

## *The Democratic Challenge in Africa*

### The Carter Center

The Carter Center

May, 1994

---

### Introduction

On May 13-14, 1994, a group of 32 scholars and practitioners took part in a seminar on *Democratization in Africa* at The Carter Center. This consultation was a sequel to two similar meetings held in February 1989 and March 1990.

Discussion papers from those seminars have been published under the titles, *Beyond Autocracy in Africa* and *African Governance in the 1990s*. During the period 1990-94, the African Governance Program of The Carter Center moved from discussions and reflections to active involvement in the complex processes of renewed democratization in several African countries. These developments throughout Africa were also monitored and assessed in the publication, *Africa Demos*.

The letter of invitation to the 1994 seminar called attention to the need for a new period of collective reflection because of "the severe difficulties encountered by several of these transitions." "The overriding concern," it was further stated, "will be to identify what could be done to help strengthen the pluralist democracies that have emerged during the past five years and what strategies may be needed to overcome the many obstacles that are now evident."

A list of 12 questions was sent to each of the participants with a request that they identify which ones they wished to address in their discussion papers. As it turned out, the choice of topics could be conveniently grouped in six panels.

Following the seminar, 19 of the participants revised their papers for publication in this volume, while an additional four scholars (John Harbeson, Goran Hyden, Timothy Longman, and Donald Rothchild), who had been unable to attend the meeting, still submitted papers for discussion and publication.

The Democratic Challenge in Africa is a challenge not just to African peoples and their governments but also to officials of external governments and agencies, and to members of the international academic community, who have become intimately involved in promoting, monitoring, and assessing the relevant processes. A comment by Crawford Young cited in *Beyond Autocracy in Africa* is still relevant today: "No handful of facile formulas can overcome Africa's travail. No single observer is likely to have sufficient breadth of perspective or vision to propound a definitive charter for future resurrection." By circulating these papers, we hope to continue the reflections that took place in Atlanta. If democratization is to acquire in Africa the self-sustaining dynamic evident in other areas of the world, it will be because collaboration in thought and action has continued despite, and even because of, the problems encountered.

The papers are organized in sections that closely parallel the actual sessions of the seminar. Michael Chege provides a timely review of the many ways in which military establishments in Africa still constitute obstacles to democratization, and he explores the need to bring the military into a more positive relationship with these changes. Sahr John Kpundeh examines the threat that pervasive corruption poses to political renewal using Sierra Leone as a case study. Donald Rothchild looks at the upheavals that have accompanied democratization in Africa and suggests that simultaneous attention to enhancing peacemaking capabilities should be made intrinsic to these transitions.

The seminar took place while the Rwandan tragedy was still unfolding. It was also influenced by the exhilaration and relief experienced as a result of the transfer of governmental power in South Africa. It is understandable that

considerable attention was therefore devoted to exploring the issues of ethnic mobilization and conflict. The breadth of these discussions cannot be captured in a few sentences. It is generally known that democratization often provides an impetus, and excuse for, the exacerbation of social conflicts as the politically ambitious seek to mobilize a potential voting community. How, it must be considered, can democratization enhance the capacity of African states to contain and resolve conflicts, especially those based on ethnicity and other sectional identities? These are questions that Marina Ottaway, Harvey Glickman, and Donald Rothchild tackled in various ways.

Catharine and David Newbury provided a case study of Rwanda based on their long years of involvement in that country and their valiant efforts to help avert the unfolding calamity. One of the three graduate students who contributed to the proceedings, Timothy Longman, took us beneath the surface of political and economic reforms during the later years of the Habyarimana regime in Rwanda to show the tensions that were building up and the responses being made at the level of group action.

Africa, as is well-known, is undergoing a series of simultaneous transitions, the most notable being programs of political and economic liberalization. Will the new democracies be able to "deliver" in the way of meeting the urgent material needs of the African people? F. van de Kraaij focused on the degree to which freedoms of speech and of the press were being enlarged in Africa and of their economic consequences; while Nicolas van de Walle indicated what was needed to generate successful outcomes as neo-liberal economic reforms were being adopted in Africa. He further called attention to what appears to be the fundamental preconditions for the establishment of a "developmental state" in Africa.

A number of contributions reflected the end of the euphoria generated by the first wave of democratic transitions in Africa. Marina Ottaway was one of several

participants who questioned whether democratization or differing degrees of political liberalization was occurring. John Harbeson queried how reversible were the political changes occurring and how stable were the governments emerging from these processes. Linda Beck, in a preview of her forthcoming doctoral dissertation, examined the persistence of clientelism and clan politics in Senegal and the uncertainties they create in one of Africa's earliest but now problematic democracies. Stephen Ndegwa, in reviewing institution-building and civic education in rural Kenya, suggests the possibilities for political mobilization in local arenas. Drawing on the direct experiences of Carter Center engagement, the editor provided an assessment of the possibilities as well as the pitfalls of an incremental approach to democratization.

Much of the energies invested in the struggle to establish pluralist democracies has been directed to the holding and monitoring of multiparty elections, often the first in most countries in decades. The seminar benefitted from the presence of several participants who had actively participated in such exercises, including senior officials of two organizations that play a major role in them; Ned McMahon of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and Keith Klein of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). Their papers provide a useful distillation of the lessons learned by these organizations from their wide engagement.

Jean-Germain Gros, the third of our graduate contributors, examined the experiences of the deeply flawed elections in Cameroon. He shows the interplay between a recalcitrant regime and external organizations as the former moves to meet the lowest criteria of the latter (for political reform) through hastily arranged elections. Michael Bratton, in a paper based on substantive research on Zambia, looks beyond the rhetoric about popular participation to examine, empirically, just who is participating, and where and when, in a country officially embarked on building a pluralist democracy. Goran Hyden contributed a paper on the need for

more critical attention to be paid to the actual electoral systems adopted in Africa and makes the case for the desirability of adopting proportional representation.

The final session focused on the activities of external actors and agencies. Lucie Colvin Phillips, while reviewing an array of issues, called attention to the need to look beyond the short-term efforts associated with elections to the multifaceted and long-term nature of building new democracies. H. R. von Meijenfeldt, representing a new European Center established to address these issues, reviews the elements of a "more inclusive international approach in support of democratic development in Africa," whose key premise is the need to treat democratization as a process rather than a specific event or series of events.

Joel Barkan, who can look at these critical issues from the perspective of an academic scholar as well as someone who was actively involved in a U. S. government program to support them, identifies several critical needs including better donor coordination and external involvement designed "for the long haul."

Other areas of the world have benefitted from the efforts of external agencies to assist their political and constitutional transitions. Rozann Stayden was able to draw on the positive experiences of the American Bar Association (ABA) in its extensive work in Eastern Europe to explore the necessity, and opportunities, to build strong legal systems in Africa's emergent democracies. Willard Johnson, after reflecting on pivotal events of the recent past, looks ahead to provide a comprehensive overview of key issues that must be confronted by external actors and agencies, including the U. S. government. His paper suggests the need for enhanced global action to meet these simultaneous and interlocked challenges.

A collection of discussion papers, such as those presented here, raise far more issues than they resolve. Some papers are largely sketches of issues that require further reflection, while others can stand as significant contributions on their own. We, for our part, are satisfied that the seminar participants rose to the challenges

presented to them. We are also encouraged by the ways in which the proceedings from the previous seminars have been widely used by scholars, practitioners, and teachers, and we anticipate that this collection will provoke a similar response. At the very least, the papers call attention, once again, to Richard Sklar's prophetic remark that Africa is "a workshop of democracy." To be more than a testing ground, however, Africa has to discover surer paths to sustainable democracy and development. To meet that challenge, we must continue our critical examination of the historic transformations that have occurred since 1989 to prepare ourselves for the even greater ones that lie ahead.

