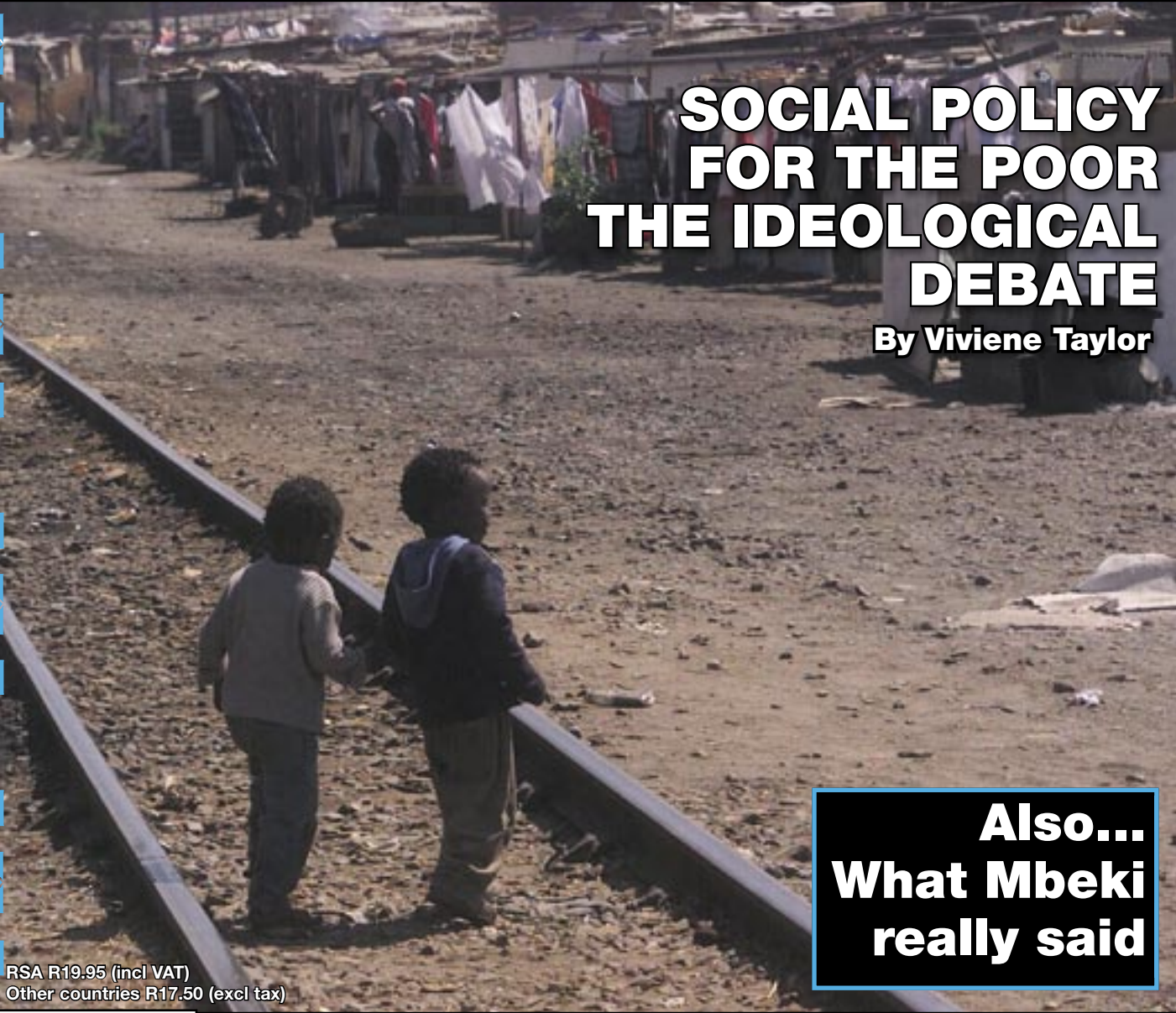




NEW AGENDA

SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY



SOCIAL POLICY FOR THE POOR THE IDEOLOGICAL DEBATE

By Vivienne Taylor

**Also...
What Mbeki
really said**

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WHAT MBEKI REALLY SAID

Press coverage of the June ANC Policy Conference was extensive but seriously flawed. First, there was the build up about the succession race, and then the outcome was presented by many journalists as mere jockeying for position. Little attention was given to the rest of the deliberations.

On 27 June, the opening day of the conference, *Business Day* editorialised, “the succession debate... made it unlikely that anyone would try to raise anything too controversial at this week’s policy conference... This should be the time for reflection and real debate on policy options, and chances are there won’t be that much... some of it may have to wait until bigger conflicts are settled.”

Before any debate had started, the ever-opinionated Karima Brown wrote, “So whatever the outcome of this week’s deliberations, we will only really know which way the policy wind is blowing when the succession battle is resolved in Polokwane [in December].” (*Business Day*, 27 June 2007)

Even that superb journalist Allister Sparks wrote, “the most important item on the agenda is not a matter of policy, but... the ruling party’s bitter succession struggle.” (*Cape Times*, 27 June 2007)

And Quentin Wray said, “some of the questions that will be debated [concern] how long the very strained tripartite alliance hang together.” (*Business Report*, 25 June 2007)

New Agenda cannot deny that the succession issue received considerable attention at the conference, and will continue to do so as the ANC moves to the December National Conference. But it was not as central to the four days of debate as the press made it out to be. Indeed, the commissions and plenary session dealt with fundamental policies in great detail and over many hours. Proposals from the commissions were reported to the plenary session and were voted on line by line. Although many senior members of the ANC participated in the commissions, there was no attempt to influence the final proposals or modify critical elements. The press was excluded from the commissions so that delegates could express themselves freely, but they attended the plenary.

Journalists were aware of the free flow and the wide range of debate throughout the conference, but chose not to report this.

Most reports from the commissions included important statements about the desirability of a developmental state. This resonates a great deal with the founding principles of this government in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). We remind readers that the RDP remains the central guiding document of the ANC even though it has received less attention in the last decade.

Journalists were aware of the free flow and the wide range of debate throughout the conference, but chose not to report this.

Also importantly, the press paid little attention to and missed the significance of the statements made by President Mbeki at the opening and closing sessions of the policy conference.

If the ANC and its allies take these statements seriously, this could well make the coming National Conference a watershed for the movement and the country. For this reason, and in the interests of promoting serious democratic discourse on the basis of principle rather than sensationalism and gossip, we print extracts from these speeches.

Finally, this was a conference of the national leaders of most leading institutions in South Africa. Present were not only the whole of the national executive committee of the ANC and ANC ministers, but also 1 000 representatives from ANC branches and provincial and regional structures of the ANC, as well as leaders of COSATU, the SACP and SANCO, together with leaders of all organs of state and business. Together, this constituted a meeting of the most decisive leaders of our country.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, THABO MBEKI, AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE ANC POLICY CONFERENCE

27 June 2007, Gallagher Estate, Midrand

What I know is that the African National Congress was established 95 years ago to serve the interests of the suffering masses of our people. It was not formed to be, and has never been, an instrument to advance the personal interests of its members, regardless of the positions within the organisation that any of its members might occupy.

Many of these members of the African National Congress lost their lives during the countless battles that had to be waged to secure victory. Many of these members of the African National Congress suffered extraordinary persecution, served many years in apartheid prisons, and made immense personal sacrifices to liberate our people.

I have spoken as I have because over the recent past all of us, loyal members of the African National Congress, have been subjected to a sustained barrage of propaganda that has suggested that we remain members of the ANC because we are determined to gain positions of power at the various levels of government, and thus to use these positions of power to accumulate wealth for ourselves and secure our positions of power by a mercenary dispensation of patronage.

The African National Congress was formed 95 years ago to liberate our people from colonial oppression and white minority domination. That colonial and racist domination had robbed the majority of its right to determine both its destiny and the future of our country.

It had robbed the masses of our people of their right to land and all means by which they could guarantee themselves an independent livelihood. It had deliberately worked to impoverish these masses and ensure that they were available to serve as an unskilled labour reservoir that would provide cheap labour for the enrichment of the white minority.

It is out of this reality that the ANC was born. It was formed to advance the national interests of all the oppressed, regardless of distinctions of race, class and gender.

At the same time, our movement knew that the democratic revolution would also serve the fundamental interests of the white working people, who had been bribed by the colonial and racist power with the specific purpose to separate them from the black majority and use them, against their own long-term interests, as storm troopers to suppress the rebellion of the black majority.

In the "State and Social Transformation" document of 1996, we said, "However, there is a need to recognise that the South African democratic state also has the responsibility to attend to the concerns of the rest of the population which is not necessarily part of the majority defined above.

The objective reality in our country is that the National Democratic Revolution cannot succeed if it does not contain among its motive forces our country's socialist, trade union and civic movements.

To the extent that the democratic state is objectively interested in a stable democracy, so it cannot avoid the responsibility to ensure the establishment of a social order concerned with the genuine interests of the people as a whole, regardless of their racial, national, gender and class differentiation. There can be no stable democracy unless the democratic state attends to the concerns of the people as a whole and takes responsibility for the evolution of the new society."

This defined the tasks of the ANC, and what we had to do to ensure that the masses of our people benefited from the victory of the democratic revolution.

And indeed, the democratic revolution has brought enormous benefits to all sections of our population, starting with the complex of democratic rights guaranteed by the

Constitution adopted by the Constitutional Assembly in 1996, the laws we have adopted since 1994, and the decisions taken by our courts.

In this context I would like to mention such important issues as:

- the responsibility of the members and structures of our movement and the broad democratic movement to defend the democratic state and its institutions
- respect for the institutions of the democratic state by members and supporters of our movement
- respect for the institutions of the democratic state and public property owned by the people as a whole, during the exercise of the entrenched democratic right to engage in public demonstrations
- the use of force during public demonstrations and mass protests resulting in such unacceptable actions as violent assaults against the people, intimidation in various forms, looting and destruction of property
- the deepening of popular participation in governance through such interventions as the Ward Committee system and the Izimbizo process
- the constituency work of our public representatives at national, provincial and local levels, and its relevance to the process of democratisation
- the place of civic street committees and similar structures, as well as non-governmental and community-based organisations in the process of deepening our democracy
- the concerns raised by the media about restrictions to the freedom of the press, as well as issues that relate to the responsibility and public accountability of the media
- the full integration of the institution of traditional government within our democratic system of governance.

Necessarily, therefore, the Policy Conference will have to assess the policy positions that have informed our activities since 1994.

Necessarily, therefore, the Policy Conference will have to assess the policy positions that have informed our activities since 1994, focused on:

- the growth and development of our economy
- the more equitable sharing of the national wealth
- the reduction of the inherited and persisting racial, gender and class disparities in the distribution of income and wealth
- employment creation and poverty eradication
- and the provision of a comprehensive and sustainable social security net.

All of us know, and our movement and government have made it a point constantly to remind all our people, that we still have a long way to go before we achieve one of the central goals of the national democratic revolution: the

realisation of a better life for all our people, on a sustainable basis. In this regard, we have pointed to the challenge posed by unacceptably high levels of structural unemployment, persisting endemic poverty, and underdevelopment that affect many of our urban and rural areas.

We have generated public sector resources that have helped enormously to cushion millions of our people from the terrible impact of abject poverty. This includes our capacity to empower our people to set themselves up as independent producers, not forced to bow to the will of the major owners of capital in our country and the rest of the world.

We have increased the social wage, to improve the quality of life of our working people and reduce their absolute dependence on the proceeds of wage labour. We have responded to this challenge in a manner that is sustainable, not governed by any short-term considerations.

I must state and restate this fundamental truth with absolutely no hesitation, that objectively and practically, it is not possible to solve problems that have accumulated over 350 years in the mere 13 years of our democracy.

In this context, the issue of the relationship between the national democratic and the socialist revolutions has been raised once again.

There is a distinct, material and historically-determined difference between the national democratic and the socialist revolutions. Objectively, and not by proclamation or conference resolutions, the ANC necessarily serves as the leader of the forces committed to the victory of the National Democratic Revolution, which struggle for the realisation of the national democratic goals of the masses of our people.

For many decades already, our movement, the African National Congress, precisely because it accepted and supported the right of our people to choose their path of development, accepted the proposition that our ally, the SACP, and not the ANC, would lead the forces and the struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution.

I must emphasise this again today, as we begin our Policy Conference, that the ANC would respect any decision by the masses of our people that, rather than the national democratic revolution, they prefer to support and pursue a socialist revolution.

Equally, the ANC would respect the right and duty of our ally, the South African Communist Party, to lead the struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution. Our movement has never stopped or discouraged the SACP from playing this role, and will not do so today or tomorrow.

Historically, the ANC has deeply appreciated the fact that over the decades, the SACP has defined itself as an integral part of the national liberation movement, of our movement

committed to the victory of the National Democratic Revolution, and therefore accepted that, objectively, the ANC must serve as the leader of the NDR.

For many decades, the SACP has therefore not seen and acted against the ANC as its political competitor, which we are not.

I must also add this, that already during the 1940s, if not earlier, our movement recognised the strategic position that our working class occupied and would occupy in our economy, in our society, and in all our struggles to achieve the victory of the National Democratic Revolution.

To speak about the motive forces of the National Democratic Revolution was to speak of the working class as a leading echelon in the struggle for national liberation, which would also organise and fight for its interests in terms of higher wages and better working conditions, and a role in determining the future of our country.

The objective reality in our country is that the National Democratic Revolution cannot succeed if it does not contain among its motive forces our country's socialist, trade union and civic movements.

The objective reality in our country is that the trade union and civic movements cannot achieve the goals they pursue

if the National Democratic Revolution does not succeed in its objectives.

The objective reality in our country is that the victory of the socialist revolution cannot be achieved outside the context of the victory of the National Democratic Revolution.

The ANC remains committed to what, necessarily, will be a protracted struggle for the victory of the National Democratic Revolution, that, objectively, will continue to demand that the ANC discharges its obligation to lead the entirety of the democratic movement.

And indeed the objective reality in our country is that, in the same way that the defeat of the apartheid regime would not have been possible without the ANC, so would it not be possible to construct the new South Africa without the ANC.

This important Policy Conference must itself also be characterised by a festival of ideas, producing the rich complex of policies that will confirm to the people that their movement, the ANC, indeed remains a trusted leader, a loyal servant of the people, a true agent for such change as will enable the masses of our people fully to realise their aspirations.

Amandla!

EXTRACTS FROM THE SPEECH TO CLOSE THE ANC POLICY CONFERENCE

30 June 2007, Gallagher Estate, Midrand

I would like to remind all of us of a critical requirement in terms of our democratic processes – the requirement for all members to respect and abide by the majority decisions adopted during our meetings.

Our movement is deeply interested that everybody, including our members, our supporters and the population at large should have the possibility and right freely to express their opinions. We will continue to defend this right, and its practical expression, even if it results in the enunciation of views contrary to our own as a movement.

In this regard I have no hesitation in saying that our movement has no equal among the political formations in our country in terms of democratic participation and widespread consultation in the formulation of its policies.

We will continue further to entrench this rich tradition which we must sustain as we continue to enhance our

character as a parliament of the people. However, all of us must all understand that, as members, we have both rights and obligations.

I have no hesitation in saying that our movement has no equal among the political formations in our country in terms of democratic participation and widespread consultation in the formulation of its policies.

Our leadership and I feel privileged that over the last four days we have had the possibility to listen to you, dear comrades, as you discussed the challenging and interesting questions we must discuss, to find the right answers to the critical question we must answer together, relating to the

aspirations of the masses of our people and the obligations of our movement to these masses – what is to be done! You must continue to play your role as genuine leaders of the African National Congress. Accordingly:

- you must continue to have the courage to think independently
- you must take the necessary steps to acquire the skills the democratic revolution needs, and work to ensure that this revolution has the necessary and growing number of people committed to the victory of the democratic revolution, even within the limited space of their professions and skills
- where necessary, you must identify what is wrong and oppose it, without fear or favour
- at all times, you must act in a manner consistent with your principles and your consciences
- at all times, you must remain loyal to the goal of serving the masses of our people, and
- at all times, you must refuse to succumb to what might, at any particular moment, present itself as genuinely a popular view, simply because it was a popular view, regardless of whether, objectively, it serves the interests of the people.

At all times, you must act in a manner consistent with your principles and your consciences.

I will mention only some of the matters on which you have decided our movement must focus, which I believe our National Conference will endorse. These are:

- propagating and entrenching in our society the values of *ubuntu/botho* to enhance the human dignity of all our people

- using the process of place name changes to pay tribute to the midwives and architects of our freedom, enhance the dignity of the formerly oppressed, celebrate diversity, and mobilise all our people to unite around the process of building national cohesion and a common patriotism
- enhancing the safety and security of all our people, by vigorously responding to crimes of violence, including the violence experienced by women, children and the elderly, corruption, and drug and alcohol abuse
- reviewing our system of governance significantly to increase its capacity properly to respond to its central task to meet our development imperatives
- strengthening the capacity of the state to generate the financial and other resources to support industrial development, the development of the SMMEs and the co-operatives, and the empowerment of women and the youth
- increasing our attention to education, health and child poverty in our continuing struggle against poverty and underdevelopment
- elaborating a comprehensive rural development strategy, focusing on women's development
- assessing our energy mix, bearing in mind our economic and social requirements, and our response to the challenge of climate change
- contributing to the strengthening of SADC, the AU and Nepad.

Dear comrades, once more and on behalf of our National Executive Committee, I would like to thank you for the important work you did this morning and the preceding three days, the vigour and openness of the debates in which you engaged, and the affirmation of the unity of our movement.

Amandla!

THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE FORTHCOMING SEMINAR

BY BEN TUROK

Minister of Provincial and Local Government Sydney Mufamadi has agreed to host a high-level seminar to try to achieve a consensus on the most useful characterisation of the “developmental state” for South Africa at this stage of our development. Papers are being commissioned and will be published in New Agenda. The seminar, to be held in October, is sponsored by the Human Sciences Research

Council, the Development Bank of South Africa and the United Nations Development Programme.

The concept of a “developmental state” has gained substantial currency in South Africa. It features strongly in the ANC policy documents for 2007, including “Economic Transformation for a National Democratic Society” and

“Strategy and Tactics”. Although the idea has also been raised in many earlier papers, there is no agreed characterisation and it is given a variety of meanings depending on the ideological bent of the user.

Most statements on the developmental state commonly assume a mixed economy, a strong state, and state intervention in the economy. It is also generally agreed that, in South Africa, the developmental state has to address dualism in the economy and polity. This involves an examination of the reasons for the survival of a “structural fault” and dualism, even after the abolition of the extra-economic coercion of labour and the bantustan policies of apartheid.

It is also generally agreed that, however successfully we deal with the first economy, this will not automatically trickle down to the second economy, however defined. Indeed, there is a concern that modernising our economy to make it more competitive could widen the gulf between rich and poor, as has happened in other developing countries. We therefore have to distinguish between measures taken by the developmental state to boost the first economy and measures in the second economy.

Possible developmental state action in the first economy could include:

- the establishment of a Central Planning Commission
- modernising instruments, especially technology
- strong state-led investment
- rigorous coordination within the organs of government, including parastatals, development finance institutions, development agencies and research institutions
- state regulation of parastatals and private sector
- state incentives for private sector industry
- cooperation with the private sector
- state-sponsored training
- state-sponsored research and development.

Developmental state action in the second economy could include:

- economic intervention in underdeveloped rural areas, including assistance for farming in good quality arable land
- support for SMMEs in townships and former homelands
- employment promotion through state programmes, such as the extended public works programme (EPWP), Working for Water, etc.
- social grants for pensioners, people with disabilities, child support, etc.
- major efforts to strengthen social capital
- support for community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

ARTICULATE CRITERIA FOR CHOICE

However, an essential feature of the developmental state is strategy and prioritisation. Each of the above cannot have the same priority. *To plan is to choose!*

Choosing is often highly controversial, as choices are dependent on ideological preferences and sectional interests.

Government departments fight for their advantage, as do many other actors in the public arena. From the “State of the Nation” address and various other important policy-setting statements, it would appear that unemployment, poverty and inequality are national priorities to be addressed.

As indicated above, no matter how successful we are in boosting the first economy, this alone will not be adequate in addressing unemployment, poverty and inequality, due to the legacy of apartheid. Account must also be taken that the distinction between employment and unemployment is somewhat artificial in a developing country, where we find self-employment, partial employment, underemployment, and unquantified and unpaid work at home and in the community.

The realisation of our potential requires, above all, a coherent, logical strategy and framework to guide all the different initiatives and ensure that they complement one another.

In order to deal with second economy issues, we offer the following definition: “The second economy is a metaphor for the peripheral parts of South Africa’s economy, located mainly in the urban townships and rural areas, in a process of underdevelopment created under apartheid. It has resulted in a population of millions of people who are unable to find a place in the formal economy due to a lack of assets and opportunities, and unable to generate self-sustaining development. They are therefore forced to survive by means of informal trading, survivalist activities, family remittances and social grants, in a condition of dependency.”

Government statements on poverty suggest that the poor should be assisted to work their way out of poverty through income generating activity. To do this, they need skills development, training, physical resources, social capital, finance, infrastructure, market access and many other support services. The developmental state will have to do an audit of current provisions and ensure that priorities are set and gaps filled.

We are all aware that South Africa has a very favourable financial base in the budget at present. Perhaps the discussion on the developmental state can help guide the use of these assets to unlock the productive potential throughout the economy.

The realisation of our potential requires, above all, a coherent, logical strategy and framework to guide all the different initiatives and ensure that they complement one another. This needs the commitment of all our state institutions, governmental departments in all three spheres of the state, parastatals, development finance institutions, development agencies and development research institutions, among others.

A CHOICE OF CHANGE: SOCIAL SAFETY NET OR COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

The author is associate professor in the department of social development at the University of Cape Town

BY VIVIENE TAYLOR



Simon Mathabula © Sunday Times

South Africa is at a crossroads when it comes to the realisation of the socio-economic rights of all, especially the working poor and those who are outside of the labour market. The choice of change lies between reinforcing a residual, narrow safety net approach to poverty alleviation or taking decisive policy and programme action to implement comprehensive social protection measures that address structural unemployment and the multiple dimensions of poverty.

Thirteen years into our democracy, the need for a paradigmatic shift from a social safety net to comprehensive social protection has resurfaced. Recommendations made in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security (Taylor Report, 2002) have spurred debates on the appropriateness of a comprehensive social

protection system. Terms or concepts such as social security, social assistance and social protection have underlying values and beliefs that inform the choices made by decision makers on whose needs matter and under what conditions. This article discusses the implications of recent shifts in thinking on such issues.

DEFINING TERMS

Historically, social security gained formal recognition in 1944 when the International Labour Conference saw it as the (right to a) "basic income for all in need of such protection and comprehensive medical care". Today, the term *social security* can cover a range of income support measures, including privately provided pensions, contributory social insurance systems administered by governments or general tax-funded government social assistance payments. Social security measures, especially of the private contributory kind (based on agreements between employers and employees) are typical of industrial countries where there is virtually full employment. Based on social accords negotiated between workers and employers and regulated by governments, these measures cover temporary hardships that individuals experience during their life cycle. This form of social security assumes full employment of the working age population and characterises the welfare states of industrial Europe. Social security provisions in such states are an acknowledgement that capitalist market-based economies can fail people and, therefore, a safety net in the form of social security is necessary.

The Taylor Committee argued that it is not possible to adopt such a model of social security in South Africa or developing economies. First, individuals cannot contribute to social insurance payments if they are not in paid work. In the context of high and persistent levels of unemployment, chronic poverty and growing informal work, such as in South Africa, social security or a "safety net" is not a viable option, since it excludes the majority of poverty-stricken unemployed. Second, government social assistance benefits are extended to poor unemployed individuals in a residual, safety net fashion. In this way, such benefits essentially seek to ameliorate the difficulties of those who cannot get paid work because of ill health, disability or other factors not related to structural conditions.

South Africa, because of structurally-based inequalities and chronic poverty, requires a more active social protection system. Such a system must have the potential to contribute to asset redistribution and include measures to address the structural basis of poverty and social exclusion. Growing unemployment and casualisation of work, deepening and widening poverty, macroeconomic shocks and financial volatility, the HIV/AIDS crisis and other disasters require more than a social safety net.

Social protection measures provide minimum standards of well-being to people in dire circumstances, enabling them to live with dignity. Adopting such measures would require social consensus on what constitutes minimum standards to protect the vital core of all human lives. Social protection is not a residual policy function that assures the welfare of the poorest as a last resort. As a policy alternative, it recognises that economic and financial crises and shocks are part of the global economy that affects all parts of the working population. Social policies must therefore include measures to safeguard the middle classes, as well as the working poor and those without paid work, from the risk of falling into poverty. As a policy option, social protection measures can become a foundation at a societal level for promoting social justice and social cohesion, developing human capabilities and promoting economic dynamism and creativity. It incorporates options that respond to absolute deprivation and the vulnerabilities of the poorest. Importantly, social protection can also include responses to those who experience transient crises and insecurity because of downside economic and political risks. (See, for instance, Taylor Report, 2002 and the Report of the Commission on Human Security, 2003).

Social protection should not simply be seen as a residual policy function of assuring the welfare of the poorest – but as a foundation at a societal level for promoting social justice and social cohesion, developing human capabilities and promoting economic dynamism and creativity.

This understanding of social protection fits well with the thinking that informed the reconstruction and development process in the post-1990 policy era in South Africa. The language used in South Africa's White Paper on Social Welfare as well as Education and Health policy frameworks cohere with the Commission on Social Development's when it notes that:

The ultimate purpose of social protection is to increase capabilities and opportunities and, thereby, human development. Social protection aims at providing at least minimum standards of well-being to people in dire

circumstances, enabling them to live with dignity. Social protection should not simply be seen as a residual policy function of assuring the welfare of the poorest – but as a foundation at a societal level for promoting social justice and social cohesion, developing human capabilities and promoting economic dynamism and creativity". (United Nations Commission on Social Development, 2000:12)

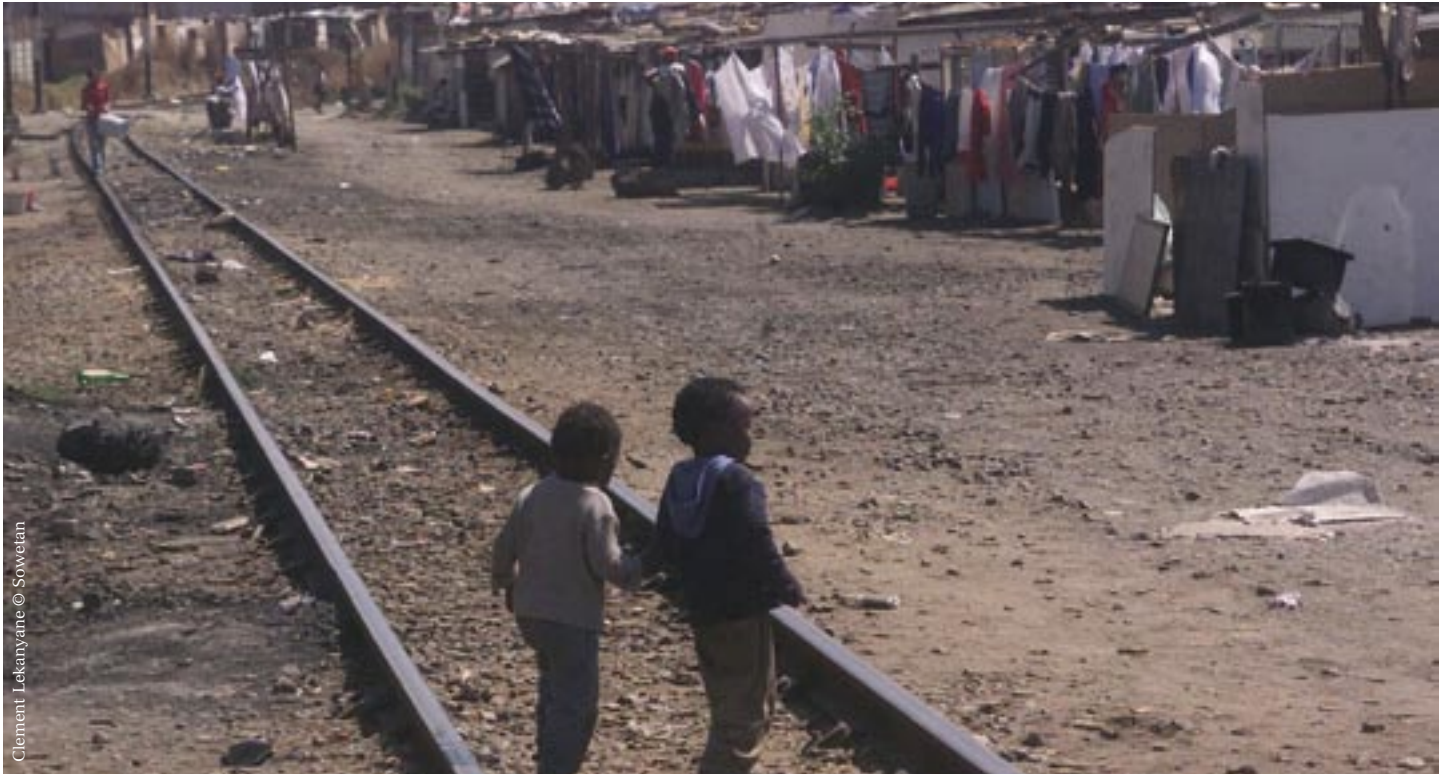
The South African Constitution, the social and economic context of extreme hardship and deprivations of the majority, and increasing levels of inequality, all support the case for a comprehensive social protection system. Importantly, the South African Constitution, adopted in 1996, mandates the right of access to health care, food, water and social security under Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights. Specifically, Section 27 (1) (c) states that everyone has the right of access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, "appropriate social assistance". Subsection 27 (2) states that: "The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights".

The progressive realisation of socio-economic rights contained in the Constitution distinguishes South Africa as a developmental state. In the absence of the realisation of such rights, South Africa becomes a neo-liberal market-driven capitalist state in danger of promoting an unsustainable model of development that widens inequality and entrenches poverty. The social and economic rights in the Constitution also provide the basis for South Africans to hold the government to account and to challenge orthodox economic thinking that economic growth on its own is a sufficient condition to address poverty. Using the constitutional mandate, even within a neo-liberal economic framework, it is possible to ensure equity with economic growth by introducing a comprehensive system of social protection that provides minimum guarantees for social and economic redress.

While the constitution provides support for extending the social security system, a political mandate also exists for the extension of social security. In 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) campaigned for political power under an election manifesto that included "welfare rights for all". The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) policy framework of the ANC launched that same year identified a main goal of a developmental social welfare programme as:

the attainment of basic social welfare rights for all South Africans, irrespective of race, colour, religion, gender or physical disability, through the establishment of a democratically-determined, just and effective social delivery system (RDP 1994: 2.13.4.1).

The South African government clearly has the firm historical base, the political mandate and the constitutional and normative imperatives to expand the social security system to provide comprehensive social protection to all. Moreover, the socio-economic context illuminates the disparities that exist and that require a comprehensive approach: one



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that includes short-, medium- and long-term interventions that are able to address structural as well as symptomatic social problems. In addressing the inequities of the past and moving to a non-racial democratic and equitable system of social welfare, South Africa has a sound base on which to build. The task of constructing a social protection system that is responsive to chronic poverty and social inequality is both financially feasible and institutionally essential.

Limited reforms to the South African government's social assistance programme have resulted in the extension of the Child Support Grant to children up to 14 years of age living in poverty and a grant for HIV/AIDS patients. Other government-funded social grants or cash transfers include foster care grants, disability grants, care dependency grants, social old age pensions and grants for war veterans. These income support measures are part of a means-tested, non-contributory, tax-funded system of social grants. According to Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's 2006 Budget speech, the South African government social assistance programme provides social grants to over 10 million citizens.

Despite these limited reforms, the extent and depth of poverty and unemployment in South Africa means that there are significant gaps in the system. Millions of poor workerless households living in destitution remain outside the social security system or safety net. Social protection would address these gaps by linking policy interventions designed to address deprivations in health, education, services and income.

SOME DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES: THE EXCLUDED MAJORITY

South Africa's population was estimated at 46.9 million in 2005. Approximately 57 percent of the population live under

the poverty line (Human Science Research Council, 2004; cited in Di Lollo, 2006). There are "skip generation" households in South Africa because of AIDS. Such households may have children and a grandparent (the parents are absent because of AIDS) or households with just children (skipping both generations – parents and grandparents).

