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"No die, no rest"? Coercive Discipline in Liberian Military Organisations

Ilmari Käihkö

Abstract: Discipline forms the backbone of all military organisations. While discipline is traditionally associated with draconian punishment, this association is increasingly only applied to non-Western contexts. African rebel movements and similar, weak organisations are represented especially often as lacking non-coercive means of instilling discipline. This article explores the utility of coercive discipline in one such context – the Second Liberian Civil War (1999–2003). I argue that Liberia's weak military organisations faced significant restrictions when it came to employing direct coercion. Executions, which are often equated with coercion in existing literature, threatened to rive the already frail organisations. Even other formal instruments of discipline, such as military hierarchies and rules and regulations, remained contested throughout the war. Consequently, more indirect means were adopted. Ultimately, the main users of coercion were not military organisations, but peers. This suggests that it is easier for strong organisations to coerce their members, and that the relationship between coercion and organisational strength may need to be reassessed. Furthermore, existing positive perceptions of camaraderie between brothers-in-arms requires re-evaluation.

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Keywords: Liberia, civil wars, armed forces/military units, social cohesion, discipline

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Nyonbu Tailey was an elephant hunter and a kinsman of President Samuel Kanyon Doe, who had risen to power through a military coup in 1980. When the rebels were moving closer to Monrovia in 1990, the desperate Doe promoted Tailey, who was not a soldier by training, to the rank of captain. When the war reached the capital, Tailey protected the port with his fellow soldiers from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). But when the fighting intensified he began shooting at his own men, ordering them to stay put. Tailey's forces shrank in two waves, first after he shot at the soldiers, and later when others deserted in self-preservation. Finally, Tailey's remaining forces were so weak and demoralised that they fled in the face of the larger enemy. Consequently, the AFL lost the port to rebels, who later captured Doe there. He was subsequently tortured and killed. Tailey fared no better. After the president's demise, he and his young "death squad" attempted to take over the AFL – if not the state – to execute the maxims "No Doe, no Monrovia" and "It's not the size, it's the tribe" against the civilian population that remained in the capital. In effect, he and his underage followers began to burn down the homes of those deemed suspect, on ethnic grounds alone.[1] Tailey's actions against both his own fighters and civilians were soon perceived as being too violent by soldiers and civilians alike. He met his end when one of his own fighters knocked off his hat – which was supposed to give him supernatural protection against bullets – after which Tailey was shot and killed by his fellow soldiers.

This well-known narrative from the beginning of the First Liberian Civil War is a typical story of African warfare: It includes child soldiers, patrimony, supernatural forces, tribalism, and brutal violence used against both civilians and fellow soldiers. When it comes to the latter group, a "No die, no rest" attitude to discipline – subjugating defiance – existed in Liberia. Drawing from a 1980s Nigerian highlife song of the same name, the expression was used during Liberia's civil wars (1989–1996 and 1999–2003) to refer to situations where combatants would have to keep on fighting until killed either by the enemy or by their own comrades. Struggling with the problem faced by all military organisations of establishing discipline, "No die, no rest" thus began to characterise coercive situations where fighters were controlled through threats, if not actual use of force. Some military operations were even called "No die, no rest", and contributed to the prevailing idea in the scholarly literature

1 Tailey is also accused of having led the massacre of hundreds of displaced people at the Lutheran Church compound (although his name is misspelled) (Williams 2002: 103–104).

that the years of conflict in Liberia were particularly violent and uncivil (Edgerton 2002: 156–162; Ellis 2007: 20–22).

Yet when it comes to coercive discipline, Tailey's story is in fact atypical of war in Liberia. As his fate shows, Tailey's use of violence was simply too radical for his comrades. Instead of producing discipline, extreme coercion led to its disintegration. While "No die, no rest" existed as a notion, military organisations struggled to implement it in practice. The main argument of this article is that direct coercion – especially executions, which the literature often takes as the only measure of coercion – was never the main method of instilling discipline during the Second Liberian Civil War. This goes against the expectation that weak organisations lack non-violent means to control their members. These kinds of organisations are often seen to consist of those coming from the dregs of society, who can be controlled only through "indiscriminate use of drugs, forced induction, and violence" (Abdullah 1998: 223). Mueller agrees, and adds that contemporary wars are characterised by lack of discipline and almost exclusively occur in poor countries (Mueller 2003). Ultimately, there is an assumption that weak military organisations frequently resort to violence and extreme coercion in order to uphold discipline (Herbst 2000: 279–280).

This article seeks to examine this assumption through an investigation of the use of coercive discipline in Liberia. The utility of extreme coercion was limited, because if used on a wide scale it could have undermined the already bristling cohesion of Liberian military organisations. Because of lack of formalisation and shared norms, harsh disciplinary action was experienced as unjustified and illegitimate. Even further and as exemplified by Tailey's fate, extreme coercion potentially endangered the life of whoever was applying it. Consequently, the Liberian military organisations had to do as their like around the world, and resort to more indirect measures to instil discipline.

The article proceeds as follows: the following section identifies coercion as both the main traditional source of discipline in military organisations and the use of power. As a result, Lukes' three-dimensional view of investigating and exercising power is adopted as the theoretical framework that will later structure the investigation of coercive discipline in Liberia. These three dimensions respectively conceive power as decision-making, agenda-setting and preference-shaping. This section also advocates the use of (European) experiences of discipline as a heuristic tool to understand discipline in Liberia and elsewhere. The third section describes the ethnographic methods used for this study. Long-term presence in the field was arguably necessary for the investigation of a contro-

versial topic in a politicised environment. The fourth section focuses on the Liberian context, and especially the military organisations there, which were rather ad hoc and weak, and fought in ways that made it difficult to apply the old mechanistic view of draconian discipline. The fifth section investigates the use of coercive discipline in Liberia through Lukes' three dimensions of power. It is argued that there is little evidence that extreme coercion in the form of executions was widely used to instil discipline among the warring organisations. The norms of the top level within military organisations were not widely shared by their members, and remained contested. These difficulties regarding direct coercion are illustrated through an investigation of attempts to set up hierarchies and to uphold rules and regulations. Instead, less direct means had to be employed. The indirect means focused on limiting mobility: ethnic polarisation made it difficult to stay neutral in the conflict, and checkpoints kept fighters close to frontlines, where the circumstances alone forced them to fight. Finally, compliance was secured through dissemination of norms. Many combatants ultimately assumed a new fighter identity. But this identity came with the expectation that group norms would be adhered to. Ultimately, discipline was mainly maintained by peers. Because they often resorted to coercion, the previously upheld understanding of a positive role of comrades in arms should be re-evaluated. The sixth and final section discusses the theoretical implications of this investigation.[2]

Coercion, Discipline, Organisation, and Power

The defining characteristic of all military organisations is the use of organised violence, whereas the majority of those who form these organisations instinctively seek to survive these ordeals. This creates a clear contradiction between the interests of these organisations and their members, which becomes a fundamental problem these organisations need to solve. The traditional solution to this problem is discipline, which forms the backbone of all military organisations. To discipline essentially means to subjugate defiance; discipline is utilised to help ensure that orders are obeyed despite their unpleasantness or dangerousness (Baynes 1967: 180–181; Du Picq 2013: 111; Westmoreland 1971).

2 The author would like to thank the participants of the seminars at the Nordic Africa Institute in April 2014 and the Swedish Defence University in June 2014, the anonymous reviewers and the editors of this journal, and especially Peter Haldén, Danny Hoffman, Mats Utas, and Jan Ångström for their constructive comments.

As the notion of "No die, no rest" underscores, the disciplinary methods used in the Liberian military organisations discussed here are ultimately coercive.

As Mills argues, "the ultimate form of power is coercion by violence" (Mills 1999: 172). Power and coercion are even present in Dahl's standard definition of power, according to which "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Dahl 1957: 202–203). The usefulness of power on the frontlines is obvious. For Weber, power could come in the form of either authority or coercion, where the former corresponds to legitimate use of power, and the latter to illegitimate use of power. In the absence of authorities, any use of power relies on force alone (Weber 1978: 212–215). In other words, in the absence of authority, coercion is required. A more recent take comes from Lukes, who criticises Dahl's "one-dimensional" understanding of visible use of power as insufficient and argues for a "three-dimensional view" of power as a contested concept. These three dimensions of power can be applied not only to analyse the use of power, but also to exercise it: Lukes' "second dimension of power" focuses on the more indiscernible limiting of some alternatives of action altogether, while his "third dimension of power" equals "the capacity to secure compliance through the shaping of beliefs and desires, by imposing internal constraints under historically changing circumstances" (Lukes 2005: 144). This third dimension thus focuses not on forcing someone to comply, but instead on securing willing compliance. Lukes thus sees power as something much more than Dahl's classic, yet both more visible and narrower, understanding. For Lukes, "power is at its most effective when least observable" (Lukes 2005: 1). Lukes' three dimensions will be employed later on as the theoretical framework that structures the investigation of Liberian coercive discipline.

Discipline and coercion are not necessarily obvious in the West any longer, and tend to be taken as given. This in part has to do with the recent professionalisation of military organisations, where those who form them are expected to be motivated by non-coercive causes. Even further, the coercion used in the conscript-based mass armies was often deemed legitimate to the extent that it was not strongly questioned. Other factors, such as nationalism, offered non-violent motivations. The Liberian case can shed light on both coercive and non-coercive motivations often assumed by Western political science. In what follows, the European history of discipline is used as a heuristic tool to understand the use of discipline not only in Liberia, but also elsewhere – including the contemporary West. Two things need to be pointed out in regards to

this approach. First, for a central concept, surprisingly little has been written about discipline in the explicit military context. This almost necessitates the use of historical examples, which tend to be European. Second, while the decision to treat Liberian military organisations and their use of coercive discipline as cases of a broader phenomenon can be criticised on several accounts, so can the alternative of only focusing on these organisations as somehow inherently African. The latter alternative comes with an uncomfortable suggestion that Africa – if not Africans – is exceptional, and that it bears little similarity to other places and thus offers few opportunities for scientific exchange between continents. As the rest of this paper will show, the cases share certain similarities and can offer some interesting lessons, thus justifying this choice.

It is useful to begin the investigation of discipline from Frederick the Great and the mid-eighteenth century. Half of Frederick's troops consisted of foreign mercenaries "whom no bond ties to the state, [and who] seek to run away at every opportunity" (Frederick the Great 1753). Underlining how pressing the problem of discipline was, he devoted the very first section of his *General Principles of War* to the question of discipline. Frederick instructed his generals to avoid camping close to forests and marching during the night, and he commissioned more reliable forces to guard against deserters. Partly because of the need to closely supervise soldiers with unreliable loyalties, partly because of the tactical concepts used at the time, frontline soldiers were organised in tight formations. The ideal was to transform soldiers into machines that could be animated and directed by their officers. Draconian punishments – "fear and compulsion, linked perhaps with habit and *esprit de corps*" (Paret 1966: 17) – played an instrumental role in this endeavour.

Yet, it was already recognised that while soldiers were isolated from society and as a result could be treated harshly, officers were different. This began to change as Enlightenment ideas gained ground, and soldiers were increasingly recognised not only as individuals with honour but, because of growing nationalist sentiments, equally as citizens. The military, in turn, came to be portrayed as a school of the nation. New tactical innovations were less fixed and required more autonomy from soldiers, and as a result discipline became looser. Consequently, draconian discipline began to give way to more humane treatment and patriotic education even among the rank and file. By the time Du Picq died in 1870, he had already noted this important change. According to him, "discipline is for the purpose of dominating […] horror by a still greater horror, that of punishment or disgrace" (Du Picq 2013: 94). Only a century before, when it was still up for debate whether the rank and file had honour to begin with,

disgrace was perceived to have limited utility. This had left corporal punishment as the predominant disciplinary method.

Whereas previous wars had been fought with smaller and more homogeneous forces, in the First World War whole nations were mobilised in an industrial manner and on a grand scale to fight a total war with an almost industrial quality of death and destruction. While this could be taken as a return to machinelike discipline, the war shows that, in fact, the influx of civilians into the military also led to inevitable norm conflicts between professionals and citizen-soldiers. For instance, Sheffield notes that in the British volunteer forces, where personal relationships between commanders and subordinates remained crucial for discipline, "an attempt to impose Regular-style discipline would have led to men leaving the Auxiliary forces" (Sheffield 2000: 17). It was only with the First World War that self-discipline began to play a greater role than imposed formal discipline (Kellett 1982: 9; see also Baynes 1967). Yet this is not to say that coercive discipline had ceased to play a role in military organisations. In the aftermath of the Second World War, an extensive questionnaire-based research programme conducted for the United States War Department targeted American servicemen. When asked about punishment, only 23 per cent of the officers and 20 per cent of enlisted men agreed to the claim that it was the "best way" to ensure good behaviour. However, 46 per cent of officers and 67 per cent of enlisted men agreed that "the main reason most soldiers obey rules and regulations is because they are afraid of being punished" (Stouffer 1949: 417).

Coercive discipline is, however, rarely discussed when it comes to contemporary Western military organisations, which have little desire for machinelike soldiers, as personal autonomy and initiative have become prized and sought-after attributes. Coercive discipline would also not help with recruitment and retention of voluntary forces (Strachan 2006: 226). The gradual shift away from coercive discipline has, however, been very different in other contexts. For instance, different rules applied when it came to what was described as exceptional but necessary colonial disciplining of "uncivilised" "other bodies" (Rao and Pierce 2006). This perception arguably continues in a sense, as coercive discipline has mostly been omitted in literature that investigates contemporary Western military organisations. As a result, it remains a practice associated with others.

This association to some extent arises from the perceived connection of discipline and forms of organisation. In fact, Du Picq went so far as to say that it is only organisations that can produce discipline (Du Picq 2013: 122; see also van Creveld 1982: 163). Some organisations are, however, unmistakably designed for warfighting and possess highly devel-

oped organisational structures that offer a wide variety of instruments to create and maintain discipline. Others, like the ones in Liberia, are comparatively ad hoc and are seen to possess more limited means of fostering discipline, which are furthermore allocated to more immediate incentives. A dichotomy of stronger and weaker military organisations thus exists, where the former are seen to mainly resort to non-coercive means.

Finally, while coercive discipline has changed profoundly over time in the West, existing literature still typically equates coercion with executions (King 2013: 214-215). While executions are seemingly easily observable and quantifiable, they do not say much about the less visible (and more everyday) forms of coercion. In addition, because of the sensitive nature of the topic of execution, there is reason to be sceptical of some of the existing source material (Ylikangas 2009: 89–156). Both of these issues raise questions about the usefulness of executions as a measure of coercion.

Ethnographic Fieldwork with Former Combatants in Liberia

This article builds mainly on data gathered from ethnographic fieldwork. I spent a total of ten months during two field trips (in 2012 and 2013) investigating Liberian military organisations, focusing on former combatants from all major factions of the civil wars in seven of the fifteen counties of Liberia. Semi-structured interviews with former combatants were the main method employed. The length of interviews varied from brief, unplanned encounters to living for weeks with informants. Fieldwork concentrated on approximately 30 key informants of varying ethnicity, faction, geographic location, and military rank. I spent anywhere from a few dozen to several hundred hours with each. Some of the findings received from these key informants were verified in interviews with other former combatants, who number in the few hundreds. Semi-structured group interviews became an especially effective way to accomplish this.

A long process of building trust was deemed necessary to undertake this research, as many aspects of the wars remain sensitive to this day. An element of informants' potential mistrust of researchers is the lingering rumours concerning a potential war crimes court that could especially target those who held higher positions during the war. All sources have been anonymised in order to prevent any negative consequences for them.

Several independent groups of informants were interviewed based on the snowball-sampling recruitment method (Russell 2006: 192–194). Additionally, my long-term presence and open intentions (which were deemed necessary to avoid feeding into suspicions) led to additional spontaneous encounters with former combatants. Most of these key informants were revisited after a year, when I revisited my main fieldwork sites. This made it possible to return to certain topics, thereby improving the reliability of the data.

The analysis also benefitted from the work of Anders Themnér, who permitted me to utilise a further 238 semi-structured interviews of former combatants conducted for another research project. This material contained information about disciplinary measures, and was collected in eight counties between 2010 and 2013 by Themnér and myself. It has been used to further control some of the findings.

Liberian Military Organisations

All Liberian military organisations have been influenced by the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). The AFL has its roots in the Liberian Frontier Force (LFF), which was established in 1908 to pacify Liberia's interior in order to keep encroaching colonialist neighbours at bay. Organised by British officers following European models used in neighbouring countries but soon overtaken by Americans, the LFF acted with impunity and often paid little heed to its political masters in the capital. There were too many officers, who furthermore were selected due to patronage rather than competence. Paid a meagre salary that was often several months in arrears, LFF soldiers often resorted to looting and robbery (Akingbade 1976: 136–166). Many of these problems formed a legacy that was handed down first to the AFL, and subsequently to the military organisations formed during the two civil wars, as former soldiers from the AFL manned central positions in all of them.

These two wars were fought between 1989 and 2003. The First Civil War began on Christmas Eve in 1989 and continued until 1996, with presidential elections the year after. The Second Civil War began only a few years after these elections, following a short period of calm brought about as a result of the electoral victory of the rebel leader Charles Taylor. As Taylor proved unable to bring stability, many began to see regime change as the only way to bring peace. By 1999, Liberian dissidents operating from neighbouring Guinea, who came to be known as Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), attacked northern Liberia. But as Taylor's Government of Liberia (GoL) proved difficult to

dislodge, fighting dragged on. In early 2003, southeastern Liberia was invaded by another group of rebels, who assumed the name Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Following the departure of Taylor in August 2003, the government forces, LURD and MODEL combined to create a transitional government, thus ending the conflict that had begun fourteen years earlier (Käihkö 2015).

In order to link Liberia to the more general discussion of discipline above, the nature of the latter war in Liberia warrants some discussion. This was a small war, with limited combat. Fighting forces were typically dispersed into small formations, which ensured that casualties between them remained low. Much of the fighting was done in densely forested areas and required significant independence and initiative, which further made upholding strict discipline difficult. There were long periods that saw little fighting on several fronts. Violence, therefore, does not always feature prominently in fighters' narratives of war. Second, while many of these fighters had inherently political motives, there was no overarching ideology such as nationalism that they could draw from. Not only was the war a civil war, but those who fought in it had very mixed origins: in addition to Liberians from different ethnic groups, the factions also included foreign nationals, such as Guinean rebels, Ivoirian militiamen, and Sierra Leoneans from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Civil Defence Forces. To some extent, ethnicity played a similar, yet lesser role, but it was never backed up with formal structures comparable to nation-states, for instance. As argued by Malešević, this lack of "institutional and ideological devices" has profound consequences for discipline. According to him, it is "social organisation, an external mechanism of social control, [which] is a backbone of military might" (Malešević 2010: 113). Curiously, the GoL forces were arguably *less* organised than the rebels they fought against. Instead of relying on the AFL (which the distrustful Taylor kept weak), the bulk of GoL forces consisted of irregular militias, which were contracted for paid missions against the rebels (Brabazon 2003: 8; Hoffman 2011a: 48). Third, the war was fought by forces that encompassed both trained soldiers, as well as (often young) civilians without any previous experience of war. While the soldiers attempted to enforce military norms on the organisations, these always remained contested because of civilian norms. It is thus not implausible to compare these fighters to citizen-soldiers. As Ferme and Hoffman discuss, discourses of international human rights norms thrived in the Mano River region even among combatants. In Sierra Leone, opposition to both government and rebels was motivated by exactly that disregard for the protection of civilians (Ferme and Hoffman

2004). Similar discourse existed across the border in Liberia (Gerdes 2013: 168–169). These ideas almost certainly affected how fighters expected to be treated during the war. The rest of this article concentrates on how and whether these expectations were met in practice.

Lukes' First Dimension of Power: Never Quite "No die, no rest"

As noted, "No die, no rest" was used in Liberia to express the idea that the only alternative to fighting was death – either at the hands of the enemy, or through execution by one's own side. Yet it was difficult to put this idea into practice, as exemplified by the case of Captain Tailey. He remains a pertinent example often used by informants with military backgrounds (who, because of their positions, were the people who would have employed coercion) to describe the problematic utility of executions and other direct coercive techniques to establish discipline during the Liberian civil wars. This should, however, not be altogether surprising, considering that even an extreme case like the Lord's Resistance Army – which almost completely relies on forced recruitment – could not exclusively rely on coercion (Blattman and Annan 2010; Titeca 2010). Such coercive measures fit under Lukes' first dimension of power, which focuses on the visible use of power that coerces someone to do something they would not otherwise do.

Why did coercion fail to achieve the desired effect in Liberia? Ultimately, the disintegration of discipline among Tailey's forces was the result of the AFL's weak organisation. For Weber, discipline is rationalised, bureaucratised, and above all impersonal (Weber 1946: 253–254). This kind of formalisation did not take hold in Liberia, where the weak organisations never succeeded in convincing their members of the necessity of drastic measures. Following Weber, enforcing punishments not based on shared norms is illegitimate. As Westmoreland observes, military justice should promote discipline – "an unfair or unjust correction never promotes the development of discipline" (Westmoreland 1971). Fairness can only be achieved through shared understanding, and unfair punishments do not easily lead to discipline. This is also evident in the way peers often begin to control each other's behaviour. As one American study noted, "where the formal controls […] are not supported by the informal social pressures of one's fellows, not to mention internalisation which operates even in the absence of one's fellows, there is almost certain to be widespread violation of the rules" (Stouffer 1949: 411). While collective punishments can be used for similar effect, as long

as they are illegitimate they remain problematic. From the point of view of an organisation, self-discipline is naturally preferable because it spares resources. As will be discussed later, signs of this were visible during the Second Liberian Civil War.

In the case of Liberia, the weak organisation and the consequent lack of shared norms contributed to a limited use of executions during the Second Civil War. For instance, only two executions took place in Voinjama when it served as the headquarters of LURD from 2000 to 2003. Both resulted from quarrels between members of the rebel movement.[3] At least one of these executions was carried out by the provost marshal, and the accused was shot on the spot. Several informants state that no executions took place among the MODEL fighters.[4] As one MODEL fighter noted, "rebel war" had "no court trial system."[5]

Military norms failed to completely replace civilian ones in Liberia. Furthermore, lack of formalisation in organisations highlighted the importance of personal relationships (Brabazon 2003: 7). Several commanders were afraid of using too much coercion: as Tailey's example shows, executions could have easily turned fighters against their commanders. "Execute somebody – they execute you, too," was how one of them put it.[6] Even less severe punishments could be seen as unreasonable, as illustrated by the case of MODEL's commanding general, who repeatedly beat up his fighters for failing to follow orders. His perceived violent nature caused ill feelings towards him, and even made his *aide-de-camp* abandon him. When the commanding general died in the last major battle between the GoL and MODEL, there were several who rejoiced.[7] Leaders also needed to be wary of the risk of provoking animosity not only from the person punished, but also from their friends and those belonging to the same ethnic group. One well-known example comes from LURD, where one battalion openly defied direct orders from political leaders to retreat towards the Guinean border, and instead went on the offensive. The LURD leadership threatened to execute the leaders of the unit if they did not immediately return, but never carried out these threats. The utility of executions was overshadowed by the serious disturbances to LURD's internal cohesion that would undoubtedly have

3 High-ranking LURD commander, 11 September 2012, Monrovia
4 MODEL task force commander, 11 August 2012, Zwedru; MODEL commander, 24 August 2012, Zwedru.
5 MODEL fighter, 12 September 2012, Monrovia.
6 LURD commander, 2 November 2013, Zwedru.
7 MODEL fighter and *aide-de-camp*, 21 September 2012, Monrovia.

followed.[8] The existing tensions within the organisation might well have escalated and led to fragmentation. In the end, the commanders were briefly detained, after which they returned to the frontlines.

Punishing relatives was impossible in practice, which is why commanders could send their family members to other units[9] and choose to serve away from their home communities.[10] Finally, as all the factions ultimately struggled with manpower issues, in most cases they could ill afford to execute their own fighters. This imperative to preserve limited force also contributed to the limited use of executions. Several fighters who knew that they could face consequences for misbehaviour found safety in the frontlines.

All in all, interviews do not support the hypothesis that the popular idea of "No die, no rest" was a widely implemented notion, or that executions were extensively used as a disciplinary measure during the Second Liberian Civil War. This may sound puzzling, as commanders sometimes claim that they could execute their own men for mistreating civilians. Even ex-combatants often refer to other commanders who were extremely violent, and who used indiscriminate violence against their own men. Yet, curiously, no combatants serving under commanders who claim to have exercised harsh discipline have confirmed these accounts.

This discrepancy between the commanders' and fighters' narratives may be explained by the fact that few interviewees wanted to admit to participating in brutality during the wars. Similarly, ethical considerations make it difficult to pose direct questions about what often amount to war crimes. Accounts of specific events, though, were often brought up by interviewees themselves. The few commanders who claim to have executed those who were brutalising civilians may be attempting to justify some violence, or at least to paint an image of a force more disciplined than it was. The latter tendency was especially obvious during interviews with political leaders associated with the military organisations. Yet if executions were employed as a deterrent, they should have been advertised within organisations as a warning to others, which was not the case. Similarly, fighters who presented themselves as victims might have been expected to emphasise the presence of extreme coercion as a reason for their participation in the war (Utas 2003: 22–24); however, only a few did so – mostly government fighters and those recruited by LURD in the final stages of the war during its march towards the capital. As a result, there is limited evidence that executions consti-

8 LURD official, 16 November 2013, Monrovia.
9 LIMA fighter, 3 October 2012, Monrovia.
10 Low-level MODEL commander, 18 July 2012, Grand Gedeh.

tuted a common instrument of coercive discipline among the rebel forces of the Second Liberian Civil War.

Naturally, Liberian military organisations sought ways to instil discipline among their ranks. Two methods stand out: imposing hierarchies, and establishing rules and regulations. These will be investigated in the following sections.

Hierarchy

Military organisations are almost invariably hierarchical. Hierarchies – and their outward manifestations, such as rank and insignia – demand obedience, and thus help to generate authority and discipline. In Liberia, the lack of formalisation had a major negative effect on attempts to develop hierarchies. As a Library of Congress report dating from 1985 describes, the 1980 coup had seriously affected discipline in the military, and resulted in a situation where "the reluctance of most officers to impose discipline had combined with the unwillingness of more than a few enlisted men to accept it." Even further, "since the coup, the AFL had operated almost exclusively on the basis of directives, rather than written regulations that codify standard methods of operation" (Ehrenreich 1985: 273). In addition, when many officers were retired after the coup, their replacements were often selected with criteria other than merit in mind (Ehrenreich 1985: 263). Tailey's promotion shows that this practice still existed a decade later. This lack of professionalism among the officer corps continued to be a source of disciplinary problems until the beginning of the war in 1989, when some soldiers refused to take orders from their illiterate and poorly trained officers.[11] While the AFL obviously struggled to impose a hierarchy, it must still be seen as the most formalised of all the Liberian military organisations, as it drew on some shared military norms. These were not easily accepted by the citizen-soldiers fighting in the three organisations of the Second War, as most of their members lacked previous experience with the AFL (Käihkö forthcoming).

While military hierarchies existed in all factions, they were partly based on a different logic than the strict bureaucratic one, with the result being that formal hierarchies became disputed. The best example is the commanding general of MODEL mentioned above. Because he spent most of his time in Côte d'Ivoire, other top commanders were able to establish themselves in Liberia. When one such commander struck the

11 MODEL task force commander, 11 August 2012, Zwedru.

commanding general in the face after accusing him of looting too much, no disciplinary action followed. Despite such insolence, there was little the commanding general could do.[12] Clearly, discipline could not be automatically imposed through hierarchies.