Richard Joseph, Director

African Governance Program

The Carter Center of Emory University

### **List of Questions Submitted to Seminar Participants**

1. Has there been an over-emphasis on elections in current assistance to democratic transitions? What are the alternatives?
2. Authoritarian regimes have adjusted themselves to the pressure for pluralist systems. In several cases, they become effective "pluralizers" themselves, promoting micro-parties to fragment the opposition. What options are there in the face of these, and related, strategies?
3. External organizations and governments have played a significant role in applying pressure to authoritarian regimes, supporting democratic movements, and funding the transitional process, including elections. This is a mixed blessing, especially when these external forces lose interest, shift priorities, or accept superficial changes.

4. Africa is undergoing at least two transitions simultaneously. There is often more consistent pressure to liberalize economies by way of structural adjustment programs. What have we learned about the interface between the two processes? What can be done to ensure that the political process is not sacrificed to economic adjustment or vice-versa?
5. Democratization and multiparty politics can become little more than new structures and procedures for the circulation of elites. How broad has the democratic movement been in Africa? How widely have the lives of different categories of persons been affected? What can be done to make sure that the process is not circumscribed to formal structures of governance?
6. The upsurge of ethnic and other sectional conflicts, as a consequence of liberalizing formerly authoritarian systems, is not surprising. In the case of Africa, however, such forms of group assertion are often deliberately provoked as a strategy to retain or obtain power. Are these inevitable consequences of democratization? In some cases, the mobilizing of formerly subjugated groups can be justified. Are there new perspectives on ethnicity that should be taken into consideration?
7. It is not a surprise that democratic renewal has coincided with the ending of the cold war. It tells us something about the priorities of that period. Coinciding with democratic upheavals however, but not necessarily coterminous with them, are the armed conflicts in several countries, many of which elude resolution especially in the absence of external leverage against any or all of the combatants. Demands for greater security and political order could adversely affect conflicts that legitimately emerge in the struggle for democratic renewal.
8. Constitutional democratic systems are ends in themselves. They are also advocated as a means to introduce greater probity and accountability, controls on corruption, and to facilitate economic recovery. In short, democratic transitions in Africa will eventually be judged not only by what they are but by what they make possible to accomplish for their hard-pressed populations.
9. Democracies are not only systems of government, they involve ways of interacting socially. A democratic civil society is seen as a necessary corollary of

a democratic political system. What have we learned about the interconnections between the two in Africa?

10. Advocates of pluralist democracy, within and outside Africa, have been confronted by the charge that they were imposing external models of democracy on African societies. As mass movements for democracy emerged all over the continent, and their representatives eventually opted for constitutional multiparty systems, such charges lost credibility. Nevertheless, that Africa should generate its own forms of democratic governance cannot be denied without depriving the notion of its very essence. What are the innovations that have emerged in the course of the struggle for democratic renewal or in the establishment of new institutions and procedures of governance?

11. The election of new governments in national and popular elections is no guarantee that the problems of governance in the past will not recur. How can such failings be minimized? Indeed, they already have in some countries whose transitions were widely applauded. What is the next step in such instances?

12. The core of many authoritarian regimes has been their military and security systems. In some cases, any hope for a democratic transition has become subordinate to a prior question: How do you get the military to return to its constitutional function and accept civilian leadership of the political system?

## **Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank the following individuals for their assistance during various stages of this project: La'Tanya Afolayan, Loretta Anderson, Pam Auchmutey, Edget Betru, Alesia Brooks, Abdi Djama, Terri Gaston, Andrei Maximenko, LaSandra Milner, Tanya Parks, Jennifer Pelzman, and Karena Sager.

Table 1 AFRICA - SELECTED FEATURES POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION &  
ECONOMIC REFORM (1994)

	Population (mln) 1991	Political Characteristics	Freedom of Speech (1)	Freedom of Press (1)	Political System (2)	Last Year Elections
<b>North Africa</b>	(114.7)					
Algeria*	25.4	military régime	d	d	4	1991 (3)
Egypt*	54.6	moderate authoritarian/democracy	b	c	1	1993
Libya	4.6	military régime	d	d	4	..
Morocco*	25.7	authoritarian régime/monarchy/democracy	d	c	1	1993
Tunisia*	8.4	moderate authoritarian/democracy	b	c	2	1993
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	(512.7)					
Angola	10.0	civil war	b	b	1	1992 (3)
Benin*	4.9	moderate authoritarian/democracy	a	a	1	1991
Botswana	1.3	democracy	a	a	1	1989
Burkina Faso*	9.2	authoritarian régime/democracy	c	c	1	1991
Burundi*	5.6	near anarchy/democracy	c	c	1	1993
Cameroon*	11.2	authoritarian régime/democracy	d	d	1	1991
Cape Verde	0.3	democracy	a	a	1	1991
Central African Republic*	2.7	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1993
Chad*	5.9	authoritarian régime	c	a	1	..
Comoros*	0.6	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1990
Congo*	2.3	fragile democracy	a	c	1	1992
Côte d'Ivoire*	12.1	democracy	a	a	1	1990
Djibouti	0.4	civil war/democracy	d	c	2	1993
Equatorial Guinea*	0.4	authoritarian régime	d	d	1	..
Eritrea	3.5	provisional government	a	a	4	1993
Ethiopia*	47.5	transitional régime	c	c	1	..
Gabon	1.2	authoritarian régime/democracy	a	c	1	1993
The Gambia*	0.9	democracy	a	a	1	1992
Ghana*	15.4	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1992
Guinea*	6.0	authoritarian régime/democracy	b	b	1	1993
Guinea Bissau*	1.0	moderate authoritarian/democracy	b	b	1	1994
Kenya*	25.9	authoritarian régime/democracy	d	d	1	1992
Lesotho*	1.3	(ceremonial) monarchy/fragile democracy	a	a	1	1993
Liberia	2.7	civil war/transitional government	d	d	1	..
Madagascar*	11.5	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1993
Malawi*	8.6	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1994
Mali*	8.3	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1992
Mauritania*	2.1	authoritarian régime/democracy	a	a	1	1992
Mauritius	1.1	democracy	a	b	1	..
Mozambique*	16.0	transitional phase	a	c	1	..
Namibia	1.4	democracy	a	a	1	1989
Niger*	8.0	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1993
Nigeria*	83.5	military régime	b	c	4	1993 (4)
Rwanda*	7.4	civil war/anarchy	d	d	1	..
São Tomé e Príncipe*	0.1	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1991
Senegal*	7.3	moderate authoritarian/democracy	a	b	1	1993
Seychelles	0.1	authoritarian régime/democracy	c	c	1	1993
Sierra Leone*	4.3	military régime/civil war	d	d	4	..
Somalia	7.5	civil war/anarchy	d	d	4	..
South Africa	34.8	fragile democracy	a	a	1	1994
Sudan	25.5	military régime/civil war	d	d	4	..
Swaziland	0.8	authoritarian régime/monarchy	c	c	4	1993
Tanzania*	26.4	moderate authoritarian	a	a	1	..
Togo*	3.6	authoritarian régime/democracy	d	d	1	1993
Uganda*	17.0	moderate authoritarian régime	a	c	4	..
Zaire	36.7	authoritarian régime	c	d	1	..
Zambia*	8.3	fragile democracy	b	b	1	1991
Zimbabwe*	9.6	fragile democracy	b	b	1	1987

#### Notes:

- \* still recently or currently undergoing economic reforms.
- .. civil war, military régime and/or no recent presidential elections.

- (1) a: yes, freedom - unrestricted  
b: yes, freedom - but isolated cases of restrictions  
c: no freedom  
d: no freedom, severe repression

- (2) 1: multi-party system  
2: limited number of parties allowed  
3: one-party system  
4: no political parties allowed/existing

(3) Second round cancelled. (Algeria and Angola)

(4) Election results cancelled. After a brief civilian interim presidency there was another military take-over (Nigeria).