Described as a middle-income developing country, South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is comparable to nations such as Poland, Chile and Costa Rica. Income per head says very little about the quality of human life in any one country. On the Human Development Index (HDI), South Africa is ranked at 120 – lower than the occupied Palestinian Territories. The drop in South Africa's HDI may relate to the AIDS epidemic: these results at least suggest that poverty related to income, assets and services has not improved in South Africa. As Butler (2004) notes, the share of the poorest half of households in national income fell from 11.4 percent in 1995 to 9.7 percent in 2002.

Given the level of macroeconomic stability, economic growth trends and budget surplus, the issue is not that South Africa does not have the means to address the demographic challenges and poverty. The key issue is one of distributive justice and fairness. Addressing poverty is necessary for sustainable economic growth, and reducing inequality is central to conflict prevention and democratisation. The crucial question is what proportion of the benefits of economic growth reaches the poorest of the poor: unless a larger proportion of the benefits of economic growth reach the poorest, inequality and poverty will persist.

Besides population growth, health and education trends, unemployment is a key feature of South Africa's demography.

Structural unemployment and poverty are persistent and growing problems. Statistics South Africa estimated that unemployment was at 26.7 percent in September 2005 (up slightly from 26.2 percent in 2004), according to the “official” definition of unemployment. This definition includes only those who were actively seeking work in the seven-day period prior to the survey. An expanded and more precise measure of unemployment includes *all* those who are available for work but were too discouraged to look for it in the previous seven days. Using this definition, the rate would be at least 40 percent.

One argument against government income support (social grants) for the poor is that it is a disincentive to work. Indeed, Trevor Manuel stated, “People must learn to work instead of living on handouts.” (*Cape Times* 27 Oct 2005) Yet with close to 40 percent of the working age population not able to get work, such an argument is without basis.

In contrast to the government’s expressed approach of restraining social security growth, a significantly expanded uptake of grants in recent years has helped to relieve extreme poverty, especially in poor households with children under 14 years. As important as these interventions are, the challenges of equity, poverty reduction and sustainable development continue to remain themes of post-apartheid processes of transformation. Government rhetoric must be understood against its explicit policy direction of curbing social grant expenditures – even though research evidence from the International Poverty Centre shows cash grants to be the most efficient and direct means of reducing absolute levels of deprivation and inequality.

Individuals living in households without any social grant recipients and without any income are close to 10 million. These individuals constitute the excluded majority. Many of them are black, between the ages of 18 and 55 and live in rural and peri-urban areas. Economically and socially disenfranchised, they experience extreme hardship and constitute the greatest risk to South Africa’s democracy.

WHAT DOES COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION OFFER?

Freedoms to enjoy basic income, basic health, basic education, shelter, physical safety, access to clean water and clean air are essential to human well-being (Sen, 1999). When people’s ability to get decent paid work is deeply compromised, together with their freedom, their welfare and security contracts. Chronic poverty, growing inequality, unemployment and the impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic impose the greatest hardships on people and increase their vulnerability to the new risks that result from processes of economic globalisation.

A comprehensive approach to social protection focuses on creating the institutional capacity to deliver adequate social assistance and social services that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity. Together with basic income and resources, the freedoms to enjoy basic education and basic health, at a minimum, are vital to the attainment of people’s security. Access to these

essential resources empowers people to make better choices and fend for themselves in times of crises. South Africa’s unemployed, lacking the skill and knowledge base to engage in entrepreneurial activity and work that can generate income, are denied the minimum economic resources to develop themselves and live with dignity.

The task of constructing a social protection system that is responsive to chronic poverty and social inequality is both financially feasible and institutionally essential.

Comprehensive social protection would seek to provide the basic means for all people to effectively participate and advance in social and economic life, and in turn to contribute to social and economic development. It incorporates developmental strategies and programmes designed to ensure, collectively, at least a minimum acceptable living standard for all citizens. It embraces the traditional measures of social insurance, social assistance and social services. It also goes beyond these to address causes of poverty and inequality through an integrated policy approach that includes many developmental initiatives such as income support through cash transfers, housing subsidies, food subsidies and government-guaranteed work programmes.

Countries in the south with social and economic conditions comparable to South Africa are adopting social protection measures to address large-scale poverty and inequality. Take, for instance, Brazil’s *Bolsa Familia* programme that provides monthly cash grants for food and reaches eight million of the poorest families. Positive social returns on this programme show increases in participation rates in schooling and community activities. India’s recent National Rural Employment Guarantee programme provides every rural household with 100 days of guaranteed employment at the legal minimum wage, or an allowance if work is not available within 15 days of registration. The Indian state has an enforceable obligation to provide employment to anyone willing to take it. The guarantee applies to unskilled manual labour and is set to reach some 40 million families who remain outside of India’s economic boom. This programme provides a universal entitlement to employment on demand and has a number of social and economic multiplier effects. South Africa has much to learn from the Brazilian and Indian experiences.

Economic security is one important means by which people respond to the present and future insecurities of life. Analysing economic security in terms of its impact on lives, rather than on national aggregates, highlights the link between economic and human security. South Africans are increasingly at risk as labour markets evolve and global markets extend. No longer is it sufficient to be a reliable and industrious worker; a shudder in the national or regional economy can have wrenching effects across entire societies.

Since formal sector employment may never become the norm that it is in the welfare states of Europe, why should developing economies adopt a model of social security that excludes vast numbers of people who do not have access to paid work? Recent studies make cogent arguments for a comprehensive approach to work and rights within the context of countries such as South Africa (Sen, 2000; Standing, 2002).

Emphasising the promotion of “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”, Sen (2000: 120) asserts that this goal includes “all workers” irrespective of their sectors, whether they are waged or unwaged, unregulated or self-regulated or home workers. Furthering this analysis, he states that a comprehensive approach to social protection would ensure that different parts of the working population, whose fortunes do not always move together, get equal treatment with the interests and demands of other groups. The demands and gains achieved, for example, by organised workers, should not be “traded off” against the needs of the unemployed, underemployed and unorganised informal sector.

Fears raised by policy-makers about the financial sustainability of social grants do not come with any proven alternatives that offer pathways out of poverty for poor households. Despite considerable fiscal space to expand

social protection and increase social provisions to the poorest, the idea that the poor are undeserving of assistance dominates. Indeed, the belief that tax breaks and other incentives to the private sector and upper- and middle-income earners would generate savings and investments and grow the economy prevails. Yet programmes such as *Oportunidades* in Mexico, which gives cash to the female heads of some five million households every two months for sending their children to school and attending health clinics, are increasing in countries of the south. South African policy-makers need to draw on such experiences, rather than succumb to the influences of former welfare states of Europe that are curbing welfare spending under conservative neo-liberal state regimes.

Some of the notions that have been used internationally to justify large social security retrenchments, especially in the industrialised north, and that form the basis of the belief in “welfare dependency” have, in recent years, surfaced in the public discourse on social security in South Africa (Di Lollo, 2006). The irony is that policy makers in South Africa use arguments of conservative governments in former welfare states of the industrial north as a basis to discount income support programmes to poor households.

POVERTY AND SOCIAL POLICY IN DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

Wide-scale civil society mobilisation, reinforced by resolutions of the 50th National Conference of the African National Congress (ANC) in Mafikeng in 2002, has, to a limited extent, seen South Africa cautiously going against the international social policy trends of northern industrial countries. The Mafikeng Conference resolved that redressing poverty and inequalities is to be a central focus, and that the government and other sectors of society would strive to meet the basic needs of the under-privileged through the development of a comprehensive social security system using the Taylor Report as a basis.

As a consequence, the South African government has gradually expanded rather than contracted its social security system. Yet, when we contrast South Africa with comparable countries in the global south, such as Brazil and India, we find that it has not made significant social policy shifts to balance economic and social goals. The South African government’s draft ten-year review document affirmed the effectiveness of social grants in reducing poverty, particularly extreme poverty. At the same time, however, the report notes that roughly one-third of households live below the poverty line. A full 39 percent of the adult population, who do not qualify for any social grants, continue to have no access to a sustainable livelihood.

In October 2004, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel issued a warning that the country could not sustain its spending on welfare and social security, estimated at R308 billion over the next three financial years. Moreover, the national treasury was particularly concerned about the rise in the number of disability grants and foster care grants. (An uptake in grants in particular may be partially due to more adults becoming disabled because of AIDS-related illnesses, and



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more children becoming orphaned because of AIDS deaths (Di Lollo, 2006).

Welfare reform based on cutting back rights in many industrialised countries accompanies efforts to strengthen incentives to work. One can argue that in such countries, where there is close to full employment, the assumption is that jobs are readily available for those who are able to seek them. In some former welfare states, social security options are becoming less attractive, and the conditions attached to income support more onerous, so that recipients will enter work programmes.

Millions of poor workerless households living in destitution remain outside the social security system or safety net.

Recent statements by the ANC and the government attribute proposals for income support measures to address poverty and inequality as having their basis in a “welfare state ideology”, rather than that of a developmental state (ANC Social Transformation Policy Discussion Document, 2007). This is inaccurate and serves to undermine evidence-based research proposals that draw on experiences from countries in, for example, Latin America and South East Asia. The proposals contained in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security (2002) have their basis in a developmental and human rights approach to social protection and take account of South Africa’s history of apartheid and social and economic contexts. The Report clearly acknowledges that South Africa is not likely to move towards full employment, because of the material conditions of the poorest and the changes in production processes internationally, due to economic globalisation processes and new information technologies.

Full employment is a key assumption of welfare states in the industrial north and “back to work” incentives may have positive outcomes because paid work is available. Examining the intellectual origins of the notion of “welfare dependency,” some researchers note that international discourse in support of welfare retraction is founded on the belief that welfare itself *causes* dependency – and consequently causes unemployment and poverty. Policy makers are inclined to believe that welfare reform needs to focus on changing the *behaviour* of welfare recipients.

For example, a main fear of the American government under Roosevelt in the 1930s was that people would develop a mindset that divorces work from income. As a result, the government favoured massive public works schemes, rather than programmes to guarantee a basic income. As Di Lollo (2006) argues, South African policy options to counter welfare dependency have their basis in similar assumptions, including faith in the role of public works programmes to provide ample employment, and an ideological commitment to a residual (“safety net”)

welfare system, rather than social protection as a right of citizenship.

According to the national department of public works (NDPW), the objectives of community-based public works programmes (CBPWP) include:

- creating short-term employment opportunities for community members through the construction of public assets
- creating sustainable employment opportunities by facilitating micro-business opportunities (NDPW 2005:1).

Evaluating the success of the CBPWP in creating jobs, McCord (2003) found that it was extremely limited. Moreover, she notes, the programme as it stands is not likely to achieve the wider set of social development and economic objectives. The short-term nature of employment offered under public works programmes means that wages tend to function as a “short-term income shock” (McCord, 2004:1), rather than leading to longer-term sustained benefits and livelihoods.

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), launched in 2004, focuses on infrastructure for social, environmental and economic work activities. The faith of the national government in the EPWP as a job-creation mechanism is underlined by the fact that it has the only reference to job creation in the national government’s Programme of Action. President Mbeki’s confidence in the EPWP to act not only as a major generator of jobs, but as an alternative to dependency on social grants, is illustrated by his comments to *ThisDay*, 12 November 2003: “A million people will get jobs over the next five years because of dramatically expanded public works programme... The programme will help people move off social grants and into public employment.”

The South African government is implementing an approach that is effective in economies of developed countries where unemployment tends to be cyclical. Such an approach cannot address unskilled unemployment as if it were a transitory problem. Public works programmes, as currently envisaged in South Africa, are utterly unsuited to an economy characterised by chronic structural unemployment. In most countries of the industrial north, an unemployed person who is actively seeking work, but has no other means to support him or herself (for example, when his or her unemployment insurance runs out) is usually able to claim a basic income benefit. No such public benefit is part of the South African national social grant system, which targets cash transfers to poor people who are either AIDS orphans under 16 years of age, elderly or incapacitated for work.

The government’s Ten Year Review acknowledges that public works are not as efficient as social grants in alleviating poverty. The same review, however, identifies a key challenge over the second decade of democracy as reducing the number of people dependent on grants. How such dependency manifests and what it entails never seem to be elaborated by the government. The identification of a policy goal to reduce the number of people supposedly dependent on grants creates the impression that benefits are available



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as an alternative to work, and that enough waged work is available to absorb those who are willing to search for it. Such an approach serves to entrench the misconception that public works programmes are an adequate and available alternative to social grants, rather than a complementary measure. Moreover, such thinking serves to shift the public debate away from the need to transform the existing social security system. Instead, it results in advocacy to defend an inadequate and limited system in the face of further reductions to public welfare.

Since formal sector employment may never become the norm that it is in the welfare states of Europe, why should developing economies adopt a model of social security that excludes vast numbers of people who do not have access to paid work?

Coleman (2003:126) warns against using public works programmes as an “ideological tool” against the expansion of the social security system that necessarily involves “extolling the dignity of labour” and the need for the “poor to pull themselves up by their bootstraps.” Others argue that, apart from severe problems of job rationing, public works programmes create dependency in and of themselves (Meth, 2004; Di Lollo, 2006). Supporting this assertion, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) Commission on Social Security (2005) found:

“Public works programmes have created dependency and, when the programmes are terminated, it creates misery for the people who are dependent on them.”

The EPWP is based on the residual notion that any work is better than social security support, rather than the notion that the work and social security support can and should coexist to prevent poverty. However, the EPWP has only delivered between 100 000 and 200 000 short-term jobs per year (McCord, 2004). Proportionally speaking, the programmes have very few opportunities for the millions of South Africans who require jobs, and fail to move those relatively few who have participated out of poverty.

THE CHOICE OF A RESIDUAL “SAFETY NET” WELFARE SYSTEM

The residual model of social welfare is coercive in its approach to welfare consumers, highly selective in its targeting of services and minimalist in its actual level of support (Di Lollo, 2006). South Africa’s social grant system mirrors some aspects of the residual approach and the current rhetoric shows a closer alignment with this approach. Statements by government representatives on the need to “move people off” social grants, and sentiments emphasising the clear distinction between “work” and social grants, demonstrate an ideological preference for the residual approach.

This approach, used by conservative governments in developed economies, also assumes that institutions of the market, the family and society are intact and are functioning at their optimal levels. The majority of South Africa’s poor have suffered the wanton breakdown of their families as a result of migrant labour and the state-based violence of the apartheid system and have been denied access to economic

opportunities through a flawed education system and racial job reservation. Such structural problems require strong state intervention through comprehensive social protection measures.

Coleman (2003:134) argues that technocrats interpret the ANC's commitment to a "comprehensive social security system" to mean a consolidation of the existing highly selective and limited system, rather than a comprehensive overhaul. Proponents of the residual approach to social welfare do not focus on those who are not receiving any cash or in kind benefits. *These people are either undeserving or have a problem that they can correct.* The residual approach would see support for the unemployed or low-income working families as tantamount to undermining labour force participation. Yet recent research shows that, in households with social grant recipients, the income becomes *de facto* poverty grants and enables people to survive in extreme poverty as well as encourages entrepreneurship.

Individuals living in households without any social grant recipients and without any income are close to 10 million. These individuals constitute the excluded majority. Economically and socially disenfranchised, they experience extreme hardship and constitute the greatest risk to South Africa's democracy.

A residual safety net approach is inherently inappropriate for the situation in South Africa because it assumes, among other things, that:

- unemployment is a transient phenomena
- a full-time worker's earnings are sufficient to support a family
- most people will be able to make private provision (such as taking out insurance policies) for such eventualities as sudden unemployment, illness or disability.

Such assumptions are fallacious in South Africa.

MAINSTREAM SOCIAL POLICY DISCOURSE

The increasing public discourse around "welfare dependency" identified by many researchers became even more apparent with the release of the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Comprehensive Social Security for South Africa in 2002. A core recommendation of the report was the establishment of a Basic Income Grant (BIG) for all South Africans.

In opposing BIG, Agriculture Minister Thoko Didiza made the comment that "the possibility of such a grant creating dependency should be considered". Joel Netshitenzhe, a senior government official, noted at the time that government was moving towards "a rather different philosophy" to that underlying the Committee of Enquiry's report, and noted that able-bodied adults "should enjoy the dignity of work" rather than having to rely on social grants. This statement

reflects the view that receiving a social benefit is somehow "undignified." This kind of aspersion contributes significantly to the development of the dependency stereotype and other negative stereotypes.

Coleman (2003:122) argues that the use of the term "dignity of work" in this context is "pure ideology". He notes that the reality of the South African situation is that millions of poor people have access neither to a social security safety net nor to the prospect of steady, formal employment. For them, the rhetoric of "enjoy(ing) the dignity of work" is meaningless and even cruel. The belief that social grants cause dependency is further emphasised by the government treating social grants and employment options as if they are (or at least should be) mutually exclusive. An underlying notion, implied in this supposed dichotomy, is that people in paid work will earn enough to protect themselves from poverty and not require any social assistance. Yet, a reality for millions of South Africans, particularly those working in the informal sector, is that being engaged in full-time income-generating activity is not enough to guarantee a decent living. As Di Lollo (2006) argues, the "dignity of work" notion constructs the receipt of social grants as the problem, rather than the existence of the recipient's poverty itself. This suggests that *any work at any pay* is preferable to receipt of a social grant. The aim implicit in this thinking is to shift people off social grants (or discourage application), rather than to develop and expand measures to combat poverty in both its working and non-working forms.

Fear that some forms of redistribution may have an adverse impact on growth, through their impact on incentives to save, invest or work, has led to government reluctance to expand social security as a part of a redistribution agenda. However, not enough is known about the negative effects of redistributive expenditures to say whether they outweigh the benefits or not. McKay (2004) finds that development approaches that focus on growth may be less successful at achieving development and poverty reduction than those that focus on support. Other recent research (Foster and Szekely 2002) suggests that economic growth benefits the poorest less than it benefits the less poor. They find that a dollar of growth will result in a growth in income of less than a dollar for the poorest and more than a dollar for the richest. At typical growth rates, sustained growth will take a long time to lift the poorest out of poverty without medium-term income-support policy options.

The other issue is what type of economic growth is pro-poor and labour-absorbing. Governmental policies that focus mainly on economic growth are in danger of increasing inequality, unless growth is specifically encouraged in the sectors containing high concentrations of poor people. Where high levels of inequality (particularly asset inequality) occur, this may slow growth down, as it often links to high rates of crime and low levels of personal security. This affects returns on investment, entrepreneurial behaviour and foreign direct investment. High inequality is likely to occur alongside high levels of chronic poverty.

So, reducing inequality does not necessarily damage growth, and failing to tackle high inequality can slow growth down. Social protection policy interventions are not measures that would restrain economic growth, but rather, they constitute a crucial ingredient for sustained economic growth and social development.

ADVANCING A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

In addition to inhibiting the development of a much-needed comprehensive social security system, the promulgation of “dependency” and other negative stereotypes in South Africa seriously undermines, or at least detracts from, the urgent need to ensure higher uptakes of social grants by those who are entitled to them.

Recent statements by the ANC and the government attribute proposals for income support measures to address poverty and inequality as having their basis in a “welfare state ideology”, rather than that of a developmental state. This is inaccurate.

Social protection is intrinsic to human security, and is more appropriate to the South African context than developed economy models of “social security”. For instance, it provides a framework for people doing informal work to gain access to social protection coverage. It also creates the space for integrating existing and proposed social and economic policy interventions, including access to assets, income, services and capabilities, within a conceptual framework more consistent with South Africa’s transformation agenda.

The varied landscapes of economic insecurity provide several points of entry for a comprehensive social protection system:

- first, the commitment to addressing extreme poverty must be a basic policy goal of the government, and not just incidental to economic growth.
- second, it is necessary to provide elementary capabilities to the chronically poor, to workers including the self-employed, to displaced populations, and to persons who are catapulted into sudden poverty. The core capabilities may be roughly the same in all cases, but the mechanisms of empowerment and protection differ considerably. They may include education and training, healthcare, minimum income support and access to basic services.
- third, South Africa’s history and legacy demands that the considerable fiscal space that exists in government (estimated to be in the region of R100 billion) be used to address the immediate crises of income poverty faced by those who have been historically excluded.

Crucially, comprehensive social protection enables the attainment of “positive-sum” policy interventions, rather

than the pursuance of narrow policy trade-offs between social and economic policy objectives. Indeed, by creating greater income security, the poor who are in survivalist and low-income informal work become empowered to risk pursuing higher-return activities (such as investment in education or micro-enterprises) that can break their cycle of poverty. Such activities are critical where informal activities are pervasive, and increasingly represent the typical point of departure for most people’s development. Indeed, there are ways that an integrated and innovative social protection system can deliver more for both objectives, enhancing the prospects for human security.

These wider functions and objectives of social protection are better able to address socially and economically embedded problems and new risks and increased vulnerabilities, and would do much to move us away from a market-fundamentalist approach to people’s development. Social protection could create added potential for integrated and linked private, public and community sector interventions and benefit systems. The central challenge remains one of bringing issues related to poverty and social protection back into the public discourse in ways that can generate real debate and society-wide consensus on how to fulfil the promise of democracy.

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NATIONAL GUN LAWS IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY ADELE KIRSTEN

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GUNS, VIOLENCE AND CRIME

With a single shot to their heads, the ex-mayor of a small provincial town in North West Province killed his wife and their two young children. He then committed suicide. On the night of 2 September 2006, Andries Jaycee Nxamakele of Jouberton, Klerksdorp, used his licensed pistol to kill his wife, Nokhaya, his son, Nkululeko (6), and his daughter Sabelo (5). They all died at the scene. Nxamakele, who had been mayor since 2000, lost his job after not being re-elected in the March 2006 municipal elections and is reported to have been destitute at the time of his suicide. (Mail and Guardian, 15–21 September 2006)

South Africa is a heavily armed society. Family murders, armed robberies and unintentional killings – these are all part of the daily reality.

During the years of the negotiated settlement, 1990 to 1994, South Africa experienced a dramatic increase in armed violence, such as the train shootings in the Vaal, the violence in worker hostels and massacres in KwaZulu-Natal. Guns were no longer just in the hands of the state but had become increasingly available across all sectors of society, altering the nature of conflicts in the home and within and between communities. During its political transition, South Africa also experienced a dramatic increase in violent crime. Between 1994 and 1999, violent crime (murder, attempted murder, rape, robbery and assault) increased by 22 percent. Multiple factors contributed to the growth of violent crime, including the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democracy, a culture of violence, inequality and the increasing wealth gap, and the proliferation of firearms. (Schonteich and Louw 2001)

However, since 2001 there has been a steady reduction in violent crime with murder showing the most significant decrease from 67 murders per 100 000 in 1994–95 to 39.5 per 100 000 in 2005–06, according to figures from the South African Institute of Race Relations (Mail and Guardian 19–25 January 2007). The significant decrease in homicides nationally is largely due to the decrease in firearm homicides, especially in major cities. For example, in Cape Town, firearm homicides have almost halved since 2001, according to the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS) Annual Report 2004. Despite this decrease, South Africa has one of the highest firearm homicide rates

in the world. This high rate of gun deaths is coupled with high levels of civilian firearm ownership.

South African civilians own 3.7 million firearms, while the police and the army have 567 000: South African civilians have more than six times as many firearms as those held by the police and army (Gould and Lamb 2004: 200). The control and effective management of gun ownership, combined with intelligence-driven policing to recover illegal guns, is critical to solving South Africa's high levels of firearm-related crime and violence. But reducing and preventing gun violence is not just the work of the state security forces – it requires a robust civil society movement that will assist the government in reducing the demand for guns and complying with the supply restrictions, and also keep the government accountable to its promise to keep its citizens safe and free from the fear of gun violence.

This article reflects on the nature of the relationship between the state and civil society in the policy process that resulted in significant change in South Africa's gun laws, demonstrating the important role that both MPs and civil society have to play in effectively tackling gun violence and the uncontrolled availability of small arms and light weapons. It identifies the key features of the policy process such as the strategic engagement between the state and civil society, the use of research data and information, and the role of the media. It also examines how the legislative reform process brought about significant social change, forever changing the way South Africans think about the meaning of guns, and the range of strategies that were used, including social mobilisation and lobbying.

A DEFINING MOMENT

The advent of democracy in South Africa, heralded by the 1994 general elections, acted as a catalyst for significant social mobilisation in the fight against gun violence and in support of stricter gun control. This is not unique. Over the last decade, most countries emerging from war or armed conflict, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Solomon Islands, have used the period of political transition as an opportunity to address the issue of armed violence, most often through strengthening their national gun laws and developing an integrated arms control strategy.

In several other peacetime countries, the catalyst for change has most often been a gun massacre, such as in

Australia and Brazil. In Brazil, there has been significant social mobilisation against rampant gun violence since 2000, combined with a deliberate engagement with the state at all levels. Although the presence of an internal stimulus, whether in peacetime countries or those emerging from armed violence and war, is a key factor enabling effective social mobilisation, the event itself is not enough to bring about the desired change. The “defining moment” doesn’t just happen – it is constructed by social actors and consists of both the event itself and the response of the social actors.

In the months leading up to the historic 1994 elections, Methodist Bishop Peter Storey began to articulate his concern that easy access to and the excess of guns in society was one of the biggest threats to the emerging democracy: “guns were beginning to dominate the scene in every way.” (personal communication 2002)

The response to this threat was a joint civil society and government initiative to remove guns from circulation, by calling on people to hand in their firearms. The minister of safety and security declared a 24-hour firearms amnesty for 16 December, the first Day of Reconciliation in the new South Africa. Despite the limited number of guns handed in, the Gun Free South Africa campaign had put the issue of national gun control on the political and social agenda. This gave rise to the establishment of a national non-governmental organisation (NGO) called Gun Free South Africa (GFSA) and wide-ranging gun control measures that culminated in the promulgation of the Firearms Control Act in 2000.

The Firearms Control Act has been one of the most comprehensive, exacting and challenging pieces of legislation to steer to completion.

A DUAL STRATEGY

GFSA recognised that working in the context of a newly established democracy offered opportunities to influence both the practice and the policy on the use of firearms in South Africa.

A dual strategy of grassroots mobilisation and influencing public policy defined GFSA’s approach to the issue of gun violence, influenced by its understanding of the nature of the firearm problem in South Africa as one of insufficient state control of firearms on the one hand, and on the other, the link between the demand for guns and political transition and socio-economic exclusion. By focusing on policy, GFSA could influence the supply side by making access to firearms more difficult through the legislative process. By focusing on mobilising at the grassroots, GFSA could begin to impact on the demand side by understanding the factors that drive people to own a gun.

In a comparative analysis of firearms policy processes and social movements across three countries, one of the

distinguishing features in South Africa was the execution of this dual strategy: making the links between demand and supply explicit in practice and not just in theory (Kirsten 2004). For example, grassroots mobilisation did not just engage people through local projects to improve public safety and reduce the demand for guns, such as through the “gun free zones” campaign, but enabled them to influence the public policy process, both through oral presentations to MPs and lobbying at local level. In addition, the call for a reduction in firearms violence was linked to a broader social transformation agenda.

South African civilians own 3.7 million firearms, while the police and the army have 567 000: South African civilians have more than six times as many firearms as those held by the police and army.

RESEARCH DATA AND INFORMATION

A key factor in GFSA’s dual strategy approach was the use of research data and information to better understand the nature of the issue and potential solutions, to influence the views of policy makers and to enable grassroots people to act at local and national level, ensuring significant policy reform.

When GFSA started in 1994 there was little, if any, reliable data on crime or gun-related statistics. In 1996, the South African Police Services (SAPS) published some of the first post-1994 data on gun-related crime and mortality rates: 30 gun deaths a day. Not only did this kind of information provide hard evidence that firearm deaths were high, it allowed civil society organisations (CSOs), such as research institutes and NGOs, to establish a baseline from which to compare the rates of firearm-related deaths.

The Secretariat for Safety and Security made a significant contribution to the dissemination of firearm-related information through the publication of *Firearm Use and Distribution in South Africa*, written by Robert Chetty, just prior to the public hearings on the Firearms Control Bill (FCB) in 2000. This publication played a critical role in enabling government to defend its approach to gun control. Another important source of data that had a significant impact on the parliamentary debate was the release of the NIMSS data on non-natural death and injury. This data, collected from mortuaries, and independent of the police, confirmed the high levels of gun-related deaths across the country.

The availability of research data was critical in assisting social actors to develop sound, rational and statistically based arguments in the fight to influence public policy and convince government that developing a comprehensive national firearms control regime was essential to improve security both at the national and local level. However, the sharing of data and information was not limited to policy

makers and influential leaders. It was as important to bring this information into the public domain. By sharing information on the nature and extent of the gun problem, activists were able to raise awareness about the problem and help identify the key policy issues. More importantly, the data was also used to frame the discussion on possible solutions. A variety of forms were used to distribute this information in the public domain, ranging from more detailed discussion at public seminars and through lengthy radio talk shows to “sound bites” on news radio and stickers or posters.

The story of GFSA demonstrates that social mobilisation around a particular issue can enable citizens to move beyond limitations within the “public sphere”.

Although the existence of accurate and reliable research data was critical in the success of these advocacy efforts, it is not necessary to have all the data available to begin raising an important social issue for public debate.

The media both influences and shapes public opinion and is an important role player in any social or public interest issue. As an organ of political debate within the public sphere, it plays a critical role in the public policy arena – as it did during the debate on the new firearm legislation in South Africa. Although the concept of the “public sphere” implies public participation in political processes and the freedom to express opinions and the notion of the public good, it remains deeply flawed as it still essentially favours those with the means and the education to participate. The story of GFSA, however, shows that it is possible to break through these barriers, and demonstrates that social mobilisation around a particular issue (in this case, new legislation) can enable citizens to move beyond limitations within the “public sphere”, with people at the grassroots involved in shaping the public debate on key policy issues.

RELATIONS WITH THE STATE: COLLABORATION AND CONFRONTATION

In 1996, the government developed the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) with an emphasis on social crime prevention, multi-sectoral involvement and partnerships between the police and communities. Within this national framework, several priority crimes were identified, one of which was firearm crime. The ministry of safety and security developed a comprehensive firearms control strategy that included the establishment of a policy committee to: review the existing national firearms legislation (Arms and Ammunition Act of 1969); forge regional links to combat illegal trafficking (e.g. Operation Rachel with Mozambique); and develop partnerships with other government departments, such as social development and correctional services, to tackle the problem of gun crime.

In 1997, GFSA, together with three other civil society representatives, was a member of the firearms policy

committee, appointed by the minister of safety and security, with a brief to assist his department develop policy guidelines for new firearms legislation. The work of the committee was brief and its influence limited, but it provided a framework for the government to put in place a comprehensive firearms control strategy. This took several years to come to fruition, but in December 1999, the government published the Firearms Control Bill (FCB).

Although it was frustrating to wait for the Bill, these two years were critical in establishing relationships with the key stakeholders which included government officials within the key departments, the SAPS, members of parliament across the political spectrum and key party political structures, such as the national or women’s caucus. This period was also used to build alliances within civil society, understand the *modus operandi* of the opposition (primarily situated within civil society through gun owners’ associations) and conduct research in order to bring new information to the debate.

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

One of the key features of the fight for stricter gun control is that it began during the first five years of South Africa’s democratic era. This was a period of exploration and experimentation during which traditional boundaries were being broken, particularly in the relationship between civil society and the state. The general climate of openness to input from civil society into policy and legislative processes enabled CSOs to get access to information and policy makers, exerting a degree of influence that was unknown both in the previous apartheid regime and in the current period.

However, this new climate did not necessarily translate equally through all government departments or policy processes. In the small arms control and security domain, some policy makers argued that that only those with expert knowledge of the workings of weapons should be involved in policy change, or that those who own or use guns are best placed to shape and influence the management and control of firearms. This was one way to exclude significant sections of civil society from the public policy debates.

GFSA played a key role in opening that space to include all stakeholders, in particular those most negatively affected by the lack of adequate controls on the trade in and use of guns. The experience of women as victims and survivors of gun violence, most often in their homes, was one of the most powerful reasons to include civil society in any efforts to reduce gun violence. The FCB was subject to scrutiny by many interest groups, including weapons dealers and owners as well as health professionals, violence prevention groups, human rights advocates and community-based organisations.

