conflicts between Traditionalism and Modernity in Postcolonial Africa

Kenneth Omeje & Chris M. A. Kwaja

Introduction

Discourses of the evolution of African social structures and institutions have often been made in comparative longitudinal terms by juxtaposing and contrasting the various historical dispensations – pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial. In several respects, colonialism marked a turning point of revolutionary proportion in the collective evolution and structuring of African social systems. This is apparently because colonial rule had an extraverted agenda conceived to serve the overall interest of the colonizers at the expense of the colonized. Part of the necessity for maximizing the colonial agenda was the tendency towards a systematic obliteration of the entire African social structures and the imposition of their western equivalents or alternatives where such existed.

Although colonialism set out to displace indigenous African social institutions considered as primitive and consequently to replace them with European modern equivalents, the intended colonial destruction was not completely successful. The result is that there is today what are termed indigenous social systems (alternatively conceptualized in extant literature as traditionalism) and modernity in all spheres of African life (see Giddens 1992; Ellis & Haar 2004; Ross (ed.) 2011). A critical conundrum with regard to the intersection of traditionalism and modernity is about how the contradictions have played out in African post-colonial history, including their consequences for both the states and society.

The deliberate attempt at displacing traditional African institutions and social systems by western forces dating from colonial history finds contemporary expression in the imposition of Eurocentric institutions, values and traditions, which are parcelled out and exalted as the path to modernity for Africa. In the unfolding process, the whole idea of local inventiveness and cultural creativity are

increasingly jettisoned in response to modernism as propagated by the West (Hamelink 1983:25). This continuing encounter raises serious concerns about the extent to which Africa is prepared to protect its identity in an emerging civilization-based world order that is accelerated by forces of globalization, to the extent that the revival of cultural, ethnic and religious identities are increasingly gaining ground. In a civilization-driven world order cultural affinities cooperate with each other, while states group themselves around the lead or core states of their civilization (Huntington 1997:20). The theoretical articulation of differences between traditionalism and modernity, as they affect post-colonial African state and society, is no doubt an on-going discourse that seeks to construct what Bhabha (1994:2) labelled 'cultural hybridities', which emerge in moments of historical transformation. Hybridity in this sense constitutes the notion that the identities of the colonized and colonizers are constantly in flux and mutually constituted. Sections of postcolonial scholarship, especially the postmodernist school, are of the view that global hierarchies of subordination and control, past and present, are made possible through the social construction of racial, gendered and class differences (see Monga 1996). All of these variables have continued to uphold and define the relations of power and subordination between Africa and the West. Scholars such as Reader (1999) and Skalnik (2002) have argued that even though Africa is a victim of domination from powerful hegemony, the continent has witnessed counter-hegemonies of resistance.

The civilization of Africa has largely been shaped by a triangular formation of religious worldviews that are both competitive, contradictory and in some instances complementary – a convoluted history that Ali Mazrui (1986) dubbed 'the triple heritage.' These three religious worldviews are African Traditional Religion (ATR), Western Christianity, and Islam. It is pertinent to highlight that the conflict of Mazrui's triple heritage was originally adumbrated by Kwame Nkrumah (1970) in his classic study on *Consciencism*. Each of the three main religions in African heritage is embedded in diversity of beliefs, adherents and practices. The dominance of these three sets of religions in Africa has had far-reaching implications for intra and inter-civilization conflicts of varying intensities.

With the coming of colonial rule into Africa, the languages of imperialism – English, French, Portuguese and Spanish – were imposed on different parts of the continent, as part of the cultural tools for colonization. Consequently, the imposed imperial languages were intended to progressively displace the indigenous languages on the pretext that the latter were too 'primitive' to serve as the medium of communication and the production of scientific knowledge. In fact, attempts by colonialism to foist cultures that were alien to African civilization, value systems and traditions became a weapon of divisiveness that separated much of the African people from the reality of their histories, norms, traditions and religion. In order to overcome this challenge, the colonial authorities in some of the Districts

were required to become fluent in the native language of the territory so as to enhance communication between the colonial governments and colonized African societies (Reader 1999:611). In this sense, the twentieth and twenty-first century African societies have become significantly shaped and redefined by the twin concepts of globalization (i.e. the widening and intensification of linkages across cultures and civilizations) and modernity (literally, the transition from indigenous to modern). They are both critical because they are used to understand an era in the history and transitions that are part of Africa's distorted civilization.

The Conflict between Traditionalism versus Modernity in a Historical Perspective

In the aftermath of colonial rule, postcolonial African states inherited indigenous political institutions, which were variously mutilated, defaced and distorted by western colonizers. In fact, the arbitrary and self-serving intervention of the modern state system on indigenous political institutions has been a core feature in the majority of the post-colonial states. One of the consequences of this political interference is that local chiefs and indigenous political authorities have in most cases been reduced to sycophantic agents of the governing elites, helping them legitimize the political regimes and their policies before their grassroots subjects. Independent minded indigenous authorities and those with sympathy for opposition parties and groups are often considered confrontational and partisan by government – an indictment that could result in the deliberate persecution and sometimes ultimate removal of the traditional leader. As the distinguished Ghanaian monarch, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene (King) of Ghana's largest ethnic group, the Asante, aptly articulated the narrative (2005):

> During colonial rule, African kings and chiefs, who did not submit to the colonial administrators, were replaced or exiled. The onslaught against chiefs continued after independence, and they were betrayed along with the rest of the African population. Additional humiliation was inflicted upon the traditional rulers when they were stripped of much of their traditional authority and their powers severely curtailed.

Stoutly opposed to colonial imperialism, the legendary Ghanaian 'Asantehene Otumfuo Agyeman Prempeh I' and several elders of his kingdom were captured as war prisoners and banished to the Indian Ocean Island of Seychelles in 1896 when the British colonial authorities conquered Ashanti land and subsequently imposed colonial rule on the people. The banished king and his entourage were only allowed to return home in 1924, 28 years after the colonial authorities had overrun and assimilated his kingdom. Elsewhere in South Africa, Senegal, Rwanda, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, traditional rulers who were opposed to colonial rule were ignominiously dethroned and replaced. Some were ultimately killed or banished.

In postcolonial Sierra Leone, for instance, the governing elite that inherited state power in the aftermath of political independence seemed to have suspicion and misgivings about the traditional authorities and local chiefs, whom they perceived as collaborators of the defunct repressive colonial regime. Between the country's independence in 1961 and the outbreak of civil war in 1991, the governing elite in fundamental ways reinforced the arbitrary intervention in, and manipulation of, the traditional authorities as an appendage of the central political authority in line with the inherited colonial pattern (Richards 2005; Fanthorpe 2006). Comparable manipulation or attempts to whimsically use the traditional political authorities by various governing elites in post-colonial Africa to advance the political agenda of the government have predominantly occurred in countries like Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Ethiopia.

This paradigm of political manipulation is not markedly different from the way African traditional rulers were treated during colonial rule when the colonizers co-opted loyal traditional rulers as agents of indirect administration charged with the responsibility of extraction of tributes (taxes), labour, and deference towards the imperial regime. Traditional rulers opposed to the colonial authorities were dethroned and in extreme cases banished or killed. For instance, Lat Dior Diop, the defiant dethroned sovereign (*Damel*) of the Kingdom of Cayor in modern Senegal fled into asylum in Jolof (a nearby kingdom) from where he waged a guerrilla battle against French imperialism until he was killed by the invaders five years later in 1887; Samori Toure, who resisted French incursion into west Africa from 1891 to 1898 was captured and deported to Gabon where he later died (Reader 1999:584). Surrogate chiefs known as colonial warrant chiefs were appointed in their stead. Similarly, the colonial authorities arbitrarily created new chiefdoms and imposed warrant chiefs on them for the logistical and administrative convenience of metropolitan Europe.

Postcolonial Africa's Transformation: Towards a Synthesis between Traditionalism and Modernity

Post-colonial African states inherited ambivalent social formations that upset the balance of indigenous political institutions, to the extent that the indigenous systems were replaced with modern institutions as part of the colonial legacy bequeathed to Africans in the aftermath of de-colonisation. The colonial government established Western-oriented institutions and agencies of governance that usurped the sovereignty of traditional institutions and subordinated them to the control of colonial government. The reliance on force to impose colonial governance, among other things, provoked considerable resistance across Africa such as the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya, the Temne uprising in Sierra Leone and the Zulu resistance in South Africa. The transitional social formations inherited by post-colonial Africa are largely characterized by centralized political structures with different organs of government (the executive, legislature and judiciary more or less supposed to

maintain a measure of separation from one another), formal bureaucratic institutions of government staffed with career civil servants, the co-existence of traditional and modern political authorities and the subordination/co-option of the traditional by the modern. The colonial conquest that led to the unification of the different ethnic groups, chiefdoms, and feudal regimes into imperial protectorates also led to the birth of the colonial state, which at independence became an internationally recognized sovereign state (Mamdani 2006:2).

The new African states in the aftermath of independence were thus faced with the challenge of creating a balance between the heavily embattled indigenous political systems and the advancing modern systems they inherited. What we have witnessed in a number of post-colonial African states (e.g. South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Botswana, etc.) is an unbalanced structure of hybridization whereby traditional institutions as custodians of the people's culture and tradition are confined to local administration of some sort and advisory functions while the modern political institutions hold ultimate power acquired by either democratic or undemocratic means.

The issue of land tenure and land rights has also generated far-reaching conflicts and has become a controversial issue between modern and traditional political authorities in postcolonial Africa. This is for the understandable reason that land remains the primary means of economic production for the majority of the African people and states, thereby making land tenure a highly contested subject. To many Africans, land also has a spiritual value. In pre-colonial Africa, traditional land tenure systems varied from one community or ethnic group to another. Notwithstanding the variance, Cousins (2009:8) identified the basic features of indigenous precolonial land tenure systems as generally characterized by:

- An unregistered customary land tenure.
- An admixture of freehold and leasehold under the structural framework of the family, lineage or clan.
- Gender-based discrimination in which women largely gained secondary rights to land through male relatives or by virtue of their marriage relationship to men;
- The use of land primarily for subsistence agricultural production.

Commercial sale of land was a rarity. With the advent of colonialism, the colonial state introduced requirements of land titling and registration as the basis for establishing private ownership of land. This legal requirement was problematic because private ownership of land was non-existent in many local communities. In addition, colonialism also introduced forced alienation or expropriation, which was massively carried out in east and southern Africa where there were large settler communities of white colonizers. This action no doubt created population pressure and land scarcity for the local African populations that were confined to highly marginal and lessproductive land spaces.

The postcolonial reforms in the majority of the African states have tended to reinforce or expand the trajectory of inherited colonial land policies with their emphasis on land titling, registration, land privatization and development-oriented expropriation for large-scale commercial agricultural production. This has in a fundamental way aggravated the contradiction between customary land tenure and modern state-driven, individual/private sector-oriented land tenure. Rural women are the worst hit by the postcolonial land policies and scarcity as they increasingly find it difficult to access land for smallholder subsistence cultivation. Since women are almost completely dependent on men to access land, women who are childless, single, widowed, disabled, separated/divorced, or with only female children often have few or no resources because they may have no access to land except through a male relative in view of the divisions that take place along gender lines (Mamdani 2002:170; Tripp 2004:6).

In precolonial history, traditional African societies essentially provided the basis for cohesion and solidarity that held socio-political life together, established structures and identified characteristics that provided meaning and purpose to life. These features are anchored in belief systems, customs and history that are transferred from one generation to another. This accounts for the embeddedness of African life in deep and rigid cultural traditions. Fay (1987:162) argues that becoming a person in traditional African societies attempts to appropriate certain material of one's cultural tradition, and continuing to be a person means working through, developing, and extending this material, which to a large extent involves operating in terms of it. This notion of community in traditional Africa fits into what Ake (1996) termed 'the organic character of society'. Colonialism fundamentally unravelled this organic character of African societies in all its ramifications.

In appraising the dominant trend of transition from colonialism to post-colonialism in Africa, Okere *et al* (2005:4) observes that:

> African societies have since colonization and till today been marked by 'othering' from the North. Its great civilizational traditions, political, medical, biological, commercial, and religious ones, have been inferiorized and subdued, in particular, during the 19th and 20th centuries by the colonial and missionary enterprise. That jaundiced civilizing mission assumed that all traditional knowledge in Africa, where their very presence was acknowledged at all, was obsolete. In the colonial era, western enlightened knowledge and expertise was *a priori* proclaimed superior… In this othering, rather than genuinely being an enriching centre for the dialogue of civilizations, the colonial school turned out to be a rigid institutional setting for entrenching western civilization and knowledge against African endogenous knowledge.

The secularization thesis, which argues that with the coming of modernism, religion will wither away, has been deconstructed across Africa (Berger 2010:30). The rising wave of Islamic resistance, as well as Pentecostal and evangelical movements across the continent buttresses this argument. Africans have come to accept

modernization and the inevitability of science and technology and the changes immanent on the transformation. But they seem unreceptive to the idea of becoming Westernized (i.e. wholesale assimilation or imposition of the culture and value systems of the West), while in the countries of the West, the schism over the relationship between religion and modernity has heightened since the Enlightenment era (Micklethwait & Wooldridge 2009:9). This is a revival of some sort, as scholars attribute the apparent revival to the widespread collapse or failure of the state in Africa, which leaves the church, the mosque and other religious institutions to fill in the gaps created by the state's inability to fulfil its normal public functions of provision of basic social services and public order (Ellis & Haar 2004). It is still however debatable whether Africa and other postcolonial regions can achieve modernization independent of westernization.

Post-Traditionalism, Modernity and African Revivalism

Political Islam and various fundamentalist religious movements (notably within Islam but also in Christianity to a lesser extent) have emerged in different parts of Africa in recent decades as a reaction to western modernism and the globalizing and domineering tendency of the West in general. Islamic Court, Islamic Jihad, Islamic Combatant Group, Salifist Group, Al-Shabaab, Muslim Brotherhood and Boko Haram (to mention a few) are some of the Islamist groups known, among other things, for their resentment of Western modernism in places like Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Algeria, Morocco and northern Nigeria. Some of these Islamist groups or factions of them are reputed to exhibit marked ambivalence towards Western civilization and modernism – some are receptive to modernism and thus adopt Western technology and work ethics, but conversely exhibit a selective attitude towards Western civilization, with specific reference to aspects of secularism, individualism and materialism that are not in tandem with core Islamic tenets and traditions (Hansen & Mesoy 2010:16-17).

The emergence and upsurge of violent Islamic movements across the Horn and western part of Africa, as evident in Somalia's Al Shabaab, Nigeria's *Boko Haram*, Mali's Ansar Dine and MUJAO (Dowd 2012), represent groups that have declared war on the secularity of the state, with an uncompromising demand for the imposition of strict Sharia law in these countries (Campbell 2012). The use of violence as a tool for advancing these ideologies has been a dominant feature of their operations, with Nigeria having the highest number of documented cases of violent Islamist activities of 106 between 1997 and 2011 (Dowd 2012:3).

The upsurge in religious intolerance witnessed in the growth and resurgence of the *Boko Haram* sect in northern Nigeria is ostensibly driven by this Islamist group's quest to resist any attempt to modernize Islam, and where possible, to Islamize modernity (Kepel 1994:2). It represents what Huntington (1997:110) described as an acceptance of modernity, rejection of Western culture, and recommitment to Islam as the guide to life in the modern world. This has been

done in a highly coordinated manner that led to violent confrontation between the *Boko Haram* sect and the Nigerian government's claim to secularism, with grave humanitarian consequences in terms of the loss of human lives and property. The emergence of the *Boko Haram* sect is seen as a carryover of the *Maitasine* group that emerged in the 1980s in Nigeria, which also engaged the state in armed revolt (Danjibo 2010:18).

The changes brought about as a result of modernity and globalization led many Muslim sympathizers to view the West as hostile to the traditions and values of Islam, to the extent that Western values as represented by modernism contradict Islamic beliefs and traditions. Attempts to checkmate the influence of Western modernism in north Africa in the pre-colonial era partly deepened the Arabization of the local cultures and population, the establishment of Islamic sultanates and state structures over non-Arab ethno-cultural groups in the region. Møller (2006:11) described the phenomenon as 'Arab colonization'. It is pertinent to remark that Western modernist influence in north Africa (notably religion and social cultures) and Arab cultural penetration of Europe preceded colonial conquest by more than a thousand years and this was largely as a result of the geographical proximity of the two regions.

One of the features of postcolonial African history is the existence of structural conflicts between the three dominant religions in the continent (i.e. Christianity, Islam and African Indigenous Religion [AIR]) and these conflicts have taken diverse forms and twists. Other related features that somehow impact on the structural conflicts include the continued Africanization of both Christianity and Islam in most part of sub-Saharan Africa, and the formal acknowledgement of Islam as the state religion in some African countries regardless of the move towards secularism as is evident in North Africa (Singh 2006:2). It suffices to briefly highlight the nature of AIR in relation to other major religions on the content to help contextuate the discussion.

Broadly, AIR subsumes a hierarchy of Afro-deities, deified objects and spiritual forces that in various ways connect the people to the conceivably more decisive supernatural realm. Some of the spiritual forces and gods are believed to inhabit the cosmic system or some natural forces and creatures, including the sun, moon, virgin forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, caves and totems. There are also spirit forces associated with the deification of some dead legendary ancestors or fictive progenitors. From the perspective of adherents and worshippers (both 'pre-historic' and present), AIR is purposeful for a wide range of spiritual, secular and mundane concerns, including reverential worship and fellowship, individual/collective protection and security, material prosperity, therapeutic healing, explanation of the unknown, control of present and impending adversities, etc. (see Omeje 2005). The empirical content of ATR varies from one culture or community to another. Based on the classic works of noted experts like Mbiti

(1969), Ellis and Haar (2004, 2007) and Møller (2006), one can identify some of the defining structural and empirical characteristics of AIR as follows:

(a) Structural polytheism – a plurality of deities and gods: according to Mbiti (1969:1), 'Africans are notoriously religious, and each people have their own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it'. Ellis and Haar (2007:387) argue that in sub-Saharan Africa there is widespread belief that the immaterial forces perceived to be operating in the material world consist of, or are controlled by, individual spirits. Mbiti speaks of AIR in the plural (AIRs) because according to him, 'tribes' are the operational framework for AIRs, and each tribe has got its own religious system. However, one must hasten to add that there is also a mosaic of 'sub-tribal' – or perhaps more appropriately 'sub-ethnic' – and trans-ethnic deities in various communities of sub-Saharan Africa.

(b) A holistic approach to reality in which the spiritual and physical worlds are inseparable; the former preceding the latter. In African traditional religion and cosmology, the structural distinction between the sacred and the secular, the religious and non-religious, as well as the spiritual and material areas of life found in Judeo-Christian civilization is completely blurred. Ellis and Haar (2007) posit that the so-called structural separation between the sacred and secular reflects the specific historical experience of Europe, but not necessarily the rest of the world, not least Africa. Mbiti (1969) attributes the African holistic approach to reality and the pre-eminence of religious discourse to the fact that religion permeates all spheres of life in Africa – beliefs and worldview; farming, harvest and crop yield; marriage and child-bearing; stages and rituals of community socialisation; death and funerals; personal and collective security; defence and warfare; the environment and natural disasters, etc.

(c) Community-centeredness: AIR is a community-centred and community-driven religion, implying that the individual is religious by virtue of his membership of a closely-knit multi-functional community. In the traditional African societies, especially in pre-colonial history, everybody was so deeply and communally religious that there was no space for atheism or agnosticism. The advent of the two main Abrahamic religions (Christianity and Islam) has significantly vitiated the community spirit of AIR, especially in many urban areas where AIR has either, to a large extent, been displaced or where some measure of syncretism prevails. It is noteworthy that amongst many Africans oriented to syncretism (i.e. adhering to two or more religions, in most cases, AIR and one of the two dominant Abrahamic religions) there is the tendency for people to often conceal their involvement in, and practice of, AIR. This is most common among the educated elites and urban dwellers and the reason is clearly because of the legacy of demonization that AIR has inherited

from colonial times. With regard to the tendency of many Africans towards syncretism, Mbiti (1969:3) observes that: 'unless Christianity and Islam fully occupy the whole person as much as, if not more than, traditional religions do, most converts to these faiths will continue to revert to their old beliefs and practices for perhaps six days a week, and certainly in times of emergency and crisis'. Many neo-liberal scholars attribute the present and growing religious revival in many parts of Africa (i.e. radical Islam, neo-Pentecostalism and neo-traditionalism) to deepening economic hardship, state failure and the impact of globalisation (Møller 2006; Ellis & Haar 2007).

(d) Human embodiment of religious codes and non-scripturalization: AIR's codes are largely embodied by powerful personages and adherents, albeit the codes are believed to be inspired and sanctioned by the applicable god(s). There is an evident lack of codification and scripturalization of the religion into sacred texts. 'Religion in African societies is written not on paper but in people's hearts, minds, oral history, rituals and religious personages like priests, rainmakers, officiating elders and even kings … (Hence), to study AIRs, one has to, of necessity, study the people that embody the religion' (Mbiti 1969:4). Some critics have argued that the lack of sacred scriptures disposes AIR to the arbitrary manipulation of officiating priests and other powerful intermediaries. This is further seen as an indication of how underdeveloped AIR is as a religion. But it is evident that twisting of religious codes occurs in all religions and this is a phenomenon associated with the susceptibility of the belief systems (written or unwritten) to multiple subjective interpretations.

(e) Self-containment, non-proselytization and this-worldly utility: AIR does not have missionaries for the purpose of winning converts to expand its territorial reach. 'One does not preach his religion to another; you are born into it' (Mbiti 1969:4). This is a tendency that AIR shares with some oriental religions, such as Hinduism and Confucianism. Similarly, the religion lacks messianic pillars and founders comparable to Jesus Christ in Christianity or Mohammed in Islam, albeit many traditions of AIR incorporate certain legendary figures (in some cases, symbols of ancestor worship) into their belief systems (Mbiti 1969; Ranger 1992. By and large, AIR mostly has a this-worldly utilitarian approach to gods and deities. There is a great orientation of the religion to how divinity can help maintain or achieve a harmonious social order, and how spiritual power can be harnessed to solve real-life existential problems, including combating diverse forms of threats to security and social order. Without doubt, and as in most religions, human intermediaries often exploit and abuse these processes. The mystical and eschatological dimensions of AIR essentially help in explaining, rationalising and engaging the unknown and the seemingly mysterious. These include issues like unravelling past retributive atrocities, getting

a handle on complex oddities of the present, foretelling the future, as well as issues of after-death, incarnation, and eternity.

The apparent denigration and displacement of AIR by Christianity and Islam is derived from the notion that colonial missionaries and state officials constructed AIR as a satanic, primitive and pernicious religion that thrives on reprehensible practices like witchcraft, ancestor worship and human sacrifice. Colonial missionaries and agencies used a combination of persuasive and aggressive *proselytization*, as well as outlawing of some traditional religious institutions and destruction of their shrines, to convert many Africans from AIR to Christianity. The dangerous stigmatization of AIR and its discord with Christianity was a phenomenon inherited by the African postcolonial states, which has contributed to the indignity and disdain associated with the religion in most part of Africa, especially among the educated and urban-based segments of the populations. But notwithstanding the reality of continuing stigmatization, many Africans acknowledge the multi-functionality of AIR – an aspect of the African indigenous knowledge system - as a practical problem-solving oriented religion and as such continue to maintain a foothold on it (Amisi 2008:1).

For some of the Westernized urban-based classes, especially the political elites, whose religious worldviews and orientations are markedly ambivalent, AIR is considered invaluable inissue areas such as: divination and oath-taking to affirm political loyalty or establish official wrongdoing; bewitching and persecution of rivals using *juju* and mystical missiles; de-mining and repelling of evil darts; supernatural security of political regime and office holders; offensive defence and combating of threats by public office holders; and quite significantly, spiritual healing and alternative medicine (Omeje 2011).

Colonial legacy has been a crucial factor in the conflict between Christianity and Islam in some of the postcolonial African states. This was recently reinforced by a question raised by Mazrui (2010:1) in terms of whether Christianity and Islam, both growing in influence in post-colonial Africa, can co-exist. Using Nigeria as a prototype for divisiveness along religious fault-lines, he drew attention to the fact that Nigeria also has one of the largest populations of Muslims in Africa. In terms of the spread of the two religions (Islam and Christianity) among the three dominant ethnic group of Nigeria, Islam reinforces the Hausa identity in northern Nigeria while the Yoruba-dominated south-western part has a significant number of Christians and Muslims. Christianity is the dominant religion among the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria. Tensions between Christianity and Islam over the implementation of Sharia law in the northern part of the country have led to violent confrontations between the two religions culminating in killings and reprisals (Schwartz 2010:3).

In the case of Sudan, the country has a nexus of complicated conflict fault lines. Its forty-two million population is largely divided along lines of religion

(70% Muslim, 25% animist, 5% Christian), ethnicity (52% black African, 39% Arab, and others 9%), and economic activity at grassroots level (nomadic and sedentary) (ICG, International Crisis Group 2006). The majority of people often classified as animists in Sudan are mostly syncretic in that they simultaneously adhere to one of the two major religions, Islam or Christianity. Significantly, there is a major ethno-regional divide between the dominant Arab north and the minority Christian-Animist black African south, a divide that has historically been a conflict fault line. This north-south conflict fault line based on racial and religious identities has produced two instalments of civil wars between the south and the Khartoum-based central government in the north: the first between 1955 and 1972, and the second between 1983 and 2005. Another ethno-regional conflict fault line exists between the largely black African Muslim-dominated north-western region of Darfur and the hegemonic Arab Muslim populations of north-central Sudan. The civil war in the Darfur region of Sudan that started in February 2003 is a consequence of this conflict fault line (Omeje 2010:177).

'We will Modernize but We will not be You': The Continuing Debate between Traditionalism and Modernity in Africa

Postcolonial Africa's drive for modernity has inculcated a belief in the inferiority of its traditional values, and practice and knowledge systems. In this case, the will to assert the primacy of its traditions is undermined, with a strong will and tendency to be dependent on the West (Ake 1982:141). The implication of this is that modernity, which essentially reflects the transition from the pre-modern (e.g. feudal and semi-feudal) to modern (e.g. industrial and secular) way of life and knowledge system is translated to mean Westernization in thinking and practice. Huntington (1997:78) argued to the contrary, on the basis of the assumption that modernization is distinct, and does not necessarily mean Westernization (Huntington 1997:20).

In this case, non-western societies can modernize and have modernized without abandoning their own endogenous cultures and adopting Western values, institutions and practices. Huntington's claim reinforces the argument of this chapter that postcolonial civilizations in Africa and Asia, for instance, have embraced modernity, while in some fundamental respects contesting Western ideological standpoints.In essence, the triumph of the Western model of modernity would not lead to the end of the plurality of historic cultures. He argued further that the world is fast becoming modern and less Western, to the extent that while African societies have access to the technological advancements of the West, the culture and value systems of the West have faced some degree of resistance from some of the African societies.

One aspect of such a drive towards modernity is the question of individualism. In traditional African societies, individualism is a novel concept that is in conflict with the old notion of communalism, which puts emphasis on dependence on 'the collective or community' for the realization of one's identity and aspirations

in life. While this chapter does not argue that there are no historical structures of individualism in Africa, there is a sense in which individualism exists in various African cultures. For instance, this could be seen within the context of what is being referred to as *umuntu-ngumuntungabantu* in southern Africa, which connotes the fact that 'a person is only a person through his/her relationship with others'. Here, the success or advancement of an individual is predicated on the extent to which the community contributes to such an endeavour. Thus, an ethological discourse of African societies tends to be plagued by a pattern of generalization whereby African people are considered as forming one single tradition, and Africa is perceived as one village where all the African people come from (Makang 1997:328). As Mandela (1994:8) once observed:

> In African culture, the sons and daughters of one's aunts or uncles are considered brothers and sisters, not cousins …We have no half-brothers or half-sisters. My mother's sister is my mother; my uncle's son is my brother; my brothers' child is my son, my daughter. Anyone who claims descent from a common ancestor is deemed part of the same family.

Modernization theory came under intense criticisms for its reductionist attempts at elevating Western European and North American development experiences and pedagogy to the level of universal truth. In fact, the attempt to present the western model as the most valid model puts into question the very concept of modernity, which has raised certain fundamental questions about whether the path to modernity followed by countries from the West is valid (Fukuyama 1992:69). While the global North is progressively becoming homogenous technologically, economically, and culturally under what is termed a global culture, African societies are on the verge of retrogression as the continent seems to be lagging behind largely due to its diverse cultural, political and religious value systems (Afolayan 2002:4).

The project of Western modernity, which made historical advances to various parts of Africa through colonialism, was met with a variant of African philosophy (e.g. *ubuntu* in southern Africa) that emphasizes communality as against Western individualism (Gianan 2010:86), while in North and Sahel Africa, western modernism has been largely checkmated through the solidarity, faith and resistance offered by Islam. Conversely, the reality of Africa's postcolonial experience is that the continent has encountered and been defeated by Western civilization to the extent that indigenous languages are fast withering, and giving way to English, French, Portuguese and Spanish languages, which were imported into Africa during colonial rule. The dressing and behavioural patterns of Africans have to a large extent changed to reflect those of the West (Graiouid 2007:2). Tradition in the African sense is criticized for maintaining a worldview based on patterns, customs, beliefs and rituals inherited from the past and orally transmitted through generations, as well as the existence of a type of social organization that places a greater

premium on group ties at the expense of the autonomy of individuals. Giddens (1992:36) asserts that the idea of modernity is hinged on a linear conception of time, a secularized form of the life-world, a differentiated interpretation of spheres of action and knowledge and the organization of social relations around individual rather than group interest.

The concept of post-traditionalism was used by Nabudere (2000:41) and Graiouid (2007:7) as a variant of traditionalism in explaining the shift from colonialism to post-colonialism in African societies. They view post-traditionalism as a composite of a coherent mix of traditionalism and modernism, which was adopted as a strategy for survival by the African modernists. In this sense, postcolonial Africa's shift from traditionalism to post-traditionalism is characterized by the emergence of new cultural identities as evident in the revival of religious fundamentalism that is concerned with the movement that calls for the emancipation of the historically marginalized. In the last two decades, the Horn of Africa has been a region in crisis, largely due to the emergence of Islamic revolt against modernity by Islamist movements, such as *Al-lttihad al-Islamiya* and the Islamic Court Union (ICU).

Notwithstanding the existence of countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia with Christianity as dominant religions, the goal of these Islamist movements is to impose strict Sharia laws in the entire Horn of Africa, as a way of resisting and displacing Western values as represented by the United States (Eshel 2007:1). In the case of Sudan, for instance, the indigenization policy that came into being during the decolonization years, under what was termed Sudanization or Arabization, was adopted as a way of replacing Western colonial officials with educated locals. This policy of Arabization and Islamization, as the case may be, was partly meant to checkmate or restrict the activities of Christian missions from the West but more fundamentally to control, dominate and exploit the non-Arab periphery of Sudan's southern region (Omeje 2010:173-176).

The resurgence of indigenous African conceptions of the role of women in society also reflects a cultural movement over the last decade, which is seen in the light of the shift from traditionalism to modernity, in view of the rising wave of agitation for the advancement of women's rights so as to enable them to achieve important recognition in the public sphere. This is aimed at creating space for multi-vocal debate. The phenomenon seems to have been achieved through what is regarded as contentious conversations between African indigenous cosmology and modernity. African indigenous beliefs and practices are essentially predicated on the sustaining faith held and transmitted by the fore-bearers of the present generation concerning the organic relationship between the spiritual and the mortal, a relationship that continues to bewidely professed and practiced in various forms by contemporary Africans, including people of African descent in the Diaspora (Awolalu 1976:1).

To a considerable extent, the cultural violence associated with women's rights is still being reinforced in postcolonial African societies of northern Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Somalia, and other Islamic states and regions of Africa where patriarchy and the practice of *purdah* still hold sway. This tension between indigenous notions of masculinity in Africa and modernity's recognition of the Western feminist struggle for equity (including the quest to displace the prevailing gender hierarchies in Africa) is firmly rooted in culture and religion (cf. Mohanty 1988:71; Kramer 2006:1).

In all, the notion of post-traditionalism is presented as a metaphorical site where people can reflect on the dynamics taking place in a society where politics, tradition, religion, secularism, modernity and post-modernity open an array of opportunities for people from different cultures and civilizations in a process of globalization that is restructuring the economic, political, social and cultural map of the world (Graiouid 2007:13-14). On the political front, postcolonial African states have created governance regimes through the harmonization of traditional political institutions with modern political and democratic practices, under an institutional duality (Mengisteab 2008:5). In the case of Uganda, for instance, the observed institutional duality was formalized by the President Museveni regime, which under the country's new constitution of 1995 recognized and consolidated the governance role of indigenous political institutions, a move that has emboldened indigenous rulers, often pitching them in conflict against the state (Nabudere 2000:43). Even in countries where there are no apparent constitutional roles for traditional political institutions, traditional chiefs and religious authorities continue to perform significant legitimate functions in community governance, dispute settlement and state-society relations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that colonial rule has had far-reaching distorting effects in the historical evolution of African societies, engendering a crisis of staggering proportion in the various institutions of the state and society. The contemporary conflict between traditionalism and modernity which creates deep-rooted confusion and ambivalence in the socio-economic, cultural, political, and ideological orientations and identities of the African people (both in their collectivities and individualities) seems to be the strongest expression of this postcolonial crisis. In the discourse of African social structures and ways of life, the boundaries between African indigenous heritage and imported external systems and influence are increasingly blurred, but also in conflict. Ideally, this should not be the case because in all practical purposes, civilizations are not insular.

African traditional values and Western civilizations can co-exist and aspire towards modernity in ways that do not seek to displace the other. Attempts toward displacement would amount to deliberate extinction of the history and

people of one against the other. What this chapter recommends is the constructive hybridization of African traditionalism and western modernity on the basis of mutual respect and reciprocity. More significantly, postcolonial African civilization rooted ina nexus of traditionalism and various models of modernity (especially western) is continually subjected to invention, re-invention, as well as mutual negotiation and infusion customs, values and beliefs as a result of the widening and intensification of the frontiers of communication and interaction. These have been made possible through the globalization process that is increasingly shrinking the traditional barriers of space and time.

Postcolonial Africa is no doubt at a crossroads. The transformation of the continent and its people is intrinsically linked to the transition from traditionalism to modernism, while struggling hard to defend its pan-African identity. Africa is not in conflict with modernity. Like any other continent or region of the world, what many African states, communities and peoples tend to resist is any attempt to foist unacceptable exogenous value systems on them, particularly from the West, under the guise of modernity. Since the modernization of the West went through a process of reinvention and unsettling contradictions, African transformation cannot be an exception.

In the final analysis, it could be argued that traditionalism and modernity are adaptable phases in the collective development of a people (Africa and the West included), and more importantly, modernism is an eternally evolving paradigm of human civilization that is not peculiar to any people, society or hemisphere. The Western model of modernity should not therefore be seen as the universal prototype of civilization. While this chapter endorses the notion of post-traditionalism, which recognizes the mix of indigenous African knowledge systems and modernity, scientific advancements and developments in Africa should be geared towards meeting the continent's specific needs, rather than imitating the West.

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6

Postcoloniality, Conflict Intervention and Peacebuilding in West Africa: Opportunities and Challenges

John M. Kabia

Introduction

This chapter examines the crises of postcoloniality in west Africa and its links with state failure and conflict in the sub-region. It also analyses the conflict response and peacebuilding intervention of the sub-regional economic grouping, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and examines the contemporary opportunities and challenges to peace and security in the sub-region. A number of commentators and writers on postcoloniality and conflict in Africa have focused on the role played by indigenous political elites and the impact of neo-patrimonial and clientelistic politics in producing weak and failing states (Bayart 1993; Reno 1998). Whilst recognizing the destabilizing impact of these factors on the African state, however, this chapter argues that analysis of postcoloniality and conflicts in west Africa should be eclectic and take on board various other factors, such as the sub-region's colonial legacy, its Cold War past, and peripheral status in the world economy. Limiting the analysis of the crises of postcoloniality to the excesses of African political elites ignores the myriad of actors and factors involved, and certainly distorts the understanding of wider political and socio-economic forces at play.

To understand the crises of postcoloniality in west Africa, this chapter starts by examining the impact of colonialism on the sub-region and how it laid the foundations of authoritarianism, state collapse and conflicts. As historical legacies are not enough to explain the sub-region's widespread instability, the nature of the postcolonial state and the challenges it faces will be analysed to highlight the

devastating effects of neo-patrimonial and clientelistic politics and how these have produced failed states and complex political emergencies across west Africa. Next, we look at the conflict response and humanitarian intervention of ECOWAS and its attempt at institutionalizing conflict resolution and peacebuilding mechanisms. Finally, we assess the opportunities and challenges facing peace and security in West Africa.