As already discussed, non-military dynamics also affected military hierarchies. It was often difficult to know for certain who ranked higher, and why. In one MODEL case, each of two commanders claimed that he, himself, ranked higher.[13] One of them, though, recognised the other as an "elder brother" (a slightly older man from the same area, to whom he probably had a distant blood relation), which made the asymmetry in military rank irrelevant. "Tradition [was] more important than rank"[14] because the younger man needed to be mindful of the consequences he would face after the war if he broke the prevailing social norms. Similarly, because of the fear of upsetting social relations (for a comparison, see Sheffield 2000: 17), some promotions were based on seniority rather than merit. Political meddling also served to confuse the situation: because hierarchies were ultimately based on control of supplies, politicians could bypass chains of command and directly empower their trusted favorites. This kind of favouritism led other, less favoured commanders to question hierarchies altogether.[15]

Ultimately, many fighters – with or without experience in the AFL – drew a distinction between "city rank" (of formal organisations such as the AFL) and informal "bush rank" (used in the rebel organisations and militias), and noted that only the latter really played a role, as it was based on actual performance.[16] Some aspects of meritocracy thus existed within all Liberian military organisations: the commanders that could both grant special privileges to their subordinates and keep them alive were understandably favoured by fighters. By controlling many fighters, such commanders could in turn claim recognition of rank. As a result, at least one ambitious LURD commander left a safe position behind the lines for frontline duty simply because this was the only way he could ascend in the organisation.[17] While hierarchies could be used to uphold discipline to some extent, they remained contested. Relationships between commanders

12 MODEL task force commander, 19 August 2012, Zwedru.
13 MODEL commander, MODEL company commander, 19 August 2012, Grand Gedeh.
14 MODEL commander, 19 July 2012, Zwedru.
15 LURD commander, 21 October 2013, 2 November 2013, Zwedru.
16 GoL commander, 14 April 2012, Monrovia.
17 LURD frontline commander, 23 November 2013, Monrovia.

and subordinates remained more important than formal hierarchies for discipline.

Rules and Regulations

As Ellis notes, Liberia came to epitomise the anarchical and uncivil wars of Africa (Ellis 2007: 17–22). This description would suggest that even the military organisations involved with these wars would be anarchic and uncontrolled. Liberian fighters' narratives, however, do not necessarily support this view. In the Second Civil War, all factions aimed to observe standard operating procedures (SOPs), which regulated fighters' conduct towards both each other and civilians. In addition, factions had military police or so-called "task forces," which were described by interviewees to have focused on disciplinary issues. LURD even had a provost marshal. Finally, since many leadership positions within factions were filled by former AFL soldiers, they brought with them AFL regulations, and could even refer to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the Geneva Conventions. The existence of these mechanisms counters the idea of the Liberian military organisations as lacking discipline.

Despite these accounts suggesting that disciplinary mechanisms were in place in all factions, the reality was more complicated. Such mechanisms were probably not well known or well used. While those familiar with the AFL regulations could refer to a suitable regulation to justify disciplinary action, such regulations meant little to the vast majority of fighters. Virtually no former AFL soldier could explain the contents of the UCMJ, except to mention that the last officer responsible for enforcing it in the AFL had been killed by President Taylor after verbally offending him.[18] The same went for the Geneva Conventions, with the exception of policies concerning prisoners of war. In LURD, the provost marshal worked mostly on logistics behind the lines, and was only involved in the two executions discussed earlier. Military police and task forces did exist, but were few and only occasionally concentrated on upholding discipline due to lack of manpower. SOPs certainly existed, and most fighters can recall the transgressions identified in them. For instance, the MODEL SOP was "No looting, no raping, no loving to your friend['s] wife or girlfriend, don't kill friend or innocent people."[19] Yet there is little agreement on how such transgressions should be punished. For instance, many fighters claimed that rape would be punishable by death, and harassing civilians by flogging. Most fighters, though,

18 AFL soldier, 1 October 2012, Monrovia.
19 MODEL fighter, 20 September 2013, Monrovia.

struggle to name a single person punished, let alone executed, for any violation of an SOP. The SOP prohibiting looting was contradicted by the fact that government and NGO property were sometimes declared to be fair game as it "belonged to the people." Similarly, "abandoned" civilian property (in many cases possessions of those who had fled the fighting) could be taken. Looting was thus used as a positive incentive to encourage fighters, but at the same time commanders sought to control looting for tactical as well as selfish reasons. The part about relationships with "reserved women" was important for minimising conflicts between fighters.

Rules and regulations were thus characterised by lack of formalisation, and the resulting negotiability. This is made evident in the varying understandings regarding the procedures of the SOPs, which were likely never documented. If they were written down, they simply did not reach down the chain of command to the frontlines. This lack of formalisation resulted in flexible rules that were difficult to enforce since they were not clearly understood. Typically, the local commander was left with the arbitrary power to enforce SOPs. While some commanders were stricter, this arrangement did not usually result in high discipline, or control of forces. Many commanders understood that they needed to choose between military efficiency and limiting immediate civilian suffering, and they chose the former.[20] The fact that perhaps the most important GoL military police commander was mainly responsible for disarming fighters coming from frontlines to the capital also suggests that the regime valued its own security over that of its citizenry.[21] To sum up, SOPs were more guidelines than actual rules, and were selectively enforced.

Ultimately, direct coercion fared poorly in Liberia. As Marks notes in regard to the RUF, "harsh punishments were unsustainable," as they "would have eliminated some of the fiercest fighters upon whom the RUF relied for strength in battle, including key commanders" (Marks 2013: 161). As a result, executions were not extensively used. Organisations also failed to formalise themselves in ways that would have promoted much discipline – for instance, by legitimising the use of extreme coercion. Hoffman's description of the organisation of the Civil Defense Forces in neighbouring Sierra Leone thus seems fitting even in Liberia: "hierarchies were rooted in a less bureaucratic and more personalistic set

20 Mitton raises an important question when he asks whether the punishments meted out in the RUF were meant to reduce abuse, or rather to uphold commanders' authority and control of resources; Mitton 2015: 89–90. I, too, find this question difficult to answer.

21 GoL Anti-Terrorism Unit military police commander, 23 April 2012, Monrovia.

of understandings about authority and responsibility" (Hoffman 2011b: 132). As a result, more indirect and subtle means were required.

Lukes' Second Dimension of Power: Limiting Mobility

Arguably, the one-dimensional power in Liberia was overshadowed by Lukes' second dimension: limiting alternatives of action. As Kellett notes, discipline "limits the range of possible behaviour open to the soldier and thus increases the likelihood of his compliance" (Kellett 1982: 325). Even further, war itself becomes a force that limits the alternatives of those caught up in it. In Liberia, this offered the military organisations some ways to recruit and control fighters. The first method was the creation of in-groups and out-groups, and the second the more concrete limitation of mobility through the erection of checkpoints. From an organisational point of view, this indirect strategy was superior to direct coercion because it required substantially fewer resources. Even further, it spared organisations from much of the conflict and grievances that outright coercion would have created.

The Creation of In-Groups and Out-Groups

Ethnic polarisation has historical roots in Liberia. When the rebels first entered the country in 1989, they targeted two ethnic groups they viewed as supporters of the Doe regime: the Krahn and the Mandingo. Doe had persecuted the Gio and the Mano following unsuccessful coup attempts. In Lofa, Loma fought Mandingo for local dominance, and atrocities were committed by both sides during the early 1990s. Particular ethnic groups associating with particular military organisations strengthened the creation of in-groups and out-groups, making it difficult for individuals to stay neutral in the conflict.

These ethnic grievances had not vanished by the beginning of the Second Civil War (and still have not more than a decade after its end). While LURD in particular sought to present itself as a movement that fought only against Charles Taylor and welcomed all ethnic groups to join it, it was easy for all the factions to exploit existing ethnic grievances. Whereas the GoL could claim to be protecting the state against rebels, many LURD and MODEL fighters saw fighting as the only way to return home from exile. All three movements could present themselves as protectors of one or more ethnic group, which helped mobilisation against certain out-groups. Ethnic groups identifying themselves and

being identified by others with certain factions enforced polarisation. As Maček argues, "war has a propensity to enforce both an antagonistic division between groups and homogeneity within groups" (Maček 2009: 208). Both divisions and homogeneity were enforced by tactical action. For instance, one side's systematic execution of prisoners belonging to certain ethnic groups likely led to the adoption of similar tactics by the opponent. This kind of indirect use of power contributed to making fighting a "choiceless decision" (Aretxaga 1997). As a result, it was easier for military organisations to control those who lacked viable alternatives for not falling in line.

Checkpoints

The second indirect way to instil discipline and to reduce desertion was to limit the mobility of fighters and thus keep them on the frontlines, where the conditions alone would force them to fight. Similar logic has been applied around the world. For instance, military barracks are typically located in remote places in order to remove soldiers from society – and thus make it easier to retain them. Another example is the Lord's Resistance Army, which "sought to limit escape opportunities by quickly moving the abductee as far as possible from home" (Blattman and Annan 2010: 141). Travelling through the bush in Liberia is difficult, which meant that a string of checkpoints – often called gates – erected on roads behind the frontlines had a significant effect on stopping desertion. As one LURD commander explained, "gate controls frontline."[22] While it was possible to pass through one or two checkpoints by negotiating or by exploiting personal relationships, at some point a pass or a permit became necessary. Checkpoints, enemy attacks, hunger, and terrain all contributed to limiting the alternatives to not fighting. For instance, many LURD fighters in northern Lofa County claim that they were "captured" by LURD, but never forced to fight. One sample of 26 fighters from the same unit that I interviewed in May 2012 included only six who claimed to have joined willingly. None, however, stated that they were ever forced to fight. As even these respondents brought up, struggling with a difficult situation, many ultimately had little choice whether to join – or fight – or not. While the grim situation was at least partially the responsibility of LURD, it was difficult to hold the capturing commander personally responsible for the prevailing circumstances. In fact, associating with a military organisation often provided significant bene-

22 LURD task force commander, 19 November 2013, Bomi.

fits for the recruits. Not only did it provide security, but it also increased the possibility of getting supplies such as food and medicine, and improved some recruits' social status and future prospects. Refusing to follow orders would have negated these benefits and possibly worsened the situation even further. In other words, active coercion was not always required to recruit and retain fighters.

Coercion was focused on the controlled areas close to frontlines, whereas the coercive means available to military organisations behind these areas – in towns, villages, and refugee camps – were much more limited. The weak formalisation of military organisations and the relative calm on many fronts is emphasised by the fact that many combatants spent considerable amounts of time away from their units, behind the frontlines (for a Sierra Leonean parallel, see Peters 2011: 66). Some interviewees (mainly but not exclusively those with rank) simply chose to stay away from the front without facing any consequences. Runaways often faced the choice of being disarmed or being returned to the frontlines when caught.

A different kind of dichotomy existed between civilians and fighters despite their ethnicity. This kind of polarisation of available alternatives is evident in statements made about civilians such as "You're either with us or against us" and "One way or the other you'll participate."[23] This kind of acceptance of military norms that differ significantly from civilian norms is best discussed separately.

Lukes' Third Dimension of Power: Securing Compliance

Lukes' third dimension is the most potent of his three categories, but is also typically the most difficult to achieve. In a similar manner as with the second category, the context of war arguably helped. As noted, associating oneself with a military organisation was often thought of as the sensible thing to do in difficult circumstances. Yet, closer association came with certain expectations, which in many cases led to dissemination of norms and adoption of a new identity – that of a fighter.

Disseminating Norms

The final means of coercion concerned the dissemination of norms throughout organisations. In established military organisations, norms are disseminated through training (Kellett 1982), a process enhanced by

23 LURD official, 16 November 2013, Monrovia.

isolating individuals from competing norms (Goffman 1987). While training officers existed in all Liberian organisations and while the government forces established dedicated training bases, norms were arguably disseminated more by unit commanders and peers on the frontlines than by centralised training regimens. While many fighters possessed previous military training, wartime formal training in all three warring factions typically consisted of little more than the basics of handling a weapon, whereas the rest was learned on the front. Ideological training was especially lacking.

While it has been noted above that the AFL possessed the strongest norms in Liberian civil wars, even the identities of ordinary fighters with no previous military experience were affected by years of war. Many began to identify with their comrades to the point that they became an in-group. Furthermore, other factions, military units, and ethnic groups were commonly perceived to be less brave and less capable than one's own, which points to the formation of group identities and *esprit de corps*. This kind of pride is nothing less than the opposite of the shame that Keen argues contributed to cohesion in Sierra Leone (Keen 2005: 77–78; for a more nuanced view, see Mitton 2015: 128–130) These identities were supported and maintained by normative expectations: belonging was connected to adherence to group norms (Baynes 1967: 184). As one young LURD fighter rather casually pointed out, "the duty of a soldier is to fight and follow orders."[24] If a fighter refused to play his or her part, it was impossible to be a fighter anymore. While this fighter identity was connected to maximising chances of survival, it was also linked to both positive and negative incentives. When it comes to the former, the failure to meet norm expectations was met with the denial of the positive incentives, such as security and supplies.

Examples of negative consequences for breaking established norms come from the frontlines. Once in the front, it was considered a breach of solidarity for anyone to abandon comrades. Such attempts were typically met with hostility or even aggression. For example, purposefully injuring oneself in order to leave the front (typically, shooting oneself in the palm or leg) might be left untreated by one's fellow fighters. Some went even further and shot the other palm or leg. At worst, attempts to desert raised the question of whether the fighter attempting to flee had betrayed their comrades to the enemy through "conniving." As elsewhere, such cases of potential "different intention" were typically met with even more hostility by suspicious comrades.

24 LURD fighter, 12 November 2013, Voinjama.

The existence of at least some shared identification and norms is also evident in the lack of condemnation concerning the treatment of those who refused to fight: they were often forced to carry heavy loads or exposed to long periods of direct sunlight. Some interviewees expressed sympathy towards commanders who used violence against disobedient subordinates. These officers were described as having been carried away by anger after repeated insubordination; the blame was thus put on the victims instead of the perpetrators. Such views were more common among former AFL soldiers, but were also held by other fighters. This kind of socialisation clearly included a different idea of what was just. Such shaping of beliefs and desires corresponds to Lukes' third dimension of power, in that norms had been changed to the extent that discipline was upheld by peers, who saw in-group cohesion as a way to increase their chances of survival in a violent environment.

This normative change and the resulting discipline upheld by peers was arguably the most important instrument for upholding discipline in Liberia. Whereas the organisations struggled to instil discipline through direct means, peer pressure was clearly more successful – although not necessarily in ways that guaranteed that force could be utilised strategically, as widespread preying on civilians and disregarding orders illustrates. At times, such tactical behaviour went against strategic interests, especially to the extent that it increased ethnic polarisation.

This upholding of norms by peers was also not necessarily as brotherly or buddy-like as is typically portrayed in the existing literature. For instance, Marshall notes that a soldier risks his life because of "friendship, loyalty to responsibility, and the knowledge that he is a repository of the faith and confidence of others" (Marshall 1947: 161; see also Baynes 1967:183; Little 1964; Shils and Janowitz 1948: 284). This may be true to some extent in Liberia, but the prospect of being punished by peers after failing to meet expectations played a role as well. A to some extent comparable account comes from Eisenhart's personal experiences from the United States Marine Corps boot camp in the 1970s, where violence was used against norm-breakers (Eisenhart 1975). This finding calls for a re-evaluation of the positive role played by peers in military organisations.

Conclusions and Theoretical Implications

This article has investigated the use of coercive discipline epitomised in the notion of "No die, no rest" during the Second Liberian Civil War. It argues that Liberian military organisations faced concrete restrictions when

they sought to rely on extreme coercion and especially executions to instil discipline. Much rested on the very weakness of these organisations: they failed to formalise themselves, and consequently to disseminate and uphold norms effectively. As a result, the Liberian military organisations could be compared to citizen-armies with recruits with little previous idea – let alone acceptance – of military norms. These norms thus remained contested and extreme coercion illegitimate. Executions in particular were recognised as potentially hazardous for those who sought to resort to them. Individual commanders and in particular peers became the source of most discipline, ostensibly in order to increase their own chances of survival. Because they often resorted to violence against norm breakers, the positive view of camaraderie of brothers-in-arms held in previous literature should be re-evaluated.

The fact that Liberian military organisations struggled to employ coercive discipline and as a result had to resort to more indirect means challenges the prevailing idea that weak organisations must invariably resort to force in order to instil discipline among their ranks. In fact, the investigation suggests that weak organisations can face collapse if they attempt to rely on extreme coercion. Employing coercion remains much easier for strong organisations, because they can disseminate and uphold norms much more effectively. Without shared norms, coercion remains illegitimate. Similarly, the Liberian military organisations had very limited power to use coercion in areas they did not directly control. In comparison, Finnish deserters during the Second World War could never truly escape the total war: they were often arrested if they returned home. Some were executed (Ylikangas 2009). Similar coercive apparatuses did not exist in Liberia. Further comparative in-depth studies would be helpful in developing the idea of the legitimacy and utility of coercive discipline in both weak and strong military organisations.

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"No die, no rest"? Zwangsmaßnahmen in bewaffneten Einheiten in Liberia

Zusammenfassung: Disziplin bildet das Rückgrat militärischer Organisation. Zwar wird Disziplin traditionell mit drakonischer Bestrafung assoziiert, heute allerdings zumeist nur noch mit Bezug auf nichtwestliche militärische Strukturen. Insbesondere Rebellengruppen in Afrika und ähnliche kämpfende Einheiten werden sehr oft so dargestellt, als ob sie zur Sicherung von Disziplin nur auf drakonische Zwangsmittel setzen könn-

ten. Der vorliegende Beitrag untersucht die Effizienz von Zwangsmaßnahmen in einem solchen Kontext – dem zweiten liberianischen Bürgerkrieg (1999-2003). Der Autor zeigt, dass die schwachen militärischen Einheiten in Liberia erhebliche Probleme hatten, direkten Zwang auszuüben. Durch Exekutionen, die in der Literatur oft mit Zwangsmaßnahmen gleichgesetzt werden, hätten die ohnehin schon zerfallenden Strukturen endgültig zerbrechen können. Sogar die Wirkung eher formaler Disziplinierungsmittel, wie militärischer Hierarchien oder Vorschriften und Richtlinien, blieb während des Krieges umstritten. In der Konsequenz setzte man auf eher indirekte Disziplinierungsmethoden. Am Ende gingen Zwangsmaßnahmen nicht von der Spitze der militärischen Einheiten aus, sondern von Mitkämpfern. Der Autor schließt daraus, dass es für starke Organisationen leichter ist, ihre Mitglieder Zwangsmaßnahmen auszusetzen, und dass der Zusammenhang von Zwang und organisatorischer Stärke neu bewertet werden muss. Zudem müssten positive Einschätzungen in Bezug auf die Kameradschaft unter Waffenbrüdern überprüft werden.

Schlagwörter: Liberia, Bürgerkrieg, Streitkräfte/Militärische Verbände, Sozialer Zusammenhalt, Disziplin

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Ready or Not: Namibia As a Potentially Successful Oil Producer

Andrzej Polus, Dominik Kopinski, and Wojciech Tycholiz

Abstract: The primary objective of this paper is to assess whether Namibia is ready to become an oil producer. The geological estimates suggest that the country may possess the equivalent of as many as 11 billion barrels of crude oil. If the numbers are correct, Namibia would be sitting on the second-largest oil reserves in sub-Saharan Africa, and exploitation could start as soon as 2017. This clearly raises the question of whether Namibia is next in line to become a victim of the notorious "resource curse." On the basis of critical discourse analysis and findings from field research, the authors have selected six dimensions of the resource curse and contextualised them within the spheres of Namibian politics and economy. While Namibia still faces a number of important challenges, our findings offer little evidence that the oil will have particularly disruptive effects.

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Keywords: Namibia, economic development, state, political systems, corruption, natural resources, crude oil/natural gas extraction

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In sub-Saharan Africa, negative aspects of natural-resource management are usually referred to as the "resource curse." Despite two decades of debate on this phenomenon, the literature on the resource curse remains inconclusive. There is an ongoing discussion about whether developing countries should even bother to undertake actions in order to avoid the notorious curse. Inspired by reports claiming Namibia might be Africa's next big oil frontier, and taking into account promising geological data, this article considers Namibia's potential to become a successful oil producer.

The Kudu gas field in the Orange River Basin is the only hydrocarbon discovery in Namibia.[1] Although there are no proven oil reserves, geological estimates suggest that Namibia may possess 11 billion barrels of crude oil. It is by no means self-evident that these estimates could turn into actual commercial volumes; in fact, the numbers that have gone viral in recent years may be seriously flawed. Nonetheless, considering the geological features of seabed rocks (geologically similar to the Brazilian and Angolan shores) and the first promising, yet still non-commercial, discoveries, there is a good chance that Namibia will end up producing oil in the foreseeable future (Interview Iyambo 2013). Currently, exploration licences have been obtained both by medium-sized companies (e.g. Murphy Oil, Tullow Oil, Galp Energia, Repsol) and by oil-industry giants (e.g. BP, Shell). Furthermore, the Namibian government is pushing oil companies to drill more wells and warns that it will not renew licences for companies that do not carry out oil exploration.

On the basis of a critical analysis of discourse concerning the resource curse, the authors have identified several factors that should be considered when answering the question of whether a country with new oil discoveries may be considered a potential victim of the resource curse. These are: resource location and resource type, the state's ability to deal with the economic consequences of the resource's discovery, the stability of the political regime at the moment of the resource's discovery, transparency, accountability, and the strength of civil society. The above-mentioned factors were contextualised and analysed in order to determine Namibia's readiness for oil production.

This article is based primarily on a field study conducted in Namibia. The major research techniques used during the work on the article were in-depth interviews, critical analysis of documents, discourse analy-

1 The Kudu gas-to-power project (development of the 800 MW gas turbine power station near Oranjemund) is of key importance for Namibia, since it will make the country energetically self-sufficient. However, Tullow Oil's withdrawal from the project led to delays in its implementation and raised questions about its economic viability.

sis, and comparative analysis. The authors conducted over 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews with politicians, civil servants, representatives of civil society, academics, and representatives of the mining industry. The respondents were asked two general questions about their opinions on Namibia being ready for oil production in terms of legal framework, institutional adjustments, revenue collection, management of public expectations, and their estimations of the likelihood of a "resource-curse" scenario unfolding. Every respondent was also asked targeted questions dependent on his/her field of expertise. The interviews' average length was 26 minutes.[2]

Is Dutch Disease a Problem for Namibia?

As difficult as it is to discuss a possible de-industrialisation process in a country which, in fact, never experienced industrialisation in the first place (such as Namibia), it is still feasible to analyse the negative aspects of vast revenue inflows to the natural-resource sector spurred by a major discovery at the expense of other sectors. The cases of Angola and Nigeria can serve as good examples of how devastating the economic aspects of the resource curse can be for a new oil-exporting economy. For example, before oil was found in Angola in the 1970s, the country was a major African exporter of agricultural products such as coffee and maize (Odour 2007: 2). Nowadays, mainly due to the negligence of the government towards non-oil sectors (especially agriculture), combined with the devastating effects of the decades-long conflict that left behind a huge number of landmines, as well as the strengthening of the local currency, the country has fallen into patterns of monoculture characteristic of an oil-based economy. As a result, Angola has become a net food importer and has been struggling to diversify its economy away from oil ever since. Is Namibia doomed to a similar fate once vast oil quantities are discovered? Not necessarily.

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Unlike Nigeria, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea, Namibia is a member of a monetary union[3] and its currency is pegged at par with the South African rand. This means that as long as the par exchange rate is sustained, Namibia will not experience nominal currency movement. The real exchange rate can still be subject to fluctuation – reflecting changes in the purchasing power of the Namibian dollar against other currencies (Interview Pastor 2013). However, once appropriate macro-economic policies are set and tailored to country circumstances (including fiscal consolidation and adjustments in short- and long-term spending), the appreciation pressure on the Namibian dollar – at least to some extent – can be abated (Ostry et al. 2011; Badia and Segura-Ubiergo 2014).

A positive prognosis for any future vast commercial oil discoveries is the fact that in the past two decades Namibia has avoided real currency appreciation – even though revenues from the mining sector were relatively large during that period. The South African rand has not appreciated either. On the contrary, in the period from 1991 to 2013, the South African currency depreciated by more than 3.5 times against the US dollar (from 2.8 to 10.1 per dollar). This suggests that revenues from the mining sector in Namibia are insignificant when compared to total South African export revenues.

In fact, revenues from the Namibian mining sector, which totalled NAD 12.1 billion[4] in 2012, constituted just 1.3 per cent and 0.2 per cent of the South African total export and GDP, respectively.[5] Therefore, it seems that even if commercial quantities of oil are discovered and the revenues from oil production plummet, these revenues would still be easily accommodated by the giant South African economy.

3 Namibia became the fourth member (joining South Africa, Lesotho, and Swaziland) of the Common Monetary Area (CMA) in 1992. The CMA agreement and bilateral agreements of each "small" member state with South Africa provide a framework for monetary policy and exchange rates for the region.

4 USD 1.2 billion, cf. Chamber of Mines of Namibia website, <www.chamberofmines.org.na> (29 May 2015).

5 Authors' calculations based on WTO data available at <http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Language=E&Country=ZA> (29 May 2015); SA total merchandise export in 2012: USD 87.3 billion; SA GDP (current PPP in 2012): USD 585.6 billion.

Stabilising Mineral Revenue Streams in Namibia

Even though over the past years the mining sector has been generating approximately 10 per cent of the country's annual GDP (Chamber of Mines of Namibia 2014: 88), Namibia has not established any revenue-smoothing mechanism yet. As a result, any drop in global uranium or diamond prices affects Namibia's national budget heavily. For example, after reaching a peak of almost USD 140/lb in 2007, the uranium price tumbled to USD 40/lb in 2009. This plunge in prices reflected negatively on the government's revenues: total tax revenues from mining dropped from NAD 1.7 billion in 2007 to NAD 1 billion in 2009 (Chamber of Mines of Namibia 2014: 90), and the budget surplus of 5.9 per cent changed to a deficit of 4.6 per cent in the same period (IMF 2014: 74).

At the dawn of the discovery of commercial quantities of oil, Namibia is considering establishing the Namibian development funds, modelled on Norwegian solutions, whose major objectives would be, first, to minimise the negative effects of price volatility (stabilisation fund) and, second, to save money for future generations (create a heritage fund) as the resources are depleted (Interview Natangwe Nashandi 2013).

In the past, Namibia experimented with purpose-oriented funds replenished by mining revenues, but the effects were not very promising. In the 1990s, the country had the Development Fund of Namibia, the major objective of which was to provide funds for infrastructure projects across the country. As noted in 1999 by the chairman of the fund, the money from the Development Fund of Namibia was spent on projects that were neither technically nor financially viable (Development Fund of Namibia 1999: 7). This raises the question of whether the possible establishment of any new fund, fuelled with oil money, will bring an end to similar difficulties, especially when the government openly admits that a lack of skills will be the country's greatest challenge in the future.

Stability of the Political Regime

The claim that oil-related revenues might cause a dysfunction of the political system has been developed by Benjamin Smith and Terry Lynn Karl, who independently of one another came to the conclusion that political and institutional conditions under which oil rents become available to the governments of developing states powerfully shape the subsequent uses of the oil revenues (Smith 2007; Karl 2007: 273). If the state where oil has been discovered is institutionally strong and the gov-

ernment does not experience massive protest movements, then it is less likely that the state will become a victim of the resource curse. The occurrence of the resource curse is usually associated with the notion that since the government has relatively easy access to financial resources, it has very little incentive to improve the overall situation in the state's functioning (Dunning 2008: 11). It is also argued that the state administration puts itself at the mercy of multinational extractive corporations, and the government does not conduct an effective fiscal policy. The ruling elite might use the resource rent to bolster its position on the domestic political scene (this scenario has played out, for example, in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon). Additionally, when the amount of the rent allows the ruling elite to stay in power, then the political system might be transformed into a clientelist or neopatrimonial one (Thomson 2006; Omeje 2008: 5). In the long run, political systems dependent on resource rent are often associated with exclusions, and they bring frustrations and social unrest (Lowi 2009: 36) since various groups attempt to control an asset which allows them to remain in power (Collier 2007: 42). Political stability can also be achieved by the domination of one political elite, which, thanks to the effective redistribution of incomes related to raw material, remains in power, but the power is maintained and legitimised democratically. This is the case in Botswana, for instance, where the Botswana Democratic Party (despite accusations by the opposition of being increasingly authoritarian) maintains an omnipotent position in the political system.