THE GUN CONTROL CHARTER AND ALLIANCE

The groundwork had been laid for significant policy change, with growing support for the long-term vision of a gun free South Africa. However, GFSA recognised that it could not win the battle for stricter gun control on its own.

In 1999, the Gun Control Alliance (GCA) was launched: a broad-based coalition of over 450 members, organisations and individuals that supported stricter gun control, as articulated in the Gun Control Charter (see www.gca.org). It consisted of large national bodies such as the South African Council of Churches and the Gender Commission, as well as national and provincial NGOs and community-based groups, such as Women Against Child Abuse in Orange Farm and Mamelodi, many local churches, and health professionals, such as those working at the Red Cross Children's Hospital.

The process of influencing public policy is multi-faceted. Some of the key ingredients for success include clarity on the issue for policy action, identifying solutions, building broad political and community support and having a good media strategy. The Charter became the mechanism through which the Alliance was able to articulate its policy solutions through its list of demands (such as increasing the age limit), and it acted as a mobilising tool to build broad-based community support for the end goal: stricter gun laws.

The Charter also enabled activists to analyse the Bill by focusing on the links between the key demands of the Charter and key clauses in the Bill, thereby identifying the priority clauses. This in turn enabled Alliance partners, when making their written submissions, to make the links between community concerns about gun violence, the demands in the Charter and what was in the Bill. For example, many communities felt that one reason for gun violence in their communities was that young people had easy access to firearms. Suggested criteria for ownership included increasing the age limit, possession of a competency certificate, no history of violent behaviour and no incidence of substance abuse.

Through a workshop process, people began to realise that they could speak on behalf of their communities much more effectively than anyone else. In fact they were the "experts" when it came to knowing what the community wanted and needed on the issue of gun violence and safety. This redefinition of expertise to include experiential knowledge – expert opinion from another vantage point – was central to the success of the FCB campaign.

A dual strategy of grassroots mobilisation and influencing public policy defined GFSA's approach to the issue of gun violence.

MANAGING RELATIONS

Just as the Charter provided a focus in mobilising support at the grassroots level, it also assisted GCA activists dealing with government officials and MPs. It also contributed to building a climate of trust between Alliance members and government officials and MPs as they knew the position

of the Alliance and what it would fight for at all costs. This was one of the factors that enabled the Alliance to influence the final legislation to a significant degree. However, this does not mean that the relationship with either MPs or government was always easy or cooperative. There were strong differences of opinion, both on the principles underlying the new policy and its intent and on the detail of how that policy was interpreted through specific clauses in the Bill.

The relationship to the state and other significant role players in the policy process is not static. It may vary depending on a range of factors, such as the general political climate, individual personalities, attitudes to and beliefs about the issue under debate, the different phases of the policy process, which government departments are involved and the strength of civil society in general.

For example, despite a generally cooperative and open relationship between CSOs and the state on the gun control policy process, there are still varying levels of support for gun control within the different sectors of government. Although the management and control of firearms is under the control of national government, support for the policy remains uneven across various departments, in particular within the department of safety and security and the SAPS.

At times the relationship between the key role players may be collaborative, at other times more hostile or confrontational, and sometimes, as was the case in Brazil in the late 1990s, it is completely absent. In the case of GFSA, the relationship with the state was present from the beginning and occurred in a context in which government was sympathetic to the principle of gun control, which made the state both accessible and open to policy suggestions from the civil society perspective.

In most examples of firearm legislative reform across the world, CSOs collaborated with the state by proposing alternatives and supporting or influencing the direction of policy on firearms control. In South Africa, although there was cooperation with the state, there was also a strong element of lobbying, in particular during the process of drafting and finalising the legislative framework. Pressure was directed at the state to alter the firearms legislation, but it was also directed towards changing attitudes in society through challenging the views of the gun lobby.

The relationship to the government therefore is also nuanced, as the main aim of CSOs, in particular those in support of stricter gun control, is to influence both ideas and behaviour through a mixture of pressure, lobbying and cooperation. Influencing public policy requires a strategic engagement with the state.

Just as the new democratic order presented NGOs with new opportunities and challenges for engaging with the state, so it offered MPs new insights into the law-making process, especially with regard to incorporating divergent views. The Firearms Control Act has been one of the

most comprehensive, exacting and challenging pieces of legislation to steer to completion. Most MPs involved in the portfolio committee acknowledged that one of the important lessons for them was to recognise the critical role that civil society had to play in the law-making process. However, another lesson learned was the important role they had to play as MPs, to listen to all sides of the debate and make decisions based on what they understood to be the common good for all citizens and what would secure an efficient and effective law. This was a tough task given the divergent opinions and contested nature of the issue. Mluleki George, chairperson of the safety and security portfolio, committee put it this way: "Civil society does have to sensitise the members of parliament to issues which they (CS) deal with everyday of their lives. So that relationship is very good and must be nurtured and strengthened. What I have also learned is that it will not always be possible for parliament to do what civil society wants." (personal interview 2003)

The process of influencing public policy is multi-faceted. Some of the key ingredients for success include clarity on the issue for policy action, identifying solutions, building broad political and community support and having a good media strategy.

This is the reality of the nature of the relationship between social actors and the state in forging new policy to govern the way we live – a nuanced, strategic engagement that recognises that political forces and interests are fluid and constantly changing, both within the state and civil society.

CHANGING THE LAW

In October 2000, The Firearms Control Act (No 60 of 2000) was passed by a majority in the national assembly. The new law essentially raised the barrier for firearm ownership in South Africa by increasing the age limit and requiring a competency certificate prior to application for a firearm licence. Limits were also imposed on the number of firearms that an individual could own. The law put in place greater administrative controls, such as regular licence renewals and stricter penalties for offences committed under the Act.

However, the Act is just one part of a wider strategy to reduce the flow of guns into South African communities, to reduce violent crime, to promote development and to enhance the quality of life of all South Africans. In his address to parliament, George said, "No one piece of legislation will solve the problems of crime in this country."

Although the new law has been essential for controlling and reducing both the supply of and the demand for firearms, the experience of the FCB campaign shows that not only the law but also the process leading up to the legislative debate can change attitudes and influence behaviour. The years of public debate prior to the parliamentary phase played a key role in creating new social norms, whereby gun ownership is no longer seen either as a right or as appropriate by the majority of South Africans. An HSRC study in 2000 showed that 84 percent of South Africans supported gun control. This view was reinforced by Katherine McKenzie, a researcher and policy consultant, who made this point at a CGA focus group: "Laws can change society and the way people behave, how they function and how we do things."

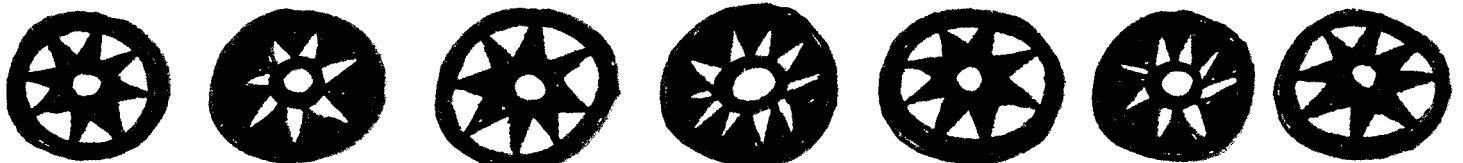
BEYOND PARLIAMENT: MAKING THE LAW WORK

On 1 July 2004, the FCA came into full effect. By this stage several new structures and positions had been created to ensure the effective implementation of the Act. This included Firearms Registration Centres (FRC) and the training of police officers as Designated Firearms Officers. In January 2005, the renewal process for all existing licensed firearms owners commenced. At the same time, government launched its most ambitious effort to remove surplus and unwanted guns as well as to reduce the number of illegal guns in circulation in South Africa. Within six months, just over one hundred thousand firearms had been collected.

Putting in place new structures, training personnel, conducting firearms amnesties, developing compliance and enforcement strategies – these are all integral to the implementation of new legislation. They also remain processes that are open to influence and change and, therefore, civil society needs to remain engaged with the relevant government structures and processes, in order to ensure that the gains made through the public policy process are not eroded. Once the law has been passed, monitoring the implementation of the new law remains one of the biggest challenges facing CSOs, to ensure that what was agreed during the policy process becomes a reality on the ground

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INDUSTRIAL CHALLENGES

BY LUMKILE MONDI

The author is chief economist and executive vice-president for professional services of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC)

Interviewed by Ben Turok

BEN TUROK: How important is the IDC in the industrialisation of South Africa?

LUMKILE MONDI: The IDC, historically, has been part and parcel of the South African economy: supporting the building of new industries, such as synthetic fuel or the formation of Sasol; in the exploitation of mineral resources and their beneficiation, for instance in aluminium, iron ore and so on. It has played a very important part in the industrialisation of South Africa.

Unfortunately, since 1994 the government has not come to the party in strengthening our productive capacity to make sure that we can support the services and manufacturing sectors to improve efficiency, job creation and competitiveness. Instead, in its first five years, government focussed on reforming and removing tariffs, on taking the state out of the economy through fiscal and monetary conservatism, without looking at the important economic sectors. This approach has now caught up with us because the service sector is very strong and there is excess demand in our economy. Hence, we are importing more manufactured goods than we should. The government needs to concentrate on the supply side, through supporting small and medium enterprises to create new capabilities and an import replacement programme that will benefit from public sector investment.

BT: That is a rather strong statement. Is this a view held quite widely in the country, including business and the parastatals?

LM: Business has been quite pessimistic. In 1994, there were high expectations, particularly in the construction and engineering sectors. They knew that the challenge of underdevelopment in South Africa was huge, particularly around housing and infrastructure. So, there were a lot of expectations in the private sector that the democratic government would turn to people-driven programmes. Many of these companies built new capacity. But, to their surprise, the state chose fiscal and monetary conservatism and didn't deliver on the backlogs in infrastructure and housing. That led to much pessimism in the private sector.

As to the parastatals, the state proposed some privatisation, even selling Telkom and Eskom, and perhaps SA Airways.

The basis for this approach was that government was influenced by the World Bank's Washington consensus policy. Thirteen years later, government has realised that the country needs to have a strong base in the commanding heights of the economy, and to make sure that Eskom and Transnet become pivotal to our development by delivering infrastructure. We lost many opportunities to create local capabilities due to fiscal conservatism.

But whether the changes currently under consideration in government will have a medium- or long-term impact is questionable. It is very difficult to convince industrialists that the state expenditure of billions of rand is going to be sustained. The state has a poor record of spending during the 1994–2000 period.

BT: Yet the government keeps on saying that policy is being driven by the RDP as the main policy objective of the government. You are saying that this is not being observed in practice

LM: I think that in the hearts and the minds of a lot of our comrades in the ANC and in government, there is a commitment to the people. There is a passion to make sure we develop according to our vision. But in practice, there is a huge attraction to conforming to the Washington consensus policies, which require that the state should not be very bold in playing a developmental role – where the state disciplines the private sector and the market to make sure that South Africa behaves like a developmental state and intervenes to make sure that we are doing the things that are good for South Africa. Instead we seem to concentrate a great deal on the short term, mainly appealing to international players.

BT: Is that your personal view or the view of the IDC?

LM: These views are widely shared. The main priority for South Africa, its government and the ANC, is the development of our people, making sure that we have the productive capacity to produce what is needed by ourselves as well as by Southern Africa and Africa. There is a lot of discussion of these matters. But it is very difficult for the state to look at itself critically. They have to keep the momentum and communicate that everything is going very

well. Yet, when it comes to coordination and deal making, boldness is sadly lacking.

BT: Are there other economists who agree with you that the strategy and direction have been one-sided?

LM: Most local economists are very happy, because in South Africa you've got two economies, or two nations. There is the nation of the privileged, which lives in the first world economy, who argue that the most important things are low inflation, low interest rates and a stable currency. This is because they have family members all over the world and they like to go and enjoy holidays there. But there is another society, which has little access to basic income, decent schooling or clean water, which lives in a different world, struggling to meet the basic needs for survival. Many in the privileged sector tend to represent the first world of our society and not the second world. As an organic intellectual whose roots are in the second world, I can articulate these views. My family is also trapped in the second economy.

We tend to misrepresent the second economy because they have no voice, yet we know there are serious problems in the country.

BT: You are saying that the economists who are advising government are biased towards the status quo and first economy thinking.

LM: There is a new term they use now: "path dependency"¹. No one is saying we can actually change things. The ideas we had in the '80s and '90s in the movement seem to have faded.

We wanted to make sure that our economy strengthens its productive capacity, and addresses the needs of our people who were marginalised by the apartheid regime. Instead, some are now saying that the apartheid regime did very well and so we are following the same dependency on minerals, on energy, on what [former department of trade and industry (DTI) director-general] Zav Rustomjee called "the mineral-energy complex". This approach is coming back to haunt us because we didn't manage to restructure the economy. The net effect is that we have serious balance of payments problems on our current account today.

BT: The IDC, in itself, has gone through some difficult periods and has lost some capacity. What has been the history of the IDC in the transition period?

LM: The IDC, like all apartheid institutions found itself being de-capacitated quite seriously by our democratic government. The policy section was very pivotal under the apartheid regime, for strategy and implementation, but this was taken over by the DTI. So the IDC became more growth-oriented, in the sense that the state said: "We do not know what to do with you", so the new leadership focussed more on growing the balance sheet of the IDC and looking at areas which could be profitable. The IDC had a huge exposure in the steel sector and the steel price was at a historic low. Therefore the growth strategy was meant to sustain self-sufficiency, sustainability of the balance sheet and diversification towards others sectors

BT: The same thing happened with the DBSA (Development Bank of SA). The government stopped funding and so they became profit-oriented.



Robert Tshabalala © Financial Mail

LM: Yes, and with Transnet, ACSA (Airports Company SA), Eskom and others. This was a new way of doing things, because the Washington consensus economists argued in favour of the experiences of Latin America, countries like Argentina and Brazil, which included large-scale privatisation. The Washington economists were convinced that the privatisation programmes worked very well. When our people took power, they were greatly influenced by those economists.

So we missed many opportunities that are now only partly compensated for by changing management and putting the interests of the historically disadvantaged people in the forefront. We now have many black people in senior posts but this does not guarantee that they will pursue progressive policies linking all our institutions into a framework of a developmental state. Instead, there is a disjuncture, with government going one way and the parastatals and development institutions going another way. There has been no co-operation at all and it's only now that new ideas are emerging. Hence we have lost many opportunities.

“We now have many black people in senior posts but this does not guarantee that they will pursue progressive policies linking all our institutions into a framework of a developmental state.”

Also, we are not bringing competition into very important areas, such as the telecommunications, transport, steel and chemical sectors, yet competitiveness can be very helpful in lowering the cost of doing business. We need to lower the cost of inputs for companies which are going to bring substantial benefits to the country. Instead these industries in metals and chemicals are charging international prices, although they have benefited from state support.

BT: Given the consumer boom at the moment, and the apparent success story of the economy, is this reflected in the productive sectors of the economy: agriculture, mining and manufacturing?

LM: Unfortunately, the biggest surprise for a lot of us has been how the private sector in the services sector has been very optimistic, and the biggest investors. I refer to the retail chains, whether it's Pick 'n Pay or Checkers – they will go to the townships, where there is money to be made, and they've done that successfully. But in the productive sectors, firms were never given the chance to modernise under apartheid and operated behind an iron curtain. When we took over in 1994, except for the motor sector under the leadership of Alec Erwin and many NUMSA (National Union of Metal Workers) comrades, firms in other sectors were never given time to adjust, so that the prices could be competitive.

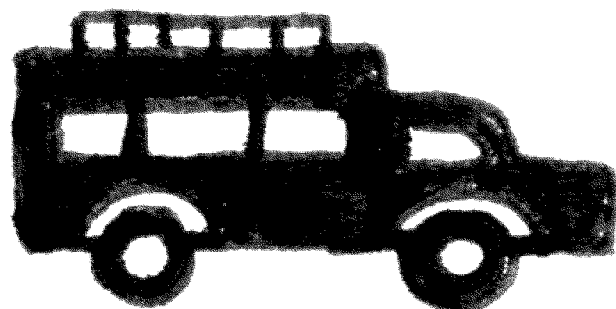
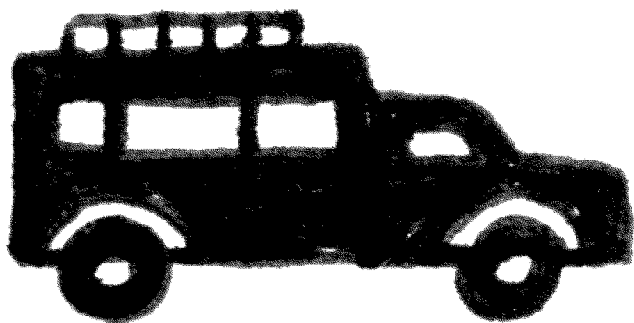
The challenge going forward is how the state can use supply chain management for enterprises like Transnet and Eskom, which will be spending over R180 billion on infrastructure. How can that be used to create local industry, such as foundries, tooling, shipbuilding etc., making sure that we boost and expand the domestic transport, equipment and metal goods sectors?

BT: So this is a preferable route to a present one which entrenches dependency?

LM: This is a preferred route and the government agrees this is the way we have to go. I think the challenge now is how the IDC and other DFIs (development finance institutions) respond as partners in supporting small and medium enterprises with a favourable financial package, in accessing the parastatals' expenditure in delivering infrastructure for energy as well as transport.

NOTE

¹ The view that technological change in a society depends quantitatively and/or qualitatively on its own past.



SMALL RETAILERS IN THE SECOND ECONOMY

BY A A LIGTHELM

The author is with the Bureau of Market Research at the University of South Africa

During the past decade South Africa has made significant strides in improving the living standards of the previously disadvantaged communities. Many township consumers have progressed to a middle-income group, resulting in a substantial increase in the consumer expenditure of township inhabitants. These developments at the top end of the retail market and the fact that many traditional retailing areas are becoming saturated have caused large formal retailers to view this lucrative emerging township market as the last retail frontier in South Africa.

This article explores the income growth experienced by especially African consumers. It also investigates the sustainability of consumer expenditure within township areas and the possible impact of retail chain development in these areas on existing small township retailers.

INCOME GROWTH

Substantial improvements in living standards have been experienced by a large percentage of the previously disadvantaged communities. This has resulted in a prominent advancement of especially African people into the middle- and higher income groups. Table 1 depicts the class dynamics of the African adult population during the 1998 to 2003 period and projections to 2008. It is evident from the table that significant gains in respect of improvements in social class were made since 1998.

This rapid social and wealth advancement is confirmed by differentiated growth in personal disposable income of each population group. Table 2 confirms substantial higher real annual growth rates (at constant prices) in personal disposable income among the previously disadvantaged

TABLE 1: LSM MOBILITY OF AFRICAN ADULTS (16 YEARS PLUS), 1998-2008

LSM group	1998		2003		2008	
	Number of adults	%	Number of adults	%	Number of adults	%
LSM 8-10	520 240	2.8	1 244 060	5.6	2 742 490	10.5
LSM 5-7	9 889 690	52.5	13 507 040	60.5	17 120 810	65.2
LSM 1-4	8 433 170	44.7	7 572 430	33.9	6 376 510	24.3
Total	18 843 100	100.0	22 323 530	100.0	26 239 810	100.0

LSM = living standard measurement. The LSM system is a scale used for indicating the socio-economic status of a person 16 years and older. Based on 29 variables largely referring to the ownership of household amenities, South African adults are categorised into 10 LSM groups with LSM 1 being the poorest and LSM 10 the most affluent. Source: Van Aardt (2005b)

groups than with whites. From 1990 to 2007, the annual increase in the personal income of whites was only between

one- and two-thirds compared to that experienced by the other three population groups.

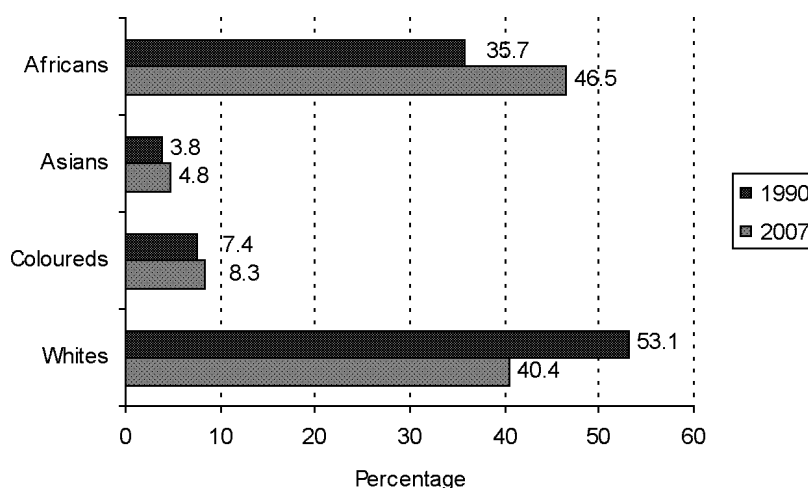
TABLE 2: ANNUAL GROWTH RATES IN REAL DISPOSABLE INCOME BY POPULATION GROUP (CONSTANT PRICES), 1990-2007

Population group	1990-1995 %	1995-2000 %	2000-2005 %	2005-2006 %	2006-2007 %
Africans	3.3	4.6	6.0	4.5	3.6
Asians	4.4	3.9	5.5	4.4	3.5
Coloureds	1.5	3.7	5.6	4.4	3.5
Whites	-1.4	1.4	3.7	2.6	1.7
Total	0.8	3.0	5.0	3.7	2.8

Source: Van Wyk (2006)

The differentiated advancement in wealth by population group resulted in changed shares in total personal disposable income by population group. Figure 1 shows an increase in the share of Africans in total personal disposable income of South Africa from just more than a third (35.7 percent) in 1990 to almost half (46.5 percent) in 2007. The share of whites dropped from a share of 53.1 percent in 1990 to 40.4 percent in 2007.

FIGURE 1
SHARE OF THE POPULATION GROUPS IN PERSONAL DISPOSABLE INCOME, 1990 AND 2007



Source: Van Wyk (2006)

EXPENDITURE DYNAMICS

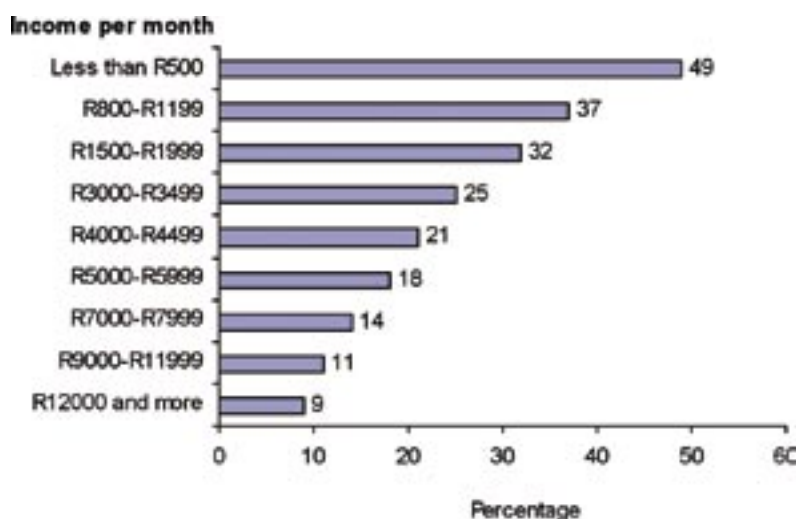
As mentioned above, the pre-1994 retail environment in township areas exposed limited retail choices and services for its inhabitants. A recent study aimed at developing a retail strategy for Soweto clearly illustrates the need to improve the retail choices in township areas. For example, in 2004, Soweto contained an estimated 43 percent of Johannesburg's population but only approximately 3 percent of the city's retail floor space (City of Johannesburg 2005).

The Soweto example also portrays the buying behaviour of township residents within the retail environment available to them (prior to the recent development of

shopping malls). Figure 2 shows the percentage of retail expenditure by Soweto residents within Soweto in 2004. The inverse of this percentage reflects the percentage of retail expenditure flowing out of Soweto, i.e. the extent of so-called "outshopping" by Soweto residents. Retail expenditure within Soweto is negatively correlated with income levels implying that as income levels increased lower percentages of income are spent within Soweto. The average of all households stood at 25 percent.

This pattern may have changed considerably over the past two to three years due to the establishment of several new shopping malls in the township areas (see discussion below).

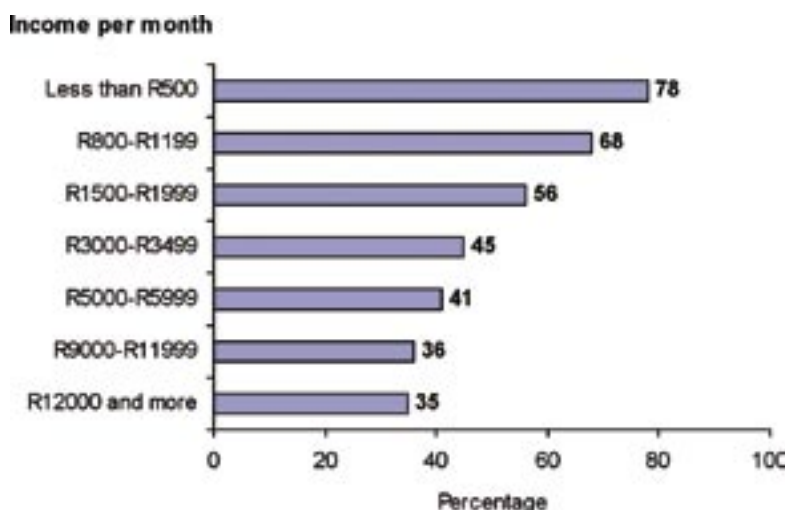
FIGURE 2
PERCENTAGE OF RETAIL EXPENDITURE BY SOWETO HOUSEHOLDS WITHIN SOWETO BY A SELECTION OF INCOME GROUPS, 2004



Source: City of Johannesburg (2005)

The share of retail expenditure in total household expenses is substantially higher among the less affluent households (Figure 3). The most affluent households allocated the bulk of their expenditure to non-retail items such as vehicles, education, insurance, housing, savings and income tax.

FIGURE 3
PERCENTAGE SPENT ON RETAIL GOODS/SERVICES FROM TOTAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE WITHIN SOWETO BY A SELECTION OF INCOME GROUPS, 2004



Source: City of Johannesburg (2005)

The lack of an efficient retail infrastructure in townships – portraying relatively high prices and limited choices – clearly has a far more negative impact on the poorer households compared to the more affluent ones. In 2004, almost 60 percent of retail expenditure in Soweto came from households earning a monthly income of less than R3 000. The households earning

a monthly income exceeding R9 000 contributed only 29 percent to retail purchases from retailers located within Soweto itself (City of Johannesburg, 2005). This resulted in the following township expenditure dynamics, prior to the recent establishment of township shopping malls (Tustin and Strydom, 2006; Radebe, 2005 and De Vynck, 2005):

- low car ownership and underdeveloped public transport systems resulted in people (especially the less affluent) either walking or using taxis to go shopping within townships
- township dwellers often travel by taxi to shop at nearby urban retail outlets rather than at township shops
- purchases are limited to small quantities of groceries at a time (day-to-day buying)
- the concept of “shoppertainment” is not yet well developed in townships. Only residents higher up on the social and income ladder prefer to shop outside their neighbourhoods (so-called “aspirational shopping”)
- the bulk of small township retailers can be classified as survivalists or “necessity entrepreneurs” who do business only to fend for themselves
- workers tend to do their shopping close to their places of work primarily located outside townships
- township residents who have moved up the social and income ladder prefer to shop outside townships at upmarket shopping malls

The above historical dynamics of township shopping, together with continued upliftment of African consumers, create an environment conducive to profitable retail development in these areas. The question that arises is whether this emerging market is sustainable within townships, or will it still experience leakages to non-township areas?

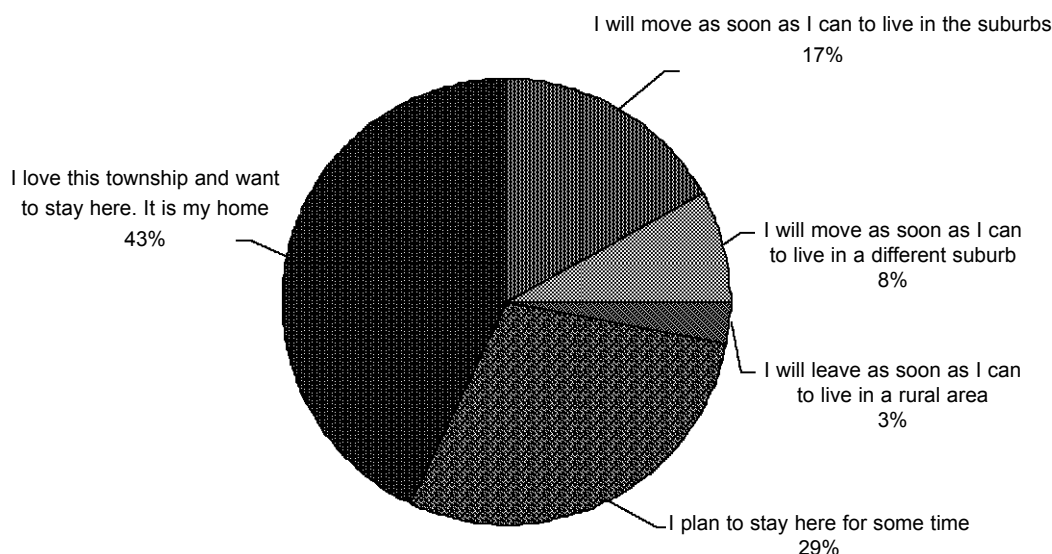
A recent study conducted in the middle-income areas of major townships (including Soweto, Tembisa, Soshanguve, Mamelodi, KwaMashu, Mangaung and Khayalitsha) suggests a fairly stable demographic pattern in these areas. It was found that 86 percent of all middle-income township inhabitants have resided in the specific township area for more than four years and 61 percent for more than 10 years. Of more relevance in this regard is that almost three in every four middle-income earners in township areas either plan to live there for some time or regard these areas as their home without any intention of moving (Figure 4 below).

TOWNSHIP RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

South African townships are emerging as the new market for national retailers, especially supermarket chains. This increasing movement of formal retailers into previously untapped middle- and low-income markets has resulted in an increase in shopping centre development in townships. Products offered by the national grocery chains are similar to some that are procured by small township retailers, which will undoubtedly lead to increased competition.

Prior to this shopping mall development, it was estimated that R48.5 billion or almost nine percent of total household expenditure in South Africa was channelled through informal retail outlets in 2004 (Ligthelm 2005). In township

FIGURE 4
INTENDED STAY IN TOWNSHIP AREAS, 2006



Source: Glue Metric and Lilanda Holdings (2006)

The above findings suggest a fairly stable middle-income population base in townships that may further increase as more people progress into the middle-income group. The gravitation of a relatively small percentage of township residents to suburbs will probably be countered by further growth in the number of middle-income township dwellers as well as income growth within the existing middle-income group. If appropriate retail choices and services are available in township areas, it can be expected that the upsurge in consumer spending in townships will be sustainable, at least for the foreseeable future.

areas alone, these were estimated to be between one-quarter and one-third of retail expenditure. The most important products sourced from these businesses are food, transport, alcoholic beverages, personal care products and services, cigarettes and tobacco, and clothing and footwear. These products were sourced from an estimated 750 000 informal outlets employing just more than 1.6 million people (owners included) and supported close to 5 million people in South Africa. It can be assumed that a substantial part of this retail expenditure will be redirected to newly-developed national retail chains in townships.

The South African Council of Shopping Centres unfortunately does not maintain a list of newly-developed shopping centres in townships. The following (with investment values in brackets) are a few examples of shopping centre development during the past two years in township areas: Maponya Mall (R500 million), Jabulani Mall (R250 million), Protea Gardens (R146 million), Bara Mall (R420 million) and Diepkloof Plaza (R60 million) in Soweto; Mdantsani (R100 million), East London; New Brighton Plaza (R15 million) and Motherwell Shopping Complex (R32 million) in Port Elizabeth; Promenade (R400 million), Mitchells Plain; KaNyamazane (R80 million), Nelspruit; and The Crossing (R140 million), Mafikeng.