Colonialism in West Africa: Legacy and Impact on State Formation

Understanding the crises of postcoloniality in west Africa and the problems of state failure and collapse require an analysis of how these states were formed. Such an analysis reveals the deep-rooted causes of west African conflicts and the impact of colonialism on state formation. With the exception of Liberia that was founded as a settlement for freed slaves by an American charity, the American Colonization Society, all the states in the sub-region share a colonial past. However, even Liberia shares some of the legacies of colonialism as descendants of freed slaves resettled in Monrovia behaved like 'colonial masters' over the indigenous population.

Prior to colonialism, west Africa was home to some of Africa's earliest thriving political entities. This goes back to the era of the great empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Contacts with outsiders go back centuries when Arab merchants started the lucrative Trans-Saharan trade. This involved exchange of north African salt, cloth and cowries for West African gold. European contact started with naval explorations by Portuguese sailors. This was later followed by trade in gold and slaves. Although parts of west Africa, and indeed Africa at large, were already under colonial rule by the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was not until 1884 that the process of acquiring colonies began in earnest. Upon the invitation of Von Bismarck, European powers assembled in Berlin in 1884 to 'carve-up' Africa into colonial territories. This arbitrary partition never took into account the existing ethnic and natural borders in Africa. This resulted in the creation of countries with many different ethnic groups. Nigeria, for instance, has more than 250 ethnic groups with very diverse cultural and linguistic background. In some other cases, some ethnic groups straddle several countries. This contributes to the regional spread of conflicts as members of the same ethnic group in neighbouring countries come to the aid of their kin.

The dominant colonial powers in west Africa were France and Great Britain. The Portuguese were also involved but to a minimal level. Although there are variations in the policies of the different colonial masters, the common underlying motive of all of them was the subjugation and exploitation of the African continent. The French considered their territories as overseas provinces of France. To this end, they sought to integrate their territories closer to the metropole. This resulted in the weakening of local authority structures through their policy of 'assimilation'.

The British on the other hand opted for the cheaper option of governing their colonies through indirect rule. This involves delegating greater powers to local authorities. The Portuguese implemented the most draconian policies in their territories. These include forced labour and a rule requiring locals to carry ID cards. Forced labour was also widespread in French west African colonies. However, unlike the settler-dominated colonies of east and southern Africa, decolonization in west Africa was relatively peaceful except for the former Portuguese colonies, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, who had to wage a bitter war of independence. Nationalist agitation surfaced in west Africa following the end of World War I and the creation of the League of Nations. The League's principle of self-determination provided the impetus for the activities of the early nationalist leaders. The involvement of many west African soldiers in the liberation of Europe during World War II also galvanised support amongst west Africans for decolonization. Furthermore, most of the elites from these colonies had been educated in Europe and could now articulate their demands using the political language of the West. The creation of the United Nations also acted as a major catalyst towards independence. Founded on ideals of equality and self-determination, the UN accelerated the move towards independence. In west Africa, Ghana led the way to independence in 1957, followed by Guinea in 1958. Most countries had independence between 1960 and 1961, with Cape Verde being the last to be free from foreign rule in 1975.

Although nationalist agitation started about 50 years earlier, little was done by colonial powers to prepare the colonies politically and economically for independence. In fact most of the colonialists were caught off guard with the speed of events after World War II. The French, for instance, were still thinking of creating a grand Franco-African Confederation in 1958. This lack of preparation meant that at independence, most west African and indeed African states had few educated personnel to take over the administration of these countries. Guinea Bissau, for instance, only had 14 graduates at independence and an illiteracy rate of 97 per cent (Lamb 1984). It was not surprising therefore that 'the skills of the new civil servants were too few and their experience all too limited to master the many tasks of governance' (Chazan *et al*. 1999:43).

Not only were the new civil servants unprepared for the tasks they faced, the new political leaders also lacked the necessary skills and experience to govern. Most of these leaders gained their positions through their ability to organize anti-colonial protests and campaigns. Whereas 'the bulk of their own political understanding had been modelled in a centralized and authoritarian colonial context' (ibid:45), at independence they were faced with pluralist political institutions of alien origins. Kasfir rightly noted that 'the political culture bequeathed by colonialism contained the notions that authoritarianism was an appropriate mode of rule and that political activity was merely a disguised form of self-interest, subversive of

the public welfare' (Kasfir, quoted in Chazan *et al.* 1999:43) . In fact, in most of these colonies, pluralist politics and universal adult suffrage was only introduced about a decade before independence. As will be discussed later, this legacy of authoritarianism would resurface in the post-colonial era.

Besides failing to prepare the colonies politically, the colonizers also failed to bring meaningful economic and industrial development. No serious attempt was made at industrialization. The few industries that were established were mainly focused on the primary sector. Infrastructural and development projects started late in the process. In keeping with their underlying economic motives, the few infrastructural projects implemented were geared towards facilitating the exploitation of the colonies' raw materials. Evidence of this incoherent and lopsided development policy can be seen in the way roads and railways were built to link only the major producing areas with the seaport (Thomson 2004). Consequently, young men were lured from rural areas lacking in amenities to coastal urban cities. Unfortunately, this trend has not been reversed by post-colonial governments. In search of livelihood and a better life, the majority of these youths have remained unemployed in the urban areas, thus providing a fertile recruiting ground for would-be dissidents.

A False Dawn: The Crises of Postcoloniality in West Africa

The euphoria that greeted independence in the 1960s was short-lived as post-colonial regimes failed to deliver on their promises of economic development and political emancipation for the masses. A combination of internal and external factors account for this dismal performance, including the widespread practice of neo-patrimonial and clientelistic politics, the impact of Cold War politics, the peripheral status of African countries in the world economy and the debilitating debt burden.

Patrimonialism and clientelism are key concepts in trying to understand the crises of legitimacy and governance that rocked several west African and indeed African countries. Thomson (2004:115) aptly defines patrimonialism as 'a form of political order where power is concentrated in the personal authority of one individual ruler … The state is their private property, and the act of ruling is consequently arbitrary'. In west Africa, the politics of patrimonialism led to growing tendencies towards authoritarian rule. But as mentioned in the previous section, this is not a new phenomenon as post-independence leaders inherited from colonial rule a highly centralized, undemocratic and authoritarian system of government. This has led some analysts to argue that the authoritarian rule of postcolonial rulers was merely a continuation of what existed during colonialism. Most postcolonial leaders regarded their positions as rewards for their struggle for independence. Any opposition was branded unpatriotic and considered ungrateful to the efforts of nationalists. Members of the opposition were suppressed, intimidated and jailed. In several countries, such as Ghana and Guinea, crude

sedition laws were formulated to suppress the activities of the opposition. The press was heavily censored and freedom of expression was curtailed. And as Chazan *et al.* (1999:49) observe, 'opposition itself was considered to be immoral. Unity was equated with uniformity, disagreement with treason'. Complete concentration of power on leaders was achieved with the adoption of the one-party system, for example in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Even in countries where the system was not institutionalized, one-party rule became *de facto* as opportunities for fair competition were absent. Senegal and Liberia can be classed under this category. Various reasons were used by leaders to justify one-party rule (see Jordan 1969; Thomson 2004). Kwame Nkrumah considered multi-party politics to be divisive and a distraction from the goal of national development. Felix Houphouet-Boigny regarded one-party rule as a manifestation of the unity that already existed whilst Sekou Toure saw opposition parties as undermining the national development goals. Siaka Stevens borrowed from Julius Nyerere of Tanzania when he opined that one-party rule is in line with the traditional democratic African principles of unity and consensus. Notwithstanding the different justifications for adopting the system, the methods and strategies employed were similar. It resulted in the total concentration of power in the hands of the president and his closest allies. The role of national legislatures was reduced to rubber-stamping the decrees and wishes of presidents. In these circumstances, there was no basis for the establishment of Max Weber's legal-rational source of legitimacy as the state was personalized and the divide between the private and public became blurred. Leaders were immortalized; for instance, it was common to see leaders having titles like 'father of the nation'. In addition, important places were named after leaders like the Siaka Stevens Stadium, Kwame Nkrumah Institute, etc. Some leaders went as far as declaring themselves 'rulers for life'. Nkrumah of Ghana is a notable example.

Closely linked to the politics of patrimonialism is clientelism. In the absence of political legitimacy based on legal-rational governance, support for patrimonial rulers is based on clientelistic networks aimed at buying off opposition and rewarding followers. Christopher Clapham describes clientelism as 'a relation of exchange between unequals' (Clapham 1982:4). It is a mutually beneficial relationship between the patron and client. Thomson refers to this relationship as a form of political contract: whilst the patron rewards the client with public office, security and resources, the client reciprocates with support that helps to legitimise the patron's position (Thomson 2004). Clientelism in west Africa resulted in a seriously flawed process of distributing the state's scarce resources. Most leaders succeeded in building strong patron-client relationships that meant only supporters of the regime benefited from state resources. This guaranteed the support and loyalty of key institutions like the army and police on whose loyalty the regimes relied for survival. But it also led to inefficiency and massive corruption in the running of the state. Inefficiency permeated the entire state structure as

appointment to public office was not based on qualifications or merit but on association with the ruling elites. The meagre resources available for nation building were diverted to sustaining the patron-client networks. Corruption became rife as clients used their positions for rent-seeking. This involves taking bribes for performing their 'official' duties, kick backs on contracts, fraudulently selling off government property for private gain or diverting large sums of money to private Swiss accounts. The consequence for the masses was a state of declining social services, dilapidated infrastructure, weak and collapsing economy and widespread poverty. But in the midst of this growing impoverishment, patrimonialism and clientelism ensured some sense of stability and legitimacy for the ruling elites. However, around the 1980s and 1990s, patrimonial-clientelistic politics suffered a major crisis of legitimacy. The economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s including the negative effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and global economic recession on African economies, and the drying up of aid money following the end of the Cold War all resulted in the decline of resources available to ruling elites to sustain their patron-client networks. This in turn led to loss of legitimacy and widespread economic difficulties for patrons and clients alike. The resulting hardship brought about a spate of angry demonstrations across west Africa that were crushed with massive brutality by the authorities. In the middle of this chaos and instability, and with no established means of peaceful political change, the military emerged as the only challenger to the dictators and as Lewis observes, 'where opposition is illegal, governments can be changed only by *coup d'État*' (Lewis, quoted in Jordan 1969:105).

The first military coup in west Africa took place in Togo in 1963 when Eyadema overthrew President Olympio in a bloody coup. Since then, west Africa has been the most coup-prone sub-region in Africa. Cote d'Ivoire, once a bastion of peace and prosperity in the sub-region was itself engulfed in a coup in December 1999. Out of 16 countries in the sub-region, Senegal is the only one to have escaped the scourge of military rule. From Sierra Leone to Ghana, the justifications given by the military for seizing power are similar: to stop the misrule and massive corruption and human rights abuses of civilian dictators and return the country to a sound socio-economic and political footing. But despite the rhetoric, the record of military leaders in west Africa is far more appalling than their civilian counterparts. Human rights abuses reach unprecedented proportions during military rule as the cases of Sani Abacha, J.J. Rawlings and Samuel Doe indicate. Opponents of the regime are intimidated or brutally murdered whilst freedom of the press is severely restricted. Corruption is rife. Most of these leaders end up transforming themselves into civilians, allowing them to contest and rig the elections that follow. This spate of military coups has retarded economic development in the sub-region and created a climate of deep instability.

However, in the midst of this crisis of legitimacy, the Cold War superpowers actively and consciously tolerated and supported the dictators, both military and

civilians. This support for authoritarian regimes was meant to promote their political and strategic interests. Former US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, James K. Bishop acknowledged the fact that during the Cold War, 'Africa was viewed as yet another playing field on which the struggle between the Soviets and ourselves was to be waged' (quoted in Diamond 1995:150). Brutal and corrupt as Doe was, the US made him a key ally and effectively turned a blind eye to his excesses. In other west African states, the US intervention was limited as long as British and French influence was enough to thwart Communism. Soviet role in west Africa was limited and only acted as a response to US and Chinese influence in the sub-region (Chazan et al. 1999). Nevertheless, with its anti-colonial and radical stance, the Soviet Union was able to win over a few revolutionary leaders like Guinea's Sekou Toure and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah.

West Africa in the Post-Cold War Era: Between Democratization and Marginalization

At the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and the subsequent withdrawal of superpower support, west African regimes faced increasing internal and external pressures for reform. The internal pressures came in two forms. The first type was a peaceful, civil society-based campaign for democratic reforms whilst the second form was violent and aimed at taking over the state. Having been suppressed for a long time during the Cold War politics, these dissident groups suddenly realized that there was no longer any backing for dictators; the lid was then opened for everyone to express their dissent. Without support from their erstwhile allies, states like Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau all degenerated into a vicious circle of violence and instability.

The external pressures came from the Bretton Woods institutions, the UN and major bilateral donors like the US, UK and France who tied the granting of aid to economic structural adjustment and democratisation. In its 1989 study, *Sub-Saharan Africa: from Crisis to Sustainable Growth,* the World Bank linked the problem of governance to the poor economic performance of the continent. Major bilateral donors were blunt in warning African leaders that economic aid will be conditioned on satisfactory transition to democracy and the adoption of Western models of liberalized economy (see Diamond 1995). But as discussed above, these were the same institutions and governments turning a blind eye to, or supporting, repressive regimes in Africa during the Cold War. Hoogvelt (1997) also noted the contradiction in the new democratic conditionalities and the way in which strong and authoritarian regimes in Asia have been credited for the region's economic success. What then is responsible for this sudden change of policy? Some analysts have argued that these new conditionalities are geared towards 'focusing responsibility on governments of developing countries, both for past ills and for implementation of reform packages' (see Hoogvelt 1997:174). Another

plausible explanation for this sudden shift can be found in the fact that, after the end of the Cold War and the demise of communism, the West no longer needed the services of African dictators to help fend off soviet influence. With the battle of ideologies won, the US and its Western allies can now shift to promoting 'democracy' in the developing world. Hoogvelt considers this as 'new ways to serving the interests of international capital' (ibid).

With increasing internal and external pressure, governments across the sub-region were forced to accept reforms and a gradual move towards democracy. New political parties, human rights groups, pro-democracy movements, students, workers, market women, professionals and the unemployed all joined in the campaign for reforms. National conferences were held in several states in the sub-region to discuss the new democratic constitutions. Multi-party systems were adopted across the sub-region and freedom of the press and independence of the judiciary were enshrined in the constitutions. Elections were organised in Senegal, Mali, Benin, Cape Verde, Niger, Togo, Ghana, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. But the optimism that followed these events soon dissipated. In countries such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, military coups reversed all the gains that were achieved by pro-democracy campaigners. Even in those countries where elections were held, their conduct and aftermath cast a big shadow of doubt on the sustainability and effectiveness of democracy. In Guinea, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, a large section of the opposition boycotted the elections, citing the absence of a level playing field. In Togo, intimidation and targeted killings of members of the opposition effectively killed any meaningful challenge to the authority of President Eyadema. Niger slumped back to military dictatorship in 1999.

The above bleak picture of the state of governance in west Africa and indeed the entire continent has been the subject of several scholarly debates, analysis and commentaries. Sola Akinrinade (1998:79) calls it 'democracy without democratization.' He criticizes the democratization process in the entire continent for reducing democracy to the symbolic holding of elections rather than transforming the inherently undemocratic structure of the post-colonial state. This failure reduces elections to a mere exercise of choosing between two oppressors. It was only in Mali, Niger, Benin and Cape Verde that elections resulted in the ousting of incumbents. The failure to address the social and economic needs of the people is also a significant drawback for the democratisation process in west Africa. As Akinrinade succinctly puts it, 'when democracy is indifferent to the grinding poverty of the masses, giving the vote to the poor is virtually meaningless' (ibid:81). In short, democracy should not only bring about political liberalization but also, and most importantly, economic and social welfare for the masses.

The inability of the pro-democracy movements in these countries to present a united front against dictators is also partly responsible for the difficulties in

sustaining democracy. In most of these countries, pro-democracy campaigners ironically include former members of ruling parties and professionals who have fallen out of favour with leaders. These are the same people who have contributed to the subversion of democracy in their respective countries. Democracy for this group of people is purely about gaining power. This obsession with power has divided and seriously weakened the opposition. In Senegal, 7 presidential candidates stood against President Diouf in 1993. In Cote d'Ivoire 19 political parties contested the 1990 elections. In Nigeria, prior to the annulment of the June 1993 elections, 120 people aspired to be presidential candidates! (Akinrinade 1998). This apparent friction within the opposition is a big boost to incumbents. In addition to the friction within the opposition is its inability to present a credible and feasible alternative programme. This is not surprising as politics in west Africa revolves more around personalities than issues. However, the above shortcomings of the pro-democracy movement should not deny it the credit it deserves. Besides the small group of self-serving recycled politicians, there is an active and committed majority of activists, most of them ordinary people who have borne the brunt of bad governance in the sub-region. The sacrifices of these people in forcing political reforms and bringing a semblance of democracy should not go unnoticed.

The actions and policies of external actors (International Financial Institutions [IFIs], private investors and foreign governments) should also be considered when analysing the democratization process in west Africa. Foreign direct investment remains substantially low. The cynicism expressed by this Western business executive sums up the view of business leaders towards Africa: 'Who cares about Africa; it is not important to us; leave it to the IMF and the World Bank' (quoted in Callaghy 2000). Despite the promises of aid and economic assistance tied to democratization, IFIs and Western donor countries have not matched their words with deeds. For instance, the US scaled down its development aid to the entire sub-Saharan Africa from $2 billion in 1985 to $1 billion in 1997 (Mburu 2003). The debt burden continues to take a heavy toll on already fragile economies. By 1992, African debt was over $180 billion, which amounts to over 100 per cent of Africa's total GNP (Callaghy 2000). The continent remains politically and economically marginalized. Democracy does not thrive in a situation of abject poverty as is the case in Africa. There also appears to be a contradiction between democratization and the economic conditionalities imposed on Africa by the IFIs. Both new and old regimes alike have faced serious difficulties in implementing these directives. Because of their unpopular nature, elected governments have been forced to resort to draconian measures in implementing Structural Adjustment Programmes. In implementing such top-down directives, governments were required to ignore the views and opinions of the masses. This caused deep-seated resentment in many countries across the region and led to a series of violent demonstrations and riots. Harbeson (1995:15) shares this view when he noted that 'the multi-

donor campaigns for simultaneous economic and political liberalization risk becoming counterproductive, self-defeating, and accessories to the troubled political and economic circumstances of African countries in the early 1990s'. Former Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Adebayo Adedeji, puts it more bluntly: 'the donor countries that are encouraging Africans to take the democratic path are also the countries that are encouraging Africans to adopt economic policies that alienate the people' (quoted in Callaghy 2000:46). In his study on Sierra Leone, William Reno (1998) also established a link between neo-liberal reforms and the outbreak of violent conflict. He argues that these economic reforms attack the patrimonial state and undermine the basis of legitimacy of most leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed a rekindling of the spirit and determination of west African civil society to put democratization back on track. ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) have also shed their state-centric image to start engaging with civil society and putting democracy and good governance at the centre of their programmes. Notwithstanding these steps, the sub-region is still suffering from the problem of bad governance and the failure of leadership. These twin problems are at the heart of most of the political upheavals devastating the sub-region.

State Failure, Armed Conflict and Peacekeeping in West Africa: From ECOMOG to ECOMIL

The crises of postcoloniality have contributed to the incidents of state failure and state collapse in west Africa, including cases of brutal civil wars in the 1990s and 2000s. A failed state as defined by Carment (2001:10) is one that 'does not fulfil the obligations of statehood. The leadership does not have the means and credibility to compel internal order or to deter or repel external aggression'. A failed state is characterized by its increased inability to provide security and basic services for its people, including health, education and food. The institutions of government are in a state of near-collapse and the capacity of the state to manage conflicts and tensions is drastically diminished. Different examples from sub-Saharan Africa reveal that state failure is often preceded by years of dictatorship characterized by patron-client networks, massive corruption, intimidation and suppression of the opposition. These factors erode the legitimacy of the state and set the stage for disaffected groups to challenge its authority. But whilst the crises of postcoloniality have created the underlying causes of state failure and conflicts in the sub-region, a mixture of triggering factors, most of them regional in nature, transformed these latent conflicts into violent and protracted wars. These include the reciprocal support given by states within the sub-region to various dissident groups, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the spread of local mercenaries and civil militias, and the role of strategic natural resources in fuelling and prolonging

conflicts. Consequently 13 out of the 16 countries in the sub-region have been embroiled in varying levels of conflicts ranging from intermittent low-intensity conflicts in Nigeria and Guinea to devastating civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. In early 2012, Mali which until recently was seen as a positive example of the region's transformation from conflict was plunged into a complex crisis involving on the one part separatists Tuareg rebels and Islamists fighting for control of northern Mali, and on the other, a military coup in the south which undermined the country's growing democratic credentials. The widespread conflict and instability has led many in the West to brand Africa the 'hopeless' continent. In his article, 'The Coming Anarchy,' Kaplan (1994:3) painted a rather gloomy picture of west Africa:

> West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide democratic, environmental and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real 'strategic' danger. Disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a west African prism.

But despite raising some of the security concerns facing west Africa, Kaplan's analysis appears to be grossly exaggerated. The conflict response and peacebuilding intervention of states in the sub-region paints a more optimistic picture of a region taking responsibility for addressing its security and political problems.

Faced with an unprecedented scale of human suffering and international disengagement from African conflicts, the sub-regional economic body, ECOWAS, was forced to devise *ad hoc* security mechanisms for keeping a lid on these conflicts. In the 1990s, ECOWAS deployed its peacekeeping force, ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau. In 2003 following the outbreak of conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, ECOWAS launched the ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ECOMICI) and in August 2003, the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) was deployed following that country's relapse into violence. The dynamics and unpredictability of conflicts in the sub-region has posed significant challenges to the traditional conceptualization and practice of humanitarian intervention. State collapse, which can be both a cause and consequence of complex political emergencies, has expanded the remits of humanitarian interveners from the 'fire brigade' mentality to efforts aimed at rebuilding collapsed states. ECOWAS peacekeepers therefore have established safe havens, shared their limited military supplies with starving civilians and secured humanitarian relief corridors. To varying degrees of success, ECOMOG missions have also engaged in peacebuilding efforts, including implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, security sector reform and organizing elections. These interventions have also provided an opportunity for the UN to co-deploy with a regional organization in peacekeeping as was envisaged in the UN charter. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOMOG has co-deployed

with UN observer missions whilst ECOWAS Missions in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire has provided rapid deployment forces that were transformed into UN Missions. Despite the problems of co-ordination, logistics and differences in mandate and culture, the co-operation between the UN and ECOWAS has allowed each organization to maximise its comparative advantage whilst working together to resolve the conflicts. Lessons learned in these missions have provided a blueprint for how the UN and regional organisations can work together.

However, despite the achievements and successes outlined above, ECOWAS peacekeeping missions have faced serious challenges and setbacks in their attempts to restore peace to war-torn countries. These include the force's lack of capacity to effectively safeguard civilians under their control, poor human rights record of troops, lack of neutrality and complicity in exploiting the natural resources of the host countries. ECOWAS missions have also been hampered by financial, military and political difficulties. The endemic funding and logistical constraints suffered by ECOMOG has severely limited the capacity of the force. Another crucial factor that has adversely affected ECOMOG's operations is the rivalry and lack of political consensus between French and English-speaking west Africa. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, for example, French-speaking countries have been less co-operative, with some even supporting rebel groups against ECOMOG. For example, in December 1989, Charles Taylor used Cote d'Ivoire as a staging ground for the invasion of Liberia. A UN Panel of Experts also implicated Burkina Faso in providing support to the RUF and NPFL in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively (UN 2001). This lack of political consensus on the part of the mandating body complicated an already complex situation and further derailed efforts to resolve the conflicts. Even amongst troops on the ground, there were differences of approach and strategy. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, whilst Ghana favoured traditional peacekeeping strategies, Nigeria adopted more robust enforcement action. This difference in strategy has led to problems with inter-contingent co-ordination and chain of command. These tensions have been exacerbated by the lack of effective ECOWAS oversight of both forces and the sub-regional resentment of Nigeria's hegemonic position.

Institutionalizing Conflict Resolution in West Africa: The ECOWAS Security Mechanism

The problems encountered and lessons learned in the various ECOWAS peacekeeping operations of the 1990s and early 2000s led to the initiation of a process meant to improve future interventions. In this respect, ECOWAS made moves to institutionalise conflict resolution, security and peacekeeping mechanisms. The revised ECOWAS treaty of 1993 represents the first serious attempt to establish such a permanent mechanism. Besides strengthening economic and fiscal ties to face the challenges of globalization, the treaty addressed issues pertaining to security, conflict resolution and management. In recognition of the nexus between human

rights, good governance and conflicts in the sub-region, ECOWAS in 1991 agreed on the Declaration of Political Principles which committed member states to respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This was followed in 2001 by the adoption of the Protocol on Good Governance, which addresses the root causes of conflict such as corruption and bad governance. To address the link between small arms proliferation and conflict, ECOWAS member states agreed on a Moratorium on Small Arms in October 1998. The Moratorium was transformed into a legally binding convention in June 2006 and a Small Arms Unit has since been established within the ECOWAS Commission to monitor its implementation.

However, the most important security protocol adopted so far is the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security signed in December 1999. As its name implies, this mechanism seeks to strengthen the sub-region's conflict prevention, management and resolution capacity, as well as build effective peacekeeping, humanitarian support and peacebuilding capabilities. The ECOWAS Security Mechanism formally established ECOMOG as the standby force of the community and, reflecting the changing nature of peacekeeping, its role was expanded to cover conflict prevention, humanitarian intervention, enforcement, peacebuilding and the control of organized crime. In June 2004, the ECOWAS Defence and Security Commission renamed ECOMOG as the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). The force is made up of 6,500 highly trained soldiers drawn from national units. It includes a rapid reaction Task Force of 1,500 troops that have the capability to be deployed within 14 days (instead of the 30 days previously planned in line with African Union Standard), whilst the entire brigade can be deployed within 90 days. The ESF forms one of the components of the African Standby Force and is under the operational control of the African Union. To enhance the force's strategic, tactical and operational readiness, ECOWAS is in the process of implementing a 5-year training programme. This involves a series of specialised modules consistent with UN standards to be delivered in three designated Centres of Excellence: Nigerian War College in Abuja, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre in Accra, Ghana, and the Ecole du Maintien de la Paix in Bamako, Mali. ECOWAS also organises military exercises with the aim of enhancing the peacekeeping capacity of troops and harmonising strategies and equipment. To address the perennial problem of logistics, ECOWAS has designated two logistics depots – a coastal base just outside Freetown, Sierra Leone, and an inland base in Mali. In July 2010, the Government of Sierra Leone donated 18 acres of land to ECOWAS for the building of the logistics base and ECOWAS has already disbursed $10 million dollars for the first phase of the project.

An Early Warning System (ECOWARN) has also been established with a regional observation network and observatories. These observatories undertake risk mapping, observation and analysis of social, economic and political situations

in the sub-region that have the potential of degenerating into conflict and present appropriate threat perception analysis. Critics have however accused ECOWARN of lacking an early response capacity. This is illustrated by the organization's failure to respond to the Cote d'Ivoire crises of 2010/11 and its delay in responding to the ongoing conflict in Mali. The system also suffers from a lack of integration and co-ordination with other agencies and initiatives within ECOWAS performing prevention and peacebuilding roles such as those responsible for youth and gender equality. The development of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (discussed below) aims to address this drawback.

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was developed in January 2008 to inform and guide the organization's conflict prevention efforts. It aims to provide a strong conceptual understanding of conflict prevention, strengthen ECOWAS' conflict prevention capacity and integrate existing initiatives of ECOWAS institutions and mechanisms responsible for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. These aims are to be achieved through a set of 14 components covering a broad spectrum of areas that enhance human security: Early Warning, Preventive Diplomacy, Democracy and Political Governance, Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Natural Resource Governance, Cross-Border Initiatives, Security Governance, Practical Disarmament, Women, Peace and Security, Youth Empowerment, ECOWAS Standby Force, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Education (The Culture of Peace). To enable its implementation, the ECPF calls for increased advocacy and communication of the goals and activities of ECOWAS, resource mobilization to support peace and security efforts, cooperation with the AU, UN, member states and civil society, and participative monitoring and evaluation. The ECPF is a very comprehensive framework document that addresses a key limitation of earlier security mechanisms – the failure of coordination amongst various departments and institutions within ECOWAS and member states responsible for peace and security programming. For example, prior to the ECPF, various agencies responsible for conflict prevention and peacebuilding such as ECOWARN and initiatives to promote good governance, gender equality and youth empowerment operated in isolation leading to duplication of efforts and inefficient use of scarce resources. It also provides a strong conceptual understanding of conflict prevention that goes beyond the prevention of imminent outbreak of violence to addressing the fundamental causes of conflict and human insecurity in the region. However, whilst the document calls for better co-ordination and integration of peace and security initiatives, it fails to specify organs or institutions responsible for this task and neither does it clearly define roles and responsibilities for its implementation. Without clearly defined roles and action plans, the ECPF risks becoming one of many high sounding declarations and protocols of ECOWAS that are hardly implemented.

ECOWAS and Civil Society

Another important feature of the emerging peace and security architecture of ECOWAS is its engagement with civil society groups. This reflects the new ECOWAS vision of moving from 'an ECOWAS of states to an ECOWAS of peoples'. In this respect, ECOWAS with the help of local and international NGOs created the West African Civil Society Forum in 2003 to act as a platform for civil society interaction with ECOWAS policy makers. This new people-centred approach has already resulted in civil society playing an active role in matters of regional peace and security including helping to develop the region's small arms control convention, the ECPF and working alongside ECOWARN to enhance ECOWAS early warning capacity. Organizations such as the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the West African Network on Small Arms (WANSA) are notable in this regard. However, critics have accused ECOWAS of only working with selected organizations that have the capacity to access the ECOWAS Commission (Ekiyor 2008). For ECOWAS to be considered serious with its people-centred approach, it must seek to work with a wider set of civil society actors and organizations and increase representation.

Opportunities and Challenges to Peace and Security in West Africa

The ECOWAS peacekeeping and peacebuilding intervention in west Africa opened up new possibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa and challenged the stereotype of Africa as the 'hopeless continent'. These interventions represent a significant shift in Africa's international relations, previously characterized by the traditional Westphalian principles of state sovereignty and non-interventionism in the internal affairs of states. ECOWAS also deserves commendation for institutionalizing peacekeeping and incorporating conflict prevention and peacebuilding into its security mechanism. Humanitarian and peace support operations in today's complex political emergencies call for a coherent and effective peacebuilding component to prevent a relapse into violence. The experiences in Liberia and Sierra Leone are indicative of the importance of incorporating peacebuilding into humanitarian intervention. The emerging policy shift within ECOWAS towards issues of human security and good governance is also encouraging. The Protocol on Good Governance, which is closely linked to the Security Mechanism, addresses the root causes of the sub-region's security crisis and seeks to shift attention towards the wellbeing of the individual. Whilst there are still cases of bad governance and threats to democracy in a number of countries in the sub-region, on the whole, governance appears to be improving across west Africa. The focus on conflict prevention and early response is another step in the right direction. Civil society across the sub-region is also becoming stronger and playing an active role in campaigning for good governance and managing conflicts.

Despite the above positive outlook for peace in west Africa, a number of challenges remain. With regards to ECOWAS, the institutional and financial weakness of its secretariat poses an obstacle in realising the aims embodied in its emerging peace and security mechanism. The problem of funding is not new to the organisation. The organisation's financial crisis is characteristic of the weak economic status of its member states. The 'Community Levy', a 0.5 per cent tax on all imports into ECOWAS member states, is meant to help fill the gap between states' contributions and ECOWAS expenditure. However, due to competing national priorities, a number of states have so far failed to apply this levy. This means ECOWAS has to rely on external donor support to fund its peace and security mechanism. In 2003, it created the ECOWAS Peace Fund to mobilize resources to support peace and security interventions. A number of Western countries have contributed to the fund. To help with institutional capacity building, France, the US and UK are also collaborating with ECOWAS to implement a number of capacity building programs. Whilst this external support is needed to boost the capacity of ECOWAS, it risks eroding local ownership of security structures and encouraging a disproportionate dependence on outside prescriptions and funding.

Another major challenge towards realising the sub-region's peace and security aspirations is the gap between policy and implementation. ECOWAS leaders are known to be making high sounding declarations and policies that they are slow to implement or, in some cases, never implement. As noted above, the organisation's failure to timely respond to the crises in Cote d'Ivoire and Mali raises serious questions about its commitment to its peace and security mechanism. In both cases, the former colonial power, France had to intervene whilst ECOWAS played second fiddle.

Whilst ECOWAS is making moves to address human security issues and become a more people-centred organization, it still struggles to deal with endemic human security problems in the sub-region such as corruption, disease and growing poverty and economic hardship. Corruption in the sub-region continues to undermine economic recovery efforts and robs the population of the expected peace dividend. Eleven of the organization's 15 member states occupy the bottom 82 places of Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International 2011). Although macro-economic figures and growth forecasts for the sub-region are getting better, however, the pervasive poverty and poor social and economic indicators pose the biggest challenge to peace in West Africa. For example, thirteen of ECOWAS's fifteen member states fall within the Low Human Development category of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Index Report of 2011 due to factors such as low life expectancy, high infant mortality rate, high levels of illiteracy, low per capita incomes and abject poverty.

Problems with reforming the security sector also pose a challenge to peace and security in many countries across the region. Renegade security forces have been part of the problem in most of the conflicts in the sub region. The failure of Security Sector Reform (SSR) after the first phase of the Liberian conflict in 1997 was partly responsible for the country's relapse into conflict. In Guinea Bissau, security forces continue to undermine the fragile peace in that country. The need to prioritise SSR cannot be overemphasised.

Whilst the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes in Liberia and Sierra Leone have been relatively successful in disarming combatants in these countries, however, problems with reintegration of ex-combatants are posing major threats to peace. Half-hearted reintegration efforts and the prevailing high youth unemployment are causing discontent amongst former combatants and young people in both countries and threaten to unravel the major gains achieved so far. In March 2012, a UN assessment team found that in some areas of Liberia, command-and-control structures were still intact and Liberian ex-combatants were mobilised to fight in the Ivorian conflict of 2011 (UN 2012). In June 2012, seven UN peacekeepers and several civilians were killed in cross-border raids in Cote d'Ivoire involving suspected ex-combatants. Considering the interconnectedness of conflicts in west Africa, conflict in any one is bound to have far-reaching security implications for the others and any long-term peacebuilding programme should be cognisant of this.

Conclusion

The high expectations that greeted independence in many west African countries were short-lived as successive post-colonial regimes failed to deliver on promises of economic development and political freedom for their people. Whilst several analyses of west African conflicts have focused on the clientelistic and neo-patrimonial politics of leaders in west Africa, other factors such as the flawed colonial policies, negative Cold War impact, misguided economic policies of IFIs and Western donor countries, and international political and economic marginalization have massively contributed to producing weak and failing states across the sub-region and have sowed the seeds of violent conflict. The consequence for people across west Africa is a state of declining social services, dilapidated infrastructure, weak and collapsing economies and widespread poverty. The increasing 'informalization' of the state has also led to a weakening of state institutions and in many cases state failure and collapse. The political and economic discontent generated by this collapse has provided the trigger for most of the conflicts in west Africa. Thus, in the 1990s and early 2000s several countries in the sub-region were plunged into brutal civil wars.

Nevertheless, despite the portrayal of west Africa and indeed the entire continent as hopeless, the conflict management and peacebuilding intervention of ECOWAS deserves commendation and is a manifestation that west Africans are taking ownership and responsibility for resolving their conflicts. The on-going efforts at institutionalizing peace and security response mechanisms, despite challenges, are steps in the right direction as are efforts to promote good governance and economic development in the sub-region.

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7

Conflict and Postcolonial Identities in East/the Horn of Africa

Macharia Munene

Introduction: Colonial Background

Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa refer to a zone of countries stretching from Eritrea and Djibouti in the north to Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Sudan in the west, Tanzania in the south and fragmented Somalia and Kenya on the east. Ethiopia is in the middle surrounded by Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Kenya. All these countries were defined and shaped by European powers who had engaged in prolonged imperial ventures in which they had rewritten the past and created myths of their greatness that are still perpetuated in post-colonial Africa (Martin-Marquez 2008:12-16; Bessis 2003:12-14). They had also produced an imperial offspring, the United States of America. Together, Europeans and the North Americans are the Euro-powers, for short. The Euro-powers were full of socio-ideological contradictions between the professed ideals of liberty for white men and the reality of enslaving Africans (Duffield 2007:228).