Namibia's political scene is dominated by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which was the major force throughout the liberation struggle (Thornberry 2004). During the transition period and constitution-making process, smaller parties supported the idea of a relatively weak presidential office subject to the Parliament, while SWAPO forced the idea of a strong executive branch led by the president, and this idea was mirrored in the Constitution (Hishoono et al. 2011). The Constitution provides separation of powers and checks and balances between the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers, but due to SWAPO's absolute dominance in the Parliament, the legislature is literally controlled by the executive. In 2013, 47 out of 60 SWAPO members of parliament (MPs) served as ministers or deputy ministers (The Parliament of the Republic of Namibia 2014). The percentage of SWAPO MPs who are government members has remained more or less unchanged since independence (Hopwood 2007: 23).

A strong executive was of crucial importance for political stability during the transition period and for the creation of robust state institu-

tions, yet the current political dominance of SWAPO does not originate from an attractive political programme but is, rather, derived from voters' loyalty to the party that brought about Namibia's independence (Interview Schade 2013) and an extremely weak and fragmented opposition. The most visible example of SWAPO's omnipotence was the amendment of the Constitution in 1999 that enabled Sam Nujoma to have a third presidential term (Hopwood 2007: 70). It should be noted that the vast majority of Namibians did not advocate against the amendment of the Constitution, and the amendment was met with much more criticism of outside Namibia than within the country itself. Nevertheless, SWAPO's omnipotence in the political system is undisputed. Furthermore, Namibian political analysts and intellectuals stress the existence of the "freedom-fighter mentality" among SWAPO members – who sought to build the most successful country in Africa – which could prevent the current political elite from abusing power (Interview Lindeke 2013). It is obvious that the "freedom-fighter mentality" as well as other aspects of Namibian political mythology and pre-independence ideals are not a sufficient guarantee for the proper management of oil and gas revenues. Although the existence of the "freedom-fighter mentality" has gone almost completely unmentioned in the Western literature on Namibia, it is often highlighted by Namibians and should be taken into account, together with a strong historical argument that the resource rent from diamonds and uranium extraction has generally not been pocketed by SWAPO. However, recent controversies around various contracts signed by the government might imply that a rent-seeking elite is indeed emerging in Namibia. Nevertheless, as of today, it is still a far cry from the rent-seeking elite in countries such as Angola or Nigeria, and a deliberate weakening of the state institutions for the sake of personal benefit does not seem be the case.

The leader of the Afrobarometer team in Namibia claimed that according to his research over 70 per cent of the population agrees with the statement that the government is steering the economy in the right direction (Interview Lindeke 2013). It is obvious that the general public's support for the government's macro-economic policy does not imply a low risk of opportunistic or non-transparent behaviour on the part of SWAPO in the oil sector. However, the risk of SWAPO's position becoming further strengthened on the political scene due to the additional revenue created from the sale of crude oil is relatively low. Namibia would be better compared with Botswana than with the textbook examples of resource-curse victims. As in the case of Botswana, due to the role of the state in the economy there is a constant threat that contracts,

concessions, or licences will be granted to those who are politically well connected. Additionally, the line between SWAPO and the state might be blurred. Some challenges may also emerge from ethnic heterogeneity and its management by politicians (the presidential appointment of Hage Geingob from the minority Damara ethnic group was meant to reduce ethnic tensions and the growing demands for increased social security) (Interview Edwards 2013). Political tensions might also be generated by the need for generational change in SWAPO. But unless there is a sharp economic downturn, or disclosure of major political scandals (possibly connected with the licensing processes), it is highly unlikely that oil-related rent will strengthen or facilitate the creation of opposition parties capable of challenging SWAPO. In other words, in the short and medium term, potential oil-related rent will neither strengthen SWAPO's political position nor contribute to the strengthening/unification of the opposition on the basis of anti-corruption rhetoric.

One can argue that the absence of significant political powers capable of challenging SWAPO seems to be the factor that affords the ruling elite a comfort zone while preparing institutional structures and legislation that eventually might help the country to avoid the resource curse. However, this assertion will be proven true only when the systems of oil extraction and oil-revenue management develop built-in mechanisms to correct the policies of the ruling party. In this context, the timing of the oil discovery will largely determine the negotiating position of internal and external organisations that may influence the management of resource rents. As noted by Jędrzej Frynas,

> Once the government begins to receive oil and gas revenues, third parties such as the World Bank and Extraction Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) lose much of their bargaining power in persuading host governments to adopt principles of good governance and transparency. (Frynas 2010: 170)

As for today, the Namibian government sees no need to involve third parties in the process of creating oil-related legal infrastructure and ensuring transparency in extractive industries (Interview Mulunga 2013).

State and Institutional Capacity

Most available research finds a robust link between a weak state and the likelihood of the resource curse transpiring. In fact, the state and its institutions have recently been placed at the centre of discourse concerning the natural-resource curse. Countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Zambia, Equa-

torial Guinea, Gabon, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan all suffer from weak institutions. Nevertheless, the evidence on the nature of a relationship between weak institutions and economic performance in Africa is not very clear, as causality mechanisms could in fact run both ways (Sachs and Warner 1995; Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2008). Mehlum et al. argue that the ultimate reason that some resource-rich countries grow and others falter rests largely with institutional quality. But they also point out that the resource boom may weaken the state's already weak capacity and lead to institutional decay, for which they use the term "double resource curse" (Mehlum, Moene, and Torvik 2006a, 2006b).

The institutional weakness of the state is investigated in a number of areas; with regards to resources, the attention is usually centred on problems such as corruption, rent-seeking, and inadequate taxing capacity. Examples from Nigeria (Agbiboa 2013), Equatorial Guinea (Frynas 2004; McSherry 2006), Cameroon (Cossé 2006), and many other first-generation African petro-states clearly show that resource rents have all too often become an easy target for political elites. Another aspect is the ability to tax. Most generally, according to the taxation-leads-to-representation paradigm (Ross 2004), states willing to tax must offer things in return to its citizens, such as public goods and representation. They often prefer to rely on natural-resource rents, tax the extractive sector and use easy-to-collect revenues (e.g. indirect taxation). Taxing the extractive sector comes, however, with many hurdles, as the administrative capacity in Africa to identify tax liabilities, collect taxes, and deter possible evasion remains greatly insufficient (Stürmer 2010).

In Namibia, despite many development challenges ahead, the quality of institutions is relatively high, at least by regional standards. This is reflected in the 2013 Heritage Index of Economic Freedom, in which the country is ranked above world averages – 9th out of 46 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is largely confirmed by the World Governance Indicators prepared by the World Bank. The country's development path renders the hypothesis about minerals adversely affecting institutions rather difficult to substantiate. The Namibian economy has grown on the back of mineral extraction for decades, with no signs of institutional decay. Having said this, there is no historical or empirical evidence that might indicate that this time, with the discovery of oil, things might turn ugly. On the contrary, if oil production ultimately gets underway, Namibia might be better off, as it will start with a relatively good institutional set-up that has been forged over the course of decades. It is fair to say that even though the oil business has many of its own peculiarities, challenges, and problems related to oil production and revenue management, it will not catch the

government off guard and will be handled more effectively than in a country without prior experience in resource extraction.

As mentioned above, one of the symptoms of institutional decay is corruption. Yet in Namibia corruption does not seem to be a problem as acute and widespread as in many resource-rich countries from the region. According to the World Bank, "public corruption is not endemic, as in other jurisdictions in the developing world" (Yikona et al. 2011: 61). Transparency International puts Namibia at 58 out of 176 countries in its ranking (the third-highest scoring country in sub-Saharan Africa, behind Botswana and Rwanda). Still, corruption scandals are not that unusual (*The Namibian* 2013) and awareness of corruption among the public remains rather high and stable (Sasman 2012; Melber 2006). Graham Hopwood, director of the Namibian Public Policy Research Institute, is even less cheerful, arguing, "Namibia is at a tipping point – with endemic corruption inevitable if stern action is not taken in the near future" (Grobler 2014). The fairly limited corruption may be explained by relatively effective legislation and enforcement bodies (e.g. the Anti-Corruption Commission), whose effectiveness has been, nonetheless, questioned more recently (the Commission's conviction rate was less than 1 per cent of cases appearing before a court) (Grobler 2014). Active journalism has also played its part in investigating many high-end corruption affairs in past years (Interview Kaapama 2013). In 2005, Namibia's newly elected president, Hifikepunye Pohamba, declared zero tolerance for corruption in Namibia, and despite some setbacks and voiced opinions that his initially tough stance on corruption has largely faded away (*The Namibian* 2010), the country essentially remains on track by regional standards. Having said that, with oil production coming on stream, there is relatively little historical evidence suggesting that the new wealth is likely to trigger a major corruption spiral. This view, however, acknowledges that a blurred line between party politics and the state, combined with a near political monopoly held by SWAPO, makes corruption harder to weed out.

With regards to the inefficiency of the tax regime, discussion in Namibia currently hovers largely around the problem of tax evasion, which, as the World Bank's study has shown, is far from negligible and costs the Namibian state a staggering 9 per cent of GDP annually (Yikona et al. 2011: 9). It remains unclear, however, what part of this leakage can be attributed to the extractive industries *per se*. A closely related issue that has increasingly captured the government's attention is transfer pricing, which helps to siphon off a great deal of mineral revenues. Recognising this, the Ministry of Finance has recently been rein-

forcing capacity in order to address transfer pricing, by using external auditors and training new staff (Interview Natangwe Nashandi 2013). Even though Namibia introduced transfer-pricing legislation (Section 95A of the Income Tax Act) on 14 May 2005, its execution remains a challenge. Tax-collection problems and the contribution of the mining sector to the budget should be contextualised within a number of more general facets. To begin with, the country has a relatively short tradition of tax-policy formulation and administration. For many years, Namibia has been, at least fiscally, a quasi-province of South Africa, with its tax policy for all intents and purposes determined in Pretoria. The revenue mobilisation has been heavily constrained by the significant role of the Southern African Customs Union, which has created a financial comfort zone for the government of Namibia. The tax burden is placed on a relatively small formal sector, yet at the same time it is argued that "the Namibian system already collects too much of the poor's income by a high VAT" (Rademacher 2011: 16). Moreover, the tax policy is essentially characterised as regressive (Rakner 2011).

It should be noted that even though most of the government officials interviewed by the authors during their visit to Namibia feel relatively confident about the state's capacity vis-à-vis oil production and the subsequent handling of oil revenues, it is rather naive to expect any country to actually be "ready" ahead of the actual oil discovery and before the oil starts flowing. As aptly expressed by Immanuel Mulunga, petroleum commissioner in the Ministry of Mines and Energy, "You cannot be ready for oil without oil" (Interview Mulunga 2013). This attitude has also been confirmed in many other ministries and government agencies. Very often, officials are aware of the need to build more skills and capacity, hire new staff, and come up with new legislation, but all of this requires financial resources and political will. And mustering the above, quite paradoxically, requires a major trigger, such as the discovery of oil in commercial quantities. This is where the situation comes full circle.

Transparency and Accountability

According to proponents of oil-sector transparency, its major objective is to achieve "clear disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes, and actions," including bidding rounds, contracts, expenditures, and revenues.[6] Accountability is required to ensure that stakeholders involved in

6 Definition according to the Transparency and Accountability Initiative; see <www.transparency-initiative.org/about/definitions>.

all aspects of oil exploration and production are accountable for their actions. Both concepts – transparency and accountability – apply to the relations between oil companies, governments, and society, as well as to oil-revenue management, and are usually considered to be of utmost importance for avoiding the natural-resource curse. To this end, as the proponents emphasise, the government and oil companies should publicly disclose information about contract terms and conditions, revenue flows, and operations.

Recent research has provided a significant amount of evidence showing that, in general, developing countries holding vast amounts of natural resources tend to be less transparent, whilst their politicians are less accountable and more corrupt. Additionally, as well noted by Jean-François Bayart, African countries tend to sustain a specific interdependence of relations between the government and the elites controlling private spheres, where each side is trying to prosper (Bayart 1993).

Moreover, most of the studies also suggest that improving transparency and accountability is of key importance in avoiding the devastating resource curse. For example, Nicholas Shaxson has noted that African countries such as Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville, and Nigeria can serve as prime examples of opaque revenue payments and Byzantine contract negotiations (Shaxson 2007a). Abiodun Alao has pointed out that appropriate "governance structure" and transparency levels are the key elements of good revenue management and avoidance of the resource curse (Alao 2007). Macartan Humphreys, Jeffrey Sachs, and Joseph Stiglitz have noted that the impact of the natural-resource effect on political conditions, including transparency, is actually much greater than it is on economic factors such as Dutch Disease and price volatility (Humphreys, Sachs, and Stiglitz 2007) and, therefore, its role should not be undermined in efforts to disrupt the link between resource wealth and the negative outcomes of the resource curse. Global Witness, in its landmark report titled *A Crude Awakening: The Role of Oil and Banking Industries in Angola's Civil War*, identified lack of transparency as the leading cause of the Angolan civil conflict (Global Witness 1999). Collier argues that the "misaligned incentives" of decision-makers have been the major reason behind the poor performance of resource-rich countries, and that applying adequate laws and codes to improve, among other things, transparency in revenues is critical in order to ensure convergence between the interests of the society and those of the government (Collier 2008). Lederman and Maloney argue, on the basis of several case studies, that appropriate policies on transparency, accountability, and other elements of good governance together with strong institutions constitute a

sound foundation for long-term growth fuelled by resource revenues (Lederman and Maloney 2007).

Both economic theory and economic history suggest that mineral-rich economies are not necessarily doomed in the long run. Conversely, over the long term, if the growth comes hand in hand with social and political changes, minerals can lead to stronger institutions. Nevertheless, many examples from sub-Saharan Africa prove otherwise and demonstrate that countries that rely heavily on natural resources tend to perform below average in indexes ranking countries according to level of governance, transparency, and accountability (Shaxson 2007b; Gillies 2010) – for example, first-generation oil producers such as Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Nigeria (McFerson 2009: 1529–1548; McSherry 2006: 25–45). In Angola, the contract-awarding process and resource-revenue management are everything but transparent, whilst undisputed loyalty to José Eduardo dos Santos, the president of Angola, is the political key to ministerial nominations (Global Witness 1999).

The global push for higher transparency and accountability in the oil sector started in the late 1990s, and now, over two decades later, includes initiatives such as the EITI, Publish What You Pay (PWYP), and the Revenue Watch Index. Obviously, it should be noted that the mere adaptation of the EITI or PWYP transparency procedures is not synonymous with improved transparency, and even if this is the case, better governance or accountability in the oil sector may not necessarily follow. Therefore, the enthusiasm, while probably not misplaced, should be curbed. On a general level, many authors have already argued that whereas the idea of the EITI is clearly commendable, there are many weaknesses embedded in the system, ranging from the reliability of data audited, the ability of the various stakeholders to process information, and the voluntary nature of commitments, to a risk of free-riding on the part of EITI members (Haufler 2010: 53–73; Hilson and Maconachie 2009). As aptly noted by Haufler, the "EITI can be a triumph of form over results, with real power remaining in the hands of government and corporate elites" (Haufler 2010: 69).

As the experience of Shell and other majors in Nigeria shows (who decided to withdraw their operations from the violence-prone Niger Delta region and focus on offshore oil in the country), the business environment can be just as important as (or even more important than) cash flow and profitability calculations. In other words, drilling an oil well or constructing a pipeline in a developing country that lacks transparency and accountability (together with other elements of good governance covered in other parts of this paper) is now considered to be a high-risk

bet, and the transparency concept itself is emerging as an internationally recognised standard for the oil industry rather than a loose, participate-or-not scheme.

Transparency in the Namibian Extractive Sector

Unlike the first generation of oil-producing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Namibia claims to have one of the most transparent extractive sectors globally. "Mining contracts are not a secret and are available for inspection" for everybody (Interview Iyambo 2013). The most important terms and conditions of each mining agreement – from royalties and annual charges to employment and training to reporting and audits – are plainly set out in the model agreement which is the starting point of each contract negotiation and which is available to the general public (The Parliament of the Republic of Namibia 1992).

Although Namibia can be portrayed as a role model for transparency in the mining industry in Africa, there are also aspects of the country's management of mineral resources that can be described as opaque and vague. For example, even though Namibia more than qualifies, it has not joined international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the EITI or PWYP which seek greater accountability and transparency in the mining sector, and is not planning to do so anytime soon. Both the Namibian government and mining companies admit that there is no need for Namibia to join PWYP or the EITI, since mining revenues "are properly utilised" (Interview Iyambo 2013) and there have been no disputes over reported revenues and payments made by the mining companies to the country's coffers (Interview Malango 2013).

Indeed, in the Chamber of Mines' *Annual Review* one can find excerpts from the audited financial statements of each mining company containing information related to profits, taxes, and royalties paid to the government. However, strangely enough, the government does not compare these figures to those obtained from the mining companies (Interview Natangwe Nashandi 2013). Furthermore, as the study by the Institute for Public Policy Research shows, the issue of transparency in the exploration-licensing process "is more of an optional add-on than a core feature of the system" (Hopwood et al. 2013). In addition, mining companies are not always treated in a consistent and fair manner, mainly due to the fact that Namibia lacks clear policies and laws in certain areas. For instance, the scope and role of the newly created and first-ever state-owned mining company Epangelo have yet to be determined, and thus

the terms and conditions of cooperation of the private mining companies with Epangelo are far from clear. Finally, lack of a Black empowerment policy means that the "positive discrimination" associated with the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) can be used in an *ad hoc* manner, further increasing the level of uncertainty in the mining sector (Hopwood et al. 2013).

According to Vestor Malango, chief executive officer of the Chamber of Mines, there are few mechanisms regarding the revenue-management process in the mining industry which can be transplanted to the emerging hydrocarbons sector. For example, the annual reporting and disclosure of profits, taxes, and royalties paid to the government by foreign companies operating in the extractive sector can serve as a good starting point.

So far, Namibia has been doing quite well in terms of its transparency level in the mining sector. An appropriate level of transparency is often identified as the crucial element in avoiding the resource curse. If past records of the transparency level in the mining industry in Namibia can serve as a guide, it is fair to state that in terms of transparency the country is relatively well prepared for the discovery of commercial quantities of oil. It should be acknowledged, though, that the country's general lack of interest in EITI and PWYP principles, as well as the unclear status and role of Epangelo, provide less reason for optimism. Additionally, as the examples of Nigeria and Angola prove, lack of transparent mechanisms in the oil sector leaves a lot of room for corruption and rent-seeking behaviour, specifically once oil revenues are weighted in as a factor. And in the case of Namibia, due to the small size of its economy (GDP of approximately USD 12.6 billion in 2014), even modest oil-production figures will translate into a "heavyweight" revenue inflow, amplifying the propensity for mismanagement and rent-seeking.

Civil Society

In sub-Saharan Africa, there is a certain ambivalence surrounding the concept of civil society, hinged both on the fact of the non-African nature of the political activity of civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs and on observations that some African CSOs are simultaneously dependent on their respective country's governments along with Western donors (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). Nevertheless, a strong civil society is perceived as a way to provide checks and balances to counterbalance the government and mining corporations in order to ensure proper management of the resource rent. In the first generation of oil-producing sub-

Saharan countries, relations between local NGOs and governments are hostile and manifest themselves in mutual accusations of corruption and failing to act in the best interest of citizens. Historically, the largest confrontation between local groups and the state administration occurred in the Niger Delta (Watts 2004: 70–72). However, in Ghana, a vibrant civil society and its involvement in creating oil-related legal infrastructure is perceived as, arguably, one of the safeguards against the resource curse (Kopinski, Polus, and Tycholiz 2013). Among actors involved in resource governance, international NGOs usually act as whistleblowers (mineral extraction normally poses numerous environmental and social challenges) or promote international schemes, such as the Kimberly Process or the EITI (Carbonnier, Brugger, and Krause 2011).

In the case of Namibia, the activity of NGOs seems to be limited by a number of structural factors. First of all, the Namibian non-governmental sector is relatively small,[7] and the vast majority of Namibian NGOs are service-oriented. There is also a long history of NGO–SWAPO collaboration. Before independence, Namibians were denied certain services and NGOs filled that gap (Interview Lombardt 2013), although SWAPO's position as the main representative of the population of Namibia was never challenged. In the 1990s, NGOs' loyalty to SWAPO was an important factor in the relationship between the government and the NGOs. On the level of rhetoric, SWAPO also emphasised the NGOs' role in the political transition, and NGOs did not engage with the government.

When Namibia joined the ranks of middle-income countries, NGOs experienced a sharp decline in funding (Höhn 2008). The situation is slowly changing at the time of writing, since NGOs are becoming more research-based and more advocacy-oriented (Interview Lombardt 2013), but their activity in mining-related areas is heavily constrained by shortages of skills, limited financial capacity, and failure to carry out continuous research on the social and environmental impact of mining (Interview Lendelvo 2013). Furthermore, the Namibian political environment makes criticising the government extremely difficult due to the weak opposition and Parliament.[8]

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7 In 2013, the Namibian NGO Forum (NANGOF) had 163 member organisations.

8 What is more, in this context, the government is planning to adopt strict legislation on any kind of research activity conducted in Namibia. According to the government plans, every researcher will need formal approval of his/her activity by the government. Namibian advocacy NGOs are pointing out that if this legislation is adopted, there will be a real threat that hardly any more meaningful empirical work will be able to be done there; cf. <www.lac.org.na/news/inthenews/2014/news-20140317.html> (6 July 2014).

Thus far, the main mining-related actions of Namibian NGOs have focused on the social and environmental impact of uranium-mining (the largest anti-mining campaign was led by Earthlife Namibia), and there is a visible antagonism between the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the umbrella network of NGOs in Namibia known as NANGOF. NGOs criticise the government for a lack of transparency in the mining-licensing process and claim that "the Ministry of Mines and Energy is one that was very difficult for us to infiltrate. We basically are 'reduced to' produc[ing] statements" (Interview Lombardt 2013). On the other side, the ministry argues that all of the data are provided to the NGOs, but they are misused, and that the main purpose of NGOs' activity is to obtain funding from foreign donors (Interview Shivolo 2013). As for now, possibly negative aspects of drilling for oil are not included in Namibian advocacy groups' agendas (Interviews Lindeke; Schade 2013), and the ministry has not experienced any pressure in this regard (Interview Iyambo 2013), but it is likely that, due to the offshore location of Namibian oil, the major future point of concern will be the management of oil revenues. However, due to the complex nature of mining contracts and visible lack of skills and capacities, it is highly unlikely that Namibian NGOs and civil society could critically assess the government's approach to oil-revenue management and thus contribute in any significant way to the creation of oil-related legal and institutional infrastructure in Namibia. Nevertheless, the absence of strong advocacy groups in Namibia should not be seen as a factor that might facilitate the resource curse following the start of oil production, since factors other than the "strength of civil society" seem to have a much greater importance in this particular case. Nevertheless, Namibian NGOs and the government are now undergoing a period of redefining their relationship, and the outcome of this process will largely determine advocacy strategies adopted by the NGOs' community in the future. Taking into consideration the relative weakness of the Namibian legislature, stronger civil society may provide additional checks and balances in the political regime. On the basis of the experience of other sub-Saharan petro-states it can be reasonably asserted that the hostile relations between advocacy CSOs and the government will not contribute in any way to the increased transparency in the oil sector.

Conclusion

Since the presence of oil in commercial volumes in Namibia has not been officially confirmed, it seems reasonable to question whether we

should require developing countries to be ready for oil production before they have discovered it. If anything, it is fair to assume that oil, if proven to be present in large volumes, will be commoditised gradually, and it might be assumed that the moment of discovery will be a catalyst for the creation of oil-related legal and institutional infrastructure.

It is also sometimes argued that until this happens Namibia should seek to build its capacity by tapping into its massive gas reserves; however, since the recent oil discovery by Tullow, the Kudu project has once again suffered from delays and it is now far from certain that it will be carried out at all. The recent developments might have also provided a quite unexpected twist to the story: with the oil price taking a nose dive and some experts arguing that the current level is the "new normal," there is a risk that the optimal time to develop these resources might pass without Namibia reaping the benefits.

If the country, however, starts pumping oil someday, the offshore location of the potential oil fields and material characteristics of the anticipated natural resource places it in a relative comfort zone. Considering the current structure of the Namibian economy, the development of the oil sector should be seen as a shift towards more, not less, economic diversification. It is very unlikely the oil will crowd out other economic activities and turn the country into a petro-state with all the negative syndromes that come along with that. Additionally, the monetary union with South Africa makes the country less prone to Dutch Disease, although some loss of competitiveness of domestic industries seems to be inevitable. The timing of the oil discovery and relative transparency of the extractive industries as well as the stability of the political regime are additional assurances of Namibia's relative immunity against the oil-related curse. Given SWAPO's dominance on the Namibian political scene together with general public support for the government's macro-economic policy, the ruling elite is in a comfort zone as it prepares institutional set-up and legislation that eventually might help the country to avoid the resource curse. Whereas it may be argued that this very comfort zone can also provide a space for the further self-enrichment of the country's elites, our research does not provide sufficient evidence that this is to be feared.

In Namibia, the geography and material characteristics of anticipated natural resources place the country in a relative comfort zone. Namibian oil, if discovered in commercial quantities, has several important characteristics that might insulate the country from adverse effects associated with the oil curse evidenced across Africa. First of all, exploration takes place offshore along the coast (for example, the Kudu

gas field is located 130 km offshore and the three-well programme of HRT Participações em Petróleo SA is located over 200 km northwest of Walvis Bay), which mitigates the risk of interstate war or internal conflict. With its geographical location offering vast amounts of the Atlantic Ocean's coastal waters ready to be explored without any territorial constraints, and relatively stable and friendly neighbours, there is very little risk of any upheavals, border disputes, or conflicts over oil deposits. Internal conflict or resource-related violence of any kind is hard to imagine in present-day Namibia. Greed and a grievance type of reasoning (Collier and Hoeffler 2000), widely applied in many African countries, would not hold sway in Namibia, like most of the other arguments explaining resource-related violent conflicts. Additionally, the offshore character of oil deposits makes both the "obstructability" and "lootability" risk essentially irrelevant in Namibia. If discovered, oil will be uploaded directly onto tankers and shipped out to refineries overseas, as happens in many other coastal African countries engaged in offshore production. The only concern might arise with regard to the fishery sector, which is a vital part of the Namibian economy (Interview Sikabongo 2013). In fact, recent research has demonstrated that the tuna catch has declined sharply as a result of seismic exploration (Njini 2013).

The past and current management of the resource rent suggests that comparing Namibia to Botswana makes more sense than comparing it to the first-generation African petro-states. On the negative side, a relatively weak civil society, non-institutionalised political advocacy and, above all, a lack of skills in state institutions and unclear policy towards BEE might cause turmoil in Namibia's oil sector. Nevertheless, in terms of the Namibian oil potential, the possible "curse" should instead be perceived as a treatable "condition" (Kopinski, Polus, and Tycholiz 2013).

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Bereit oder eher nicht? Namibia als potentiell erfolgreicher Erdölproduzent

Zusammenfassung: Die Autoren des Beitrags versuchen einzuschätzen, unter welchen Voraussetzungen Namibia in die Erdölförderung einsteigt. Nach geologischen Schätzungen könnte das Land über 11 Milliarden Barrel Rohöl verfügen. Wenn sich die Zahlen als richtig erweisen, besitzt Namibia die zweitgrößten Erdölreserven Subsahara-Afrikas; die Förderung könnte schon im Jahr 2017 beginnen. Damit ergibt sich die Frage, ob Namibia der nächste Staat ist, der dem „Ressourcenfluch" zum Opfer fällt. Auf der Grundlage einer kritischen Diskursanalyse und unter Berücksichtigung von Feldforschungsergebnissen haben die Autoren politische und ökonomische Merkmale des namibischen Staates entlang von sechs Dimensionen des Ressourcenfluch-Ansatzes untersucht. Ihrer Einschätzung nach steht Namibia zwar vor erheblichen Herausforderungen, sie sehen aber nur wenige Hinweise darauf, dass die Erdölförderung sich besonders negativ auf die politische und soziale Entwicklung des Landes auswirken wird.