The above few examples are illustrative of the retail development in emerging township markets. Can small township retailers, especially informal survivalist retailers, survive in the midst of these new developments?

Almost three in every four middle-income earners in township areas either plan to live there for some time or regard these areas as their home without any intention of moving.

IMPACT ON SMALL TOWNSHIP RETAILERS

In October 2006, a survey was conducted to establish the impact of the Soshanguve Shopping Mall on small township retailers within a radius of 5 kilometres. The survey was conducted among 100 small retailers, including formal small retailers (employing less than 6 people) and spaza/tuck shops, six months after the opening of two adjacent shopping malls that housed 70 shops. (Ligthelm 2006).

This study will be replicated in an area such as Soweto to render it more representative of major core metropolitan townships. The Soshanguve results would, however, establish important benchmarks to evaluate the impact of the new retail structures established in township areas.

Several questions were asked to respondent businesses on the impact of the new shopping mall on the surrounding small retailers. These ranged from opinions on the perceived impact to more exact calculations on the increase/decrease in turnover and profitability.

Number of small businesses

In response to a question on the closure of small businesses in the direct vicinity of respondents' businesses within the six month period after the opening of the mall, almost two in three respondents (59.2%) confirmed a decline in the number of small businesses in their immediate vicinity; 37.8 percent perceived no closures, while 3.1 percent indicated an increase in the number of businesses since the opening of the mall.

Level of business activities

Respondents were requested to confirm the impact of the mall on various aspects of their operational activities. Three in every five businesses confirmed a decline in their stock movement, product range, turnover and profitability. However, it would appear that the negative impact tends to decline with businesses more than four km (one hour walking time) from the mall. Only one in every three businesses located between 4.1 and 5 kilometres reported such declines.

Assortment of merchandise

In an open-ended question, respondents were requested to identify the two products that most affected as a result of the opening of the shopping mall. Maize meal was reported by 43.1 percent of respondents as experiencing the biggest decline in sales. This is followed by cooking/fish oil (19.6 percent), meat/chicken pieces (17.6 percent) and bread (17.6 percent). Other products mentioned were: tomato sauce, fruit, rice, oats, eggs, tea, household cleaning detergents, cosmetics and potatoes. It appears that loss of sales was experienced over a wide spectrum of products.

The above indicates a varied impact of mall development on product demand from small township retailers, and suggests the selection of a small, dedicated assortment of merchandise that may be stocked by small retailers.

Customers

The following percentages of small retailers confirmed a loss of spending by regular customers since the opening of the mall:

- 55.4 percent of spaza/tuck shops
- 29.4 percent of small township retailers

The above suggests a more severe impact of shopping mall development on businesses in the second (informal) economy (eg, spaza/tuck shops) than experienced by somewhat more sophisticated small township retailers. The reasons advanced for a loss of customers by both small business categories were in order of importance:

- high and uncompetitive prices offered by small retailers
- variety of shops available in the mall
- leisure shopping environment in the mall
- proximity of the mall to customers' dwellings
- inferior product quality offered by small retail businesses

The businesses that recorded little or no reduction in spending by regular customers advanced the

following reasons, in order of importance, for retaining their customers:

- shopping mall too far (advanced by small retailers furthest away from mall)
- competitive prices for certain products
- satisfy emergency needs
- friendly/good customer service
- long and flexible hours
- buying on credit allowed
- availability of merchandise in small units and quantities

An estimated 750 000 informal outlets employing just more than 1.6 million people supported close to 5 million people in South Africa.

A comparison of the above shows that the same reasons are sometimes advanced for the continued support of customers as well as for the loss of spending by customers. Some businesses managed to provide good customer services, thereby retaining regular customers, while others advanced poor customer service as the main reason for losing customers. Some respondents managed to retain customers by offering competitive prices (for some products), while others lost customers due to uncompetitive prices.

The issue of small retail business sustainability amidst rapid retail chain development in townships needs urgent attention, in order to assist small retailers to adjust their business model to the new retail environment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Rapid income growth of township residents since 1994 resulted in a substantial increase in consumer expenditure in these areas. This lucrative untapped consumer market resulted in formal national retailers focusing on market expansion strategies in these emerging markets. This retail transformation in townships poses many challenges and threats to existing small township retailers especially those active in the second economy (informal sector).

Answers to the following questions are attempted in this article:

- What is the extent of consumer growth in the African population group?
- What is the sustainability of the expanded consumer demand in townships?
- Will small and informal retailers be cannibalised by the encroachment of national retail chains in township areas?
- What strategy options exist to ensure the survival of small retailers in township areas?

The trend emerging from income growth in South Africa is one of substantial growth in income levels of the previously disadvantaged groups.

A study embracing all the major township areas in South Africa suggests a fairly stable demographic pattern in townships that in turn suggests a sustainable consumer market in these areas.

Small township retailers and spaza/tuck shops are normally exposed to severe competition by fellow small retailers in an overtraded retail market. The opening of new shopping malls adds to the competitive environment within which these businesses have to operate.

More convenient access to large chain stores would surely suggest a gravitation of at least some household expenditure to such stores. This will particularly be true for low-income township inhabitants who currently satisfy the bulk of their retail needs within townships, primarily at small retailers within the particular township.

Convenient access linked to price competitiveness and the extended shopping experience and entertainment at shopping malls suggest a negative effect on turnover and profitability of small township retailers and especially spaza/tuck shops.

Can small township retailers, especially informal survivalist retailers, survive in the midst of these new developments?

The net balance sheet on the impact of shopping mall development on small township retailers suggests a decline in their market share. However, this does not mean a total cannibalisation of small retailers. The various competitive advantages of small retail businesses may result in the survival of some of the small township retailers and spaza/tuck shops (albeit often at a smaller turnover). It would appear that the negative impact of shopping malls on small retailers tends to decline with businesses more than four kilometres from shopping malls.

Because the second economy (including spaza/tuck shops) employs more than 1.6 million people, it is imperative that strong focus be placed on the structural changes in the retail environment in township areas in order to assist small retailers to effectively counter the increased competition from national chains as far as possible. As these changes have manifested quite recently and are still in a stage of flux, further research is needed to fully comprehend the new retail dynamics in South Africa, including:

- a detailed evaluation of the impact of newly developed shopping malls on small township retailers and spaza/tuck shops in a rapidly developed area such as Soweto
- the adjustments required for small retailers to effectively explore a niche market in terms of product assortment and customer services
- the training and advice needed by small retailers to effectively adjust to the new retail environment.

Of immense importance is to advise small township retailers on adjusting to a new business model to counter the competitive threat of newly established national chains. Formal businesses often have access to knowledge and skills to adjust to environmental changes; small (often informal) retailers need advice to adjust effectively to the new retail environment.

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EMPLOYMENT CREATION THROUGH PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

BY WELLINGTON DIDIBHUKU THWALA

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Investment in infrastructure has a huge potential to redress high unemployment and poverty levels, and also to correct the skill deficits in disadvantaged communities – two of South Africa's most pressing problems. History has shown that, by using locally available inputs and thus creating a greater demand for local products and services, labour-intensive programmes generate more direct and indirect local employment opportunities and income than do high-technology programmes reliant on imported technology and equipment.

From a theoretical perspective, supported by experience elsewhere in Africa, properly formulated public works programmes, based on the use of labour-intensive methods, could be established to construct and maintain the required physical infrastructure, thus creating employment, skills and institutional capacities. This article examines the main tenets of labour-intensive construction and describes progress elsewhere in Africa and the potential contribution that such programmes could make to alleviate the unemployment

problem. It then analyses the problems and successes that have been experienced in public works programmes in South Africa, and closes with some recommendations for the future.

Public works infrastructure programmes and projects have been seen as a major tool to transform the lives of people throughout the developing world, but this is not true for all developing countries. The character of development, its direction and pace and the way people share in its benefits are largely determined by how a country manages its development projects.

In South Africa, the level of unemployment is estimated at 28 percent and is one of South Africa's most pressing problems. In many settlements, it is over 60 percent and, excluding those being educated, it is 60–70 percent for the 16–19 age group. In addition, there is a need for housing and municipal infrastructure, such as water supply, sewerage, streets, storm water drainage, electricity and refuse collection.

According to the World Bank (1994: 2), infrastructure can deliver major benefits in economic growth, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability – but only when it provides services that respond to effective demand and does so efficiently. The problem of infrastructure backlog is aggravated by the apparent lack of capacity and skills at institutional, community and individual levels.

PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION

Public works programmes have a long history in the industrialised countries as an economic-policy tool, both as a fiscal measure to expand or contract public spending in periods of unbalanced domestic demand as well as a short-term measure to alleviate unemployment. In recent years, they have formed important components of special job-creation schemes launched by many industrialised countries in response to either economic recession or rising unemployment among youth. The “employment-intensive approach” is defined as an approach where labour is the dominant resource for carrying out works, and where the share of the total project cost spent on labour is high, typically 25–60 percent. Optimal use is made of labour as the predominant resource in infrastructure projects, while ensuring cost-effectiveness and safeguarding quality. This involves a judicious combination of labour and appropriate, generally light, equipment. It also means ensuring that employment-intensive projects do not degenerate into “make-work” projects, in which cost and quality aspects are ignored.

According to the International Labour Organisation (1999), comparative studies of employment-intensive vs. equipment-intensive projects have shown that the employment-intensive approach:

- has a higher absorptency of unskilled labour (direct and indirect employment)
- improves income distribution
- contributes to an increase in household income and consumption, thereby leading to an increase in national income
- saves foreign exchange and thereby does not increase debt
- is based on demand from the community level, and thus enhances democratic participation
- is more cost-effective in low-wage labour surplus economies
- is more environmentally friendly.

OVERVIEW OF AFRICAN EXPERIENCES

The use of employment-intensive public works programmes is not new to Africa. In the 1960s, three countries in North Africa, namely Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, experimented with such programmes. Although started initially as emergency relief works programmes, especially in rural areas, they gradually acquired a development orientation. The Moroccan experiment, known as National Promotion, was launched in June 1961. This large-scale programme was aimed at enhancing opportunities for the rural unemployed in productive works and slowing down the rural exodus and associated problems. According to one estimate, the

programme provided employment for 85 000 workers per month during the peak season and increased GNP by 3.6 percent (Jara 1971).

In 1959–60, a large Tunisian works programme, *Worksites to Combat Underdevelopment*, was carried out, with 80 percent of the cost being borne by Tunisian authorities and the remaining 20 percent in the form of food aid from the United States. The employment created was equivalent to an annual average of 20.7 days per head of Tunisia’s labour force. Similarly, the publicly-sponsored works programme, *Worksites for Full Employment* (*Chantiers de plein emploi* (CPE)) began operating in 1962 as a relief operation in Algeria. It soon acquired a strong development orientation to maximise employment in a project of economic interest, namely reforestation work to fight the severe erosion problem.

In Kenya, over 12 000 kilometres of rural access roads was constructed and over 80 000 man-years of employment were created. The Kenyan Rural Access Roads Programme is the overall responsibility of the ministry of transport and communications but operates within the national district focus policy, which gives great autonomy to the local level. The methods were considered so successful that they were introduced in the secondary roads network. In Botswana, a national programme of labour-intensive road construction units was set up within semi-autonomous district councils, under the overall responsibility of the ministry of local governments and lands. This programme has resulted in the creation of over 3 000 jobs (total employment within the public sector is only 20 000) and the construction and upgrading of nearly 2 000 kilometres of road. The Labour Construction Unit in Lesotho was attached to the ministry of works since 1977. By 1985, about US \$3.35 million had been expended on various road construction works.

Thus, within different institutional and organisational frameworks, a wide range of techniques of labour-intensive road construction and maintenance has been extensively tried and tested over the past 30 years.

Despite their valuable contribution to rural employment-generation, many of these earlier experiments in employment-intensive public works in Africa suffered from one or more of the following shortcomings:

- *ad hoc* nature of schemes, lacking spatial focus and often without any links to national rural development and infrastructural planning systems
- makeshift administrative arrangements and failure to inject sufficient managerial and engineering skills and technical competence into project selection and execution; as well as choice of technology, resulting in poor project planning, programming and manpower management
- lack of balance between centralisation and effective involvement of local administrations and popular bodies in crucial programme decisions, planning and implementation
- failure to adjust programme operation and intensity to seasonal labour demand for agricultural operations

- lack of precision about target groups, and programming on the basis of inadequate information about beneficiary groups
- lack of adequate and sustained political commitment and allocation of public funds for the programmes
- inadequate post-project maintenance arrangements
- inadequate emphasis on, and arrangements for, reporting cost-benefit studies and general performance evaluation.

Within different institutional and organisational frameworks, a wide range of techniques of labour-intensive road construction and maintenance has been extensively tried and tested over the past 30 years.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, the government of national unity initiated the National Public Works Programme (NPWP) after the 1994 elections. In essence, the NPWP consists of a process of labour-intensification and increased training and capacity building in the provision of infrastructure. The NPWP is a key component of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme. The NPWP has been shifted towards a Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP), which places more emphasis upon smaller companies and regulatory bodies than a national programme.

Another initiative was the Framework Agreement, later incorporated into NPWP. A social compact between government, the National Committee for Employment-Intensive Construction (NCLIC), COSATU and the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO), it was signed on 22 June 1993. Its main item is the industry commitment to maximise the use of labour-intensive systems of construction within public works programmes, with due regard to economics.

The current government has embarked on a multi-billion rand national job creation programme known as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). This programme involves creating temporary work opportunities for the unemployed, while ensuring that workers gain skills and training on the job, and so increase their capacity to earn an income in the future. The programme is one of an array of government initiatives to try to bridge the gap between the growing economy and the large numbers of unskilled and unemployed people who have not yet enjoyed the benefits of economic development.

The fundamental strategies to increase employment opportunities in the economy aim to increase economic growth so that the number of new jobs created starts

to exceed the number of new entrants into the labour market. They are also focused on improving the education system and access to training in a way that better equips the workforce to take up the largely higher-skilled work opportunities that economic growth will generate. In the meantime, there is a need to put in place short- to medium-term strategies that seek to reduce the vulnerability of the unskilled and marginalised. The EPWP aims to expand the use of labour-intensive methods in government-funded service delivery projects, in order to create more job opportunities and stimulate entrepreneurial activity through providing a combination of work opportunities and skills development and training for a minimum of one million people by the year 2009.

Many public sector organisations in the country are already implementing the public works type of projects and programmes, and one key objective of the EPWP is the expansion and replication of existing best practices, under the Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works Programmes (SPWP), or learnership employment conditions. EPWP projects also define and facilitate exit strategies for workers when they leave the programme, as a way of helping to build bridges between the first and second economy.

Over the past 20 years, billions of rands have been spent on projects and programmes with stated objectives to both create employment and provide physical infrastructure such as roads, water supply and sanitation (Thwala 2001). Based on both the international and local experiences, the problems of South African large-scale public works programmes prior to 1990 can be attributed to the following factors, which must be avoided in future:

- lack of clear objectives linking the short- and long-term visions of the programme
- no pilot projects with extensive training programmes or lead-in time to allow for proper planning at a national scale
- the programmes have seldom been scaled to the magnitude of national manpower needs. Very often they have been introduced in an unsystematic and fragmentary style that led to technical hastiness, which was compounded by incompetence and inappropriate technology selection
- there has been an imbalance between centralisation for higher level coordination and decentralisation for local decision-making and execution of works
- inadequate post-project maintenance arrangements often undermined the efficacy of the projects. This was largely attributed to a failure to ensure there would be an authority with sufficient stake in the projects and in their continuing effectiveness (that is, to a lack of community participation and ineffective local government)
- the projects and programmes have been over-ambitious. This was a result of the lack of appreciation of the time it takes to build the necessary individual and institutional capacities at various levels
- lack of clearly defined and executed training programmes that link medium- to long-term development plans

- very little sustainable employment was created
- little national, provincial and local institutional capacity building took place. Internal planning, monitoring and control were severely lacking. Independent valuation was absent. Given the lack of systems of planning and monitoring, systematic evaluation would have been extremely difficult anyway
- the expenditure on development failed to reach the target group to the extent envisaged
- individual skills were not improved. Training, where present, was not particularly appropriate or focussed and has not shown itself to be carried through into post-project employment.

(Barker 1986; Abedian and Standish 1986; Ligthelm and Van Niekerk 1990; McCutcheon 1990, 1992, 1994; McCutcheon and Taylor-Parkins 2003; Greyling 1994; and Thwala 2001)

Community-based projects develop democratisation and local organisation at grassroots levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The following must be considered in the EPWP in South Africa:

- good preliminary analytical work and thorough attention to technical aspects throughout the work
- pilot projects which test all aspects (technical, administrative, organisational, institutional, wage rates and conditions of employment, training, planning, socio-economic/community) and act as the embryonic training programme for future work
- strong yet flexible institutions with good management systems
- extensive training
- long-term political support
- long-term financial support
- good long-term coordination and objective external advice
- consensus reached with regard to: wage rates; conditions of employment; the role and responsibilities of the community.

National public works infrastructure programmes have the potential to redress the problem of high unemployment levels and also to correct the skill deficits in disadvantaged communities. These may be achieved through an efficient institutional set-up, effective community participation, and construction technology that is pragmatic and innovative in nature.

The public works programme in South Africa should change as the policy environment changes, from relief, emergency and "special" public works programmes to a long-term structured employment-generation programme. The approach should link economic growth, employment and investment policies. The programme must aim to ensure that infrastructure is planned around local needs rather than

vice-versa. The government needs to establish a long-term programme of employment intensive construction.

This cannot be established overnight, and will take some years to grow into a national programme. Community-based projects develop democratisation and local organisation at grassroots levels. The associations that are developed will also provide a good basis for other initiatives, such as mutual health funds for the informal sector.

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THE ANC SUCCESSION DEBATE

BY MIGHTY MADASA

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In the course of the ongoing public debate about the so-called succession battle in the ANC, I feel that some pertinent important political considerations have fallen through. It seems to me that some are blinded by their unbridled desire for state power and self-interests from doing a proper political ideological analysis about the correct approach to the succession debate.

I believe that this important national debate has been reduced to a struggle for state power and access to resources, instead of being viewed as the need for the ANC to elect an appropriate national cadreship that can lead our country and the African continent to prosperity for all. A need to elect a cadreship that is still committed to traverse the difficult road of sacrificing self-interests, even in the face of immense opportunities for self-enrichment, to ensure a better life for all. A cadreship that still has the courage to continue with the cause of decolonising the economy, and to challenge the global balance of forces in order to tilt them in favour of the poor masses of the continent and the world.

Regrettably, many commentators have focused their energy on who should become the ANC president and the head of state. There have been incessant cacophonous emotional voices warning against the “two centres of power” if the ANC president is not the same person as the head of state. Consequently, the ANC processes of electing its leaders have been erroneously confused with those of the government when electing the head of state. The result of this mixing up of the ANC and the government processes has caused some to call on President Mbeki not to stand for a third term in the ANC. The call, in my opinion, is wrong, if the callers are making it with one eye on the presidency of the country.

There seems to be ignorance in realising that the ANC is still a revolutionary political liberation movement that is also the ruling party according to our negotiated political settlement of liberal constitutionalism. There is therefore nothing untoward ideologically if the ANC as a movement were to consolidate itself such that it takes complete control of itself as a party in government in order to adequately prosecute the revolution. In this regard, it would be quite acceptable and traditional for the ANC president to be re-elected, if that is the will of the majority of ANC cadres. It would also be correct for the ANC cadres to call for a new

president of the ANC – not because the incumbent’s term as the head of state is about to expire but for ideological and political reasons.

But how can the president of a liberation movement be elected according to the dictates of the national constitution? To illustrate the absurdity of these views and the ideological mix-up of its proponents in the ANC: I have read about the same people who are concerned about many centres of power calling for regionalised appointment of premiers. If such proposals were to see the light of the day, how many centres of power would be there in the ANC? As they say, one cannot have one’s cake and eat it.

We must not fail to recognise that the ANC and the government are two different entities that should be kept separate at all times. Such a separation is vital to ensure the continued existence and strengthening of both institutions.

The reason for this grotesquely irrational ideological trend of thought, in my opinion, is that some are blinded by self interest and an unbridled greed for power. When prejudice and vindictiveness have the better side of logic and rationality, the result is inevitably absurd. It could not have been the intention of the drafters of the national constitution to extend the limitation of the terms of the head of state in office to the ANC presidency. The ANC constitution does not limit the time in office of its president, and could not, because it is still a revolutionary liberation movement. Therefore, a reference to terms of office of the ANC president is completely unconstitutional vis-à-vis the ANC constitution and traditions.

We must not fail to recognise that the ANC and the government are two different entities that should be kept separate at all times. Such a separation is vital to ensure the continued existence and strengthening of both institutions. We must not forget that the government is available to be

led by any political party that wins the elections besides the ANC. Can you imagine the constitutional consequences of making the ANC and the government one and the same thing in a multi-party democracy like ours?

The ANC is a revolutionary political movement with political aims and objectives that go far beyond controlling state power, although the leadership of the government is a vital means to prosecute the revolution. In the past, for example, the ANC successfully prosecuted essential phases of the revolution without state power. It is not in the interest of

the continued existence of the ANC to allow its processes to be dictated to by those of the government.

I believe that it was a wise decision by the ANC to leave things as they are and not bind the future when it may be desirable to have different persons as the head of the ANC and the state. I believe the challenge that the ANC is facing is to how to ensure that its officials in government are accountable to the movement and implement its policies. In other words, to ensure that the ANC remains in charge, and not the government in charge of the ANC.

LAND REFORM: NOT ON THE FAST TRACK, BUT ON THE RIGHT TRACK

BY ROGIER VAN DEN BRINK

The author is the World Bank country economist for South Africa. This article was first published on www.worldbank.org

It is true that the pace of delivery on South Africa's land reform programme has been underwhelming. And it is also true that land reform is an issue that can easily be exploited by politicians, while unresolved land issues can plunge countries into political and economic crisis. But let us also not forget why throughout history land reform is politically so appealing. From Napoleon Bonaparte via Abraham Lincoln to Hernando de Soto, the promise of broad-based ownership of land is not so much about cheap politics, but about democracy, economic growth and higher living standards for all. So for all these reasons – peace and stability, economic growth and poverty reduction – a well-executed land reform programme can be a cornerstone of sustainable development.

South Africa's land reform strategy, while not exactly on the fast track, is on the right track. At no point in time since 1994 has there been such a strong consensus among all stakeholders to get the job done, and done well. And that includes white commercial farmers. Add a dose of determined and pragmatic leadership to this newly found stakeholder consensus, and the existing programmes and the improvements being made to them can yield dramatic positive results in the short term.

So what about recent newspaper reports about "Zimbabwe-style" land reform being contemplated by radical elements in the department of land affairs? As someone who has worked with these "radical elements" for four years, I believe nothing is further from the truth.

The reality is that these officials are working day and night to, first of all, resolve the often highly complicated restitution cases. The government has correctly decided that the sooner restitution is brought to closure, the better. Because nobody benefits from uncertainty, and there can be no going back on the first law signed by the first democratic government of South Africa and its president, Nelson Mandela, in 1994.

Second, these officials, working hand in hand with their colleagues in the department of agriculture, are redesigning the way they implement the land redistribution programme. It is through the redistribution programme and the land market itself, and not the restitution programme, that the bulk of the 30 percent target will be met. This redistribution programme is firmly based on the principle of willing-buyer, willing-seller.

Potential beneficiaries of this programme use subsidies to buy land on the market from willing sellers. Under this programme, the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development and the Settlement and Land Acquisition Grant sub-programmes have demonstrated that land can be delivered through the market. If the government wanted to deliver more land tomorrow, it could do so by simply increasing the budget for redistribution. Admittedly, the impact of redistribution can be significantly improved, but there is no intention by the government to scrap these programmes and replace them with unlawful confiscation. Rather the focus is to make these programmes, and the land market itself, work better.

Will this see a more proactive role of the state? Yes, it will. Black farmers should not be forced to mobilise large crowds to be able to pool enough grants together to buy a large farm, or, driven by misguided notions of “viable farm sizes”, be pushed into ill-fated collective farming experiments (which will fail, as they have elsewhere in the world). The state will and should be more proactive in assisting black farmers acquire farms that they can operate as individual family farms, commensurate with their initial skills and financial resources, and benefiting from the type of technical support and infrastructure developments that will make these farms and other businesses a success.

And will the state very selectively and prudently use expropriation following the constitution and the law, paying immediate and fair compensation to come to closure on certain restitution cases that are not getting resolved within very reasonable time? Or to acquire certain farms that are extremely well suited for land reform, as identified through the participatory and consultative process of drawing up an integrated development plan for

the area, but where landowners refuse to accept market value even after years of negotiation or because of the “not-in-my-backyard” syndrome? Surely, it will and it should. Similarly, should the Property Rates Act be implemented in such a way that there will finally be a cost to holding on to vast tracts of land purely for speculative reasons, but without hurting productive investments in farming? Of course. And finally, do we all hope that the anti-market and anti-poor restrictions on the subdivision of land will finally be relegated to the apartheid history books where they belong? We do.

The main strategic thrust, as supported by all stakeholders, will go to removing the unnecessarily complex delivery of programmes, empowering farmers, rather than officials, to drive the programme. It will be up to local governments, rather than national bureaucracies, to coordinate the financial and technical advice these farmers need to make their farms a success. And it will be white farmer neighbours, rather than consultants, giving a hand where needed. That is definitely the right track.

OBITUARY ARCHIE MAFEJE

BY LUNGISILE NTSEBEZA

The author is an associate professor of sociology, University of Cape Town and chief research specialist, Democracy and Governance Research Project, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

On 28 March 2007, one of the greatest minds and activists that this country has ever produced, Professor Archie Mafeje, passed away. Born at Engcobo in the Eastern Cape on 30 March 1936, Archie Mafeje matriculated at the then famous Healdtown Institution in the Eastern Cape, and spent a brief time at the University of Fort Hare before completing degrees up to master's level at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1964. He then proceeded to Cambridge University in the UK where he obtained a PhD in anthropology and rural sociology in 1966.

Mafeje was associated with a number of renowned universities and institutions across the globe. He was head of the department of sociology at the University of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania between 1969 and 1971, at a time when that institution was the hub of radical African nationalist thinking; visiting professor and later chair of the Rural Development, Urban Development and Labour Studies Programme at the Institute of Social

Studies in the Hague between 1972 and 1975; professor of sociology at the American University in Cairo from 1979 and professor of sociology and anthropology and director of the Multidisciplinary Research Centre at the University of Namibia from 1992 to 1994, soon after the independence of Namibia.

Mafeje was widely published. There were already clear signs that he was destined for a distinguished scholarly career as early as his student days at UCT. In 1963, while completing his master's degree, he co-authored, with his mentor and supervisor Monica Wilson, a classic on Langa, a study of social groups in this township situated on the outskirts of Cape Town. He went on to publish extensively, including seminal contributions in areas such as the land and agrarian question in Africa and the ideology of tribalism and politics. Mafeje's writings were always politically engaged and engaging, as his contribution on the Soweto uprisings of 1976 and its aftermath shows.

Since 2001, Mafeje has been associated with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), which duly recognised his contributions to scholarship by awarding to him an honorary life membership in 2003 and appointing him as a CODESRIA Distinguished Fellow in 2005. The latter was a joint appointment with the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) in Pretoria.

The fact that, despite Mafeje's illustrious intellectual and political career, which spanned over four decades across three continents, he never received serious attention from the South African academy must rank amongst the most tragic situations. Very few South African scholars and students knew about Mafeje and his outstanding and path-breaking publications. Yet, none of the publications was banned. The majority of those who were aware of his publications must have, for whatever reasons, taken a decision not to prescribe his work. The South African academy continued to marginalise Mafeje when he returned to his country of birth in 2000. Conferences on topics in which Mafeje had established an international reputation, such as the land and agrarian question, were often organised without even a mention of his name as one of the experts in the field – very sad.

An institution that must surely shoulder most of the responsibility is none other than UCT, where Mafeje started his brilliant academic career. Upon completing his degree, Mafeje applied for a post at UCT. He was duly appointed on merit in 1968. There was no affirmative action for black Africans in those apartheid days. However, the UCT administration at the time did not have the nerve to offer Mafeje his position and ended up doing the dirty job of the apartheid regime by not sending Mafeje his letter of appointment.

Hopes that, with the advent of democracy and as part of the quest for transforming higher education institutions, UCT would take the initiative and invite Mafeje to take up his richly deserved position were dashed when UCT did not do so. In fact, UCT could have done this as early as 1990, when political organisations were unbanned and the political negotiation process was underway. There are clear signs that Mafeje could have considered the offer and that he was ready to make the move back home. From as early as the late 1980s, after the liberation of Zimbabwe, and the early 1990s, when Namibia won its independence, he was attached to the universities of Lesotho and Namibia. But the UCT administration at the time did not treat the Mafeje issue as a priority. This was despite various direct calls made by some individuals to the UCT administration. These pleas obviously

fell on deaf ears, as there seems to be little evidence that UCT did anything to redress the injustice it visited on Mafeje.

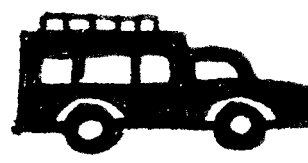
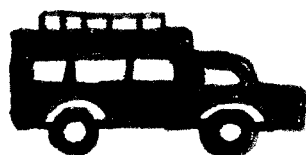
It must be recorded, though, that the current administration, under Advocate Geoff Budlender (chairperson of the UCT Council) and Professor Njabulo Ndebele (vice-chancellor), made attempts to resolve this issue in 2004. This was in the form of a letter to Mafeje making a formal apology, and a plan to nominate him for an honorary doctorate. Understandably, Mafeje was not interested in these gestures and probably thought they came too late. But UCT could have been more aggressive and concerted in its efforts. This could include making the Mafeje issue more public by involving the wider university community, culminating with a public apology. There seems little doubt that a legitimately aggrieved Mafeje would have favourably considered such gestures.

After the death of Mafeje, UCT seems to have renewed its efforts to bring closure to the tense relationship between Mafeje and the institution. The UCT Council executive committee has since endorsed and recognised the “deep injustice done” to Archie and “acknowledged his extraordinary contributions”. It went further to resolve that Mafeje’s “impact as an extraordinarily gifted scholar be captured forever” and that “UCT will find a practical way to do this”. UCT also sent a representative to the funeral of Mafeje on 7 April 2007 in Mthatha, with a letter, signed by the vice-chancellor, to the Mafeje family extending UCT’s condolences. It remains to be seen what steps UCT will take without being seen as opportunistic.

To their credit, institutions like AISA and Unisa should be applauded for their efforts in tapping the vast knowledge and sharpness of Mafeje. But a lot more could be done.

As we mourn the death of Mafeje, South African scholars in particular should reflect deeply about their professed claims and commitment to the transformation of higher education. Key to the transformation of higher education institutions is the need to change the existing racial composition of academics and students, as well as the development of appropriate curricula. Too often transformation at the level of academic staff composition is blamed on a perceived dearth of black academics and intellectuals. The irony that the Mafeje experience brings out so palpably is that when black academics lift themselves by their own bootstraps, they are marginalised, often by the self-same academics who readily lament the non-availability of black scholars.

Lala ngoxolo (rest in peace), Mndobe (Mafeje's clan name) and rest assured that the struggle continues.



GENDER AND CHALLENGES OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

BY AMINA MAMA

The author is chair of gender studies at the African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town. This is an edited version of her inaugural lecture as Prince Claus Chair in Development and Equity, Institute of Social Studies, the Netherlands, 28 April 2004

Leading international development thinkers now acknowledge that Africa will have to “think its way out of its current predicament”, and even those who once dismissed the need for universities in Africa now show renewed interest. The question of African intellectual development is indeed critical to the future development prospects of the region.

WHY INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT?

The unfulfilled promise of African intellectual development has been a key factor perpetuating Africa's underdevelopment. Yet it is to intellectual development that we must once again turn in a collective effort to reverse the underdevelopment of the continent. This will require the reclaiming and strengthening of African intellectual work for the pursuit of African interests. I shall further argue that the community of critical intellectuals – notably feminist intellectuals – have consistently pursued alternative approaches to knowledge-building, both within and beyond the academic establishment, in a manner that illustrates the potential for critical intellectual work to advance liberatory agendas for development, democratisation and social justice.