Beginning in the later part of the 19th century, the Euro-powers considered Africa to be a rich source of needed raw materials and a potential market of last resort for manufactured goods that no one else wanted. This had led to the imperial urge for territorial colonization, and hence, the Euro-powers turned to Africa (Tuathail 1996:38) to create new empires. The English, the Italians, and the French led the way in eastern Africa in imposing colonialism through terror while claiming they were doing it for humanity and civilization (Cesaire 1970:9-12; Young 1994:165-166; Munene 1995:228).

In general, Euro-powers believed they had rights to enslave and reshape the Africans to suit imperial whims (Mbembe 2001:28-29; Bessis 203:16). This included forcing Africans to 'disremember' their past and to imbibe the conqueror's heroism.

One method used to force forgetfulness was that of renaming everything (Thiong'o 2009:4). Another whim was the creation of famine as a control mechanism to ensure that Africans became *materially* and *mentally* poor. This involved blocking avenues of independent economic activities, destroying industries and lifestyles, and dehumanizing the Africans into submission (Waal 1997:27; Harrison 1993:45; Munene 2007:183-184).

In abrogating freedom, independence, and the right of Africans to be human, the Western powers planted the seeds of post-colonial identity crisis. They recruited African administrators, called 'chiefs', to be subordinate to Europeans (Nzongola-Ntalaja 1998:44-47). Chiefs became part of a new legal system that lumped all Africans together as 'natives' serving colonial interests (Mamdani 2001:22-28). This system also helped to make 'tribal' distinctions amongst the natives when it came to political issues that challenged the colonial state (Munene 1992:2-6).

The Postcolonial Realities and Challenges

With the background of mental enslavement, orchestrated ethnic divisions, invented ethnicities and nations, and cultivated loyalty to colonial masters, colonies in the zone became states and plunged into prolonged disputes. Since the agitation for independence had aimed at removing white political rule in specific territories, it did not challenge the colonial structures that were inherently divisive. This inherent conflict between the remnants of colonial attitudes and the desire to cut clean from the colonial past constitutes an aspect of postcoloniality. It is a struggle on the cultural and political 'what' that should be acceptable from the two 'pasts' in the light of the present. The end result is a borrowing from both the pre-colonial and colonial past in order to shape new African futures. And this has been the problem, one of postcolonial identities designed to fit colonial structures.

Nowhere was this attempted fusing of the pre-colonial and the colonial past more pronounced than the discussions at the founding of the Organization of African Unity, the OAU, where delegates debated how much of colonial legacies they should accept. One group was aggressive as it adopted the concept of elasticity of new states and argued that colonial territorial boundaries needed dismantling because few Africans, if any, had participated in determining those boundaries. Such states had irredentist desires on their neighbours and they included Morocco, targeting Western Sahara and parts of Algeria. It also strangely included both Ethiopia and Somalia that were targeting each other. Ethiopia's intentions for Somalia were conveyed quietly but Somalia was loud in its desire to absorb all outlying ethnic Somali-occupied territories beyond the official Somali borders, namely, French Somaliland, the Ogaden in Ethiopia, and north-eastern Kenya.

The other side was defensive and it insisted on the sanctity of colonial boundaries as a way of preventing the eruption of conflicts not only over boundaries but also over what would exactly constitute the state. Such states rejected elasticity

and irredentism and instead believed in not only the concept of inelasticity of state but also in the incontractibility of the colonial state. The concept of inelasticity of state was essentially a defence against outsiders or neighbours who had irredentist ambitions. The concept of incontractibility, in contrast, was a defence against domestic challengers who refused to identify with the new postcolonial state and might even be encouraged by neighbouring states that had irredentist inclinations.

The new OAU, aware of the potential chaos that could arise in attempts to adjust boundaries, sided with those desiring to uphold the sanctity of colonial boundaries. This was a settlement that discouraged secession and interference in the internal affairs of a sister state (Woronoff 1970:329–330; Selassie 1980:4–5; Adar 1994:29–39). At the 1964 OAU meeting in Cairo, it was Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika who proposed the settlement because of three unpleasant experiences which, he said, 'caused me move that resolution in Cairo in 64'. And I say, the resolution was accepted, two countries with reservations, and one was Somalia because Somalia wanted the Ogaden, Somalia wanted northern Kenya, Somalia wanted Djibouti'. The three episodes, Nyerere stated, were a visit by Kenyan Masai led by a white American missionary who wanted to dismantle Kenya, a suggestion by Kamuzu Banda that Nyasaland and Tanganyika should swallow Mozambique, and the Somali war on the Ogaden (Nyerere 2000:21).

Without external interference, each state then tried to become viable and acceptable to its 'peoples'. Subsequently, each state tended to concentrate on keeping *the peace*, meaning law and order, at the expense of maintaining *generic peace* (Munene 2009:218-228). In the process of maintaining the *peace,* however, the idea of state ran into friction with the idea of nations within the state who refused to identify with the state. At times encouraged by outsiders, despite the OAU decision, internal disputes in one country tended to spread to neighbours and to become regional problems (Jackson 2006:426).

This was mainly the case in the eastern and Horn of Africa zone with an area of almost 6 million square kilometres and about 200 million inhabitants. The zone has not known much internal peace partly because of two reasons. First, the idea of state failed to converge with the idea of nation in many of the countries. Given that acceptance of the fact of any state is crucial to the survival of the state (Goldsmith and Posner 2005:4), the new states tended to remain fragile which made it difficult for them to protect people or adapt to new international realities that affected internal political and economic well-being (Ikpe 2007:86). Instead, as in the Congo, the president and the prime minister fired each other and, with external help, the prime minister died (Munene 2005:236-238).

Second is the influence of external players who, in colonial and postcolonial times, considered countries in the zone to be in their strategic interests, which presumably gave them a right to determine what should happen. In part, this is because the zone is hemmed in by a triangle of three large bodies of water that

are considered crucial to the survival or well being of other countries and regions. The bodies of water are the long River Nile in the west that is considered strategic to Egypt, the Red Sea in the north that is important to the oil-producing Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean in the east that is part of a shipping route from Asia to Africa and to the Western Hemisphere. By being considered 'strategic' to the interests of others, the people of the zone found themselves having to respond to those interests that in turn influenced their identity and orientation. There are three assets that seemingly attract external attention and make it difficult for countries of the zone to control their environment and resources. These are the Nile, oil and minerals, and land. Egypt, which controls the shipping lanes in the Red Sea, tries to have total control of the Nile by stopping riparian states from using the Nile waters. It has occasionally engineered instability against countries in the Horn. Saudi Arabia shows interests in the Horn mainly because Eritrea, Djibouti, and the Somalian mini-states of Puntland and Somaliland border the Red Sea and can affect oil shipping. Besides, Puntland and Somaliland provide safe haven to pirates that cause havoc to oil shipment.

Oil is the determinant of the current competition for supremacy between Euro-Americans on one side and the Indo-Chinese on the other. India would like to make the Indian Ocean really 'Indian' and thereby bury the notion of the ocean being a 'British lake' but it has to contend with the ever-growing presence of the United States whose naval activities in eastern Africa have intensified officially to fight terrorists and pirates. The discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Sudan and Uganda has added to the region's strategic value as far as the extra-continental players are concerned.

But it is not simply oil that is attracting other regions. There are minerals and a growing belief that agricultural land is finite and increasingly in short supply and this has led to a new scramble for African land. Well-endowed countries that are worried about their food security have mounted a spree of land grabs in places like Ethiopia and Sudan with the arrangement of government officials. Arab and Asian countries have taken to leasing huge tracts of land to grow the food in African countries that is then shipped directly out, to their own consumers (Cotula *et al*. 2009). After the agreement, the African country loses control of the said territory thereby creating a strange phenomenon in which a country pleads for food aid while a lot of food is shipped out to another country as export. What this implies is that the leasing countries have thought strategically about food security (Borger 2009) and this has made African countries geo-strategic to the interests of Arab and Asian countries. It is also a reflection of the culture of dependency and lack of forward thinking on the part of many government officials who, from colonial times, were and are conditioned to depend on 'aid' from 'development partners' or 'donors' rather than be self-reliant (Moyo 2009:31-32; Polman 2010:16-17, 167-168; Bolton 2007:12-14, 22-24).

The Two Clusters

Eastern African and the Horn of Africa Zone, almost a microcosm of all the conflicts in Africa, can be split into two overlapping clusters, the Horn and the Great Lakes. They have some similarities and differences. Countries in both clusters experienced European territorial colonialism that split peoples and thereby forced the emergence of new identities. Even Ethiopia, which was not directly colonized, experienced a bit of Italian and British rule in the 1930s and 1940s. The end of colonialism in both clusters was accompanied by chaos in Sudan, the Horn, Congo, and the Great Lakes. Both clusters attract a lot of extra-continental forces in part because of their natural wealth that is considered strategic. The differences are also clear. There is more of the Asiatic and Arab influence in the Horn than in the Great Lakes. The Horn also tends to attract more attention than the Great Lakes in part because it is at the crossroads of commerce between the Euro-West and the Oriental-East. In addition, international terrorism is more pronounced in the Horn than in the Great Lakes cluster. Attractions in the Great Lakes are centred in Congo, which started as a personal property of Leopold of Belgium who incited other Europeans to scramble for territories in Africa. The presence of minerals that are considered strategic, particularly uranium that was used in developing the atomic bomb, makes external forces want to control the Great Lakes cluster and to influence those who officially run the countries, to impose neocolonial relationships. In both clusters, however, the problem of postcoloniality lingers and greatly influences conflict structures and conflict management behaviour.

The Horn of Africa Cluster

In the Horn of Africa cluster, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which started as a body concerned with the effects of drought but then turned to security matters (Nabudere 2006:73), is trying to reconcile conflicting claims and identities. This applies particularly to Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia: countries that occasionally engage in 'proxy wars' against each other (Abbink 2003:409; Kornprobst 2002:369). The Horn also attracts extra-continental forces that consider it geostrategic to their interests. During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union sought proxies in the region and established bases in Ethiopia and Somalia. This was to safeguard the oil routes or to challenge the supremacy of the other in the region. The end of the Cold War removed the props from proxies, helped to intensify regional instability, and seemingly promoted non-state actors to international prominence.

Sudan

Postcolonial identity in Sudan is compounded by the fact that Sudan and its peoples experienced multiple-colonialism. The largest country in Africa with almost one million square miles of land and a small population of roughly 41 million people,

Sudan has a profound postcolonial identity problem. The country is divided along racial, ethnic, and religious lines. It is a country where the idea of state is in conflict with the idea of nation. A cultural mix of historical and religious interactions of Africans and Arabs, some of its peoples, especially the leadership, have appeared to be confused as to whether Sudan is an African or an Arab country. Independence, in 1956, had different meanings for Arabs and for Africans.

Africans were disappointed because independence had simply removed British and Egyptian rule while leaving Arab 'colonialism' intact. Consequently, they, particularly in the south, challenged the legitimacy of the state and took up arms to demand the rights they believed were denied by their Arab rulers. From the start, therefore, Sudan had an identity challenge as it became a place of continuing warfare because Arab rulers tried to assert authority in creating an Islamic state. Resistance to Islamization was symbolized by the rise of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), and its military wing the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), based in the South. In response, the government encouraged Arab militias initially to counter the advances of the SPLA. The fighting spread to the neighbours where Uganda supported the SPLA and Sudan supported the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel movement that originated in northern Uganda and was led by Joseph Kony.

The tendency to transnationalize Sudan's war worries its neighbours. Through IGAD, the neighbours facilitated a peace process between the government and the SPLA that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in Nairobi in 2005 as a long-term way out of the prolonged conflict (Jambo 2006:149–159; Samatar and Machaka 2006:35–38, 46). Recognizing that there are some profoundly adversarial identity groups in Sudan, the Agreement called for a constitutional restructuring by instituting power-sharing at the national level while giving autonomy to the south to organize a government that is virtually independent. It also called for elections and a referendum in 2011 on the possibility of the south seceding from the state of Sudan.

In its attempt to ensure that the desire of the peoples of southern Sudan to determine their own distinct political identity, through a referendum, would become a reality, the AU/IGAD differed with extra-continental forces. Concern for long-term security and a successful referendum made AU/IGAD engage all the sides of the Sudan conflict and urge the International Criminal Court (ICC), through the United Nations, to postpone its indictment of President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan. While not condoning impunity, commented Tete Antonio, the AU Observer at the UN, Al-Bashir's indictment 'came at a critical juncture in the process to promote lasting peace, reconciliation and democratic governance in the Sudan' (Lederer 2010). One of the countries with a direct interest in *peace* prevailing in Southern Sudan is Kenya, which hosted al-Bashir in Nairobi to discuss the referendum and was fully supported by the AU (Munene 2010a). The interest

that Kenya has in Sudan is immediate in terms of security and long-term in terms of regional development and security.

The unsuccessful AU appeal to the United Nations on the Sudan issue is an indication of parallel perceptions of what the priorities should be. The United Nations, controlled by the Euro-powers, is part of the extra-continental forces whose perception of threat is different from that of the Africans. The irony is that the extra-continental powers led by the United States are in constant touch with al-Bashir and have the capacity to arrest him but apparently they do not consider his arrest a worthwhile political risk.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia poses a special problem when it comes to discussing postcoloniality because it hardly experienced Euro-colonialism. For the rest of Africa during colonial days, Ethiopia had been the symbol of many things. It was the inspiration to Africans to resist colonialism, having defeated the Italians at Adowa in 1896. It inspired Pan-Africanism in the 1930s when the Italians forestalled its independence in the prelude to World War II. During and after World War II, it successfully opposed British plans for a Greater Somaliland that included parts of Ethiopia. A founder member of the United Nations, it persuaded the UN to link Eritrea to Ethiopia and to reject the British-inspired Greater Somaliland idea.

Although Ethiopia was presumably adversely affected by Euro repression, despite the brief Italian occupation between 1935 and 1941 followed by British supervision up to 1944 (Gilkes 2004:231-232), it has also exhibited aspects of post coloniality. While it wanted to be recognized as an anti-colonial force in Africa, Ethiopia displayed colonial tendencies towards Eritrea and even towards Somalia. It, therefore, found itself caught between resisting Somalia's irredentism and its own desire to absorb both Eritrea and Somalia. Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere remembered Emperor Haile Selassie "quietly saying to us 'that the whole of Somalia was part of Ethiopia'" (Nyerere 2000:21). Ethiopia and Somalia therefore accepted the concept of elasticity of state but they differed on the direction of that elasticity. While Ethiopia wanted elasticity towards Eritrea and Somalia in order to swallow them, Somalia wanted to annex parts of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti (Nyerere 2000:21; Munene 2010b).

In the early 1960s, therefore, Ethiopia and independent Somalia found themselves having to deal with two similar postcolonial environments. First, from different angles, both countries adopted the concept of elasticity of state, which ultimately failed. Second, both stressed presumed pre-colonial uniformity and tried to ignore the reality of the identity created by different colonial experiences. The Ethiopian government tried to force unity by insisting that Italian-ruled Eritreans were Ethiopians whilst the people in Eritrea considered themselves differently. The result of that difference in perception of identity was a prolonged war in

which Ethiopia struggled to contain Eritrean secessionism while for the Eritreans it was a war of national liberation. Similarly, the new Somali state ignored the different colonial experiences between British and Italian Somalilands as it tried to forge a sense of Somali unity by claiming territories in neighbouring states.

The Ethiopian contradiction was solved through the action of the OAU, as proposed by Nyerere that member states should respect colonial boundaries, and eventually through conceptual adjustments. The OAU resolution dealt a blow to Ethiopia's 'quiet' dreams of Somalia but not the Eritrean issue that was regarded as part of Ethiopia's internal affairs. The conceptual adjustment dealt with Eritrea and it was due to internal political pressures that brought together like-minded Ethiopian and Eritrean officials. First, to stop the application of Somali elasticity, Ethiopia had found it necessary to engage in defensive alliances with Kenya and most importantly, with extra-continental forces. It fought wars with Somalia, particularly the 1977 Ogaden war, and thus helped to destroy the possible application of the idea of Greater Somalia (Mburu 2005:173–229; Selassie 1980:5, 117–125). And this was at a time when it insisted on being elastic towards Eritrea. Second, there was an internal adjustment of the concept of incontractibility and the acceptance of the fact that states can contract. Ethiopia had to let Eritrea go and thereby end similarities between Ethiopia and Somalia on the issue of elasticity of state. In a popular referendum in 1993 after 30 years of war, Eritreans chose to separate from Ethiopia and become independent. Separation was amicable in part because Ethiopia's Meles Zenewi and Eritrea's Issaias Afwerki had been allies against Mengistu Haile Mariam.

Letting Eritrea go did two things. It opened up a different problem, that of being so occupied with perceived national interests that former allies quickly become enemies once the immediate objective has been achieved. The simmering differences on ideology and statecraft took centre-stage and the friendship between the two leaders, Zenawi and Afwerki, deteriorated into state rivalry (Plaut 2004:1-19). When Eritrea unlinked its Nafka from the Ethiopia currency, Ethiopia accused Eritrea of occupying Badne, a border town, and a two-year war erupted in 1998. In 2000, the two submitted rival claims to The Hague for arbitration and in 2002 The Hague decided in favour of Eritrea. Thereafter, Ethiopia failed to cooperate with the court decision and the tension between the two projected itself into other countries in the region (Beehner 2005). The fragmented Somalia is one of the countries where Eritrea and Ethiopia have taken opposite sides (Hanson 2006). The IGAD has not been able to reconcile the two and has virtually declared Eritrea to be a renegade state.

At the continental level, the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia undermined the concept of states as being incontractible which, in turn, made secessionism increasingly acceptable as a conflict management technique. In a way, Eritrea opened

the way for the possible independence of Southern Sudan. While in the 1960s, as was evident in the separatist wars waged by Katanga in the DRC and Biafra in Nigeria, such an idea would not have been condoned, partitioning states whose peoples appear to be incompatible is becoming cautiously acceptable in Africa. In addition, this acceptability is increasingly being pushed by extra-continental forces particularly in fragmented Somalia where there are calls for recognition of Puntland and Somaliland as independent states.

Eritrea

Eritrea, barely 20 years old as a country, struggles to find relevance in the Horn and has attracted attention as the regional renegade, defying IGAD, the AU, and the United Nations and seemingly getting away with it. Its postcolonial experience is a contest between a pre-colonial pastor the period before the Italian conquest, and a colonial past that is Italian, British, and Ethiopian. It is also a contest involving forcing the acceptance of the Eritrean identity by suppressing ethnic differences within the state (Gilkes 2004:249-250). In the process, it appears to accept mainly its Italian colonial past while rejecting the Ethiopian colonial past. In part, this is because the Ethiopian colonialism is more recent and involved a 30-year war of liberation because the Eritreans refused to accept that they were part of the Ethiopian empire. The fact that peoples in both Eritrea and Ethiopia are mostly of Tigrean background is subsumed in the reality of different colonial experiences. To a large extent, the modern Eritrean identity was shaped by the Italians and Eritreans tend to think of their capital city, Asmara, as a small Rome (Berhe 2010; Rodwell 2004; Triulzi 2006). Ethiopian identity is hinged on resistance against Italian occupation. The attempt by Ethiopia to ignore the Italian-induced Eritrean identity while stressing the supposed pre-Italian commonality in the two places failed. The Eritrean elite, mainly the descendants of the *ascari* or the African troops used by Italian conquerors, glorify the Italian colonial experience. They tend to look down on 'backward' Ethiopians and simply refuse to accept an identity that is not Italian-based (Dirar 2004; Triulzi 2006).

Eritrea seems to enjoy playing renegade in the Horn and going against the wishes of IGAD, the AU and the UN. Eritrea started as a darling of the Euro-powers with its leader, Aferwaki, along with Uganda's Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Rwanda's Paul Kagame, Laurent Kabila of DRC, and Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi were portrayed as the 'new leaders' of Africa. They were new in the sense that they were used by the Euro-powers to get rid of old 'African leaders' who had outlived their usefulness and had therefore become irrelevant as tools of control and exploitation. These men, who initially appeared to be close, then turned on each other and fought wars they rationalized on the basis of their countries' national interests. Some of the wars were fought through proxies.

Somalia

Fragmented Somalia is one of the countries where the feud between Eritrea and Ethiopia is playing itself out in the open as the two have taken opposite sides (Hanson 2006). No other country in the Horn cluster has become as problematic as Somalia in part because Somalia has ceased being a functioning state. It is also a country in which the problematic of neocolonialism was so glaring that it ultimately led to the collapse of the new state. After World War II, and influenced by the growing Cold War, the United Nations had returned Somalia to Italy in 1950 with instructions to prepare the colony for independence in ten years. The British had decided to give their Somaliland independence at the same time so as to encourage a new united Somalia. The British and Italian Somalilands then mounted a joint venture to fuse together a myth of pre-colonial unity of Somali people using a World War II British colonial notion of Greater Somaliland with the idea of a new elastic Somali state. This implied that wherever there were people of Somali ethnic background, that territory was part of the Somali state.

At independence in 1960, therefore, the political leaders of the new Somali state tried to forge a sense of Somali unity to cover up differences arising out of competing pre-colonial and colonial experiences. It had adopted the concept of elasticity of state as a unifying ideology to create, instil, and perpetuate a sense of Somali homogeneity across boundaries. This had the effect of hiding the fact that there are people in Somalia whose ethnic identity is not Somali. Among such people are the Oromo and the Somali Bantu groups that are estimated at over 600,000 people. The Oromo and the Bantu could not identify with the new Somalia because they remained oppressed by the Somali people and state. The Bantu, for instance, were dispossessed of their land, enslaved, and derisively referred to as 'tiimojereer' (hard hair) or 'adoon' (slave) (Lindley 2010:187-189; Phillips 1994; Menkhaus 2003:323-339). Still, the ideology helped to create the myth of Somali unity (Menkhaus 2003:323).

This ideology of elasticity collided directly with the concept of incontractibility of colonial state. This led Somalia into a quasi-war with Kenya, known as the Shifta, and a real war with Ethiopia, the Ogaden War (Mburu 2005:173-229; Selassie 1980:5, 117-125). The collision also seemingly encouraged Kenya to enter the 1964 Anglo-Kenya Defence Agreement enabling Britain to continue to 'enjoy military facilities' in the country (Percox 2004:209-210).

Successive Somali governments invented and tried to apply the ideology of Somali expansionism but they ultimately failed. The epitome of the Somali contradiction between dreams of external grandeur and internal weakness was Mohammed Siad Barre who grabbed power in 1969 and initiated efforts to 'liberate' the Ogaden in 1977. The failure to liberate the Ogaden shattered the dream of expansionism, which made him turn inward. In the process, his internal repression destroyed the very sense of Somali unity he had tried to promote and

gave rise to various militants opposed to his regime. The militants had no illusions about Somali unity. Instead of achieving its dream, Somalia eventually disintegrated after 1991 when President Barre was ousted by forces of the United Somali Congress (Zewde 2006:13–25; Menkhaus 2003:323).

By the time of Barre's ousting in 1991, the idea of Somali homogeneity had disappeared as Somalia fragmented into warring entities, each demanding autonomy or independence. Since then, few of the Somali factions have been willing or able to reinstate a viable Somali state, partly because it is not in their perceived interests. Instead, the former British Somaliland has mothered Puntland and Somaliland who are often at loggerheads with each other over boundaries. The two also jointly provide safe haven to local pirates operating in the high seas in the belief that piracy safeguards Somali interests against international fish theft and waste dumping.

Somalia thereafter became an international security problem as it fragmented into warlord fiefdoms. The issue was handled in two ways. First, the US led a UN-attempted intervention to restore order by disarming Somali warlords. This was poorly executed and forced the UN to leave in an embarrassing manner (Patman 1997:509–533). Thereafter, extra-continental powers have tended to deal with Somalia through proxies. Ethiopia appears like an American proxy in Somalia (Nduru 2007) and receives of a lot of Western aid (Polman 2010:122). Eritrea supports Islamist al-Shabaab and therefore is perceived by many external observers as an al-Qaida proxy.

With the challenge of Somalia being a theatre for proxy warfare, the OAU encouraged IGAD to deal with Somalia. IGAD seemingly adopted a two-track strategy: on the one hand restoring central authority and on the other keeping the peace. To restore governance, IGAD facilitated the creation of a federal transitional government. After extensive haggling in Kenya from 2002 to 2004 between the Somali supporting the Transitional National Government, TNG, and those supporting the Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council (SRRC), the delegates compromised on a Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), comprising 275 members. Taking their oath by August 2004, the new MPs proceeded, still in Kenya, to elect Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed of Putland as President in October 2004 (Ahmed 2006:169; Spilker 2008:22; Cornwell 2004) Transferring the Somali government from Nairobi to Mogadishu required security because the number of warlords was increasing, and some were comfortable in Nairobi (Mills 2004). IGAD authorized the creation of a peacekeeping force, first known as the IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia, which did not take place because of logistical failures. Next, IGAD authorized the AU Mission to Somalia, which was partially realized in 2007 and is trying to keep the Federal Transitional Government afloat in the midst of opposition from Al Shabaab and the warlords who are responsible for piracy along the Somali coast (Macintyre 2009).

The two AU/IGAD strategies appear to have failed because they seemingly ignored the problem of postcolonial identities in Somalia. Without the unifying ideology of Greater Somalia to cover up contradictions in colonial identities, peoples in Somalia insisted on translating differences into political autonomies. In addition, the two decades of fragmentation have produced a generation of people whose only experience is warlord politics. For such people, the idea of a unitary Somali state is a myth that runs counter to their new war-related identities.

The Great Lakes Cluster

Like the Horn with which they overlap, countries in the Great Lakes cluster also struggle due to pre-colonial and colonial identities and the confusion is intense. This cluster comprises Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. They have had structural conflicts in terms of the constitutional designs but also in terms of the people in each state accepting their new postcolonial identity. Only Tanzania appears to have been able to create an acceptable postcolonial identity that has minimized pre-colonial distinctions. Rejecting the concept of elasticity of state at the possible expense of Kenya and Mozambique, Tanzania sought to forge a sense of national unity within the existing colonial boundaries (Nyerere 2000:20). This was clear after the 1967 Arusha Declaration that stressed Ujamaa (familyhood) and everyone became Ndugu (brother) in an effort to eliminate class distinctions as well as ethnic proclivities.

In the process, Tanzania crafted a new postcolonial identity for itself as the haven of revolutionary ideologies for would-be African liberators. The liberators were of two types, those fighting the remnants of white settler colonialism and those fighting African postcolonial tyrants. It therefore developed a reputation as the ideological training ground for leaders who derived their 'revolutionary' identity from Tanzania. In Southern Africa, beneficiaries of Tanzania's revolutionary identity included freedom fighters from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. But it was in the Great Lakes that Tanzania's role in creating postcolonial 'revolutionary' identities became vivid in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in Congo and Uganda.

The rest of the Great Lakes countries seemed chaotic and incapable of developing acceptable postcolonial identities. Eastern Congo, seemingly detached from the rest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, appears to be the focal point of the cluster and also symbolic of the crisis of postcolonial identity and external manipulation. At independence in 1960, Congo had a flawed constitution providing two centres of powers that were in structural conflict, President Joseph Kasavubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Extra-continental forces overthrew Lumumba and then imposed Joseph Mobutu as their ruling proxy in Congo and Mobutu plunged the country into protracted chaos that affected the neighbours (Rikhye 1993:1–2, 318; Depelchin 1992:85–86; Villiers and Hirtle 1997:186; Weiss 2000). By the 1990s Mobutu had become a liability to his sponsors and

therefore had to be dumped (French 2004:154-157). He was also an embarrassment to other leaders in the Great Lakes cluster who did not want to be identified with him.

The leaders in the cluster first united and second they turned on each other. Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and José dos Santos of Angola formed a temporary alliance (Wrong 2000:237, 257–289) in support of 'revolutionary' Laurent-Désiré Kabila's efforts to capture power in Congo. They were seen as 'liberators'. On achieving their objective, however, their mission changed from 'liberation' to one of feuding over the exploitation of Congo's resources. The alliance collapsed as individual state's interests took centre-stage. They traded accusations and competed to exploit Congo's natural wealth. In the depth of it all was Uganda.

Postcolonial Uganda was equally chaotic with its various peoples challenging the new identity. Gaining independence in 1962 with a flawed constitutional structure that created a divided government between the president and an executive prime minister, just like Congo before it, it plunged into chaos within four years. Prime Minister Apollo Milton Obote overthrew President Edward Muteesa, abolished the post of prime minister, and became an executive president. He annoyed the 'capitalist' West with the 'socialistic' policies, outlined in his Common Man's Charter. General Idi Amin Dada overthrew Obote in 1971 only to be ousted in 1979 with the help of Tanzania. Kenya's effort to mediate subsequent feuds was not successful as Museveni's National Resistance Movement grabbed power in 1986 (Mugaju 1999:17-33; McDonough 2008:361–362) with the help of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF).

Members of the RPF were Rwandese exiles, mostly from a Tutsi background, who right from independence were victims of postcolonial identity. In many ways, postcoloniality in Rwanda, and the neighbouring Burundi, is a struggle over which historical account, as shaped by both German and Belgian colonialism, is to take precedent. One account is that the main groups in both countries, Hutu and Tutsi, are socio-cultural divisions shaped by the economic mode of production. In that argument, it was possible in pre-colonial days, to move up and down the socio-cultural ladder rather than be stuck in a position permanently. It is this claim that credits Germans and mostly Belgians with artificially creating solid ethnic groups that ultimately became antagonistic to each other. The identities so created remained intact and continued to affect the postcolonial period, which has been so chaotic in both places that they have experienced bouts of massacres and genocide based on those artificial creations. The other account is that both the Hutu and the Tutsi, in pre-colonial days, were actually distinct peoples having a socio-cultural relationship that was virtually master-servant oriented. In that relationship, the Tutsi were the rulers and the owners of cattle. They had supposedly come from the north by crossing the Kagera River and then lording it over the

agriculturally-minded Hutu who became dominated as servants. All that Euro-colonialism did, therefore, was to reinforce an existing reality to suit their interests and this appeared to work for a while. By initially privileging, and then turning around against the Tutsi in the name of democracy just when they were about to leave the two little colonies, the Belgians laid the ground for the political chaos that followed.

In both narratives, the primacy of colonial experience dominates a contested pre-colonial experience that is struggling to find space in modern history as the legitimate identity of peoples in postcolonial Africa. This became extreme in Rwanda when President Juvenal Habryamana's government started sponsoring such militias as the *Interahamwe*. Following the assassination of Habyarimana, there was genocide of the Tutsi with a government-sponsored, and French trained/armed, *Interahamwe* militia going on a killing spree in 1994 that wiped out more than 800,000 people, mostly Tutsi and moderate Hutu (Quinn 2004:119; *Rwanda News Agency* 2006; Nzongola-Ntalaja 1998:7). The rampage stopped only when the RPF took over control of the country and displaced former government officials as well as the *Interahamwe* into eastern Congo largely inhabited by their kinsmen, the Banyarwanda.

Other kinsmen who cut across state boundaries include the Banyamulenge and the Twa and they all tend to pose identity problems for the Great Lakes cluster. In pre-colonial times, there was no identity crisis that was geopolitically determined because colonial states did not exist. By splitting peoples into different colonial compacts, colonialism created identity confusion that provoked postcolonial identity crisis. People had problems accepting that they were Congolese, Rwandese, Burundians, Ugandans, or Tanzanians and were supposedly different from their relatives across the state borders.

This confusion was evident elsewhere in the Great Lakes cluster. For instance, Kenya has experienced a typical crisis of postcolonial identity. Acceptance of an African identity had been made problematic in the colonial days when to be an African, often called 'native', was to be victimized and forced to pay odious taxes while being non-native was to be privileged (Salim 1976:65-85). This manifested itself in the north-east province where people of Somali background heeded the call of the Somali state to demand that they be united with Somalia rather than be part of a new African-controlled Kenya (Adar 1994:159-187). Dealing with Somali irredentism led to the Shifta war that remained a headache for independent Kenya. It was the same with people of Arab extraction along the Kenya coast who through the *Mwambao* Movement wanted to unite with their Arab brethren in Zanzibar rather than accept rule by Africans. They wanted none of the new post-colonial Kenyan identity (Adar 1994:164-165; Kindy 1972:184-187; Ogot 1995:67). There was even an extra-continental interest in dismantling Kenya. When as Chief Minister in 1960, Julius Nyerere later remarked, 'I received a delegation of Maasai

elders from Kenya, led by an American missionary. And they came to persuade me to invoke something called the Anglo-Masai Agreement so that that section of the Masai in Kenya should become part of Tanganyika…. I suspected the American missionary was responsible for that idea. I don't remember that I was particularly polite to him'. To Nyerere, the missionary's logic was ridiculous (Nyerere 2000:20; Chachage and Chachage 2004:160).

Leaders in the Great Lakes cluster have tried to resolve the identity crisis using such organisations as the International Conference on the Great Lakes, (ICGLR), and the East African Community, (EAC), often under the umbrella of the African Union. They first accepted the necessity of creating one postcolonial identity for various peoples within the boundaries of each colonial state. They also agreed not to interfere with the forging of that identity. This explains the 2004 declaration by the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), which was signed in Dar es Salaam by presidents of 11 African countries. The declaration stressed that member states should not allow the use of their territories as bases for aggression and subversion. They committed themselves to preventing 'any direct or indirect support, delivery of arms or any other form of assistance to armed groups operating in the region' (Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, 19–20 November 2004). To prove it was serious, ICGLR officials facilitated the collection of evidence leading to arrest and transfer to The Hague for trial by the ICC of Jean Pierre Bemba, for crimes against humanity and crimes of war (Kazooba 2009). The Dar es Salaam Declaration was one of the regional responses to developments mainly in the Great Lakes cluster that involved Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and particularly Congo.

Conclusion

Postcolonial Africa has had to struggle with identity and, using an assortment of such organs as the African Union, IGAD, and ICGLR, has attempted to resolve the arising disputes. It has largely succeeded in settling the competing notions of elasticity and inelasticity of states generally in favour of inelasticity. Colonial states, therefore, could not be dismantled whether to accommodate problems of identity within a new state or to entertain irredentist desires of a neighbouring state claiming identity with people in another state. In many ways, this meant downplaying supposed pre-colonial identities that had been drastically influenced by having different colonial experiences even when the colonial power was the same. The identity of the Kenyan Maasai, for instance, is different from that of the Tanzanian Maasai. The Tigrean in Eritrea believes he is different from the Tigrean in Ethiopia. Clearly, this (pre)colonial identity fragmentation continues to have negative implications for both national and regional integration.

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8

Postcolonial Imperialism in Africa's Maghreb and Sahel

Jeremy Keenan

This chapter focuses on the post-9/11 period in north west (NW) Africa's Maghreb and Sahel, a region that includes much of the Sahara. President George Bush's 'global war on terror' (GWOT) has been described, quite correctly, 'as merely an extension of the defence of the capitalist market' (Lal 2004:211).[1] This has certainly been the case in Africa where 9/11 and the ensuing GWOT have played a key role in facilitating what I refer to as the renewed imperialization of the continent. It has been most clearly demonstrated in the way in which the GWOT was rolled out across the Sahara-Sahel region of NW Africa during the years 2002-2005 and then revamped and re-energized in 2006 with the creation of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

There are three key strategic players in this latest phase of postcolonial imperialism in this part of Africa: the US, manifest through what Noam Chomsky has called America's 'grand design', Algeria, Washington's key ally and the region's most powerful sub-hegemon, and the European powers, most notably France. All three are characterized by their strategic use of terrorism, or, to be more precise, state and fabricated terrorism. Most commentators and analysts would add another player, namely Al Qaeda, to this threesome. But, as AQIM is primarily a construct of Algeria's secret intelligence services, the *Département du renseignement et de la sécurité* (DRS), I will not treat it as a separate player, at least for the moment. However, since the events of July 2010 to which I refer below, it is conceivable that AQIM might come to take on a life and dynamic of its own, independent of Algeria's DRS.

There are also three other sets of players who may play more significant and perhaps even determining roles in the not too distant future. These are the three weaker states of the region, namely Mauritania, Mali and Niger, who are currently

showing signs of resentment at Algeria's duplicity and bullying; Morocco and Libya, who are both intent on challenging Algeria's hegemonic designs in the region, and finally the local peoples, notably the Tuareg, who have been the immediate victims of the GWOT and whose suffering has led them to take up arms (2007-2009) in both Niger and Mali and to now threaten, once again, to take matters into their own hands.