Schlagwörter: Namibia, Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, Staat, Politisches System, Korruption, Natürliche Ressourcen, Erdölgewinnung/Erdgasgewinnung

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Indigenous Knowledge and Public Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Munyaradzi Mawere

Abstract: The discourse on indigenous knowledge has incited a debate of epic proportions across the world over the years. In Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region, while the so-called indigenous communities have always found value in their own local forms of knowledge, the colonial administration and its associates viewed indigenous knowledge as unscientific, illogical, anti-development, and/or ungodly. The status and importance of indigenous knowledge has changed in the wake of the landmark 1997 Global Knowledge Conference in Toronto, which emphasised the urgent need to learn, preserve, and exchange indigenous knowledge. Yet, even with this burgeoning interest and surging call, little has been done, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, to guarantee the maximum exploitation of indigenous knowledge for the common good. In view of this realisation, this paper discusses how indigenous knowledge can and should both act as a tool for promoting the teaching/learning process in Africa's public education and address the inexorably enigmatic amalgam of complex problems and cataclysms haunting the world.

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Keywords: Africa south of the Sahara, education, learning, cultural heritage, social values, language

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Societies across the world depend on their indigenous knowledge to solve their day-to-day socio-economic problems, address various environmental challenges, and adapt to change. Yet, the term "indigenous" knowledge, just like the term "indigenous" itself, has prevailed as a generic term, though it is not without problems. The term has been vilified and criticised particularly since the beginning of formal decolonisation projects across the globe such that it has now assumed a diversity of meanings, as I will show in the ensuing discussion. Some scholars, such as Paulin Hountondji (1997) and David Turnball (2000), view it as pejorative and sneering when a group of people are referred to as "indigenous" or their ideas, beliefs, and practices as "indigenous knowledge". For this reason, even the United Nations is hesitant to use it. Rather, the UN has developed what it calls a "modern understanding" of "indigenous" (and, by proxy, "indigenous knowledge") based on the following tenets applied to a given person or group of people: self-identifying as indigenous and being accepted by the community as a member; demonstrating historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; evincing a strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; having distinct social, economic, and/or political systems; having a distinct language, culture, and/or beliefs; comprising a non-dominant part of society; and resolving to maintain and reproduce ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues n.d.: 1).

Whereas much discussion has already started regarding indigenous knowledge and the status of contemporary African development (The World Bank 1998), the current chapter resuscitates the debate, examining it in the context of public education in Africa. The paper explores the role that indigenous knowledge could and should play in public educational systems across Africa, and how this role could possibly influence the three principles of pan-Africanism – namely, collective self-reliance, self-sustaining development, and economic growth. The focus is on the potential role of indigenous knowledge in motivating, raising interest, and promoting both innovative thinking and a sense of self-consciousness in learners. The paper begins with an exploration of the concepts of indigenous knowledge and intangible heritage. This conceptualisation of terms is followed by a discussion on how indigenous knowledge can have a positive impact on learners and on some areas of schooling and society.

Understanding Indigenous Knowledge and Intangible Heritage

Indigenous Knowledge

For many indigenous populations of Africa, Latin America, and Asia, the term "indigenous knowledge" or what others have called the natives' ways of knowing, is positively associated with the creativity and dynamic ways in which residents of a particular locality have understood themselves in relation to their natural environment (see Semali and Kincheloe 1999: 3).

In view of this understanding, the term indigenous knowledge has, over the years, enjoyed different definitions and conceptualisations (see Altieri 1995; Melchias 2001; Odora Hoppers 2001, 2002; Mawere 2012, 2014; Ocholla 2007; Mapara 2009; Shizha 2013). Emphasising the different definitions of indigenous knowledge over the years, Warren (1991) described indigenous knowledge as being synonymous with traditional, local knowledge to differentiate it from the knowledge developed by a given community from the international knowledge system, sometimes also called the "Western" system, which is generated through universities, government research centres, and private industry. This definition by Warren is limited in that when indigenous knowledge is described as traditional, it is presumed to be static. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983: 4) have argued that being "traditional" does not preclude something being innovative or changing up to a point as new tradition can be born out of an old one (what they have referred to as "invention of tradition" [see Mammo 1999: 16]). By contrast, this article refers to indigenous knowledge as a set of ideas, beliefs, and practices (some of which have indigenous religious underpinnings) of a specific locale that has been used by its people to interact with their environment and other people over a long period of time.

Intangible Heritage

This is a term used to describe aesthetic, spiritual, symbolic, and other social values that people in a given geographical location may associate with a particular site. The social values include language, oral traditions, taboos, rituals, music, dance, knowledge forms, art, folklore, riddles, idioms, and cultural spaces (see also Deacon 2009; Chabata and Chiwaura 2014). Intangible heritage is part and parcel of the realm of indigenous knowledge given that these values can only be manifested through local ways of knowing such as traditions, customs, and practices. I should also

underscore that since heritage becomes heritage only if society attaches value to it, intangible heritage, just like indigenous knowledge (of which it is part), is as important as indigenous knowledge, in many similar ways. In addition, given that intangible cultural heritage is a constituent element of indigenous knowledge, it suffered the same historical imbalances as the latter. For this reason, I will look at the importance of both indigenous knowledge and intangible heritage to the learning process of the African child at the same time. Yet, I should point out that while there are overlaps between indigenous knowledge and knowledge from the academy (what others, such as June George [1999], sometimes refer to as "conventional science"), there are also differences between the two. Below, I spell out some of the major differences between indigenous knowledge and conventional science.

Table 1. Differences between Indigenous Knowledge and Conventional Science/Academic Knowledge

Conventional Science	Indigenous Knowledge (IK)
Generated by planned procedures and rules	Generated by societal members through trial and error as members seek solutions to their daily problems
Drawn from set-out principles, theories, and laws	Drawn from existing societal wisdom and other local resources and a sense of creativity
Passed on through documents and other stores of knowledge	Passed on orally (though this is changing) from one generation to the next
Found in school curricula	Normally not found in school curricula (though this is changing)
Generated in academy	Generated in specific local contexts, though influenced by knowledge generated in other contexts (which means IKs are dynamic and not static)
Found in packages, i.e. with labels such as chemistry, biology	Normally not found in packages
Normally found in permanent form such as theories and in print	Constantly changing, produced as well as reproduced, though perceived by outsiders/external observers as static
Emphasises competitive individualism as it eliminates students through failure of tests	Emphasises cooperative communalism as it strives to include all children in the community

In the sections that follow, I look at the role that indigenous knowledge could and should play in the teaching/learning process in the various educational systems.

Indigenous Knowledge in Educational Systems: What Role Can it Play?

▪ De-Racialise African Educational Systems

Mazrui (1978: 13) advanced a critique of the ideological foundations of African education in which he regards neocolonial cultural dependency as a threat to African psychological autonomy and sovereignty, reporting,

> Very few educated Africans are even aware that they are also in cultural bondage. All educated Africans […] are still cultural captives of the West.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Julius Nyerere (1968) opine along similar lines. These scholars realised that a racialised curriculum is a new form of imperialism – a neocolonial instrument of manipulation – to control knowledge production in the world. In view of this realisation, I argue in consensus with UNESCO (2003: 17) that

> local languages are the means for preserving, transmitting, and applying traditional knowledge in schools. A bilingual or multilingual education allows the full participation of all learners; it gives learners the opportunity to confront, in the positive sense, the knowledge of their community with knowledge from elsewhere.

Rattray (1927: ix), in a sort of wake up-call to the African, had this to say:

> Guard the national soul of your race and never be tempted to despise your past. Therein I believe lies the sure hope that your sons and daughters will one day make their own original contributions to knowledge and progress.

▪ Promote Innovative Thinking as It Provides the Basis for Problem-Solving Strategies for Local Communities

As Busia (1964:17) puts it, "Traditional education sought to produce men and women who were not self-centred, who put the interest of the group above personal interest": men and women who were innovative and represented "think tanks" of the society. This means that the inclusion of students' prior knowledge into educational curricula promotes and enhances innovative thinking and constructivism (to use Jean Piaget's sense of the word) in the learners. This is because learners will be afforded the chance to abstract understanding from their personal experiences, their understanding of the local conditions, and what they already know from their

respective communities. In Nigeria's Jigawa State, for example, one young Nigerian has invented a natural refrigeration system that does not require electricity, gas, or paraffin to operate. The system, also known as the "pot-in-pot cooling system," is said to be as efficient as the modern refrigerator. The system can keep perishable foods fresh for up to one month. Further, it is said that three-quarters of the people in Jigawa have adopted the system, which has also helped farmers keep their perishable foods for longer periods, along with curtailing the movement of people from rural areas to towns. This reinforces the point that indigenous education was practical and relevant to the needs of society. Fafunwa and Aisiku (1982: 9–10), for instance, note that the focus of education in pre-colonial Africa was social responsibility, political participation, work orientation, morality, and spiritual values. Learning was by doing, which involved observation, imitation, and participation in all or many of the individual's societal activities. For Kenyatta (1965: 119), such education had the merit that "knowledge acquired is related to a practical need, and […] is merged into activity and can be recalled when that activity is again required." In view of this, I argue that the invention of the pot-in-pot cooling system by the young Nigerian could have been a result of the abstraction of his understanding of a refrigerator and what he knows from experience at home (cf. Mawere 2014).

▪ Evaluate the Effectiveness of Conventional Science and Indigenous Knowledge

Intangible heritage, the part of indigenous knowledge that deals with belief and practices, could be used by learners in science classes to evaluate the effectiveness of indigenous knowledge and conventional science in real life. Through the inclusion of indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, students are afforded the opportunity to compare and contrast different forms of knowledge for their own good and that of the society of which they are part. In fact, upon careful analysis, one notices that many so-called "traditional" communities have the same content areas as those found in formal education. For instance, many communities teach their members about beliefs and practices related to plant growth, human nutrition, childbearing, pregnancy, food preparation and preservation, medicine, animal husbandry, and others. All these areas are also taught at school in science and agriculture, which means that indigenous knowledge represents an important component of the so-called "global knowledge" on different issues. With indigenous knowledge and conventional science in the curriculum, learners are, therefore, better empowered to shake off the chains of imperial domination, make their own decisions, and chart their own destiny based on what they learn both at home and at school.

▪ Motivate and Generate Interest in Learners

Since indigenous knowledge is knowledge that arises directly out of the children's real-life experiences, its incorporation into the school curriculum can motivate and bolster the intellectual fortunes and interests of the learners as students realise that recognition is given to what they already do, know, and say in their own communities. This resonates well with the adage "From the known to the unknown," which suggests that indigenous knowledge, being knowledge that the learners have before they enter the academy, will no doubt inspire and stimulate their minds to abstract and even seek solutions to their daily problems using locally generated solutions. In western Mozambique, a traditional method of brewing beer (*tototo*) similar to the distillation system students learn in science at school, has also been invented. On realising that their fruit trees (mango, citrus, and banana) produce more than they can consume, the Mandau people of Western Mozambique have devised a traditional beer-brewing system through which they make use of the over-ripe fruits: The fruits are put into a big clay pot, where they are then boiled, turning the contents' liquid into steam before the steam is condensed to form a colourless liquid. The liquid is a traditional beer with an alcohol content allegedly much higher than similar products manufactured commercially. Thus, in instances where students go into learning the science of distillation already understanding the *tototo* beer-brewing system, abstraction is much easier to achieve, and motivation and interest in technology and development issues is generated.

▪ Teach Language and Instil a Sense of Self-Consciousness and Cultural Identity

Indigenous knowledge could also be used to teach language, recount history, reclaim humanity and dignity, and promote a sense of self-consciousness and cultural identity in learners. This is critical, as people are people because of culture. In fact, we are distinguished from other ethnic groups through our distinct cultures. Even our learning will contribute more to our society if what we know and experience on a daily basis is incorporated into our school curricula. As Busia (1964: 31–33) reports, there was a widespread expectation among many Africans before and after independence that "education should be rooted in Africa's own cultural heritage and values and have relevance to African societies." Busia therefore felt that schools could only preserve and transmit this culture by maintaining African languages. This point was made even more forcefully by Moumouni (1968: 275), who claims that "real literacy

[…] can only be taught in an African language and should extend to the entire population." Woolman (2001: 41) emphasises the same when he says that the

> cultivation of oral and written fluency in local African languages is important in building self-esteem, preserving culture, and advancing the literary output and identity of African Peoples.

For him (ibid.),

> the importance of African-language development is further underscored by the historical reality that early nation-building in Europe was closely linked to the cultivation of vernacular languages and literature.

Under the broadened concept of inclusive curricula and teaching materials promoted by UNESCO (2005), the local community is encouraged to contribute to active learning that responds to the cultural and physical environment of the school. Inclusive education also implies a relevant and responsive curriculum that takes into account indigenous languages along with other languages. As stated in a UNESCO Position Paper (2003: 17),

> the requirements of global and national participation, and the specific needs of particular, culturally and linguistically distinct communities can only be addressed by multilingual education.

Through the study of African indigenous knowledge systems, learners can easily appreciate their language, cultural identity, and the wisdom and contribution to knowledge and technological advancement of their ancestors. In fact, the "re-evaluation of traditional education is part of a process of reclaiming cultural identity with deeper roots in authentic African traditions" (Woolman 2001: 31). The teaching of indigenous knowledge such as children's traditional games, for example, helps youths not only to be creative, morally sensitive, and innovative, but also to appreciate the contribution of forebears' creative genius and indigenous epistemologies in the world of language, games, and physical education. Yet in schools across Zimbabwe, for instance, only non-African games such as chess, tennis, netball, and others feature. Reversing this situation in Africa is more urgent now than ever if the African people are to be mentally liberated. As Steve Biko (1970: 51) notes, African cultures were "battered out of shape by settler-colonialists" through Western education.

▪ Promote Dissemination of Indigenous Knowledge across Cultures

The inclusion of indigenous knowledge in school curricula will no doubt help different cultures/societies to share their knowledge with each other. This is because people from different cultural backgrounds will be made to share and interact with indigenous knowledges from other cultures in a way that will allow them to appreciate and emulate them where necessary. A good example is that of the Washambaa people of the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania, who developed a land-use system emulating the climax vegetation of the deciduous natural forest through multi-story cropping, integrating annuals and perennials on the same plot. The principles were transferred to Nyabisindu, Rwanda, to be utilised in a project assisted by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit; special multipurpose contour bunds with trees, shrubs, and grasses were added to the system and re-transferred to the Washambaa once dense population and demand for firewood had depleted the soil cover (cf. The World Bank 1998: ii; Mawere 2014).

▪ Promote Cultural Dimension of Development

Every culture is known for something distinctive and inimitable to it. The people of the honorific name (*chidawo*) Chikonamombe, also known as Mashayamombe, who are of the totem Mhara (impala), are well known for their leather-tanning skills and expertise in manufacturing dyes. As revealed by Chigwedere (1980; 1982), they would rustle cattle, slaughter them, and quickly dye the hides. When questioned by the people who lost their cattle as a result of these activities, the answer that came was one seemingly showing empathy: "Mashayamombe!" In other examples, the Chopi people of Mozambique are well known for their cultural dance, *timbila*; the Shangaan/Hlengwe people of the Zimbabwean Low Veld are well known for their initiation rites (*chinamwari/khomba*), which, besides having caused a furore among imperialists and Eurocentric scholars especially during colonialism and some years after independence, has of late come to be appreciated as helping reduce the chances of HIV/AIDS infection; and the Shona people are well known for their *mbira*/thumb piano music normally used to accompany *mbakumba* dance. They are also known for their stone sculptures such as the Zimbabwe Bird and stone work such as the Great Zimbabwe Monuments. The Kalanga are well known for mat craft. All this knowledge is important in its own right. As emphasised by the World Bank's 1998/99 World Development Report, knowledge, not capital, is the key to sustainable social and economic development. Build-

ing on local knowledge, the basic component of any country's knowledge system, is the first step to mobilising such capital. Moreover, there is a growing consensus that knowledge exchange must be a two-way street. A vision of knowledge transfer as a sort of conveyor belt moving in one direction from the rich, industrialised countries to poor, developing ones is likely to lead to failure and resentment (cf. The World Bank 1998, 1999). Sharing indigenous knowledges such as those mentioned above could not only enhance cultural dimension of development but also help reduce poverty (cf. The World Bank 1998). For instance, instead of spending money on circumcision in the "modern" hospitals, one could opt for a traditional one, such as the one performed during *khomba* initiation rites.

▪ Promote Interpersonal Relationships and Reciprocal Obligations

As noted by Woolman (2001: 31),

> traditional education integrated character-building, intellectual training, manual activities, and physical education. The content included all of the activities, rituals, and skills required to sustain the culture and life of the family and community.

This means that traditional education placed great importance on interpersonal relationships and reciprocal obligations. Fafunwa and Aisiku (1982: 9–10) recall,

> In old Africa […] the man who combined good character with a specific skill was adjudged to be a well-educated and well-integrated citizen of his community, as trades were learned by the apprenticeship system.

This marks the distinction between Western education, which emphasises competitive individualism as it eliminates students through failure of tests, and African education, which emphasises cooperative communalism as it strives to include all children in the community. Yet the task of education as a force that promotes interpersonal relationships remains critical. Busia (1964: 59), for example, notes that

> the tasks of […] achieving a new social unity and cohesion can only succeed if the citizens share a common set of values and standards of public morality which are supported by law as well as public opinion.

He calls on schools to integrate groups in ways that foster associations, inter-group understanding, and cooperation. Jomo Kenyatta (1965) once

observed that individuality is the ideal in life for Europeans, whereas for Africans, the ideal is good behaviour and relations with other people. As Woolman (2001: 42) observes:

> In the West today, schools as well as corporations are concerned about teaching human relations, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. This has come about because of a breakdown in family and community that, sadly enough, is also a result of modernisation in Africa.

This connotes that indigenous knowledge that emphasises interpersonal relationships and human values is more urgently needed in contemporary education than ever before.

Conclusion

Indigenous knowledge, including intangible heritage, can contribute immensely to the learning process of the African people as long as value and a modicum of respect are accorded to them. In fact, the relevance of indigenous knowledge and intangible heritage to the learning process of the African child cannot be underestimated. Yet, the full realisation of indigenous knowledge can only be recognised if it is fully implemented in education curricula and if its importance is popularised. Makinde lamented over those that discard indigenous knowledge and write it off as nonsense, noting how very many African medical doctors trained in the West seek to tarnish and discourage African traditional medical doctors by painting them as having no standard, even though it was through "traditional medicine" that "many of them were safely delivered, nurtured, and successfully treated until they grew up to be medical doctors" (1988: 106). This critique of colonial and postcolonial education together with a quest for identity has prompted some African intellectuals to re-examine the objectives, methods, and outcomes of so-called "traditional," pre-colonial education. Such studies will no doubt offer valuable insights into postcolonial education that may become a guide for reformed and constructive education in Africa. Therefore, as long as indigenous knowledge fails to find full recognition within and real integration into curricula and the mainstream knowledge discourse, the lofty pan-African ideals of collective self-reliance, self-sustaining development, and economic growth will remain an unrealised dream.

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Indigenous Knowledge und öffentliche Bildung in Subsahara-Afrika

Zusammenfassung: Der Diskurs zu den traditionellen Wissenssystemen hat im Lauf der Jahre eine globale Debatte enormen Umfangs ausgelöst. In Afrika südlich der Sahara hatten die Kolonialverwaltungen und die mit ihnen verbundenen sozialen Gruppen die afrikanischen Wissenssysteme als unwissenschaftlich, unlogisch, gegen gesellschaftliche Entwicklung gerichtet und/oder gottlos angesehen – während die soge-

nannten traditionellen Gemeinschaften von ihren lokalen Erfahrungen und Kenntnissen immer profitieren konnten. Im Anschluss an die bahnbrechende Global-Knowledge-Konferenz von 1997 in Toronto, bei der die Dringlichkeit offensichtlich wurde, *indigenous knowledge* zu erlernen, zu bewahren und auszutauschen, haben traditionelle Wissenssysteme einen ganz neuen Stellenwert bekommen. Doch trotz des wachsenden Interesses und der drängenden Forderungen gibt es insbesondere in Subsahara-Afrika kaum Ansätze, die traditionellen Wissenssysteme zum Wohl der Allgemeinheit optimal auszuwerten. Angesichts dieser Wirklichkeit legt der Autor dar, wie *indigenous knowledge* als Mittel zur Förderung von Lehr- und Lernprozessen im öffentlichen Erziehungswesen afrikanischer Staaten eingesetzt werden könnte und sollte – und zugleich dazu beitragen könnte, das undurchschaubare Amalgam komplexer globaler Problemlagen und Katastrophen zu erfassen.

Schlagwörter: Afrika südlich der Sahara, Bildung/Erziehung, Lernen, Kulturelles Erbe, Soziale Werte, Sprache

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The 2015 Nigerian General Elections

Nkwachukwu Orji

Abstract: The high level of success of Nigeria's 2015 general elections was unexpected, considering the difficult political and security environment in which the elections were conducted. The major obstacles to the smooth conduct of the elections include the grave security threat posed by the Boko Haram insurgency, the competing claims to the presidency by northern and southern politicians, a keenly contested campaign smeared by inflammatory messages, and serious gaps in electoral preparations. Against the backdrop of these challenges, this article assesses Nigeria's 2015 general elections, looking closely at the key issues that affected the polls, the major electoral outcomes, and the critical post-election issues raised by the outcomes.

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Keywords: Nigeria, elections/voting, election campaigns, voting results, democratisation

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Despite widely held concerns about the likelihood of a destabilising outcome, Nigeria successfully conducted its general elections on 28 March and 11 April 2015. Muhammadu Buhari, candidate of the newly emerged national opposition party known as the All Progressives Congress (APC), defeated the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the presidential election. His party also scored huge victories in the gubernatorial elections, as well as those in the National Assembly and the various state Houses of Assembly. A phone call by President Jonathan to his main rival conceding defeat a few hours before the official results of the elections were announced set the 2015 elections apart from previous elections, most of which were characterised by disputes over results. President Jonathan's early acceptance of defeat had a tremendous calming effect on the political atmosphere, which had been tense prior to the elections.

The peaceful and positive outcome of the 2015 elections came as a surprise to many, considering the difficult political and security environment in which the elections were conducted. The grave security threat posed by Boko Haram insurgency posed the greatest obstacle to the smooth conduct of the elections. Other issues, such as the competing claims to the presidency by northern and southern politicians, a keenly contested campaign smeared by inflammatory messages, allegations of politically motivated postponement of the elections, and gaps in electoral preparations, caused equally serious concerns (Orji 2014).

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other election stakeholders, especially the security agencies, addressed many of the challenges that were anticipated; yet logistical lapses, electoral irregularities, and outbreaks of violence could not be entirely avoided. In a few states, such as Rivers and Akwa Ibom, losers of the gubernatorial elections contested the results based on allegations of irregularities. However, most election observers maintain that the spread and gravity of irregularities recorded were not sufficient to question the overall credibility of the elections (EU EOM 2015a; TMG 2015).

The 2015 elections can be viewed as a positive step towards democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The elections enabled the country to achieve inter-party alternation of the presidency for the first time in its electoral history. Democratic theorists see alternation of power as a crucial stride in the democratisation process (Przeworski et al. 2000; Huntington 1991). Although the Nigerian presidency did not change hands before the 2015 elections, there has been significant alternation at other levels of government (LeVan et al. 2004). The uniqueness of the 2015 alternation, however, is that it occurred at the highest level of authority.

Nigerian Elections: A Background

The evolution of electoral democracy in Nigeria has been protracted and difficult. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country has organised nine general elections and numerous regional/state/local elections. Of these elections, the 1979, 1993, and 1999 polls were conducted by military regimes to allow for transition to civil rule, while the other elections[1] were conducted by incumbent civilian regimes to consolidate democratic rule. Elections organised by incumbent civilian regimes have been the most problematic (Agbaje and Adejumobi 2006). With the exception of the 2011 and 2015 elections, these elections have been characterised by attempts by the ruling parties to contrive and monopolise the electoral space and deliberately steer the process in their favour. This pattern was reflected in the "simulated" landslide victories recorded by the ruling parties in the 1964, 1983, 2003, and 2007 elections (Ibeanu 2007).

The 1964 federal election was contested by the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA), which is a coalition of predominantly southern parties, and the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA), whose base of support is in northern Nigeria. The Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) and its allies in the NNA took advantage of their control of the federal government to contrive a controversial victory (Dudley 1973). The 1983 general elections were also manipulated by the incumbent National Party of Nigeria (NPN), which won the presidency and gubernatorial elections in seven out of the nineteen states in 1979, and thereafter attempted to extend its political power throughout the federation. The allegations of vote manipulation in the 1983 elections triggered violent protests in some parts of Nigeria (Hart 1993).

The 2003 and 2007 general elections were also allegedly manipulated (Lewis 2003; Suberu 2007). The 2007 elections, in particular, severely dented Nigeria's democratic credentials due to the national and international condemnation they elicited. However, on a positive note, the elections led to a great deal of soul-searching among the Nigerian leadership. The president at the time, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, publically acknowledged that the election that brought him to office was fundamentally flawed. He therefore set up the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) to suggest measures that could improve the conduct of elections, restore electoral integrity, and strengthen democracy in Nigeria. Some of the ERC's recommendations were reviewed and adopted as amendments to the Constitution and Electoral Act. The government also tried to restore

1 Held in 1964, 1983, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015.

the integrity of elections in the country by appointing credible leadership to the INEC. For its part, the INEC adopted series of internal measures aimed at restoring public confidence in the electoral process (Kuris 2012). All of these measures contributed to the relative successes of the 2011 and 2015 general elections.

Polling Preparations

Preparations for the 2015 elections began soon after the 2011 polls. In August 2011, the INEC inaugurated a committee – the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC) – to evaluate the 2011 voter registration and general elections in order to recommend ways of strengthening the commission's operations. The RERC's recommendations created a framework for preparations for the 2015 elections and broader electoral reforms (INEC 2012). A major outcome of the RERC report was the INEC strategic plan (2012–2016), which sought to reorganise and reposition the commission. Based on the plan, the INEC implemented wide-ranging reforms, including a comprehensive restructuring of its bureaucracy, the development of a comprehensive election project plan, the formulation of a business-process map, and the adoption of new communications and gender policies (Bolaji 2014; INEC 2014).

The extent to which the implementation of these reforms improved election management during the 2015 polls has not been determined; the myriad of challenges faced by the INEC in conducting the 2015 elections raises doubts about the impact of the reforms. Challenges relating to voter registration and to the reorganisation of both the constituency and polling arrangements were the most prominent. Although the Nigerian Constitution requires the INEC to review electoral boundaries at least once every ten years,[2] the last review took place in 1996. Given the huge population expansion and the migration of citizens across the country since 1996, there was a consensus that a new constituency-delimitation exercise was necessary before the 2015 general elections (INEC 2014). On 16 November 2011, the INEC convened the Technical Committee on the Review of Electoral Districts and Constituencies (TCRED&C) to review past constituency-delimitation efforts and suggest measures that would improve future demarcation undertakings. Based on the committee's report, the INEC formulated a four-phase work plan for constituency delimitation. But the commission could not proceed beyond the first stage of the plan due to poor coordination and failure to secure the consensus required to

2 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, Section 73.

implement the exercise. In September 2014, the INEC suspended its constituency delimitation plan and introduced a scheme to create 30,000 new polling units to relieve pressure on the approximately 120,000 units in existence (Jega 2014). The INEC's polling-unit reorganisation plan was similarly abandoned after it was severely criticised for allegedly favouring northern constituencies (Ndiribe et al. 2014; Olokor 2014). The inability of the INEC to manage its constituency and polling-unit reorganisation programme called into question the commission's planning and technical capacity.

The INEC's professional capacity was further questioned by the manner in which it managed the distribution of permanent voter cards (PVCs). Following the compilation of the biometric voter registry in 2011, the INEC proposed issuing PVCs to duly registered voters before the 2015 elections. The PVCs replaced the temporary voter cards (TVCs) handed out to registrants immediately after their enrolment. Unlike the TVCs, PVCs have a microchip containing machine-readable biometric data of each voter. The INEC planned to deploy card-reading machines to authenticate the cards they issued and verify the identity of the voters through their fingerprints. This is expected to help prevent multiple voting, reduce incidents of card theft, and control vote-buying. From November 2014 when the PVC distribution exercise began, the Nigerian press buzzed with stories of tardy INEC officials, protesting registrants, insufficient PVCs, stolen cards, and other irregularities (Mordi 2015; Haruna and Ismail 2015). By 14 February 2015, the date originally scheduled for elections, only 76 per cent of registered voters had received their PVCs. The postponement of elections allowed more time for registrants to obtain their PVCs, resulting in approximately 82 per cent of PVCs having been collected by 21 March (EU EOM 2015a: 6).