The complexities of the post-colonial era have generated new African intellectual identities that are contradictory in their diversity, peripatetic, multiply-constituted and cosmopolitan, located in epistemologies that are likely to owe as much to Africa's social movements, civil societies and independent research communities and networks as they owe to the formal academic establishments.

The generation of African intellectuals in which I would locate myself includes those who have survived the iron grids of military rule, the traumas of numerous civil wars and conflicts, the failures of modernisation, the continued dependency and underdevelopment of the region, and have resisted the continuous undermining and disparagement of African intellectual and conceptual capacities, both at home and abroad. They are a resilient lot, whose commitment

deserves to be commended. However, the point to emphasise is not so much their resilience, as the importance of the critical dispositions arising out of post-colonial experience, and the critical role that such intellectuals have to play in the future survival and well-being of the world's most impoverished and beleaguered continent. Africa's critical intellectuals are not neutral, with abstract academic identities determined solely by the dictates of a formal, disciplinary, academic training which, in claiming universality, denies its own specificity. Rather they engage positively with the challenges of the particular vantage point afforded by being located on the African continent and informed by the historical experience of the region.

Decades after decolonisation, and the civil rights, workers' and women's movements of the 1960s, anti-imperialist, nationalist and international feminist challenges have profoundly challenged the intellectual hegemonies of yesteryear. As a result, it is no longer acceptable for those working in the humanities (arts and social sciences) to masquerade as “identity-less” observers, as amoral asexual beings who exist “outside” their society. Such claims suggest a schizoid split between theory and the context in which it exists, something that is an anathema to today's more reflexive intellectuals, and unacceptable within the epistemologies that guide their work. The world's leading natural scientists are also questioning the supremacy of science over other kinds of knowledge, and acknowledging the importance of other levels of truth and meaning.

Despite a broader developmental condition that has constrained the African higher education establishment, Africa's more critical intellectuals have contributed significantly to the emergence of the alternative theories, analyses and methodologies that have been forged in the crucible of the epistemological, socio-political, cultural and economic conditions of post-coloniality, a challenging environment if ever there was one.

UNIVERSITIES OF LIBERATION

During colonial times, the idea of a modern, African university was first put forward as a liberatory project. When flag independence was achieved, national universities were considered as essential to nationhood as a national anthem or a national army. These days we nostalgically remind ourselves of how the Zambians responded in the 1960s. At his 1966 installation as the first chancellor of the University of Zambia, President Kenneth Kaunda observed:

The University of Zambia is our own university in a very real sense. The story of how the people of this country responded enthusiastically to my appeal for support is a very thrilling one. Humble folk in every corner of our nation – illiterate villagers, barefooted school children, prison inmates and even lepers – gave freely and willingly everything they could, often in the form of fish or maize or chickens. The reason for this extraordinary response was that our people see in the university the hope of a better and fuller life for their children and grandchildren. (cited in Ade Ajayi, Goma and Johnson, 1996)

The generation of African intellectuals in which I would locate myself includes those who have survived the iron grids of military rule, the traumas of numerous civil wars and conflicts, the failures of modernisation, the continued dependency and underdevelopment of the region, and have resisted the continuous undermining and disparagement of African intellectual and conceptual capacities, both at home and abroad.

The independence of so many African nations gave rise to the establishment of hundreds of tertiary institutions. From no more than a handful of colonial colleges, the sector grew to over 300 universities in the 54 nations, and even larger numbers of technical and training colleges. African tertiary enrolment figures have grown from a few thousand in the 1960s to somewhere between four and five million at the present time. However impressive this might seem, Africa still has the weakest higher education system in the world. The gross tertiary enrolment rate amounts to just 3 percent of the eligible age group, by far the lowest in the world, and the demand continues to surge past the available provision.

Since political independence, African intellectuals have also developed scholarly ethics that privilege engagement and responsibility over abstraction and irresponsibility, ethics that define freedom not so much in terms of liberal individualism, but in terms of the collective interests of African people whose struggles demand the freedom to challenges all the legacies of oppression. Much work has

been undertaken to highlight the perils of state repression and censorship and, more recently, to challenge the abstract tyranny of “market forces” manifesting through global policy dictates.

Today, very few would dispute the essential role of higher education to African development and democratisation. Indeed, there is currently a renewal of interest in African universities being reformed so as to facilitate Africa’s participation in globalisation, the global economy and the global village. This seems strange to some of us. Most Africans understand their history as one of extensive involvement with the rest of the world, albeit an involvement on highly unfavourable terms. I refer to immeasurable costs – the loss of lives, the destruction of cultures, the expropriation of natural resources, accumulation of huge debts, and the mortgaging of future prospects.

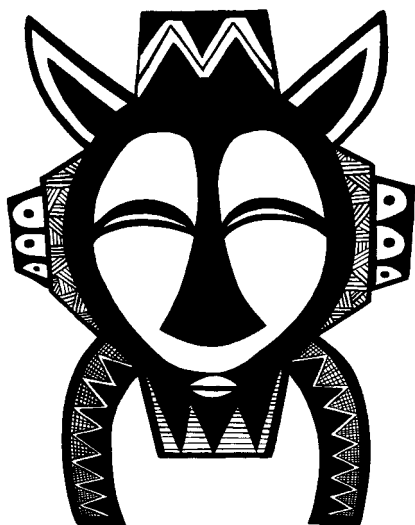
THE ACADEMIC ESTABLISHMENT

There is always a little thought even in the most stupid institutions. – Michel Foucault

The late Ruth First observed that the modern institutions of governance established in colonial Africa were invented at a time when militaristic regimes ruled not so much “by the people or for the people, but *despite* the people.” (First 1970). There is little doubt that a prominent feature of post-colonial governments, too – half of whom were military dictatorships by the 1970s – has been their proclivity for ruling despite the people.

Colonial regimes began with military and economic conquest, followed by military rule. The emphasis was on the army and the establishment of an administrative bureaucracy, with relatively little expenditure afforded to public services, to health, welfare or education. Taxation revenues were sent to London, Paris and other colonial capitals, with local expenditure kept to the bare minimum and dedicated to the imperial agenda of ensuring maximum use of cheap local labour and the efficient extraction of the raw materials needed for their burgeoning industries. The colonial regimes did not view the education of Africans as a profitable investment, and some even viewed it as a direct threat to their supremacy. Only during the later stages were a select number of secondary schools and colonial colleges set up to sustain the colonial enterprise by training African men for the lower echelons of the civil service. Given the almost exclusively male staffing of the colonial state, even less was provided for women, and what there was carried out the domestication of African women – a process designed to produce housewives suited to supporting husbands recruited into the colonial service.

Since flag independence, basic education for the majority has formed the bulk of Africa’s expenditure and emphasis. However, it has always been understood that decolonisation and nation-building required higher levels of intellectual capacity. If ordinary people valued it as a route to a better life, the African leaders and intellectuals of the nationalist era shared an understanding of



education as having a key role to play in the great tasks of nationalism, namely “decolonisation and national sovereignty, national development, democratisation and regional cooperation” (Mkandawire 2000:2). In other words, the African university is not so much a colonial edifice as a post-colonial one, in the sense that it owes its existence to the ending of colonialism. (This was, of course, not the case in South Africa, where the state established a whole array of deliberately racist institutions designed to school the various sectors of the population to uphold apartheid, and where the restructuring and reorientation of the sector into a unified and deracialised system presents pressing challenges.)

The higher education institutions established at independence were strongly associated with the establishment and reproduction of the nation state, and were concerned with their continental and national relevance in a way that distinguished them from the earlier Western models of the “ivory tower”. They pursued indigenisation, massification and the diversification of access in their efforts to address the challenges of national development, but they did so in the context of unforeseen constraints.

AUTHORITARIANISM AND AUSTERITY

The failures of the grand nationalist visions of development are strongly implicated in the deterioration of the post-independence national political consensus. Growing schisms emerged between increasingly autocratic states and their increasingly educated and restive populations. Governments tightened their control over the academies to the extent that they ceased to be key sites for the production of grand visions, critical theories and analyses of development, turning instead to the delivery of technical expertise and policy-bound studies.

One might say that the far-reaching visions of African intellectuals have been sabotaged by two main factors. The first is national and refers to the limits placed on development by authoritarian regimes. The second is international and refers to the increasingly stringent global economic dogma that has displaced more ambitious and holistic visions of development since the “lost decade” of the 1980s. Structural

adjustment and neo-liberal reforms have required massive cuts in all services to the people, but specifically constrained public spending on higher education in ways that have undermined the early progress.

Ironically, these two aspects – political authoritarianism and economic austerity – are not unconnected, but rather mutually enforcing, as the late Claude Ake cogently argued (2000). In Nigeria, for example, it took a return to military dictatorship to impose structural adjustment programmes on a highly resistant populace, and for a long time locally discredited military dictators were propped up and condoned by international financial institutions. Viewing African governments through the narrow lens of debt-repayments, and from the great distance that separated Washington from African people, these institutions regarded the supreme military councils as highly efficient ruling bodies – and *militarily-speaking*, perhaps this was true.

The long-term costs of such truncated vision have been devastating, even to those who formerly supported the atrocious regimes of Mobutu Sese Seko, Idi Amin, Siyad Barre, Sani Abacha and their kind. We now have a long and tragic record of evidence on this kind of “efficiency”: the killing of opponents, the corruption, the increasingly uncivil features of traumatised civil societies, the banalities of primitive accumulation – all the worst excesses of militarised masculinity run amok. In the worst cases, even the national army’s monopoly on weapons and the use of force has given way to more invidious and dispersed forms of militarism: the entrenchment of warlordism, gangsterism, genocide and the concomitant normalisation of perversities such as sexual violence. The responsibility for the development that has produced these conditions must be shared. They have been possible through the numerous military and financial deals that have secured foreign loans and investments that have filled the pockets of these so-called leaders, leaving our economies in ruins. Meanwhile, Africa’s people are still expected to pay off these enormous debts by foregoing the basic public services that might have mitigated their debilitating poverty.

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT?

In the 1980s, the international financial institutions had the effrontery to suggest that Africa did not need universities. This provoked such outrage that the position was soon modified towards a redirection of African higher education. Indeed, the kind of “relevance” now being called for speaks not of responsiveness to development or to regional and national agendas, but rather responsiveness to the labour needs of the global market. “Diversification” no longer refers to greater social inclusivity, but to privatisation, and “access” no longer means access to education for marginalised groups but access to the education “market” by would-be service providers.

The motivations for this reduction and redirection need to be questioned. The world market in higher education now exceeds \$30 billion, and the USA’s free trade advocates are arguing for the complete opening up of higher education

“services” that would see regulation left to the General Agreements on Trade and Services, a move that would perpetuate the USA’s global domination of this lucrative market. Needless to say, Africa will be hardly be able to compete successfully on such an uneven playing field. Analysts have noted that by the mid-1990s, the African region was spending over \$4 million on 100 000 expatriate technical advisers, and the continent was displaying such extensive “development failure” that many governments abandoned any pretence of sovereignty. “Relevance”, “diversity” and “access” have been redefined to articulate the interests of different and more powerful stakeholders.

BEYOND THE ACADEMY

The 1970s saw the emergence of several independent regional scholarly associations and networks that sought to reassert and sustain a regional intellectual agenda. Perhaps the most significant of these are the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) formed in 1973, and the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) formed in 1977. Both are autonomous pan-African networks which reaffirm intellectual traditions that challenge imperial legacies encourage interdisciplinary research and value independent publication. As the established academic institutions deteriorated, these independent networks only gained in importance, ensuring the survival of a vibrant intellectual culture closely attuned to the challenges facing Africans at all levels of their diverse and complex societies.

CODESRIA pursues the intellectual priorities collectively identified by the social science community at the general assembly held every three years for this purpose. Key areas have included development economics and structural adjustment, the military and militarism, social and civil society movements, identity and ethnic politics, democratisation and governance studies, indigenous knowledge, academic freedom, higher education reform and, and since the 1980s, gender studies.

Among the various post-colonial developments that have informed African scholarship, feminism has perhaps been one of the most interesting. Not only has it grown in the context of constraint and decline, but whereas independent African scholarship appears to have begun in African universities and subsequently migrated out of them, gender studies seems to have begun by activists who had left the universities but now shows signs of migrating back into them.

Gender and women’s studies has grown into a transdisciplinary field that has gained ground across Africa in recent years. This can be seen in the growing pool of publications covering a wide range of disciplines and fields, and in the corpus of methodologies designed to challenge both androcentrism in knowledge production and gender oppression in society. A small but growing pool of feminist-inspired scholars and researchers now works in and beyond universities. Their activities epitomise the key commitments of African intellectualism: a focus on continental challenges,

a willingness to work across the disciplines, a strong sense of social responsibility (particularly towards women’s liberation) and an insistence on maintaining the engagement between theory and practice. Most of those working in gender and women’s studies do so in a manner that is motivated by a deeply-felt commitment to gender activism as a key route to effecting democratisation and social justice.

Would African people respond as they did in the 1960s if they were called upon to contribute to the university?

Let me sum up this part of my discussion with a question: would African people respond as they did in the 1960s if they were called upon to contribute to the university? The present situation is one in which African communities might still be likely to scrape their resources together to send a child for higher education. However they would probably be more desperate, more humble in their aspirations. Instead of dreaming that their children could become doctors, teachers, senior government officials or university professors, they are more likely be seeking some quick training in whatever practical skills seem most likely to assist him or her to migrate to Europe or North America, in the sad hope that he or she might send some foreign exchange home to alleviate their extreme poverty, and to pay their basic food and medical bills. There was a time when this meant sending their sons to the university, later it meant sending them to the army. These days it is more likely to mean sending sons and daughters out onto the marketplace to acquire entrepreneurial skills and personal connections.

Perhaps, with the advances in democratisation and the somewhat revised position of international financial institutions, there is an opportunity to retrieve African universities to advance African agendas in the contemporary global arena. Having discussed the constraints placed on the academic establishment, and the mobilisation of alternative scholarly networks, let us now consider the intellectual identities and methodologies that might best be mobilised to this end.

CHALLENGES OF IDENTITY

If the best of Africa’s intellectuals have identified with the goals of regional and national development and committed themselves to an ethic of regional pride and social responsibility towards Africa’s diverse peoples, then we have seen how this kind of intellectual identity has become more precarious over the years, how it has been increasingly deprived of institutional support. Critical thinkers have been driven out of African universities, often by colleagues who defined “responsibility” and “relevance” as obedient service to government, no matter how distant from popular interests government had become. Others chose to leave, rather than to comply with oppressive and tyrannical regimes, and some fled for their lives. The campuses became strife-ridden and, in many countries, critical intellectuals were targeted for surveillance and repression. As the late Claude Ake noted,

the responses were not always those of flight into exile or intellectual militancy:

Some of us cooperated opportunistically with vice-chancellors and other state officials to break students and other colleagues who tried to resist the assault on the universities. Some of us who joined government became zealots of the assault on the universities, wreaking reckless vengeance on former colleagues for largely trivial long-held grievances. When we finally got round to rallying in defence of our institutions and our freedoms, our defence, if it can be dignified with such nomenclature, was unimaginative, fitful and perfunctory (Ake 1996: 21).

“When we finally got round to rallying in defence of our institutions and our freedoms, our defence, if it can be dignified with such nomenclature, was unimaginative, fitful and perfunctory.” – Claude Ake

Others have been no less critical of the inability of the intellectual community to withstand these challenges, drawing our attention to those who served despotic regimes, or pursued destructive impulses within civil society agendas – who became what Bourdieu (1998: 92) describes as “negative intellectuals”. Bangura’s (1994) case study shows the ways in which the Nigerian military created a “technocracy”, an academic elite that supported their activities in various ways. The fact is that many paid – and some are still paying – a high price for pursuing more critical directions.

Nor were the campuses comfortable places for the growing number of women who found their way into universities. Indeed, the contradiction between the growing numbers of highly educated women and the persistence of feudal and conservative gender politics is one of the factors leading to a deepening gender consciousness among women and men.

By the early 1990s, it was already apparent that self-censorship presented particular challenges, and at that time, the engagement or lack of engagement with gender contradictions presented an illustration of this tendency. The pressures on academics to self-censor their work have intensified as the increasing financial dependency of African researchers on consultancies and unequal partnerships has grown over the years. Maintaining intellectual integrity and loyalty to regional, socially responsible and critical intellectual agendas is likely to become more difficult with globalisation and the concomitant commodification of higher education.

African intellectuals of both genders have become increasingly divided and fragmented, finding their institutional positions first politically and then economically precarious, and now increasingly subject to new technologies of professional regulation and surveillance. These take

various forms, but include merit-based ratings systems and subsidy calculations, that are formulaic enough to curtail more critical work and threaten local intellectual autonomy within a global system that is still Western-dominated.

Within this scenario gender studies has grown, not so much because of the feminist challenges that the term implies, but because over 20 years of feminist intervention into the international development industry has created a space for particular kinds of gender discourse, referred to as “the development nexus”. “Women in development”, “gender and development” and “gender mainstreaming” have become such buzz-words that even the most conservative of vice-chancellors is willing to accommodate the presence of something to do with gender on the campus, not least because it sounds as if it might attract some funds.

Africa’s post-colonial intellectuals may generally have complicated identities, but those who are feminists perhaps especially so, given a critical consciousness born out of the contradictions between decades of politically correct constitutional and policy reforms, and the lived reality of persisting inequalities and injustices. Under these circumstances, feminist identities survive in a state of subalternity, perhaps with a degree of discretion, in interstices of male-dominated institutions. Their survival depends on carefully navigating these spaces, on the performative pragmatism required to retain space within what are, after all, public establishments. At the same time, they remain vulnerable, attracting suspicion and hostility. They also continuously risk being compromised by the pragmatic terms on which they have secured marginal spaces within overwhelmingly patriarchal institutions.

CHALLENGES OF EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemologies, like identities, have emerged in challenging and changing contexts. I will not dwell long on the epistemologies of the colonial era, for these have been competently dealt with already. However, it is in the aftermath of colonialism, and in the context of continuing inequalities in the global politics of knowledge production, that post-colonial epistemologies have emerged. They therefore derive from a body of work rooted in colonial contexts, and which owes much to anti-imperialist, nationalist, feminist and post-independence politics. As such, post-colonial thought is inherently critical, focusing on

forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world: the politics of anti-colonialism and neo-colonialism, race, gender, nationalisms, class and ethnicities define its terrain... post-colonial theory’s intellectual commitment will always be to seek to develop new forms of engaged theoretical work that contribute to the creation of dynamic ideological and social transformation... directed intellectual production that seeks to articulate itself with different forms of emancipatory politics... (Young 2001:11)

Post-colonial and feminist epistemologies are, in other words, therefore critical and activist, committed to political, social and cultural transformation of the societies in which

they are located. Given the conditions under which they have emerged, they are also internationalist, demanding transnational engagements with the conditions of globalisation, and transdisciplinary, sustained engagements with social phenomena. Feminist epistemologies do not seek to propound grand, universal theories, so much as to develop more discrete grounded approaches to conceptualisation that will in the end develop qualified generalisations and theorisations that are targeted, partial and particular.

Considering the dominant organisation of knowledge into science and the humanities, and the official privileging of the natural sciences and positivist modes of social science over the humanities, such approaches have found little space in resource-starved African universities, relying on continental and transnational networks, including transnational feminist networks.

African perspectives remind us that this is an organisation of knowledge that has been deeply complicit in imperialism, and financed through capitalist expansionism and military interests. It has long been argued that the disciplines lack intellectual justification, given the interconnected nature of social, political and cultural life. Nonetheless, the irrefutable Western dominance of the world's educational systems has seen this particular organisation of knowledge and its accompanying methodologies internationalised and exported, effectively globalised. It has also been absolutist,

with "truth" and "knowledge" emerging as universal discursive regimes intolerant of alternative epistemologies and world views, and which has subjected the colonised world to epistemic violence – the denigration of non-Western philosophies and their displacement by discursive regimes that reinvent "Africa" and the "Orient".

In African contexts, the hierarchies of knowledge production have also coincided with an era of militarism. However, African militarism has not fuelled an industrial revolution. Instead, in the context of economic and political underdevelopment and dependency, it has played out with consequences that warrant our careful and critical attention. Science and scientific cultures do not exist in a vacuum, and its technological manifestations and applications are deeply mediated by politics and identities, including those of gender. Remaining alert to the human consequences of technological advance is an essential aspect of cultural development. It is clear that post-colonial and feminist readings of scientific development have much to offer. They remind us that the most pressing challenges of our times require more than purely scientific responses – consider the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the widespread abuse of women, genocide, the multiple social and cultural consequences of conflict, or the deeply gendered politics of today's war-making machines.

The contradiction between the growing numbers of highly educated women and the persistence of feudal and conservative gender politics is one of the factors leading to a deepening gender consciousness among women and men.

Epistemological changes are subversive by definition: they do not fit into pre-established canons or paradigms. The same might be said of social changes. Neither can be "engineered" in quite the way that positivistic epistemology assumes. This is because of the complexity and unpredictability of human beings and social processes, and the influence of identities, cultures and human agency – all of them gendered – on even the most scientifically planned policy frameworks.

CLOSING REMARKS

Because of the ongoing nature of these cultural, institutional and methodological challenges, I have no intention of concluding this discussion. The matter of intellectual development deserves to be kept open, in view of the enormous challenges already endured, and those that we still face.

Let me end by suggesting that Africa's intellectuals, by virtue of their difficult and complicated post-colonial experience, are in some ways uniquely positioned to engage critically with the contemporary challenges of global development. I have further suggested that the post-colonial and feminist



Felix Dlangamandla © Sowetan

epistemologies currently shaping African thought have much to contribute to the re-positioning and reactivation of the critical capacities likely to contribute to the future revitalisation and development of a regionally-focused and organic intellectual culture. Whether this can best be pursued within or beyond the academic establishment remains to be seen.

If cultural identity is a fundamental condition for autonomy, and if development cooperation should indeed help the recipient countries to achieve greater independence, then the possibilities for partnership become clearer. They hinge around supporting independent intellectual development. Because of the enormous strategic importance of public education in national and regional development, I hope that Africa's more liberatory intellectual traditions – post-colonial and feminist – will find both space and resources, not just at the margins of our beleaguered institutions, but at their very heart. Here they might just provide us with the creative cultural resources to inspire us to think beyond the

confines of the present towards a global future that is more imaginative and more just than the present.

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THE THREE FACES OF THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

BY ANTHONY BARNETT

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The World Social Forum (WSF) is about three things, a young Frenchman told me as we were coming back together from Nairobi, Kenya. He had been to most of them since they first began in Porto Alegre in Brazil in January 2001. They are, he said, about protesting, networking and proposing.

When they began, before 9/11, the protest was against the World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos, which appeared to celebrate the end of government and the triumph of market-driven "neo-liberal" capitalism and its rampant inequality. It was in the wake of the battle of Seattle in November 1999 that disrupted the world-trade talks. The creation of the WSF as an "anti-Davos" ensured that the new century began with a multi-national stand in the name of the peoples of the world against the presumptions of the world economic order.

Since 2001, until this year, the WSFs have grown and, undoubtedly, shifted the agenda, making sure that the big battalions have not had it all their own way. It has been a remarkable achievement. In 2004, the WSF was held in Mumbai with an enormous mobilisation of Indian organisations. In 2005, it returned to Porto Alegre. In 2006,

it went regional or "polycentric": to Caracas in Venezuela, Karachi in Pakistan and Bamako in Mali. One reason for this was that the decision had been taken to hold the next full world forum in Kenya, giving the organisers plenty of time to prepare against the backdrop of poor infrastructure.

Thus, this year, global civil society and Africa planned to come together for the seventh World Social Forum in Nairobi, 20-25 January 2007, close to the great rift valley from which the human species first emerged in triumph on its own two legs. The hope was that, in 2007, the social movements of the world would inspire African civil society to stand up and show its strength, wisdom and the music of its needs.

For, unlike the mere protest mobilisations such as Seattle in 1999, WSFs are designed as a form of positive protest, exemplary sites of solidarity with the struggles of the poor, to give voice to the "have-nots".

PROTESTING POWER

Such aspirations were pitifully unfulfilled at the Kasarani stadium complex, which was hired for the WSF 2007 in

Nairobi. As a mobilisation against the dominant order, it was a public-relations disaster. The main headlines that it won around the world, in so far as it gained any, was the protest *against* it by the hungry poor of the Kibera slums (made famous by the film *The Constant Gardener*) who stormed the gates against the high price of entry and the rip-off cost of the food.

The poor from the slums were headed by a young spokeswoman, Wangui Mbatia, who possesses astonishing political talent. Alas, she had to direct it inwards against an appalling organisation that closed off the WSF from Kenyan society, when she should have been supported by it to present her calm and determined eloquence to the wider world.

NETWORKING AFRICA

In its second role, as an event for networking, I was impressed. In his account of his disappointment with what he felt was a lack of politics, Firoze Manji in *Pambazuka News* considers whether Nairobi's WSF was "just another NGO fair". But where else can the far-flung universe of all those who are working for a better world come together? In advance, the organisers boasted that 150 000 would attend. When it opened, they claimed 50 000. I doubt if more than 20 000 participated, including Kenyans (but not including the water vendors).

But still, to get 20 000 people from around the world to equatorial Africa is an achievement. A wonderful, friendly variety of views, arguments, dress, interests, beliefs and backgrounds came together in many conversations.

Below the radar of the public platforms – from the Habitat International Coalition to the network on water resources, and women's rights to human rights – new connections were being made and a younger generation was assessing the intercontinental scene.

To take one example, a network of activists in local authorities working for social inclusion asked the organisers for the facility to hold a day-long seminar. When they got no reply, they met off-site in a hotel; 150 participated from all over Africa (including South Africa, Mali, Benin and Mozambique) and beyond. The connections made between committed local-government administrators will pay off in all kinds of ways.

However, there was no participant from Kenya – a telling comment on the failure of the Kenyan organisers, not only with respect to running (or failing to run) the forum itself but, more important, in terms of the impact the gathering was supposed to make within Kenyan society. A historic opportunity to activate the voices of Africa was lost, however considerable the links being made by the networks that were already organised.

As Adam Ma'anit of *New Internationalist* wrote in his blog at the start of the forum, there seemed to be a corporate and commercial air to its organisation that undermined its aims.

Firoze Manji also complained that it was the larger, established and therefore (with the exception of the magnificent Action Aid) northern NGOs who made the running. Those who had the resources made the best impact. He rightly singled out the Human Dignity and Human Rights Caucus (HDRHC) who provided a printed and extremely full programme. So did the Germans, with a full-colour programme (in German and English) of all 65 events they were staging.

The churches were out in force. While he was registering, a friend found himself next to a Jesuit who was bringing over 50 participants from Burkina Faso. Caritas, the huge Catholic network, created the Caritas-All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Ecumenical Platform, "to facilitate the participation of the churches of Africa at the WSF". Its secretary-general, Duncan MacLaren, stated: "It is important for us to be involved in this process to contribute to the globalisation of solidarity rather than the globalisation of inequality." Their presence led to intense debates over reproductive rights

The hope was that, in 2007, the social movements of the world would inspire African civil society to stand up and show its strength, wisdom and the music of its needs.

THINKING BEYOND

This brings us to the third role of the WSF. After the protests and the networking, what does it propose? Thomas Ponniah put this question to a small session on the future of politics: "For seven years we have built a global consciousness. The question is, what next?"

The last meeting I attended was a gathering of all the social movements, organised by Christophe Aguiton of ATTAC. Trevor Ngwane of the South African Anti-Privatisation Forum led the proceedings. About a thousand people initially thronged the spacious double tent. There was much condemnation of the commercialisation of the forum, about which a Brazilian speaker said, "(It) is not enough that our cause be pure and just, purity and justice must also be within us."

But an answer to Ponniah's question did not come. In the different specialist areas, there was strategic thinking. In smaller sessions, there were arguments for engagement. Emira Woods insisted that "grassroots campaigns, national campaigns and global campaigns can influence government." In a dedicated session on implementing United Nations Resolution 1325 to enhance the role of women, Cora Weiss called for "participation, critical thinking and a holistic approach that engages with the issues..."

There was participation in Nairobi. The holistic approach was often just knee-jerk, "oppose all forms of exploitation".

At that overall, movement level, there was little if any strategic thinking.

As a result, this year, Davos won. Since that first WSF in 2001, China has doubled its wealth and output; India and Turkey have grown theirs by more than half. Then, Google had only recently got its initial funding. Today, the argument on climate change is over. For all the glitz and its versions of hot air, these huge changes are being seriously mapped and assessed at Davos. In Nairobi, they were addressed only peripherally, if at all.

Larry Elliott, the economics editor of the *Guardian*, sensed at Davos “more than a hint of a return to the future: a scramble for Africa, a sidelining of civil society, and geopolitical concerns trumping human rights.” If so, there needs to be a World Social Forum that continues to set out its different claim on the global future in a way the world notices. Its international committee should be very concerned that this is slipping away.

It has already decided that next year the forum will distribute itself everywhere, to consist entirely of local events and actions. Could this provide the opening for original, critical thinking about how to achieve its aim of making “another world possible”? Or will it simply ensure that the WSF disappears completely from view, while the big NGOs find some other venue to continue the invaluable work of global networking?

THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM Q & A:

Questions and answers about the movement that seeks to challenge corporate globalisation

From an article compiled by Karoline Kemp, Patrick Burnett and Joy Olivier for *Pambazuka News*, 26 January 2006

What is the goal of the WSF?

The goal is not to produce agreements on specific policy positions, but to offer a space for dialogue and engagement, with resources to strategise, network and plan joint ventures for the future. It has been successful in creating a loose network of forces around the world who advocate for social, political and economic justice. It has often been called an “anti-globalisation” movement, but is in fact one of the most globalised movements in the history of social justice.

There also seems to be a lot of criticism over its form, structure and decision-making.

In order to preserve the plural and open consensus style that is the mandate of the forum, the goal of creating a bottom-up, grassroots event is often planned in an extremely heavy-handed, top-down manner. Some critics argue that the WSF is not transparent or accountable, let alone democratic, and that their Charter of Principles, size, lack of resources and goals of planning massive events make organising

unmanageable. The movement has also been criticised as simply a popularised gathering of wealthy NGOs and funders. Past forums have also been dominated by certain interests, leading to debates about whether the WSF represents revolutionaries or reformists.

What were the focus areas this year?

Topics included war and militarisation, security and peace; globalised neo-liberalism; aggression against peasantry; the alliance between patriarchal and neo-liberal systems; culture, media and communication; destruction of ecosystems, biological diversity and resources control; international order and the role of the UN; international trade, debt and economic and social policies; social fights, human rights, social organisations and political rights; alternatives. The areas to be discussed are meant to be kept quite loose, and can be kept extremely localised or made to be more general depending on the needs of the participants.

What global solutions is the WSF generating?

The WSF attracts thousands of people from across the world who work in many different areas and have diverse outlooks, not only about the problems that the world faces, but also in their beliefs about how these problems should be tackled. This has made the articulation of united policy positions difficult and therefore led to frustration in some quarters. Before this year’s forum, there were calls from the likes of CIVICUS secretary-general Kumi Naidoo for “different civil society actors to find common ground, engage in joint strategising, and plan joint activities for the future”. But, say founders of the forum such as Chico Whitaker, this is not what the forum was intended for in the first place: “The primary purpose of the forum is to create a space for free dialogue between social movements, and that its openness should not be compromised by confining participants to any narrow statement of intent.”

Who funds the WSF?

It’s very difficult to determine who pays for the WSF. The website cites no sponsors, and it is hard to find any organisations or funding bodies highlighting their role as sponsors. The WSF charter is silent regarding what kinds of international sources of funding may be tapped. The registration fees are minimal. All organisations participating in the WSF are asked to contribute towards a translation solidarity fund, which is intended to help cover the WSF’s translation budget.

Are grassroots organisations represented?

The question of grassroots representation is quite closely tied with that of funding. Organisations working on the ground are usually far more cash-strapped than those that network, train, research or sponsor them, and the former usually (hopefully) spend their money largely on meeting the direct needs of their beneficiaries. Several private foundations did manage to sponsor representatives of grassroots women’s organisations to attend the events in Bamako, enabling many to make voices heard that are frequently absent in international “jamborees”.