The net outcome of the strategic objectives and actions of these three main parties – the US, Algeria and France (Europe) – has been to transform this vast region of Africa, some 1.5 million square miles (and twice that if the entire Maghreb is included), from a state of relative political quiescence and 'pacificity' into a zone of increasing political instability, insecurity and conflagration, or what the US military maps of Africa have branded since 2003 as a 'Terror Zone'.[2] This catastrophic plunge, over a period of 8-9 years, from a state of near-order to one of near-chaos was epitomized in July 2010 when France, the former colonial power across this entire region, declared war – in language reminiscent of George Bush's declaration of 'war on terror' – on AQIM.

I will deal with each of these three in turn, beginning with the US, followed by Algeria, France and other European powers, with final comments on the prospective roles of the hitherto lesser players, Mauritania, Mali and Niger, and, by no means least, the Tuareg population of the region, whose resistance to both AQIM and other incursive and exploitative interests in their region, notably international mining capital, could become decisive.

The US 'Grand Design' in Africa

The US's growing interest in Africa, reflected in the establishment of AFRICOM as a fully unified combat command on 1 October 2008, did not come about overnight, but was, as AFRICOM's website told us at the time, 'the culmination of a 10-year thought process within the Department of Defense'.[3] That 'thought process' began in 1997, a landmark year in contemporary US history for two related reasons. First, it saw the founding of the neoconservatives' 'Project for the New American Century' (PNAC 1997). Second, it saw US dependency on foreign oil reaching the psychologically critical 50 per cent. The threat posed to national security by the latter development was not lost on the 'neocons'. They made it an election issue in 2000, with George W. Bush pledging to make energy security a top priority.

One of the new President's first executive decisions on taking office was to establish a National Energy Policy Development (NEPD) Group under the Chairmanship of his Vice-President, Dick Cheney. The 'Cheney Report' was published in May 2001 (National Energy Policy Group 2001). Its findings were stark: between 1991 and 2000, Americans had used 17 per cent more energy than in the previous decade, while domestic energy production had risen by only 2.3

per cent. It projected that US energy consumption by 2020 would increase by about 32 per cent, with the oil share remaining at around 40 per cent, more than a quarter of the world's total consumption (Keenan 2009:116-131).

With Saudi Arabian oil output appearing to plateau and possibly even decline, along with the security risk posed by dependency on oil from the Gulf region, the Cheney Report singled out sub-Saharan Africa as the key source of future US oil supplies. It forecast that by 2015, 25 per cent of US imported oil would come from the Gulf of Guinea. Some subsequent forecasts have put this figure at 35 per cent.[4]

While the crisis engendered by the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US may have diverted public concern and attention away from the Cheney Report, the Pentagon, now effectively driving US foreign policy, had certainly not relegated it to the archives. In January 2002, Ed Royce, The Republican Chairman of the House of Representatives' Africa sub-committee, called for African oil to 'be treated as a priority for US national security post-9/11' (Institute for Advanced Strategic & Political Studies 2002). In April, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs Michael Westphal stressed that 'Africa matters to the United States' (Department of Defense 2002), pointing out that Africa was already supplying 14 per cent of US oil imports and had the potential to increase that amount substantially over the next decade. In June, US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Walter Kansteiner told a Nigerian audience that 'African oil is of strategic national interest to us' and that 'it will increase and become very important as we go forward' (Akosah-Sarpong 2002:10).[5]

9/11 was the PNAC's 'second Pearl Harbour'. It presented the neocons, who now effectively controlled the Pentagon, under the hierarchy of Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, and many of the other high reaches of the US Administration, with the opportunity that they sought. The launch of a GWOT provided the ideological means to secure the militarization of those regions, such as Africa, that US imperial interests required. Indeed, the Bush administration had already defined African oil as a 'strategic national interest' and thus a resource that the US might choose military force to control (Volman 2003). Thus, rather than acknowledge that US military intervention in Africa was about resource control, the Bush administration was able to use the pretext of the GWOT for justifying its militarization of Africa and securing access to and control over its oil.[6]

However, launching the GWOT in Africa was tricky, as most of the continent, especially sub-Saharan Africa, had hitherto scarcely suffered the atrocities of terrorism. The main terrorism incidents in Africa had been concentrated in Somalia, East Africa and the Maghreb, far from the oil-rich, West African countries surrounding the Gulf of Guinea.[7]

I have described in great detail elsewhere (Keenan 2009, 2013) how the US administration and its key ally, Algeria, overcame the problem posed by the lack of terrorism in Africa by fabricating it. The US colluded with Algeria's DRS in

the abduction of 32 European tourists in the Algerian Sahara in February-March 2003. The 'official' story is that the tourists were captured and held hostage by Islamic extremists belonging to the GSPC (*Groupe salafiste pour le prédication et le combat*). The truth is that the leader of the 'terrorists', whose *nom de guerre* was El Para,[8] was a DRS agent. Through this and a number of subsequent fabricated incidents in the northern Sahel regions of Mali, Niger and Chad during the course of 2003-4, the Bush administration was able to justify the launch of a Sahara-Sahelian front, or what became known as a 'second front' in the GWOT in Africa.[9]

The idea of creating false flag incidents to justify military intervention is not new in US history. In 1962, for example, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff drew up and approved plans, codenamed Operation Northwoods, that called for CIA and other operatives to commit acts of terrorism on innocent civilians in US cities and elsewhere, thus giving the appearance of a Communist Cuban terror campaign in Miami, other Florida cities and even Washington that would create public support for a war against Fidel Castro's Cuba (Joint Chiefs of Staff 1962).[10] The plan was ultimately rejected by President Kennedy. Forty years later, a not dissimilar plan was presented to the US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, by his Defense Science Board (Department of Defense, Defense Science Board 2002). Excerpts of the DSB's 'Summer Study on Special Operations and Joint Forces in Support of Countering Terrorism' were revealed on 16 August 2002, with Pamela Hess (2002), William Arkin (2002) and David Isenberg (2002), amongst others, publishing further details and analysis of the plan. The DSB recommended the creation of a 'Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group' (P2OG), a covert organisation which would carry out secret missions to 'stimulate reactions' among terrorist groups by provoking them into undertaking violent acts that would expose them to counter-attack by U.S. forces, along with other operations which, through the US military penetration of terrorist groups and the recruitment of local peoples, would dupe them into conducting 'combat operations, or even terrorist activities' (Floyd 2002; Ahmed 2009).

The P2OG Programme raises huge questions about all terrorist actions since 2002, such as the Madrid and London Bombings in March 2004 and July 2005 respectively, as well as the GWOT's Sahara-Sahel front. In his investigation of such operations, Nafeez Ahmed (Ahmed 2009) says that the US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh (Hersh 2005) was told by a Pentagon advisor that the Algerian (El Para) operation was a pilot for the new Pentagon covert P2OG programme. The timing of the developments between Washington and the Algerian Sahara are significant. The P2OG programme 'leak' came two weeks after Marion E. (Spike) Bowman, Deputy General Counsel for the FBI, presented crucial evidence to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in regard to proposed amendments concerning the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (Bowman 2002). Until Bowman's evidence, the American intelligence community

was anxious about working too closely with their Algerian counterparts for fear that they would pass sensitive information to Palestinian organizations. However, Bowman's statement, in which he presented the background and nature of what the FBI called the 'International Jihad Movement', dispelled many of the anxieties about collaborating with the Algerians by showing how close Algeria was to the US in its fight against Al Qaeda and terrorism.

The first attempt to fabricate terrorism in the Sahara-Sahel region was not El Para's operation in 2003, but a similar attempt by alleged Islamists to hijack and abduct four Swiss tourists on 18 October 2002, near Arak in southern Algeria. The operation, however, was botched and the tourists escaped (Keenan 2009:172-4). It is inconceivable, in the light of the very close 'post-Bowman' relationship between US and Algerian intelligence services, that the U.S. could have been unaware of the Arak operation. Why else were two officials from the State Department's Counterterrorism Office[11] (i.e. AF DAS Robert Perry and S/CT Deputy Coordinator Stephanie Kinney) simultaneously briefing the governments of Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania on the Bush administration's planned counter-terrorism Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI)?[12]

Before the abduction of the 32 tourists in early 2003, there had been no terrorism in the conventional meaning of the term[13] anywhere in this part of the Sahara-Sahel region. However, by May, with the 32 European hostages making global news headlines, EUCOM's commander, General James (Jim) Jones[14] was speaking of 'large ungoverned areas across Africa that are clearly the new routes of narco trafficking, terrorist training and hotbeds of instability' (*World Tribune* 2003; Schmitt 2003).[15] Indeed, even before the hostages had been released, the Bush administration, in line with General Jones's remarks, had designated the Sahara as a new front in the GWOT. Bush referred to El Para as 'Bin Laden's man in the Sahel', while EUCOM's deputy commander, General Wald, described the Sahara as a 'Swamp of Terror', a 'terrorist infestation', which 'we need to drain' (Powell 2004). More than anything else, it was this abduction of the 32 Europeans, effectively an act of state terrorism, that enabled the Americans to launch this new, fabricated Saharan-Sahelian front in the GWOT and so both create and underpin the ideological conditions for Washington's militarisation of those major parts of Africa that were strategically important to it.[16]

President Bush's PSI rolled into action on 10 January 2004 with the disembarkation in Nouakchott, capital of Mauritania, of a U.S. 'anti-terror team' of 500 US troops. U.S. Deputy Under-Secretary of State Pamela Bridgewater, in Nouakchott to oversee what locals called the 'American invasion', confirmed that these troops would work in Mauritania and Mali, while 400 US Rangers would be deployed into the Chad-Niger border regions the following week, along with Los Angeles-based defence contractors Pacific Architects and Engineers.

The US immediately portrayed Africa's new terrorist threat as having spread across the wastelands of the Sahel, from Mauritania in the west, through the little

known desert lands of Mali, Niger and southern Algeria, to the Tibesti Mountains of Chad, with beyond them the Sudan, Somalia and, across the waters, the 'Talibanized' lands of Afghanistan. Shortly after El Para's alleged escapades across the Sahel, western intelligence and diplomatic sources were claiming to be finding the fingerprints of this newly fabricated terrorist threat everywhere. It took only a few days after the Madrid train bombings (11 March 2004) for Western intelligence-security services to link falsely that atrocity to Al Qaeda groups lurking deep in the Sahara and to issue warnings that Al Qaeda bases hidden deep in the world's largest desert could launch terrorist attacks on Europe (Colonel Victor Nelson cited by Fisher-Thompson 2004; General Charles Wald cited by Miles 2004). In 2005, the US expanded the PSI into the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI), raising the number of countries involved from four (Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad) to nine with the inclusion of Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. This enabled Washington to link together two of Africa's main oil- and gas-producing countries, Algeria and Nigeria, along with seven neighbouring Saharan-Sahelian states, into a military security arrangement whose architecture was American.

Algeria's Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives of Algeria in this post-9/11 period, aside from the primary concerns of safeguarding the interests of its ruling regime (including guarantees of immunity from prosecution) that seized power in 1992 after annulling elections that would have brought to power the world's first democratically elected Islamist government, can be considered in three broad categories. These have been: to re-equip and re-establish the army in the wake of the international embargoes that prohibited most countries selling arms to Algeria during its 'Dirty War' of the 1990s; to re-establish its international standing after the 1990s; and to establish itself as the major power in NW Africa, including the Sahel. Whether, or for how long, Algeria will succeed in these objectives, especially the latter, is another question.

The army has played a decisive role in the development of Algeria's post-colonial state, especially through its security establishment, the *mukhabarat*, which holds the country in an iron grip. As the Algerian historian, Mohamed Harbi, remarked: 'Algeria has an army with a state at its service, rather than an army at the service of the state' (Algeria Amnesty Newsletter 2002). Following the cancellation of the 1992 elections and the ensuing 'Dirty War', the United States, European and most other countries were reluctant to sell arms to Algeria for fear of Islamist reprisals and criticisms from human rights groups. The result was that the Algerian army became increasingly under-equipped. As the door of international recognition creaked slightly ajar after Abdelaziz Bouteflika's 'election' to the presidency in 1999, the Algerian army and 'its state' preoccupied themselves with trying to acquire those modern, high-tech weapon systems that it lacked,

notably night-vision devices, sophisticated radar systems, an integrated surveillance system, tactical communications equipment and certain lethal weapon systems. Bouteflika also sought to overcome Algeria's pariah status and re-establish the country's position and reputation in international affairs – perhaps even at the US 'high table'. The Bush administration was seen as being able and likely to deliver on both.

Algeria's seduction of the US began before 9/11. In his visit to Washington in July 2001, Bouteflika and his foreign minister told the Americans all they wanted to hear in their attempt to get the US to double its investment in the Algerian oil sector over the next four years. In US-Algerian relations, they said, 'oil is oil and politics is politics' (Gorguissian 2001). Bouteflika, however, did not lose sight of what he really wanted from Washington. Almost as a harbinger of what was to befall America two months later (9/11), he told President Bush that his country had dealt with the fight against terrorists and that he was now 'seeking specific equipment which would enable us to maintain peace, security and stability in Algeria' (World Tribune 2001). A few days after Bouteflika's Washington visit, the Algerian army Chief of Staff, General Lamari, visited US EUCOM's (European Command) military HQ at Stuttgart where he sought further support for his army's modernisation effort. At the time of the 9/11 attack, the head of Algeria's DRS, General Mohamed Mediène, was actually in the Pentagon building.

9/11 provided both countries with the opportunities that they sought and precipitated a new era in US-Algerian relations. In terms of trying to throw off its pariah status, 9/11 provided Algiers with the horrifically real imagery with which to persuade the world of the correctness of its policy of 'eradication' in its 'dirty war' against Islamists. It was the chance to say 'we told you so'. To demonstrate its willingness to help the US in its 'War on Terror', Algiers provided the Americans with a list of 1,350 names of Algerians abroad with alleged links to Osama bin Laden and a list of alleged Islamist militants inside Algeria (El Hayat 2001). Above all, 9/11 provided Algeria with a golden opportunity to push for the high-tech weaponry that its army had been denied. Three days before his second meeting with President Bush in Washington in November 2001, Bouteflika started beating the terrorist drum. While reaffirming his country's support for America, he reminded the US administration that 'the Algerian people had had to confront terrorism alone, amongst general indifference' (Algeria Amnesty Newsletter 2002). He hoped that the US would now see Algeria's struggle against Islamic militants as comparable to its own war against Al Qaeda and thus be more willing to provide his army with the high-tech weaponry it needed.

In spite of America's tardiness on arms sales to Algeria, the two countries almost immediately became key allies in the GWOT, as evidenced by their collusion in the 2002 P2OG operation. This relationship with the US not only provided Algeria's generals with an effective guarantee of international immunity from

prosecution for their crimes in the 'Dirty War' of the 1990s, but it restored Algeria's role in international affairs, especially as Algeria become a 'global player' in the GWOT and as US policy towards Africa increasingly came to envisage Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa as constituting the three poles of surrogate US military control over the continent.

Creating the Al Qaeda Franchise in the Sahara-Sahel

Algeria's third objective of establishing itself as the regional sub-hegemon, especially in the Sahel, began to take shape in 2006. The opening of a 'Sahara-Sahelian' front in the GWOT played a key role in enabling the US to justify and legitimise its growing presence in Africa, especially as manifest in the ultimate establishment of AFRICOM in 2008. However, by 2006 the US and its allies, notably Algeria, were beginning to face a problem. This was that, in spite of the interminable barrage of US-Algerian generated propaganda and disinformation about terrorism in the Sahara-Sahel, the notion of the GWOT was not gaining much traction within the Sahara-Sahel region.

There were two main reasons for this. One was that the local populations, mostly Tuareg, knew that there was no real terrorism in the area and had always suspected their governments, especially Algeria, of being in some way involved in the El Para 'affair'. Secondly, all the governments of the region, without exception, were using the justification provided by the GWOT to crack down on all forms of legitimate political opposition, civil society, minorities, etc. Again, most of the region's population was aware of this strategy and, with a few exceptions, did not rise to the bait.[17] The circumstances that provided the opportunity for the US and its Algerian ally to revamp the GWOT in the Sahara-Sahel and which led up to the rebranding of the GSPC as AQIM emerged in Mali in early 2006 (Keenan 2013).

Libya's leader, Mouamar Gadhafi, had seen renewed discontent amongst Mali's Tuareg in early 2006 as an opportunity to expand Libyan influence into Mali. He accordingly opened a consulate in Kidal, the administrative centre of Mali's northern Tuareg region, with the promise of massive financial aid. This was anathema to Algeria, which regarded Kidal as being within its sphere of influence. The Algerians and Americans were fully appraised of this situation and saw the possibilities of a Tuareg rebellion as the means of achieving their respective goals. A Tuareg rebellion could be blamed on Libya, thus discrediting Libya and driving it from the region, while Washington could use it to re-vamp its GWOT in the region.

In preparation for such an anticipated opportunity, on 15-16 February three US transporters airlifted some 100 US Special Forces, their dogs and communications equipment from what is now AFRICOM's headquarters at Stuttgart to the new, Halliburton-built base at Tamanrasset in southern Algeria. Both the US State Department and the US Ambassador to Algeria are adamant

that they were not informed by the Pentagon of this covert operation (Keenan 2013). The trigger for their incursion into Mali came on 10 April. The occasion was Gadhafi's address to the *mawlid*[18] ceremony in Timbuktu in which he launched his idea for a 'Greater Saharan' state. He envisaged a day when the Tuareg of Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Algeria would form a federation with Libya as its base. Taken to its logical conclusion, such a state would necessitate the breakaway of much of northern Mali and northern Niger, part of Mauritania and a large part of southern Algeria. For Algeria, Gadhafi's provocative speech was red rag to a bull.

Algeria's DRS, in collusion with its US allies, did a deal with the local Tuareg political leader, Iyad ag Aghaly, to support a Tuareg rebellion in exchange for Tuareg help in the GWOT against the GSPC, a small, Algerian group of Islamist 'terrorists' that was to change it name to AQIM shortly after these events. The precise words of the deal were: 'We [Algeria] are ready to help you achieve what you want, but on the condition that you help us fight the GSPC in the Tuareg Malian Sahara' (Keenan 2013). The US Special Forces from Tamanrasset, along with their Algerian allies, crossed into Mali to give backing to the Tuareg rebels, who, at dawn on 23 May, raced into Kidal and Ménaka in 4WDs and trucks mounted with machine-guns. After looting the armouries, killing two soldiers and taking 20 soldiers hostage, the rebels withdrew to their bases in the Tigharghar Mountains between Kidal and the Algerian border. Algeria took responsibility for quartering the rebels in Tigharghar and managing on their behalf the long drawn-out peace talks. A number of US Special Forces remained in the area.

Algeria achieved its immediate regional objective of discrediting Gadhafi and ousting him from the region. But once the dust had settled, it was payback time. In September, the Algerians, working in hand with the Americans, called in their favour. Algeria instructed and paid Iyad ag Aghaly a considerable sum of money to organize an attack on an alleged GSPC 'terrorist' in northern Mali. The first attack in September was inconclusive. A second, one month later, resulted in five Tuareg being killed, two wounded and two taken hostage.

The international media, prompted and facilitated by the Americans, gave the incidents huge coverage, with the Americans saying that Iyad ag Aghaly's 'Democratic Alliance for Change,' as the May 23 rebel movement called itself, had actively thrown itself into the GWOT. The Alliance spokesman told Reuters that 'Our Democratic Alliance handles security in the region and we chase out those who are not from there, that's the position we've taken to control the zone'. This was the language that Washington wanted to hear: its GWOT was now firmly embedded in the Sahara with the Tuareg tribes, as the Americans called them, being on the right side! The two skirmishes laid the basis for much of the US-Algerian propaganda that has surrounded the post-2006 establishment of AQIM in the Sahel.

At the time of these incidents, many Tuareg who did not know about the deal between the DRS and Iyad ag Aghaly told me that the 'reprisal' attack against the Tuareg at Araouane had been undertaken by GSPC *repentis* (repentants). These were GSPC 'terrorists' who had accepted the Algerian government's amnesty. In early 2006, Tuareg in southern Algeria came across several[19] such *repentis* in the Mali and Niger border regions. They believed that these *repentis*, after turning themselves in, had been sent into Algeria's extreme south by the DRS to 'cause trouble'. There are good grounds to believe that it is these same *repentis* who came to form the hard-core of the GSPC/AQIM's 'foot-soldiers' in the Sahel. With *repentis* in place and the deal between Mali's Tuareg and the DRS accomplished, all that remained was to re-brand the hitherto insignificant GSPC with the Al Qaeda franchise.

The Structure and Organization of AQIM in the Sahara-Sahel

AQIM is, in effect, the Algerian GSPC under a new name. The name change was planned during 2006, probably in conjunction with the contrived 'Tuareg-GSPC' clashes described above, and formally announced in January 2007, with huge publicity in the US, Algerian and other western media. AQIM is structured into three 'components': the 'real' AQIM, AQIM *katibat* (brigades) that have been created by the DRS and AQIM *katibat* that have been infiltrated by the DRS. The 'real' AQIM, which is active around Algiers, its immediate hinterland and the Kabyle region to the east of the capital, is frequently quoted by the Algerian security forces as numbering around 600. The extent of its infiltration is uncertain, although it is generally believed that most of its *katibat* are probably subject to some degree of infiltration by the DRS.

AQIM in the Sahara-Sahel is very different from that in the north, being a hybrid of *katibat* that have been both 'created' and 'infiltrated' by the DRS. AQIM's two main emirs in the Sahel are Abdelhamid abou Zaïd and Yahia Djouadi, both of whom have several aliases. Both are associated with the DRS, and can effectively be regarded as 'DRS agents'. Abedelhamid, for example, was El Para's main 'lieutenant' in the fabricated 2003 operation. He also managed the entire Malian end of that operation because of his greater familiarity with the Sahel regions. Yahia Djouadi is also believed to have been involved in the 2003 operation, although his alias at the time is uncertain. The core of Abdelhamid's *katibat* would appear to be the 'regrouped' *repentis* described above, joined by a loose collection of 'Islamists' drawn mostly from Mauritania and Mali. They have also attracted a few local bandits and criminals. Yahia Djouadi's group may also contain some of these Algerian *salafistes* at its core, but has probably recruited more young Islamists from within Mauritania.[20]

The strength of AQIM in the Sahel is not known. Between its creation in 2006/7 and 2008/9, most estimates put it at around 200. Since then, estimates have risen to around 400, although local recruitment has almost certainly increased since the disastrous Franco-Mauritanian military raids into Mali on 22 July (Keenan 2013).

After the 'creation' of AQIM in 2006/7, it remained something of a 'phantom,' but still the subject of extensive US and Algerian disinformation and propaganda. One reason for this AQIM inactivity in the Sahel was because both northern Niger and northern Mali, from early 2007 onwards, became the terrain of new Tuareg rebellions, which had nothing to do with Algeria's GSPC/AQIM. Without any 'real' terrorism in the region, the governments of the region, all beneficiaries of Washington's TSCTI, referred to the Tuareg rebels as 'terrorists' and 'drugs traffickers,' or, in the case of at least one Washington analyst, 'putative terrorists' (Keenan 2013). Indeed, the strength of AQIM in the Sahara-Sahel during these years is not known, although most estimates put it at around 200 or less. Not until the resumption of Western hostage-taking in 2008 did estimates of AQIM's numbers creep up to nearer 400.

Even though 'real terrorism' in the region was virtually non-existent during the two years following the AQIM branding, the impression was being given to the world by both Algeria and the US that this new branch of Al Qaeda was posing a dangerous threat to the Sahel, NW Africa as a whole and even Europe. In fact, if we take the Tuareg rebellions out of the picture, the only AQIM incident in the entire Algeria-Niger-Mali nexus during the two years following the creation of AQIM was the attack on Djanet airport on 8 November 2007. The 'incident' occurred at 4:00 am, when, according to Algerian security sources, about ten terrorists in three off-road vehicles fired on Djanet airport with rocket propelled grenades and machine guns. Algerian media reports, all sourced to the security services, gave quite contradictory accounts of what had happened. Some said that the attackers damaged an *Air Algérie* plane; others that two helicopters and a military aircraft had been hit. Accounts of the terrorists' 'escape' were equally confused. Some said the attackers escaped across the border into Niger; others that the terrorists had all been caught and killed by an army helicopter-based operation. The security forces subsequently issued a statement saying that the 'terrorists' had been identified as coming from Al Qaeda training camps in northern Mali affiliated to AQIM. The same report said that the attackers had been targeting oil facilities in the region, and that they knew this because they had infiltrated the attackers' training camps.

The reports, issued by Algeria's security forces and widely published through the US and international media, were 'lies'. Aside from there being no oil facilities in the Djanet region, the attackers were not 'terrorists', but Tuareg youth (mostly teenagers) from Djanet itself. Of the myriad so-called 'security analysts' who cover the north African security situation, only Menas reported accurately what happened. It reported immediately 'that there was no terrorist attack on Djanet airport … and that Algeria had once again fabricated a terrorist incident' (Menas 2007). It then explained that the youths' very amateurish attack had been intended as a demonstration of sympathy for the Tuareg rebels in Niger and a protest against the Algerian authorities in Djanet. The report was, of course, ignored by

western 'security services', especially American, which instead ensured that maximum media coverage explained how the Djanet attack demonstrated the increasing threat being presented in the Sahara-Sahel by AQIM, and that the terrorist organization's recent rebranding as an Al Qaeda franchise reflected its increasing 'internationalization' and 'reach'.[21]

The Djanet incident demonstrates quite unequivocally how both Algeria and its western allies were continuing to use fabricated, or in this case fictitious, terrorism for their own respective agendas. For the US, Djanet could be used to demonstrate the expansion of Al Qaeda across the Sahara-Sahel and thus provided further justification of the need for AFRICOM. For Algeria, the Djanet 'lie' diverted international attention from the escalating unrest against the regime.

However, the Djanet attack, coming just before GSPC/AQIM's resumption of Western hostage taking, fitted perfectly into Algeria's US-backed strategy of establishing itself as the controlling military power in this part of the Sahel. The means of asserting this strategy has been through the use of terrorism. Between February 2008 and September 2010 a further 20 Westerners have been taken hostage by AQIM in the Sahara-Sahel,[22] leading Richard Barrett, the former British intelligence official and the UN's highest ranking official responsible for monitoring the activities of Al Qaeda and the Taliban, to say that while attacks by Al Qaeda and its operatives were decreasing in many parts of the world, the situation was worsening in north Africa (Keenan 2013). He was referring specifically to the activities of AQIM in the Sahel region of southern Algeria, Niger, Mali and Mauritania.

However, as all of these hostages have finished up in the hands of one or other of the three AQIM emirs mentioned above, who are strongly believed to be linked, either as agents or associates, with Algeria's DRS; and as all major Western intelligence services have varying degrees of awareness of the DRS-AQIM link, the key question focuses not just on Algeria's hegemonic designs, but on the extent to which Algeria is serving Western interests that go further than just providing the US with justification for AFRICOM and its own militaristic policies for the continent as a whole.

The Sahel's Riches and the Interests of France, the US, the EU and Others

The Sahel region of Niger, Mali and Mauritania is immensely rich in minerals. Areva's uranium mines at Arlit in northern Niger are one of the richest and most productive in the world, providing France with some 40 per cent of the uranium it needs to produces some 80 per cent of its energy. AQIM's increased activities in the Sahel over the last year especially have raised the possibility of external intervention. France and the US have held high-level discussions on the subject. Other EU countries, notably the UK, Spain, Germany, Holland and Italy are involved in varying degree in the region's security.

Algeria, however, is adamant that the problems of the region, namely AQIM, should and can be met by the four countries affected (Algeria, Niger, Mali and Mauritania), without any external intervention, and has therefore been at the centre of a number of new, although largely theatrical, initiations of new military-security institutions for the region. Algeria is using the AQIM threat to the Sahel to assert itself as the region's major power and the only one with the military ability to remove the Al Qaeda threat. In this, it has Washington's blessing. In so doing, it believes that it will be able to establish itself and its national interests as the major power and influence in the Sahel region. To achieve this goal, however, Algeria must first reduce France's standing and influence in the region. The presence and influence of the former colonial power are major impediments to Algeria's own hegemonic designs on the region.

As for where the US fits into this triangle, there are many who believe that the US would welcome a weakening of French influence in the region and to even inherit the old empire. The US is also clearly happy to see its ally in the GWOT continue to orchestrate 'sufficient' terrorism in the region for its own needs and to establish itself as the dominant military power in the region.

However, with two Frenchmen taken hostage, the stakes have been raised very much higher. One (Pierre Camatte) was released in February 2009, allegedly for a ransom. The other (Michel Germaneau) was abducted in April and either died or was executed by AQIM. On 22 July, France, with Mauritanian assistance, undertook two disastrous military raids into Mali, ostensibly to free Germaneau. Whether Germaneau had already died of heart illness or been executed by AQIM as retribution for killing 6-7 AQIM members in the raid is still not known. Either way, however, there is evidence that Algeria's DRS led France into a trap. Not only did France find no trace of Germaneau or his captors, but the raids branded France as the new infidel.

Then on 16 September, less than two months after both France and Mauritania had 'declared war on AQIM', AQIM proceeded to kidnap five French employees (plus 1 Malagasy and 1 Togolese) from the Areva's Arlit uranium mines in northern Niger. At the time of writing (October 2010), the hostages are being held by AQIM in northern Mali.

How this new crisis will be resolved remains to be seen. On the one hand, France has been embarrassed and weakened in the region, and may become more so if the hostages are killed, if a military assault ends in another failure, if France is humiliated by AQIM in the negotiations, or, perhaps, if France has to seek Algeria's help to extricate itself from the crisis. All such outcomes are likely to enhance Algeria's position in the region. On the other hand, there is growing suspicion amongst nearly all Algeria's neighbours – Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Libya – that Algeria has in some way or another been orchestrating the AQIM terrorist situation. One Mauritanian Minister even accused Algeria as being the *porte-parole* (spokesperson) for AQIM, while America has been accused in the

Moroccan media of appeasing Algeria over its involvement in 'terrorism'. Indeed, there are currently signs that the three 'weaker' countries of the Sahel – Mauritania, Niger and Mauritania – may turn to support (against Algeria) from not just Morocco and/or Libya, which would be anathema for Algeria but to France and the EU. Indeed, at this particular moment, this part of the Sahel is beginning to receive high-level attention from the EU, which feels threatened by this latest security crisis. Algeria will do all that it can to prevent such EU intervention. But Algeria may have overstepped the mark and it may be too late to stop such intervention, in which case Algeria's designs in the Sahel will not be achieved quite as easily as it had perhaps imagined when it created AQIM.

The region, after eight years of largely fabricated and fictitious terrorism, has finally become the Terror Zone that the US military marked on its maps of Africa in 2003. Since 22 July, there are indications that AQIM is attracting new recruits in the region and may become Washington's self-fulfilled prophecy. But the Sahel's largely unexploited wealth and resources are such that the West, either with or without the help of Algeria, seems set on re-establishing its 'control/security' over the region. How this will be achieved depends on many factors, some of which are as yet perhaps unforeseen. There is, for instance, the question of the extent to which the Tuareg, aggrieved on almost all fronts, might take matters into their own hands. There is also the question of Chinese and other interests in the region, which are unlikely to abandoned over a such a small matter of security.

Notes

1. Deepak Lal, Professor of International Development Studies at UCLA, was an advisor to both The World Bank and IMF.

2. These maps were compiled originally by US EUCOM in 2003.

3. See http://www.africom.mil/AboutAFRICOM.asp/. Since then, Africa's strategic importance to the US has undergone several reappraisals as a result of the US's increased awareness of its own energy crisis, the post-9/11 GWOT and the rapid growth of China's growing economic investment in Africa.

4. In 2002, sub-Saharan Africa was already supplying 14% of US oil imports; by 2006, the US imported 22 per cent of its oil from Africa, and by 2007 the country was importing more crude oil from Africa than the Persian Gulf (US Dept. of Energy 2007).

5. Five years later, following the announcement of AFRICOM, EUCOM commander General Bantz Craddock told journalists in Washington that '[When] you look at West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, it becomes more focused because of the energy situation', with the result that protecting energy assets 'obviously (*sic*) is out in front' (National Intelligence Council, 'External Relations and Africa,' discussion paper, 16 March 2004, at www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_GIF_2020_Support/2004_03_16_papers/external_relations.pdf (10 May 2007). Ryan Henry, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, told journalists at a Foreign Press Centre briefing in Washington in June 2007 that the new US African Command 'is about resources, specifically oil, specifically the oil in the Gulf of Guinea and that's what this command is about'.

6. US policy towards Africa cannot be reduced to or explained solely by America's increasingly serious energy crisis. Besides oil, the USA is dependent on Africa for many other raw materials such as manganese (for steel production), cobalt and chrome, both vital for alloys especially in aeronautics, vanadium, metals in the platinum group, antimony, gold, fluorspar, germanium, industrial diamonds, and many other lesser known materials such as columbite-tantalite (coltan for short), a key component in everything from mobile phones and computer chips to stereos and VCRs (Keenan 2009:127-9). Others reasons for US policy towards Africa in the Bush era include the role of the 'religious right' and military and intelligence 'turf wars' (Keenan 2009).

7. In 1993, 18 US soldiers were killed in Mogadishu in an incident that some 'terrorism analysts' now attribute to 'Islamic terrorists'. In 1998, some 200 people were killed when U.S. embassies were bombed in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. In 2002, a hotel was bombed in Mombasa, allegedly by Al Qaeda 'terrorists' and 2 surface-to-air missiles fired at an Israel-bound airliner. Northern Algeria has been subjected to both Islamist and state terrorism since the early 1990s, while there have been incidents in Morocco (bombings in Casablanca on 16 May 2003) and Tunisia (el-Ghriba synagogue, April 2002).

8. El Para was his *nom de guerre*, from his time in the elite parachutist regiment. His proper name is allegedly Saifi Am(m)ari. His many aliases include El (Al) Para (Bara), Abderezak, Abou (Abu) Haidara, Ammane Abu Haidra, Abderezak Zaimeche, Abdul Razzaq, Abdul Rasak, Abdalrazak, Al Ammari Al Arussi, El Ourassi and further combinations and alternative spellings of these. It is believed that he may have trained at Fort Bragg, as an elite green beret in 1994-1996.

9. In his State of the Union address of 29 January 2002, President Bush spoke of the expansion of the war on terror to new fronts. Since then, the term 'front', and especially the term second front, has become almost synonymous with the attempt to globalize the GWOT. Afghanistan is usually understood to be the first front. The term 'second front' has been applied at one time or another to most parts of the world, including SE Asia; Iraq; Latin America in the context of the election of left wing presidents in Brazil and Ecuador; Colombia in terms of the FARC campaign and, after 2003, the Sahara. In the latter case the 'first' front is sometime understood to be the Horn of Africa and East Africa. See, for example, Pyne (2002); Clays (2003).

10. The Northwoods document was published online in a more complete form by the National Security Archive on 30 April 2001: 'Pentagon Proposed Pretexts for Cuba Invasion in 1962', *National Security Archive*, 30 April 2001.

11. Details of AF DAS Robert Perry and S/CT Deputy Coordinator Stephanie Kinney's mission were confirmed publicly by the Office of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C. on 7 November 2002.

12. Even though the PSI forces were not officially brought into the region until January 2004, US Special Forces, believed to be attached to the P2OG programme, were operating covertly in the region as early as November 2002. The State Department explained the PSI as: 'a programme designed to protect borders, track movement of people, combat terrorism, and enhance regional cooperation and stability. It is a State-led effort to assist Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania in detecting and responding to suspicious movement of people and goods across and within their borders through training, equipment and cooperation. Its goals support two U.S. national security interests in Africa: waging the war on terrorism and enhancing regional peace and security'.

13. By 'conventional', I mean that terrorism is the threatened or employed use of violence against civilian targets for political objectives.

14. Later to become President Obama's National Security Advisor (NSA), before stepping down in October 2010.

15. EUCOM's second-in-command, air force General Charles Wald described these groups as 'similar to Al Qaeda, but not as sophisticated or with the same reach, but the same objectives. They're bad people, and we need to keep an eye on that' (*World Tribune*, 6 May 2003).

16. General Jones envisaged a new concept of US military basing in Africa. With Cold War-style bases containing large numbers of US forces neither militarily appropriate nor politically feasible, General Jones was planning a far more flexible facilitative arrangement which would enable the US military to deploy quickly, as and when required, through what he called a 'family of bases'. These would include forward-operating bases, or what he called 'lilypads', perhaps with an airfield nearby, that could house up to 3,000-5,000 troops, and 'forward-operating locations,' which would be lightly equipped bases where Special Forces, marines or possibly an infantry rifle platoon or company could land and build up as the mission required (Schmitt 2003).