Election Campaigns

Campaigns for the 2015 elections commenced in mid-November 2014 with large-scale rallies in different states of the federation. There were also lively campaigns in the media, especially social media. The 2015 election campaigns played out more as low politics than high-minded electoral appeals based on policy proposals. The two main parties adopted mainly negative campaign tactics involving fierce personal attacks on the candidates and prominent party members. The PDP's main line of attack on Buhari was to question his democratic credentials. The party has contrasted his past as a former military leader with President Jonathan's ex-

perience as a "tested and trusted democrat" who emerged in the aftermath of the country's return to civilian rule in 1999 (Amodu 2014).

From November 2014 when electioneering commenced, reports of violent attacks by rival political groups began to increase (NHRC 2015). In late November 2014, the APC accused the PDP of organising state-sponsored violence after the State Security Service raided the APC's office in Lagos as part of an investigation into claims that the party was illegally duplicating voter cards.[3] In early January 2015, the APC accused the PDP of having links with gunmen that shot at its supporters travelling to an election rally in Bori in Rivers State (Ezigbo 2015). A few days later, the PDP alleged that APC supporters set fire to one of President Jonathan's campaign vehicles in Jos (Okocha and Ezigbo 2015). There were also reports of verbal attacks in the form of politicians using young "internet warriors" to attack rivals online, often deliberately peddling misinformation and employing inflammatory language (Nwaubani 2014).

The APC was clearly more coordinated and coherent in its campaign. The party anchored its campaign on the message of change with which it consistently challenged the PDP's nearly two-decade-long hegemony of Nigerian politics. Hinged on the failure of the PDP government to lead Nigeria out of its governance and security predicaments, the APC's message of change reverberated throughout society, especially among the youth and the middle and lower classes. The APC posed corruption as the fundamental challenge to the PDP's moral fibre and the capacity of its government to produce results. Along this vein, the APC waged sustained attacks on the PDP's credibility as a party and the effectiveness of its government. In contrast to the PDP's rather elitist orientation, the APC presented itself as a mass party ready to ensure the government's accountability and its staying in touch with popular needs such as education, employment, and security.

Voting and Results

The voting process in Nigeria reflects the myriad of challenges that have affected election administration in the country. The scale of the tasks facing the INEC was immense given an extremely challenging environment marked by inadequate infrastructure, poorly educated masses, fierce contestation of power, and grave security challenges. On 7 February, the INEC postponed the 2015 elections scheduled for 14 and 28

3 *BBC News,* Nigerian Opposition APC Condemns Lagos Office Raid, 24 November 2014, online: <www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30175988> (23 April 2015).

February by six weeks following an advisory from the National Security Adviser stating that security could not be guaranteed for the proposed election days. The general elections were therefore shifted to 28 March for the presidential and National Assembly elections and 11 April for the gubernatorial and state Houses of Assembly elections.

On 28 March, logistical lapses led to the late arrival of officials and materials and delays in the opening of polls. Reports by the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) indicate that only 43 per cent of election officials arrived on time in 90 per cent of the polling stations the TMG monitored (TMG 2015: 2). The late opening of polls imposed severe hardship on the voters who waited in long queues for several hours before the commencement of accreditation, particularly those who travelled far distances to arrive at the polling units before their official opening time.[4]

For the 2015 elections, the INEC introduced a two-step voter-accreditation process involving the use of card-reading machines to verify INEC-issued voter cards and authenticate the voters through their fingerprints. To ensure the optimal performance of the card readers on the day of the election, the INEC conducted a pilot two weeks before the elections. The outcome of the pilot showed that 100 per cent of the cards were verified while only 59 per cent of the voters were authenticated through their fingerprints (Chibuzo 2015). Mirroring the experiences of the pilot, the process of voter authentication posed serious challenges during the presidential and National Assembly elections. The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) reported that card readers malfunctioned in 18 per cent of the polling units monitored, while in 91 per cent of the polling units the cards were not able to consistently verify fingerprints (EU EOM 2015a: 12). The gravity of this problem forced the INEC to change the guidelines midway in the election, allowing officials to manually accredit voters. In so doing, the INEC expedited accreditation, but removed the safeguard of electronically checking for authentic PVCs allocated to particular polling units (ibid.).

On 11 April, the day of the gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections, there was marked improvement in election management, especially in terms of timely opening of polls and functionality of the card readers. Observers note that 90 per cent of the polling units monitored opened on time, and that accreditation proceeded smoothly with the

4 In Nigeria, curfews are usually imposed during the election period – normally from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and voters residing far away must reach the polling units before the official time of poll opening.

card readers functioning with minimal hitches.[5] But this positive outlook was marred by reports of critical incidents, including refusal to allow eligible observers into polling units, intimidation of poll officials, snatching of ballot boxes, and interference with the result-collation process. The security situation clearly deteriorated during the gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections, with at least 30 people killed in 28 incidents (EU EOM 2015b: 10). This figure surpassed the 19 deaths in 20 violent incidents reported during the presidential and National Assembly elections (EU EOM 2015a: 11).

The results announced by the INEC indicate that the APC won the presidency, increased their proportion of gubernatorial positions, and won a majority of the seats in state and federal legislatures.[6] However, the national scope of support of the two leading parties – the APC and the PDP – challenged the identity-politics argument of many analysts of Nigerian politics, and suggests that the relevance of ethnicity and religion in understanding the complexity of Nigerian politics might indeed be overstated. The democratisation literature emphasises the importance of multi-ethnic support in plural societies (Lijphart 1977; Horowitz 1985). Although the PDP swept the votes in the South South and South East while the APC enjoyed vast support in the North West and North East, the two parties still maintained a national presence. In the presidential election, the APC won in 21 states and received at least 25 per cent of the votes in 26 states, while the PDP won in 15 states and gained 25 per cent of the votes in 25 states. The overall votes won by the two parties (the APC's 15.4 million to the PDP's 12.8 million) also reflect their relative strength and national range.

The 2015 elections were a major success for the APC and its presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, who triumphed for the first time after standing in four successive presidential elections. Buhari unlocked "the battleground states" of the South West and North Central. The voting pattern in these regions refuted the simplistic story of North/South, Christian/Muslim splits. Historically, the two regions have op-

5 Nigeria Civil Society Election Situation Room, *Final Statement on the Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly Elections*, 13 April 2015, online: <www.placng.org/situation_room/sr/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Final-Statement-on-the-State-level-elections.pdf> (15 April 2015).

6 The APC won 20 out of the 29 governorship positions contested, leaving 9 to the PDP. The party also won 64 out of 109 senatorial seats – the PDP got the remaining 45. Of the 360 House of Representatives seats, the APC won 225, the PDP got 125, while three other parties – the Labour Party (LP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), and Accord Party (AP) – shared the balance of 10 seats.

posed the Muslim North, with the North Central, in particular, framing its political identity in terms of opposition to the Muslim North. In the 2015 elections, voters in the South West gave Buhari 57.1 per cent of their votes compared to the paltry 6.9 per cent he received from the region in 2011. The North Central voters also increased their support for Buhari from 31.3 per cent of their votes in 2011 to 55.7 per cent in 2015. Even in the South East and South South, where opposition to Buhari and the APC is strongest, the electoral fortune of the opposition candidate changed significantly. Support for Buhari in the two regions increased from 0.6 per cent of the votes in 2011 to 7.9 per cent in 2015.

The success recorded by Buhari and the APC in the 2015 polls can be attributed to three factors. The first is the poor performance of the Jonathan administration and the desire of many Nigerians for a change. The APC confronted an extremely discredited and unpopular PDP government, and successfully used its message of change to sway the voters. Concerns about economic and security failures of the government forced many voters to defy traditional allegiances to stand behind Buhari and the APC. Second, Buhari and the APC benefitted from an internal crisis that significantly weakened the PDP. President Jonathan's candidacy was extremely controversial within his party, leading to the withdrawal of several prominent politicians from the party and the weakening of the party's support base in the North. The APC capitalised on the breakdown of the PDP's organisation to make inroads into the party's traditional strongholds. Finally, improvements in election administration offered all parties a more level playing ground and increased the prospects of genuine elections being carried out. In this way, the PDP's opportunities to frustrate the opposition or co-opt their mandate were greatly reduced.

Post-Election Issues

The outcome of Nigeria's 2015 elections has raised three main issues in the post-election period. First, the severe operational and logistical problems encountered by the INEC before and during the elections indicate a critical need to scale up the commission's professional capacity through sustained reforms. The current leadership of the INEC appears committed to continuing the reforms it started upon its appointment in 2010. However, the tenure of the commission's chairman, Attahiru Jega, and some other members ends in June 2015. Jega has publicly stated that he will not accept a reappointment, raising the question of whether the next leaders of the INEC will be willing and able to sustain and extend the reforms (Anwar 2015). The Nigerian Constitution grants the president the power

to appoint the chairperson and members of the INEC.[7] In the past, this prerogative has been abused following the appointment of individuals who were clearly unprofessional. Attahiru Jega has been widely adjudged to have led a relatively independent and transparent commission. The end of his tenure raises fears that this outlook of the electoral commission may be reversed.

The second key post-election issue is the role of the PDP as opposition. The 2015 elections have reduced the PDP to a regional organisation with solid backing in the South East and South South, as it trails behind the APC in other parts of the country. Noting the historical tendency of Nigerian politicians to converge under one broad political organisation, there are indications that the PDP may implode, as various factions of the party seek political accommodation in the ruling APC. Just after the 2015 elections, there was a major wave of defections from the PDP to the APC (Olaniyi and Anwar 2015). The survival of the party was further threatened by the leadership crisis that ensued in the aftermath of the 2015 elections (Alechenu et al. 2015). The collapse of the PDP will return Nigeria to one-party dominance and reverse the democratic progress represented by the emergence of the APC as an alternative political platform. As is recognised in the democratisation literature, inter-party contestation is a crucial element of true democracy (Przeworski et al. 2000). But such contestation can only thrive where two or more relatively strong parties exist.

Finally, the outcome of the 2015 elections has revived underlying ethno-regional tensions in Nigeria. In the build-up to the elections, there were campaigns by local PDP activists urging voters in the South East not to support the APC, describing the party as a reincarnation of the Northern–Yoruba alliance that defeated Biafra in the civil war of 1967–1970.[8] Following the APC's victory, there was a growing perception that the APC government would alienate the South East and South South, the same way the two regions were marginalised in the 1970s and 1980s in the aftermath of the civil war. This view highlights the need for the new government to embark on national reconciliation. Part of this effort will focus on appraising the country's institutional arrangements. Among election losers, there is an underlying lack of confidence in the capacity of the institutions to protect the minorities, and strong fear that they might not be able to regain power in future elections. This fear could be addressed by creating additional institutional guarantees of minority inclusion in the government. Furthermore, sustained improvements in

7 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, Section 154.

8 *Africa Confidential*, Nigeria: No Condition Is Permanent, 56, 8, 17 April 2015.

the electoral process will reassure losers of the possibility of victory in future elections, and in this way, will transform politics into a game – which it is supposed to be.

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Die allgemeinen Wahlen in Nigeria 2015

Zusammenfassung: Angesichts des schwierigen politischen Umfelds und der akuten Sicherheitsprobleme waren die allgemeinen Wahlen in Nigeria 2015 ein unerwarteter Erfolg. Ihr reibungsloser Ablauf war insbesondere durch Angriffe von Boko-Haram-Kämpfern gefährdet, aber auch durch konkurrierende Ansprüche auf die Präsidentschaft von Politikern aus dem Norden und dem Süden, heftige Auseinandersetzungen im Wahlkampf, die durch Hetze im Internet noch angeheizt wurden, und erhebliche Unzulänglichkeiten bei der Vorbereitung der Wahlen. Vor dem Hintergrund dieser Herausforderungen beleuchtet der Autor die wesentlichen politischen Streitfragen und das Abstimmungsverhalten und zieht Schlussfolgerungen aus dem Wahlergebnis.

Schlagwörter: Nigeria, Wahl/Abstimmung, Wahlkampf, Wahlergebnis/Abstimmungsergebnis, Demokratisierung

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Why Corporatism Collapsed in South Africa: The Significance of NEDLAC

Yejoo Kim and Janis van der Westhuizen

Abstract: The National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) was established as a corporatist institution, defined as a representative and consensus-seeking body coordinating to reach agreement through negotiation and discussion involving the state, organised business, and organised labour. It signalled the equal participation of the state and societal actors in the decision-making process in democratic South Africa. However, after two decades, NEDLAC is facing questions regarding its relevance. The imbalance in the power dynamics diminished the power of labour to bargain vis-à-vis the state and business. Labour's inability to represent a broader constituency beyond the formally employed, the lack of technical capacity within the labour movement, and NEDLAC's organisational inefficiency negatively affected the corporatist institution, which is now on the verge of demise.

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Keywords: South Africa, state, political participation, trade unions/associations, employers associations, corporatism, NEDLAC

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The burgeoning of corporatist institutions in newly democratised countries was regarded as a social phenomenon. Corporatism is a means to promote social solidarity and cooperation by allowing societal actors to play an important role in the decision-making process (Calenzo 2009; Adler and Webster 1995; Valenzuela 1989). Corporatism in South Africa was initially adopted in order to achieve social stability as well as economic growth. However, the sustainability of corporatism in the post-democratisation period has received little scholarly attention. The case of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) is instructive to explore the sustainability of corporatism. Contrary to more sustainable arrangements elsewhere, especially Northern Europe, corporatism in South Africa emerged as a response to the state facing political-economic crises in the transition period and became a control mechanism. But so far the analysis of whether corporatism will contribute to the "sustainable inclusive development" of South Africa (Habib 2013) is missing.

The establishment of NEDLAC reflected the increasing power of labour and the fact that the state, business, and labour were considered to be equal, which was different from the pre-democratisation period. The institution was expected to be a platform for the voice of institutionalised labour. However, after two decades, the power of labour has ebbed and flowed. We argue that the imbalance in the power dynamics between the state, business, and labour – as manifested at NEDLAC – negatively affected the corporatist institution in South Africa. In particular, the labour movement faced a series of crises internally and externally. This, in turn, negatively affected the power of labour to bargain vis-à-vis the state and business. Three problems bedevilled corporatism after 1996: first, labour's inability to represent a broader constituency beyond the formally employed; second, the lack of technical capacity within the labour movement; and third, NEDLAC's organisational inefficiency. This article discusses the corporatist tradition and capitalism during Apartheid, the institutionalisation of corporatism as part of the transition to democracy, and finally the conditions that caused the gradual marginalisation of NEDLAC.

The Corporatist Tradition in South Africa

In South Africa, corporatism burgeoned alongside capitalism. Big businesses – particularly in the mining and agriculture sectors, which lay at the heart of the South African economy – played a significant role in the architecture and implementation of Apartheid (Handley 2000). Lipton

(1986) suggests that capitalism benefitted from or coexisted with Apartheid. Organised white labour was subordinated and co-opted by the alliance between the state and business (Desai and Habib 1997: 502).

These close ties between the state and the white working class enabled the mobilisation and industrialisation of the economy along the basis often referred to as "racial Fordism": "mass production and mass consumption by and for white South Africans, with an underclass of low-paid Blacks excluded from the benefits of the industrialised economy" (Desai and Habib 1997: 502). Within this well-regulated corporatist framework, employees under the Apartheid government enjoyed full-time jobs and job security. However, these benefits granted to white South Africans were made possible only by repressing other societal groups, on an explicitly racial basis (Shaw 1994: 248).

Industrial relations entered a critical phase with the emergence of independent Black trade unions during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Along with industrialisation, Black workers gained more leverage by using the capacity to organise and mobilise union members. Simultaneously, business showed interest in engaging labour in a range of issues as early as the mid-1970s (Van der Walt 1997). Business experienced rising costs and increasingly begun opposing the economic restrictions Apartheid imposed, whilst the international community started exerting pressure in the form of sanctions and social isolation (Habib and Padayachee 2000: 247). This became the driving force behind not only the toppling of Apartheid but also the establishment of a corporatist dialogue.

The Growing Power of Labour and the Creation of Corporatism

The state's capacity to sustain its dominance eventually eroded. Fordist production enabled workers to construct a shared consciousness, prompting the formation of trade unions that increasingly agitated for improved workplace conditions and legal recognition. This was inevitably coupled with "labour militancy," as Seidman (1994) suggests. The discontent of labour finally erupted in the form of collective action in the Durban strikes in 1973, which led to the establishment of the Wiehahn Commission of 1979. The commission legitimised the existence of Black trade unions by de-racialising unfair labour practices in the workplace (Kooy and Hendrie 1979). Even though some critics point out that the Wiehahn Commission tried to bring labour militancy under control, the commission acknowledged African workers as a permanent part of the economy. This became the impetus for the establishment of the Con-

gress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985 as an important part of the democratisation process (Price 1991). COSATU played a significant political role when most political organisations were banned during the 1980s. This new alliance of social forces became the driving force in achieving democratisation and building post-Apartheid South Africa.

The growth of labour was associated with increased militancy, and the state realised that African workers had the potential to bring about social change. Also, the South African economy during the transition period was characterised by "stagnation, high levels of unemployment, and an uncompetitive level of productivity" (Maree 1993: 28). The growing power of labour, especially in the metal, mining, chemical, and textile sectors, which were regarded as the backbone of the economy, was seen as a serious threat. Under these circumstances, the state sought collaboration with societal actors; the necessity of creating a social dialogue including actors such as labour was raised. Consequently, the state established the corporatist institution NEDLAC (Adler and Webster 2000: 2).

From the 1990s onwards, there was heated debate over the need to adopt corporatism. On the one hand, corporatism was seen as having the potential to bring about benefits for the working class (Lundahl and Petersson 1996). Labour's participation in policy arenas was hailed since it would help strengthen workers' control of economic decision-making and democratise the workplace (Webster 1995). On the other hand, there were concerns that corporatism might exacerbate the "dualism" of workers, between those who belong to the formal economy and/or are members of unions, and those who work in the informal economy, which accounts for a large part of the South African economy (Maree 1993). Furthermore, Habib (1997: 69) sees corporatism as a "crisis response" to the adoption of a neo-liberal economic programme in the early 1990s and draws on Stepan's (1978) analytical framework, which highlights the response of the elite to the mass labour movement. Political and economic elites recognised that their neo-liberal economic programme was bound to provoke massive discontent and protest. In order to achieve social peace, these elites adopted corporatism, emphasising social unity and reconciliation (Stepan 1978).

Despite criticism, the state, business, and labour had their own different reasons for favouring corporatism. Especially business and labour needed to be organised vis-à-vis the state in the fast-changing economic environment (Maree 1993; Desai and Habib 1997). These two groups were fragmented along racial and political lines; therefore, they were willing to merge into large organisations in order to exert more influence

over others (Van der Walt 1997). Taking all of this into consideration, cooperation was expected, and it came to be seen as crucial to "constitute a long-term structural transformation" through corporatism (Shaw 1994: 244). As a result of this strategy, the National Manpower Commission and National Economic Forum were integrated into NEDLAC by Act of Parliament 35 of 1994. This signalled a change in the decision-making environment through the incorporation of various societal actors (Marais 2010). Significantly, NEDLAC highlighted the participation of social actors as equal players at the discussion table (Baskin 1991: 26).

Within NEDLAC, labour was the driving force behind a series of legislative developments to achieve equity at the workplace by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment. These include the Labour Relations Act of 1995, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, and the Employment Equity Act of 1998. The labour-related acts are significant outputs of NEDLAC.

The Diminishing Role of NEDLAC in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Despite its initial accomplishment, NEDLAC faced various challenges over time. According to a former labour movement activist (now working in government),

> [NEDLAC] helped improve policy responsiveness and reduced policy conflict. However, it is often portrayed as a failure because it has not led to the big social pact that will reduce workplace and social conflict while ensuring more rapid growth and employment creation. (Interview with a government official and former labour unionist, 25 March 2014)

NEDLAC is now considered as having failed to aggregate the state and societal actors' interests, promote democracy, and develop the socio-economic conditions of the country. The interests of labour, particularly, have not been met, and the corporatist institution has gradually lost ground.

Within macro-economic policy, the influence of COSATU on the African National Congress (ANC) was originally strong when the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) – the primary socio-economic development blueprint of the first democratic government – was adopted. The ANC and COSATU collaborated to develop the RDP, envisioned as a comprehensive economic and social programme (Schmidt 2003). However, the RDP survived for only two years. Instead, a more neo-liberal economic-development programme, Growth, Employment,

and Redistribution (GEAR), was adopted without consultation or consent from other societal actors. The state unilaterally pushed forward GEAR within the NEDLAC framework without further negotiations. Taylor (2007) and Parsons (2007) point out that there was a "reform coalition" between incoming political actors and big business, and as time went by, the ANC departed from ideological positions based on the Freedom Charter and took a reconciliatory approach towards big business.

NEDLAC failed to create an environment where the three actors could cooperate. The unilateral attitude of the state, the lack of consultation, and business's lack of interest in NEDLAC contributed to the weak outcomes attributed to the council. Trade unions' proposals were often not even discussed. According to Bassett (2004: 552),

> the ANC government never saw NEDLAC as an institution to develop policy or even to influence it significantly, but, rather as a means to generate support for the government's programme.

A study by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE 2000: 48) confirms that NEDLAC's influence was restricted to the initial stages of decision-making and had no impact on the process of finalising a policy, passing a law, or implementing the law or policy. The Human Sciences Research Council found that labour's influence in terms of policymaking regarding job creation, in particular, had largely diminished (Houston et al. 2001: 56).

The Collapse of NEDLAC

The following section dissects the various reasons that NEDLAC failed to play the key role of intermediating interests between the state, business, and labour. Four issues are highlighted: the asymmetrical balance of power between actors; the inability of labour to represent the interests of a broader constituency beyond labour itself; labour's lack of technical capacity at NEDLAC; and NEDLAC's own organisational inefficiency.

Asymmetrical Balance of Power between Actors

One of the most significant aspects that weakened the status of NEDLAC is the different dynamics of the relations among actors over time. In the process of achieving democratisation, labour became one of the most influential societal actors vis-à-vis the state. The economy provided the state and business with an "important new lever" (CDE 2000: 51). Along with the pressures of globalisation and demands to liberalise the

economy and attract foreign investors, it was imperative for the state to incorporate various actors' macro-economic demands and their prescriptions into policy. The state had to give way to the demands of capital, which tilted the balance of power away from labour and their demands.

The state has played a leading role in coordinating agendas at NEDLAC, with the state's pro-business approach not necessarily representing labour's position.

> The participants including secretariats at NEDLAC are pro-business. In this context, it is difficult to make a law advantageous to labour. There are continuous disagreements among the actors; NEDLAC does not seem fair to labour. (Interview with a former labour unionist 25 March 2014)

In practice, the state and business dominate at NEDLAC, with labour being placed in an inferior position.

Lacking a proper medium, labour has chosen another option to exercise its power by using the tripartite alliance between the ANC, COSATU, and the South African Communist Party (SACP), which has, in turn, weakened the status of NEDLAC. COSATU, the biggest labour movement, with 2.2 million members (as of 2012), used to be a significant pillar in the tripartite alliance of the ruling party and played a decisive role in politics. However, the influence of labour within the tripartite alliance is not regarded as equal. The tripartite alliance is seen as an "ANC-led alliance," and COSATU and the SACP have been outpaced by the ANC. According to the labour activists, COSATU seems to be consulted and considered a true partner only in the run-up to elections; thereafter, it enjoys very little policy influence in the ANC. One interviewee, a former labour unionist (now working within government), agrees that "the ANC does not represent workers despite workers having remained strong and dominant in civil society." The interviewee further noted,

> Workers have become politically conscious and their patience reaches limits; there is no fundamental change in the society. Nevertheless, at the moment, there is no alternative institution that can represent workers in this country. (Interview, 25 March 2014)

The demands of labour have been constrained and absorbed in the name of national unity, and COSATU has become marginalised in the course of decision-making. Labour has been expected to discard its own interests in the name of national development (Webster and Buhlungu 2004).

Labour Unable to Represent Broader Constituency

Corporatism provides a platform for organised labour, and other community members are also included; the participation of community members and NGOs is, in practice, limited to the Development Chamber of NEDLAC (Musgrave 2014). Collaboration between the labour movements and society forged a form of social-movement unionism across race and class (Von Holdt 2002; Seidman 1994). Thus, unions have been expected to represent their members' interests and, furthermore, the interests of the working poor and the unemployed (Habib 1997; Southall and Webster 2010).

However, unions have failed to forge longer-term strategies for them. Along with the high unemployment rate, the South African labour market has become fragmented, now consisting of "insiders" and "outsiders." The union density has begun to decline steadily, going from more than 50 per cent in the 1990s to 24.4 per cent in 2013 due to massive job losses (Bhorat and Oosthuizen 2012; COSATU 2012). Large numbers of the population remain outside of corporatist institutions, and they do not benefit from agreements made under corporatism. Under these circumstances, commentators question the representativeness of COSATU (Buhlungu 2008: 37).

Moreover, the 2013 suspension of COSATU's general secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi, eroded labour's credibility, creating a leadership void. By withdrawing electoral and political support for the ANC, the National Union of Metalworkers in South Africa (NUMSA), one of the most influential affiliates, showed its dissatisfaction with COSATU's "aristocracy" and the fact that it has become supportive of the state's neo-liberal agenda. This breakaway of NUMSA shows that the labour movement in South Africa is in conflict with political, ideological, and organisational divisions, exacerbating the lack of coherence within the labour movement.

Lack of Technical Capacity of Labour at NEDLAC

Labour lacked a clear strategy toward business and government at NEDLAC. A labour unionist acknowledges the problem:

> Labour does not see policy as its core function. Among labour there is often no clarity about what they can compromise on. Under the circumstances, it is easier for labour to say "no" since government will go forward anyway. (Interview with a former labour unionist, 25 March 2014)

Compared to labour, representatives from government tend to have "technical depth, dedicated policy capacity, and legitimacy" (Interview with a former senior coordinator at NEDLAC, 29 April 2014). Business was viewed as having technical expertise including committed leadership, knowledge of the economy, and experience.

A considerable number of labour unionists were incorporated into government positions, which had the potential to engender favourable conditions for labour. However, as soon as they joined the government, they were expected to toe the party line:

> As soon as unionists are incorporated, they are tamed and not able to represent labour. The situation is described as "The party puts you in a position, therefore you have to abide by the ANC 'ticket' and their rules." Only the brave criticise. (Interview with a senior official from NUMSA, 1 April 2014)

Moreover, the growing influence of technocrats in policy circles has reduced the scope of consultation with, and even at times, tolerance for the role of labour. Their perspective is that the government should not be constrained by an obligation to reach consensus with labour (Interview with a government official, 25 March 2014).

It is urgent that labour build the "technical capacity" if it seeks to influence the decision-making process more effectively. Also, the importance of coordination within labour is imperative: "All COSATU people in Parliament need to speak with one voice, but it's not like that now," according to one labour activist (Interview with a senior NUMSA official, 1 April 2014). According to many interviewees, a "popular alliance" with civil society needs to be created in order to strengthen labour's voice. However, in reality, labour has chosen mass mobilisation among workers, which labour opponents have characterised as a tactic relying on violence, which has only widened the gap between the state, business, and labour, as well as labour and other societal groups that might otherwise give broader support to labour (Buthelezi 2002: 6–7).

Organisational Inefficiency within NEDLAC Itself

Interviewees from government and labour confirmed that NEDLAC facilitated the democratic transition and contributed to improvement in legislation and regulations related to labour issues, in addition to helping improve policy responsiveness and reducing policy conflict. NEDLAC has now come under pressure, and many question its relevance and effectiveness as a social dialogue forum (Maswanganyi 2012).