MAINSTREAMING EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

BY MAXWELL M MKWEZALAMBA

The author is the African Union (AU) commissioner for economic affairs. This report was presented at the 39th Session of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 14-15 April 2006

BACKGROUND

Unemployment and underemployment continue to be pressing economic and social issues in both developed and developing countries. High levels of employment are believed to be one of the most direct channels to achieve economic growth and reduce poverty. In general, unemployment and underemployment are considered to be, among others, the direct causes of poverty in Africa and the rest of the world. According to the available statistics, the average rate of unemployment in 2003 was around 10.5 percent in Africa. The trend over the past decades shows that unemployment in Africa has not significantly improved over the past 10 years.

It should be noted that the current process of globalisation presents both challenges and opportunities for Africa. However, this has so far marginalised the continent in a manner that exacerbates problems of poverty, unemployment and even underemployment. Social and economic policies should aim at addressing these challenges if the continent is to reduce poverty by half by 2015.

The general level and rate of unemployment (both indices of poverty levels) are very high in Africa, with the youth and women being the most adversely affected groups. The unemployed also include university graduates, school leavers and dropouts, and highly skilled and experienced professionals. This has been one of the causes of the serious net brain drain experienced by the continent.

The major ramifications associated with unemployment, particularly youth unemployment could be explosive and be a source of civil and social unrest. Recently, the world witnessed unparalleled demonstrations by the youth in France on issues of employment. Africa is no exception to such social upheavals if no effort is made to remedy the unemployment question.

THE ROLE THE AFRICAN UNION: THE OUAGADOUGOU

DECLARATION, PLAN OF ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM

A decision was taken at the 2nd Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government in Maputo, Mozambique, in July 2002 requesting the African Union Commission (AUC) to convene an extraordinary summit on employment and poverty alleviation. Following this decision, an extraordinary summit was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in September 2004, specifically to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and underemployment on the continent. During this extraordinary summit, a declaration, plan of action and follow-up mechanism were adopted, calling upon member states to place employment at the centre of their economic and social policies.

The plan of action provides key objectives and guidelines for member states to formulate their own mechanisms based on their national needs and specificities. Its primary objective is to reverse the current trends of pervasive and persistent poverty, unemployment and underemployment in the continent. The key priority areas of the plan of action include:

- ensuring political leadership and commitment to create an environment of good governance for investment
- promotion of the agricultural sector, infrastructure and rural development
- development of an appropriate framework for integration and harmonisation of economic and social policies
- improving and strengthening the existing social protection schemes and extending them to workers currently excluded
- empowerment of women by integrating them into labour markets and to enable them to participate in development of national policies
- capacity building for public and private institutions dealing with employment promotion
- allocation of adequate resources to sectors which can generate more jobs

- building international cooperation to enhance international support on the employment agenda
- promotion of regional and economic cooperation among the regional economic communities (RECs) in order to expand intra- and inter-regional trade
- targeting and empowering vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, aged persons and working poor
- mobilisation of resources at national, regional and international levels.



The follow-up mechanism outlines the modalities of assessing and evaluating progress being made in the implementation of the plan of action. It also designates the member states and the RECs as the principals responsible for implementation of the plan of action. Achievement of this agenda will require the support of international partners in adopting clear policies aiming at increasing support for employment agenda within the context of the AU and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) programme. The Summit mandated the AU to coordinate the follow-up mechanisms and evaluate the implementation of the declaration and plan of action at the continental level.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE?

Consultative meeting with the RECs and co-operating partners

In pursuing its mandate, the AU with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Regional Office and some United Nations (UN) agencies convened a consultative meeting with the RECs and cooperating partners to popularise the Summit outcomes. The meeting was aimed at strengthening and enhancing cooperation of the AUC, ILO and the RECs on the follow-up to the Ouagadougou Declaration. The meeting adopted the following:

- guidelines to member states and RECs to follow up on the Declaration
- a reporting format
- a roadmap for immediate actions.

The Fourth Ordinary Session of Labour and Social Affairs Commission

The AU convened its Fourth Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission in Cairo, Egypt, from 22 to 27 April, 2006. It was during this session that the AU presented its first biennial report on the status of the implementation of the plan of action for the promotion of employment and poverty alleviation since its adoption in Ouagadougou in 2004.

The AU report alludes to the efforts made both by African countries and international partners in addressing the challenges facing employment. At regional level, the AU is placing additional resources to implement and follow-up the Ouagadougou Summit Decisions. This is being jointly supported by the governments of Sweden and Norway and in collaboration with ILO, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), RECs and member states. Further, the AUC and the ILO have created a joint task force comprising the AUC, the ILO and other partners for strategic purposes to assist the Commission in following-up the Ouagadougou Summit Decisions.

The Declaration on Financing Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Development issued at the end of the meeting:

- calls for holistic strategies to be developed on the need to promote faster, sustained, and employment intensive growth
- requests ministers of finance, planning and development, in consultation with labour/employment ministers, social partners and other national stakeholders to continue to mainstream employment into national development strategies, especially at the macro-economic, social and political levels
- recommends strengthening mechanisms of social dialogue at national level in order to provide a mechanism for achieving synergies, especially in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national economic and social development goals
- calls upon member states to make annual budgetary allocations towards employment creation and poverty reduction
- calls upon the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Development to take into account the fact that the creation of decent work remains the decisive instrument for addressing poverty on a sustainable basis
- requests the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to develop mechanisms of ensuring that member states, RECs, and international organisations are facilitated to adequately address poverty and employment, with the Ouagadougou Summit commitments being the benchmarks

- recommends the scaling-up of social-sector expenditures in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- proposes greater synergy between finance, planning and economic development ministries and labour, employment and social affairs ministries towards deepening national capacity to address the challenges of unemployment while recognising the unique institutional competencies of labour ministries
- recommends that international organisations, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN system align and harmonise their actions in line with the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalisation.

Achievement of this agenda will require the support of international partners in adopting clear policies aiming at increasing support for employment agenda within the context of the AU and Nepad.

Identification of Priority Areas within the Plan of Action for Implementation in 2006

With regard to the plan of action, the AU has identified three priority areas to be implemented by the end of 2006. These are the following:

- analysis and advocacy for setting up integrated employment promotion policies and programmes to cover all sub-regions of the continent
- undertaking studies and organising a workshop on the informal sector in Africa and how it contributes to employment creation and poverty alleviation
- exploring the possibility of a social protection mechanism in Africa.

African Plenary on Poverty Reduction Strategies and the MDGs

The AU and the ECA, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), jointly organised a high level African plenary on poverty reduction strategies (PRSPs) and the MDGs in Cairo, Egypt, from March 26- 28, 2006. The plenary was attended by ministers and senior officials from ministries of finance, planning and development and social sectors. The plenary was also attended by international partners.

Discussions during the plenary revealed that many African countries are aligning their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) to the Ouagadougou Summit outcomes. The plenary emphasised that Africa's efforts to achieve the MDGs would be hampered unless it generated higher rates of broad-based growth; improved ownership, leadership and accountability in the

formulation and execution of its development programs; developed integrated capacity building strategies for the implementation of PRSPs; and worked with donor partners to design an aid architecture that reduces transactions costs and supports the implementation of national policy priorities as reflected in PRSPs.

The following are among the achievements made by some of the countries:

- the president of the Republic of Mali has made youth employment his first national priority
- the government of Ghana's 2006 budget, entitled "Investing in People, Investing in Jobs", allocated 1.5 trillion cedis – or approximately \$110 million – for a national youth employment programme
- the World Bank and the ILO are currently working in Ethiopia to design appropriate and effective employment and labour market policies, with the aim of designing a three-year poverty reduction plan which will consider job creation as a core element and as key to poverty alleviation
- Gabon has made employment a national priority
- Chad has prepared a post-summit national action plan on employment
- in Madagascar, a national plan for employment promotion has been adopted and a national committee for employment promotion and poverty reduction has been established
- in Tanzania, the president has directed the ministry of labour, employment and youth development to identify potential areas that would hasten the creation of over a million jobs annually
- in Uganda, the government, through the ministry of gender, labour and social development has formulated a national action plan on youth employment.

Commitments by Member States

It can be argued that the Ouagadougou Summit led to the setting in motion of a number of activities in various countries. These activities ranged from ministerial meetings, consultative meetings, dissemination seminars and media coverage to put in place follow-up implementation committees. To date, implementation mechanisms have been put in place in a number of countries, or where tripartite or tripartite-plus structures already existed, they have been revitalised. In addition, a number of governments in Africa are taking initiatives to place employment at the centre of economic and social policies.

THE WAY FORWARD

Consultative Meetings

The AUC is planning to organise a number of consultative meetings at sub-regional level aimed at popularising the Summit outcomes and enhancing cooperation of the member states on the follow-up to the Ouagadougou Declaration. The meetings will involve ministers of trade and industry, ministers of finance and economic planning and ministers of labour and social welfare, employers organisations, and trade unions.

Implementation of key priority areas

In addition, the key priority areas of the plan of action identified by the AU will be implemented in 2006. These are the following:

- analysis and advocacy for setting up integrated employment promotion policies and programmes covering all the sub-regions
- studies and a workshop on the informal sector in Africa and how it contributes to employment creation and poverty alleviation
- exploring the possibility of a social protection mechanism in Africa.

To date, implementation mechanisms have been put in place in a number of countries. In addition, a number of governments in Africa are taking initiatives to place employment at the centre of economic and social policies.

Monitoring the achievement of the MDGs

The AUC in collaboration with member states, the RECs and the ECA will develop a mechanism for monitoring progress toward the achievement of the MDGs in Africa. As mandated by the AU Assembly in July 2005 in Sirte, Libya, the AUC will submit regular progress reports on the attainment of the MDGs by African countries to AU summits for political guidance.

Establishment of a Statistical Unit

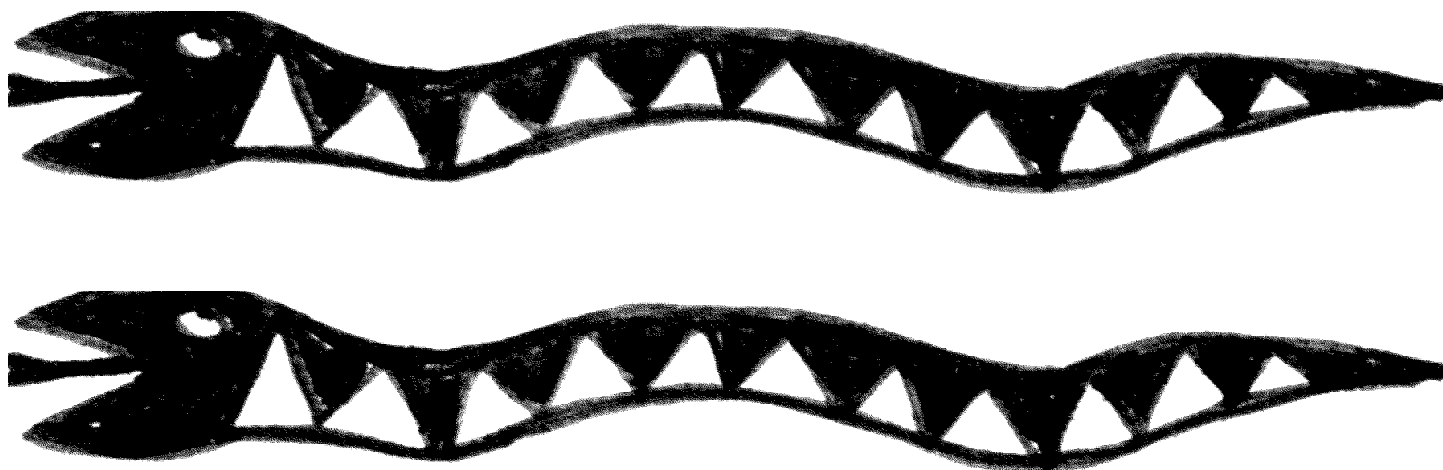
Given the need to have reliable, timely and quality statistics, the AUC will continue with its work on setting-up a statistical unit within the Commission to collect, analyse and harmonise statistics in Africa. In doing this, it will

work closely with the member states, the RECs, the ECA and the African Development Bank. In addition, the AU will advocate for reliable, timely and quality statistics in Africa.

CONCLUSION

The fundamental issue in dealing with labour markets is the creation of more, well-paid and decent jobs. The experience has been that formal sectors provide limited number of jobs while informal sectors usually face the challenge of low earning and low productivity. Incentives and a conducive environment for investment remain a challenge in many African countries. In order to face the challenges of unemployment, poverty and underemployment, the AU wishes to lay emphasis on the following points:

- member states should formulate their national budgetary allocations towards employment creation and poverty reduction
- employment issues must be mainstreamed in PRSs and national development strategies
- in achieving the MDGs, social sector expenditures need to be scaled up
- greater cooperation is needed among ministers of finance, planning and economic development, labour and vocational training, trade and industry, and employment and social affairs towards deepening national capacity to address challenges of unemployment
- countries that have not yet done so must put to good use the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action and start implementing them immediately
- there is need to develop an appropriate framework for integration and harmonisation of economic and social policies
- women must be integrated in labour markets and participate in development of national policies
- there is a need to target and empower vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, aged persons and working poor
- partners should align their programmes with the Ouagadougou Declaration and Action Plan.



DEMOCRACY IN THE DRC

BY ERNEST WAMBA DIA WAMBA

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Professor Wamba dia Wamba presents a critical analysis of the concept of democracy in the age of globalisation, which equates with Western political democracy. He provides historical context to the recent elections in the DRC, in which outside influences continued to play a large part in the outcome of the elections, and concludes with reflections about the future of the democracy project in the DRC.

THE WORLD CONTEXT: HOW DO WE ORIENT OUR THINKING ABOUT DEMOCRACY?

Democracy, or more accurately democratic materialism, has become the dominant ideology. It is increasingly obligatory to be a democrat. It has almost become the single political thought. Democratic materialism asserts that there are only bodies marked by languages, and nothing else. There is only one market, one politics, and one economy. In brief, there is only one order of things. That is all there is and that is how it is (Alain Badiou, 2006). There is no exception, unless it is to be totalitarian or terrorist. Bodies are interchangeable, and languages and opinions are equivalent. Anything unlike the only order of things is effectively and intrinsically anti-democratic. Democracy equals the Western political order of things. It is compulsory to have Western-style democracy.

Is there a political truth? How do we give an account of it? We are in the epoch of a democratising mission, following the old civilising mission. Like the latter, set to impose, by force if need be, democracy on other countries. At the beginning of the war in Iraq, some people in the US were wondering whether or not one country can build democracy for another country. Whether or not the people of a country knew how to build democracy for other countries. There were no conclusive answers to those crucial questions. Democracy has become a package of “techniques” – constitutions, electoral mechanisms, management systems – to be exported or imposed, top-down, on Third World countries. In these countries, the *demos* has been reduced to voters who are passive, without civic education. How is this a break from the liberal world: responsible for Atlantic slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism; a world created by slavers, colonialists and neo-colonialists?

It is also true that the nation state as the horizon of political revolution, or a state policy of war – in the sense of war as the continuation of state policy through other

means, and thus of a short duration – to get another other nation state to agree, is no longer possible. Ultra-liberalism or neo-liberalism is opposed to nation states, and promotes weak states to which are assigned minimal functions of keeping order, to allow people to buy into its consumer governance. War is now conceived as opposing good and evil, waged to eradicate evil. Such conception calls for the intervention of law and crime. Proxy figures are identified as being responsible for crimes: Saddam Hussein, Milosovic, Interahamwe, and Bin Laden. Some Cold War crusaders have suddenly become proxy figures. War against evil tends to be very protracted, even when the axis of evil is identified. It is not clear what victory in this war consists of. Is it imposed democracy? Is it the elimination of the criminal figure: the hanging of Saddam Hussein, for Iraq? Is it the destruction of a nation state and its people, or the grabbing of its strategic resources? The world becomes divided in a Manichean manner: good democracy versus bad democracy (the recent experience of the Palestinians); good Muslim versus bad Muslim (Mamdani 2004); good states versus rogue states; democrats versus terrorists. And are these the fuelling dynamics of globalisation?

There may be good cases of the rule of law – with some unjust laws, of course – but they are not democracies respecting the rights of the uncounted marginalised groups. Should it not be the excluded people of those democracies that may help us orient our thinking about democracy?

Democracy is reduced to a certified formality. It is rare that protests against the democracy of covered-up fraud and vote-buying, promoted through unjust laws, are taken seriously. It does not matter whether or not voters have seen or read the basic texts of the constitution or electoral laws, especially since voting is the sole way, for most voters, of having access to some resources. Has being an observer not become a very satisfying activity? Electoral campaigns have ceased to be a way of debating different visions of “national

interest”, instead becoming a way of distributing things (T-shirts, food, appliances, etc.) and money. When you have nothing to wear, you capitalise on collecting t-shirts. When you have nothing to live on, you sell your vote for money. Is the one who buys your vote your representative in the institutions?

On the other hand, the national liberation mode of politics, which opened up with the independence of India, died with the assassination of Salvador Allende and Amílcar Cabral in 1973. That was the most active period of transformative politics the world has seen – with leaders such as Ghandi, Mao Tse-tung, Fidel Castro, Frantz Fanon, Ho Chi Minh. The imposition of draconian structural adjustment programmes on impoverished countries, and the recent very aggressive imperial interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti and Lebanon, and the protracted resistance of people in those countries are reawakening hope for other active, transformative politics in the world. Qualitatively different democratic elections have been taking place in Latin America, for example. The protracted character of resistance in the Middle East is exposing the bankruptcy of the dominant ideology of democracy. Will democracy cease to be closely tied up with a package of conditionalities?

What was supposed to be an Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) practically became UN-style conflict resolution, in which the facilitating process becomes the initiating or imposing process. When crisis deepens and crisis alleviators or pro-change people and pro-status quo people are put on equal footing, it becomes difficult to reach consensus about where to begin and where to end.

Different experiences of democratic constructions could be identified in the history of democracy. Each has had specific obstacles, targets and concrete results. The US experience, for example, was born out of the genocide of indigenous people, the enslavement and discrimination of black people, the civil war, white Anglo-Saxon supremacist bigotry, imperial new-frontierism, male chauvinism. The Indian experience has confronted the caste system, the external imperial pressures and colonial heritage, active religious differences. Today, most of western European democratic experiences still confront the colonial heritage, the effects of neo-colonial interventionism; the “multi-nationalisation” of their nations is worsened by a refusal to deal correctly with the so-called “*sans papiers*”, or immigrants and foreign-born workers. The new-frontierist US has gone so far as to build a wall to keep potential immigrants out. Most of these democracies, refusing to count every person as being worth one, no more or no less, cannot really be said to be truly democratic. There

may be good cases of the rule of law – with some unjust laws, of course – but they are not democracies respecting the rights of the uncounted marginalised groups. Should it not be the excluded people of those democracies that may help us orient our thinking about democracy?

THE IMPORTED DEMOCRATIC PROJECT OF THE DRC

Is there a Congolese project of building democracy in the DRC? No serious debate has really dealt with the question. Building democracy should, normally, focus on the formation of the *demos*, the empowerment of its capacity to make sound choices, its mastery of the crucial issues of what a good democratic state would be like.

From the very beginning, with the precipitous granting of independence on 30 June 1960 by Belgium, the Congolese have never had a chance, by themselves and without external interference, to debate the parameters of the definition of the crisis they have protractedly been facing since the crusaders of the Cold War dismantled the nationalist regime and assassinated Patrice Lumumba. Even the so-called Sovereign National Conference (SNC), singling out Mobutu as the cause of every evil, ended up failing to grasp the significance of the impact of the Cold War on the country. It finally adopted a proposal by Herman Cohen – a former US assistant secretary of state for African affairs – to keep Mobutu in power and reduce only his powers. Such a solution, later on, turned into a farce.

New rebellions could not have been avoided. These claimed to seek solutions to the crisis. Each time, proposals of solutions came from without, often offered as necessity for the democratic project. Once in power, AFDL (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo), for example, kept postponing the implementation of its so-called democratic project. Another rebellion, claiming to be more committed to implement its democratic project emerged, this time also supported by African regional states and great personalities.

What appeared, up to the signing of the Lusaka Accord in 1999, to be an exclusively African initiative for the resolution of the crisis, often led to civil wars, rebellions or external armed interventions, and got hijacked by the forces of international community.

These, according to the late Mwalimu Nyerere, were responsible for imposing a bad solution in the person of Mobutu, who eventually destroyed the country. The financial package required to implement such a “solution” could only come from the international community; the African states could not afford it.

What was supposed to be an Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) practically became UN-style conflict resolution, in which the facilitating process becomes the initiating or imposing process. “Dialogue” becomes technical and hierarchical. It ended up with CIAT (the International Committee to Accompany the Transition) almost getting power of veto over the transition. Without this external

pressure, no objective of the transition could have been achieved. When crisis deepeners and crisis alleviators or pro-change people and pro-status quo people are put on equal footing, it becomes difficult to reach consensus about where to begin and where to end – the main task of the transition. Mistrust among the actors was rampant. Of the five retained objectives of the transition, only two could be said to have been fulfilled: the setting up of the transitional institutions, and the rushed electoral organisation. All the others were either half done, or not done at all. National truth and reconciliation, for example, hardly took off.

The process of drafting the constitution was fundamentally withheld from the would-be Congolese *demos*. Senatorial consultations with targeted social categories were either rushed or very abstract – asking people to make choices on concepts they barely understood: form of the state, semi-presidential regime, federalism. Senators refrained, supposedly to not influence the results, from explaining things. Two days before the referendum vote, only 500 000 copies of the constitution were printed for 25 million voters. Of those actually in circulation, four different texts of the constitution could be identified. This explains the frustrations of the lady who was asking for the picture of “Mister Referendum” to help her decide how to cast the vote.

A necessary educational debate over the drafting of the constitution did not take place. The basic issues needing to be addressed by the constitution were hardly debated, namely: what sort of state are we in, and what do we want it to be in the future? What sort of relations do we want to have with the outside world? How should power be organised for it to be responsive to the basic needs and aspirations of the large majority of the people, in the present, and in the future? How can we empower the people to control the institutions? Debates on the variant experiences of constitutionalism were not entertained, except for the desire to copy the constitutions of others, on the grounds that modernity can only come from elsewhere.

The most creative experiences were hardly identified or discussed to help us draft a better constitution.

Because of the scarcity of fundamental debates involving all strata of society, laws tended to be tailored according to known possible candidates rather than for the entire foreseeable future. Crucial elements, such as levels of education, moral integrity and capacity for leadership, were not considered in a country torn apart by negative values and the exclusion of competency and workmanship. Looters and people who have become rich for being close to the treasury dominated the institutions. High financial fees were required, by law, to be paid by standing candidates, which excluded decent fellows who did not have a chance to loot.

Although laws required that debates were part the electoral campaigns, no serious debates took place. A national consensus over what situation our country was in, what must be done to get it out of it, with whom to work, and the

kind of leadership capacities to promote, was not achieved. The fact that our country is in a catastrophic and urgent situation, an exceptional situation calling for an exceptional response, was never addressed. Elections were an occasion for each person to display as much financial capacity as possible to get a post in a scheme of power sharing. Some people who could afford it got themselves elected to different posts. More accurately, they bought themselves different posts, and placed their relatives or clients in them.

It was not possible, due to the way the transition was unfolded, for the formation and development of a Popular National Democratic Coalition (PNDC) to be created. Such a coalition could have been the vehicle to promote necessary debates on pertinent issues. Etienne Tshisekedi's UDPS (Democratic Union for Social Progress), still suffering from oppositional politics – “what those in power are doing is no good, when we get in power, things will be better” – could not help organise such a coalition. To its credit, it did call for the need to have consultations at the summit to agree on the best way of organising the elections to everybody's satisfaction. But nothing came out of it, and UDPS stayed away from participating in the elections.

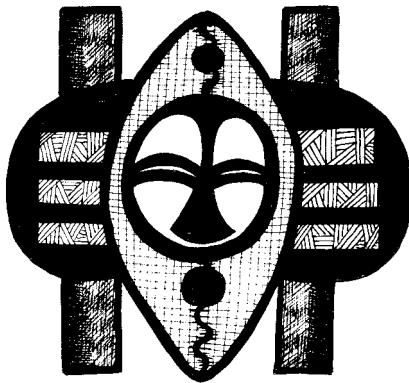
The elections were organised mostly on the basis of external financing. This gave external forces the leverage to control the process, its pace, scope and order of priorities. Ascendancy to their preferences made a mockery of national sovereignty in the elections: of the democratic project as a whole. Almost no funds were allocated to the crucial task of civic education for the electorate. Diaspora Congolese, among the most informed, and in some cases people living in democratic countries, were excluded from the process, on the dubious grounds of costs. Congolese in the security forces were not allowed to exercise their democratic right, as part of the electorate, for “security reasons”. Violating the constitution, under the pretext of security, is arguably equivalent to a coup d'état. From the ICD, through the transition, up to the elections, no national consensus was reached about what constitutes the national cause. It was taken from the suggestions of the external forces that the organisation of free, fair and credible elections could be such a cause. Yet there was no real internal social process of popular self-organisation to ensure that those elections would actually be free and fair.

Two days before the referendum vote, only 500 000 copies of the constitution were printed for 25 million voters. Of those actually in circulation, four different texts of the constitution could be identified.

The attempt by the Catholic Church to do so fell short. The Union for the Nation (UN), formed around the second-round contending presidential candidate, Jean-Pierre Bemba, failed to properly provide a national leadership to rally all the national forces interested in a transparent electorate

process. The monitoring process that it set up was weakened from within – giving the impression of a lack of commitment or clear vision.

An important political space opened when it became obvious that the second round presidential elections results were fraudulent. Instead of organising a big protest against such fraud, leading up to a great gathering around the Supreme Court of Justice, and requiring from the latter just justice, the leadership vacillated and finally gave in, on grounds of saving human life and salvaging peace – an unjust peace and saving a dying human life (about 1 800 Congolese people die everyday). There was no space for the rise of a radical transformation. This would be a question of the vision, aims and style of leadership. The latter seemed to have been trapped in the politics of power-sharing after the electoral victory, not sticking to the two demands of the masses of people: to liberate the country from too heavy control by external forces, and to put in place a regime that would be responsible to the people and responsive to their needs and aspirations. It remains to be seen whether the promise of organising a rigorous and republican opposition, by J-P Bemba, will achieve those demands.



Six provinces out of eleven voted against the incumbent president because they felt that he was too dependent on external forces. He was also accused of selling out the country. He was for the most part unresponsive to the basic needs of the majority of the impoverished population. Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC)'s programme, too lenient on liberalism in the epoch of ultra-liberalist globalisation, would not have realised those demands either. This may explain why the MLC was unable to genuinely lead the masses of people gravitating around the UN. Once again, the question of the relationship between fundamental changes and the leadership came to the fore. It is the actions and ideas of the rebelling masses of people that bring change; yet the popular masses credit the leadership for the changes. Their blind faith in the leadership is, very often, eventually betrayed. The same faith makes the people fail to be vigilant and actually deal with the task of how to control the leadership so that it will not betray them. There was no way and no structure within the UN to control Bemba, for example, in his dealings with various people

– including his meeting with the incumbent president, at a critical moment. Most often, the so-called “political council” of the UN, which he presided over, and meetings of which he was the only one to call for, did not meet.

Money and promises or hopes of big institutional posts were the only motives of the so-called Alliance of the Presidential Family. Its victory, which underlines the fact that we are in a “corruptocracy” rather than a democracy, has made that camp suffer from what could be called “political drunkenness” that makes them blind to see that legitimacy is not just a question of legal victory, but, more importantly, the capacity to rally everyone and thus generate mass enthusiasm for the new regime. Instead of working out a concrete policy to deal with those who voted against the presidential camp, by rallying them around a convincing programme, the camp has tended to discriminate against them; in fact, an attitude of revenge has characterised the presidential camp. This attitude explains also why political matters have been increasingly assigned to police and military forces to treat them. Arbitrary arrests and even the Kongo Central massacre (31 January–1 February 2007) could account for much of that. The rumours according to which the president had said that he would reserve only two places – the prison and the cemetery – to the Bakongo who did not vote for him, appeared *a posteriori* to be credible.

Very briefly, the so-called democratic project has been, in the DRC, another process of grafting a Western experience of democracy, reduced to a “universal model”, on to an ill-prepared and un-attendant Congolese political soil, justified, after the fact, as a necessary consequence of globalisation. No lesson seems to have been learned about the process of grafting from the history of the colonial state in the Congo, which although now decomposed and fragmented, still operates like a Western Trojan horse. Such a state readily represses the people rather than responding positively to their basic needs and aspirations. The newly “elected” president is still surrounding himself with a militia that hardly is aware that in a democracy, the army is supposed to serve the people, and not harass them for its enjoyment. Western democracy experts – our democratic teachers – come and go, and democracy does not seem to be growing deeper roots. Goodwill is often found wanting.

The permanent paradox faced by the so-called Congolese elite remains. They want to lead the people, from whom they are culturally and socially detached. They claim to “liberate” the country from the extended control of external forces, to which they are culturally and socially attached. While capable of producing a constitution and a nationality law that forbids holding dual nationality concurrently, some members of the elite do actually hold dual nationality. Those who genuinely believe that they can solve the fundamental problems facing the Congolese people – and who claim to have worked out some solutions – spend most of their time struggling to survive by devoting their time to reinforcing the very system that causes those problems. Change is always a task for tomorrow.

WHAT FUTURE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE DRC?

The country remains divided on the issue: some have voted enthusiastically for the presidential camp that enticed them financially to vote, and are now marked by a sense of victorious crowing – forgetting that the strategic aspect of democracy is the protection and defence of the rights of the minority. Those around the UDPS, who did not participate in the electoral process, are so far unclear about what type of oppositional position they are going to assume. Those who supported the UN camp have been mostly disappointed with J-P Bemba, frustrated by the turn of events. The massacre of people in Kongo Central, the only place where a very active opposition against the corrupting democratic process took place, did not galvanise the various opposition forces into a movement. If it is the case that the Bakongo nation were, as

Fanon and Cabral asserted, consistent anti-colonialists from 1921 (with Kimbangu's Kintwadi) up to 1959 (the January 4 uprising) and the core of the Congolese nation struggling for national independence, one should not be surprised that some of their descendants are leading the struggle against corrupting democracy.

Will the use of force or threat of force succeed in silencing the protests? The stability of the cemetery cannot lead to a genuine construction of democracy. Dealing with the catastrophic and urgency situation with repression will not last as long as it did under Mobutu. Not only will more protests take place, political implosion is likely. The ways things are going, the next five years might turn out to be very rough indeed.

FRAMEWORK OF AN AFRICAN UNION GOVERNMENT

The following is extracted from a study conducted by the African Union (AU), prior to the AU summit (25 June–3 July) that focused on the mechanism of creating the United States of Africa.

The Union government will be a political transitory arrangement towards the United States of Africa. As such, it should consist of a more focussed assembly, and an executive council backed by an effective permanent representatives committee, and result-oriented specialised technical committees as may be required. In addition, the Union government would have a commission with an executive authority on matters totally or partially delegated by Union members. Finally, it would be supported by more effective parliamentary and judicial systems, as well as efficient continental financial institutions and an adequate participatory framework for non-state actors.

The framework of the Union government would therefore be based on African countries' shared values and common interests, and on strategic focus areas. The rationale of referring to these shared values and common interests are amply documented and need only to be briefly brought to light in the context of the present study. The same applies to the strategic focus areas.

All African countries can claim membership of the Union government based on the principle of strict adherence to its rules. In addition, countries with certain population make up could be given the status of *associate members* of the Union government. In that context, relationships with the *African diaspora* will be given special attention.

Although Africa has, for well-known historical reasons, lost some of its self-sustaining characteristics, it is of paramount importance to use the shared values as leverage towards closer unity among and joint purpose of action by African countries and people.

SHARED VALUES

Shared values and common interests have both structural and psychological elements which ensure collective self-development of the African people under condition of good governance at continental level and constructive engagement with the rest of the world. They serve as the basis of mutuality and reciprocity in Africa's self-discovery and the strength of a re-invigorated pan-African institution. These shared values and common interests are contained in such basic documents as the Kampala Document of the CSSDCA (Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa), the OAU Declaration on unconstitutional change of government, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Nepad Action Plan.

Shared values are drawn from both African culture and societies and from articulated commitments of African countries to meet the challenge of coping with historical legacies and current realities. In that connection, it would be important for African countries to be guided by the following values as contained in the CSSDCA Declaration:

- adherence to the rule of law
- popular participation in governance
- respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- transparency in public policy making.