17. For details of this strategy, see Keenan (2013). The main incidents in this strategy include the attempts by the Niger government in 2004 to provoke the Tuareg to take up arms, the alleged terrorist attack on the Lemgheity garrison in northern Mauritania in 2005 and the Tamanrasset riots of 2005.

18. The Prophet's birthday.

19. The precise number is not known. Tuareg described finding a few groups numbering about two or three. The total number is therefore unlikely to have been more than a few dozen.

20. A third *katibat* is believed to centre around Mokhtar ben Mokhtar (MBM), an independent 'businessman', who has waged his own war against Algeria since the late 1990s. Details of MBM and his activities are given in Keenan (2009, 2013). His relationship to both GSPC/AQIM and the DRS can be best described as freelance.

21. An official at the British FCO responded to the Menas report by saying: 'The Algerians reported that there was a terrorist attack on Djanet airport. Therefore it is a fact' (Keenan 2013). The truth and the accuracy of the Menas report was revealed three years later, when a DRS journalist, Salima Tlemçani (2010), inadvertently reported both the head of the regional government and the Tuareg Supreme chief as confirming the Menas account of events.

22. Also, 1 Malagasy and 1 Togolese employed by the French company, Areva. For details of all hostage takings, see Keenan (2013).

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9

The Crises of Postcoloniality in Southern Africa: SADC and Conflict Intervention in Zimbabwe

Martha Mutisi

Introduction

This chapter appraises the role of the Southern African Development Community in conflict intervention in Zimbabwe, following the decade-old conflict between the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). From 2000 to 2008, Zimbabwe experienced political conflict which had huge social and economic ramifications including violence against civilians, disputed election results, internal displacement, hyperinflation, massive exodus of Zimbabweans and subsequent international isolation of the country. The close to a decade-old conflict resultantly had contagion effects in the Southern African region, hence the label, 'the sick man of SADC' (Gavin 2007:35). Although the conflict appeared protracted, the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s intervention particularly the mediation by former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, finally paid off resulting in a negotiated political agreement.

This chapter pays special attention to the regional organisation's role in negotiating democratic and electoral reforms and the subsequent political agreement between the parties, the ZANU-PF and the MDC. SADC's seminal achievement in the ZANU-PF/MDC dispute was demonstrated by its successful facilitation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that was signed by the ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations on 15 September 2008, paving way for the Government of National Unity. As this chapter demonstrates, despite scoring colourful marks through the GPA, SADC's conflict intervention in Zimbabwe is fraught with complexities stemming from the organization's partiality, SADC's principle of non-interference and some level of incoherence and incongruence within the regional organization. As a postcolonial organisation comprising of fellow

comrades who fought the liberation struggle against colonialism and which advances a pan-African ethos, SADC is largely compromised especially when dealing with political novices who espouse a neo-liberal agenda such as the MDC. Indeed, SADC's initial benign response to the Zimbabwe crisis, the length of time taken to reach the negotiated settlement and the stalemate experienced during the post-agreement phase further reflect the limits of SADC's multilateral engagement on Zimbabwe. The chapter concludes by calling for the transformation of SADC from a non-interfering liberators' club to a supra-national entity that is not only more directive in its conflict intervention efforts but also more citizen-centred when addressing political disputes.

The Political Conflict in Zimbabwe: Anatomy of the Actors

Zimbabwe is a former British colony that obtained independence in 1980 following a prolonged and bloody armed struggle that came to an end through negotiations known as the Lancaster House Conference. One of the outcomes of the peace talks between nationalist movements and the colonial government, represented by Ian Smith, was the Lancaster House Agreement, a negotiated settlement that ushered in a ceasefire, subsequent post-conflict elections and ultimately Zimbabwe's independence. For the past 33 years, Zimbabwe has been under the leadership of President Robert Mugabe and the party, Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The July 2013 elections witnessed the re-election of the President and a resounding win by the ruling party.

In the late 1990s – close to two decades after independence Zimbabwe became the theatre of a political dispute that involved the ZANU-PF and the opposition, MDC, whose consequences extended to civil society and ordinary civilians. The key actors in the Zimbabwe conflict include the major political parties, the ZANU-PF and the MDC formations, MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC-M led by Arthur Mutambara and the MDC, led by Welshman Ncube. Unlike many conflicts in Africa that have an ethnic or religious undertone, the Zimbabwean conflict is uniquely political in its orientation as the major point of difference between ZANU-PF and the MDC is largely at the ideological and political level. Although in the aftermath of Zimbabwe's independence in the early 1980s, there were massacres known as *Gukurahundi*,[1] which were committed by ZANU-PF on the Ndebele people in the name of pursuing insurgencies; the post-2000 conflict between the two political parties was largely driven by divergent political agendas not ethnicity. Generally, both the ZANU-PF and the MDC parties encompass an almost even Shona and Ndebele membership, although during its formation, the MDC managed to attract more Ndebele followers who felt left out in the post-independent development agenda of Zimbabwe. The MDC has since split into three formations, namely MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai, MDC-N led by Welshman Ncube and MDC–M which is led by the current Deputy Prime Minister, Arthur Mutambara.

Political Ideology of the ZANU-PF

Founded in 1963, the ZANU-PF is led by President Robert Mugabe who according to the political ranks of the party is the First Secretary. ZANU-PF is a political party born out of the struggle against colonial rule, hence the reference to a 'nationalist and revolutionary liberation party'. Through its military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), the ZANU-PF party organised a guerrilla movement against the colonial regime of Ian Douglas Smith, leading to the Lancaster House negotiations that ushered in Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. The first democratic elections held in independent Zimbabwe witnessed the ZANU-PF winning the majority of parliamentary seats, and subsequently becoming the ruling party in Zimbabwe, a position that the party held until the March 2008 elections. As a result of its access to security machinery and state media, the ZANU-PF has for the past 30 years controlled the conduct of elections, hence the conclusion that Zimbabwe is a 'militarised form of electoral authoritarianism'[2] (Bratton and Masunungure 2008). Since the liberation war, violence has been central to ZANU-PF's mobilization of support and consolidation of power. Bratton and Masunungure (ibid) make reference to Goran Hyden (2006)'s 'movement legacy' thesis, arguing that the ZANU-PF has not fully transformed itself from an armed liberation movement into a democratic political party, as is often demonstrated by the party's employment of guerrilla strategies of violence especially during crises. The Matabeleland, the controversial fast-track land reform exercise hailed as *The Third Chimurenga*,[3] the 2005 urban clean-up campaign called *Operation Murambatsvina*[4] as well as the violent post-2000 elections are episodes indicative of the ZANU PF's reliance on violence as a necessary means to an end. In a speech in 1980, the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe (1980:12) declared '... our votes must go together with our guns; after all any vote … shall have been the product of the gun. The gun, which provides the votes, should remain its security officer, its guarantor'.

Over the past decade, Zimbabwe emerged in the limelight due to cases of political violence, especially in the context of elections. Nonetheless, it is important to note that violence has been used as tool for political survival even as far back as the colonial era. During the colonial era, acts of violence were committed by both the colonisers and the nationalist movements. To challenge colonialism, nationalist movements waged wars of liberation, which although they led to the 1979 negotiated settlement, had huge ramifications on the civilian population. The history of liberation in the ZANU-PF has somewhat contributed to the political party's sense of entitlement to patriotic history. Kriger (2005) contends that the ZANU-PF's strong conviction that it owns Zimbabwe's history by liberating the country from British rule partly accounts for the party's deep intolerance of opposition. In fact, in the current narratives and debates, it is evident that the ZANU-PF political and military elites find little respect for opposition parties

that have emerged in post-independent Zimbabwe, especially those whose leaders have no 'war credentials'. In fact, President Mugabe and the so-called 'securocrats' have repeatedly made statements that dismiss the MDC on the basis of lack of liberation war history. At an election campaign rally held in Silobela, Central Midlands, prior to the June 2008 run-off election, President Robert Mugabe reiterated this message by declaring: 'We fought for this country and a lot of blood was shed. We are not going to give up our country because of a mere X. How can a ballpoint pen fight with a gun?'[5]

The ZANU-PF's highest decision-making apparel, the Politburo, largely comprises of liberation ex-combatants or those with 'war credentials'. These office bearers not only publicly declare their steadfast allegiance to the principles of sovereignty and anti-colonialism but they also make decisions affecting the party and government (Raftopolous 2009). Additionally, the ZANU-PF has enjoyed the support of 'securocrats',[6] which is a term that has been adopted to describe the leaders of Zimbabwe's security sector institutions such as the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), the air force of Zimbabwe (AFZ), the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Zimbabwe Prison Services (ZPS). These security sector institutions form a cumulative alliance known as the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), whose leaders have in several instances publicly declared their support to President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF and their denunciation of the MDC and Morgan Tsvangirai, in particular.

The ZANU-PF espouses the African liberationist and nationalist tradition, which is characterised by a strong leadership and pan-Africanism. The ZANU-PF ideology is often exhibited in anti-Western and anti-capitalism narrative that underscores sovereignty, independence and a sense of ownership of patriotic history. Unfortunately, this position often exudes elements of intolerance to opposition as well as an absolute disregard for those who did not participate in the liberation struggle. Since 2000, one of the most frequently used campaign slogans by the ZANU-PF is 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again'. During the 2008 election campaigns, the ZANU-PF's catchphrase was '100 per cent Empowerment, Total Independence', placing more emphasis on economic independence and undoing imperialism. The ZANU-PF's pan-African inclination is shared by many liberation political parties in the Southern African region, including the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) of Namibia, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) of Tanzania, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and the Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola (MPLA). President Robert Mugabe is a paragon of African nationalism who commands unquestionable allegiance from fellow African liberation movements.

Bratton and Masungure (2008:47) summarize five key elements that characterize the ZANU-PF as a political party: an ideological belief in its right to rule in perpetuity, a party machinery that penetrates the organs of the state, a corrupted

economy vested in the hands of party loyalists, an institutionalised role in policy making for military commanders, and a heavy reliance on violence. The authors contend that ZANU-PF not only controls the state security and governance machinery, but it also has the capacity to orchestrate organized and institutionalized violence against all sources of dissent. Apart from the July 2013 elections, most of the country's post-independent polls were marred by allegations of violence leading to commentators arguing that violence was central in the retention of power by the ruling party. Subsequently since independence, no opposition political party has ever succeeded in completely wrestling political power from ZANU-PF despite the regular and consistent conduct of elections in Zimbabwe. Mostly as a result of its command and control system and the longevity of its tenure as a ruling party, the dichotomy between the ZANU-PF party and government is blurred and in some cases, decisions by ZANU-PF organs such as the Politburo and Central Committee automatically influence Cabinet decisions. Bratton and Masunungure (2008:46) observe that 'The ruling party and public administration are fused, and organizational structures are conflated at all levels – the party is married to the state'.

During the early days of post-independent Zimbabwe, the ZANU-PF government practiced what was then labelled as 'scientific socialism', which entailed the provision of social services like education, health and housing to the population at little or no cost. Criticised by many as populist and economically unsustainable, this humanistic-socialist ideology is responsible for the massive gains in educational advancement and broadened social service provision that were witnessed in the first decade of independence. The humanistic-socialist ideology was partly accounted for by the 'crisis of expectation' at independence where masses expected the new black government to deliver to them services they could not access during colonial rule. However, a decade later, Zimbabwe embraced neo-liberalism and capitalism as evidenced by the launch of the neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) that demanded austerity measures by the state as well as the reduction of the civil service budget. ZANU-PF leaders who were supporters of broad-based development were gradually converted to elites, embracing a bourgeoisie outlook, and soon some were owning and running businesses against a background of rising levels of poverty and eroding income among the population. Based on such attributes, Chingono (2010:14) concludes that 'ZANU-PF is a typical representation of a party whose characteristics and policies are overly shaped by *partocracy* …'.[7]

Despite the above observations, the ZANU-PF continues to exhibit its support for redistributive policies such as land reform programmes that witnessed the acquisition of land from white commercial farmers and distribution to black farmers. Additionally, the ZANU-PF continues to champion indigenisation policies such as the proposal to ensure that 51 per cent of business shares are owned by local Zimbabweans. The redistributive ideology is based on the argument by the

ZANU-PF that the party seeks to undo the impact of colonialism and imperialism by empowering Zimbabweans economically. Despite this bold goal, the ZANU-PF has been criticised by the opposition, civil society and the international community for a political ideology and economic policies that alienate private business, disrespect private property and reward political elites instead of genuinely empowering poor people.

The MDC Political Ideology

Established in September 1999 under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC emerged in the political scene of Zimbabwe, following the ZANU-PF's almost two decades of domination. There had been other opposition parties that existed in Zimbabwe before the MDC, and these include the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), the Forum Party of Zimbabwe (FPZ) and the Zimbabwe Union of Democrats (ZUD). However, the MDC was the first opposition party to pose a credible, critical and sustained political challenge to the ruling party since independence. This opposition party was readily embraced by a diverse and huge constituency comprising labour, civil society, academia and former commercial farmers. As a result of this competition, the relationship between the ZANU-PF and MDC was often characterized by militant politics, polarization and violent clashes.

When it was established, the MDC branded itself as a labour party, and this was befitting as the party's President, Morgan Tsvangirai, was a former Secretary-General of a labour union, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). The MDC's leaning towards labour is explicable because the party emerged in the context of declining economic and living standards in Zimbabwe, rising unemployment rates and an increasing gap between the rich and poor which were cumulative outcomes of an unstable economy, inequitable distribution of resources and corruption. Additionally, the MDC political ideology was centred on a neo-liberal democratic agenda, demanding change in governance, and especially being critical of the *de facto* one-party state Zimbabwe had become owing to more than two decades of ZANU-PF rule. The change agenda of the MDC can be understood given the context in which this political party was formed. For more than a decade now the MDC has been a source of frustration for the ZANU-PF, which was used to being a political hegemony since the 1980 independence.

Apart from its major identify as a labour party, the ideology of the MDC is difficult to define and categorise, mostly owing to the eclectic nature of its membership. Some scholars posit that the MDC has no political ideology as its political manifestos are always in a continuous state of flux. However, this author underscores that the party does have an ideology although the task of dispensing this ideology is made challenging by the variegated nature of its membership. As

a party emerging during the period of emerging politico-economic challenges in the country, the MDC received massive support from civil society and interest groups such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) and the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU). In addition, the MDC also received support from white commercial farmers whose fate was threatened by government's land reform programme. As such, the MDC was born as a coalition party, based on an unusual alliance between working class people, civil society,[8] employers and professionals. While on the one hand, the interests of these disparate groups were often difficult to reconcile for the political party leadership, on the other hand, the nascent, novel, assorted and contemporary nature of the MDC politics brings vibrancy and diversity to its decisions and policies. However, this and the eclectic dimension of the MDC explain the party's split of 2005 that led to the two MDC formations, the one led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and the other led by Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M).[9] In 2011, the MDC-M subsequently split again with Welshman Ncube leading the MDC-N and Arthur Mutambara retaining leadership of the MDC-M.

Ideologically, the original MDC formation espoused its narrative as being based on the concept of social democracy[10] and transformation, as evidenced by its slogan, *Chinja Maitiro!* (Change in the way things are done!). When it emerged as an opposition party, much of the focus of the MDC political architecture and energies have been expended towards opposing the approaches and values of the ZANU-PF. This call for change has its roots in the perception that the ZANU-PF thrives on political patronage and dictatorship, and that the party has outlived its usefulness to the citizens. In the early 2000S, the 'change narrative' resonated with a wide array of Zimbabweans who were disenchanted by patronage politics and poor governance by the ZANU-PF and their attendant effects such as declining living standards and rising unemployment rates. Being a labour-driven political party, the MDC's biggest constituency resided in Zimbabwe's urban areas where the party has won the bulk of its votes since 2000. The ZANU-PF, on the other hand, has historically commanded popular support from the rural areas whose population bought into the promises brought about by the land reform programme.

On several political occasions (the 2000, 2005 and 2008 elections), the MDC managed to upset the ZANU-PF during elections by collecting a substantive percentage of the popular vote yet despite its popular appeal to the electorate, the MDC has not wholly succeeded in ousting the ZANU-PF party electorally. This was partly due to the ZANU-PF's control of the security and electoral apparatus, an uneven electoral climate as well as the MDC's own organisational deficiencies and limited political capacity to find creative ways of engaging the populace and challenging the ZANU-PF. Muleya (2008) labels the MDC as 'structurally brittle', politically paralysed and lacking in leadership, hence its failure to deal with the challenges posed by the hardened ZANU-PF regime. Perhaps

this is why Makgetlaneng (2008:1) observes that the MDC '… has no position on imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, globalization and north-south relations. Despite acute problems confronted by the masses of the Zimbabwean people on a daily basis, its strategy and tactics have been failing to meet their demands and needs'.

Currently, however, the MDC is split into three factions: one led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T), another led by Welshman Ncube (MDC-N) and another one led by Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M). The first MDC split took place in 2005, with the Tsvangirai faction opposing the MDC's participation in senatorial elections, and a faction led by Welshman Ncube deciding to go ahead and participate in these controversial elections. A further split of the MDC-M happened in 2011, followed a January 2011 congress which witnessed Welshman Ncube ascending to the presidency while Mutambara was reduced to a mere party member. Mutambara allegedly contested the legitimacy of the party structures which emerged from the congress elections. However, a February 2011 High Court ruling barred Mutambara him from conducting any business on behalf of the MDC or presenting himself as president or principal of the party. As a result, Ncube represented the MDC in the July 2013 elections; while Mutambara went on to form his own MDC-M party, though he did not contest in the 2013 elections.

The ZANU-PF/MDC Conflict: Origins, Manifestations and Outcomes

The relationship between the MDC and ZANU-PF has been characterized by a violent rivalry ever since the formation of the opposition party in 1999. Power politics, governance, ideological differences and issues of resource distribution are central to this conflict. On the one hand, the MDC is perceived by the ZANU-PF to be a party espousing the neo-imperial agenda that seeks to disrobe Zimbabwe of its sovereignty. On the other hand, according to the MDC, poor policy choices by the ZANU-PF have often resulted in socio-economic and political complexities that subsequently led to the coagulation of opposition against the ZAN-PF by the year 2000. Examples of inept policy decisions include the massive one-time compensation offered to war veterans during 1997 despite the lack of budgetary means to support this gesture. Yet another erroneous policy move was the decision by government to send approximately 11,000 troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998 to support President Laurent Kabila against invasion by Rwandan and Ugandan forces. The move was made without budgetary considerations and against a toughening economic environment caused by the adoption of the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes, hence its unpopularity with citizens who saw it as ostentatious. The cumulative impact of such policy decisions was economic implosion and a growing frustration with the ZANU-PF. Indeed, during this period, the ZANU-PF's 'patriarchal mode of liberation' (Campbell 2003 had now become exhausted, irrelevant and

illegitimate in Zimbabwe. The MDC emerged in this context of the ZANU-PF's increasing unpopularity and the relationship between the two parties has been contentious ever since. The emergence of the MDC was accompanied by subsequent significant political gains and international recognition, thereby alerting the ZANU-PF to the reality that a new neo-liberal political dispensation in the name of popular democracy was underway. For a decade, the MDC has been a source of frustration for the ZANU-PF, as it has resonated with a significant population of Zimbabweans and in certain cases; the party has largely triumphed over the ZANU-PF during elections despite the challenging electoral environment. Although it did not wrestle power from the ruling party, the MDC scored notable challenges against the ZANU-PF which include the successful rejection of a government-proposed constitution, and the party claimed significant votes during the 2000, 2002 and 2005 elections.

The relationship between the main political parties can at best be described as a belligerent rivalry. While on the one hand, the opposition criticises the ruling party's extreme patronage politics, the ZANU-PF on the other hand perceives the MDC as a counter-revolutionary force that threatens to reverse the gains of independence. In fact, in the ZANU-PF narrative, the MDC is a surrogate of the British and a 'puppet of the West', which has been orchestrating the 'regime change' agenda.[11] The ZANU-PF also criticizes the MDC for being opposed to redistributive policies that seek to economically empower ordinary Zimbabweans such as the land reform programme and the indigenisation agenda. The MDC and ZANU-PF also have differing perspectives on the issue of imposition of sanctions in Zimbabwe. While the ZANU-PF argues that sanctions are illegal and that they are an imperialist tool meant to dislodge the government and facilitate regime change, the MDC on the other hand argues that these are targeted sanctions that were imposed on recalcitrant individuals in the ZANU-PF who were blocking democratic change in Zimbabwe.

As a result of these divergent ideologies and perspectives on the challenges facing the country, the emergence of the MDC was met with the closure of political space as well as increasing radicalization and re-assertion of control by the ZANU-PF. When the MDC was formed, the ZANU-PF government's initial response was to employ heavy and contentious tactics against the opposition and civil society (Makumbe 2002; Meldrum 2004; Hammar 2005) and violent episodes such as the violent fast-track land reform program dubbed the *Third Chimurenga,* the 2000, 2002 and 2005 elections as well as an urban clean-up campaign known as *Operation Murambatsvina* attest to this (Makumbe 2002; Dorman 2007; Kriger 2005). In addition, the government enacted tougher legislation that curtailed a number of freedoms for citizens and civil society, including the Broadcasting Services Act, the Private Voluntary Organizations Act Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). The confrontational rivalry between the ZANU-PF and MDC became increasingly protracted with

heightened levels of political violence and unabated economic decline becoming appendages of the conflict. However, after an elongated process of negotiations that were facilitated by the SADC-mandated mediator, former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations reached a negotiated settlement known as the Global Political Agreement on 15 September 2008. The following segment of this chapter will analyse in detail the strategic role played by SADC in intervening in the Zimbabwe conflict.

The Context of SADC Intervention: A Political Analysis of SADC

Established in April 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) with the intention of coordinating development efforts and fostering socio-economic cooperation and integration in the region, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been the centrepiece of Southern Africa's economic development and political cooperation. The history of SADC can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s, when the leaders of countries that had won independence through liberation movements mobilised and galvanised support towards political, diplomatic and military cooperation against colonialism in Southern Africa. Later in 1980, this cooperation crystallised to become an entity called the Frontline States (FLS). SADCC was transformed into SADC in 1992, which witnessed the policy transformation of the organization from mere focus on development cooperation towards political and security cooperation. With time, SADC's focus turned towards promoting peace and security and spearheading conflict resolution efforts in member countries. Since the 1990s, SADC has been involved in a number of conflict interventions, some of them military and others adopting a stance of peaceful resolution of disputes. Examples of military interventions include the SADC intervention in Lesotho, code named *Operation Boleas* which aimed at containing a suspected *coup* in August-September 1998 and the SADC military engagement in the DRC under the auspices of the SADC Allied forces from Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia following the invasion of DRC by Rwanda and Uganda. On the pacific dimension of conflict intervention, examples include the SADC involvement in Madagascar following the 2009 unconstitutional change of government and currently the intervention in Zimbabwe towards facilitating the implementation of a negotiated agreement between the major political parties.

Now comprising 15 member states, the regional organisation has evolved to become quite influential in the region and in the continent, as the SADC countries account for more than 40 per cent of Africa's population. Structurally, at the helm of SADC is the Supreme Council, which comprises Heads of States of the member countries, and is headed by a Chairperson (a sitting President of a member state), who guides conversation on key issues brought to the attention of the organisation. SADC has different units that are mandated to carry out specific activities that enhance regional cooperation, including the Organ on Politics, Defence

and Security (OPDS) and the SADC Troika that is tasked with conflict intervention mandates.

SADC and Conflict Intervention in Zimbabwe

Assigning a Mediator to the Zimbabwe Conflict

The more directive role played by SADC during the GPA negotiations in 2008 is similar to that played by the frontline states during the Lancaster House negotiations of 1979. When the Lancaster House negotiations were stalling, frontline states were prepared to use coercive measures against the nationalists, ZANU and ZAPU, in order to get them to truly commit to negotiations and the outcome. In the same manner, in the prelude to the Global Political Agreement, SADC shifted from its non-interference philosophy to adopt a more forceful stance to push for a negotiated settlement. Following the March 2007 incident where opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai and high-ranking members of the MDC were attacked by some members of the Zimbabwe Republic police, the SADC strategy for intervention in Zimbabwe became more forthright as evidenced by the emergency SADC meeting in Dar-es-Salaam whose outcome was the formal designation of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa as the mediator of the dispute between the ZANU-PF and the MDC. Keen to avoid regional isolation and condemnation, the ZANU-PF subsequently participated in the inter-party negotiations. Although widely criticised for being partisan and too soft on Robert Mugabe, Thabo Mbeki's mediation in 2007 is credited with negotiating important electoral reforms, including Amendment 18 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe that was supposed to facilitate credible elections in Zimbabwe, according to the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. The March 2008 elections that followed these negotiations resulted in the MDC winning parliamentary seats and Morgan Tsvangirai winning the majority of the vote ahead of Robert Mugabe However, Tsvangirai was short of the 50 per cent votes needed to become the outright winner, hence the decision to have a run-off election in June 2008.

Presiding Over GPA Negotiations

Following the continued deterioration of the Zimbabwe crisis, the patience of certain African leaders was waning. Some elements within SADC, including President Ian Khama of Botswana and the late Zambian President, Levi Mwanawasa, openly denounced the actions of the ZANU-PF government and the violence that had engulfed the country. SADC was also under pressure from the international community, respected senior African citizens and local civil society activists to take stronger action on Zimbabwe. In June 2008, former South African President, Nelson Mandela described the conflict in Zimbabwe as a 'crisis of leadership' while the former Chairperson of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, abhorred the ZANU-PF's political

assault and electoral violence. Even other political players erstwhile known to be supporters of the ZANU-PF could not help but express their concern at the deteriorating conditions in Zimbabwe. On 24 June 2008, the African National Congress issued a statement saying it was 'deeply dismayed by the actions of the Zimbabwean government, which is riding roughshod over hard-won democratic rights'. The ANC added that it would not remain 'indifferent to the flagrant violation of every principle of democratic governance'. Jacob Zuma, then President of the ANC, described the situation in Zimbabwe as 'out of control', underscoring how the situation in Zimbabwe departed radically from the ANDC values. These comments coming then from Deputy President Zuma could be interpreted as being reflective of the frustration by the ANC of the seemingly lack of progress that the then mediator, Thabo Mbeki, was recording towards addressing the political crisis in Zimbabwe. Additionally, Zuma and the ANC's comments need to be examined using the lens of South Africa, being the regional powerhouse in SADC and ultimately feeling responsible for the regional challenges that would ensue should the Zimbabwe conflict not have been effectively and timely addressed.

In addition, mounting pressure from the civil society organisations in SADC member states also forced the organization to revise its approach on Zimbabwe. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a strong ally of the African National Congress, indicated its disdain about the crisis in Zimbabwe and pressured SADC to take a more decisive action. In April 2008, COSATU prevented a ship from China that was destined for Zimbabwe and loaded with armaments from docking in South Africa, arguing that arms acquisition at that time would escalate the conflict in Zimbabwe. Growing pressure from the international community, especially the deepening universal criticism of the SADC non-interference principle, also influenced a more forthright SADC intervention. The European Union, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand renewed their targeted sanctions against the ZANU-PF in acts of disapproval of the situation. Although SADC and the Western international community did not agree on solutions to the Zimbabwean crisis, such internationalization of the Zimbabwean crisis further pressured the SADC to seek what they deemed as an 'African solution' to the Zimbabwean crisis. SADC leaders realized that their cautious approach on Zimbabwe and subsequent inaction would make all those arguments about 'African solutions to African problems' look like mere rhetoric.

SADC Ruling on the 2008 Elections

By 2008, SADC had amplified its disapproval of the worsening situation in Zimbabwe. At a SADC summit held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in March 2008, the Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete said the Zimbabwean crisis required 'urgent attention' from SADC leaders (Afro News 2008) On 12 April 2008, following the post-election violence in Zimbabwe, an emergency SADC Summit was

convened in Lusaka, Zambia, where the late President Levi Mwanawasa urged SADC to 'push Zimbabwe onto the regional agenda and to invite Tsvangirai' Following the controversial June 2008 run-off election, SADC concluded that the election 'did not represent the will of the people of Zimbabwe' and recommended a continuation of the SADC mediation. Against this background, a report by Solidarity Peace Trust (2008:12) notes that 'Growing criticism of Mugabe within the SADC and the AU and their unwillingness to sanction his presidential 'victory' provided Mugabe with clear signals that his support base in the region and the continent had declined'. Even though President Thabo Mbeki still used 'quiet diplomacy',[12] developments in and outside Zimbabwe dictated a more directive mediation role for the mediator. President Mbeki's numerous trips to Zimbabwe between July 2008 and September 2008 reflected this urgency for a negotiated settlement. The more forceful intervention from SADC subsequently led to the September 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) between the ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations. The successful negotiation of the GPA demonstrates the capacity of SADC to intervene in conflicts affecting the region.

SADC Conflict Intervention in Zimbabwe in the Post-GPA Phase

Overall, the sentiments among the political actors and the general populace are that the regional intervention on the Zimbabwe crisis did well towards providing a platform for the political parties to move beyond the political stalemate. The facilitated negotiations and dialogue by SADC through President Mbeki and now President Zuma have facilitated a dissipation of the increasing levels of political violence that there was in Zimbabwe in the post-2000 era. Through the SADC-mediated GPA, the then diametrically opposed ZANU-PF and MDC political counterparts have been able to work together as a coalition government. September 2012 was the fourth anniversary of the GPA. The signature of the Global Political Agreement was followed by the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) whose immediate mandate was to bring temporal peace while preparing for long-term and durable peace. The GNU has been associated with bringing a sense of economic progress and democratic reforms as well as mitigating the decade-long political violence.

Another area where there has been a significant shift, albeit incredible challenges, is on the constitutional review process. The proposed draft of the new Constitution was signed by the management committee and later the Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) and subsequently was presented at the second All-Stakeholders' Conference in October 2012. Despite achieving this milestone, the revision of the Zimbabwe Constitution was surrounded by controversy and political manoeuvring, as well as a huge delay. There are still contentious issues in the new constitution in which the major political parties have not found agreement, and these include the presidential powers, the stipulation that presidential candidates

should have running mates, and the appointment of judges by the President as well as the proposal for dual citizenship to be legalized.

Although the GPA is one of the seminal achievements of SADC's conflict resolution effort, there is still an evident political stalemate in Zimbabwe, and it is epitomised by the partial implementation of GPA provisions. As a result, Zimbabwe is still in transition mode as negotiations are still inconclusive; hence the need for the continued SADC engagement of Zimbabwe. Responding to the need for engagement in the post-agreement phase, the new SADC-appointed mediator President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, who took over from the former President Mbeki, continues to engage with the principals of the ZANU-PF and the MDC. The post-GPA facilitation role of President Zuma is meant to ensure that the major provisions of the 2008 Global Political Agreement are implemented. To SADC's credit, the organisation has taken a dedicated stance towards ensuring that the political agreement is not only monitored and evaluated but also the facilitator Jacob Zuma has been engaged in follow-up on specific post agreement processes being undertaken by parties in Zimbabwe, including constitutional review, design of an electoral roadmap as well as facilitating discussions on security sector reform.

Nonetheless, from a broader perspective, there has not been significant departure of President Zuma's intervention strategies from those of Thabo Mbeki. The were numerous post-GPA mediation sessions by Zuma and countless SADC meetings focusing on Zimbabwe although not all the outstanding GPA reforms agreed upon in September 2008 were implemented. Additionally, there is discordance of opinion between the ZANU-PF and the MDC on the question of the continued sanction regime in Zimbabwe. In fact, President Zuma and SADC's round criticism of the sanction regime against President Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF are indicative of the partisan nature of SADC, and their spirited support of the liberation icon, President Mugabe. This has resulted in few observable shifts in ZANU-PF behaviour since the signing of the GPA. The benign demeanour of the South African- led SADC intervention certainly brings attention to the limits of SADC's engagement with Zimbabwe. Evidently, within SADC apart from the imperative to move Zimbabwe out of its political lethargy, there are evidently other considerations to take note of, including the history and relations among the former liberators and the protection of the doctrine of sovereignty. From the foregoing analysis, it is arguable that SADC lacks adequate political will towards effectively addressing the political impasse in Zimbabwe.

Understanding the Limits and Complexities of the SADC Intervention in Zimbabwe

A major limit to SADC's intervention in conflict in the region is the absence of a dedicated mediation support office or team within the peace and security architecture of a regional body. Currently, SADC's organ for mediation support is the SADC Troika, which taps into the resources of a SADC Mediation Reference

Group. The SADC Mediation Reference Group has not been very active towards providing mediation support to the envoys and mediators who have been mandated by the regional body to address crises in the affected member states. As a result, most of the mediation enterprises of SADC have been conducted on an *ad hoc* basis, with limited human resources and administrative capacity as well as miniscule political muscle. The current SADC mediation in Zimbabwe that is being led by President Jacob Zuma of South Africa relies mostly on the South African team comprising of Lindiwe Zulu, South Africa's International Relations Adviser, Charles Nqakula, who is President Zuma's Political Adviser and the South African Special Envoy, Mac Maharaj. While this team is fully capacitated in its own right and has the requisite political aptitude for mediation support, it is important for the Zuma mediation to be viewed as a SADC initiative. However, the current mediation composition makes it appear as if it is a bilateral mediation initiative between South Africa and Zimbabwe rather than a SADC-mandated mediation.

Additionally, it is important to understand that SADC does not have extraordinary powers over member states and cannot decree particular courses of action. This means that the organization thrives on consensus and persuasion as strategies of bringing about desired change. Furthermore, SADC is a political organisation that represents interests of member states as well as leaders from those states; hence its treatment of the Zimbabwe conflict has been fraught with allegations of partisanship. The relationship between SADC and the ZANU-PF is one of a shared history of the struggle against colonialism, hence the criticism by Nathan (2006) that the regional organization is merely a club of anti-colonialists. The liberation parties within SADC not only galvanise around a shared history, but they continue to develop and strengthen their relationships as evidenced by the creation of the Southern African Association of Liberation Movements in 2001. As a result of the notion of 'African solidarity', SADC's public criticism of Robert Mugabe has been malignant given the high regard for President Mugabe's pivotal role in supporting liberation movements in the region (Hendricks 2005). In African political relations, political power comes from both seniority and solidarity (Mahmud 2001:138). As such, within SADC, President Robert Mugabe is not only a senior or veteran nationalist, but he is also considered as 'the champion of a colonially injured continent' (Bomba and Minter 2010), who seeks to put an end to the unjust colonial order. In addition, President Mugabe is widely respected in SADC for his role in helping the institution during its nascence particularly for coordinating the peace and security issues of SADC. Perhaps Thabo Mbeki's statement below best describes how powerful 'African solidarity' has been in influencing SADC's actions towards Zimbabwe:

> The fight against Zimbabwe is a fight against us all. Today it is Zimbabwe, tomorrow it will be South Africa, it will be Mozambique, it will be Angola; it will be any other African country. Any government that is perceived to be strong, and to be resistant to imperialists, would be made a target and be undermined.

> So let us not allow any point of weakness in the solidarity of the SADC, because that weakness will also be transferred to the rest of Africa (Mbeki quoted in Mawere 2007).

On the other hand, the relationship between SADC and the MDC is often characterized by mistrust and something closer to disdain as the ZANU-PF has succeeded to portray the MDC as a foreign-sponsored party that plays to the dictates of Western imperialists (Chigora and Dewa 2006). Furthermore, in a region where liberation political parties dominate and politics of dissent is treated suspiciously, supporting an opposition party, particularly if it is labour-driven, would be considered politically suicidal. By supporting Mugabe, fellow SADC statesmen are also being pragmatic in preventing winds of dissent from spreading into their countries. As a self-preservation strategy of collectively ensuring political survival and regime security, these African leaders would rather not support the MDC cause, as this would be tantamount to endorsing a labour-based model of popular democracy.

In addition, SADC's intervention in Zimbabwe is made even more complicated because of the governance deficit in the region. With the exception of South Africa, the Southern African region hosts numerous small economies, which are characterised by weak states and undemocratic regimes, a scenario that effectively militates against effective multilateral conflict intervention. In addition, the majority of the SADC region comprises half-backed democracies, *de jure* and *de facto* one-party states like Namibia and Angola as well as authoritarian monarchies like Swaziland and Lesotho. Against this background, it is difficult for many SADC leaders to vociferously denounce the conflict-ridden relationship between Zimbabwe's ruling party and the opposition.