NEDLAC regained some impetus in 2003 with the creation of the Growth and Development Summit when all societal actors were asked to commit to rebuilding the economy. The importance of the corporatist framework was reconfirmed by the state, business, and labour (Bassett 2004: 554). Despite this opportunity to refurbish itself, NEDLAC continued to face crises. Interviewees frequently lamented the poor implementation:

> At NEDLAC chambers, there are detailed discussions of policies and legislation and these have led to visible legislative improvements. However, these efforts have been overshadowed by poor implementation. Agreements are reached every three to five years, and are often either vague or not on a requisite scale, and mostly poorly implemented. (Interview with a senior COSATU official, 1 April 2014)

NEDLAC itself has failed as a social dialogue mechanism and faced challenges at an organisational level. Interviewees pointed to various issues, ranging from the necessity to strengthen the position of the secretariat, to shortcomings in the management committee's administration, including delays in convening meetings, the non-sharing of minutes, and insufficient information-gathering. It was suggested that NEDLAC itself should increase its negotiation capacity vis-à-vis government actors by strengthening its organisational capacity (Interview with a former coordinator at NEDLAC, 29 April 2014). Interviewees suggested that NEDLAC reposition itself as a corporatist mechanism and come up with agendas that can address the more fundamental problems facing South Africa, such as poverty and inequality.

Conclusion

According to the scholarly literature, corporatism plays a role in ensuring the maintenance of political stability in a liberal democracy and improving the effectiveness of economic policies through coordination between state, labour, and business. However, in South Africa, NEDLAC failed to forge a comprehensive social pact addressing inequality, poverty, and unemployment.

The influence of labour has diminished over time, aggravated by the high unemployment rate and the growing number of casual workers. Furthermore, labour has been unable to represent a constituency beyond the formal labour sector, due to the fragmentation of the labour market, lack of technical capacity within the labour movement compared to

other social counterparts, and the organisational inefficiency within NEDLAC itself.

During the transition period, corporatism was one of the few viable options to bring about socio-economic stability by means of cooperation between the state, business, and labour. For societal actors such as business and labour, the fact that they initially had access to the decision-making process and could affect policy outcomes was the biggest motivation for them to participate (Lundahl and Petersson 1996). Through corporatism, the state gained domestic legitimacy and increased its effectiveness in the implementation of policies. For example, in Western European countries that have adopted this model, corporatism brought about economic prosperity and social harmony based on the environment created by corporatism. In other words, the state maintained social control over other societal groups indirectly through the corporatist institution (Lundahl and Petersson 1996). The adoption of corporatism in South Africa was a crisis response to the challenges of democratisation. Nearly two decades after its inception, corporatism has become little more than a label.

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Warum der Korporatismus in Südafrika gescheitert ist: Zur Bedeutung von NEDLAC

Zusammenfassung: Der National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) wurde als korporatistische Institution gegründet. Als repräsentative, koordinierende und dem Konsens verpflichtete Körperschaft hatte er zum Ziel, durch Verhandlung und Diskussion zwischen Unternehmerverbänden, der organisierten Arbeiterschaft und dem Staat Vereinbarungen zu erzielen. Die Einrichtung von NEDLAC stand für die Partnerschaft des Staates mit gesellschaftlichen Akteuren und die Partizipation an Entscheidungsprozessen im demokratischen Südafrika. Zwei Jahrzehnte nach seiner Gründung ist die gesellschaftliche Relevanz von NEDLAC heute fraglich. Die Machtbalance hat sich zuungunsten der Arbeitnehmervertreter entwickelt, deren Verhandlungsposition gegenüber Vertretern des Staates und der Unternehmer ist deutlich geschwächt. Die Unfähigkeit der Gewerkschaften, ihre Basis über die formal Beschäftigten hinaus auszuweiten, mangelnde technische Kapazitäten der Gewerkschaftsverbände und organisatorische Mängel der Arbeit von NEDLAC haben die korporatistische Institution geschwächt; inzwischen steht sie am Rande der Auflösung.

Schlagwörter: Südafrika, Staat, Politische Partizipation, Gewerkschaften/ Verbände, Arbeitgeberverband, Korporatismus

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The Use of "Community" in South Africa's 2011 Local Government Elections

Udo Richard Averweg and Marcus Leaning

Abstract: In South Africa, local government elections are held every five years, with the next ones scheduled for 2016. During the last local government elections in 2011, much media coverage was given to political parties' manifestos and slogans. They are frequently layered with social and political references, and the terms used are often emotionally resonant across a broad spectrum of the electorate. One term frequently found in such rhetoric is "community." This article explores the term as it was used in a number of different political parties' manifestos during the 2011 local government elections. The authors utilise research methods that allow a neutral interrogation of the manifestos.

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Keywords: South Africa, local elections, political parties, party programmes

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During the build-up phase to South Africa's last local government elections, held on 18 May 2011, significant coverage was given by media outlets to political parties' manifestos, slogans, and advertisements. In contemporary, postmodern times the mediation of such messages plays a very significant part in how such ideas are understood by the electorate. Norris (2000) offers a historical schema in which the political communication aspect of elections can be understood to be operating in three key periods: premodern, modern, postmodern.

In premodern times campaigning techniques were activist-based. They made extensive use of and were organised by civil-society groups such as guilds, trade unions, trade associations, and small political entities. During the modern period there was a gradual decline in individual and group activism as the mass media became dominant as a way in which people associated with one another and experienced the world. The larger social range of the mass media resulted in national issues becoming more significant in determining people's election choices. Consequently, elections came to be won (or lost) on national issues rather than local issues. However, in postmodern times we have witnessed the emergence of social media, forms of networked media, and the significant growth of the use of mobile phones. Norris (2000) understands this technological impact as resulting in a new age in which the activist is important again.

Activists and individuals assist in the mediation of political messages to a far greater degree now than they ever have. Consequently, the text contained in manifestos, slogans, and advertising is mediated and individualised to a far greater degree than it previously was. Moreover, we have witnessed an increased professionalisation of the various forms of political communication (Papathanassopoulos et al. 2007). Parties' employment of internationally based professional political strategists, consultants, and pollsters to more efficiently orchestrate campaigns and better exploit various social research methods (such as focus groups and surveys to determine the public's reaction to political messages) has resulted in far tighter and far more measured forms of political communication. Simenti-Phiri et al. (2014) argue that South African politics has changed significantly in recent years and is now far more professional than before, drawing heavily upon an approach to campaigning popularised in the United States. The type of political rhetoric examined here (manifestos, slogans, and advertisements) is designed for and calibrated to specifically appeal to the South African voter, the target audience.

Manifestos, slogans, and advertisements are a key ingredient in election campaigns. They are frequently layered with social and political

references and the terms used often resonate emotionally with a broad share of the electorate. One term frequently found in such campaign language is "community" (or its plural, "communities"). While "community" is generally understood to refer to the set of interactions and human behaviours in the context of everyday, lived experiences within societies, the term also has very significant political resonance and is often found within political manifestos. The question arises as to whether the use of the term in political manifestos differs from its use in everyday life. In this article, the commonly used terms "community" and "communities" are explored in a number of different examples of political-campaign rhetoric disseminated during the local government elections of 2011 to explore *how* the term was used.

Origin and Use of the Term "Community"

The term "community" has its roots in Old French and Middle English. It originates in the Latin words *communitas*, meaning fellowship, and *communis*, meaning common, public, or shared. Indeed, "community" and "communication" share their Latin root (Webber 1964).

The topic of community was of significant interest to sociologists and philosophers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ferdinand Tönnies' work on the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* [*Community and Society*], published in 1887) represents a continuation of Hegel's distinguishing among forms of association. *Gemeinschaft* (community) should be understood as a living organism, while *Gesellschaft* (society) should be understood as an artificial and less authentic grouping of people (Averweg and Leaning 2011: 22). Such interpretations became integrated into political discourse.

Community has long been a topic of mainstream political interest and there has been a large amount of popular comment upon the issue. Currently, "community" is undoubtedly a key political value and the term is widely used in a range of popular and academic debates – such as in the emerging discipline of Community Informatics. Whilst one cannot possibly begin to do justice to the wide variety of perspectives that have been used to study community, one can discern a broad schema in how the term is understood.

One popular approach to the term advocated by authors such as Willmott (1989), Lee and Newby (1983), Crow (1997), and Crow and Allan (1994, 1995) recognises three distinct interpretations of "community":

- Community is conceptualised as a "locality." Here the "commonality" or the essence of community between people is the physical space in

which they reside. This approach to the study of "community" has been used to examine a number of topics such as the impact of architecture and geography upon "community."

- Community between people emerges from a shared interest or experience – this category provides a means by which many forms of association that emerge from a shared set of practices or interests may be conceptualised as a community.
- Community is used to understand the feeling of commonality that occurs between people around certain topics, beliefs, or spiritual values. Thus one can talk of a feeling of "community," or of a link between people in a heightened spiritual or emotional state such as sharing a religious experience or being part of a crowd at an exciting soccer match.

"Community" in South Africa

In South Africa, the term "community" was originally used as a euphemism for race (Bosch 2003: 108). However, its meaning has become increasingly vague with its rhetorical use in politics. In post-Apartheid South Africa, communities occupy a "legitimate" space in the regulatory framework of the state. Bosch (2003: 110) notes that it is "communities" that can make claims for land restitution and land distribution, and the term "formerly disadvantaged community" refers to racial groups dispossessed of land, an entity on whose behalf a struggle was waged. In the South African media, the term "community" is prevalent. Bush Radio (the oldest community radio project in Africa) creates community by being deeply connected to the various communities it serves – the concept of community pulsates as its central life force (Bosch 2003). Murkens (2009) studied the "special interest" and "geographic" models of community radio in meeting the needs of the community. The perceived failure of local government to deliver services and the delayed response to the concerns of communities has resulted in the "collective trauma of the paradoxical new democracy" in South Africa (Mogapi 2011: 124).

Local community protests have spread across South Africa since 2004, with a dramatic upsurge in 2009 and 2010. These community protests have been "against poor service delivery, corruption, and the lack of consultation with communities by government" (von Holdt 2011: 5). In South Africa, the provision of services is viewed as the prerogative of the local sphere of government (Gumede 2009; Kagwanja et al. 2009; McLennan 2009). Community protests and xenophobic violence are a last resort strategy to express grievances in South Africa, particularly over

inadequate service delivery. In von Holdt et al. (2011), the term "community protest" occurs 79 times, and a search string for "communit" to locate either the term "community" or "communities" generated a total of 642 "hits" ("community": 558 hits; "communities": 84 hits). It is evident that the term "community" continues to have significant resonance across a broad population and remains ingrained in South Africa's collective psyche.

Given the recent violent, xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals, the term "community" has again gained prominence in South African media. For example, James Nxumalo (mayor of eThekwini, Durban, South Africa) states in the local government publication (*METRO ezasegagasini* 2015) that "leadership met affected *communities*" and that "Our City [Durban] will go all out in helping displaced foreign nationals to be reintegrated into their *communities*" (emphasis added).

Community is a complex concept that can be described from many points of view in the South African context. The ongoing economic divisions characteristic of the post Apartheid era are typically those between different black communities in South Africa – in discourse, one very rarely hears the term "white communities." The terms "community" and "communities" are also prevalent in the South African political landscape, manifesting in political parties' extensive use of the terms "community" or "communities" in their manifestos, slogans, and media advertisements in the 2011 local government elections. This rhetoric sets the tone of a political party's election campaign.

2011 Local Government Elections in South Africa: Survey Method and Data

The ruling African National Congress appears to still rely heavily on loyalist politics (Mogapi 2011: 123). The case studies in the aforementioned July 2011 research report "seem to suggest that the development of democratic local government has been marred by the unresolved trauma of Apartheid" (Mogapi 2011: 124) and the building anger over the failures of the African National Congress. Furthermore, local government appears to be failing to listen and responding to the concerns of aggrieved community leaders.

Extracted from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) website (<www.elections.org.za>), Table 1 reflects the 2011 local government election results for the ANC, COPE, DA, and IFP. The voter turnout for this election was 57.6 per cent. The total percentage of support obtained by these political parties was 91.6 per cent.

Table 1. 2011 Local Government Election Results, Number of Seats Won, and Percentage Support

Political party	Number of seats won (N = 8,436)	Support
African National Congress (ANC)	5,633	62.0%
Congress of the People (COPE)	236	2.1%
Democratic Alliance (DA)	1,555	23.9%
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	352	3.6%

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa <www.elections.org.za/content/new.aspx?id=1850> (6 July 2011).

The analysis of political manifestos has long been conducted through the application of the critical discourse method (Fairclough 1989, 1995). Critical discourse method is rooted in, and owes much to, the progressive cultural studies and critical theory that emerged from the counter-hegemonic movements of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s in Western Europe and North America. As such it seeks to identify the ways in which power is articulated through text. Since the intention of this article is not to overtly criticise any political party's manifesto but merely to report upon the usage of the term "community," the authors sought to apply research methods that would allow a neutral interrogation of the manifestos. The method to survey and report upon the number of incidents of the use of the term "community" was derived from the work of Tetlock et al. (2008).

The first stage was to secure key documents that would be used in the analysis. This involved a search of available online documents on the websites of the four "major" political parties contesting the local government elections: (in alphabetical order) the African National Congress (ANC), Congress of the People (COPE), Democratic Alliance (DA), and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). These "top" four political parties are all represented in the South African legislature – collectively, they currently occupy 379 (94.8 per cent) of 400 parliamentary seats.

Once secured, websites were subjected to an electronic scan using the search string "communit," which was used to locate either the term "community" or "communities" in each political party's manifesto published on the internet. For each scan, a tally was taken of the number of occurrences of the term "community" and "communities." A second-pass inspection was made of the occurrences of the terms "community" and "communities" in the manifestos, and a tally was taken of instances where either term formed part of a composite phrase (e.g. community activism, community gardens).

A scan and search of slogans and media advertisements containing either the term "community" or "communities" was also undertaken in available print media (daily South African newspapers) for a period commencing two months prior to election day on 18 May 2011.

From a scan of the four political parties' manifesto websites containing the terms "community" or "communities," the results of the survey are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. Political Parties' Manifesto Websites: Number of Hits for the Terms "Community" or "Communities"

Political party	URL manifesto (date of last access: 6 July 2011)	Number of hits
ANC	<www.anc.org.za/docs/manifesto/2011/lge_manifeston.pdf>	80
COPE	<us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/32449_cope_manifesto.pdf>	34
DA	<www.da.org.za/docs/11025/DA%20Local%20Government%20Manifesto%202011.pdf>	10
IFP	<www.ifp.org.za/2011/2011manifesto.html>	6
	Total number of hits for "community" or "communities"	**130**

A second-pass inspection was made of the occurrences of the terms "community" and "communities" in each of the manifestos, and a tally was also taken of each instance that either term formed part of a composite phrase. A summary is reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. All Manifestos: Number of Hits for the Terms "Community"/"Communities," or a Composite Phrase

Term or phrase	Tally of occurrences
community	20
communities	65
community participation	8
safer communities	2
community spirit	2
community gardens	2
community courts	2
other	29
Total	**130**

A scan and search of slogans and media advertisements containing the term "community" or "communities" in daily South African newspapers showed only one result for an ANC advertisement in the *Daily News* (22 March 2011), which used the following slogans: "Together we can build better communities"; "Across our country the face of communities has changed"; "We have given communities a voice and the opportunity to be active participants in the areas where they live"; "in the 2011 local government elections, because working together we can continue building better communities".

Concluding Remarks

During the 2011 local government elections, the ANC deployed the terms "community"/"communities" to a far greater degree than its competitors – twice as often as COPE and eight times as many as the DA. However, our research design and data do not afford us grounds to postulate about why this occurred. We advocate that research be conducted on the political manifestos and campaign material for the municipal elections in 2016 to explore the deployment of the terms, as it will no doubt be interesting to see how the major current political parties make use of them. This may provide future research opportunities for this sociological construct.

Pursuant to this, we suggest that, in the study of political communication within a South African setting, "community" be recognised not as a universal good but as a locally contingent position in possibly much wider debates taking place in society. Invoking "community" in the practice of a particular activity will situate that activity in opposition to activities that are not "community"-orientated. This positioning is often locally and politically determined – to be pro community is not an absolute value but one tied to a position in a conflict or debate, as is currently being witnessed in South Africa, especially in regards to xenophobic violence. The 2016 elections will offer fresh opportunities for "community" to be deployed and articulated within party campaigns. We contend that "community" will be used to situate political parties within particular frames of reference and larger societal debates concerning the future social fabric of South Africa.

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Der Gebrauch des Begriffs "community" in den südafrikanischen Kommunalwahlen von 2011

Zusammenfassung: In Südafrika werden alle fünf Jahre Kommunalwahlen abgehalten, die nächsten sind für 2016 vorgesehen. Während der letzten Kommunalwahlen im Jahr 2011 fanden Wahlprogramme und Slogans der politischen Parteien in den Medien große Aufmerksamkeit. Diese Texte sind oft mit sozialen und politischen Botschaften unterlegt. Die Wortwahl setzt auf emotionale Reaktionen in einem breiten Wählerspektrum. Ein viel genutzter Begriff ist "community". Die Autoren haben ermittelt, wie häufig der Begriff in den Programmen einer Reihe politischer Parteien während der Kommunalwahlen 2011 eingesetzt wurde. Ihre Forschungsmethode erlaubt die neutrale Untersuchung der Programme.

Schlagwörter: Südafrika, Kommunalwahl, Politische Partei, Parteiprogramm

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Conference Report:

Neopatrimonialism, Democracy, and Party Research: The German and International Debate

In Remembrance of Gero Erdmann (1952–2014)

Marianne Kneuer, Andreas Mehler, and Jonas Sell

Abstract: This report summarises the presentations held at a symposium that took place on 8 June 2015 in Hamburg to commemorate the life and scholarly achievements of Gero Erdmann. Erdmann has left deep footprints in the literature on neopatrimonialism, parties, and party systems in Africa, as well as on democratisation, including democracy promotion. Colleagues and former collaborators revisited some of his work and put it in the perspective of recent findings in the literature.

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This event, jointly organised by the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and the "Democracy Studies" Working Group of the German Political Science Association (DVPW), assembled companions, colleagues, friends, and family of the late Gero Erdmann, who held important positions at both the GIGA and the DVPW. Erdmann's main research interests – party politics, democracy, and neopatrimonialism – were at the heart of this conference. Erdmann's drive to do two things in parallel – to disprove Africa's alleged exceptionalism while working towards the adaptation of universal approaches in light of his deep insights into many African cases – made him a respected scholar both in African Studies and Comparative Politics.

At the conference's outset, Robert Kappel, the GIGA's former president, elucidated Erdmann's unfortunately rather typical German academic career path, which entailed a long time passing before he finally got a permanent position and the recognition he deserved. He became the head of GIGA Research Programme 1: Legitimacy and Efficiency of Political Systems, and later headed up the GIGA's office in Berlin. Kappel highlighted in particular Erdmann's role as a mentor for many young researchers who benefitted from his experience and expertise.

In the first thematic block on party research, Matthias Basedau (GIGA) explained what new perspectives a Comparative Area Studies (CAS) lens could bring to party research, all along paying tribute to Erdmann's work. CAS can serve as the – for quite some time "missing" – link between classical Area Studies and Comparative Politics, as it seeks a balance between generalisation and individualisation, between induction and deduction. Basedau illustrated this added value by reference to party research on Africa, one essential element being the adequate description of parties and party systems in Africa. Erdmann applied and adapted universal typologies of political parties (e.g. Gunther and Diamond 2003) and party systems (Sartori 1976). He had experimented with his own typology, particularly focusing on both "mono-ethnic parties" and "ethnic congress parties" (Erdmann 2004, 2007) while showing that dominant-party *systems* are the most common type of party system in sub-Saharan Africa (Erdmann and Basedau 2007, 2013). Beyond the description of parties and party systems, a CAS approach allows for the isolation of causal relationships in specific contexts. Erdmann et al. (Erdmann 2007; Basedau, Erdmann, Lay, and Stroh 2011) found that ethnicity can explain voting behaviour – to some extent. Nevertheless, there were significant differences between the examined countries with regard to the explanatory power of ethnicity. On a higher cross-regional level, Köllner, Basedau, and Erdmann (2007) compared African and non-African cases, examining the

causes of factionalism within parties and whether this factionalism affected the stability of parties and party systems in democracies. The aspiration of CAS to combine universal compatibility with context sensitivity stresses the need for a variety of methods; from this perspective, it is most appropriate to fuse qualitative and quantitative methods on the micro- as well as the macro-level.

Sebastian Elischer (Leuphana University/GIGA) gave an overview of recent research results on African parties, showing how strongly the field has developed since Erdmann's statements from the 1990s deploring the lack of discussion on African parties and party systems in the international literature (after somewhat stronger coverage in the 1960s and 1970s). With the third wave of democratisation, Africa had once again become fertile ground for party research, noted early on by Erdmann. However, he continued to criticise the lack of theoretical and conceptual clarity (Erdmann 1999, 2004). Elischer proved Erdmann's early predictions to be accurate by referring to recent literature appearing in prominent publishing houses (LeBas 2011; Fleischhacker 2010; Pitcher 2012; Elischer 2013; Riedl 2014; Resnick 2014; Osei 2012; Stroh 2014; Doorenspleet and Nijzink 2014). Recent work produced new insights into the influence of identities on parties, though in a differentiated way. Ethnicity has a huge influence on the process of party formation in some African countries but not in others. Party research in Africa is no longer marginalised – also thanks to Erdmann's pioneering work, which shaped the research agenda for over a decade.

Alexander Stroh (University of Bayreuth) explored the nexus of party systems and electoral competition in Africa, focusing on the case of Benin. He showed that Sartori's characterisation of African party systems as a labyrinth (1976) cannot simply be denied. At first sight, there is a highly fragmented and polarised party system in Benin. However, a glance at the subnational level reveals a different reality. Today there is enough data on the level of subnational competition – which is arguably essential for the overall level of democracy, though not all methods exploiting such data work well. Stroh proposed looking at four essential aspects on a micro-level: fragmentation, competitiveness, polarisation, and institutionalisation of parties. Such a deeper analysis of subnational structures shows that in over two-thirds of Benin's electoral districts only two lists got mandates. Competitiveness is normatively desirable within a democracy; the level of uncertainty of who would win at the constituency level is a key factor – Stroh applied the Grofman/Selb (2009) Index of Competition here. He showed that Blais' thesis that competition increases voter turnout (2006) does not apply in this case. Voter turnout declined in Benin's National

Assembly elections from 1995 to 2015 while the Index of Competition increased. Existing analytical instruments to measure the polarisation of party systems often do not consider political stockpiling – an especially important feature in African presidential systems like Benin's.

The second conference block focused on the uses and usefulness of neopatrimonialism as a concept. Ulf Engel (University of Leipzig) portrayed the refinement and critique of the concept of neopatrimonialism in recent academic debates, relying on a common understanding of the term as "a mixture of two types of domination that coexist: namely, patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic domination" (Erdmann and Engel 2007). He took issue with a number of recent statements of colleagues – for instance, that neopatrimonialism is a valid universalistic paradigm (Bach 2011) or a concept that simply needs updating (de Waal 2014). Neopatrimonialism as a concept is being increasingly criticised: as "analytically inadequate" (Olivier de Sardan 2014), as a "severe misreading of Weber" (Pitcher, Moran, and Johnston 2009), as not having predictive power with respect to economic policy and performance (Mkandawire 2013), and as a Eurocentric concept (Wai 2012). Engel underlined Erdmann's growing scepticism towards the concept for its lack of clarity, its difficulty to operationalise, and its failure to provide convincing subtypes. However, Erdmann still insisted that the concept had heuristic value in the absence of better options to grasp the "widespread phenomenon of the interaction between formal institutions and informal behaviour and/or institutions in politics" (Erdmann 2013). Engel supported this view; neopatrimonialism seems to help describe realities in Africa and other world regions, but contains in itself severe obstacles for operationalisation and analytical clarity and is also flawed due to its underlying normative assumptions, which present practical problems.

André Bank and Thomas Richter (both GIGA) applied their understanding of neopatrimonialism to the different fates of various regimes within the Arab Spring. In Middle East Studies, neopatrimonialism is dominantly portrayed as an authoritarian subtype, whereas Erdmann and others would stress the mixture of patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic domination as described by Engel. Bank and Richter find personalisation essential, finding indisputable salience in the head of state's relationship with the elite – meaning, the role of a central political actor and ultimate decision maker in the context of elite pluralism (and competition) and his or her ability to ensure a balance of power via an elite rotation. They applied their model to five republics (Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Tunisia) and three monarchies (Jordan, Morocco, Oman). The attitude of the ruler towards elite pluralism and rotation would help

explain outcomes of the Arab Spring – relative stability (Jordan, Morocco, Oman) versus transformation (Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Tunisia). Bank and Richter noted that in every single case, the rulers tried to appoint their sons or other relatives as their successors. This narrowing of the elite resulted in a decreasing elite rotation and a deficient power balance. Despite these similarities, there are also significant differences in regard to the influence and structure of the elite and the opposition in the power game. The focus on the relationship between ruler and elites as key aspect of neopatrimonialism is therefore helpful, but still needs refinement, not least with regard to the military as a special actor evincing a very different functional logic than other elite segments. Agency, more generally, is not easy to cover using existing concepts of neopatrimonialism.

Christian von Soest (GIGA) also tackled the question of to what extent neopatrimonialism is analytically applicable beyond Africa. He relied on insights from a research project that had been initiated by Erdmann and conducted by von Soest. Deduced from a certain branch of the discussion on sub-Saharan Africa (Bratton and van de Walle 1997), Erdmann and von Soest used three dimensions – informal concentration of power, systemic clientelism, and corruption – to reveal differences between Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. They encountered several challenges concerning the interregional transfer of the concept: First, there was the question of how to measure informal institutions. Second, the concept's applicability was challenged in the Latin American political context by colleagues from the region. Moreover, the case-study character of the research rendered a generalisation beyond any given region very difficult. On a descriptive level, it became obvious that the forms and magnitudes of patron–client networks varied greatly. Although taking a very different perspective on neopatrimonialism than Bank and Richter, von Soest came to a similar conclusion: the concept of neopatrimonialism is deficient in its integration of actor behaviour. There are cases in which decision makers acted very differently within similar structures. According to von Soest, it is necessary to step down the abstraction ladder from investigating at the regime level to conducting comparative research on specific questions focusing on certain policy areas or administrations. Such a more specific approach could lead, in his view, to a more systematic examination of "type of rule" that would also take into account regional peculiarities.

The third part of the conference dealt with the issue of hybridity and the future of democracy. Marianne Kneuer (University of Hildesheim) showed that the whole branch of research on external factors of

democratisation, including democracy promotion, has experienced a boom since 1989. While the 1990s constituted a period of optimistic belief in the normative and factual force of democracy accompanied by equally committed activities of external support for democratisation, the pendulum had swung to "democratic pessimism" a decade later (Carothers 2009). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, many democratic experiments produced disappointing results and a more general scepticism about the future of democracy set in globally. Moreover, the so-called "War on Terror" declared after 9/11 and the way George W. Bush conflated democracy promotion with the fight against Al Qaeda resulted in a loss of credibility of the overall democracy-promotion project. The more anti- (or pro-)democratic the environment is internationally, the smaller (or bigger) the willingness to promote democracy. In the current context within the West of giving priority to security and stability, the prospects for democracy promotion remain unfavourable. Current events in Libya, Syria, and Ukraine offer ambivalent messages for democracy supporters and promoters: On the one hand, they prove that democracy still has an immense appeal for citizens who are willing to fight for it. On the other hand, democratic uprisings do not necessarily result in democratic transitions but may instead lead to internal instability or even to civil war. They also prove that autocratic regimes feel threatened by democratic uprisings in their neighbourhood or even some distance away. As a consequence, autocratic regimes such as Russia or China not only pursue an aggressive foreign policy (McFaul and Spector 2010; Kneuer and Demmelhuber 2015) but also actively promote autocracy (Burnell and Schlumberger 2010; Burnell 2011; Jackson 2010). The IDCAR project,[1] the last big project Gero Erdmann co-initiated, investigates this counter-project to democracy promotion. Kneuer proposed investigating the international dimension of regime promotion more generally across the regime types (democracies, autocracies, hybrid regimes) in search for similarities and differences.