#### Sources:

1. 'Country Reports On Human Rights Practices For 1993 - Report submitted to the Committee On Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives and the Committee On Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate by the Department of State (February 1994; U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington: 1994)
2. Fred van der Kraak: 'Background Notes on Sub-Saharan Africa', in: Rolf van der Hoeven and Fred van der Kraak (eds), 'Structural Adjustment and Beyond in Sub-Saharan Africa - Policy and Research Issues', James Currey Publishers, London; 1991; pp. 240-258.
3. 'Le Monde', various issues.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### I. CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA

#### 1. Obstacles to Democratic Reform

Michael Chege, "The Military in the Transition to Democracy In Africa: Some Preliminary Observations"

Sahr John Kpundeh, "Challenges to Democratic Transitions in Sierra Leone: The Problem of Corruption"

Donald Rotchild, "Democratic Change, Insurgent Action, and the Changing Patterns of International Peace-Building"

#### 2. Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict

Marina Ottaway "Remarks on Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict"

Catharine Newbury and David Newbury, "Rwanda in the 1990s: Democratization and Disintegration"

Harvey Glickman, "Democratic Ethnic Conflict Management in Africa"

Timothy Longman, "Democratization and Civil Society: The Case of Rwanda"

#### 3. Political Liberalization and Economic Reform

Nicolas van de Walle, **"Economic Reform and the Consolidation of Democracy in Africa"**

Fred van der Kraaij, **"Political Liberalization and Economic Reform in Africa - A Closer Look at Freedom of Speech and The Press"**

## **II. MANAGING DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS**

### **1. Imperfect Transitions**

Richard Joseph, **"Imperfect Transitions"**

Linda Beck, **"Advancing Beyond Semi-Democracy in Senegal: A Fair Electoral Code Does Not A `Full' Democracy Make"**

Stephen Ndegwa, **"The Green Belt Movement and the Kenya Elections of 1992: A Case Study of Grassroots Civic Education"**

John W. Harbeson, **"Politics, Transitions and Democratization in Africa"**

### **2. Transitional Elections**

Michael Bratton, **"Popular Participation in Transition Elections in Africa: Some Observations"**

Edward R. McMahon, **"Lessons Learned from African Elections"**

Jean-Germain Gros, "**Whither Authoritarianism in Cameroon? An Examination of the 1992 Presidential Elections**"

Goran Hyden, "**The Electoral System: The Forgotten Factor in Africa's Political Transitions**"

3. External Actors and Assistance

Joel Barkan, "**Assisting Democratic Transitions in Africa: Constraints and Opportunities**"

Keith Klein, "**Who's Afraid of Flawed Elections?: Imperfect Elections and Election Assistance in Africa**"

Lucie Colvin Phillips, "**Democracy, Elections and U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa**"

Rozann Stayden, "**Democratization: Legal Transformation- The Necessity of Strong Legal Systems and Institutions in Emerging African Democracies**"

H.R. von Meijenfeldt, "**International Support for Democracy's Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**"

Willard Johnson, "**Emerging Issues in U.S./African Relations Likely to Affect the Course of Democratization in Africa**"

## **2. PARTICIPANTS**

### **I. CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA**

#### **1. Obstacles to Democratic Reforms**

Democratic reforms in Africa are confronted by the formidable challenges posed by clientelist politics, pervasive corruption and extensive involvement of the

military in the political process. While clientelism is a characteristic feature of most political, and indeed large organizational, systems and corruption is not a uniquely African phenomenon, the problems they pose have steadily increased in contemporary Africa. In conditions of resource scarcity and shrinking or stagnant economies, clientelist ties and political corruption imperil the viability of the state (Kpundeh). Moreover, corrupt elites may come to view democratization, with its promise of wider political competition and greater accountability, as a threat to their economic and political dominance.

Governments in transition are also increasingly vulnerable to capture, openly or tacitly, by a military fearful of the loss of its power and privileges under a new order. While asserting itself as the defender of democracy and justice, as occurred most recently in the overthrow of the Jawara government in The Gambia in July 1994, the military is itself not immune from political pressures and often ends up disrupting the order it has intervened to protect. Strategies must be developed to incorporate the military into the processes of democratic reform. The professional conduct of some African armed forces during the transitional phase should be given closer scrutiny (Chege).

The intensification of internal conflicts as a consequence of political liberalization may threaten the survival of emerging democratic regimes unless political structures and mechanisms designed to facilitate the resolution of such conflicts peacefully are carefully planned and implemented. Appropriate intervention should occur before the extent of state collapse deprives negotiators of significant leverage (Rothchild).

## **The Military in Transition to Democracy in Africa: Some Preliminary Observations**

by Michael Chege

Center for International Affairs, Harvard University

## Introduction

This brief paper proposes to focus on the role of the military in the transition to democracy in contemporary Africa. It begins from the premise that in a constitutional democracy, armed forces are deployed only on the order of legally constituted civilian authority as specified in national statutes and never the reverse, which is a treasonable offence. Although the issue of how to manage armies and paramilitary units in Africa's current political liberalization drive has not received much attention at academic and policy levels, it is actually a greater priority than most advocates of democracy in the continent initially imagined. And the truth is that it has forced itself into the agenda in such a brutal and disastrous manner that it can no longer be treated as a subsidiary issue.

As the colossal human tragedy now unfolding in Rwanda demonstrates, the capacity of rogue military units-fearing loss of clout and patronage in the new liberal order-to cause widespread havoc in the desperate quest of self-perpetuation, ought no longer be taken lightly. For to the extent that press and eyewitness accounts emanating from that sad situation can be relied upon, the anti-Tutsi carnage and pogroms appear to have been initiated by the once-elite presidential guard of the late president, Juvenal Habyarimana, not long after his still-mysterious air crash of April 6, 1994. In a rapid succession of gruesome events, they seem to have been joined by the customarily ill-disciplined national army and restless militia groups of the floating unemployed Hutu youth-the *Interahamwe*-out to gain from plunder, looting, and general disorder. The guard's inner agenda can be read in its reported efforts to eliminate-in addition to innocent Tutsi-fellow Hutu intellectuals and human rights advocates who spoke out against the excesses of the Habyarimana government and in favor of democracy and national reconciliation. To those familiar with the internal situation in Rwanda, the reactionary wing of the mainly-Hutu presidential guard had always viewed with suspicion and mistrust the concessions that the Habyarimana regime had made to the insurgent and mostly-Tutsi Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF)

in the course of the constitutional negotiations at Arusha (Tanzania). For certain, the guard could no longer have enjoyed a favored status in the transition to a more ethnically representative democracy in which the more disciplined RPF would have been integrated into the national army. This consideration, among other reasons, may have caused Habyarimana to temporize, leading to the impasse which his ill-fated flight to Tanzania was expected to break.

But it is not only in Rwanda that military units-or to be more precise, the disorganized and poorly disciplined soldiery who pass for the national army-have attempted to sabotage the transition to democracy, with or without the support of incumbent anti-reform authorities. The October 1993 anti-government massacres in Burundi were perpetrated by Tutsi militarist hard-liners of the ancient regime out to crush the democratically elected Melchior Ndadaye government. A section of Lesotho's army has also revolted against the newly installed government of Ntsu Mokhele twice this year. In the run up to the April elections, elements of the South Africa Defense Force and police were evidently party to right-wing efforts to scuttle the advance to majority rule. The military have turned their guns on democratic forces in Zaire, Congo, and Togo. And in the most populous country of them all-Nigeria-General Babangida's farewell act was to abrogate the results of the June 1993 elections that would have ushered in the first civilian government in a decade. It is vital to note, however, that military action in this difficult phase of African history has not been uniformly reactionary. In Mali, Malawi, Benin and possibly Mozambique, the army may have been at least a partial accessory to political reform. In Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Tanzania, it has played a politically correct neutral role, at least openly.