Furthermore, SADC's conflict resolution in Zimbabwe is incapacitated by the policy of non-intervention. The SADC Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation underscores a commitment to sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and good neighbourliness, among other values. In addition, the Protocol emphasises the preference for peaceful means for conflict resolution by adopting methods such as conciliation, negotiation and mediation. Since SADC is not a supra-national entity, it has had to rely on persuasion rather than outright intervention, an approach that could explain the lack of finality in the Zimbabwe conflict. Despite the decade-old onslaught against opposition and civil society by the ZANU-PF, SADC did not respond as decisively as anticipated, especially to the violence, closure of political space, human rights violations and electoral controversies in Zimbabwe. Although the 2002 elections were described by *The Economist* as 'a coup by ballot box' (2002:14), and the SADC Parliamentary Observer Mission concluded the electoral conditions were unfavourable for democratic participation, President Bakili Muluzi of Malawi who was then SADC Chair declared that the same elections were substantially free and fair. Similarly, SADC endorsed the 2005 elections despite being ridden by violence, intimidation

of the opposition and skewed media coverage in favour of the ZANU-PF (Kriger 2005). The fact that it took SADC approximately eight years to be able to publicly criticize the ZANU-PF for the situation in Zimbabwe is a test of the credibility of the concepts of 'African Renaissance' and 'African solutions to African problems'. It could also be a reflection of the challenges of public diplomacy.

What complicates SADC's effective intervention in Zimbabwe is the centrality of the land in the Zimbabwe conflict (Moyo 2000). Despite the controversial manner in which it was undertaken, Zimbabwe's *Third Chimurenga* arguably was an attempt to address the socio-economic and racial imbalances that were created by the colonial system (Moyo 2000; Raftopoulos 2003). The imperative for addressing land inequities in post-independent Zimbabwe was undeniable given the skewed nature of the land distribution. As such, for SADC member states to denounce Mugabe's land reform policy could be a politically wrong move that could be interpreted as endorsing colonial imbalances. In addition, judging from the same history of racial land imbalances and the current socio-economic and political temperature in southern Africa, including the increasing urban-rural migration and contention among ruralites in Africa, scholars (Moyo 2000; Palmer 2000; Moyo & Yeros 2005) posit that southern Africa has unresolved agrarian issues. Such scholars predict that most of the SADC countries are all faced with the prospect of having to deal with land redistribution sooner or later. For SADC member states, criticizing the land reform policy would be interpreted as pre-empting to their populations that they would not consider engaging in such a policy. This position explains why SADC has not been vocal about the *Third Chimurenga* despite the concern that the land reform process was initially accompanied by violence.

SADC's intervention in Zimbabwe demonstrates the challenges of multilateralism in conflict resolution given that the regional institution comprises different member states that have differential interests, histories and abilities. Within SADC, there are different perspectives on the Zimbabwe situation, hence the prolonged, fractionalised and often unresolved debates about how to address the Zimbabwe situation. In SADC, there is evident discord among member states, especially between those states that have democratic policies and those that have authoritarian tendencies. Tensions within SADC over the appropriate policy to pursue toward Zimbabwe have crippled the organization's ability to be forthright in urgent situations. From 2000-2010, the differential opinions and interests among SADC members were reflected in the strategy of addressing the Zimbabwe crisis. Botswana and Zambia were among the few member states that roundly and publicly criticised the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe while Swaziland, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa backed President Mugabe. In the absence of sufficient normative congruence, it has become difficult for regional organizations to resolve disputes, achieve cohesion and act with common purpose in crisis situations (Melber 2004).

In addition, arguably, SADC has traditionally been a platform for claiming, displaying and utilizing regional power and alliances. The history of tension within SADC can be traced back to 1998, when Zimbabwe, with the support of Namibia and Angola made a decision to send troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo even though the South African government opposed this move. This created a rift within SADC, as South Africa then had just joined SADC four years back and was perceived by other member states as a newcomer trying to set and control the regional agenda. As South Africa is the SADC-designated mediator in the Zimbabwe conflict, there is a semblance of careful treading in regional politics by SADC member states, including South Africa, to avoid the tensions of the late 1990s. It is often said that SADC states are keen to avoid adversarial relations that might jeopardise their functional cooperation as well as contradict the principles of solidarity and pan-Africanism – and the cautious approach towards Zimbabwe demonstrates this perception.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the role of the Southern African Development Community as an institution that is increasingly involved in promoting peace, security and development. Both at the normative and operational levels, SADC has come a long way in promoting good governance, development and guaranteeing peace and security in Southern Africa. SADC's role in Zimbabwe rose to prominence particularly during the 2007-2008 period when it took a more authoritative role in mediating the conflict between the ZANU-PF and MDC. The more decisive approach to conflict resolution was well rewarded as evidenced by the signing of the Global Political Agreement between the ZANU-PF and the MDC in September 2008.

However, SADC is not without its challenge as the regional organisation is evidently a political and partisan institution that currently seems to serve the interests of heads of states rather than ordinary citizens. Despite brokering the Zimbabwe GPA in 2008, it is also apparent that SADC has had a woefully flawed reputation of peace making which is reflected in SADC's inability to be forthright and concerted in urgent situations. SADC's lack of extra-judicial powers and its reliance on persuasion and mediation has often limited its efficacy in fully resolving the Zimbabwe conflict, especially given the intransigence of the ZANU-PF regime. Third, the whole issue of multilateralism in the context of diverse interests among member states has meant that there is often no unison with regards to how the Zimbabwean situation is to be handled. The inadequacies of SADC are reflected in the length of time it took to reach a negotiated agreement as well as in the continued stalling of GPA implementation in Zimbabwe.

 SADC's experience in intervening in Zimbabwe compels an interrogation of the concepts of collective security and concerted conflict intervention. While the regional body is composed of different member states with differing national interests, in some cases, it is nonetheless important for SADC member states to

demonstrate resoluteness, a shared vision and concerted efforts when addressing the challenges relating to a particular member state. Additionally, SADC needs to engender frameworks, policies and practices of mediation in its regional peace and security arrangements. It is essential for SADC-appointed facilitators and current structures of conflict intervention to have access to sustained mediation capacity support. The SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation also known as the SADC Troika is currently tasked with facilitating mediation or appointing facilitators to crises in the region. The SADC Troika and appointed mediators would need to be supported by a robust regional peace and security architecture, hence the need to set up a SADC Mediation Unit and to strengthen the capacity of the SADC Mediation Reference Group, which is currently a structure tasked with mediation support for the regional organisation.

Additionally, a key lesson emerging from SADC's intervention in the Zimbabwe political crisis relates to the composition of actors at the peace negotiations. During negotiations for the GPA, a recurring strategy for the mediator, Thabo Mbeki, was his emphasis on 'quiet diplomacy', which occurred at the Track I level. Track I Diplomacy targets political and military elites, and usually underscores the need to reach a peace agreement. On the other hand, Track II Diplomacy would include non-state actors who can influence the peace processes, and these actors include civil society, academics, religious leaders as well as community and traditional leaders. In future mediations, SADC mediators and peace envoys should make concerted efforts to include Track II actors in negotiations and other forms of political dialogue, as well as in the post-agreement phase.

Even though this chapter has paid attention to SADC's challenges, this does not in any way belittle the role of SADC in conflict resolution. Indeed, the regional organisation has demonstrably grown over the years, and its capacity for conflict resolution continues to be tested and enhanced. SADC's intervention in Zimbabwe was not only pivotal in getting to a negotiated settlement, the GPA, but the outcome of such negotiations has also afforded Zimbabwean citizens a temporal reprieve from the downward political and socio-economic spiral. Given the growing role of SADC in conflict intervention, it is important for the regional organisation to play more directive intervention roles in current conflicts and to serve the interests of the SADC populace rather than the heads of states.

Notes

1. Bratton and Masunungure base their observation about 'electoral authoritarianism' on A. Schedler (ed.), 2006, *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

2. Literally translated, *Gukurahundi* refers to 'the first rains which wash away the chaff before the spring rain.' *Gukurahundi* is an operation that occurred in post-independent Zimbabwe, specifically from 1982-1987, when Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, through a special military group known as the Fifth Brigade, instituted an armed response to a rebellion in Matebeleland that was allegedly led by then ZAPU leaders and the late

nationalist Joshua Nkomo. Reports, though unconfirmed by government indicate that in the process of stamping out this insurgence, Ndebele civilians were massacred and estimates indicate about 10,000- 20,000 Ndebeles died during this operation. *Gukurahundi* ended when the Unity Accord was signed and the two political parties (ZANU and PF ZAPU) merged into one political party known as the ZANU-PF. One report that details *Gukurahundi* is *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980–1988,* 2007, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, Johannesburg: Jacana Press.

3. The *Third Chimurenga* is a phrase coined by the ZANU-PF to refer to the post-2000 farm occupations under the compulsory land acquisition scheme, which was first led by war veterans and peasants, and then endorsed by the government. The ZANU-PF regards land reform as another form of liberation struggle that seeks to address post-independent structural and racial inequalities. However, this land reform program is also remembered for the violence that accompanied and perceived disrespect for the rule of law. The result was loss of property, exodus of white commercial farmers, international isolation of the country and subsequent crippling of the economy.

4. *Operation Murambatsvina* (which literally means, clean out the rubbish) was launched and executed by the government of Zimbabwe on 19 May 2005. This blitz lasted for three weeks and it witnessed the demolition of various settlements including housing and informal structures in Zimbabwe's urban areas.

5. Quote from President Robert Mugabe, candidate for the 27 June run-off election candidate addressing a political rally in Silobela, Central Midlands on 15 June 2008. For details see the article by: Jan Raath and Catherine Philp, 'Robert Mugabe warns Zimbabwean voters: How can a pen fight a gun?', The Times, 17 June 2008. http://www.timesonline. co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article4152337.ece Date accessed 12 October 2009.

6. The term 'securocrats' was coined to refer to Zimbabwe's top officials who lead Zimbabwe's key security institutions including the Chief of Police, Commissioner Augustine Chihuri, the Commander of the Air Force, Air Marshall Perence Shiri, as well as the Commander of the National Army, General Constantine Chiwenga.

7. According to Chingono, *partocracy* emerges from the dominion and supremacy shown by values, ideologies and their historical background.

8. Notable civil society organizations which facilitated the birth of the MDC include the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU) and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

9. In this chapter, the two MDC parties are hereinafter referred to as the two MDC formations or simply MDC or MDC-T and MDC-M (based on the last names of the political leaders of each of the two MDCs – Tsvangirai and Mutambara). The two MDC formations came about as a result of the split of 2005 that was an outcome of disagreements over whether or not the party should contest the Senate elections in Zimbabwe.

10. In 2000, Morgan Tsvangirai, during an interview with Patrick Bond, explained the MDC ideology: 'We are social democrats. The MDC can never be pure ideologically, because of our broad orientation. Besides, social democracy is a half-way house, a spaghetti mix. In our case, the main characteristic is that we are driven by working class interests, with the poor having more space to play a role than they do now. But one of the components is an element of participation by business, which is just not able to develop under present conditions.' See 'A New Zimbabwe: Tsvangirai Interviewed', by Patrick Bond, *Southern African Report*, SAR, Vol. 15 No. 3, May 2000.

11. Regime change is defined or presented pejoratively by ZANU-PF to imply that the MDC seeks to illegally and unconstitutionally oust from power,

12. 'Quiet diplomacy' is the phrase used to describe the approach being used by Thabo Mbeki in his efforts to end the Zimbabwean political crisis. It entails a mediation style that is characterised by 'skilful negotiations, conducted with tact, persistence, and impartiality, but without fanfare'. Mbeki prefers to hold private discussions with the ZANU-PF and MDC, away from the media spotlight. Scholars posit that 'quiet diplomacy' was originally developed by the late Dag Hammarskjöld, the late Swedish UN Secretary-General. For details, see: Bennet, A le R. 1995. International Organizations: Principles and Issues, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1995, p. 157.

13. Thabo Mbeki's statement at the Extra-Ordinary Southern African Development Community Summit of Heads of State and Government in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 29 March 2007.

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Postcolonial Politics in Kenya

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Introduction

Politics in developing countries are influenced by their precolonial heritage, (sic) colonial and postcolonial experiences (James Chiriyankandath, quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008:38).

There are three important pillars in the debate on postcolonial politics in Kenya: the precolonial pillar (also known as the traditional pillar), the colonial pillar, and the postcolonial pillar. This chapter examines the three pillars within the framework of contending discourses on postcolonialism.

Proponents of the modernization theory (a highly influential intellectual discourse in colonial history) argue that developing countries can only achieve effective development by more or less following the developmental processes, policies and strategies that the developed Western countries went through. Exponents like Rostow (1960) and Organsky (1965) have propounded the stages of development supposedly applicable to every society, further arguing that 'development' and 'underdevelopment' a reproducts of internal conditions that differ between economies.

Two distinct engines of postcolonialism emanate from the modernization approach. The first is the view of the colonial state as a central agent tasked to modernize the 'primitive' or underdeveloped societies. This view subsumes an image of power and culture where the colonizing power perceives the colonized as infantile and inferior in culture. The second is the perspective that development requires the developed countries to facilitate and enable the developing countries to develop through provision of foreign aid. Consequently, the developing countries are required to learn from the progress, challenges and mistakes of the developed countries. Colonialists extensively used the first viewpoint to subdue and exploit Africa while the second theory is still used by the ex-colonial and imperial powers to continue their subjugation and exploitation of Africa.

The justification and legitimization of the colonial system in Africa was achieved through the 'civilizing mission' thesis, which presupposed a temporary period of political dependence on the 'civilized societies' by the 'uncivilized world'. This continues until the 'uncivilized societies' have advanced to a point where they are capable of sustaining liberal institutions and self-governance. Self-governance is, however, viewed by dependency theorists as a theoretical condition of independence and sovereignty which in reality is a condition of economic and political dependence on foreign imperial powers (Prebisch 1950; Nkrumah 1965).

Dependency theorists further argue that it is through the de-linking of Western economies from Third World economies that the latter will develop. Proponents of the dependency theory argue that the linkage as constituted by the former colonial powers is that of exploitation and is only there to serve the interests of the imperial powers. They further argue that it is possible for Africa to progress if its local industries are developed and are made safe from the exploitation of the former colonial powers (Prebisch 1950; Nkrumah 1965; Rodney 1972). This chapter, therefore, has two objectives: (1) to examine the colonial political structure and its politics of exclusion; and (2) toanalyse the postcolonial structure and its neocolonial influence in Kenya. It is argued in this chapter that the debate on neo-colonialism in Kenya can be better understood from the perspective of two contending theoretical paradigms, namely, modernization and dependency. The two paradigms correspond to alternate visions and activities of two dominant players in Kenya's postcolonial politics – on the one hand are the neoliberal pragmatists led by Kenya's founding President Jomo Kenyatta who embraced a pro-Western vision of modernization, and on the other hand are the more critical Kenyans, radical intellectuals and the bulk of the Mau Mau liberation war veterans who held a critical view of the modernization philosophy of the postcolonial state leaders. In the early years of independence, the critique of the Kenya opposition forces seemed largely organized from the ideological standpoint of the dependency paradigm.

Precolonial Kenya

Indigenous African communities who migrated from various parts of the continent were the first to settle in Kenya. They were the Cushitic, Nilotic and Bantu groups. They were distinct groups with local knowledge of how to solve problems within their environment. They, for example, used indigenous knowledge to read and forecast the weather. They were also distinct with regard to how they pursued their livelihood in terms of being either fishermen, farmers, pastoralists or ironmen, and so on. Furthermore, these indigenous African communities exhibited what we call an African culture connoting a distinction of unity, communalism and shared purpose be it in construction, hunting among many other responsibilities. To this end, development and poverty-reduction strategies for the pre-colonial African communities can be considered to be informed and woven into the

African values like 'Ubuntu' in the case of South Africa, 'Ujamaa' in the case of Tanzania and 'Harambee' in the case of Kenya, among others (Matunhu 2011).

Colonial Politics in Kenya

David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary, arrived in Africa declaring his mission to be that of the three Cs: Civilization, Commerce and Christianity. These processes have subsequently initiated a major debate on whether Livingstone was an imperialist himself or someone who fought to end the slave trade in Africa and who concurrently ended up opening Africa for Civilization, Commerce and Christianity. Livingstone might not have been an imperialist but his framework of thinking was certainly borrowed and used by imperialists to pursue their agenda in Africa. Throughout the colonial period in Kenya, commerce was exclusively promoted for the benefit of a few white colonialists. Once the British declared Kenya a protectorate, they had to have their authority accepted by Kenyans, they had to establish a firm and efficient administrative system and they had to embark on the exploitation of the natural, human and economic resources. The aim of the British in Kenya was to enrich themselves and make profits for their mother country in their new-found colony. In accomplishing their difficult mission in Kenya, they needed a few reliable collaborative Africans who were willing to join in the exploitation.

The very reason the British came to Kenya was not, in fact, to settle in Kenya, but in order to reach the fabulous kingdom of Buganda, whose wealth was legendary (Ochieng 1985). To do this they planned to build a railway from Mombasa to Kampala, which obviously required crossing Kenya. The so-called 'lunatic' railway took five and a half years to build and cost the British taxpayers £5,500,000 by 1901 (ibid:102). The British set up the Imperial British East Africa Company that formed the core of their administration in Kenya. Indeed the first colonial provincial administration officers were employees of this company. At the beginning, their roles as provincial administrators were primarily to recruit and provide local labour for the construction of the railway (Ochieng 1985). Once the railway was completed in 1901 and traders and settlers moved into the interior of the country, the colonial administration's role expanded to that of providing security and many other administrative services to the settlers.

The governor at the time of the completion of the Mombasa-Kisumu railway, Sir Charles Eliot, perceived Kenya in his mind as an agricultural potential and called the Kenya highlands 'white man's country'. Sir Charles Eliot argued that the protectorate had to finance its own administration and that new sources of revenue had to be tapped into to generate revenue to meet the running costs of the railway. He recommended the introduction of a hut tax and the colonization of the rich Kenya highlands by the Europeans. It was also argued at the time that since the railway needed customers, Europeans should be allowed to settle in the highlands to encourage the Africans to develop their resources to the point of

making the railway viable (Ochieng 1985). Although Sir Eliot was openly contemptuous of Africans according to Ochieng (1985), it is important to note that he still believed in his civilization mission, targeting individuals rather than a community. Ochieng (1985: 104) quotes Sir Eliot's own words below:

> There can be no doubt that the Maasai and many other tribes must go under. It is a prospect that I view with equanimity and clear conscience. I wish to protect individual Maasais… but I have no desire to protect Maasaidom. It is a beastly, bloody system, founded on raiding and immorality, disastrous to both the Maasai and their neighbours.

Though the colonialist had some interest in educating and converting the 'primitive' individuals in the 'tribes' they had no interest whatsoever in understanding the African culture and indeed they carried out their civilization mission with an air of superiority over the cultures of the African 'tribes'. Read Sir Eliot's words as quoted by Ochieng (1985:105):

> The idea that the interests of an assortment of barbaric, idea-less and untutored tribesmen clothed in sheep's fat, caster oil or rancid butter-men who smelt out witches, drank blood warm from the throats of living cattle and believed that rainfall depended on the arrangement of a goat's intestine-should be exalted above those of the educated Europeans would have seemed to them fantastic.

According to Chiriyankandath (quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008:44), the colonial state was 'extractive, autocratic and coercive'. It used its thin administration, minority white population and local collaborators to maintain its authority. Its ultimate goal was to civilize the heathens and establish a new loyal white dominion which was secure and founded on the principles of the British tradition and Western civilization. Therefore, eventually, the presence of Africans in their country was ignored or forgotten. The new white settlements were henceforth created in a vacuum and a completely new society was established as if none had existed before. Kenya's administration was divided into a small number of provinces, districts, divisions and locations. All the provinces, districts and divisions were put under the jurisdiction of European officers and locations became the responsibility of African chiefs.

Although the institution of chief was originally African, it became a creation by colonial powers to serve as agents of local administration (Mamdani 1996). Africans were restricted in their rural areas or reserves under the jurisdiction of these chiefs. Above them was a legislative assembly composed of five officials: three of these were nominated European settler members (Ochieng 1985). There were so many settler groups by 1911 that such groups were federated into a number of associations. The policies of these associations were directed towards: keeping the highlands reserved for whites; organizing African labour for the benefit of settlers; developing an acceptable system of land tenure; and creating a legislative council of elected Europeans. The laws on which the authority of chiefs rested

were enacted in 1902 and 1912 to maintain public order (and the chiefs could be fined if there was disturbance in their areas); they were to keep the roads clear; and they could hear petty cases (Ochieng 1985).

In 1912, chiefs were allowed to employ persons to help them maintain order and assist them in tax collection. It was also the responsibility of a chief to call out any number of able-bodied persons to labour without pay on public works. In a nutshell, chiefs in Kenya, according to Ochieng (1985:106) were created to collect hut and poll taxes – an imposition of the colonial powers on the Kenyan people and to keep law and order, and also to provide cheap labour for the public and the settlers' (an exclusive white group in Kenya) requirements.

The colonial regime operated a 'policy of neglect' when it came to development, according to Lord Lugard (1965:617). 'European brains, capital, and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy'. This shows clearly that the white administration was only there for the interests of the white minority.

After the Second World War, Britain emerged with a shattered economy, its policies after 1945 laid emphasis on speeding up economic recovery, and in this the colonies were considered an important factor. One clear way of speeding up economic recovery was to direct government resources into colonial primary and industrial production; for example, coffee was produced in large-scale farms. The increase in colonial production was understood as a measure to meet immediate problems and a long-term contribution to European reconstruction.

Postcolonial Politics in Kenya

The struggle for Kenya's independence emanated from the oppressive and exclusive structures put in place by the colonial administration. Many Africans were disgruntled with the exclusive colonial administration that took away their land and gave it to white settlers, Africans were not happy about the creation of reserves and the restrictions that came with these creations, they were not happy with the imposition of hut and poll tax; and most of all Africans were not happy with the fact that the 'chiefs' rounded them up to provide cheap labour in the settler farms. Empowered with the Western education and with their understanding of the true meaning of Livingstone's 'three Cs:' Civilization, Christianity and Commerce (in reality a tool used by colonialist to access Africa's riches), and with the awareness created by their experiences in World War II, where Africans served under the whites in the King's African Rifles, and where they overcame their misperception of the invincibility of whites, Africans sought independence (Odinga 1967; Ochieng 1985; Mamdani 1996).

After the Second World War, a political conflict arose between the white settlers, the British colonial office and the African nationalists. During the Second World War, Britain had interpreted its duty in Kenya as that of protecting the interests of the Africans because it was within its own interest to do so as Africans

had been recruited to fight for the British against the Germans in the King's African Rifles. This view was incorrect because in reality, the British only changed tactic to continue pursuing their interests in Africa and many nationalists understood this very well. By the end of the Second World War India was clamouring for self-government and the peaceful struggle waged by Mahatma Gandhi was not wasted on Africa. After winning their battle against the colonialists, the Indians showed the way for many countries in Africa, and independence movements sprang up all over Africa.

It suffices to mention here that while the change of tactic in Africa was taking place, in the mentality of the British Colonial Office, white settlers still considered themselves to be the 'master-race'; they openly resented any interference with their social and political exclusiveness and continued to call for Kenya to be self-governed by the British white settlers. African nationalism also picked up pace at the same time with Francis Khamisi, the Kenya African Union (KAU) Secretary General declaring Kenya 'a black man's country'.

Britain eventually granted Kenya independence on the basis of a Westminster model constitution after lengthy consultations at Lancaster House, in London. In making this decision, Britain considered giving Kenya independence as an African state rather than what the settlers contemplated as a multi-racial state. A proper involvement of Africans in the administration was understood as crucial for peace to prevail in Kenya. A creation of an African bourgeoisie tied to the prevailing system of ownership of landed property was also considered. In order to protect the interests of the minority, the 1962 Lancaster House Conference agreed on a constitution with a strong central government with a federal provision for regional governments. Kenya eventually attained its self governance on 1 June 1963 with Kenyatta as Prime Minister and on 12 December 1963 Kenya became an independent African state.

However, despite this independence, it was later to be learnt by a few enlightened Kenyans that it was only an 'independence of the flag' as most of the colonial structures remained behind to be perpetuated by the new African elitist group on behalf of the colonial powers. This resilience of colonial influence is what Lugard referred to as 'indirect rule' (Lugard 1965).

To begin with, Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta began by demonstrating clearly his ability to continue with the colonialist values by assuring the white settlers in Nakuru not to fear because their farms would not be touched. Kenyatta's arguments are clearly captured by Wrong (2009) as follows: 'There is no society of angels, black, brown or white, if I have done a mistake to you; it is for you to forgive me. If you have done a mistake to me, it is for me to forgive you'.

Kenyatta stood for continuity and not change. A Kikuyu who had trained in London for 15 years, he understood both British and Kenyan (or at least Kikuyu) societies. He had long during the Lancaster House conferences entertained the

idea of the Kikuyu being settled in the Rift Valley. Kenyatta's political philosophy before independence had not changed according to Ochieng (1985:146) below:

> What we do demand in Kenya is a fundamental change in the present political, economic and social relationship between Europeans and Africans. Africans are not hostile to Western civilization; as such they would gladly learn its techniques and share in the intellectual and material benefits which it has the power to give.

Kenyatta at the same time called upon Kenyans to work together in nation-building. He argued that there was no 'room for those who wait for things to be given for nothing', and that 'there was no place for leaders who hope to build the nation on slogans' (Ochieng 1985). A policy of post-colonial multi-racial society (this was actually the perspective that was initially propounded by the white minority who called for white governance of Kenya) was pursued by Kenyatta to promote relations between races, at least as far as his interests and those of his close associates were concerned. Furthermore, within this Kenyatta regime's framework, a multi-racial approach to political, economic, educational and land problems was also encouraged (Ochieng 1985). The Kenyan society was elitist and comprised of white professionals such as doctors, lawyers, British farmers, architects as well as insurance agents. The Kenyatta government inherited and embraced the entire colonial economic system. By borrowing money from Kikuyu banks and Kikuyu businessmen, using Kikuyu lawyers, privileged Kikuyus rushed to buy land from the departing whites under a subsidized scheme. They settled in the white highlands in the Rift Valley in large numbers in complete disregard of the previously dispossessed Maasai and Kalenjin ethnic groups who thought they had been only temporarily displaced by the whites. The principle of 'willing buyer and willing seller' was so unfair to these poorer ethnic groups. This was the beginning of the Rift Valley land problems that Kenya is facing today. The Kikuyu who settled in the Rift Valley knew that what they were doing was unfair but their minds were clouded by the same superiority complex that had misled the white settlers in believing that 'Kenya was a white man's land'. The Kikuyu elite believe that they deserve the land in the Rift Valley because they had bought it, in the same way that the white settlers believed that they deserved this land in Kenya because they had bought it too. The Kikuyu elite also believe that they suffered, even though it is known that some of them were a privileged, collaborating home guard unit. They argue that it is their community that rose up against the oppression of white settlers. In fact, those Kikuyu who did, under the Mau Mau movement, were not from the home guard unit. They believed that because they were closest to the missionaries, they were better educated and politically aware and therefore were superior to other tribes in Kenya. They had led the way and of course in the process believed they should eventually lead Kenya, so they felt that they had the right to dominate politically, economically and socially. In short, Kenyatta's government struck the right note with the colonialist from the beginning. The

former home guards who had embraced the white man's ways formed part of Kenyatta's kitchen cabinet. This act clearly planted the seeds of the first Kenyan elitist group that had pro-Western values and that abandoned the struggle that bound them together with the rest of the oppressed Kenyans, as Fanon (1965) correctly observed:

> The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths full of high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother's country they were sent home, white-washed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed.

This African elitist group learnt and inherited the colonial government structures and education and continued to subjugate fellow Africans (Odinga 1967; Mamdani 1996). This elitist core of the periphery has continued its relationship with the former colonial powers through protection of the former colonial powers' continued presence and investments in the country. This link has been reciprocated by the colonial powers' institutions like the World Bank, IMF, and the EU in maintaining the flow of aid to these elitist regimes. Foreign aid, therefore, for a long time after independence represented an important source of finance in Kenya where it supplanted low savings, narrow export earnings and thin tax bases, especially during the Cold War era (Wrong 2009). Subsequent governments after Kenyatta's government, namely the Moi and Kibaki governments, have maintained the same kind of politics of exclusion that benefit themselves and trusted associates, mainly a selection of ethnic associates. This is a manifestation of the crises of postcoloniality that afflicts Kenya.

When Moi took over power from Kenyatta he declared his philosophy of following in the 'footsteps' of Kenyatta. He built his power around smaller ethnic groups and his Kalenjin ethnic group believed it was their turn to exploit the opportunities that come with political power. The Kikuyu elite continued to dominate in non-political spheres such as the transport business, hotel, real estate and so on. The Kikuyu elite blamed Moi for the economic problems in the coffee industry, tea factories and Kenya cooperative creameries in central province (Wrong 2009). They also blamed Moi's regime for the land clashes in the Rift Valley that mainly targeted Kikuyu as 'foreigners' in the region. Moi's Kalenjin ethnic group continued to prosper in education and in getting lucrative jobs in government; an airport and bullet factory were constructed in Moi's region. It is within this framework of ethnicity, greed and corruption that Kibaki's regime was ushered in during 2002. The Kikuyu elites once again celebrated Kibaki's regime as the Kikuyu elite's 'turn to eat' again, as Kibaki is from the Kikuyu ethnic group (Wrong 2009).

A Comparative Analysis of Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Regimes in Kenya

The three regimes since the formation of the state of Kenya, namely, the colonial and postcolonial regimes led by Kenyatta Moi and Kibaki effectively used the colonial, political and economic exclusive strategies evident in the practices of postcoloniality to govern Kenya. At the core of the inherited colonial structure is the provincial administrative structure. Kibaki's regime has equally and effectively used these strategies to maintain himself in power to the extent that there has developed a Kenyan political culture of subliminal ethnicity and entrenched corruption. Michela Wrong (2009) ably captured this Kenya political culture in her book 'It's our turn to eat'. The provincial administration has been used as agents of these ethnic and corruption policies at the grassroots level to keep law and order among dissenting ethnic groups in the name of nation building. The colonial regime practiced politics of exclusion by favouring whites; the subsequent African regimes continue with the practice of exclusion by favouring their close ethnic associates. All the post-colonial regimes in Kenya have maintained strong ties with Britain, the US, the World Bank, IMF and EU especially on matters of aid, trade and security. Indeed the envoys or representatives of these countries and organizations have demonstrated enormous arrogance in reprimanding Kenyan government officials when the government moves away from what they consider as good democratic practices, their pet project in Africa after the collapse of the Cold War. In Kenya, foreign envoys from these powerful states and institutions behave like colonial governors (refer to Sir Eliot's attitude in the early 1900s, for example).

By relying heavily on the hierarchical administrative structure, the colonial administration's aim in Kenya was to maintain order in its exclusive system that would otherwise have disintegrated because it had no legitimate authority from the Kenyan people. It derived its legitimacy from the colonial office; therefore, it had to rely on the use of force to maintain order. The neo-colonial system has continued with these exclusive politics that favours the interests of its kleptocratic class, which has found it favourable to continue with the colonial administrative hierarchical structure to maintain law and order.

It is therefore in order to argue that Kenya's political institutions bear a heavy resemblance to British institutions. Kenya's independence constitution was drawn up at Lancaster House in Britain. The Kenyan judiciary, legislature and executive under the last constitution were in effect a carbon copy of the British institutions. Needless to argue that the current constitution has been well received and celebrated, even though its structures bear a semblance to the American constitution. The question is whether the Kenyan political culture is in tune with the new constitution? It is interesting to note how the Kenyan judiciary still wears wigs, a relic of British colonialism; the Kenya parliament would seem to value Western

suits as the only formal dressing allowed in parliament in complete disregard of African attire; not to mention the executives' heavy expenditures on fuel-guzzling vehicles, all after the borrowed Western protocol of projecting one's status through outward signs of wealth. This is again a manifestation of the crisis of postcoloniality in Kenya. It is therefore not surprising to hear Kenyan politicians proudly requesting the West for technical assistance on all matters, from the drafting of legal documents to referral of criminal cases to either the UK's Scotland Yard or the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The Kenyan leadership and Kenyans themselves, for that matter, have been convinced that anything from the former colonial masters is better than local ideas, further giving evidence to the postcolonial mindset. It is with this in mind that Kenyans have a misplaced belief in the capabilities of the International Criminal Court (ICC) process. The post-independence Africa that in Fanon's (1965:252) thinking does not imitate Europe remains an ideal only with the post-independence political culture in Kenya. Phillip Mitchell, a British governor in Kenya, observed in 1945 that between the choice of remaining a savage or adapting to European civilization, culture, religion and language, the African was quickly adapting to the latter (quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008).

The post-colonial African states therefore have found themselves operating within the Westphalian state system in order to remain in the international system constituted by sovereign states. However, adhering to the international principles has been problematic as the political culture of African countries, in particular Kenya, is different in terms of evolution and implementation. The political culture of any society refers to the political system as internalized in the (cognition) knowledge about the political system, (affective) feelings about the roles and the incumbents in these roles, and (evaluative) the choice through application of standards or values to cognitive or affective components (Almond *et al.* 2004). Liberal ideals presuppose governments to be instituted among men and women deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. The political culture in Kenya is a mixture of the parochial-subject-participant with a small percentage of a participating kleptocratic class. A higher percentage of the parochial-subject classin Kenya follow the neo-colonial system determined by the few in collaboration with their former colonial masters.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) referred to these relations in his world political system as the relationship between the core of the periphery and the core of the core. In this relationship the core of the periphery continues to serve the interests of the core by being a producer of raw materials and a consumer of the manufactured goods from the core. Kenya faces a major post-colonial crisis within this theoretical framework. Pre-colonial Kenya would be perceived by Westphalian framework and modernization theorists as a stateless society made up of many ethnic groups that were either pastoralists (roaming freely in search of pasture and occasionally raidingneighbouring'tribes' for livestock) or agriculturalists that occasionally raided other ethnic groups for fertile land. African

Renaissance protagonists would think the contrary. According to African Renaissance, the argument that the British colonialist came to this land and drew boundaries, introduced political and economic systems and created a state called Kenya that was formless is not true. They instead argue that pre-colonial African communities had their own way of dealing with crime, deviance, conflict and so on. They, in reality, argue that the coming of modernity forced Africans to be apathetic about their abilities, knowledge and skills. In the process of modernizing Africa, the Africans lost their identity and development path. In essence, post-colonial Kenya is at a crossroads: does it revert to its traditional 'stateless society' (a modernist's perspective of these pre-colonial societies) or better put pre-colonial or 'traditional pillar'? Should it embrace Livingstone's Civilization, Commerce and Christianity? Should it embrace the Westphalian state system? Should it join Wallerstein's (1974) world system? Or should it de-link from that system and then join whichever system is not exploitative both at the core and periphery, nationally and internationally? Or better still, pursue the African renaissance spirit? The most practical way, it probably seems, is to accept that states operate in a global village in which states should maximize their potential within the rule of law without minimizing other's potential to do likewise.

Conclusion

How to come to terms with the survival of not just institutional forms (administrative, legal, educational, military, religious) and languages (English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch) but the mentality bequeathed in part by the colonial heritage has been a preoccupation of Third World intellectuals (James Chiriyankandath, quoted in Burnell & Randall 2008:37).

This chapter has examined three contending perspectives in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial debate. On the one hand Kenya has a neo-colonial ruling kleptocratic class and on the other hand a post-colonial intellectual mass tracing its inspiration from pre-colonial Kenya. The neo-colonialist hold the instruments of power and the post-colonialists (in this case perceived as critics of neo-colonialists) have the knowledge and awareness of the reality and the fact that the so-called independence of Kenya is artificial and has not been translated into real economic independence and freedoms. It is argued in the chapter that this neocolonialism is deeply entrenched in the cognitions, affective and evaluations of the kleptocratic class in Kenya. Indeed, it is demonstrated in the chapter that this culture is deeply embedded in the political structure and culture of Kenya.

In a nutshell, the debate is between the so-called former home guards (an educated, self-serving, kleptocratic class with a strong neocolonialist slant) and the postcolonial intellectuals (in sympathy or alliance with Mau Mau fighters). The postcolonial intellectuals and Mau Mau fighters believe that their cause to regain land previously taken by white settlers was stolen by the neocolonial home guards who unfairly took the instruments of power to continue perpetuating the interests

of former colonial powers. This boils down to a conflict of class that ultimately emanates from the disparity between owners of the means of production and the proletariat. Kenyatta created a Kikuyu bourgeois class following in the 'footsteps' of the British colonialists. He unfairly used his office to castigate Kenyans for wanting free things while he and his associates grabbed lands that had been forcibly expropriated from the Maasai, Kalenjin and many other communities in Kenya by the white settlers. Kenyatta's arguments captured by Ochieng (1985:149) below, says it all:

> There is no room for those who wait for things to be given for nothing. There is no place for leaders who hope to build a nation on slogans. For many years, I fought and sacrificed my active life so that this country could get rid of the yoke of colonialism and imperialism. Many sons and daughters of our land suffered and shed blood, so that our children might be free. You can therefore understand my personal feelings about the future. How can I tolerate anything that could jeopardize the promise to our children? Let me declare once more that, as Head of government, I shall combat with all my strength anyone that may be tempted to try to undermine our independence. This pledge holds true whether such forces operate inside Kenya or from without.