Hans-Joachim Lauth (University of Würzburg) began by seeking a definition for the term "hybrid" as something mingled, bundled, or crossed. Yet, hybrid more specifically refers, following Lauth, to the crossing even of "opposite" categories: ones not mutually derivable. Herein lies the central difference between a hybrid regime and a regular or diminished subtype: the latter always refers to a common central category (democracy or autocracy). Erdmann worked on such incongruous combinations, on neopatri-

1 IDCAR (International Diffusion and Cooperation of Authoritarian Regimes) is a research network of scholars coordinated by the GIGA.

monialism, fragile states, and hybrid regimes. Applying his own thoughts about hybridity to regime classification, Lauth asked when it is possible to speak of hybrid regimes. According to the initial definition, hybrid regimes should have democratic as well as autocratic characteristics. Following Erdmann (2011), who used empirical data from Freedom House to highlight the relevance of hybrid regimes, one can show that democracies declined between 1974 and 2008 and morphed more often into hybrid regimes than into autocratic regimes. Based on data from the Polity IV Project (Center for Systemic Peace), Lauth underscored this result by his finding that the number of hybrid regimes – here called "anocracies" – conspicuously exceeds the number of autocracies today. Case studies have shown the existence of hybrid characteristics in certain regimes (e.g. Turkey, Russia, Venezuela). The empirical evidence is therefore clear: many cases cannot distinctively be assigned to the superior categories of democracy or autocracy. Lauth reported on his discussions with Erdmann about neopatrimonialism: Is it a regime or a form of government, or is it more of a praxis? What are the links between neopatrimonialism and regime types, particularly democracies? The structural weakness of the neopatrimonial state may have impeded successful democratisation in many cases (Erdmann 2003). Lauth proposed several avenues for future research – for example, on the identification of possible clusters of variables measuring hybrid regimes, on the relative stability of hybrid regimes, and on the concrete interactions between formal and informal institutions.

Wolfgang Merkel (WZB/Humboldt University) portrayed Erdmann as a comparativist, not an Area Studies scholar. According to him, Erdmann was always looking for theoretical concepts to recognise and interpret causes, structures, and developments beyond the descriptively tangible occurrences. Thus, Erdmann consciously applied "European" or "Western" concepts on his focus region Africa. However, he never did this scholastically but rather with the willingness to adapt these concepts with the objective of making them applicable to "his" region. Accordingly and rather classically, Erdmann outlined five key functions that must be fulfilled by parties in democracies: shaping elections, channelling corporate and organised interests, legislating in parliament, forming the executive, and making policy. Merkel, though aware of the generalisations inherent in the approach, then deployed this checklist back to OECD democracies commonly viewed as established and mature and found many weaknesses: elections, while being mostly general and free in OECD countries, fail frequently to be fair and equal – often as a consequence of electoral systems distorting the will of the voter. Channelling

corporate and organised interests is not a problem *per se* in today's OECD world, with many lobby groups directly influencing decision-making. However, there is the danger of an asymmetry occurring due to the different resources of such groups, resulting in the dominance of the capital side, which can severely restrict democratic standards; in such cases, future generations and low-income populations often remain underrepresented in the political process. With regard to the role of parties in parliamentary legislation, Merkel emphasised an observable shift in favour of the executive's role in legislation. The formation of government may have become more difficult in some OECD countries due to an increasing pluralisation and fragmentation of party systems, but the empirical evidence shows that since the 1980s the average duration of a government has not declined. Finally, Merkel noted the growing difficulty faced by elected party representatives in their ability to shape policies given the increasing influence of markets that are becoming evermore deregulated. Altogether, the trend is towards a decline in democracy in the OECD world – not a dramatic one, but visible nonetheless. Merkel discussed suggestions to counter this trend, including an increased number of popular votes, more deliberative mini-publics, greater civil-society and digital participation, and more cosmopolitanism, but remained wary of their effects.

The aforementioned contributions and the subsequent discussions held (which cannot be taken up in this conference report) highlighted the many connections between the topics across the three blocks. Neopatrimonialism represented either a context condition or a practice within and across political regimes, and the crucial role of political parties for both competition and elite formation was named as one of many important ingredients of democracy. The symposium testified to the outstanding contribution by Gero Erdmann to academic debates within and between Comparative Politics and African Studies by addressing central issues for Africa and at the same time transcending this regional focus in order to find more general explanations.

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Konferenzbericht:
Neopatrimonialismus, Demokratie und Parteienforschung:
Die deutsche und internationale Debatte
Zum Gedenken an Gero Erdmann (1952–2014)

Zusammenfassung: Die Autoren des Berichts fassen die Vorträge eines Symposiums zusammen, das am 8. Juni 2015 im Gedenken an Persönlichkeit und wissenschaftliche Leistungen Gero Erdmanns in Hamburg abgehalten wurde. In der wissenschaftlichen Literatur zu Neopatrimonialismus, Parteien und Parteiensystemen in Afrika, aber auch zu Demokratisierung und Demokratieförderung hat Gero Erdmann tiefe Spuren hinterlassen. Kollegen und frühere Mitarbeiter Erdmanns griffen wesentliche Schwerpunkte und Ergebnisse seiner Forschungen auf und analysierten sie im Lichte aktueller wissenschaftlicher Veröffentlichungen.

Schlagwörter: Deutschland, Politische Wissenschaft, Politische Theorie, Afrikanistik/Afrikaforschung

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Review Article

A Backward Look into South Africa's Future

Ivor Sarakinsky

Richard W. Johnson (2015), *How Long Will South Africa Survive? The Looming Crisis*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, ISBN 978186 8426348, 266 pp.

Keywords: South Africa, research, research methods, development perspectives and tendencies

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Johnson begins his narrative by outlining the claims he made in an earlier text, published in 1977 and entitled *How Long Will South Africa Survive?*, where he analysed and predicted the collapse of Apartheid. His latest effort echoes the earlier work's title and its type of analysis, along with focusing likewise on the collapse of the government of South Africa. This time, though, it is the rule of the African National Congress (ANC) that finds itself at the centre of Johnson's critique. After outlining his earlier argument, Johnson claims credit for predicting the time frame for the collapse of the National Party (NP) government and the ending of Apartheid. This claim is important because it serves to reinforce his later arguments predicting the collapse of South Africa under ANC rule. Johnson implies that he got it right before and, on the basis of that prediction, he ought to be believed that his next prediction will also be proven right. At one level, this is a spurious type of inductive argument. At another level, his analysis of the NP and the decision to end Apartheid is so wrong that it cannot form the foundation for any speculation about South Africa's future. It was not simply the fiscal crisis of the NP government that enabled the United States of America and the United

Kingdom to squeeze President De Klerk into making his momentous speech in Parliament on 2 February 1990. This one-dimensional account presents structural parameters, essentially the economy, as the causal variable. However, more sophisticated analysis examines conjunctural, situation-specific factors as the key explanatory variables (see, for example, Waldmeir 1997, De Klerk 1991).

In this case, prior policy processes led by officials in the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning and deep within the NP government called for negotiations as early as 1988, where leadership, personalities, and advisors contributed to the policy recommendation (Cloete 1991: 43). It could even be argued that the collapse of communism in 1989 was a significantly more important causal factor than the fiscal crisis of the mid-1980s, because it provided a window of opportunity to engage the ANC and other opposition movements without them having access to Soviet resources. The NP might have taken a different path if other leaders had been in office, ones who interpreted economic, political, and diplomatic pressures differently and were advised by actors with different views. Structural analysis, as presented by Johnson, is insufficient. Instead, a proper analysis requires a careful examination of why a particular path was chosen bearing in mind that events could have taken a different course. Johnson's earlier text is flawed at the level of the micro-analysis of decision-making leading up to the demise of Apartheid. At best he is right for the wrong reasons, even though the NP realised a decade earlier than his prediction that Apartheid had to end and that negotiations with the opposition parties were necessary. But we must also remember that many analysts had been declaring the Apartheid system in crisis for 40 years prior to its actual demise (O'Meara 1996). Saying the same thing repeatedly over an extended period of time increases the chances of being right, with the proviso that a correlation between a prediction and an outcome does not necessarily prove the veracity of the analysis that informed the prediction.

Again, Johnson builds upon and updates his previous analysis of ANC rule that examined the Mandela and Mbeki administrations (Johnson 2009). However, in the bulk of his latest text, Johnson presents a one-dimensional, Armageddon-informed vision of ANC government collapse. There are numerous dimensions to this jaundiced vision, all presented in cherry-picked detail. The first chapter, "Then and Now," summarises Johnson's earlier text (1977: 287–327) on the predicted collapse of Apartheid, which provided an analysis of the combination of political and economic pressures on the Apartheid government. The second chapter, titled "Kwa-Zulu Natal, the World of Jacob Zuma," sets

out the context for the rise of powerful networks in the ANC that, for Johnson, in some way constitute Zuma's powerbase. This chapter presents Ethekwini Municipality as a worse incarnation of the infamous Tammany Hall in New York where the Irish ran the city like a fiefdom. Fortunately, Ethekwini Municipality is not as bad as Johnson makes it out to be. Nonetheless, unlike New York, there is no hope according to Johnson of ever cleaning up Ethekwini, as it is controlled by the ANC. Chapter 3, "The ANC Under Zuma," discusses how Zuma consolidated his power in the ANC after the Polokwane defeat of Thabo Mbeki. The following chapter, "Mangaung and After," describes the dynamics of Zuma's victory over Kgalema Motlanthe in the contest for ANC president. This is the most disturbing part of the text: it demonstrates Johnson's racism and crude tribal understanding of South African society and politics. Johnson (2015: 86) fails to explain why Xhosa ANC branches in the Eastern Cape voted 392 to 211 in favour of the Zulu Zuma rather than the Sotho Motlanthe. But this empirical demonstration of the complexity of interests, identity, and political affiliation does not faze Johnson. Instead of reflecting upon this important and hard fact in some detail as a counter-example to his tribalist world view, he superficially brushes it aside. A methodological opportunity to test and evaluate his assertions is, unfortunately, lost.

All of this is followed by a chapter entitled "The New Class Structure," where Johnson discusses the lowering of educational standards at schools and universities, coupled with the undeserved appointment of Blacks, as the means to middle-class consumerism. Associating the Black middle class with theft and the growth of the public sector, he argues that this class has expanded as a consumer rather than a producer of value. Chapter 6, "Culture Wars," repeats some of the themes set out in the previous chapter and discusses how the media and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) disseminate information to the South African public. The ANC has infiltrated the media to prevent criticism, according to Johnson, who mentions Iqbal Surve's acquisition of the Independent Group as a case in point. It is in this chapter that Johnson attempts to camouflage his racism by stating, as a question, "Blacks Can't Govern?" With all that has gone before and with what comes after, it is a transparently rhetorical question.

The following chapter, "The State's Repression of Economic Activity," attempts to explain economic decline solely as the outcome of misguided policies in the mining, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors. This is coupled to the inflexibility of the labour market brought about by trade-union influence in the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance. Johnson ech-

oes the *Business Day* editor in blaming most of these ills on two ministers, Rob Davis and Ebrahim Patel. The irony of the latter being the political head of the Competition Commission and Tribunal is lost on Johnson. But it is also possible that Johnson does not even know of this fact. Moreover, Johnson fails to analyse South African economic performance in relation to the European Union, the country's largest trading partner: when the European economy is strong, exports from South Africa rise. As Europe is still recovering from the 2008 recession and with the uncertainty caused by Greece's default on loans, the instability there is a factor that affects South Africa's performance. Despite this, Johnson's attack on Minister Davis and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has to be questioned in light of the ZAR 5 billion trade surplus recently recorded by the export of motor vehicles. This was achieved through the incentive scheme managed by the Department of Trade and Industry and the recovery of the vehicle manufacturing sector following intense strike activity.

The next chapter, "The View of the IMF," is an important part of Johnson's scenario of ANC government collapse. Despite the politics of the Tripartite Alliance being anti-American and anti-British, the ANC may have to go to the IMF for loans to bail it out of its balance of payments and tax-collection challenges. Of course, these challenges are all caused by incompetence, looting, and corruption. The thesis is that the crunch is coming and the IMF and its loan conditionalities will mark the end of the ANC government in its current form. In order to receive bailout loans, like in Greece, South Africa would have to agree to curtail state spending and reconsider its approach to fiscal policy. Johnson, however, forgets that the ANC agreed to pay off the debt incurred by the NP after it came to power in 1994 with little turbulence in the Tripartite Alliance. Johnson presents scenarios on the political implications of this thesis in the last chapter. Nonetheless, the discussion of the fiscal challenges facing South Africa is on the superficial side. Instead of relying on speculation around rating agencies and their grading decisions, Johnson ought to have accessed the primary data from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and the Reserve Bank to see whether his view is informed by fact. South Africa is a million miles away from a Greece default scenario, and the rating agencies have noted this with no further downgrades proposed. South Africa's tax base is squeezed sufficiently to allay fears of a major default in payments, and the real pressure is for cutbacks in state spending, especially given the size of the public service. The recent less-than-expected wage increase for public servants is an important sign that the ANC government is fully aware of the fiscal

challenges facing the country and is moving to address them. In terms of more efficient state procurement, Johnson has nothing to say about the establishment of a chief procurement officer in the National Treasury, which is already having a positive impact in limiting the abuse of tender processes.

The last two chapters are particularly weak. The "BRICS Alternative" is a rambling account of the gold price and international gold trade. The relevant point about South Africa pursuing bailout loans from BRICS, rather than the IMF, could have been made in two or three pages. But Johnson fails to discuss South Africa pursuing BRICS membership as a foreign policy objective of fostering markets outside of the EU. Diversifying South Africa's trade base is prudent, yet Johnson has little to say about this and its long-term possible benefits. Thus, when the EU is weak, exports might be achieved through trade with another bloc with combined higher growth rates than the EU. The final chapter and conclusion, "The Impossibility of Autarchy," is poorly edited and appears hastily written. It presents two scenarios: The first is the ANC accepting an IMF bailout to cover its poor governance and profligacy, with the ANC forming governing alliances with other parties that have made inroads into the ANC's electoral base. The second is the majority of the ANC rejecting a bailout from the IMF, leading to the ANC's adoption of more radical policy options in order to hold on to power. To Johnson's credit, he does explicitly reject the possibility of a Zimbabwe/Mugabe-type option in South Africa. However, the possibility that the ANC might be dealing with the country's important fiscal challenges is not even considered by Johnson. Neither does Johnson even attempt to present a post-Zuma scenario for the ANC when Zuma exits at the end of his two terms as ANC and South African president. For Johnson to state (2015: 89) that Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa will not succeed Zuma because he is a Venda in ethnic origin is particularly unconvincing. There is nothing certain about Ramaphosa or any of the other contenders taking over the leadership of the ANC in 2017, but tribal origin is certainly not going to be the determining factor.

In all of the chapters in Johnson's text, serious and important issues are raised, but hyperbole and partiality hinder their credibility and analytical status. Instead of colonialist tribalism, the real issues of leadership in the ANC require careful analysis. Leadership is about vision, for a country and its constituent parts. Mbeki and Zuma could never match Madiba in this regard, but there is currently in South Africa an aspirational deficit, and invoking the National Development Plan (NDP) does not fill this gap. Leaders inspire confidence through deeds and words, and there is a marked difference between current and past ANC leaders.

While the Tripartite Alliance between the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is in disarray, an important space has opened up for the ANC, as the elected party in government, to pursue its mandate more decisively. This positive development corresponds with the weakening of COSATU due to factional battles and expulsions. This is a double-edged sword: the balance of power is moving towards management after 20 years of being in favour of labour. However, this might lead to more radical and exaggerated actions of unions as they try to lever concessions. Nonetheless, the opportunity exists for skilful labour-relations practitioners to find solutions to these challenges. The public sector unions accepting a much lower increase than demanded is a case in point.

The increased size of the executive is another serious matter that requires attention. The proliferation of ministries is unsustainable in terms of cost and administrative effectiveness. However, Johnson has nothing to say about this beyond the misleading epithet of the "criminalisation of the state." So, while Johnson identifies some of the challenges facing contemporary South African governance, his account of them is flawed. Beyond corruption and bureaucratic effectiveness, an expanded executive increases the coordination challenges of government. More and more departments are created to pursue narrow objectives. However, and paradoxically, these objectives cannot be realised without the concomitant cooperation of other departments mandated to deal with issues related to these main areas of action (Dormady 2012: 749). Indeed, the NDP frequently discusses the need for interdepartmental coordination without considering how complex and fraught such coordination actually is. This coordination complexity is part of an explanation of government ineffectiveness that is ignored by Johnson. Moreover, it is a challenge facing many developed countries as well as one carefully analysed by the Canadian school of public governance (Pacquet and Wilson 2011).

It is curious why a book such as this is able to attract so much credibility in such a short time. The title is certainly provocative, but it is the book's content that has to be the explanation. Like a modern-day Nostradamus, Johnson attracts believers by spinning out a narrative of doom. But it is not enough to say that readers are like newspaper consumers, who are (according to editors) attracted to bad news. There has to be something more to this mystery. Perhaps it is this: an author, with good academic credentials, articulates a narrative of current affairs in South Africa that shares the same prejudices and anxieties with a particular group of South Africans. Instead of a rational, evidence-based rela-

tionship between author and reader, we have a deep psychological process of interpellation (Althusser 1971: 170–177), where the reader's prejudices are reinforced by an author under the influence of the same prejudices. Both think they are rational in their interpretation and telling of the narrative. Yet, what binds them together is a double hermeneutic (Giddens 2007: 284) of ideology. Johnson's text is perhaps one of the most ideological texts yet written on the current South African condition.

This goes some way to explaining how such a flawed and erroneous narrative can capture an audience of normally rational decision makers. If we say that a president of country X was elected with 99.9 per cent of the votes, this, intuitively, provokes scepticism as to the veracity of the result. Questions, rightly, will be asked about voter registration, election management, and vote-counting. In fact, Johnson (2015: 87) uses this technique of argument to cast doubt on Zuma winning outright every one of the 857 KZN branch votes, stating that this is unlikely and impossible. In the same vein, Johnson's narrative is 99.9 per cent negative about South Africa's prospects under ANC rule, yet there is no scepticism amongst readers, many of whom take this point of view as gospel. Mutually reinforcing prejudice has dulled the critical analysis of what is happening in South Africa. Be that as it may, this same monologue of disillusionment and negativity is also methodologically flawed.

The sources for the narrative are predominantly culled from newspapers and occasional discussions with unnamed respondents. Even the IMF report on South Africa is informed by newspaper articles on related themes. Newspapers are not reliable sources for telling a tale of such import. This is especially the case when the bulk of the newspaper sources cited are those covering the financial sector. So, the double hermeneutic becomes a little less virtuous – newspapers shape perceptions with editorials and content selection, which shape the perceptions of businesspeople readers, who get the same, rehashed story presented to them in this book. Where are the interviews conducted with actors at all levels of government, elected and appointed officials? Nowhere to be found! Who needs to do interviews when one can quote newspapers and conduct comfortable desktop research? Where are the discussion documents emanating from key policymaking fora in government, and where is the analysis of the decision makers to provide evidence for the claims about communist "capture" and "gatekeeping" the author makes throughout the text? Johnson provides no such references. The reason for this omission is that this is an outsider's opinion of a government, and Johnson does not feel it necessary to gather first-hand information about govern-

mental processes. As an outsider, Johnson presents a one-dimensional dialectic of negativity where the race to the bottom is nearly over.

While there is no shortage of negative news emanating from South Africa's public governance system, it cannot be absolutely all negative. At another methodological level, there is no attempt by Johnson to test any of his assertions by presenting them as hypotheses while attempting to falsify them with counter-factual information (Popper 1980: 149). In other words, the information presented is cherry-picked to verify an Armageddon prejudice, and there is no critical engagement with such information, which is a *sine qua non* of conventional academic practice. Notable oversights in Johnson's narrative that deserve careful analysis include the findings of the Competition Commission against private-sector actors for collusion and price-fixing in the bread, cement, and construction sectors. Overcharging government for infrastructure, including World Cup stadia, is not a serious matter, seemingly, for Johnson. Perhaps he does not approve of a competitive market economy for South Africa? Similarly, there is no discussion of tax avoidance by some private-sector actors through the practice of profit-shifting, which is an area under investigation by the Davis Committee examining South Africa's taxation system. So, the private sector can do no wrong and the ANC government can do no right. Johnson's either/or, manichean universe cannot be a true reflection of reality.

While Johnson bemoans the decline of education in South Africa, he does not mention the Square Kilometer Array radio telescope project that Australia lost to South Africa through a competitive international process. Not only have there already been massive positive impacts on education emanating from this long-term scientific endeavour, immense economic opportunities have likewise begun to materialise. No mention of this is made in Johnson's text, as it does not fit the narrative of decline and Blacks being unable to govern. Another good story, completely overlooked by Johnson, is the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement process designed by National Treasury and the Department of Energy. Significant foreign investment has flowed in through the 79 approved projects, amounting to ZAR 193 billion (Joemat-Pettersson 2015). The savings and value added to the economy through this form of electricity generation is currently estimated at around ZAR 800 million and will increase over the next 20 years (Bischof-Niemz 2015). This positive development, with long-term prospects, gets not a single mention. Of course not! How can one say anything good about the government when it is repeatedly stated that Blacks cannot govern, not only in South Africa, but on the whole African continent? Yet it is worse than that,

because in Johnson's view South Africa is, as an ineluctable law of nature, following the rest of Africa, lemming-like, into social, economic, and political oblivion.

This prejudice and racism is easily challenged, but there is no mention of the poor fiscal management and decline of European countries such as Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain. Greece's current crisis is much more serious than South Africa's, yet Johnson does not pen a word about European countries being possibly governed worse than Black African ones. In this regard, it is disturbing that Johnson has not engaged with the governance indicators developed by both the World Bank and the Ibrahim Foundation. The former measures world governance while the latter focuses on African countries. These annual assessments have created a valuable governance database going back a decade. While there are numerous challenges in measuring governance, these assessments show that in many African countries, governance has improved over time and, in some cases, the improvement is significant. They also show decline and stasis in other countries. The African governance picture is complex, but this evidence should not get in the way of a jaundiced narrative. Painting Africa with a single pessimistic brushstroke without reflecting on the existing data is not just shoddy research – it also suggests prejudice. But then again, these evidence-based and respected governance measures and country ratings must be precluded from entering Johnson's narrative because they do not fit into as much as challenge his perception of Africa and Africans.

It will serve no purpose to question and evaluate all of the errors and assertions made in this narrative, which is an archetypal Afro-pessimist polemic. However, there is one claim that deserves a retort. Johnson (2015: 89) refers to "over-determined" as a Marxist concept. In his zeal to paint everything bad about South Africa as the fault of Blacks and leftists, Johnson forgets that "over-determination" is a psychoanalytic concept developed by Sigmund Freud in his analysis of dreams (Freud 1983: 618). Freud showed how a dream, or symptom, is the product of multiple causal variables and processes, but never of a single, isolated one. While "over-determination" was brought into Marxist discourse by Althusser and his collaborators (Althusser and Balibar 1983: 106), Johnson ought to take heed of its principle of multi-dimensionality in describing and analysing social, economic, and political phenomena. Johnson's South African and African nightmare may well be over-determined (in a Freudian sense).

The overall point that Johnson wants to make is that the current South African condition is irredeemable and there is no one in the ANC

that can do anything to correct mistakes and revise policies. Johnson's economic determinism would make Karl Marx proud, but it is at the expense of analysing the specificity of political dynamics. Thus, the text comes full circle and repeats a mode of argument made in Johnson's earlier writings summarised in the foundational first chapter. As noted above, Johnson got the prediction and mechanism wrong for the ending of Apartheid. There is no reason to believe that he has credible predictive powers to see into South Africa's immediate and medium-term future. Moreover, the selective and one-dimensional nature of the data and information used certainly compromises his prophesied forthcoming fiscal crisis that will force a shift away from the ANC. The complexity of South African politics and governance means that there is no simplistic approach to scenario-making and soothsaying. Instead, trend identification and forecasting where South Africa is really heading lies in the detailed micro-dynamic analysis of the state, the ANC, the government, the electoral system, and the Constitution, in addition to the rule of law. Only then will it be possible to make informed predictions. But to do this requires conducting hard research, levering a network of respondents, carefully evaluating data and information, and then presenting a considered and deliberative account. This is something that an outsider, especially an armchair outsider, is unable and unwilling to do. For this and all the other reasons noted above, Johnson's text is nothing more than a polemic – and a poor one at that. The ANC has been around for over a century, and in that time it may have developed the capacity to reinvent itself in response to serious political and economic crises. Rumours of its death may once again prove, with apologies to Mark Twain, "greatly exaggerated."

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Book Reviews

Mohamed Adhikari (ed.) (2014), *Genocide on Settler Frontiers: When Hunter-Gatherers and Commercial Stock Farmers Clash*, Cape Town: UCT Press, ISBN 9781919895680, 356 pp. (also London: Berghahn 2015).

This volume is a carefully crafted project, not one born out of a conference or a panel, after which the presentations were compiled rather opportunistically, if not altogether sloppily. Its conceptualisation was triggered by the insight of its editor that his own findings could not be automatically generalised beyond the case study. Based on his research into the extermination of Cape San (also called Bushmen), Adhikari originally adhered to the hypothesis that stock farmers' invasion of the land originally utilised by hunter-gatherer communities would invariably result in forms of genocide. But the case of Ghanzi in Bechuanaland made him aware of a variety of specific cases that were anything but uniform and, hence, challenged an all-too-convenient conclusion. Motivated by this insight, he decided to initiate a comparison of settler-colonial impacts on foragers that had not yet been undertaken with such a nuanced depth. To obtain the much more differentiated result he desired, he started "to cold canvass academics across the globe working on related issues" (ix). This mission was accomplished successfully and convincingly with the collection of case studies presented in this volume.

They offer a wide range of lessons, mainly from early colonial encounters between settlers and indigenous hunter-gatherer communities. Case studies present local examples from Southern Africa (Cape Colony, North Eastern Cape, Transorangia, South West Africa, and Ghanzi in Bechuanaland), a comparison between the Cape and Australia, and further case studies from Western Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, the American plains frontier, and the Canadian prairies. All authors are highly competent scholars with long-standing track records in their particular fields. The compilation's greatest merit is therefore not in the individual cases explored (often presented by the same authors elsewhere in much more detail) but in the specific blend of cases covered and the volume's guiding question, which sought to describe "how destructive settler colonialism had been of indigenous peoples, especially hunter-gatherers" (ix).

The ten chapters presenting the mentioned case studies are complemented by a concise introduction and a concluding summary, both of which manage to capture the diversity of the investigations into similar

processes with at times rather different forms of local interactions and consequences. Adhikari captures the essence of the findings by suggesting that settler colonialism is not "inherently genocidal towards hunter-gatherer peoples, but that in cases where commercial stock farmers invaded the lands of foraging societies it was generally so" (29). Upon closer examination, the nature of the local pastoral economy and, in particular, its degree of external links were decisive factors for the types of interactions that took place. In the end, therefore, it was mainly specific economic motives and interests that eventually triggered extermination strategies. As most cases were able to document, "the extent of access to capitalist markets and the operation of a profit motive" were "the key drivers of mass violence" (29).

Lorenzo Veracini reinforces this insight in his chapter, further exploring the conflicts between hunter-gatherers and commercial pastoralists (in the main: European settlers) with reference to the case studies presented. Most inspiring is his additional notion that the pastoral settlers in most cases, due to the nature of their expansion and their background as migrants from European societies, were themselves "possessive nomads". As he emphasises, "pastoral settlers were nomads, even if of particular kind" (302). Their negative view of foragers (as having less human value – if they could be considered humans at all) served as a kind of legitimising ideology for extermination practices, but actually documented the double standards and selective perception of the invaders. After all, "settlers were indeed a tribe of possessive nomads. They were often enforced nomads, too, as it was the enclosures at home that threw them off the land and forced them into exile" (303). Hunter-gatherers at the same time and in a variety of different locations contributed to a similar process of self-identification and constitution of the invaders as a community with a global settler identity. In the process of occupation and invasion, the indigenous foragers "were *turned* into 'nomads' and became even more vulnerable to extermination. They were nomadified" (304; emphasis in original).