The remaining part of this paper attempts a preliminary three-dimensional typology of these disparate tendencies in military behavior in the difficult passage of sub-Saharan Africa toward constitutional democracy. If this line of inquiry can-after more detailed work-produce some lessons on how to forestall armed

reactionary intervention against nascent democracies, and yield some guidelines for strategies that would spur military support for political reform, it might serve to advance the higher goal of political liberalization and also minimize the recurrence of wholesale killing of unarmed civilians that have shocked the world in Rwanda and elsewhere.

### **Anti-democratic military reaction in the army's self-interest**

The first type of armed assault on an unfolding democratization process is launched out of suspicion that liberal governance will jeopardize established (and often underhand) military privileges. In a number of cases, military intervention has been prompted by fears that incoming democratic governments will whittle down the regime of generous privileges that the army have long enjoyed. Here we are not simply talking about material interests-salaries, perks, access to power-but also, most significantly, immunity from legal prosecution for criminal and other related misdeeds. As is by now well-established by the literature of military intervention in African politics, cliques of armed usurpers frequently assume power to consolidate or acquire access to graft, public resources, and coveted positions in national institutions. <sup>1</sup> To this network of material concerns, one must now add the widespread abuse of human rights and private property, which armed forces and paramilitary units commit habitually with impunity in the course of sustaining authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, it is the most highly favored elite guards close to the heads of state-and from his ethnic homeland-who are likely to be the most immediate accessories to these acts. Without in the least implying any sympathy for their actions, one can understand the mortal fear that the language of human rights, Nuremberg-style trials, and the rule of law arouses among armed men who fit that description. Because public discourse on introducing democracy to Africa has been dominated by the modalities of free and fair elections, the role of the military, its fears and expectations, has been largely sidelined in most countries with the exception of South Africa, Namibia, and Mozambique, where preelection negotiations have been thorough and long

drawn. In other places, uncertain of its future, the military lay in ambush as democracy made its first staggering steps on the road to the future.

This, as intimated earlier, may have been the tragic scenario in Rwanda. Fear that a genuinely incoming democratic government would scrutinize the corruption and human rights follies of the military under the Babanginda government may lie behind the decision to preempt Moshood Abiola's accession to power last year. Babanginda appears to have used to an extent not witnessed before, the institution of corruption and distribution of patronage to the upper layers of the military. In Lesotho, attempts by sections of the army to destabilize the government arose from what the would-be putschists considered civilian insensitivity to corporate military grievances, including financial cutbacks in a period of austerity and a diminished governance role for soldiers in the post-election era. Similarly, the bloody October 1993 events in Burundi originated, in the words of one authoritative source, not from any desire to perpetuate Tutsi ethnic interests, but rather it was a "self-interested coup by soldiers who happened to be Tutsi". <sup>2</sup>

Although there were considerable negotiations of a constitutional nature prior to the elections in all these countries, there was little specification on what would be expected of the incumbent military institutions and particularly what future policy would be with regard to previous transgressions by the army. This appears to be a strong contrast with all negotiations in colonial or quasi-colonial transition to majority rule-as in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and now South Africa-where this issue was of dominating concern in the constitutional agenda. To the extent that reorganization of the ethics, remuneration, and training of the armed forces in these set of transitions was successful, it calls for fresh analysis to detect lessons that might be applied in the more problematic cases elsewhere in the continent.

### **Military reaction on behalf of autocratic incumbents**

In the second category of attempts by the armed forces to derail political liberalization, soldiers and military units are used by incumbent dictators to cause social and political mischief and thus provide a subterfuge for delaying political reform in the interests of a spurious restoration of law and order. At the same time, the ensuing intimidation of democratic reformist groups and leaders raises the costs of political protest, just when the ruling parties are awash with funds and other patronage to buy back wavering opposition figures.

Over the past four years of political reform, Zaire and Togo stand out as exemplars of this and their leaders as the most accomplished masters of the chicanery, which is the inevitable handmaiden of this strategy. Gnassingbe Eyadema in Togo has time and again unleashed the core of his mainly-Kabre army against Togolese democratic forces and also used a combination of intimidation and patronage to splinter the new opposition groups. Similarly in Zaire, disaffected troops of the 31st Parachutist Brigade ran riot in Kinshasa in September 1991, penetrating an orgy of looting and murder directed at shopkeepers, foreigners, and ordinary citizens, rather than the Mobutu government whose inability to meet salaries was the evident immediate cause of the mutiny. This sad sequence of events was repeated in January 1993; this time the soldiers protesting, it was said, the new and worthless currency notes that had been issued by the Mobutu-controlled central bank. In either case, Mobutu's crack and Israeli-trained presidential division intervened too late or ineffectually and always to secure the president's political interests, which are by definition anti-democratic. Soldiers have been used to stop the transitional authorities from assuming control of the central bank and key government offices, and to persecute prominent opposition leaders. Notably also, the army has not intervened to stem ethnic cleansing in Shaba and Kivu, and may have been an accessory in the earlier.

The fortunes of the presidential guard and of the Zairian military high command, which is almost exclusively recruited from Mobutu's Equateur Province, are inevitably tied to the fate of its patron. To this extent the element of self-interest discussed earlier is fused into the military obligation to obey the commander in chief in political mischief-making. This could also be said of the armed forces in Togo and Cameroon. It also applies to sections of the police and paramilitary units in Kenya, recruited predominantly from President Daniel arap Moi's Kalenjin group, and that have been used to harass the opposition, sabotage the free press, and perpetrate pogroms among pro-opposition farming communities in the Rift Valley Province.

In the transition to democracy, this combination of self-interest and high-level patronage in the armed forces is of special significance because-perverse as it is and sad as it sounds-it often consolidates military strength in defined units instead of randomizing it in a pattern of anarchy discussed in the first category above. Under good and morally sound leadership, it might be reorganized to keep peace in the interim period. On the other hand, each time this lone center of armed force has literally lost its political head-whether in the person of the incumbent dictator or psychologically-ensuing panic has subsequently led to the most horrific killings followed by a downward swirl into chaos. We have already cited Rwanda. The slaughterhouse era in Somalia and Liberia also followed the exit of the resident autocrats-Siad Barre and Samuel Doe respectively-and the decision of their loyal remnants to join the highly factional internal warfare in a life-and-death struggle.

Again, the general issue of what to do which reluctant outgoing authoritarian regimes and-equally important-the armed forces loyal to them has not been featured significantly in either the theory or practice of democratization in Africa. At the realm of scholarship, at any rate, there can be no serious excuses for this since there are precedents, which have been documented since Napoleon's exile

to Elba and more recently in the easing out of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. For in the interests of avoiding yet more state disintegration and ethnic massacres in Africa, it might prove more prudent to exile the dictator and his entourage.

### **The military as a positive influence on the transition to democracy**

In a third category of cases, armed forces have functioned directly or indirectly as a positive influence in the difficult stage of disengaging from presidential authoritarianism to a more open system. Such actions include refusal to take orders against free speech, ballot-rigging, and annihilation of opposition movements. Such steps might be taken under the pretext of military professionalism and political neutrality. At other times, military leaders have gone out of their way to undermine the institutional foundations laid by the incumbent dictatorships; an accomplishment THAT could only make the work of incoming democrats-whenver that will be-a much easier task.