There is nothing wrong with the concept of 'willing seller' and 'willing buyer' basis but there is something terribly wrong with a willing seller who is selling what was wrongfully acquired. The normal procedure would be to return what is being sold to the rightful owner first (through subsidized sale if that is the mediated position) and allow that rightful owner to sell to whomsoever s/he chooses. Kenyatta started his presidency by being both an 'imperialist' and 'colonialist' over the people of the Rift Valley, and Kenyans for that matter. He abused the same freedoms he promised to protect when he took the instruments of power from the British. Why were the Maasai, Kalenjin and many other Kenyans, especially in the coast region not given the first opportunity to buy the subsidized land in the Rift Valley and others that were previously owned by the white settlers before opening it up to all Kenyans who could afford to do so after 40 years of independence when a number of Kenyans are deemed to be more enlightened and more economically empowered? Kenyatta used the same white settler misperceived grandeur of superiority in disregarding the interests of the Maasai, Kalenjin and other affected Kenyans the same way the white settlers disregarded the interests of the Kenyan ethnic groups. Fired by the ideals that other Kenyan ethnic groups were 'idea-less and untutored', Sir Eliot sought to grab African land as captured by Ochieng (1985:105) below:

> With the passing of Crown Land Ordinance of 1902, Eliot sent his chief of Customs, A. Marsden, to South Africa in 1903 to publicise settlement prospects. In 1901, there were only thirteen settlers, but already by 1904 some 220,000 acres of land had been taken by them. Seizure followed fast. Syndicates, speculators and aristocrats all took their slice.

A white colonialist in essence was replaced by a black colonialist in Kenya, further perpetuating the persistence of a crisis of postcoloniality. Kenyatta himself indeed acknowledged in his speech to the settlers in Nakuru that 'there is no society of angels, black, brown or white' (Ochieng 1985). It is apparent that to observe the rule of law, the independent postcolonial states should be bound by the sort of liberal ideals expressed in the famous American declaration of independence: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness – that to secure these rights Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed'.[1]

Note

1. See Thomas Jefferson's address in the *American Declaration of Independence* in http://www.usconstitution.net/declar.html#Intro, accessed on 5 March 2011.

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11

Contested Spaces: Gender, Governance and Women's Political Engagement in Postcolonial Africa

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Introduction

In order to develop a deeper understanding of indigenous African women's participation in the socio-economic and political development of Africa, this chapter is informed by Fanon (1986:98) and Muiu and Martin's (2009:205) arguments that change must be preceded by a complete break with the past, leading to the creation of a new culture and nation, and it must aim to create a basis for the invention of a new humanity representing new beginnings (see also Cherki 2006:197-200). The chapter therefore starts with an analysis of the evolutionary history of the indigenous African society as a state marked by contested transitions of colonialism and post-colonialism. The second part looks at the role of women in the indigenous political systems, followed by the effects of colonialism on indigenous African women. The third part looks at indigenous women in contemporary African society, highlighting the challenges and opportunities.

The Creation and Evolution of the African State

The indigenous people of Africa can be described as those people of Africa whose way of life, attachments or claims to particular lands and social and political standing in relation to other more dominant groups has resulted in their substantial marginalization within modern African states. The notion of state as defined here is a multi-layered entity from grass root communities to the government level. In the same vein, Africa refers to the continent and its islands, but this does not imply that Africa is homogenous as issues of class, ethnicity, gender and race inform both the dynamics that shape African identities and political systems.

The socio-political history of Africa can be divided into three interrelated periods: the pre-colonial referred to here as the indigenous political systems followed by the colonial and postcolonial political systems. Of significance is the fact that elements of the three historic periods interact in dialectical ways. As Mueni Wa Muiu and Guy Martin (2009:206) point out in *Fundi Wa Afrika: Toward a New Paradigm of the African State*, Africa's predicament can be explained by the systematic destruction of African indigenous states, the dispossession, exploitation and marginalization of African people through excessive historical processes, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and globalization. Using a multi-disciplinary historical lens Muiu and Martin present the evolution of African political systems ranging from ancient Egypt, Kush and Axum to the present with a particular focus on the predicament of Africa's political systems and institutions due to the interference by colonialforces from Europe.

Gibson in his book titled *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* explores the partitioning of Africa in the late nineteenth century that resulted in the conversion of African territories into European colonies. For him, those who became new African rulers were not accountable to the indigenous people; instead they governed through despotic and non-democratic processes. To improve the ability of the Europeans to exploit African resources for the benefit of the metropolitan economies, the colonialists brought together through force many African ethnic cleavages, each with unique languages, cultures, traditions, political and economic systems, to form an administrative unit that could be controlled effectively by the colonial government. As a consequence, the laws and institutions brought by the Europeans and imposed on Africans were despotic, exploitative and not designed to serve the interests and needs of the indigenous peoples. Colonial institutional arrangements were designed to maximize colonial objectives in the colonies and severely restrict African participation in both political and economic markets (Gibson 1999; 2003:204).

In those colonies in which there were substantial populations of European settlers, the abrogation of the property rights of Africans was more severe. In many of the colonies, settlers controlled the colonial state structures, and had plenty of influence on the functioning of government. As a result, colonial institutions were designed to advance the interests of either the resident European population and/or the citizens of the metropolitan cities. Significant limits were placed on the mobility of Africans in order to improve the availability of labour resources for European economic and industrial activities. Colonialism, thus, resulted in the marginalization of indigenous Africans.

The Status of African Women in Indigenous Political Systems

Histories of women usually bring with them women's worldviews about their daily life activities as part of their culture and identity. With regard to women's political position, the indigenous African political systems represent a period of

extensive variation in the political systems of ethnic groups in Africa. Historically, women were conspicuous in high places. They were queen mothers, queen sisters, princesses, chiefs and holders of offices in towns and villages; occasionally warriors, and, in one well known case, that of Lovedu of Nigeria the supreme monarch (Sudarkasa 1986:73, 91). Furthermore, it was almost invariably the case that African women were conspicuous in the economic life of their societies, being involved in farming, trade or craft production. Indigenous African women played an important role in many African cultures, including ancient Egypt and Nubia. Nubian women were very powerful, sometimes ruling Nubia as queens in their own right. For example, by 750 BC, when Nubia controlled Egypt, Nubian kings had adopted the practice of appointing their daughters as 'God's Wives of Amun' to represent their dynastic interests in southern Egypt. These women lived in ancient Thebes, one of the combined kingdoms of Egypt and Nubia. God's wives also served as administrators of the huge economic domains that belonged to the god Amun (Sudarkasa 1986:92-96).

Similarly, Egyptian men and women were legally equals, the position of women in Egyptian society was unique in the sense that they enjoyed much the same legal and economic rights as men. Social position was based not on gender, but on social class. It is important to realize that in terms of attitudes towards sexual equality Egyptians viewed their universe as a complete duality of male and female. The legal rights enjoyed by Egyptian women extended to all spheres that defined life in society. Women could manage and dispose of private property, including land, portable goods, servants, livestock and money as well as financial instruments such as endowments and annuities. A woman could conclude any legal settlement and appear as a contracting partner in a marriage or divorce. She was also entitled to sue at law (Tydesley 1995:124). Tydesley, points out a number of cases where Egyptian women had the right to bring lawsuits against anyone in open court, and there was no gender-based bias against them. Reference is made in the inscription of Mestoa court record of a long and drawn out private land dispute. Significantly, the inscription shows four things: (1) women could manage property and they could inherit trusteeship of property; (2) women could institute litigation; (3) women were awarded legal decisions and had decisions reserved on appeal; and (4) women acted as witnesses before a court of law. It is highly significant that women in Egypt women could enjoy all these freedoms without the need of a male representative. This amount of freedom was at variance with that of Greek women who required a designated male, called *kourios,* either her father, husband or brother to stand for her in all legal contracts and proceedings (Tydesley 1995:125-126).

The role, contribution and influence women played in ancient Egyptian society extended well beyond their daily life as full citizens and the afterlife, as women were portrayed in a very public way alongside men at every level of society, from co-coordinating ritual events to undertaking manual work. Women's roles in daily

life were demonstrated by the respected ideal of marriage, fertility and motherhood, the vital industry of weaving, as honoured priests in temples, dancers, mourners and even *pharaohs*. Central to the culture for the ancient Egyptian women was the belief in matrilineal descent and equal inheritance. While kingship was essentially a male activity in Ancient Egypt, queens always had an important role to play. Royal women grew very powerful in the New Kingdom and had influence on the country. Women even ruled Egypt on several occasions throughout history, either jointly with their sons, husbands or in their own right, and were formidable, decisive and capable in that role (Tydesley 1995:134-137). Egyptian women also enjoyed a degree of social and economic independence as they could legally own property. They were also financially independent, showing that women and men received equal pay for undertaking the same job.

Terborg-Penn and Rushing (1996:123) reveal the matrilineal and matrifocal culture of the Akan-speaking people of Ghana showing the powerful role of the Queen Mother, the economic power of the market women and the political leverage it gave them. These examples dispel the notion that African women were silent drudges who were subjected to bearing children, to the practice of female circumcision, and to accepting their husbands' polygamous privileges unquestioningly. Furthermore, in Liberia while all the indigenous groups are patrilineal and have ideologies of male dominance, the sexual division of labour in indigenous agriculture afforded women a great deal of power and formal authority. Women's labour is extremely valuable, as seen in the institution of bride-wealth that accompanies marriage. Indigenous political structures also have a dual-sex organization that has parallel systems of offices for men and women. For example, among the northwestern peoples of Liberia, this takes the form of the dual organization of the Poro and Sande secret societies. In the south and east, female councils of elders use a series of checks and balances on official male power. At the national level, the last transitional leader before the 1997 election was the first female head of state in Africa, Ruth Sando Perry. The presidential candidate who came in second to Charles Taylor was also a woman (Terborg-Penn and Rushing 1996:121).

The Effects of Colonial Policies on Indigenous African Women

Colonialism changed the *status quo* of the indigenous political systems. The process was arrogant because it was based on the belief that the dominating group is culturally and racially superior. Colonialism was totalitarian as it ruled every aspect of women's lives, from the economic to the political and social. Colonialists tightened control over indigenous people, in particular women, who were subjected to all forms of violence and corruption as cruelty informed all aspects of colonial rule (Harris 1987:23). Taking women and children hostage was a common practice to force men to provide labour or to pay taxes in kind. In

colonial Kenya, for example, colonial power used capital punishment as women were raped repeatedly by both African and British guards (Elkins 2005:256). The Maasai, a pastoral people in eastern Africa, are also a prime example of this shifting social organization, specifically the gendered identities and relationship between men and women. Though the Maasai society is complex, and gender is thus a necessarily shifting definition, it is clear that through specific colonial policies the rights, status and independence of Maasai women were undermined, overpowered or erased during the period of colonial rule. Through a variety of legal, economic, agricultural, religious and medical policies Maasai women were devalued and subjugated, removed of their previously equal and valued position in society (Dimandja 2004:3-4).

In his work on gender inequality titled *Many Faces of Gender Inequality*, Amartya Sen looks at the problems of discrimination against women in the development process, and on survivorship differentials between men and women under conditions of social discrimination against women. According to Sen:

> It is a known fact that the world in which we live in is characterized by deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversaries between men and women. Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekinstan to the United States (Sen 1994:13).

With Sen's assertion, the assumption is that gender inequality is an inherent nature of all human societies. The perception, if clearly understood, is that there has always been the nature of inequality between men and women in our world, right from the inception of human society. Thus, if inequality characterizes gender rights from the consciousness of human existence, it implies that the claim of women's complementary position to men's roles in the uplifting of the family and societal development is not tenable. Records of history have shown, however, that there existed little or no significant gender inequality in traditional African society; rather, women's roles were complimentary to those of men. In indigenous Nigeria, for example, women had roles they played in economics, commerce and the politics of society. Many of them excelled and distinguished themselves in various endeavours, such as Queen Amina of Zaria and Madam Timbu of Abeokuta among others. But Africa's contact with European colonialism became the concatenation to gender inequality in Africa. Boserup (1970:87) captures the result of this contact succinctly:

> Today, the complimentary roles of women to men no longer exist in Africa, but Africa's women subordination to men and gender inequality continues in various forms.

In a similar vein, St Clair explains that upon contact with Europeans, indigenous people in Africa were confronted and started interacting with a society that had markedly different moral and value systems from their own. The colonial perspective of gender roles was fundamentally that women were subordinate to

men and that their roles were less important because they were confirmed within the family unit. It was them that had the decision making power, the wisdom and the knowledge to build their communities (St Clair 1994:19).

One of the consequences of the advent of colonialism is the erosion of gender equality that characterized traditional African society. Both men and women had different roles they played in families and society at large. But the case became different since the contact of Africa with colonialism. Hunter (1973:93) narrates this ordeal:

> But since the era of colonialism, women have been placed on the lower rungs of the proverbial ladder by the dominant forces of capitalism, and now globalization, which emphasizes this need for power, superiority and compartmentalization of roles and responsibilities with different values attached to them.

Going by Hunter's assertion, the face of the African society on gender equality changed owing to the influence of colonialism. Women began to suffer oppression from men as the shackles imposed by law, custom, religion and attitudes forced women to play the second fiddle. Women remained relegated to the last rung of the social and political ladder and were not given the opportunity to exercise power. Dennis (1974:88) aptly captures the situation:

> The religions of many Nigerian societies recognized the social importance of women by emphasizing the place of female gods of fertility and social peace, but women were also associated with witchcraft which appeared to symbolize the potential social danger of women exercising power uncontrolled by men.

What this indicates is that colonial influence restricted women's participation in Africa's social, economic and political affairs. Women thus had relatively or little opportunity to become involved in whatever they desired.

The colonial state was generally based on centralized authority. Strong governments were encouraged so as to attract and protect foreign investment. The African state that developed during colonialism reflected neither Western values nor African ones. Indigenous Africans were oppressed under the guise of law and order. At the same time the Africans did not develop any affinity with the new institutions since these were used to oppress them. Their own indigenous institutions were dismissed as useless and backward (Muiu & Martin 2009:210).

Nevertheless, despite the influence of colonialism in perpetuating oppression against women in Africa, some African women who were enlightened and powerful were able to organize and had a formidable resistance movement against colonial rulers. There were, for example, women like Dona Beatrice, who led a rebellion against the pre-Portuguese Congo leadership, Queen Amina of Zaria who was a prominent warrior, and the women of Eastern Nigeria who led the Aba revolt against British colonialists for inhuman taxation in the 1920s (Saje & Abubakar 1997:22).

The Construction of the Postcolonial State in Africa

The process of decolonization and independence offered Africans the first opportunity to establish appropriate laws and institutions for their societies. Basically, the state inherited from the colonial was supposed to be reconstructed to provide (1) more appropriate governance structures for the Africans and (2) economic systems that enhanced sustainable development in the post-independence period (Gibson 2003:14). Unfortunately, this was not undertaken because the decolonization process was reluctant and opportunistic and did not adequately address important issues associated with the effective participation of Africans in the post-independence political economy. The Europeans failed to adequately transform the critical domains such as the economy, bureaucracy, educational system and health and make them more appropriate for post-independence development. Instead, the colonialists engaged in wanton destruction of valuable economic infrastructures leaving behind economies that were not viable, and thus could not support the people. At independence, Africans inherited government and economic systems that were alien, designed for the exploitation of indigenous populations and not for the advancement of their development (Muiu 2008:206-216).

According to Muiu (2008:197) formal independence was given by the colonial powers, but it was devoid of content and had very strong strings attached. At independence, it was expected that the indigenous elites who had captured the evacuated structures of colonial hegemony would engage the people in proper constitution-making to reconstruct the neo-colonial state and establish governance and economic structures more friendly to African participation in development. As Muiu argues, Africa's post-independence leaders made no efforts to undertake proper reconstruction of the state. Instead, many of them engaged in opportunistic reform processes that increased their ability to monopolize both political and economic systems.

Analysis shows that at independence, Africans had to decide on two critical issues: (1) the choice of a political system; and (2) a development model. Arguing that the market-centred resource allocation systems inherited from the colonial state were not appropriate for African societies, many of the continent's leaders chose statism which emphasized (1) state regulation of economic activities; (2) state ownership of productive resources; (3) minimization of the functions of the market; and (4) the redistribution of income, supposedly in favour of the deprived poor and marginalized groups and communities. It was generally believed that statism would provide the state with more effective strategies to deal with mass poverty and deprivation. Furthermore, exploitative multinational corporations underpriced commodities as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's conditionalities and permanent foreign economic bases replaced old forms of colonialism making genuine independence difficult (Muiu & Martin 2009).

Instead of removing African countries from the colonial yoke, independence tied them even closer to the colonial powers. It also silenced both men and women by giving them a sense of false hope. Now that they had their *Uhuru* (independence) all they had to do was to work hard and all other fruits would follow. In Kwame Nkrumah's words, 'seek ye first the political kingdom and everything shall be added unto it' (Harris 1987:28). When these benefits failed to materialize, the people blamed fate, themselves or their leaders. The African political bureaucratic elite, much like its colonial predecessor, maintained centralized states in which power remained vested in the executive, without a tradition of multi-party opposition. Such a state was undemocratic in the sense that it forced citizens, already treated as subjects, to submit to its powers by obeying its rules. Instead of uniting the diverse ethnic and social groups in nation building, the post-colonial state relied on the nationalist rhetoric to protect itself from the majority of the people. Political power became personalized, blurring the divide between rulers and states, and between the public and private spheres. Various foreign agencies controlled the economy while African leaders opted for political power. The African rulers became corrupt and the state's legitimacy was under threat as it faced an economic crisis. While the colonial state was a brutal and violent state, the post-colonial state was equally brutal and violent, but in more subtle and manipulative ways.

Claude Ake (1996:132) argues that the post-colonial African state is an instrument of political domination and economic exploitation of the people in the hands of the African elite, rather than an agent of democracy and development. According to Ake (1996:132, 139), a suitable democracy for Africa should have a people with some real decision-making power; a social democracy that emphasizes concrete political and economic rights; a democracy that puts as much emphasis on collective rights as it does on individual rights; a democracy that recognizes women and children's rights; and a democracy of incorporation which is as inclusive as possible. The development strategy derived from such a people-driven democratization process would be based on a popular development strategy of self-reliance, employment, confidence and self-realization rather than alienation (Ake 1996:140-42).

Building on the various works of other African scholars like Ake (1996), Muiu and Martin (2009) propose a new paradigm of the African state. This new paradigm which is called *Fundi wa Afrika*, meaning 'the builder' or 'tailor', uses a long historical perspective to present an exhaustive panoramic view of the issues at stake in Africa's economic, political and development so that Africans can get out of their predicament. Muiu and Martin analyse the creation and evolution of the African state from indigenous to colonial and post-colonial, showing how internal and external actors in Africa shaped the state and its leadership. They then prescribe what the ideal state and its leadership as determined by the Africans themselves should be (Muiu & Martin 2009:194, 212).

Like Fanon and Nyerere, Muiu and Martin urge Africans to be autonomous and self-reliant. In particular they call on Africans to get rid of their dependency syndrome, to cease to be supplicants in international economic forums and institutions; to take control of the resources within their borders for the sole benefit of every African; and to focus production on domestic needs rather than on export markets (Muiu & Martin 2009:195, 198, 214). Like Fanon, Muiu and Martin (2009:201-202) see African youth and women as key agents of the political change and socio-economic transformation in Africa. Finally, Muiu and Martin argue that a new stable and modern African state based on the five political pillars of the Federation of African states (FAS) should be built on the functional remnants of indigenous African political systems and institutions and should be based on African values, traditions and culture (Muiu & Martin 2009:206-216).

Gender and the Good Governance Debate

The good governance debate, understood as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs, became visible in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War and with the failure of the structural adjustment plans (SAP) imposed on the countries of the South (World Bank 1992). The financial institutions and the international donors introduced Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) as a basic requirement for the achievement of economic, social and political changes considered necessary for development. *The Report of the World Summit Declaration on Social Development* (1995) in Copenhagen also recognized that democracy, transparency and accountability in the governance of all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development. From this perspective, good governance and sustainable human development have become indivisible. Likewise, the Copenhagen Declaration recognized women's full participation guided by the principles of equality and equity as a priority and a fundamental element of economic and socio-political development. The Summit also emphasized a people-centred development approach aimed at eradicating poverty. Thus, with the thrust of the Fourth World Conference in Beijing (1995), gender inequality has become a central concern in good governance and sustainable human development discourses. However, it should be noted that women have not been able to fully reduce the generalization and to leave room for the concessions that states have made in response to women's needs. Each disappointing encounter with state machineries in the postcolonial era is evidence of more basic underlying problems that existed in the past. For example, from the time of political independence, women have received mixed messages from state institutions and bureaucracies. On the one hand, laws, policies and constitutions on women's rights and empowerment have been developed to guarantee women their rights and ensure equality with men in most African countries including Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, when women appeal to

these provisions, they are often accused of being anti-African, Westernized or elitist. When corruption, state patronage or local patriarchal practices are used by those in power to appease various constituents in the quest to seize or retain power, women's focus on their rights as citizens is seen as disruptive.

Analysis of good governance as a normative concept shows that it is shrouded in different but contested meanings as it is conditioned by actors with different interests, positions, mandates and priorities. Current definitions of good governance framed by their different approaches recognize the functional role of the different actors in the public and private sectors and how they interact at all levels including the local, national and international spheres (Jayal 2003:46; UNDP 2000). Similarly, a gender perspective on governance entails all of these aspects in order to make visible the multiple forms in which unequal power relations are expressed in each with a view to encouraging transformative interventions. Central to gender-responsive governance are democratic ways of power relations such as equity, equality, empowerment, human and women's rights. Democratizing state structures and strengthening citizen participation are considered to be fundamental to the promotion of gender-responsive governance systems. This gendered perspective implies redefining the governance concept so as to make it gender sensitive and ensuring that it includes the private and domestic spheres of life.

Gender and Indigenous African Democracies

Ancient Greece is widely regarded as the birthplace of Western democracy and political thought and the word democracy was coined from the Greek words *demos* (the people) and *kratia* (to rule), or ruling by the people for the people as opposed to rule by one of a few. Athenian democracy, however, did not extend equality to all persons and therefore allowed direct participation only by male citizens, a small political elite, to the exclusion of the majority of the populace consisting of women, slaves and foreign residents. Thus, direct participation in government by the privileged few constituted the thrust of Athenian democracy. The ancient Romans took a practical approach to the principle of democracy whereby social conditions that existed within their community determined the political institutions the Romans adopted in response to the problems as they arose (Spielvogel 1999:87).

In indigenous Africa, variants of the concepts of participatory or representative democracy evolved independent of the Athenian tradition and survived until the European invasion of Africa in the nineteenth century. In contemporary times, however, there is no acceptable scientific definition of liberal democracy although the main features are free competition among political parties, periodic elections and respect for the fundamental freedom of thought, expression and assembly (Makinda 1996:562). However, critics argue that reducing the concept of democracy to elections, multiparty system, and universal suffrage limits it to the western concept of political party formation along class and interest lines, a situation

which was absent in indigenous Africa until the colonial intrusion. Thus, contemporary Western insistence on multi-party politics does not consider indigenous cultural values and consequently multi-party politics degenerates into ethnic or communal conflicts (Makinda 1996:557). Makinda proposes that democracy should be conceived 'as a way of government firmly rooted in the belief that people in any society should be free to determine their political, economic, social and cultural systems. But the form it takes may vary from particular circumstances of any society'. Similarly David Miller points out that a broader concept of democracy should include a 'cultural dimension in which democracy represents a philosophy of people's lived experiences'. For him, African societies were socially and politically structured so that everybody participated according to their ability, age and status. African democracy transcended the realm of politics as it was embedded and constituted an integral part of the people's culture, which allowed everyone to experience a sense of belonging. It was a practical democracy as opposed to theoretical democracy, which required people to be more sensitive and responsible for each other's wellbeing.

David Held (1987:5) has delineated three basic variants of democracy, namely participatory democracy, liberal or representative democracy, and one-party democracy. While participatory democracy was used by ancient Athens, it involved all citizens in decision making about specific affairs; representative democracy involved elected officials who undertook to represent the interests of citizens within specific territories, and one-party democracy shunned multi-party competition. Critics argue that liberal democracy and its capitalist economy inevitably produces systematic inequalities and massive restrictions on real fundamental freedoms (ibid:12).

The understanding and practice of indigenous democracy can be premised on the maxim that 'three heads are better than one'. Implicit in this adage are notions of democratic values and tradition predicated on people's participation. Evidence shows that indigenous Africans experimented with various forms of monarchical and decentralized systems as many African indigenous governments were open and inclusive (Osuwu 1997:135). The structure of an indigenous African state implied that kings and chiefs ruled by consent and that the subjects were fully aware of the duties and could exert pressure to make the chief discharge his or her duties. Similarly, Ayittey (1998:91) observed that in a traditional political arrangement, no one was locked out of the decision-making process. One did not have to belong to one political party or family to participate in the process. Advocating a return to that kind of governance system, Ayittey (1998:91) noted that King Alfonso of the Kingdom of Kongo had Portuguese advisors and had allowed them to become members of the kingdom's electoral college that represented the interests of the Portuguese segment of the resident population.

The indigenous political system of the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria presents one of the most elaborate examples of participatory democracy in indigenous

Africa. Apart from a few centralized polities such as Nri, Onitsha, Oguta and Osomari that were monarchical systems, the Igbo operated a decentralized political organization (Nwabara 1979:22; Uchendu 2000:41-42). Uchendu isolated two layers of political structures among the Igbo: the village and the village group. The villages varied in size and population and the government at the village level was an exercise in direct democracy. Uchendu (2000:275-84) presents a detailed account of how Igbo village democracy operated. During general assembly, adult males known as *Ama-ala or Oha* directly participated in the legislative and decision-making process pertaining to public affairs. During this gathering, public matters are brought up and every male attendee who wants to contribute to the debate is entitled to a hearing. After thoroughly discussing the matter, the leaders from each lineage within the village retire for *izuzu* (consultation). Participation in *izuzu* is highly imperative and treasured; it is restricted to men of substance, wit, and prestige who possess the wisdom to analyse all strands of thought and suggest a compromise that the *Ama-ala* would accept. After the *izuzu*, a spokesperson is selected, based on his power of oratory, persuasive talents and his ability to pronounce a verdict. This decision is either accepted by the *Ama-ala* by general acclamation or rejected outright, and in the event of the latter, the view of the assembly prevails by popular consent.

Women have their own assemblies, which follow the male pattern. The very powerful political roles of African queens and queen mothers in the indigenous society remain very instructive. While colonial officials portrayed African women as having no role in political affairs, for Maillu (1997:255), this erroneous notion about African women exhibited European cultural male chauvinism that was carried over to Africa. Nevertheless, like ancient Greeks, the village system was analogous to the citystates as each village was autonomous and sovereign in most matters affecting it and tolerated no interference or dictation from any other group. At the village-group level, consisting of several villages, a representative system in the form of modern representative democracy evolved whereby each village elected or appointed its own delegate to the village- assembly. At all levels, the denominators were consultation, participation and consensus.

Another example is the indigenous political structure of Gikuyu (Kikuyu) of Kenya, which represented some form of participatory democracy. Among the Kikuyu as among the Igbo, there was no sole paramount ruler; eligible adults constituted the legislative assembly. In the eyes of the Gikuyu people, Jomo Kenyatta (1959, cited in Khapoya 1998:62), asserted that 'the submission to a despotic rule of any particular group, white or black, is the greatest humiliation to mankind'. According to Khapoya, the origins of the Gikuyu democracy are embodied in their historical-political legend. According to this legend, a despotic monarch who was ultimately overthrown by the people initially ruled Gikuyuland. After his overthrow, the government of the country was at once changed from despotism to a democracy that was in keeping with the wishes of the majority of

the people. This popular revolution is known as *itwika*, derived from the *twika,* which signified the breaking away from autocracy to democracy (ibid:63).

Accordingly, government among the Kikuyu villages was vested in the elders of one generation or age known as *riika.* The accession to power of a new generation took place at recurring intervals, inaugurated by the handing over ceremony known as *ituika.* The determination of the period of a generation was contingent on the composition of society at the time. However, once most of the firstborn grandsons of the ruling generation were circumcised, the generation prepared to relinquish power to the next generation. Circumcision was the only qualification, which conferred recognition of manhood and the full right of citizenship. Legislative duties were conducted in the senior rank of the elders' lodge representing the various constituent villages. Consultation, representation and consensus, as in the Igbo system, were the main features of the Kikuyu indigenous political system (Khapoya 1998:64).

The Buganda Kingdom of Uganda presents another good example of an 'absolute king' whose powers were checked by parliament. While the *Kabaka* (the king) was in principle supreme, he ruled the kingdom in conjunction with a prime minister (katikkiro) and a parliament (lukiiko). Members of parliament were made up of the chiefs of outlying districts that comprised the kingdom. Although in theory the *kabaka* was not bound to take the advice of the *katikiro* and the *lukiiko,* in practice he could not afford to ignore them. Kiwanuka (1972:125) pointed out how Kabaka Mutesa learned to consult his chiefs on questions of great national importance such as war, peace and religion. The *Kabaka* did not become king through an automatic succession arrangement, as one would expect in a monarch; instead he was elected from among a number of competing princes who equally had legitimate claims to the throne (Khapoya 1998:63).

Role of Women in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding

Although the indigenous African society was organized and structured in ways that encouraged cohesiveness and peaceful coexistence, from time to time, like in any other human society, conflicts were experienced. Conflicts arose between individuals, within a family, between different families or inhabitants of different communities.

To manage such conflicts indigenous societies in Burundi, for example, had well-organized regulatory machinery in which women generally played a major part. Under this system a woman was recognized as having an advisory role, behind the scenes, mainly where her husband was concerned, and as playing an active part in strengthening solidarity and social harmony. Examples from Burundi show that while Burundian women traditionally did not hold public office of any kind as men dealt with matters outside the home, there were some women such as Nteturuyo, also known as Nzirikane, who took on political and administrative

responsibilities of either going to war or holding chieftainship positions (Ntahobari & Ndayiziga 2003:16). Women were expected to set an example, within their families and in their immediate communities. Their role in relation to their husbands was an important one, as they were to advise them and be a constructive influence on them in the decisions they made. When conflict threatened to break out, a woman would adopt her advisory role in order to prevent conflict from escalating. She would counsel her peers, where the matter involved women, or through her husband in a disagreement between them.

Women also made significant contributions to facilitating peace within the family community. For example, Ntahobari and Ndayiziga (2003:19-20), observed that a group of wise and respected Burundian women of experience known as *Inararibonye* 'those who have seen many things' intervened whenever women were in conflict. The *Inararibonye* were selected for their leadership qualities and integrity. When a dispute arose, they held a hearing of the parties in an isolated spot, known as *Mukatabesha,* literally 'the place where no lies are told', and after deliberation, passed judgement. They mediated between both sides and would lay down a course of behaviour, particularly, for the party in the wrong. The *Inararibonye* took a similar role when a woman behaved badly in wider society, in cases of insolence, drunkenness and delinquency, and would be taken to the *katabesha* to receive advice from *Inararibonye.*

A study by Valerie Ngongo-Mbede (2003:27), on traditional mediation by women in Cameroon showed that peace was equated with freshness, health, well-being, harmony, calm and tranquillity. Because women were the main actors with respect to peace in the community, the education of girls was primarily based on peace. Keeping this system of education enabled the girls to supplement the role played by their mothers by mediating in small conflicts that could hinder good domestic management. In polygamous marriage, the first wife (called *Dada Sare* among the Fulbe, *Kindag* among the Bassa, and *Ekomba* among the Besi) was the chief mediator of conflicts in the family. She was responsible for restoring peace and tranquillity in situations of conflict between the husband and one of his wives. In the Beti and Bassa communities, the first wife was sometimes invited to deliberate with the men in the Assemblies. As a woman, being present in what was essentially masculine forums was unique as it gave her the confidence and responsibility to 'soften' sentences considered to be too severe or which could lead to revolt or revenge (ibid:29).

Many communities afforded a special place in society to paternal aunts in matters of crisis management and conflict resolution. Among the Bakossi of Cameroon, for example, it was paternal aunts who were responsible for reconciling the individuals involved in conflict. Other categories of women played the same role in other societies, for example, in the Lua Mfumte society in the North West Province of Cameroon, the Nkwuyi women took part in discussions aimed at resolving conflicts. This community also has the very influential and feared secret

society called the Djudju whose members initially were exclusively women. The role of the Djudju women was to maintain peace in the community. One of the characteristics of the Djudju mask was that it could sometimes become very dangerous and very aggressive. As a result, when its power was unleashed, only pregnant women or recently delivered women could calm it as children represented a potent symbol of peace in society (ibid:30).

Not only did women mediate conflicts between human beings, but they could also serve as intermediaries in conflicts between human beings and nature. In the land of the Mungo, of the Cameroon, and more particularly among the Mbo, any misfortune occurring in the community brought the latter to seek mediation of the *Kalbia,* who were married women. Not every married woman though was a *Kalbia.* Only those women recognized by the clanswomen as having supernatural powers (the gift of clairvoyance, for example) became a *Kalbia.* Once discovered, the *Kalbia* was associated with all meetings and consultations. She had a very wide range of actions, she could determine the causes of the evil undermining society and hindering peace, and she could ward off fate between disruptive forces and society by restoring peace (ibid:31).

In the land of the Beti, in Cameroon, the Mangissa and the Eton had what was known as the *Mbabi.* This was a purification rite aimed at restoring peace. The initiative came from the women when they realized that peace did not exist in the community, when people were ill, and were experiencing drought, hunger or epidemics. In the philosophy of these communities, such a succession of misfortunes was not fortuitous. It was the sign that love and peace were absent from the community, prompting women to organize a *Mbabi.* The *Mbabi* always ended with the drinking of the mystic potions by each of the members at the meeting. Thus, for the Cameroonian women of the past and those of the present as in the rest of Africa, peace is not an abstraction. It is a reality that is very rich, but also very fragile and has to be nurtured (ibid:32).

In line with the above, Mathey *et al* (2003:41) observed that in indigenous central African societies the elderly were greatly respected and in particular elderly women. Elderly women were respected by all, as they played key roles in crisis management and conflict management. For example, if war broke out among the Zande, the oldest women of the clan would go to meet the opposing clan, and interpose themselves between the fighters in order for them to see reason. When words proved fruitless, the women would threaten to expose their nakedness or to go down on their knees as a way of signifying a curse for those who bore the responsibility for such violent acts. Because of the respect that the enemy soldiers had for women, they would usually put down their weapons before war and violence erupted.

Again, in indigenous African societies peace germinates and flourishes only on the manure provided by the presence of a number of key African cultural values. However, the Somali culture embodies many conflicting and contradictory norms,

which can encourage conflict and war-making through the glorification of warriors and men at war. For example, warriors are perceived and idolized as heroes and some Somali women play a crucial role in perpetuating war through song, dance and poem. However, despite the embodiment of some cultures that fuel violence, Somali indigenous societies also respect the norms and values of tolerance, honesty, respect for elders, communality and mutuality, compassion, regard for due discretion, gentleness, modesty, self-control, moderation, flexibility and open-mindedness (Mohamed 2003:42-43).

Mohamed (2003:89) observed that in Somalia which functions under three interrelated authority systems of customary law, religion and the state, emphasis is placed on customary law which encourages people to uphold the principles which constitute the basic pillars underpinning the culture of peace through tolerance, inviolability, respect for human rights and equality. Through the customary law of inviolability, the killing of women, children, the elderly and the sick is forbidden and the offender is considered a coward and ostracized. In addition to their central role of managing all household chores, caring and educating the family, Somali women occupied powerful positions in society. Somali folk tales chronicle the reign and legacy of Queen Arraweelo, whose inspiration encouraged Somali women to resist a multiplicity of injustices and inequities perpetrated against women. Thus, while they were the backbone of the struggle against injustices and colonialism, Somali women also contributed to peace, conflict resolution and reconciliation through song and poem. For example, Faduma Qasim Hilowle and Zeinab Hagi Ali are renowned for speaking on behalf of Somali women through peace songs such as:

> We the women
> Have a complaint against men
> In the name of marriage, love and friendship,
> We the women
> Demand peace in the country
> We demand security and prosperity
> The boys that we bring up
> We want them to grow up in peace

<div align="center">(Faduma Qasim Hilowle & Zeinab Hagi Ali, 2003:100)</div>

Somali women also represented symbols of peace, through rituals practiced when fighting clans resulted in death. Steps were taken to organize the collection and payment of blood money through marriages involving the two conflicting parties, where a girl was offered as compensation for the death of the male relative. The main objective of the marriage was to heal the wounds and to cement the settlement. In support of this practice, the Somali say 'Where blood is shed, it must be soaked with birth fluids'. The symbolic meaning in this ritual is that the

girl offered as reparation will give birth to sons who will fill the void created by the man who was killed. Also marriage was meant to build bridges between families and clans, thereby minimizing the possibility of conflict recurring. However, in most modern societies such practices are being challenged by human rights women activists who perceive such practices as violating the rights of the girl child (Mohamed 2003:100). Women in modern Somali society play a critical role of empowering women, promoting tolerance and non-violence.