That such insights are also highly political in current settings is explicitly captured by Veracini's observation that not only settler-colonial transfers replicate such interactions. It is also applicable to the ongoing Israel/Palestine conflict, as "settler colonialism routinely needs to perceive, represent and indeed produce indigenous non-fixity in order to project its own permanence" (304).

This volume adds value not only to our knowledge of (often, but by no means always) genocidal practices in encounters between early settler colonialism and local hunter-gatherer communities. It also offers striking

new aspects in the analysis of the settler communities and their motives. The comparison from global perspectives thereby allows lessons to be drawn that are not necessarily as obvious as they would have been had the studies been confined to a specific region. Further studies on settler colonialism and local interaction – as well as the studies on forms and practices of genocide – will greatly benefit from the insights presented in this publication.

- Henning Melber

Klaas van Walraven (2013), *The Yearning for Relief: A History of the Sawaba Movement in Niger*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, ISBN 9789 004245747, xxviii+968 pp.

Klaas van Walraven's *The Yearning for Relief* is a groundbreaking and deeply engaging historical study of Sawaba in Niger. Sawaba, a leftist political party most active during the 1950s and 1960s, is one of the most intriguing political organisations in Niger's modern political history. This book is the first in-depth scholarly study of Sawaba, which has long been overlooked in historical work on anti-colonial struggles and nationalist movements in West Africa. As van Walraven notes, Sawaba has been largely absent from official historical narratives for political reasons. *The Yearning for Relief* is thus an invaluable contribution to the historiography of Niger and the surrounding region, and to a potential public recognition in Niger of the historical significance of Sawaba.

Van Walraven traces the vagaries of Sawaba from its emergence as one of the most dynamic political forces in Niger in the 1950s, through its fall from power and the subsequent persecution that forced the party to go underground and many of its members to go into exile, to the ill-fated attempt to overthrow the regime through an armed insurgency. One of van Walraven's central postulates is that Sawaba is best understood as a modern social movement. Its members, many representing "*le petit peuple*" (people of modest means), were driven by ideological conviction and, as alluded to in the poetic title of the book, by the yearning for relief: a desire for social change. In writing about Sawaba, van Walraven sets out to write a people's history, or, a history from below that places the daily life, motivations, and destinies of "ordinary people" at the centre. The book plunges the reader into the heady days of decolonisation and political struggles. Through the careful and empirically grounded documentation of the Sawaba movement during this tumultuous period, the book sheds new light on a particularly eventful period in Nigerien history and provides important insights into the gradual formation of the postcolonial state in Niger.

The book is divided into three parts (comprising 14 chapters and an epilogue). The first part of the book traces the emergence of Sawaba within the landscape of early Nigerien party politics. Initially, Sawaba built up support mainly among the urban lower classes and through links to trade unions. However, under the leadership of the charismatic Djibo Bakary and through "an uncompromising message" (70) denouncing exploitation at the hands of the colonial power and the social and political elite, Sawaba managed to mobilise the population in both rural and ur-

ban areas, becoming the first political party in Niger to gain "genuine mass support" (70). Djibo Bakary went on to become prime minister, forming Niger's first autonomous government (although under French suzerainty). The first part of the book ends with a captivating account of the 1958 constitutional referendum on the French Fifth Republic. For the colonies, the referendum boiled down to a choice between inclusion into the French Community (a "yes" vote) or immediate independence (a "no" vote). Bakary and Sawaba took a stand for immediate independence and, for a while, Niger looked set to join Guinea in a "no" vote. However, given the high stakes (Niger's geographical position and newfound uranium deposits), the French intervened to block Bakary and to influence the election in their favour. Van Walraven meticulously documents the heavy-handed intervention of the French (e.g. its military presence, control over the voting process, and manipulation of the results) that facilitated a win for the "yes" side. Van Walraven even goes so far as to argue that the manipulation of the referendum together with the dismantling of Bakary's government was the first modern coup d'état in Africa. Part one ends with the defeat of Bakary and Sawaba in the aftermath of the 1958 referendum as a new government supported by the French came into power.

Sawaba, despite its fall from power, was seen as a dangerous and potentially disruptive force. Part two chronicles the oppression and surveillance (e.g. arrests, detention, hindering of freedom of movement, house searches) that forced Sawaba to go underground and prominent members, among them Bakary himself, to go into exile. At independence in 1960, the party was outlawed. However, the movement lived on clandestinely in Niger and through the activities of party members who had gone into exile in neighbouring countries and who worked to create and maintain political alliances in the region. This part of the book also provides a fascinating account of Sawaba's drive to educate and train cadres. Sawaba's alignment with communist parties opened up educational opportunities for its members in the Eastern Bloc. Hundreds of cadres were enrolled in vocational and/or academic higher-education programmes in East Germany and the Soviet Union, easily rivalling the number of scholarships that the Nigerien government in power provided for studies abroad. Cadres were also signed up for military training in China, North Vietnam, Algeria, and Ghana. Van Walraven thus shows how Sawaba as a social and political movement managed to create links that reached across the globe.

The third part of the book provides a detailed account of the ill-fated Sawaba rebellion in 1964. With all other paths of return to Niger closed

off, Sawaba set out to topple the government through an armed insurgency. Previous accounts have dismissed the attempted insurgency as amateurish, ill conceived, and ill prepared. However, van Walraven argues that the insurgency was meticulously planned and that Sawaba's members were right in thinking that the regime was vulnerable in the face of growing popular discontent. In the end, the outcome of the insurgency was disastrous for Sawaba. Sawaba had hoped that the incursion would widen into a "popular insurrection"; however, the commandos were stopped dead in their tracks by villagers and by the army. According to van Walraven, Sawaba had failed to take into account people's fear of the government. Following the failed rebellion, thousands of Sawaba cadres were arrested in an "uncompromising" manhunt (795) and key cadres were subjected to torture and mistreatment in prison, leading to the final demise of Sawaba as a "social movement and as a political force" (771).

The Yearning for Relief is a meticulously researched book. The author draws on an impressive variety of different sources. However, it is the 100 interviews within the Sawaba community that make the book unique. The testimonies and life histories of the Sawabists give life to the story of the movement and to an important part of Niger's modern political history. By focusing on grass-roots forces that animated the Sawaba movement, van Walraven adopts a social-history approach that focuses on "ordinary people" as the drivers, participants, and witnesses of historical events. *The Yearning for Relief* is a clear illustration of the value of such an approach in opening up a more diverse and multifaceted understanding of historical events.

The book is also the result of van Walraven's personal engagement with the Sawaba community, and he clearly states that one of the main aims of the book is to restore the Sawaba movement. This is thus an impassioned, but balanced account that challenges established narratives through triangulation and a critical reading of key sources. Moreover, van Walraven's interest in and sensitivity to the meaning of "the struggle" for individual Sawaba members, giving voice to personal experiences, triumphs, disappointments, and tragedies, makes *The Yearning for Relief* a captivating and rewarding read. However, while I am fully sympathetic to his enterprise given the rich material and novel perspectives, a more direct conversation with work on African history and politics would have made the book even more accessible and obviously relevant to a broader audience. The book certainly deserves a wide readership.

▪ Gabriella Körling

Franklin Obeng-Odoom (2014), *Oiling the Urban Economy: Land, Labour, Capital, and the State in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana*, New York: Routledge, ISBN 9780415744096, 252 pp.

Franklin Obeng-Odoom's *Oiling the Urban Economy* is essentially an account of Sekondi-Takoradi, a city that has recently entered the spotlight with the discovery of commercial oil in Ghana. The book makes a compelling case for interrogating the synergies linking the extraction and utilisation of resources with the trajectories of urbanisation, which are often treated as distinct processes by the mainstream literature. The author's status as an "outsider within" and his impressive record of publication mean he is well equipped to accomplish this task.

The central theme of the book is that Sekondi-Takoradi is undergoing significant oil-induced transformation with ramifications for land, labour, capital, and the state. The author eloquently underlines the lopsided nature of this transformation as largely neglecting "indigenes" and favouring members of certain other social categories: expatriates, landowners and landlords, men, chiefs, and "wealthy strangers" from other cities in Ghana. Though relying on a rather antiquated literature, the author employs an array of data sources drawn from in-depth interviews, documentary sources, and unobtrusive observation to support his arguments.

The book's analytical gaze, as outlined in Chapter 2, is premised on a "heterodox property rights approach," which is informed by Henry George's "common property for common purposes," David Harvey's "accumulation by dispossession," and various postulations of the "rentier state," as presented by Hossein Mahdavy and Chibuzo Nwoke. Apart from exploring the effects of oil, the author employs these "critical" perspectives to highlight intervening factors like the historical, institutional, and global context. Scholars who have been yearning for a book that approaches Ghana's oil industry from the standpoint of serious intellectual scrutiny will be pleased with Obeng-Odoom's attempt to historicise, contextualise, and problematise it within the purview of critical political economy. Nonetheless, this prospect is dimmed by the fact that he overstretches these analytical instruments into less structural narratives and experiences, which constitute the bedrock of his original contribution.

The empirical insights begin from Chapter 3 with a general overview of Ghana's oil industry, highlighting the evolving institutional structures and how they remain enmeshed in contentious national politics. The chapter also engages with ongoing debates about whether Ghana's oil is susceptible to the so-called "resource curse," shorthand for poor developmental outcomes from resource endowment. The author urges us to

think beyond the binary of "resource curse" vs. "resource blessing," but his conclusion is generic to the mainstream presentations that have dispelled fears about a "resource curse" in Ghana. Specifically, he argues that "there is no evidence of total neglect of human and social rights, oppression, and systematic and widespread corruption at this stage" (63). This position beggars belief not least in terms of his own assertion about the lopsided developmental processes in Sekondi-Takoradi, but, more seriously, when paired with other analyses that have noted critical areas of institutional fragility, policy exclusion, and a poor anti-corruption environment amid Ghana's impressive democratic performance (e.g. an assessment by USAID-Ghana of democracy and governance in 2011).

Between Chapters 4 and 6, the book traces the centrality of Sekondi-Takoradi within various patterns of global and domestic economic exchange and politics, which stems from its ports, resources, and lively political environment. However, the author argues that over time the city was shunted to the margins as a result of elite manipulation and market-led reforms. Subsequently, the oil industry has rekindled interest in the city with increasing activities in sectors like services, employment, transportation, and real estate development. Here, Obeng-Odoom identifies various groups, specifically the landless class, "indigenes," women, and others whose livelihoods are tied to aquaculture and agriculture, among the overwhelming majority of marginalised actors from the oil-induced transformation in Sekondi-Takoradi. His caution not to attribute every change in Sekondi-Takoradi to oil strengthens the linkages that he draws here. However, his use of "indigenes" and "non-indigenes" is generally arbitrary, especially given the book's portrait of the dynamic and fluid demography of Sekondi-Takoradi.

The remainder of the book is devoted to a diagnosis of various policy options that could address different revenue shortfalls from the oil industry. It is at this stage that the author's analytical gaze, especially in terms of property taxation, begins to unravel. This flow is, sadly, curtailed in Chapter 9, when he attempts to recommend ways to "socialise" oil revenues with an explicit preference for investment in education and railway transportation. Apart from the analysis on taxation and transportation, where there is a serious attempt to link theory with data, the presentation of these policy options are generally haphazard. In the case of education, for example, he touches on a contentious national debate over free secondary education, which dominated the 2012 elections. Unfortunately, his dismissal of criticisms about its feasibility requires a more rigorous verification, as he largely relies on analysis offered by the opposition New Patriotic Party (168–169).

Some of the gaps in Obeng-Odoom's heterodox approach deserve special mention. Notably, while stressing the strengths of Harvey, especially in emphasising how "processes of accumulation are dispossessing others in oil cities" (38), there are significant shortcomings. A case in point, outlined in the book, relates to commercial sex workers, who are continually exploring ways to cash in on the oil industry, amid various structural barriers. Many studies of urban informalities, including those compiled by Mathews, Ribeiro, and Vega's *Globalization from Below*, suggest that Harvey's constraining barriers may be exaggerated. Another problematic area relates to Mahdavy and Nwoke's "rentier state." Perhaps, in his haste to dismiss the "resource curse" literature, whose diversity in terms of approaches and analyses makes any single account untenable, Obeng-Odoom is uncharacteristically incoherent about the aspects his preferred approach seeks to address. A deeper appreciation of this literature would have revealed that Ghana's oil output, which was recorded in 2011 at 1.2 per cent of GDP, is far from what Mahdavy and Nwoke anticipated. This is a grave oversight, given that the threshold by which established political economists, such as Terry Lynn Karl, associate oil with specific economic and political outcomes is usually set at 10 per cent of GDP and 40 per cent of total merchandise exports.

Ultimately, those interested in the intersection of natural resources, urbanisation, and development, especially in Ghana, will find *Oiling the Economy* captivating. My own impression is that Obeng-Odoom succeeds in amplifying marginalised voices in Sekondi-Takoradi, which have been eclipsed by Ghana's fast-growing oil industry. For all its merits, I remain less convinced about its theoretical contributions.

▪ Nelson Oppong

Jenny Kuhlmann (2013), *Transnational Diaspora Politics: Cross-Border Political Activities of Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, ISBN 9783865837417, 412 pp.

Depending on what sources you consult, it is estimated that the number of Zimbabweans in the diaspora is anywhere between two to four million people. Whatever the actual figure, the growing importance and impact of the diaspora has become increasingly apparent. A recent Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe report stated that approximately USD 1.2 billion was injected into the economy from the diaspora, amounting to nearly 40 per cent of the country's budget. This figure is almost on par with the mining sector's contribution, which, at USD 1.9 billion in 2014, represents the largest share of the national GDP. Additionally, in an attempt to cash in further on the high number of professionals and university graduates still leaving the country, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science, and Technology announced in June 2015 that to partly address the lack of employment opportunities for university graduates it had signed agreements with several African countries on the export of graduate labour.

These developments point to both the growing economic significance of the Zimbabwean diaspora and the Zimbabwean state's desperate need to cash in on the future movement of Zimbabweans to other countries, at a time when it faces severe budgetary constraints and new political challenges from its own support base. Yet, Robert Mugabe's regime remains extremely ambivalent about the role of the Zimbabwean diaspora, particularly in terms of its political entitlement and its participation in national politics.

Jenny Kuhlmann's book provides a very detailed account of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK and the issues this diaspora raises around the politics of both the homeland and the host country. The book adds to a rich and growing literature on the displacement of Zimbabweans and on their activities in the diaspora, and it contributes to an understanding of the transnational politics of this group by clearly setting out the different contexts that shape the agency of the diaspora and its members' capacity for political participation and mobilisation.

As many scholars have argued, circular migration has long been a part of the history of Zimbabwe and other parts of Southern Africa, from the colonial period onward. During the first half of the twentieth century, labour from settler-colonial Rhodesia migrated largely to the mines of South Africa, even as migrants from other parts of Southern Africa entered the mines, farms, and industries of colonial Rhodesia.

Additionally, the high rate of white emigration throughout the settler-colonial era resulted in a fragile construction of white Rhodesian identity.

In the postcolonial period, there were three waves of increased movement into the diaspora. From 1982 to 1987, many people from the Matabeleland region left the country, mostly for South Africa, in the wake of the Gukurahundi massacres carried out in that region and in the Midlands under the Mugabe regime. This was followed by the growing emigration of professionals during the economic squeeze of the structural adjustment programme in the 1990s. However, it was during the Zimbabwe crisis, which took place over most of the decade from 2000 to 2010, that the largest movement of people out of the country took place. As Kuhlmann observes, the Zimbabwean diaspora is now "huge and growing" and has become a "global nation."

In the UK, where the number of Zimbabweans is estimated at between 200,000 and 400,000, the diaspora is a heterogeneous group composed of labour migrants, students, asylum seekers and refugees, undocumented migrants, and naturalised citizens. Moreover, as Kuhlmann explains, this group is also fractured in terms of geographical and social origin; political orientation; and racial, ethnic, class, and gender cleavages. Driven by both the politico-economic crisis and the human rights crisis, many of these Zimbabweans have been drawn into different forms of political intervention in their native country, including supporting political parties – particularly, though not solely, the opposition; campaigning against human rights abuses through demonstrations, vigils, and other forms of advocacy; and using the diaspora media to provide information and opinions on developments in the home country. In addition, the various groupings that have emerged have protested the continually contested status of Zimbabweans in the UK.

However, in attempting to make their voices heard regarding the abuses of the Zimbabwean state, these groups have also faced many challenges. There appears to be no end in sight to the crisis in Zimbabwe, and many in the diaspora have become disillusioned at the prospect that there will be no dramatic changes in the country's fortunes in the near future. This despondency has also been fed by the divisions within, and persistent unravelling of, the opposition parties, which has been made evident by the lack of accountability, the self-interest, and the tribal factionalism of those leading the Zimbabwean opposition within the UK. The Mugabe regime's continued unwillingness to engage seriously with the diaspora, coupled with the double standards of successive British governments – which, while condemning Mugabe and his government, have also made life very difficult for asylum seekers – has led many Zimba-

bweans to withdraw into a sense of private resignation. For those Zimbabweans residing abroad without official status, this has also meant living with the constant fear of exposure and deportation to a country with little capacity to absorb the large number of its citizens living abroad. Many Zimbabweans inside the country have a growing feeling that they would prefer to quietly contribute to the livelihoods of their families at home rather than become more openly involved in campaigns for national political change.

One of the major conclusions of Kuhlmann's study is that even while most in the diaspora still view themselves as Zimbabweans, with Mugabe's nationalism sometimes resonating with their experiences of racism in the UK, there is no overall sense that they will rush back to their home country any time soon. Given the length of time many have now spent in the UK and the continued political and economic challenges facing their homeland, many foresee a transnational life between "here" and "there." Perhaps the growing politics of "fortress Europe" and the electoral ascendancy of anti-immigration policies in the EU will shift this sentiment amongst some of them. However, it is more likely that as long as prospects in Zimbabwe appear bleak, its citizens in the diaspora will do what they must to stay outside of the country. Gone is the sentiment of those Zimbabweans who returned to Zimbabwe in the 1980s with an overwhelming feeling of hope and possibility after a long period of exile in the 1960s and 1970s. Kuhlmann's book is a very good contribution to this ongoing discussion, even if the reader is sometimes worn down by the density of the detail.

▪ Brian Raftopoulos

Morten Jerven (2015), *Africa: Why Economists Get It Wrong*, London: Zed Books, ISBN 9781783601325, 176 pp.

Over the last couple of years, Morten Jerven has fundamentally changed the way African economic history has come to be assessed. He has challenged the common wisdom on economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been based on long-standing assumptions, accommodated methods of data collection, and unwarranted policy implications.

And although – as he himself acknowledges – his current book is a distilled version of the work of the past five years, it goes beyond the publications that immediately come to mind – for example, *Poor Numbers* or *A Clash of Disciplines? Economists and Historians Approaching the African Past*.[1] The value added lies in Jerven's ability to assemble his former individual findings into a coherent narrative. The book tackles how the misunderstandings surrounding economic growth in Africa are interrelated with an ill-guided search for the historical roots of this growth, a search that has made only meagre attempts to explain empirically observed ups and downs and has utilized constructed statistics. The book's simple message, which is stated at the beginning and can be understood by any interested reader, is that we need to reshape the central research questions about African economic growth and critically engage with the history of that growth in order to understand it correctly. Indeed, Jerven uses language suitable for non-economists and economists alike.

Of the chapters, which are relatively equal in length, the first is the most elaborate. It sets the stage by reviewing the growth literature in detail and by showing the consequences of this literature's misrepresentations – for instance, when the results of the "growth regression industry" are incorrectly applied to policymaking. The focus lies on illustrating the fallacies of the "chronic failure approach," of the search for an African dummy, and of the "subtraction approach" to African experiences and realities. Jerven shows that the widespread assumption that there is an African character flaw in terms of, for instance, institutional corruption and the inefficiency of governments has turned cause-and-effect relationships around. Indeed, it is high time "to bring time and change into the equation" (44) and to recognise that the lack of theory, systematic errors in data sets, and the use of proxies have shaped growth expla-

1 *Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What to Do about It*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013; A Clash of Disciplines? Economists and Historians Approaching the African Past, in: *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 26, 2, 111–124, 2011.

Thomas Bierschenk and Eva Spies (eds) (2012), *50 Jahre Unabhängigkeit in Afrika: Kontinuitäten, Brüche, Perspektiven*, Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, ISBN 9783896458292, 572 pp.

In 1960, 17 African states gained independence; a total of 33 did so in the decade from 1955 to 1965. Five decades after that momentous year, the decolonising momentum was commemorated extensively. The 2010 biennial conference of the African Studies Association in Germany (VAD) in Mainz was also dedicated to this anniversary and to the legacy of decolonisation 50 years down the road. This conference formed the basis for the edited volume under review.

50 Jahre Unabhängigkeit in Afrika: Kontinuitäten, Brüche, Perspektiven [50 Years of Independence in Africa: Continuities, Ruptures, Prospects] contains 23 contributions by 26 different authors and is organised into five sections. All of the contributions are in German and are followed by – often extensive – bibliographies, as well as abstracts in English and in German. The introduction (Bierschenk and Spies) is a remarkable exercise in pulling together a variety of topics and crystallising the discussion around two main theses.

Contributions about urban dynamics (Hahn; Beck), religion (Langewiesche; Loimeier), kinship (Alber, Häberlein, and Martin), and education (Bierschenk) are grouped under the header "Societal Trends." National celebrations (Lentz), shifting representations of African nationalisms (Fricke), and national eating and drinking identities (Nugent) make up the section entitled "Nations and Nation-Building." Political leadership, elites, and political culture (Meyns; Behrends and Pauli; Bierschenk), women's movements and transnationalisation (Ruppert and Rompel), and development and subsistence economies (Asche; Rauch) are included in the politics and economics section. A section on media, arts, and popular culture brings together contributions on mass media (Grätz), post-independence literature (Oed), African film (Kilian), and popular music (Dorsch). A final section focuses on challenges and prospects (Schäfer; Lopes) and includes a conceptual reflection on the tension between the independent state's right to kill and the independent people's right to live (Nganang).

The wide range of topics is justified as an attempt to represent the diversity and complexity of contemporary Africa and to take stock of German African studies. Indeed, only three of the authors are not German, and one of these three received his doctorate from a German university. The volume provides few original research findings, but it does offer a genuine general introduction to different aspects of contemporary Africa, including its precedents, prospects, and plurality. The book would

thus be useful as an introductory textbook in BA programmes at German universities.

Two overarching theses are put forward by the editors and are – if not taken up as such – corroborated by many of the contributors. First, the editors claim that the years around 1960 were, in fact, not a decisive turning point for Africa. They argue that the impact of the colonial era lived on for several decades and that the early 1990s ultimately turned out to be a more important rupture. Several historians have already stated that it was the years around 1940 that made a crucial difference in instigating the decolonisation process in Africa (e.g. Frederick Cooper); others have highlighted the years around 1990 as decisive in bringing postcolonial continuity to an end (e.g. Crawford Young). Even if the argument is not entirely new, it is still useful to remind us that the weight of neither state independence nor the "Year of Africa" should be overestimated. In this sense, the fact that several contributions pay attention to transnational and global dynamics is equally noteworthy.

Second, the editors recommend looking beyond the dominance of purely economic and political parameters. Instead, they make a case for the cultural and societal potential of Africans and, in so doing, lean toward Afro-optimism. The examples of creativity are compelling. However, the connection between the social-cultural potential and the political-economic challenges remains unclear. Several contributions do make insightful links between culture and politics (political music, food identity, national festivities) or between economy and society (the liberalisation of education, of the media, and of the peasantry), but not in a way that makes a clear case for how cultural creativity could contribute to solving political or economic problems.

The volume promises so much that it cannot reasonably fulfil all of it. Its interdisciplinary ambitions are overshadowed by a preponderance of anthropologists, who, despite contributing solid insights, cannot provide the historical depth that is needed for the proclaimed evaluation of the past 50 years. Many authors do refer to the colonial era and the period of decolonisation, but most do not put the past on an equal footing with the present, which undermines statements about change and continuity. How can one substantiate the argument that African societies have become much more diverse and complex (8), if the "other" element of the comparison – that is, an equally dynamic past – is missing? Most of the individual contributions are consistent in their claims, but taken together there is a tension between the ontological and epistemic assertions. Some authors describe and analyse dynamics in African societies, others do equally valuable work on the evolution of the research and scholarly debates on

African phenomena. However, one cannot conclude that what we did not see or know about in the past did not exist. As a matter of fact, historians have uncovered the diversity and complexity of African pasts to the same extent that anthropologists are grasping the diversity and complexity of Africa today.

Nevertheless, the editors and authors do fulfil most of their promises: The volume provides a variegated impression of contemporary African societal dynamics. It juxtaposes several disciplinary vantage points, and it integrates and presents research on many parts of Africa (albeit with a predilection for West African cases). It engages in an intelligent way with the challenges and prospects Africans are facing, and several papers are particularly convincing when it comes to the analysis of the creation of ideas and imagination. In the end, this volume is a valuable contribution to the German literature on contemporary Africa.

▪ Geert Castryck

nations such that the economic policies pursued by independent African governments have been incorrectly assessed.

Thus, the growth episodes that Jerven portrays in Chapter 2 have been largely unaccounted for by economists, leading to a nearly total neglect of their transformative potential. The unique historical experiences of African economies have been sidelined in favour of engaging with country-level variations in income, measured by GDP per capita. Although GDP statistics do not go far back in time (and are not tested for meaningfulness), they are nevertheless used to search for the root causes of Africa's "growth failure" in terms of path-dependent processes. This chapter draws heavily on arguments already made in *A Clash of Disciplines?* and supports them with, for example, a table originally compiled for *Poor Numbers*. One might imagine that the clearly visible volatility of rankings of African economies should have moved economists to investigate trajectories of economic growth and change, but this has not happened. Jerven thus illustrates how the neglect of historical evidence, of the context-dependency of economic change, and of the possible contribution of other social sciences in reaching beyond a "history matters" statement still shapes current, deficient interpretations of African economic history. He convincingly demonstrates the dangers of drawing policy implications from results gained through analytical shortcuts.

One of the consequences of taking the easy way out is that the recent swing towards the other extreme – an "Africa rising" euphoria – cannot be theoretically accounted for either. As much as precolonial and recurrent growth, as described in Chapter 3, is not yet understood, those recent growth experiences are not illuminated by insights into how episodes of rapid economic change and accumulation lead to qualitative changes in the organisation of societies and economies. A gap is widening, and Jerven seems to know the way out. But in view of what he has said before, his account of the factors necessary to break free from episodic growth seems an unnecessary retreat into conventional economics. One can, of course, assume that the world market, political conditions, and the prices of factors of production determine the rate of structural change across African economies (88), yet the underlying conditions of Africa's continuing vulnerability and surprising recent resilience still loom in the shadows.

As usual, Jerven is very critical of taking the measurement and application of GDP for granted, and Chapter 4 ultimately looks "beneath the statistical surface" (102), an endeavour the author undertook and accomplished with *Poor Numbers*. Here, detailed elaborations on the im-

pact of, for example, the setting of base years for GDP calculations are nicely linked with questions of data quality, data extrapolation, and the conflict between data reliability and validity.

With the first three passages of the Conclusion, Jerven boldly and lucidly challenges mainstream (development) economics. They outline his proposed agenda for future intellectual efforts on African economic development. Sentences such as "The key to understanding what fails or succeeds lies within the economy in question" (130) or "The solution is to refocus the study of economics on the study of economies" (ibid.) sound programmatic indeed. Whether these calls will suffice to stop development economists from advocating only specific models is doubtful. The incidence of path dependency, sadly, holds for science as well – perhaps even particularly well for economics. But since Jerven finishes with the perspective that "simply by asking questions [...] one can engage critically with mainstream economics" (132), maybe a critical mass of questioners represents a beginning. Jerven has clearly done his homework in securing a critical mass of readers prepared to ask the necessary questions.

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