The assault on the Young Pioneers by the Malawi military in December 1993 fits into this mold. Established as a paramilitary institution of the Malawi Congress Party by President Kamuzu Banda, the Young Pioneers became an all-purpose instrument of domestic oppression that enforced obedience to the supreme leader. Like the Maoist Red Guards, the pioneers enforced on the citizens the party's dress code and hairstyle among other things. And like its counterparts under Communist or Fascist regimes, the Young Pioneers undertook numerous police-state responsibilities, including spying on citizens and torturing suspected government opponents. Capitalizing on popular resentment of the pioneers and the military's own discontent with superior ammunition that was entrusted to these party activists by Banda's henchmen, the Malawi army took upon itself the task of disarming and demobilizing them. Considering the terror that the pioneers used to strike in the opposition and their customary role in disrupting pro-

democracy gatherings, the long-term import of their exit from the political scene can only assist the opening-up process.

In Mali, the military played a positive influence in the exit of the unpopular and corrupt Moussa Traore government. And in Tanzania, armed forces have gone along with the new policies of delinking the military from its traditional allegiance to the ruling *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (ie, Revolutionary) party and the political privileges arising from that relationship. Other than protest the amount in separation benefits, the army in Mozambique has generally supported the new accord between the FRELIMO government and their old enemies in RENAMO. However gradually, this has facilitated the demobilization program and the preparation for the multiparty election scheduled for later this year. Also, subsequent realities have given lie to predictions of gloom that the military in Madagascar would not permit the newly elected government to accede into power last year. Though still apparently beholden to the erstwhile autocrat who lost the election, Didier Ratsiraka, the Madagascar army has so far stayed clear of the political competition process. And in Uganda the Museveni government has made remarkable progress in demobilizing the army under an externally funded scheme that enables veterans to enter civilian economic life.

### **Facing up to the role of the military in the transition to democracy**

In descending order of social misery then, our discussion began with the role of the mindless and generalized military violence to preserve self-interest as one category of observed phenomena and then moved on to the capacity of incumbent dictators to use loyal units of the armed forces in measured intensity to intimidate and sabotage internal democratic movements. It ended with some remarks on the third set of activities: benign or neutral predisposition of the army in a number of African states like Tanzania, Malawi, Mali, and Madagascar. To the extent that our observations are accurate, this breakdown in itself readily suggests what might be done to respond to the catastrophic internal security

conditions in the continent. Professional and politically correct armies in the service of democratically elected governments ought to be encouraged and supported, while dictators who use armed forces to derail democracy are eased off well before the local situation degenerates into Somalian and Rwandese proportions. Because it is country-specific, such a perspective provides more hope than the more generalized continent-wide statements predicting doom scenarios about which little can be done.

In one of the few academic articles that concerned itself with the prospects of liberal democracy in Africa, written well before the onset of the current of political liberalization swept the continent, Richard Sklar noted that even in the best of circumstances, democratization combined with pressing development needs would have to be an incremental process.<sup>3</sup> The building blocs of democracy would be put in place one at a time, and often after bitter and regrettable national experiences. With roughly four years of experience behind us, the wisdom of incremental political engineering is being dictated by compelling moral and factual necessity. For as the earlier arguments on whether Western style democracy was relevant to Africa gave way to urgent concerns on the management of free and fair elections as means of easing out authoritarian government, practical experience has brought other urgent agenda to the fore. These would now include the remarkable capacity to forestall meaningful change that has been demonstrated by incumbent dictatorial regimes by resorting to the use of force while also organizing window-dressing national conferences and flawed elections in such states as Cameroon, Kenya, and Togo. An equally important issue would be the rapid implosion of once seemingly robust national democratic movements as a result of ethnic differences or competing leadership ambitions as is now evident in Malawi, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zaire, and Ghana. This has in turn provided incumbent autocratic regimes with a godsend, the better to steer gullible opposition movements away from the pursuit of democratic

goals to state patronage. All these problems have been addressed by other writers in this volume.

One issue that need never be overlooked in facing up to the role of the military in the process of political liberalization is the role of external suppliers and trainers of the military. In the era of the Cold War, the United States, the defunct USSR, Britain, France, and China were the principal source of the military hardware that is now being used to buttress dictatorships and massacre civilians. They have a responsibility in helping out in disarmament, retraining, and reorientation of armed forces, if not in ousting former clients whose survival (as in Zaire) now depends in unleashing systematic terror on pro-democracy groups. The intention is to intervene early enough to prevent humanitarian disaster, and thus avoid face-saving, last-minute salvage operations after most damage has already been done as the French did in Rwanda in June of 1994. For in this case, Paris might have spared itself the bother had it avoided arming the Rwandese army and its allies after 1990. Likewise it is necessary to strengthen neutrality and professionalism in the armed forces where they have shown a favorable predisposition toward democratic rule. The question of what to do with the army in other words must now be integrated into the policy analysis of external aid and democratic governance in Africa.

In both the external and internal dimensions, and in the spirit of the incremental strategy that was mentioned earlier, it is now time to focus on the role of the military as actors in the unfolding process of political change in Africa. Otherwise, with each new humanitarian catastrophe, the question will be asked what social science in Africa did to help predict disaster or introduce remedial policy options. Without in the least undermining the capital importance of elections, civic groups, constitutions, the practice of basic freedoms and related issues-i. e. strengthening civil society-it may now be time to give armed force the attention it deserves for reasons of bitter contemporary experience as well as the relevance

of political theory. Let us not forget as Hobbes remarked in the *Leviathan* that "Covenants without the backing of the sword are but words."

## **Challenges to Democratic Transitions in Sierra Leone: The Problem of Corruption**

**by Sahr John Kpundeh**

National Academy of Sciences

Corruption in African countries is a prominent feature of public life (although in some more than others), that poses a profound threat to all systems of government. In most African countries, corruption constitutes an important means by which individual wants and needs, especially in patronage-ridden personal regimes, can be satisfied.

Controlling corruption is one of the greatest challenges to the establishment and consolidation of democratic systems in Africa. The centralized nature of African governments and the lack of transparency and accountability have contributed significantly to creating a continent that is breeding ground for corruption.

Africans hold the state responsible for their economic hardships in large part because of widespread abuse in official circles. Paradoxically, this abuse has fostered democratization by forcing groups within civil society to take matters into their own hands (Kpundeh, et al, 1992). Consequently, in many African nations, a real political process and legitimate link between state and society have yet to grow. Corruption is linked to this dilemma.

Sierra Leone, one of the world's poorest nations, has endured a pattern of corruption remarkable in its depth and extent. The country is currently undergoing a managed military transition. After taking office in April 1992, military officials established three commissions of inquiry to identify culpable public officials and businessmen, who were considered responsible for some of the

worst offenses of dishonesty, negligence and abuse of public office for private benefit.

The commissions of inquiry revealed nauseating and enumerable cases of rampant corruption and so-called daylight robbery by politician, grotesque abuses of office by civil servants, theft and cheating by government contractors, and conspiracy among foreign and local businessmen, politicians and transnational corporations to plunder the state of money, goods, and services (Kpundeh, S.J., 1993). The question is why has corruption been rampant in Sierra Leone?

One can argue there is an obvious link between abuse of public office and Sierra Leone's undemocratic political system primarily because widespread corruption and scandals increased after the introduction of the one-party system in 1978. (Kpundeh, S.J., *Politics and Corruption in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone*, In Press). One-party politics under the All People's Congress (APC) had no room for accountability since most institutions that would have effectively audited and examined various arms of the government were eliminated. The president headed practically everything in the country including the army, the university, and the civil service, and tolerated few questions on many matters that should have required public scrutiny.