Conclusion

The conceptual issues outlined in this chapter focus attention on three concerns: the need to keep in mind at all times African historical experiences; the interaction between the indigenous, the colonial and the postcolonial and the role of women as agents of change in contemporary Africa. Informed by *Fundi wa Afrika*, a logical inference of the study is the need for the reconstruction of the African state based on the African cultures, history, values, traditions, priorities and needs in a manner that will be responsive to the challenges of the people. Any system that condemns women to violence, poverty and disease must be overhauled as most indigenous African systems respected women. As such the African state must put women back in the rightful places in society as economic, political and social actors. Thus, tackling the barriers to women's involvement in formal political systems remains a crucial aspect of achieving greater gender equity in political participation. Yet, addressing gendered exclusions with respect to political participation also necessitates looking beyond electoral politics to gendered relations of power within society and the so-called private sphere. One of the central tasks of feminist critics and activists has been to interrogate the entrenched public/ private divide that confines the activity of politics to the masculinised public sphere while defining the feminised private sphere as a distinctly apolitical realm. Finally, women's participation in positions of power and decision making is a complex process that calls for deeper analysis of the multi-layered factors that constrain democratic spaces for women's active participation at all levels of society.

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12

Pan-Africanism and the Crises of Postcoloniality: From the Organization of African Unity to the African Union

Tim Murithi

Introduction

This chapter assesses how Pan-Africanism relates to the crises of postcoloniality. At the outset the chapter attempts to develop a working definition of postcoloniality. In particular, it identifies the reality of the postcolony as being defined by superstitions, narratives and fictions. The chapter then ventures to assess how postcoloniality manifests itself in the relationships among African states. In particular, it engages with the fictional character of international relations within Africa. The reproduction of the discourse and narrative of statehood are highlighted as a key constraint towards the fulfilment of political stability and socio-economic development. As a remedy to the crises of postcoloniality, the chapter discusses how Pan-Africanism can begin to address the persistence of the superstitions, narratives and fictions that militate against the improvement of the livelihood of the continent's citizens. In particular, the chapter highlights how the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism in the form of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union (AU), can help lay the foundation for addressing the crises of postcoloniality.

Contextualizing Postcoloniality

Achille Mbembe (2001) defines the postcolony as a timespace characterized by proliferation and multiplicity. The reality of the postcolony becomes defined by superstitions, narratives and fictions. Furthermore, the postcolony refers to a timescape which is simultaneously in the process of being formed and, of being

dissolved through a movement that brings both the 'being formed' and the 'being dissolved' into collision. When the notion of postcoloniality is applied to Africa then we can recognise that Africa is evolving in multiple and overlapping directions simultaneously. Africa is first and foremost a geographical accident which has subsequently become invested with a multitude of significations, diverse imaginary contents, or even fantasies, which, by force of repetition, end up becoming authoritative narratives (Mbembe 2001). By utilizing the term 'geographical accident', Mbembe is challenging the idea that even though Africa is a contiguous geographical land mass, this does not mean that there is a unifying sense of what it means to be African. Mbembe's provocation questions whether this vast island called Africa imbues its citizens and societies with a degree of exceptionalism, or whether being African is in fact simply an accident of geography. This is a caution to those who would ascribe and derive certain narratives on or about the African continent. In essence, Mbembe's warning is for us not to over-romanticize the African continent.

Manifest Postcoloniality in Africa

The crises of postcoloniality in Africa manifest as the internal issues of social and political exclusion, authoritarianism, economic mismanagement and the misappropriation of state resources. Manifest postcoloniality is also evident in the banality of power and the cult of the 'big-man' in African politics and the persistent and recurring acts of looting, brutality and predatory practices of the local elites. Power, and its centralization, is all pervasive in the reality of the African postcolony. These power formations are still alive in varying degrees and qualities in those countries where the limits of democratization are the most evident: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, and Nigeria where 'grotesque and ugly forms of violation' still persist (Mbembe 2001). Some regions of the continent remain engulfed in bloody processes of destruction of human bodies and populations including Burundi, Chad, Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

The pervasive and disruptive forces in the African postcolony are manifesting as a new form of sovereign power, which can be defined as 'necropower' (Mbembe 2001). Necropower is wielded both by states and 'war machines'. In wielding this necropower the ultimate site of deployment of this new form of sovereignty is no longer the body as such, but the dead body of the African civilian. The war machines that continue to afflict the African continent operate through capture, looting and predation.

The contemporary nature of postcoloniality in Africa is more precisely accentuated by neo-patrimonial governance and prebendal corruption, state failure, warlord insurgency, low and high intensity communal violence, ethnic hostilities, civil war, lawlessness and culture of impunity, food deficits, and HIV/AIDS

pandemic and other dimensions of human insecurity. In addition, these challenges are transnational in nature and create regional zones of instability. Therefore, the crises of postcoloniality in Africa have profound regional ramifications.

Externally, the African postcolony is also afflicted by another configuration of terror and violence is embodied in a set of economic policies fostered by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Millions of African citizens have been deprived of jobs, food and shelter and are now reduced to struggling for daily survival (Mbembe 2010). 'Instead of curbing the corruption of local elites, the brutality of the international system has increased their greed and carelessness. Under the pretext of privatization, looting has become a norm as well as a cultural practice. Partial democratization under conditions of structural adjustment has opened the way for the privatization of violence' (Mbembe 2010).

Situating Pan-Africanism

It is often assumed that the process of continental integration begun with an Extra-ordinary Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) convened in Sirte, Libya, in 1999. In fact, the process begun with the Pan-African movement and its demand for greater solidarity among the peoples of Africa as a means to addressing some of the manifestations of postcoloniality described above. To understand the emergence of the African Union we need to understand the evolution of the Pan-African movement. A review of the objectives and aspirations of Pan-Africanism provides a foundation to critically assess the creation of the AU and its prospects for promoting the principles and norms of peace and development.

Historically Pan-Africanism, the perception by Africans in the diaspora and on the continent that they share common goals, has been expressed in different forms by various actors. There is no single definition of Pan-Africanism and in fact we can say that there are as many ideas about Pan-Africanism as there are thinkers of Pan-Africanism. Rather than being a unified school of thought, Pan-Africanism is more a movement which has as its common underlying theme the struggle for social and political equality and the freedom from economic exploitation and racial discrimination.

It is interesting to note that it is the global dispersal of peoples of African descent that is partly responsible for the emergence of the Pan-African movement. As Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, observe in their book *Pan-African History: Political Figures from African and the Diaspora Since 1787*, 'Pan-Africanism has taken on different forms at different historical moments and geographical locations' (Adi & Sherwood 2003:vii). Adi and Sherwood note that, what underpins these different perspectives on Pan-Africanism is 'the belief in some form of unity or of common purpose among the peoples of Africa and the African Diaspora'.

One can also detect an emphasis on celebrating 'Africaness', resisting the exploitation and oppression of Africans and their kin in the Diaspora as well as a staunch opposition to the ideology of racial superiority in all its overt and covert guises.

Pan-Africanism is an invented notion (Murithi 2005). Pan-Africanism however is an invented notion with a purpose. We should therefore pose the question what is the *purpose* of Pan-Africanism? Essentially, Pan-Africanism is a recognition of the fragmented nature of the existence of Africans, their marginalization and alienation whether in their own continent or in the Diaspora. Pan-Africanism seeks to respond to Africa's contemporary crises of postcoloniality illustrated most starkly by underdevelopment. As noted above, Africa has been exploited and a culture of dependency on external assistance unfortunately still prevails on the continent. If people become too reliant on getting their support, their nourishment, their safety, from outside sources, then they do not find the power within themselves to rely on their own capacities. Pan-Africanism calls upon Africans to draw from their own strength and capacities and become self-reliant.

Pan-Africanism is, in a sense, a recognition that Africans have been divided among themselves and subject to the pervasiveness of necropower. They are constantly in competition among themselves, deprived of the true ownership of their own resources and inundated by paternalistic external actors with ideas about what it 'good'. Modern day paternalism is more sophisticated and dresses itself up as a kind and gentle helping hand with benign and benevolent intentions. In reality it seeks to maintain a 'master-servant' relationship and does not really want to see the genuine empowerment and independence of thought in Africa. The net effect of this is to disempower Africans from deciding for themselves the best way to deal with the problems and issues they are facing. Pan-Africanism is a recognition that the only way out of this existential, social, political postcolonial crises is by promoting greater solidarity amongst Africans. Genuine dialogue and debate in Africa will not always generate consensus, but at least it will be dialogue among Africans about how they might resolve their problems. If ideas are not designed by the African's, then rarely can they be in the interests of Africans (Akokpari, Ndinga-Muvumba & Murithi 2008).

Pan-Africanism as Redress for Postcoloniality

Pan-Africanism possesses the transformative potential to begin to redress the crises of postcoloniality in Africa. In particular, Pan-Africanism will not be an antidote, but it can contribute towards addressing the challenges of political governance, state-building and development in Africa. The successful transition of the postcolonial crises can only be effected under conditions of sustained economic growth and cultural revival. This would involve erasing the internal illusory borders that continue to puncture the African political landscape. This rapture of the African frontier mentality, based on continental integration, would lay the foundations for the

necessary Pan-African investments which are urgently needed in the fields of infrastructure, education and health. It would also stand the African continent in good-stead when it comes to harnessing trans-national and global partnerships (Akokpari, Ndinga-Muvumba & Murithi 2008).

The institutionalization of Pan-Africanism could therefore represent the entry into another configuration of human experience for the continent's citizens. Pan-Africanism could provide the torchlight required to lead the continent out of the debilitating crises of postcoloniality and it would remain a promise to come embodied with the hopes and aspirations of African people.

From Pan-Africanism to the Organization of African Unity

In the twentieth century, the idea of Pan-Africanism took an institutional form. Initially, there were the Pan-African Congress' which convened in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, under the leadership of activists like the African-American writer and thinker W.E.B. du Bois; the Trinidadian Henry Sylvester Williams; and inspired often by the ideas of people like the Jamaican-American Marcus Garvey. These ideas were adopted and reformed by continental African leaders in the middle of the twentieth century. Kwame Nkrumah who later became the first president of Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Gamar Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria took the idea of Pan-Africanism to another level on 25 May 1963 when they co-created the Organization of African Unity (OAU 1963). The principles of the OAU kept the spirit of Pan-Africanism alive. The primary objective of this principle was to continue the tradition of solidarity and cooperation among Africans.

During the era of the OAU the key challenge was colonialism. Since 1885, in what was then known as the 'Scramble for Africa' European colonial powers had colonized African peoples and communities across the entire continent. The Belgians were in the Congo, the British in east, south, west and north Africa, the French in west Africa, Somalia, Algeria and other parts of north Africa, and the Italians in Somalia. The Germans, who later lost their colonies following their defeat in the Second World War, had to relinquish Namibia and modern day Tanzania. Africans had successfully fought on the side of the allies in the Second World War and after its conclusion they brought their struggle for independence back home to Africa.

The OAU embraced the principle of Pan-Africanism and undertook the challenge of liberating all African countries from the grip of settler colonialism. The main principle that it was trying to promote was to end racial discrimination upon which colonialism with its doctrine of racial superiority was based. In addition, the OAU sought to assert the right of Africans to control their social, economic and political affairs and achieve the freedom necessary to consolidate peace and development. The OAU succeeded in its primary mission, with the help of international actors, in liberating the continent on 27 April 1994, when a new government based on a one-person-one-vote came into being in South

Africa under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. The OAU however was not as effective in monitoring the worst excesses of postcoloniality and policing the affairs of its own member states when it came to the issues of violent conflict; political corruption; economic mismanagement; poor governance; lack of human rights; lack of gender equality; and poverty eradication.

The preamble of the OAU Charter of 1963 outlined a commitment by member states to collectively establish, maintain and sustain the 'human conditions for peace and security' (Gomes 2005). However, in parallel, the same OAU Charter contained the provision to 'defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the member states' (Organization of African Unity 1963). This was later translated into the norm of non-intervention. The key organs of the OAU – the council of ministers and the Assembly of heads of state and government – could only intervene in a conflict situation if they were invited by the parties to a dispute. Many intra-state disputes were viewed, at the time, as internal matters and the exclusive preserve of governments concerned.

The OAU created a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Cairo, in June 1993. This instrument was ineffective in resolving disputes on the continent. Tragically, the Rwandan genocide which was initiated in April 1994 happened while this mechanism was operational. It was also during this last decade of the twentieth-century that the conflict in Somalia led to the collapse of the state and the violence in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan led to the death of millions of Africans. These devastating events illustrated the limitations of the OAU as an institution that could implement the norms and principles that it articulated. Despite the existence of the OAU's Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention and Management, the Rwandan tragedy demonstrated the virtual impotence of the OAU in the face of violent conflict within its member states. The United Nations (UN) did not fare any better as all of its troops, except the Ghanaian contingent, pulled out of the country leaving its people to the fate. Subsequently, both the OAU and the UN issued reports acknowledging their failures (Organization of African Unityh 2000; United Nations 1999). The impetus for the adoption of a new paradigm in the promotion of peace and security in the African continent emerged following the Rwandan tragedy. In addition, the OAU had learned from the intervention experiences of ECOWAS and ECOMOG in west Africa.

Regrettably due to the doctrine of non-intervention, the OAU became a silent observer to the atrocities being committed by some of its member states and their war machines. Eventually, a culture of impunity and indifference became entrenched in the international relations of African countries during the era of the 'proxy' wars of the Cold War. So in effect the OAU was a toothless talking shop incapable of making a dent on the negative consequences of the postcolonial crises. The OAU was perceived as a club of African Heads of States, most of whom were not legitimately elected representatives of their own citizens but self-appointed

dictators and oligarchs. They wielded necropower and did not hesitate to target their own civilians. In this context, necropower represents authority that is illegitimately acquired and brutally wielded to impose dominion and control through coercion. This negative perception informed people's attitude towards the OAU. It was viewed as an organization that existed without having a genuine impact on the daily lives of Africans.

The Emergence of the African Union

The African Union came into existence in July 2002, in Durban, South Africa (Akokpari, Ndinga-Muvumba & Murithi 2008). It was supposed to usher Africa into a new era of continental integration leading to a deeper unity and a resolution of its postcolonial problems. The evolution of the AU from the Organisation of African Unity was visionary and timely. The OAU had failed to live up to all of its norms and principles. Africa at the time of the demise of the OAU was a continent that was virtually imploding from within due to the postcolonial crises evident in the consequences of conflict, poverty and underdevelopment and public health crisis like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The OAU effectively died of a cancer of inefficiency because it basically had not lived up to its original ideals of promoting peace, security and development in Africa. The African Union emerged as an initiative to effectively take the destiny of the continent into the hands of the African people. However, there is a long way to go before the AU's vision and mission is realized.

The AU is composed of 54 member states. It is run by the AU Commission based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The current Chairperson of the AU Commission is Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma, the former Foreign Minister of South Africa. Its top decision making organ is the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, its executive decision-making organ is the Executive Council of Ministers, who work closely with the Permanent Representatives Committee of Ambassadors in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AU has also established a range of institutions which are designed with the intention of addressing the crises of postcoloniality on the continent.

The African Union as the Institutionalization of Pan-Africanism

If we know the purpose of Pan-Africanism as an attempt to redress postcoloniality then the steps to achieve its goals become clearer to understand. It is in this context that we can begin to understand the emergence of the African Union. It would be a mistake to view the African Union as an aberration that just emerged in the last few years. It would be more appropriate to view the AU as only the latest incarnation of the idea of Pan-Africanism. The first phase of the institutionalization of the Pan-Africanism was the Pan-African Congress' that were held from the end of the nineteenth-century and into the beginning of the twentieth-century. The second phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism was the

inauguration of the Organization of African Unity. The third phase of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism is in effect the creation of the African Union. It will not be the last phase. Subsequent phases and organizations will bring about ever closer political, economic, and social ties among African peoples. African unity is an idea that can be traced back to the nineteenth-century. The African Union is a twenty-first century expression of a nineteenth-century idea. As such it is an imperfect expression, but nevertheless the best expression of Pan-Africanism that can be brought forth at this time.

The Transformative Potential of Pan-Africanism to Address the Crises of Postcoloniality

The underlying agenda of the creation of the African Union is to promote solidarity, cooperation and support among African countries and peoples in order to address the catalogue of problems that they face. The ultimate utility of the AU will depend on whether it has the transformative potential to address the crises of postcoloniality through the implementation of the extensive range of principles, norms and values that it has adopted into practical policies which can be implemented. Some of these principles are discussed below.

The Principles of Peace: The AU Protocol on Peace and Security

As discussed above, the existence of the AU is an expression of Pan-Africanism. One of the ways in which this solidarity is now being put to the test is in how the AU is addressing the crises of postcoloniality which are decimating African societies. The true expression of Pan-Africanism will be achieved only when member states and societies in Africa regard the post-conflict security and well-being of their neighbours as fundamentally related to theirs (Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2005). The necessary political will is then required to undertake humanitarian interventions in crisis situations. To reinforce this point, the AU Commission issued the *Strategic Plan and Vision 2004-2007*, which also reiterates the importance of achieving peace and security as a necessary pre-requisite for post-conflict reconstruction, development and the consolidation of democratic governance.

As indicated earlier the African Union has the primary responsibility for establishing and operationalizing the continent's peace and security architecture (Mwanasali 2004). The 2002 AU Constitutive Act has enshrined the right to intervene. In terms of policy this means that African countries have agreed to pool their sovereignty to enable the AU to act as the ultimate guarantor and protector of the rights and well-being of the African people. The Peace and Security Council was established as a legal institution of the AU through the *Protocol Relating to the Peace and Security Council* in 2002 (African Union 2002). It is the key institution charged with conducting peace operations on the continent but

it is complemented by the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force to be operationalized by the end of 2010 and the Military Staff Committee. An AU Peace Fund has been established to ensure that there will be enough resources to conduct post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Implementing the Principles of Post-Conflict Reconstruction

AU has developed an African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework through a broad consultative process with civil society and key stakeholders (NEPAD 2005). This framework stresses the link between the peace, security, humanitarian and development dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. The AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework aims to coordinate and guide the efforts of the AU Commission, the AU secretariat, the RECs, civil society, the private sector and other internal and external partners in the process of rebuilding war-affected communities. This plan is based on the premise that each country should adopt a post-conflict reconstruction strategy that responds to its own particular needs (Bond 2002). In most countries, there is a need to develop a post-conflict reconstruction process that addresses the needs of vulnerable groups such as women and children who are increasingly the targets of violence in conflict situations. AU's peacebuilding policy stresses the importance of factoring the needs of these groups into planning and programming in order to have an effective overall post-conflict strategy. The disabled, ex-combatants, child soldiers and victims of sexual violence also need to be provided with appropriate care and attention since an inadequate post-conflict programme can actually increase the vulnerability of these groups.

The Principles of Development: The New Partnership for Africa's Development

The AU has to implement its development principles in order for Africa to regain control of its economic policies from the necropower of international financial institutions. The external control of the economic policies of African countries is a situation that has to be addressed. The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS) and so-called Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) promoted and enforced by the IMF and the World Bank have had a negative impact on Africa's growth and development. By the IMF and World Bank's own admission, these programmes did not achieve what they planned to. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that IMF/World Bank policies dictated since 1980 have led to 10 percent decline in economic growth in Africa (UNCTAD 2004).

There is therefore a need for Africa and the African Union to re-declare its economic independence and identify programmes that will bring genuine development to the people who need it most. It is in this context that we hear

much talk about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which the Group of Eight (G8) countries pledged to support at their meeting in Kananaskis, Canada, in June 2002. NEPAD is a programme of the African Union. It is not a separate institution. It was designed by African leaders and adopted in Abuja, Nigeria in October 2001. One of the criticisms of NEPAD is that it did not include the views of African civil society and since then the African Union has made efforts to consult with civil society. NEPAD proposes ways to advance and accelerate Africa's peace and security by building a strong foundation for development and economic growth. NEPAD proposes to do this through improved access to education and training, access to healthcare, the building of the infrastructure necessary to make Africa an equal partner in global trade and economic development (Nkulu 2005).

Some critics of NEPAD argue that the programme cannot succeed because it tries to integrate Africa into a global framework of neo-liberal laissez-faire economic principles which is part of the reason why Africa is in the situation it is in the first place. To an extent these critics have a point, given the fact that unrestricted de-regulation in Africa has not contributed towards the net development of Africa in terms of human development indicators. This would be to try to attempt to address the crises of postcoloniality by utilising the same type of thinking that generated these crises in the first place. More specifically, critics argue that Africa is in its current situation precisely because of the neo-liberal economic framework in which richer countries preach free trade but protect their own industries and put pressure on developing countries to open up their markets. Liberalized African markets give the green light to predatory global corporations to extract primary commodities at low prices and buy up industries and production in Africa and repatriate profit out of Africa back to their global shareholders, thereby denying Africans the benefit of these profits which are vital for building schools and hospitals. As an illustration, in agriculture alone developed Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries spend US$ 320 billion a year on subsidies. This situation is currently undercutting cotton production in Mali and Burkina Faso and restricting their competitiveness in global markets. Critics argue that at the very least African governments should be allowed to strengthen and protect their local industries. In addition, profits need to remain on the continent to support development. The basic argument is that adopting a neo-liberal framework for development is like adopting a violent strategy for promoting peace.

On the issue of debt cancellation, many African countries are spending more money in servicing multilateral debt than the combined amount they spend on providing healthcare and education to their people. More money is going out of Africa and back to the foreign bankers than is spent on school children and sick people. If we are talking about genuine development to consolidate peace then clearly this situation has to change. There are additional institutions that are yet to

be established by the AU to promote development and trade including an African Central Bank, an African Monetary Fund, and an African Investment Bank.

The Principles of Governance: The African Peer-Review Mechanism

As the multiple dimensions of the postcolonial crises have demonstrated, unprincipled forms of governance have gripped the African continent. Elections are regularly held even though the people's right to freely participate and chose their leaders is often subverted. A phenomenon has led to a situation in which people vote, without choosing their leaders. As far as governance is concerned, electoralism by itself is not sufficient to bring about democracy. However, small steps have been taken on the African continent given that in the late 1980s the majority of African countries were led by dictators who did not bother to pretend to seek the votes of their people to remain in power. Today the majority of African governments except a handful seek their legitimation through universal suffrage. Even though a number of these processes are not always as transparent as they should be, they at least demonstrate the principle and norm of ruling with the consent of the governed.

The NEPAD framework has launched an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) which will monitor and assess the compliance of African governments with the norms of governance and human rights (APRM 2005). This innovative mechanism of voluntary, self-imposed assessment seeks to raise the standards of governance and economic management in Africa so as to improve the livelihood of African people by promoting a climate that will encourage investment and development. A number of countries volunteered for the APRM audit including Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Africa and Kenya. These countries were assessed in four key areas: democracy and political governance, corporate governance, microeconomic governance and socio-economic development. The APRM team also consulted with civil society and the private sector. This APRM reporting process has faltered with governments demonstrating a refusal to be monitored by external actors, which has exposed the commitment of the AU to monitor and police its own members (Kajee 2004). Critics argue that the APRM has 'failed' in its analysis and criticisms of the lack of democratic governance among its members.

The Unprincipled and Unconstitutional Change of Government

Once peace and democracy has been consolidated then it is vital to ensure that the constitutions that have been developed through consultation with citizens are maintained and not undermined. The problem of course is that there are still a significant number of African governments that initially came to power through unconstitutional means. It is also important to note that some African rulers unscrupulously changed constitutions to give themselves further terms of office beyond the approved constitutional limit. In spite of this, Article 30 of the AU's

Constitutive Act of 2002 rejects any future 'unconstitutional change' of government. The recent coup d'état in Mauritania was a test of the AU's commitment to this principle. The AU rose to the challenge, and summarily suspended Mauritania from the activities of the Union. In an act of defiance AU ministers flew to Nouakchott, the Mauritanian capital, to inform the new military junta in Nouakchott that the AU would not accept unconstitutional changes of government. With this act the AU was effectively putting on notice those leaders who harbour intentions to overthrow existing governments. However, the situation in Mauritania was allowed to prevail given the promise of the ruling junta that it would proceed to elections. Subsequently, elections were held in 2007. Evidently, the AU has had mixed results in terms of its efforts to prevent coups and re-establishing constitutional order. The recent examples of Guinea and Madagascar are cases in point. The prevention of coups should go beyond the rhetoric of condemnation to the imposition of even tougher sanctions which will compel the perpetrators to restore constitutional order.

The Principles of Participation: The AU's Interface with Civil Society

In 2004, Africa established its first ever Pan-African Parliament, based in Midrand, South Africa. The then spokesperson of the AU, Desmond Orjiako, has observed that, 'this is an extremely important step for us; it will enable all persons to have a forum where they can air their views' (Murithi 2005:71). According to Orjiako, the AU would remain committed to enabling African citizens to input into how they are governed'. The Pan-African Parliament works in close cooperation with the parliaments of the regional economic communities and the national parliaments of Member States. The Pan-African Parliament convenes annual consultative forums with these economic communities and national parliaments to discuss matters of common interest. The intention is to ultimately endow the body with the ability to make laws and coordinate laws for the whole continent. The objective is to ensure grassroots involvement by ordinary Africans in the laws that affect their future. The AU has also established the Economic, Cultural and Social Council (ECOSOC) which sits occasionally at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and includes civil society representatives from across Africa. To monitor its efforts on civil society initiatives the African Union has established an African Citizens Directorate (CIDO) Unit within the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission.

Promoting the Principle of Gender Equity

As of November 2010, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government which is the highest decision making body of the AU, has 52 men and only one woman. There is clearly a gender imbalance in the composition of the AU, and it is important to redress this issue. The AU has adopted the principle of gender equity through its *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equity*, which was approved by the AU Assembly in 2004. The AU Commission has also instituted a programme of affirmative

action and has designated that five of the ten Commissioners will be women. In order, to advocate for, and monitor, its gender policies the AU has established a Directorate for Gender, within the Office of the Chairperson.

Article 4 (l) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union which formally established the organization, in 2002, adopted as one of its principles 'the promotion of gender equality' (African Union 2000). However, it was only two years later in 2004 that the AU held its first debate on gender issues at its Annual Assembly of Heads of State and Government which took place on 6 July, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In the Summit, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the *AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality* (African Union 2004). This Declaration acknowledged the precedent set by the UN Conventions and Resolutions discussed above and noted that 'while women and children bear the brunt of conflicts and internal displacement, including rapes and killings, they are largely excluded from conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding process in spite of African women's experience in peacebuilding' (African Union 2000). The Declaration states that the AU will actively work to accelerate the implementation of gender equality in all of its activities. Specifically, the Declaration emphasised that the AU would 'ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace processes including the prevention, resolution, management of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa as stipulated in UN Resolution 1325' (African Union 2000:2). In addition, it committed the Member States of the Union to 'initiate, launch and engage within two years (of the signing of the Declaration) sustained public campaigns against gender-based violence' (African Union 2000:4). The Declaration committed the organization to also implement legislation to enable women to own land and inherit property, improve literacy among women and generally mainstream gender parity in all spheres of its social, economic and political activities.

The African Union has also recognized the importance of upholding the rights of women's through its *Protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights Relating to the Rights of Women in Africa*, which was adopted on 11 July 2003, at the Union's Summit in Maputo, Mozambique. Specifically, the Protocol states that 'women have a right to peaceful existence and the right to participate in the promotion and maintenance of peace' (African Union 2003: Article 10). The Protocol also calls upon the Member States of the AU to 'take all appropriate measures to ensure the increased participation of women … in programmes of education for peace and a culture of peace' (African Union 2003: Article 10, 2a). The Protocol calls upon 'state parties to undertake to respect and ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflict situations which affect the population, particularly women' (African Union 2003:Article 10). It further obligates 'state parties to undertake to protect asylum seeking women, refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, against all forms of violence, rape and other forms of sexual exploitation, and to ensure that such acts are

considered war crimes, genocide and/or crimes against humanity and that their perpetrators are brought to justice before a competent criminal jurisdiction' (African Union 2003: Article 11). The Protocol also legislates for equal pay for equal work and establishes affirmative action to foster the equal participation of women in public office. The Protocol also legislates against female genital mutilation and promotes medical abortions in specific instances.

The Limits of Pan-Africanism as a means to address Postcoloniality

In view of these principled initiatives, the question can be raised as to whether we are in fact witnessing the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism and whether it can in fact address the crises of postcoloniality. The African Union exists but African unity does not. In other words, while the edifice of continental unity is evident in the establishment of the Chinese-built substantial AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, and the existence of a number of regional institutions and offices. The real experience across the continent is not one of a unified Pan-African society, in which the challenges of one part of the continent, say in Senegal, in West Africa, are understood and empathized by fellow Africans, in Maputo, in South Africa. The African Union project is therefore still very much at the stage of inception, and the vision of promoting genuine African unity lies at a point in the future.

Most of Africa's problems can be resolved if the political will is mobilized to genuinely address the internal postcolonial issues of social and political exclusion, authoritarianism, economic mismanagement and the misappropriation of state resources. Some observers and commentators question whether the African Union is a valid project to be undertaking at this time, or just another ambitious campaign by self-seeking leaders, intoxicated by necropower, to distract attention from other more pressing problems on the continent. The critical challenge facing the African Union will be whether it can transform the extensive range of principles, norms and values that it has adopted into practical policies which can be implemented. The institutionalization of Pan-Africanism will only be achieved when the ideals that inform this movement begin to manifest as progressive policy prescriptions. In turn these policy prescriptions have to lead to the implementation of programmes that will genuinely affect and improve the lives of Africans across the continent.

The notion of Pan-Africanism has historically been used to defend the rights of nation-states against external interference. At the dawn of the twenty-first century the majority of African Heads of State and Government have to a large extent held onto this norm. This is despite the fact that they have signed up to the Constitutive Act of the African Union which is a blueprint Charter for greater intervention in the affairs of Member States particularly on issues to do with peace and security. However, a series of interventions in Burundi (2003), Darfur (2004), Somalia (2007) and Comoros (2008) suggest that we might be witnessing

the beginning of a more interventionist stance by the AU which augurs well for attempts to address the manifest ailments generated by the crises of postcoloniality.

Somewhere along the line, the idea of non-intervention became a license for oppressive postcolonial states to kill their own peoples through internecine conflicts. Therefore, there is a need to return to the principles that animated and inspired the Pan-Africanists who begun the movement and implement these principles in practice. The opportunity provided by the renewed sense of Pan-Africanism can be utilized by African citizens to organize themselves to hold governments and their institutions accountable for their actions and responsible for the well-being of their people. The renewed sense of unity and solidarity should serve as a foundation of Pan-African standards of accountability and respect for the rights of human beings rather than permitting the excesses and misuse of state power.

Critics of Pan-Africanism argue that in the past this movement or ideology has not brought about any significant transformation other than enabling 'a trade union of dictators' in the form of the OAU Heads of State and Government to rule unjustly and harshly. Even today words of intention and platitudes from current African leaders need to be followed with concrete action. The question is how can Africa go about protecting and guarding against exploitation? If the response is through greater solidarity and unity then this implies Pan-Africanism. African countries being left to their own devices and their own 'deviousness' is precisely what led to the theatres of violence and slaughter from Kigali, to Freetown, Monrovia, Bukavu, Mogadishu and the latest tragedies in Darfur in western Sudan and Zimbabwe. How does Africa prevent future theatres of massacres if not through working together as one African collective? Perhaps we should not be so quick to throw the proverbial ideological baby, of Pan-Africanism, out with the bath water of the politics of non-intervention, collusion and in-action which African leaders are currently practicing.

Pan-Africanism is a tool and in the right hands it is one key to Africa's emancipation. It was Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, who argued that, 'African states must unite or sell themselves out to imperialist and colonialist exploiters or sell themselves for a mess of portage, or disintegrate individually'. Nkrumah was offering future African generations some options. Africans have not united, not in the genuine sense, as illustrated by on going disputes between Ethiopia and Eritrea, fluctuating tensions between Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, tensions between Nigeria and Cameroon on the Bakassi Peninsula issue, existing tensions between Morocco and neighbouring states on the Western Sahara/Sarhawi Arab Republic issue and so on. Africa has, or rather its leaders have, colluded with unscrupulous agents of globalization, illegal traders, sanction busters, mercenaries and transnational corporations and sold out the continent to the exploiters for the illusions of power and private bank accounts in foreign lands and off-shore islands. As a consequence the continent has in fact been 'disintegrating individually'.

As an antidote to this critical situation, perhaps the emphasis should be for the African peoples and their leaders to go back to square one and re-unite. They need to borrow from the principles that animated their struggle for independence and freedom. Today there is another battle for freedom being waged on the continent - the battle for freedom from conflict, poverty, disease and exploitation.

Towards a Postcolonial Politics of Principle: Institutionalizing the AU's Norms

However, the situation is not entirely negative. The AU is at least making an effort to make a difference. It has involved itself in all of Africa's on going peace efforts. It has been making efforts in Côte d'Ivoire; it was involved in back-stopping the Inter-governmental Authority for Developments' peace process in Sudan, which led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The AU was involved initially through the Chair of the Heads of State in escorting Charles Taylor out of Liberia, to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. It does have some major challenges ahead. Zimbabwe for example is not necessarily one country's problem. It is the African Union's and all member states collectively. Zimbabwe has signed the Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4, which pledges it members to 'respect democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance'. It is up to the AU to find a way to ensure that one of its wayward members comes back into the fold. As a five year old institution this is easier said than done. The old habit inherited from the defunct OAU of allowing member states to do their will, within their borders has not yet gone away.

As Eddie Maloka observes in his edited volume *A United States of Africa?*, African leaders must be commended for taking advantage of the changed environment to advance the cause of the African continent (Maloka 2001:5). The transition from the OAU to the AU is a visionary step towards greater integration, democratic governance and the rule of law in African countries. African Union leaders met for their annual Summit in Addis Ababa, on 6 July 2004 to discuss an ambitious road map in an effort to herald a new era, end years of conflict, reduce poverty and combat the scourge of HIV/AIDS on the continent (IRIN 2004). However, if these aspirations are to become a reality the continent must be seen picking up the bill for its own problems before turning to rich nations and expecting greater support. If African governments do not make the pledge to fund the Union then key institutions or strategies for addressing the crises of postcoloniality and building a new Africa would be undermined. A substantial amount of funds can be re-directed from the draining military budgets of the war machines which deplete the economies of all African countries. If the countries pool their security mechanisms by having an integrated military mechanism and even establish a Pan-African armed forces then the continent could have more finances and resources for education, healthcare and development. The self-

imposed obstacle of course is that in the era egotistical state-centric attitudes, this would be a proposition that most of the leaders on the African continent at this point in time would reject and undermine. If such attitudes prevail the crises of postcoloniality will remain a pervasive reality on the continent.

Conclusion

The crises of postcoloniality on the African continent call for innovative strategies and an appeal to the transformative power of Pan-Africanism. The underlying agenda of the creation of the African Union was to promote solidarity, cooperation and support among African countries and peoples in order to address these crises of postcoloniality. Some observers and commentators question whether the African Union is a valid project to be undertaken at this time, or just another ambitious campaign by self-seeking predatory leaders to distract attention from other more pressing problems on the continent. The African Union exists but African unity does not. The ability of the African Union to address the crises of postcoloniality will largely depend on the extent to which it can transform the extensive range of principles, norms and values that it has adopted over the years into practical implementable policies. Such a transformation requires a change in attitude among Africa's leaders, which can be achieved through the mobilization of the wider society to trigger the necessary political will to internalize these principles and to implement the required norms. The institutionalization of Pan-Africanism will only be achieved when the ideals that inform this movement begin to manifest as progressive policy prescriptions. In turn, these policy prescriptions have to lead to the implementation of programmes that will genuinely address the crises of postcoloniality in order to improve the lives of Africans across the continent.

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