Shared values are also based on cultural commonalities among African countries and people.

While African societies are diverse, solidarity, humanness, and protection of the weak are their main characteristics at all levels (within the family, among neighbours and in the community), as well as pride in common African ancestry. These values are translated into strong kindred ties and communal cohesiveness.

Because of its geographical position, a united Africa would have the unique potential of producing most types of food and agricultural produce throughout the year, thus putting an end to the chronic cycle of drought-related food shortage.

Although Africa has, for well-known historical reasons, lost some of its self-sustaining characteristics, it is of paramount importance to use the shared values as leverage towards closer unity among and joint purpose of action by African countries and people. They should particularly be used at the national, regional and continental levels to devise and implement developmental policies and programmes that are people centred and well rooted in African traditions. *Thus, through a skilful combination of indigenous and modern knowledge systems, African countries could devise well thought-out and creative strategies for the transformation of their social structures, political systems, and economic organisations to the present world environment so that the continent as a whole would successfully "claim the 21st century".*

COMMON INTERESTS AND CONSTRAINTS

Common interests are derived from the challenges facing the continent as a whole, namely its over-dependence on the external world and the under-exploitation of its enormous development potentials at national, regional and continental levels. They are clearly elaborated in such seminal documents as the Lagos Plan of Action, the Cairo Agenda for the economic and social development of Africa, and the Nepad Action Plan. The challenge of over-dependence is critical in areas such as agriculture, human development, science and technology, industry, trade and finance.

Over several years, food security has become a matter of great concern for many African countries. Frequent climate-

related disasters (drought, deforestation, and desertification), as well as food losses, have led to chronic food shortages in several countries, thus making them dependent on external food supply. Actually, with Africa's several sovereign entities, most of them mini-states, national self-sufficiency in food is not a feasible option for many of them.

There is also a strong dependence on expatriate technicians and technology, and an attachment to export-led growth strategy, emphasising the production and export of raw materials and agricultural primary commodities in exchange for manufactured goods imported from developed countries, mostly former colonial powers, thus jeopardising the industrial development prospects of these countries.

Trade is another example of Africa's over-dependence. The terms of trade are increasingly moving against Africa, which has no alternative but to accept declining earnings from a rising volume of exports while simultaneously having to pay more for its imports. Africa's development is also largely dependent on inflows of financial resources from official development assistance (ODA) and mounting external indebtedness, in spite of recent debt relief measures.

Over-dependence also occurs in the education and health sectors. The education sector is largely dependent on external assistance for such basic requirements as trained teachers, classrooms, textbooks, scientific equipment and appropriate curricula. The same applies to the health sector when addressing trans-borders chronic diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), but also regarding attempts to provide safe drinking water and elementary sanitation facilities.

The challenge of under-exploitation of Africa's development potential is also compelling. In this respect, some studies have shown that, because of its geographical position, a *united* Africa would have the unique potential of producing most types of food and agricultural produce throughout the year, thus putting an end to the chronic cycle of drought-related food shortage in some parts of the continent. Africa being well endowed with natural resources, the concerted exploitation of the energy potential of its ecological zones would not only make many countries less energy dependent, but also enable the Industrial processing of the huge mineral resources of the continent. Infrastructural development is also a major challenge. Africa is the second-largest continent in terms of size and population, thus the building of the required transport and communications infrastructures would make it one of the most competitive markets and, potentially, the most attractive in terms of returns on investment.

Finally, given the increasing wave of globalisation and the emergence of strong regional, political, economic and trading blocs in other continents, the challenges of over-dependence and under-exploitation of its potential have increased the marginalisation of the continent in world affairs. Thus, the goal in pursuing development through a common interest perspective is to bring about human progress in Africa; restore human dignity to the African

people and give Africa a voice in the global order; promote progressive African social and political values and defend the African personality.

In doing this, there is need to develop the human potential of Africa and include the people in the development process. It should be realised that what unites Africans far surpasses what divides them. It pays to speak and act with one voice, rather than with many voices. In unity, Africa can realise and achieve a lot. The global system is such that a dismembered and balkanised continent will have weak bargaining strength.

An all-embracing common interest of the African continent is, therefore, to build its collective capability and capacity to act as a stakeholder and not an outsider in world affairs, and to fully participate in shaping international norms and agenda. This is indeed an important and over-arching objective of the Union government.

STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Strategic areas of focus and their rationale, which are consistent with the objectives of the Strategic Framework of the African Union Commission (AUC), are essentially derived from the shared values and common interests. They are aimed, in the short, medium and long run, at making the process of establishing the Union government irreversible. A number of areas are contained in proposals made at the independence of various African countries in the late 1950s and early 1960s and, subsequently, in the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Kampala Document of CSSDCA, and the Nepad Action Plan.

Under the Union government, it is nevertheless essential for Union members to endeavour to finance by themselves both the operational and programme expenditures.

Proposals on areas of focus were also made in the course of the meetings of the two committees of heads of state and government. Overall, consensus seems to have emerged on some areas around which a Union government could, progressively, be operating at continental level. *It is understood that, in each area, a subject matter to be covered could either be at continental level or concurrently with Union members. The focus areas indicated below are not in any order of priority. Similarly, the suggested subject matters under each area are merely indicative and illustrative.*

With the above understanding, the 16 suggested strategic areas of focus include:

Continental integration

- promote cooperation and exchange of experience among the regional economic communities (RECs)

- liaise with ministries in charge of integration in Union members
- prepare the meetings of the assembly
- assist Union members, as may be required, in building national constituencies for the Union government and the United States of Africa.

Education, training, skill development, science and technology

- undertake, with the support of the RECs, identification and promotion of potential continental centres of higher learning, primarily with an African focus as well as higher technical training and research centres, and encourage their specialisation
- promote the exchange of students and academic staff among universities and research centres of Union members
- harmonise curricula at primary and secondary school levels among Union members
- organise exchange of experiences among science and technology research centres of Union members, with a view to identifying and promoting continental specialised centres
- promote research on matters of particular relevance to Africa, such as desertification, coastal erosion, infectious diseases and biotechnology.

FINANCING THE UNION GOVERNMENT

The success of the Union government, in line with the principle of African leadership and ownership, especially with respect to the full operationalisation of its various organs and institutions and effective delivery on its programmes, will, to a large extent, require the development, on the part of member states, of a comprehensive and sustainable financing mechanism for the Union. The current system of assessed contributions of member states is indeed able to reduce the AU's dependency on donor funding of its operational costs, but it has the disadvantage of having the responsibility and burden not evenly shared among the member states.

While, because of budgetary constraints and difficult economic situations, meeting financial commitments towards organisations they have established has proven difficult for most African countries. Under the Union government, it is nevertheless essential for Union members to endeavour to finance by themselves both the operational and programme expenditures. This would require a review of the mechanism of assessed contributions as well as indirect taxation systems.

When the African Union was established, several proposals were made with respect to possible financial sources. In 2004, the chairperson of the AUC had made suggestions with respect to contributions from member states' annual budgets. With respect to indirect taxation schemes, two proposals were made on import levy and on insurance tax respectively. These proposals were discussed at the meeting of the conference of African ministers of finance in May 2005 in Dakar, Senegal. The conference decided that the proposal on import levy be studied further at expert level.

At its meeting in March 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the AU's economic, social and cultural council (ECOSOCC), adopted a resolution requesting the assembly to "impose US\$5 tax on each air ticket bought for inter-state travels and US\$10 on each ticket for travellers between Africa and other continents." All these proposals were submitted to the assembly at its session in Khartoum, Sudan. Subsequently, several expert meetings were held on the subject.

Given the importance of the issue of financing, a final decision should be made at the next session of the assembly, in order to move forward the process of the Union government. The principle of *strict adherence to the purpose and objectives of the Union government* calls for action at two levels. First, the Union Members should decide to *finance both the operational and the programme costs*. Secondly, they should decide on the proposals of import levy and airline ticket taxes, bearing in mind that the later proposal is already being implemented in some countries. Thirdly, they should *review the existing mechanism of assessed contributions, taking into account the experiences in the regional economic communities (RECs), for example, the Economic Community of West-African States, ECOWAS*.

TENTATIVE ROADMAP OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT

INITIAL PHASE: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT

2006-2009

Continental level:

- selection of strategic areas of focus of the Union government
- decision on the mode of finance for the Union government
- adoption of the revised functions of the assembly, the executive council, the specialised technical committees, the commission and the permanent representative committee
- decisions on the establishment of the courts of justice and human rights
- decision on the revised constitutive act
- decision on the launch of the studies on financial institutions
- decision on the establishment of the African Investment Bank (AIB)
- decision on the final status of Nepad in the commission
- decision on the representations of the Union government in other parts of the world, including in particular in the African diaspora
- consultations and decisions on the free movement of persons, rights of establishment and residence.

Regional level:

- rationalisation and harmonisation of the RECs
- harmonisation of RECs' instruments, institutions, programmes and operations with the Union government objectives and roadmap
- popularisation of the Union government project in the region
- development of a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Union roadmap at regional level.

National level:

- harmonisation of Union members' instruments, institutions, programmes and operations with the Union government objectives and roadmap
- building national constituencies for the Union government
- popularisation of the Union government project
- development of national monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the Union roadmap.

SECOND PHASE: CONSOLIDATION OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT

2009-2012

Continental level:

- creation of the African Central Bank (ACB) and African Monetary Fund (AMF)
- restructuring of remaining continental organs
- initiation of the process of consultation for and preparation of a draft constitution of the United States of Africa.

Regional level:

- adoption of measures towards effective free movement of persons, rights of establishment and residence
- consultation on the draft constitution of the United States of Africa.

National level:

- national conventions on the draft constitution of the United States of Africa.

THIRD PHASE: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AFRICA 2012-2015

The period would be devoted to the adoption by Union members of the draft constitution of the United States of Africa. During the period, all continental institutions would be fully operational, including in particular the financial institutions.

Finally, elections at all required levels (continental, regional and national) would take place during this period. The United States of Africa would be officially constituted and recognised as such in the world community of nations.



ON THE “UNITED STATES OF AFRICA”

Being a memorandum handed over by FRONTLINE AFRICA to Prof Ben Turok, MP, chairperson of South Africa’s parliamentary committee on the African Union, 25 June 2007, for transmission to all heads of states in Africa, the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Parliament.

Since 2002, when the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was transformed into the African Union (AU), Africa has continued to move forward on the path of integration and unity. The African Union has an anthem, a flag, and other democratic institutions like the Pan-African Parliament – pointers to a common destination of a United States of Africa. Africans will forever remain grateful to the following leaders for the painful pioneering contributions they made to ensure that our dream of a United States of Africa is garbed in a holy garment of reality: president of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika; president of Libya, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi; former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo; president of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade; and president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki.

We must also pay our respect to the following leaders whose struggle brought freedom and independence to the people of Africa: Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Ben Bella, Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta, Oliver Tambo, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe, Herbert Macaulay, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Robert Sobukwe, Sir Seretse Khama, Thomas Sankara, Albert Luthuli, Malcolm X, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr, Joe Slovo, Patrice Lumumba, Álvaro Holden Roberto, Léopold Senghor, Agostinho Neto, Samora Machel, Marcus Garvey, WEB Du Bois, Joshua Nkomo, Emperor Haile Selassie, George Padmore, Steve Biko and many others.

The African Union was born on the understanding that the goals of the OAU have been served by the achievement of freedom from colonialism and apartheid and that the time has come for Africans to work together for the elimination of poverty – a togetherness that can be better achieved by the pulling together and sharing of all our resources under the guidance of a Union government. The African Union was born on the understanding that the time has come for Africa to cease to be a mere supplier of raw materials to the rest of the world and a consumer of finished goods. The African Union was born on the understanding that the world is far advanced in science and technology and that it will be more difficult for our various countries to catch up with the pace of development without forever depending on the developed countries of the world for aid, technical assistance, supervision and guidance. The African Union

was born on the understanding that for Africa to eliminate poverty, Africans must pull together and share resources in a systematic and well coordinated approach.

It was in this sense that the assembly of heads of states and government of the African Union, at its 8th ordinary session in Addis Ababa, 29–30 January 2007, decided that the next ordinary session of the assembly to be held in Accra, Ghana, 25 June–3 July 2007, would be devoted to a grand debate on the Union government. It was in the same vein that the executive council of the AU held a retreat of the ministers of foreign affairs in Durban, South Africa, 8–9 May 2007 to brainstorm on the state of the Union, which is to the same effect as the grand debate.

The African Union was born on the understanding that for Africa to eliminate poverty, Africans must pull together.

Therefore today, as our leaders open debate on the Union government, we must note the following:

1. that millions of Africans remain unemployed and unemployable in various countries, and that with African integration, many of them will find opportunities elsewhere in the continent
2. that Africans still face difficulties when moving within our continent
3. that Africa still remains a primary source of raw materials for the rest of the world and a mere consumer of finished products made with those raw materials
4. that many of our leaders still fail to serve the interests of the peoples of Africa, something that is against the spirit of the struggle against colonialism
5. that many innocent Africans are still hounded as common criminals within the continent of Africa and the world, as there is no one to fight for and protect them
6. that millions of Africans remain treated like slaves and animals in their various countries mainly due to their race, nationality, ethnic origins or religious affiliations
7. that millions of our people continue to die from preventable and curable diseases
8. that Africa is yet to get a veto-wielding seat in the United Nations Security Council

9. that many of our government officials, instead of serving the interests of Africans, continue to divert state resources to the benefit of their friends and families
10. that millions of Africans are still denied basic needs and services in many countries of our continent.

There is no doubt that to address the issues pointed out above, Africans must embrace a Union government that is established on the principles of justice, fairness and equality. It is only a Union government which enjoys the support of Africans that can define a common approach to deal with our common problems and bring dignity to our people.

FACTORS AGAINST AFRICAN INTEGRATION

1. Tribal Chauvinism

Once we achieve integration in Africa, what will matter is not what tribe a person comes from but the fact that the person is African. Many of the wars and violence that we have today in Africa which pit one tribe against another will dissipate as such struggles to form countries based on ethnic groups will be replaced by a single African identity. It is possible that those that aspire to tribal superiority will stand opposed to Union government.

2. Racism

Racism is another factor that will militate against Union government as there are Africans who do not want to be Africans and prefer to be referred to as Europeans. Though they were born in Africa and grew up in Africa, they have refused to be called Africans, and pay allegiance not to Africa but to other regions of the world. These same people do not believe that Africa can write a new history that is free of poverty. To them the various problems on the continent are expected as Africans “can never figure out how to solve those problems”. Therefore, these champions of racism will always put forward complicated and sophisticated arguments on how and why the AU government is not feasible.

3. Xenophobia

Those Africans who for no reason hate other Africans are xenophobes. The xenophobes blame other Africans for problems in their societies. We must emphasise that xenophobia is against the African spirit of *ubuntu* (interdependence), and such practices weaken the position of Africa in the world as it moves our wheels of development backwards. If the forces of xenophobia are allowed to decide our fate, they will vote against a United States of Africa that will further open up Africa to Africans.

4. Religious fanaticism

Religious fanatics want every African to be of the same religion. For long, they have been causing confusion on the continent of Africa and with their theocratic mentality have moved Africa centuries behind the rest of the world. The United States of Africa of our dream is one that gives every African the freedom to worship God the way he so wishes without interfering with other Africans. The religious fanatics want us to believe that they know God better than the rest of us and are even ready to use force to show us the

way. We must know that we cannot achieve the goals of the African Union by taking the route of religious compulsion.

5. Colonial mentality/Afro-pessimism

Part of the negative achievements of colonialism was to brainwash Africans and make them hate who and what they were. Up until today, there are millions of Africans who still do not believe that Africans can survive without maintaining a master-servant relationship with the developed countries of the world. These are the same people who spend their meagre earnings to acquire imported products while their African brothers and sisters who manufacture similar items are left to scramble to put bread on the table. To them, anything African is useless as they blame God for creating them Africans. It is vividly clear that such people will oppose the idea of a United States of Africa that will promote a single African identity.



A UNION GOVERNMENT BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF SANDS WILL FALL

Though we desire a United States of Africa that will promote a single African identity as opposed to the racist, ethnic, nationalist, and religious outlook of our present day Africa, we must also state that the process of laying the foundation for the “New Africa” of our dreams must be honest and based on clear positive and progressive principles. We cannot afford to allow racists, tribalists,

xenophobes, nationalists and religious fanatics to hijack the process; otherwise our future will not be different from what our present situation is.

We desire a United States of Africa built on the solid foundation of fairness, justice, equality, transparency, and *ubuntu* and, on this note, we hereby call on all our leaders to do the following immediately:

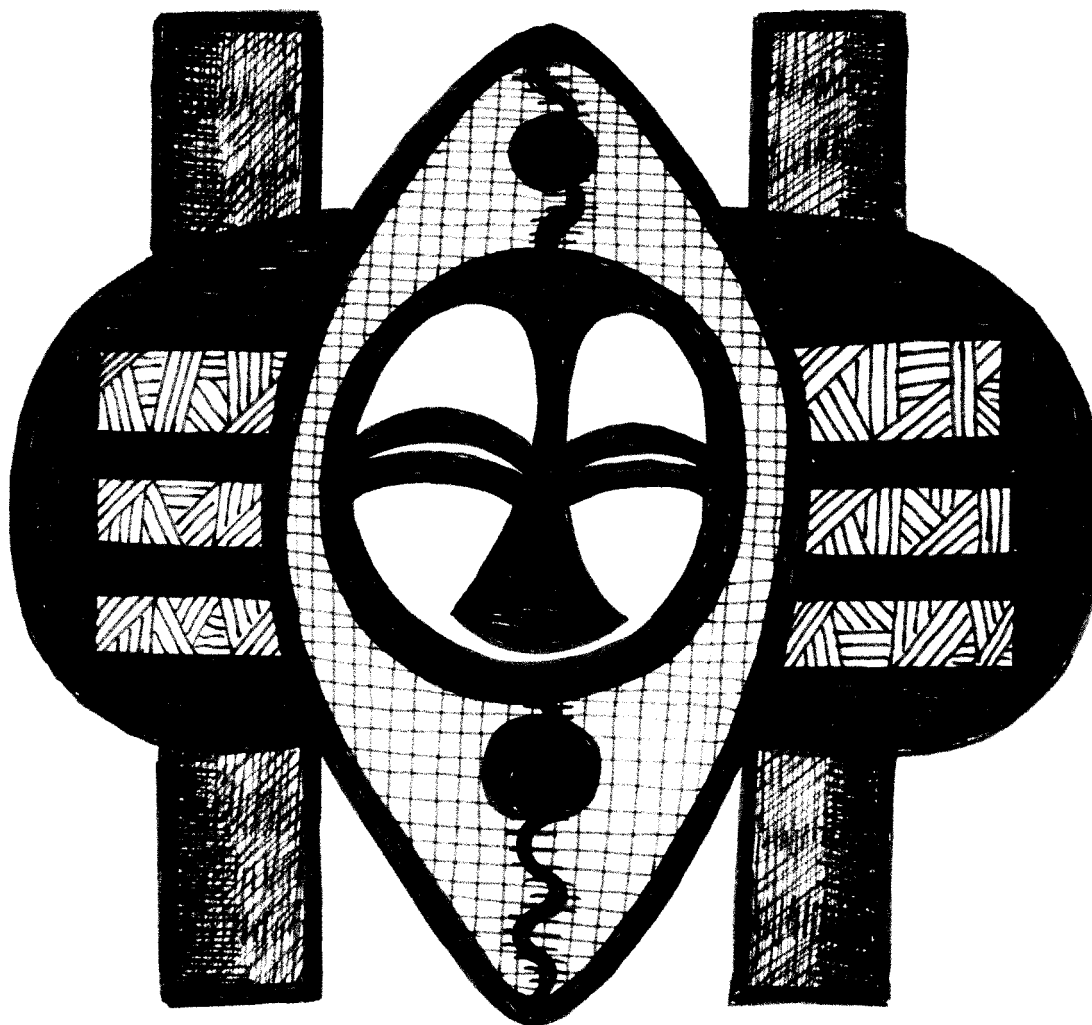
1. stop the killing and displacement of black Africans in parts of Sudan and Chad
2. stop the politics of tribal chauvinism and religious identity in countries like Nigeria and Kenya
3. stop the xenophobic practices around many countries in Africa
4. stop the flagrant violations of the basic rights of Africans in many countries of Africa
5. demand a veto-wielding permanent seat for Africa in the United Nations Security Council
6. demand reparations for slavery and colonialism from those responsible

7. provide a single passport to make it easier for Africans to move around within the continent within the next five years
8. empower the Pan-African Parliament to make laws that are binding on all the member-countries of the African Union
9. set up a trust fund to ensure a free secondary school education for all African children within the next five years
10. accord the AU anthem and flag the same respect accorded to other national anthems and flags everywhere around Africa.

We believe that the above points and more will go a long way towards building a "New Africa" that can provide a better life for all our people.

Viva Africa!

Towards a United States of Africa!



WORLD BANK FOCUS ON GROWTH OFTEN LEAVES POOR BEHIND

This Inter Press Service (IPS) article appeared in Third World
Economics 1–15 December 2006

The World Bank's narrow emphasis on economic growth has not helped the poor in borrower countries, according to the Bank's own auditing arm.

WASHINGTON: The World Bank's own auditing arm has confirmed what many anti-poverty campaigners have long been saying: the Bank's projects did not adequately reduce poverty levels in borrowing nations over the past five years. In a report released on 7 December 2006, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) said that the Bank has focused too narrowly on economic growth, leaving unemployment and poverty rates to stagnate or worsen.

"The Bank has helped many countries to get onto a growth path through improved economic management, but the growth strategies have not always helped enough to improve job opportunities and living conditions of the poor," the IEG said in its study, titled the "Annual Review of Development Effectiveness 2006: Getting Results".

Vinod Thomas, the IEG's director-general, said that at the current pace, "there is a long way to go in reducing the number of people living in poverty and the magnitude of their deprivation."

"Discernable progress depends on actions to sustain growth, as well as to improve income distribution through better service delivery and more opportunities for the poor," said Thomas. "The challenge is to see far more numbers of poor people benefiting from broad-based growth." The report says that only two in five borrowing countries have recorded continuous per capita income growth over the five years ending in 2005, and just one in five did so for a full 10 years.

"Although the report does not call for a change of course at the Bank, it does implicitly acknowledge the failure of the institution, the IMF and other official lenders and donors to contribute in a meaningful way to poverty reduction over the

past quarter century," Doug Hellinger of the Washington-based Development Group for Alternative Policies told IPS.

"Language is couched carefully so as not to directly address the failures of the now much-discredited poverty-creating 'Washington Consensus' structural adjustment policies, as liberalisation, privatisation and other adjustment measures are still being placed on loans by these institutions," he said.

Hellinger said it was good that the report calls for "a better understanding of the political economy of countries, and particularly of the nature of growth and its projected impact on income distribution, before loans are made."

However, he added that "no mention is made of the need to directly engage (the poor) in the 'policy dialogue' that the Bank has used to control national economies and which this report still supports."

CRITICAL

The report was particularly critical of the income-distribution model that the Bank has offered in its projects and lending. It said that high and sometimes worsening income inequality has dampened the poverty-reducing effect of growth in a number of countries.

It also found that the strongest growers have better economic management, as well as better policies for social inclusion, than do moderate or slow growers.

In Madagascar, for example, the Bank focused on sectors with high growth potential that would allow for relatively quick payoffs, but their impact on poverty was limited. In Georgia, the oil transport sector in which the Bank invested was a major driver of growth, but it created few jobs.

The study says that where growth did not result in poverty reduction, it was concentrated in sub-sectors with low labour intensity and where few of the poor could work.

Thomas told reporters that the answer to reconciling the Bank's emphasis on economic growth and the fight against poverty is to work on both issues at the same time.

The report does implicitly acknowledge the failure of the institution, the IMF and other official lenders and donors to contribute in a meaningful way to poverty reduction.

Anti-poverty campaigners who have long called attention to what they say is a "failed" economic model promoted by the World Bank and its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, greeted the report as vindication of their positions. They noted that the report pointed to how export-oriented and privatisation-dependent economies tend to suffer when growth does occur because the gains go to very few people.

"Bolivia... is an interesting example. It was forced to privatise its natural gas and other resources in what was essentially a gift to a number of oil companies," said Sameer Dossani of the "50 Years is Enough Network" in Washington in an e-mail message. "Did that cause growth? Yes, it did. But

the growth didn't benefit the people, as Bolivia continues to be the poorest country in South America."

The IEG report recommended that the Washington-based lender adopt new strategies to promote both greater productivity in poorer areas, and a greater mobility of the poor to higher-paying sectors and areas.

"Linking health and education or infrastructure and the environment is a powerful means for getting improved results," the report noted. "One can have a focus on a few selected areas, but, for heaven's sake, link them (across sectors) for greater effect," Thomas said.

The study says that the Bank should also come up with a more "realistic assessment" of political economy and governance-related reforms, and should work to guarantee sincere political support from local governments.

Hellinger told IPS, "Yes, it is important that national anti-corruption measures are accompanied by effective and accountable enforcement mechanisms, as the report argues, but, more importantly, how is the Bank to be held accountable when it conditions its loans on national privatisation and related measures that open southern economies up to northern companies looking for assets, resources and labour on the cheap?"

The Bank's management said that it accepts the findings of the report. "We very much accept the points raised ... We intend to learn from this," said Vikram Nehru, director of economic policy and debt at the Bank.



THE POLITICS OF PAY

New Agenda has previously covered the contentious issue of excessive salary and benefit packages for corporate and parastatal executives in South Africa and elsewhere. In its 24 March 2007 issue, The Economist looked at how the rules of pay are shifting in America.

SEC SCRUTINY

Now there is nowhere for the bosses of corporate America to hide their bulging pay packets. In spite of years of defensive lobbying, they are having to reveal all under new Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules that have just begun to take effect. This burst of sunlight could not have come at a worse time for them. It coincides with a shift in the control of Congress to the Democrats and the start of the presidential election campaign, in which the “overpaid” chief executives will make an easy target.

Although barely one-tenth of the 2 000 biggest American companies have yet reported under the new rules, the tally of negative headlines is already mounting. “There are plenty of examples of firms reporting chief-executive pay packages of millions of dollars more than expected,” says Paul Hodgson of the Corporate Library, a research firm. He reckons that the firms that have already reported are a representative sample... Top of the heap so far is Ken Lewis, boss of Bank of America, with total pay in 2006 valued at \$114.4 million...

**This burst of sunlight
could not have come at
a worse time for them.**

Of particular interest will be the data on personal use of the corporate jet. This is expected to decline sharply as firms start to charge the boss for personal flights in order to avoid embarrassing headlines... Another likely target is the golden parachute for a departing boss, especially if he has left because of poor performance. This is increasingly a focus of activist shareholders, including hedge funds.

NYSE RULES

Boards have already started to pay greater attention to how they set the chief executive's pay and to being seen to do so in a way that serves the interest of shareholders. One reason is the requirement that compensation committees consist entirely of independent directors, introduced as

a listing requirement by the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in the wake of corporate scandals at the start of the decade... Previously, compensation consultants typically had other lucrative contracts (with the company), which may have swayed their judgment.

The new climate surrounding pay has already had an effect... (However,) even being tough on new chief executives is not proving easy. Boards know that the choice of a boss can have a huge impact on a firm's performance. Executive talent is valuable. Private equity is on the prowl, offering packages with incentives that a public company can find hard to match amid all the denunciations of fat cats...

There may also be moves to toughen the tax treatment of executive pay... Share options and pensions may also come under fire... Congress may feel that heavier taxes for corporate bosses have populist appeal.

Another article in the same issue of The Economist, “A penny for your thoughts”, reported on a new congressional bill that would give shareholders a vote in determining executive pay.

Horried executives maintain that if this power is granted, special interests will use it to advance their pet causes. But the bosses should welcome this reform as being in their own interests. There is much bad feeling in America between managers and shareholders; and the best way to dispel it would be to invite investors in, not to bar the door to them...

The bill before the House of Representatives' committee on financial services gives shareholders an advisory vote on managers' pay, as well as a vote if executives gain a golden handshake while their company is being sold...

British companies have been required to hold an advisory vote on pay since 2002, and this has helped defuse the hostility between shareholders and managers... American managers should try a bit of democracy too. It is, they will find, marvellous stuff.

REVIEWS EDITOR : HELEN DOUGLAS

LIGHT ON A HILL: BUILDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA

BRONWYN LAW-VILJOEN (ED), PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELA BUCKLAND

David Krut: Johannesburg, 2006, 173 pp

REVIEWED BY HOWARD SMITH

Light on a Hill records the process that gave South Africa its remarkable Constitutional Court building on the site of the old Fort Prison in the centre of Johannesburg.



The South Africa that adopted its non-racial constitution in 1996 is a fundamentally different country from the South Africa of apartheid and racial colonialism that preceded it. Yet there is continuity in the institutions of governance, which is sustained, physically, in the institutional buildings: parliament resides in two chambers in the buildings of the former Union Parliament; the executive has set up “state house” in the Union Buildings in Pretoria; and justice is conducted in the courts, chambers and offices inherited from the past.

The Constitutional Court is the exception. It is the one wholly new institution of the “new” South Africa and rightly it has been provided with a completely new home. What makes this home so remarkable is that the building is ingeniously designed to reflect and give physical form to the values of the Court and the Constitution it exists to uphold. Thenjiwe Mtsho observes that the Court “challenges many things we have been brought to believe about courts, both through its architecture and through the inclusion of works of art.” Her belief that “there is no such court in the whole world” is echoed by Ruth Ginsberg, Justice of the United States Supreme Court, who says, “This is the most beautiful court I have seen anywhere in the world.”

A Court recognised as *beautiful*? Not a word one would apply to the Old Bailey in London, or the grand but intimidating pile of the US Supreme Court Building. But South Africa’s Constitutional Court *is* beautiful – not by chance, but because its many contributing creators consciously set out to make it so.

It incorporates, not merely contains, works of art and craft, contemporary and novel, that are symbolic of a new dispensation of openness, inclusivity and participation. Indeed, the building itself aspires to give form to these symbolisms: it is approachable and accessible, friendly and welcoming, human in scale. Nowhere in the building or its immediate surroundings is there even a faint echo of the lofty alienating presence of formal flights of steps, colonnades, impersonal corridors and secret chambers, or dark oil portraits of tyrannical judges – all those associations with colonial and class oppression that served to intimidate the litigant and accused. This building is light and airy, its functional spaces transparent, its furniture and furnishings homely, and its art- and craftworks a celebration of life and engagement.

Here, the rigid “form follows function” mantra of the modernist movement in architecture has engaged the post-modern era, not with an overlay of whimsy but with a dialectical conversation between form and function. There is a delightful interplay between the two, and both form and function are enhanced in the process. Of course, there is no guarantee that the functioning of the Court will forever adhere to the values now incorporated its structure; that assurance can only be carried in the hearts of this and future generations. But in this building there is, at least, no obstacle to the realisation of those ideals.

Light on a Hill has been published in an attractive coffee-table format. The text serves to amplify the information conveyed by the many photographs, diagrams and sketches. Quotations from the judges, artists, architects and building professionals who drove and realised the project give valuable insights into their intentions, the challenges along the way, and their overwhelmingly positive appreciation of the results.

Readers should make a point of visiting the Court – it is open to the public – and expose themselves to its values, as they will find in this book. Buy it also for friends, particularly those who have chosen to leave the new South Africa for the comfort of old values in foreign lands. Reading it, they may realise what ideals they have left behind and come back to regain them.

ELECTORAL POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICA: ASSESSING THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC DECADE

JESSICA PIOMBO AND LIA NIJZINK (EDS)

HSRC Press: Cape Town, 2006. 297 pp

REVIEWED BY TIM HUGHES
(SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS)

The very first sentence of the first chapter captures the thrust of this volume: "Ten years after 1994, South African democracy is healthier than it was expected to be, but shallower than it needs to be."

This is a deceptive volume that should not be judged by its rather bland cover. In contrast with its pallid exterior, the content of the book is packed with pithy insight. While the 2004 celebration of South Africa's decade of democracy produced a battery of analyses, such as the Government Communication and Information System's "Towards a Ten Year Review" and IDASA's *Democracy in the Time of Mbeki*, this volume has a narrower and tighter purview, using the 2004 elections as a lens to examine the quality of the country's precocious democracy.