Consequently, the absence of effective structures with autonomy and strength to check corruption has been primarily responsible for the gross misuse of public funds by those in positions of trust. For example, throughout the 1980s there was virtually no separation of powers in practice between the executive and legislative branches. Members of the Presidential Cabinet were seldom, if ever, queried by parliamentarians. All belonged to the ruling APC. In short, these two branches of government were so intertwined that they seemed to have colluded

to use the political system as a shortcut to getting rich. According to Robert Williams:

Corruption in Africa is primarily located in the executive branch of government for the obvious reason that the legislative and judicial branches have generally lost whatever independence and power they may have once possessed (R. Williams, 1987).

Over-centralization of the decision-making processes facilitates fraud, which affects not only the governance of the state but the management of the country's entire economy. The government is the largest entrepreneur in Sierra Leone (as in most African countries) and the largest employer. Consequently, corruption discourages both potential investors and donors. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, dropped sponsored programs in Sierra Leone due to widespread abuse.

Corruption in Sierra Leone is a manifestation of the weaknesses of the bourgeoisie, the ineffectual role and place of the state, the poorly structured system of production and accumulation, and an impotent economy and society. The APC party encouraged fiscal irresponsibility by inconsistently prosecuting those suspected of fraud and failing to enforce anti-corruption laws. More important, given the APC's inability to meet the basic needs of Sierra Leoneans, people increasingly relied on illegal, unorthodox, and dishonest mechanisms to survive. The spread of corruption has been encouraged by mass poverty, unemployment, elites' abuse of power, and neglect of rural areas and exploitation of vulnerable groups. The APC encouraged the notion that without connections it is virtually impossible to complete the most basic functions such as obtaining a driver's license, a birth certificate, or a passport. Political elites in Sierra Leone, for example, found these developments convenient to cover their tracks of undiscipline, waste, mismanagement, and corruption (Kpundeh, S.J., 1994).

Profit-seeking transnational corporations stimulated this debauchery particularly among elites. The 1992 commissions of inquiry revealed how these corporations took advantage of very undisciplined, immoral, and corrupt ruling people that are willing, with little or no encouragement, to subvert rules and regulations.

My 1992 research on attitudes toward corruption in Sierra Leone revealed general cynicism toward elites, particularly political elites. It is the view among a majority of my respondents that the lack of character among political elites in Sierra Leone--the perverse culture of waste, decadence, ostentation, addiction to foreign tastes, and irresponsibility--has fostered corruption. The elites, particularly urban dwellers' interests in wealth, regardless of how it is acquired, has contributed immensely to debauchery. This notion of practically worshipping wealth, the get-rich-quick mentality, the belief in "plenty money with little work," and the urge among elites to drive the best cars and live in luxury have allegedly resulted in rampant abuse and dishonesty.

### **The Need For Democratization**

According to young military officers, one of the principal reasons for the coup d'état in 1992 was to end rampant corruption. But their strategies to minimize corruption have primarily been quick-fix measures, such as throwing out the "rotten apples"--arresting and imposing severe penalties on former government officials, conducting anti-corruption purges, and/or preaching morality. Such actions were taken before during the administrations of Presidents Stevens and Momoh, but they did not succeed because abuse of public office is rooted in the institutions of society--structural problems. In other words, exposure and prosecution or disciplinary action against corrupt individuals removes the offender but does little to eliminate the problem. Such actions only act as damage control. The key is to have appropriate institutions rooted in democratic values that contribute to improved governance.

Africans are aware of the problems of corruption and abuse that have characterized authoritarian regimes and believe these issues must be addressed immediately. Many are taking a courageous stand in looking at democratization and democratic governance as ways to curb that abuse. As one political scientist pointed out:

Democratization can generate mutual control mechanisms through the interplay of balance between actors in political life. It can thus (be) an important asset in avoiding huge financial squandering, overambitious projects, and all kinds of embezzlements that have ruined [African] countries and disenchanted the people (A. Souley, 1992).

While democratizing systems are vulnerable and remain vulnerable to corruption, one can argue that it is the only option that provides the framework to answer these problems. Democracy, some think, offers a mechanism to minimize corruption, assuming it introduces greater accountability and transparency into governance. But the overall democratization process is usually long, painful, and complex; and rather than alleviate the conditions under which corruption takes place, it can intensify problems in the short term, especially if the preconditions are fragile. The challenge for countries such as Sierra Leone is to survive the transition, not to avoid it.

Democratization must meet the challenges of poverty, illiteracy, militarization, the elimination of corruption, the protection of freedom of information and human rights, decentralization and devolution of power, and underdevelopment. Power must shift from Sierra Leone's current military rulers to leaders who are representative and sensitive to the needs of the people. The military administration has announced a timetable for return to civilian rule in 1996. Hopefully, any new government will move toward protecting civil rights,

establishing agreed-upon modes of governance, and promoting greater political accountability.

Nonetheless, it is critical to understand that whatever measures are taken to successfully fight this abuse of public office will require not only appropriate institutions rooted in democratic values but also the cooperation of the general public. Throughout Africa, the significance of a lively civil society is increasingly recognized. Although for the most part civil society has been too weak to play its proper role in enhancing a democratic culture. Thus, in attempting to establish strategies to reduce corruption in Sierra Leone where individual rights and freedoms have been suppressed, it is important to first recapture the population that distanced itself from the leadership—primarily the APC leadership.

### **Attitudes Toward Corruption**

My own research in Sierra Leone during 1992 revealed that 55 percent of the 300 respondents selected from various parts of the country considered corruption as second in importance only to the ongoing rebel war. In fact, 89 percent agreed bribery is harmful, while 74 percent personally felt a lot of pressure to engage in what they perceived to be corruption (Kpundeh, S.J., 1994). If many Sierra Leoneans only tolerate bureaucratic red tape because they can bribe officials to speed up services, as is so frequently suggested, then obviously the whole system of government and administration is suffering from serious "structural" weaknesses that must be addressed.

Furthermore, 55 percent of the people I talked with agreed that politicians were members of the most corrupt "profession," followed by businessmen (28 percent) and policemen (24 percent). As pointed out earlier, Sierra Leoneans hold politicians responsible for their current problems and believe they have contributed significantly in draining the country's resources for personal gain. In addition, there is a lack of trust in the integrity of government officials. Most

interviewed (86 percent) think they are corrupt, while nearly as many (80 percent) agree laws are needed to ensure dishonest public officials are judged more harshly than private citizens.

Although anti-corruption squads under past administrations lacked the intelligence and training to uncover infractions that permeated many financial transactions, almost everyone interviewed (98 percent) agreed the current government should place a high priority on reducing dishonesty and developing remedial strategies to ensure some level of accountability and transparency. They welcome the decrees establishing the three commissions of inquiry, as well as several other decrees designed to minimize corruption, notably Decree No. 6 of 1992, which punishes bribery. There is also widespread support for legislation that requires candidates for public office to declare their assets, for Parliamentary approval of all top government appointees, and for the police to be free from restrictions on investigative and arrest procedures in cases of fraud. Although the success of such measures remains to be seen, widespread support for their implementation is an indication of the gravity of the situation, as well as the extent of popular anxiety surrounding the government's diligence to address and control this melaise.

In conclusion, in order to have an effective transition program, the current rebel war must be brought to an end. Normal political activities and sustained development can only take place in Sierra Leone when the rebel war is concluded. A truly genuine democratization program can lead to greater understanding of the meaning of democracy by the masses. Such understanding will significantly help to rebuild civil society thereby enhancing a democratic culture, which for the most part was suppressed by the APC.

## References

- Kpundeh, S.J. et al., 1992 *Research on Democratization in Africa*. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.
- Kpundeh, S.J., 1993. "Prospects in Contemporary Sierra Leone" *Corruption and Reform*, Vol. 7, No. 3. pp. 237-247.
- Kpundeh, S.J., 1993. "Elites, Non-Elites and Corruption: An Attitudinal Analysis of Data From Sierra Leone", Ph.D. Dissertation, Howard University, Washington, D.C.
- Kpundeh, S.J., 1994. "Limiting Administrative Corruption in Sierra Leone" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 32, 1. pp. 139-157.
- Kpundeh, S.J., 1994. *Politics and Corruption in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone*. (In Press) University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland.
- Souley, Abdoulaye, 1992. "Economic Crisis and Democratization in Africa," Paper presented at a symposium in Ibadan, Nigeria, June 15-19.
- Williams Robert, 1987. *Political Corruption in Africa*. Aldershot.

## Democratic Change, Insurgent Action, and the Changing Patterns of International Peace-Building

by Donald Rothchild

University of California, Davis

The ending of the Cold War had a number of unanticipated consequences. No longer were the great powers concerned with enlisting African allies in the global struggle against one another, an intervention that exacerbated local and regional conflicts and strengthened frail state structures against the challenges of identity

groups in Africa's societies. Rather the great powers were disengaging, leaving the African countries on their own in a difficult economic and social environment. With support for authoritarian rulers no longer forthcoming, a democratic renewal became evident in some two-thirds of the countries on the continent. These proved most effective where strong, legitimate states coincided with dynamic civil societies. In some cases, however, the state remained insufficiently responsive to public demands and too frail to offer the necessary leadership in political and economic affairs. Intense demands coming from disadvantaged groups at the periphery of society sometimes led to state breakdown. Armed conflicts emerged in several countries. How did the international community respond to these challenges to effective state- and nation-building? And what leverage, if any, can international actors bring to bear on state and societal elites to bring about a return to regularized relationships?

Majoritarian democracy is the most promising means of managing state-society conflict on a sustained basis. It represents a preventative mechanism, for it deals early on with conflict situations while these disputes remain open to manipulation. Given the opportunity for choice in many countries in the post-independence period, a number of African publics expressed themselves in no uncertain terms, replacing one ruling coalition with another in such countries as Benin, Zambia, Cape Verde, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe. Frequently, networks of elite reciprocities and political exchanges emerged that proved supportive of norms on proportionality of allocations, the inclusion of a broad range of identity group interests in the decision-making process, participation through regular elections, and the accountability of ruling elites. Not only did democratic regimes encourage the sharing of political power, but, in the most favorable of contexts, they encouraged a spirit of civility, described by Victor Azarya as "a sense of reciprocal obligations and expectations that prevail among groups in society, a commitment to take part in the establishment of a common order and a voluntary compliance to abide by its rules..." <sup>1</sup> To be sure, a number of these competitive

elections were stage-managed by leaders intent upon remaining in power, as in Ghana, Kenya, and Cameroun, but even in these countries there was a possibility for political learning to take place, as norms on open competition, the wide availability of information, and the acknowledgment of the rules of the game became accepted in the society at large.

But democratic norms are inevitably frail, especially during the transition period from authoritarianism to full polyarchical rule. Democratic renewal has sometimes been followed by undemocratic upheavals, as the personalistic power struggle violates the rules of encounter and as ethnic and religious minorities come to feel insecure about their cultural and physical survival in the new majoritarian order. In the more destructive state-society encounters, a collapse of the elite social contract is likely to bring with it incivility, where reciprocal ties weaken and connections are torn asunder within the ruling coalition and across the society at large. Loss of a sense of common purpose weakens interdependencies between state and societal leaders, allowing parochial values to triumph over community-wide trust and responsibility. The most fatal of these scenarios can assume grievous proportions, taking on such forms as forced assimilation, displacement, "ethnic cleansing," random violence, and genocide.

When connections between state and societal leaders collapse, neither set of leaders has the capacity to overpower its adversary and put its preferences into effect. Clearly, if state or insurgent leaders could win an outright military victory in such contested encounters as Angola, Liberia, Sudan or Western Sahara, there would be no need for third-party intervention. However reluctantly, the two sides may come to welcome the external intermediary because they recognize that the costs of continued military engagements are unacceptable and the intervention of a third-party mediator is the best option available under the circumstances. They have reached a rough equivalence of power, or what I. William Zartman calls a

mutually hurting stalemate—a deadlock from which there appears to be "no later possibilities for decisive escalation or for graceful escape." <sup>2</sup>

With state-society connections broken and conflicts intense, how can a third-party actor offer new choices, possibly leading to renewed interaction? State elites, anxious to guard their sovereign prerogatives and prevent outside intervention, may resist cooperation with external mediators. In this event, they often insist on respect by the international community for their country's domestic jurisdiction. The notion of sovereignty is no longer given the kind of single-minded support, however, that was evident in the 1960s and 1970s. For U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, "The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty... has passed." He warned, moreover, that contemporary leaders have the task of "find[ing] a balance between the needs of good internal governance and the requirements of an ever more interdependent world." <sup>3</sup>

Where international mediators take their responsibilities seriously and where state and insurgent elites are prepared to enter into a dialogue with one another, the encounter may *sometimes* prove constructive and lead, even if only temporarily (as in the Sudan in 1972), to a positive outcome. It should be stressed that successful mediatory initiatives have occurred in only a minority of cases in this century; yet, given the alternatives, they often represent the best hope available. In some situations, strong third-party interveners—usually powerful states or combinations of states—can bring diplomatic and economic pressures and incentives into play to promote an agreement. Thus in addition to the Sudanese negotiations, the accords hammered out to bring the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict to a close, the 1988 agreement on ending the international aspects of the Angolan war and Namibia's independence, and the 1991 Mozambican settlement are recent examples of partial or fully successful mediated outcomes. In all these cases, strong and determined intermediaries intervened in turbulent encounters where total victory and capitulation seemed unlikely and managed to offer peacemaking formulas that proved, in the end, to

be minimally satisfactory to state and insurgent groups alike. The resulting peace formulas combined agreement on polyarchical governance, competitive elections, the demobilization of forces, the unification of armies, and some form of international monitoring to guide the transition process through to a successful conclusion.

At times, however, these laboriously negotiated accords proved inadequate to the tasks of forging peace. The linkages between state and society remained weak and highly vulnerable, and the negotiators, faced with the need to improvise in a turbulent context, left certain matters vague. This vagueness later came back to haunt those caught up in the conflict (as in the hurried Gbadolite accords of June 1989 in Angola). Intransigent and ambitious politicians, mobilized identity group interests, intense struggles for appointments and state resources, and agreements lacking precision all combined to place severe strains upon recently negotiated arrangements that were still lacking in the underpinning of societal interdependence and in a consensus on the rules of the game. All too frequently the result was an undermining of agreements early in the transition period. Implementation, which required continuing bargaining encounters to fill in the interstices in the founding pact, proved unequal to the task of consolidating the negotiated arrangements, and the conflict burst out anew. Sometimes, such as in Angola, the casualties were worse in the aftermath of a failed agreement than had been the case in the earlier phase of the struggle. Implementation, then, was revealed to be a key stage in the larger negotiating process.

In the event of a spiraling conflict, as represented by a renewal of violence following a failed accord, external mediators were sorely tested in their efforts to bring about a return to regularized patterns of intergroup relationship. In fact, in Sudan after the collapse of the Addis Ababa accords around 1982 and in Angola following the renewal of the civil war after the first round of the September 1992

elections, a deadly form of warfare ensued involving heavy casualties and extensive brutality and destruction. Moreover, a negotiating fatigue set in, as distrustful adversaries retreated to the relative safety of their ethnoregional support bases and carried on with the struggle. The mutually hurting stalemate of the past came to seem endurable, leading to a contest of endurance that had little to do with rational choices on economic maximization. With psychological and emotional values ranked higher than the securing of tangible-and hence more negotiable-values, the best-intentioned and most powerful third-party actors had limited capacity to change actor preferences and perceptions through diplomatic means.