The book has two sections plus two concluding chapters. The first section locates South Africa's new electoral politics within a broader social, economic and institutional context. The first two chapters are the most challenging and textured. In his analysis of ten years of democracy, Steven Friedman makes the central point that, while the formal institutional features of democracy have remained vital and even robust despite our history, the quality of and access to democracy and its benefits in South Africa remains highly uneven. "And if the democratic state is unable to translate citizen preferences into policy or policy into implemented reality, the right to participate in shaping public decisions is negated or attenuated." Friedman also contends that, despite indications of its diminishing importance, identity politics (of which race is an important, but not defining element) remains cardinal in South Africa. Friedman weaves a patient and nuanced set of arguments regarding the implications of the pervasiveness of identity politics for democracy in South Africa.

Jeremy Seekings' fine overview of the rapid socio-economic shifts that emerged in the first democratic decade tends to reinforce Friedman's observation regarding the continued centrality of "identity politics" as a marker of voting behaviour. In summary, while Seekings argues persuasively that class, rather than race, is an increasingly significant marker of inequality, such shifts within the South African social formation have not (yet) translated into a concomitant shift in popular voting behaviour. Perhaps this will follow.

Drawing on the invaluable Afrobarometer opinion surveys, Robert Mattes' chapter makes a number of important conclusions about voting behaviour and partisanship (the strength of voter identity with political parties) in the first democratic decade. Despite an expansion of and access to political information, South Africans have become less involved in, or engaged with, politics. Despite a number of profound policy failures, the electorate has, on average, been generally satisfied with the performance of the ANC. Indeed the extent of ANC support on election days far exceeds popular satisfaction levels mid-term. In a sobering conclusion for all opposition parties in South Africa, Mattes observes that the data indicate that, while the degree of ANC partisanship has shown declining levels, this drop in the intensity of affiliation with the ANC has not translated into commensurate support for opposition parties. If elements of the ANC voter support base are now less enthusiastic about the party than in the past, they are no more enthusiastic about the alternatives offered by the opposition.

The editors' chapter maps the democratic trajectory, specifically the downward trajectory, of parliament, particularly since 1999. In so doing, the authors provide evidence for what many South Africans feel: namely that, contrary to the



headly expectations of 1994, parliament has generally flattered to deceive. Whereas the first parliament evinced an almost industrial output of legislation, the post-1999 period has seen the quantity of legislation drop along with the quality of deliberation. Neither has the potential for parliament to carry out greater oversight of the executive branch been realised, as the findings of a sub-committee report on enhancing parliament's oversight and accountability were essentially stillborn. In a similar vein, the authors skilfully document the stuttering attempts at electoral reform in the first decade by examining the floor-crossing constitutional amendment and the Van Zyl Slabbert Commission report, which continues to gather dust just two years before the next general election

The second section of the book is a universally excellent set of chapters examining the 2004 election campaigns of each of the parties represented in parliament, including one that no longer is, the New National Party. The penultimate chapter at once confirms and dispels one's beliefs and prejudices about the contentious role of the media in the 2004 election campaign. The final chapter is a masterful audit of South Africa's electoral democracy, ten years after we all queued on that unforgettable April day in 1994.

One hopes that the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town and the Human Sciences Research Council will repeat this exercise (although not the typographical and spelling errors) in 2009, as South Africa commences another decade of electoral politics under a new state president.

NGUGI WA THIONG'O SPEAKS

REINHARD SANDER AND BERNTH LINDFORS (EDS)

James Currey: Oxford and EAEP: Nairobi, 2006. 445 pp

REVIEWED BY BRIDGET THOMPSON

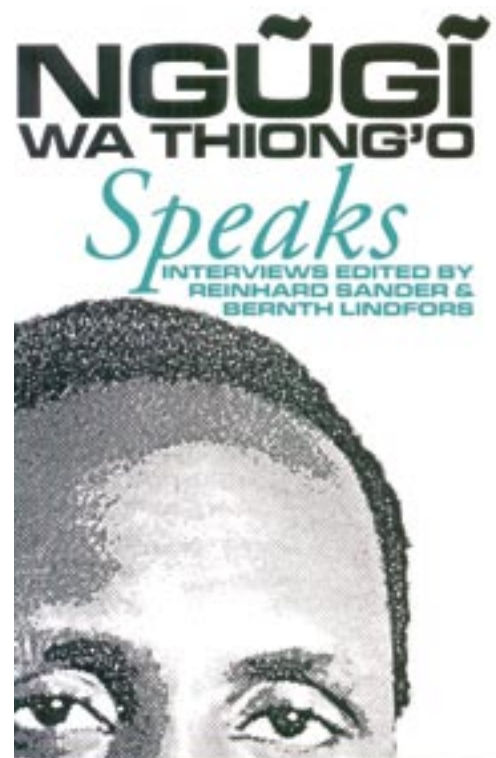
This selection of 43 interviews ranges over Ngugi wa Thiong'o's life and concerns from 1964 to 2003. Through its chronological arrangement and insightful selection by two leading scholars of African literature, it reads almost like an autobiography. It also has a comprehensive list of his published books, a chronology of key moments in his life, a bibliography of all interviews with him and a bibliography of critical studies on him. It is a marvellous and thorough resource.

The selection of interviews exposes the evolution of Ngugi's philosophy in a particularly engaging way. His headspace while writing each of his novels is eloquently described. His particular concern about the importance of writing in indigenous African languages is emphasised and explained from a number of different angles.

Ngugi describes his defining experiences when working in Kenya in 1977:

Initially I was invited by the peasants to work there to help, along with the other people, in the development of adult literacy and culture in the village, with theatre obviously being at the centre of the cultural activities. But I had never before really confronted the issue of language directly until I had worked with that community, so the question arose: theatre, but theatre in what language?

The process of answering that question in theory and practice changed my life. For one thing, when a friend of mine called Ngugi wa Mirii and I drafted the first play in the Gikuyu language called *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (I Will Marry When I Want) for that community, we found that they knew the language much better than we did. So it was a kind of revelation to us, this process of having to learn our language anew. Then when we came to write about the history, the history of the people, we realised the people knew their history *much* better than we did, for they had been participants in that history, the history of the struggle against British colonialism. Again, working in a collective spirit among the peasants and factory workers was very crucial in my development, really *seeing* the results that can be produced by people putting their resources together so that each person could contribute whatever little or big talent he had in a common pool, which produced fantastic results. The play became very successful, with peasants and



workers coming from miles and miles to see this play, which was being performed at an open-air theatre built by the peasants of the village themselves. But the Kenyan regime stopped the public performances of the play in 1977 and I myself was arrested and detained for a year at a maximum security prison for the whole of 1977–78.

As different interviewers ask him similar questions, and he again repeats the ABCs of his approach, patiently explaining for mostly western interviewers why he embraces African knowledge systems as they are embedded in African languages, it becomes repetitive and one longs for a deeper engagement with him – this does come in the latter parts of the book.

However, the piece of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's writing that I refer to again and again is his Steve Biko memorial lecture, delivered at UCT in 2003. It should really be read as a complementary text to this book. In it he not only expounds his theories about language as "the granary of memory" but, through information supplied by the South African scholar Ntongela Masilela, relates his concerns to those of some of the key members of the New African Movement here in South Africa – the Dhlomo brothers, AC Jordan and Mqhayi among others.

I was thrilled to meet Ngugi in London in 1990 at the Zabalaza cultural festival, but when he asked me a very simple question about South African literary traditions I was flummoxed, being then aware only of the dominant Western knowledge systems here. This question provoked a wonderful journey of discovery for me, which is far from over and which has led to a greater appreciation of the full range of our literary heritage.

I strongly urge any serious student of South African literature and continental literature to find Prof. Masilela's writings and use them as a guide to our literary heritage. For, while Ngugi wa Thiong'o's artistry and vision are certainly profound and important to anybody concerned with literature and the role of language in development, his ideas are undeniably preceded by South African writing a couple of decades before him.

DEMOCRACY COMPROMISED: CHIEFS AND THE POLITICS OF LAND IN SOUTH AFRICA

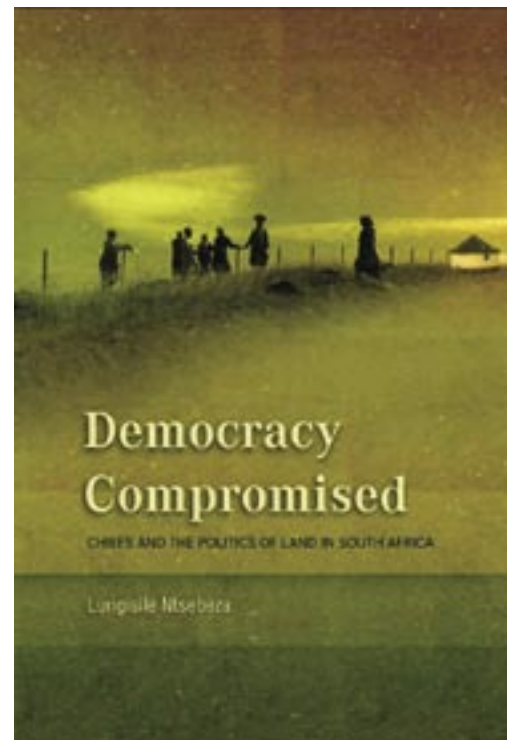
LUNGISILE NTSEBEZA

HSRC Press: Cape Town, 2006. 326pp

REVIEWED BY EDWARD LAHIFF (PLAAS,
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE)

Democracy Compromised is an important and provocative book that raises critical questions for South Africa's emerging democracy and particularly for the millions of people residing in the communal areas of the former Bantustans. Drawing on the work of Mahmood Mamdani and other theorists, Lungisile Ntsebeza critically examines the evolution of the institution of traditional leadership under colonialism and apartheid and its remarkable survival, even strengthening, in the time of democracy.

This is achieved largely through a detailed historical study of the Xhalanga district of the Eastern Cape from the 1860s to the 1990s. Drawing on rich archival and oral evidence, and his own close associations with the area, Ntsebeza paints a detailed picture of prolonged struggles between local people, traditional leaders and a succession of state administrations. Central to this story is control over land, which Ntsebeza clearly shows has long been key to chiefly power, both in Xhalanga and throughout South Africa. Particularly rich is the treatment of the emergence of a rural politics of resistance from the mid-1980s, with competing factions drawn from Black Consciousness, the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and other, locally based, organisations. Another fascinating insight is the near collapse of stock and arable farming in the 1980s, and it is significant that when reference is made to "the land question", it now refers largely to the availability of land for residential rather than for productive purposes.



It is in the post-1994 period, however, when this story becomes most controversial. Ntsebeza traces the success of traditional leaders, organised through the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESAs) and Inkatha, in extracting concessions from the new democratic order, starting with the recognition of traditional leadership in the Constitutions of 1993 and 1996 and culminating in an extraordinary legislative coup – the enactment of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 and the Communal Land Rights Act of 2004. The combined effect of these acts, as Ntsebeza points out, is to hand effective control of new “traditional councils” to unelected and unaccountable traditional leaders, and to grant them extensive powers over the administration and allocation of communal land in excess of anything they enjoyed under colonialism or apartheid.

This development is analysed with reference to long-standing divisions within the ANC around the role of traditional leaders and the generally weak political organisation in the rural areas post-1994. The concessions made to traditional leaders by these new acts not only signals the effective abandonment of much of its rural support base by the ANC, but, as the author argues, perpetuates a form of unelected and unaccountable local government that is incompatible with a constitutional democracy.

While *Democracy Compromised* correctly identifies control of land as central to political struggles in the communal areas, both historically and in the present day, it offers surprisingly little by way of an alternative vision for land rights and administration. Reference is made to the need for democratisation and popular participation in decision-making, but it is not clear what this might mean in terms of land rights and ownership.

Recent debates around reform of communal land have been dominated by the likes of Hernando de Soto, who advocate a rapid transition to individual freehold, which is clearly not what is being demanded by most rural dwellers in South Africa. The transfer of land administration from traditional authorities to elected local government, as many believed would occur after 1994, would also be problematic, as it would not necessarily achieve the type of popular participation in decision-making that Ntsebeza advocates, and overlooks the important principle that land rights vest in the occupiers and users of communal land, rather than with structures of governance, whether elected or hereditary.

Ntsebeza is one of a small number of South African scholars willing to question the role of traditional leadership and its continued relevance within a constitutional democracy. The political compromises of the past decade that he highlights have breathed new life into an institution that many – including many within the ANC – believed had outlived its usefulness, with potentially negative consequences for rural people, and especially for women. This book reminds us that there is still a long way to go before the complex issues around the administration of communal land are resolved and the fruits of democracy are enjoyed equally by all South Africans.

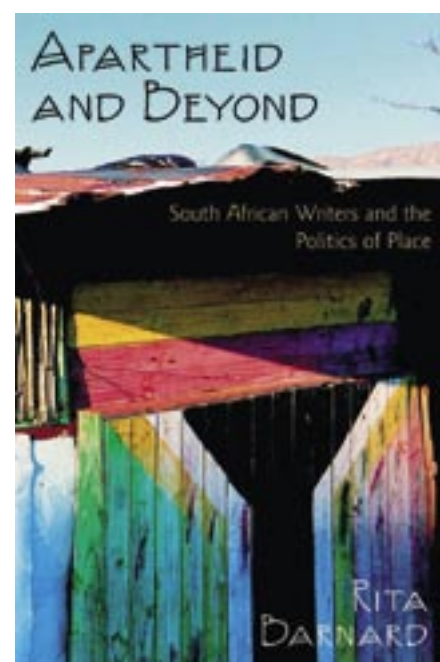
APARTHEID AND BEYOND: SOUTH AFRICAN WRITERS AND THE POLITICS OF PLACE

RITA BARNARD

Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York, 2007. 221 pp

REVIEWED BY CHRIS SAUNDERS (HISTORICAL STUDIES, UCT)

The author of this book tells us that she was once the carnival queen of the University of Stellenbosch, and that she cast her vote for the ANC in 1994 in Philadelphia, where she is now professor of English and director of the Women's Studies Programme at the University of Pennsylvania. Though long based in the United States, she has remained absorbed by South Africa. Her book is an extended commentary on a clutch of literary works dealing with South Africa in the years of apartheid and since by JM Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, Athol Fugard, Miriam Tlali and Zakes Mda. These works are mostly well known, ranging from *In the Heart of the Country* to *The Heart of Redness*, via *The Conservationist*, *A Lesson from Aloes*, *Muriel at Metropolitan*, *Ways of Dying* and others, although occasionally Barnard reflects on lesser-known works, and even a sociological work by Mamphela Ramphele.



While the present reviewer is not a literary specialist and reads very little fiction (preferring to read non-fiction), it is clear that this is a sensitive and extremely subtle set of readings and meditations, highlighting the changing ideas about space/place. Barnard is excellent in exploring the context of the works she discusses, and she is enormously well-read in literary theory, both European and African. This is a book anyone interested in recent fictional writing about South Africa will want to read.

Does all this learning and sophisticated analysis do more than illuminate the works of fiction that are treated? The blurb on the cover suggests that the six chapters “tell the story of the transformation of apartheid’s landscapes of oppression into the more ambiguous landscapes of contemporary South Africa, landscapes of tourism and leisure, of crime and privatised security, of uncontrolled urbanisation and persistent poverty”. I can think of a number of books that deal with the transformation from apartheid to our present ambiguities more clearly and directly than this one. I would also have liked Barnard to be more explicit about how her readings take us beyond the insights of previous literary critics, only some of whom are mentioned. At one point, she writes that the new South Africa “is no utopia; it is rather the site of a painful othering, whose conditions and terms will no longer... be articulated adequately in relation to matters of land and rural life”. I leave it to readers of this journal to make what they can of that, or, say, her treatment of Gordimer’s “defamiliarisation of bourgeois domesticity”, with its “time-honoured strategy of ungrounding any notion of domestic normality”. Among literary scholars this book will doubtless be much talked about for a long time. One leading scholar has gone so far as to assert that it “stands as the most ambitious, authoritative and theoretically astute study of South African literature to date”.

CREATING A BETTER WORLD: INTERPRETING GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

RUPERT TAYLOR (ED)

Kumarian Press: Bloomfield, 2004 (available from Anglia Books, Knysna, SA). 210 pp

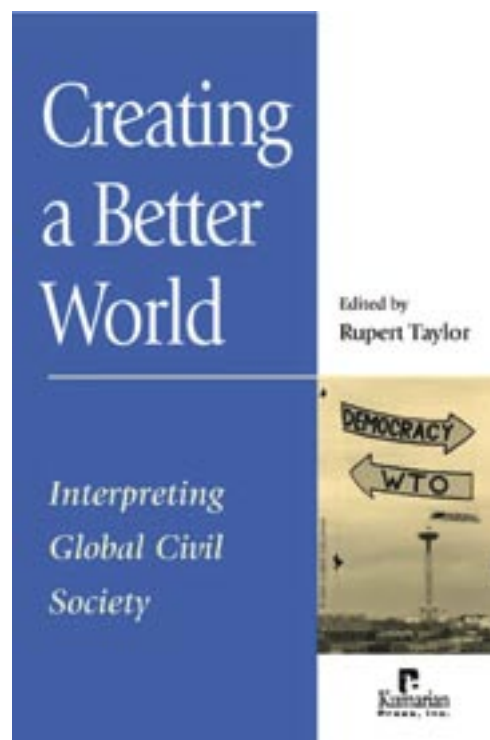
REVIEWED BY ANNIE LEATT (PHD FELLOW, WISER, WITS)

This short book grapples with the role of NGO involvement in global politics, and seeks to theorise organisations and protest movements that have emerged since the early 1990s. Who are they, what are they doing, and what is their transformative potential? And what do all these acronyms mean?

The very existence of what Taylor announces as “Global Civil Society” is contested in the book. Alternatives are suggested to this idea of NGOs as the conscience of the unrepresented world, such as a “global justice movement” (Cock) and a fragile “new labour internationalism” (Lambert and Webster). Others with a more critical bent suggest the existence of DOSTANGO (Tvedt) – an integrated donor state-NGO system that represents the interests of states rather than the dispossessed.

Of course, these definitions depend on who is said to be in the club, and Taylor naïvely pleads for the inclusion of the good and the exclusion of the racist, fascist or fundamentalist movements that he acknowledges exist in same field. Which brings us to their normative content. Taylor is perhaps the most positive about the “intentions” of global civil society, that its purpose is to reclaim and advance “the social and political space for human freedom”. Others suggest that NGOs, despite the sometimes progressive discourse they expound, end up functioning to expand the reach of neo-liberal capitalism under the guise of development and participatory democracy.

This leads the authors to question the autonomy of international NGOs and whose interests they represent. For example, Jacklyn Cock, in her generally positive review of the World Social Forum, writes that less than one percent of the representatives at the 2003 Forum were African. Srilatha Batliwala, in perhaps the book’s best chapter, writes about



the lack of accountability of international NGOs, the professionalisation of representation of the “poor” or “vulnerable”, and how this affects the capacity of those communities to represent themselves. She argues that, for the most part, the international NGO scene recreates in microcosm global power imbalances.

The transformational potential of international NGOs is at stake here, not only in what they say and to whom, but also in how they are able to organise their action. Murphy’s interesting chapter explores the Seattle WTO protests, and the inclusive networks and “affinity groups” that coordinated and trained for non-violent action over those weeks, maximising participation without seeking ideological or strategic consensus.

The book covers a lot of ground. It might have benefited from a more thorough analysis of NGO roles in light of globalisation debates and the new cosmopolitanism of the international NGO scene. Also, since the book seeks to theorise this area, the chapters ought to talk to each other more. As it stands, they often come to conflicting conclusions without taking each other’s cases and arguments into account.

ISLAM: BETWEEN GLOBALIZATION AND COUNTERTERRORISM

ALI A MAZRUI

James Curry: Oxford, 2006. 331 pp

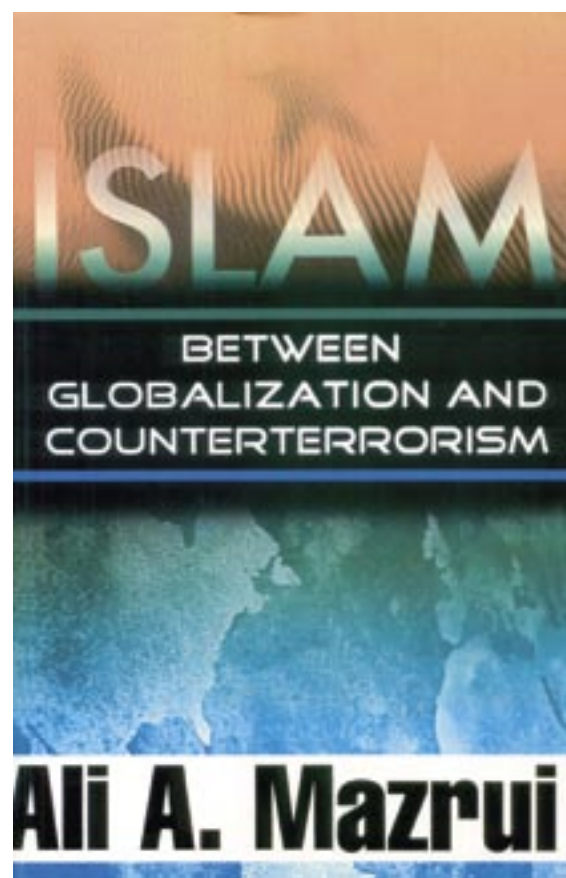
REVIEWED BY SUREN PILLAY (POLITICAL STUDIES, UWC/HSRC)

Ali Mazrui is an African intellectual who has been tackling controversial topics regularly and eruditely for nearly five decades: *The Mazruiana Collection*, an annotated bibliography of his work published in 1998, listed over 650 entries. This latest work, a collection of essays with the overarching theme of Islam in the post-Cold War and post-September 11 world, is no different. With all of its breathtaking scope and magisterial arguments, this book continuously evokes the deeply humanist concerns that have animated Professor Mazrui.

The book is arranged to orchestrate Mazrui’s main concern, which is to bring unity and understanding between the West and Islam. It therefore notes and sets up three “divides”: the political divide, characterised by North-South relations; the cultural divide, marked by the division between “occident” and “orient”; and the global “domestic-international” divide, which concentrates in particular on Africa, race and questions of sovereignty. The concluding section asserts the normative vision of “a marriage of civilisations”.

As always, there is much to argue about with Mazrui. Always known for his independence of thought, he has chosen not to accept the growing criticism of American political scientist Samuel P Huntington’s view that we are witnessing a “clash of civilisations”. Huntington argued that the fundamental divide of the post-Cold War world would be “cultural”, rather than ideological or economic, and that this divide would basically follow the fault lines between the “West” and the rest. Mazrui accepts Huntington’s argument, but tweaks it, arguing that “the clash of civilisations did not begin with the end of the Cold War but is much older. We also believe that the chief cultural aggressor throughout has been the Western world.”

Comprised of essays written for different occasions at different times, the book sometimes feels disjointed and escapes coherency. Conceptually, Mazrui accepts that the idea of a “civilisation” runs into problems. From his own observations,



it becomes clear that large containers like “the West” or “Islam” hold numerous diverse strands, and he suggests that the growing presence of Islam in the West must surely challenge us to find ways to think about what is at stake other than as a battle between Western hegemony and Islamic values. This book challenges us to rethink the familiar acceptance of secularism, and to think about how we construct political communities not simply based on the tolerance of difference, but foundationally on the recognition of different ways of being in the world. One of the problems that remain however – and which the book fails to grapple with – is to explain when and why these historical cultural divisions became activated and invested with such passion and emotion as to become political cleavages. The clash may, therefore, not be one of cultures, but of politics.

GENDER, DEVELOPMENT AND CITIZENSHIP

CAROLINE SWEETMAN (ED)

Oxfam GB: Oxford, 2004 (available from Anglia Books, Knysna, SA). 101 pp

REVIEWED BY HELEN DOUGLAS

The principle of a universal citizenship, “encompassing everyone, regardless of sex, race, class, age or creed”, may be endorsed in national constitutions and international conventions, but what is the lived experience of women and minorities across the world? To what extent are poor people able to “participate in the decision-making structures which shape events and outcomes in their own lives”?

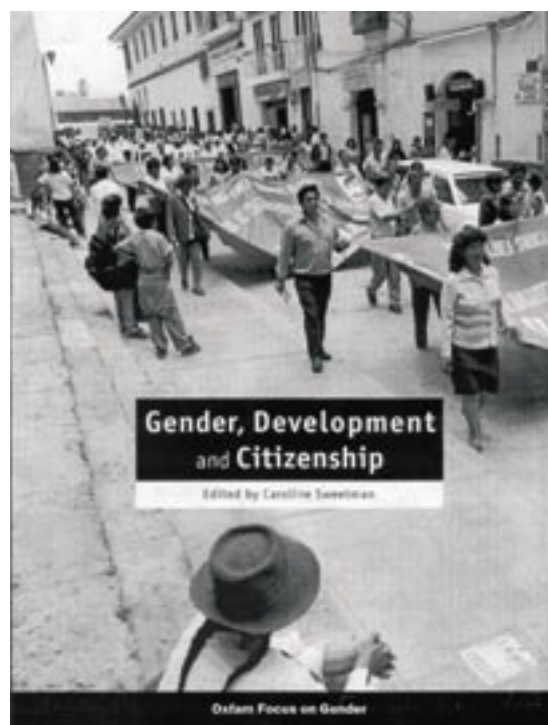
Originally published as a single issue of Oxfam’s journal *Gender and Development*, the nine essays here examine how the concept and practices of citizenship – both in terms of entitlement to rights and participation in governance – can serve as a framework for promoting development and gender equality. The book also includes a ten-page resource guide.

A couple of essays consider the economic, personal and social difficulties faced by women in formal government structures (Uganda) and in grassroots NGOs. Two international programmes designed to address these issues are also described. One, the Gender, Citizenship and Governance programme of the Dutch organisation KIT Gender, worked in nine countries in south Asia and southern Africa to support civil society organisations’ activities to demand good governance and build accountability of public administrations, with a particular focus on gender. The other, a teacher education programme called Global-ITE, which aims “to link local and global issues” within the school curriculum and “to promote a global perspective on citizenship education”, is being developed in India, Kenya and England.

Citizenship is the most basic contract of recognition between a state and an individual, so basic as to be easily taken for granted – unless and until the state limits that recognition or denies it entirely. Lina Abou-Habib describes what happens to mothers in Arabic countries, where regional migration is common, when nationality is passed from father to child. Mona Laczó writes of women in Nepal, including Bengali-speaking refugees and survivors of trafficking, being denied rights of citizenship, and she touches on the hazards of statelessness.

The ways that culture, tradition and religion also constrain or deny women’s citizenship are explored in essays from Poland, India and Algeria.

From Brazil, Joanna S Wheeler speaks of a “privatisation of citizenship”, where poor people guarantee their survival and well-being through community and family channels rather than any reference to the state or nation. Here is a strong case where state-mandated universal access is not, in fact, fulfilling the contract of citizenship: access is not enough if it does not respect the dignity of people. In the words of one woman respondent, “Dignity is everything for a citizen – and we have no dignity. We are treated like cattle in the clinics, on the buses, and in the shops. Only in rich neighbourhoods are people treated with dignity.”



ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

HENRY KYAMBALESA AND MATHURIN C HOUNGNIKPO

Ashgate: Aldershot UK & Burlington USA, 2006. 216 pp

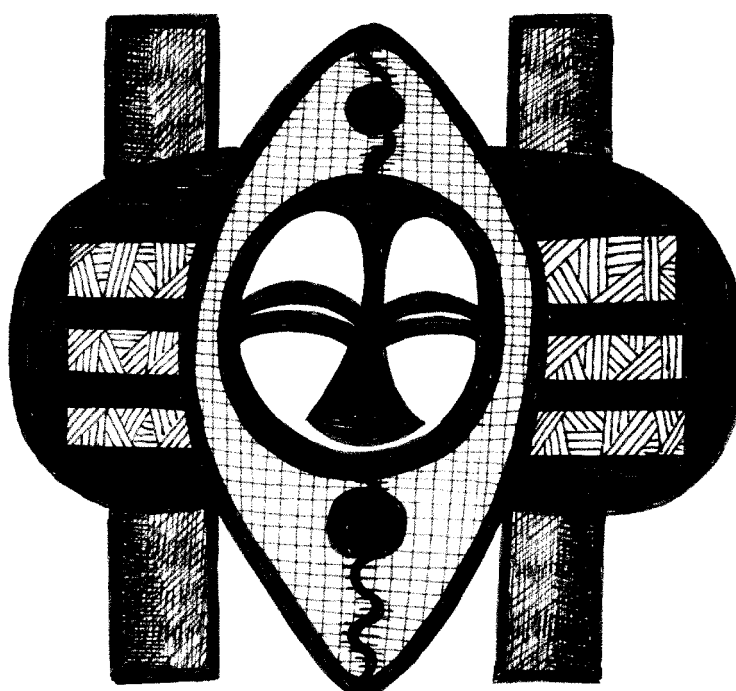
REVIEWED BY HELEN DOUGLAS

Kyambalesa and Houngnikpo, both Zambians now working in the US, begin from the premise that African economic integration is necessary for development. Regional or continental interstate integrationist programmes, such as preferential trade agreements, free trade zones, a common market, monetary union, etc., would improve competitiveness, market size, and collective terms of trade. Although they mention other political, social and technological rationales for integration, their perspective is primarily economic. This gives their discussion a sometimes cold-blooded edge – for instance, as they talk about the effects of privatisation and foreign investment.

Nevertheless, it is clear that sovereign national economies are becoming increasingly anachronistic and that some form of cooperation or integration is not only unavoidable but also desirable – such as the G20 group that pulled together the interests of countries of the South in the WTO negotiations, or the continuing developments in our own SADC region.

The book opens with theory and the reasons supporting integration, then looks into the fundamental challenges facing government leaders in the African Union. The institutional frameworks and goals of the present regional groupings that encompass the continent are then described. Other chapters deal with stock markets and the proposed stock exchange in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the challenges of using export markets to get out of poverty.

The OAU's Lomé Declaration and the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) Declaration are included as appendices. There is also a helpful glossary at the front of the book. For those who are involved in the area of economic integration, whether as academics or policy makers, this will prove a useful resource.



BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

The following books have been received recently. Interested reviewers should contact mwnewagenda@mweb.co.za. Thanks to all the publishers at the Cape Town International Book Fair and elsewhere for your continued support.

Adebajo, Adekayo and Helen Scanlon (eds). *A Dialogue of the Deaf: Essays on Africa and the United Nations*. Jacana Media/Centre for Conflict Resolution: Johannesburg, 2006

Atkinson, Doreen. *Going For Broke: The Fate of Farm Workers in Arid South Africa*. HSRC Press: Cape Town, 2007

Cramer, Christopher. *Civil War is Not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries*. Hurst and Company: London, 2006

Crush, Jonathan, Miriam Grant and Bruce Frayn. *Linking Migration, HIV/AIDS and Urban Food Security in Southern and Eastern Africa*. IDASA: Cape Town, 2007

Fisher, Ryland. *Race*. Jacana Media: Johannesburg, 2007

Jomo, KS and Jacques Baudot (eds). *Flat World, Big Gaps: Economic Liberalization, Globalization, Poverty and Inequality*. Zed Books: London and Third World Network: Malaysia, 2007

Kester, Gérard. *Trade Unions and Workplace Democracy in Africa*. Ashgate: Hampshire and Vermont, 2007

Mangcu, Xolela, Gill Marcus, Khehla Shubane and Adrian Hadland (eds). *Visions of Black Economic Empowerment*. Jacana Media: Johannesburg, 2007

Mkandawire, Thandika (ed). *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Gender and Development*. UNISA Press: Pretoria, 2005

Motsei, Mmatshilo. *The Kanga and the Kangaroo Court: Reflections on the Rape Trial of Jacob Zuma*. Jacana Media: Johannesburg, 2007

Prunier, Gérard. *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*. Hurst and Company: London, 2005

The World Bank. *Green Mini-Atlas*. The World Bank: Washington, 2005

Venter, Sahm (ed). *A Free Mind: Ahmed Kathrada's Notebook from Robben Island*. Jacana Media: Johannesburg, 2005