Where post-agreement peace-builders had limited leverage over the combatants to facilitate a return to stable relationships, as in Sudan and Angola, conflict resolution has proved elusive. A number of third-party intermediaries have stepped into these dangerous encounters, only to find out how limited was the political space for a tangible exchange of symbolic and substantive resources. In the Sudan, the integration of the Anya-Nya troops into the People's Armed Forces and the elections for the Southern Regional Assembly in the period immediately following the signing of the Addis Ababa accords were important indications that the regime of President Gaafar el-Nimeiry remained committed to the spirit of the agreement. However, by the mid-1970s, there were signs that the Nimeiry government had shifted its position on the extent of southern autonomy, as the central authorities intervened in the process of selecting a president for the new High Executive Council in order to assure the nomination of his preferred candidate to this post. Other retrogressive steps were soon to follow-the decision to build the Jonglei Canal (with its alleged drying effects in the swampy Sudd area), the alteration of the electoral processes, the dissolution of legally constituted bodies, proposed borders changes between the north and south, the location of the oil refinery at Kosti in the north, the imposition of *Sharia* law on the country as a whole, and the redivision of the south into three regions.

Southerners were outraged by these actions, and guerrilla warfare was rekindled in the south.

Other notable examples of failure to implement the spirit of an agreement-and with highly destructive consequences in all cases-were those of Ethiopia-Eritrea, Burundi, and Angola. Emperor Haile Selassie's decision to transform the U.N.-orchestrated agreement on federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which had been in effect from 1952 to 1962, and then to reincorporate Eritrea into Ethiopia on a unitary basis led to considerable outrage among the Eritreans. As a result, the Eritreans launched what became a 30-year guerrilla struggle for self-determination and independence, ultimately gaining international recognition following an overwhelming Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) referendum victory in April 1993. In Burundi, there was evidence of the refusal on the part of some groups to accept a new situation as well as a failure to consolidate democratic norms. In this case, a new constitutional agreement on democratic norms seemed most promising, as incumbent Tutsi President Pierre Buyoya, defeated in the June 1993 elections, nonetheless accepted defeat and stepped down from high office. Four months later, the election victor, Hutu leader Melchion Ndadaye, was overthrown and murdered by the Tutsi-dominated army, ushering in a period of terror and anarchy in this deeply divided society. Finally, in the most dramatic case of an implementation failure, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) leader Jonas Savimbi, fearing a loss of influence and status after a likely defeat in the scheduled run-off election, withdrew his military officers from the unified army and renewed the armed struggle. In this instance, an underfunded and undermanned U.N.-peacekeeping force proved ineffective in monitoring the provisions of the Bicesse accords on the demobilization of armed forces and the full unification of the remaining armed forces prior to the national elections.

What can be done to avert the collapse of agreements? With respect to preventing the unravelling of agreements, it is important to emphasize the transition to democracy, with its accompanying principles on power-sharing, decentralization, proportional allocations, balanced recruitment into the civil service, and competitive election systems. Provisions on power-sharing in South Africa, Namibia, and perhaps some day in Angola can reduce the threat of insecurity among minority leaders and provide an important incentive for political cooperation. It is meaningful at this point to stress the close connections between the pre-negotiation and negotiation stages and the implementation stage. In general, it seems reasonable to contend that timing and precision are vital to ensuring sustained political relationships in the post-agreement period. The earlier that such issues as demilitarization, demobilization, and elections are dealt with, the more likely it is that change will be realized. Moreover, precision about the terms of agreement is indispensable. Particularly in the delicate negotiations on bringing a civil war to a close, such questions as the demobilization of forces and the unification of armies are sensitive matters that cannot be avoided in the peace-building process. Unless the mediators and negotiating parties can develop a sense of certainty that the new rules of the game will be put into effect, extreme tensions are likely to materialize. Thus Namibia's demobilization, where South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) forces were disarmed prior to returning to the country as refugees, can be contrasted with the experience of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, where the demobilized soldiers waited at assembly points for upward to two years, meanwhile drawing down costly monthly allotments, plus severance pay equivalent to \$400. These experiences contrast, moreover, with the bleak situation of Angola, where the demobilization process was implemented erratically and incompletely, resulting in political instability and a renewal of the war. With respect to the integration of armies, it is significant that in Mozambique demobilization was slow to get under way; however, in January 1994, the

government raised hopes among many observers by announcing that Front for the Liberation of Mozambique's (FRELIMO's) Brigadier Lagos Lidimo and Mozambique National Resistance Movement's (RENAMO's) Lt. Gen. Mateus Ngonhamo had been named as Joint Supreme Commanders of the unified army.

4

Nevertheless, if the rules of the game prove ineffectual and connections among political elites unravel, what options remain in this difficult environment to re-establish regularized patterns of relationships? What leverage, if any, does the international community have at its disposal to deal with the collapsed state and its norms? In both the Sudan and Angola, various powerful state actors, unofficial mediators, and Organization of African Unity (OAU) and U.N. diplomats have issued appeals and offered various proposals. With their influence clearly circumscribed, however, they have not been able to promote a package of pressures and incentives to further cooperation. In the case of Angola, for example, the special representative of the U.N. secretary-general in Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, has sought in the 1994 talks in Lusaka to facilitate agreement on such issues as the ending of the hostilities, the second round of the presidential elections, the allocation of government positions among parties, and the creation of additional districts and provinces. Moreover, the U.S. government issued an ultimatum to the two main bargaining parties in Angola conditioning further economic aid upon their reaching some agreement by the end of March 1994. If such pressures prove insufficient, then the international community will have to combine diplomatic efforts with more coercive measures—including military and intelligence assistance to one of the combatants, the cutting off of satellite telephones, and increases in air traffic surveillance. Critical in all these initiatives is collaboration among the possible third-party actors (as happened in the negotiations over Liberia leading up to the Cotonou agreement of July 1993). With unofficial organizations (such as The Carter Center) displaying a unique ability to communicate with all sides, the United Nations and

OAU providing an internal and region-based political legitimacy, and such powerful states as the United States, Germany, and Japan providing the financial resources for effective action, a coalition may develop that may be able to influence the preferences of many-but not all-recalcitrant political actors in a cooperative direction. Certainly, a false optimism is not warranted. In light of Western reluctance to become involved in Bosnia, Rwanda, and the Sudan, there appears to be limited willingness on the part of these and other countries to become involved in peacekeeping and peacemaking initiatives. Moreover, as one analyst put it: "Not even a U.S. ultimatum appears to be enough, for now, to make UNITA and the Angola government express their willingness to alter their negotiating strategy. Time will tell whether the United States' threats bear fruit." <sup>5</sup>

## **I. CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA**

### **2. Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict**

What are the reasons behind the apparent increase in ethnic mobilization and political conflict that has followed attempts to promote political liberalization in authoritarian states? How can ethnic competition be channeled into nonviolent bargaining and power-sharing so that democratization enhances a state's capacity to mitigate and resolve such conflicts?

While ethnicity and ethnic conflict have always been important factors in the politics of most nations, that pertinence has taken on special urgency in contemporary Africa. Authoritarian regimes have employed, with varying degrees of success, different means of managing such conflicts and sharing power and resources. The process of democratization can create openings in state-centric political systems that permit sectional identities to be more freely, and even constructively, expressed. In a rapidly changing political situation, however, differences can become crystallized and subject to manipulation by political elites, often with disastrous results. Responsible promotion of democratization in

Africa must include the design of appropriate frameworks for managing potential conflicts (Ottaway).

When ethnic identities are deliberately encouraged by leaders in the pursuit of political goals, conflicts often become inevitable. Such conflicts along ethnic lines in Africa seldom occur just because of the dissolution of state-centric systems. Rather, they are more often deliberately provoked by ruling groups using the instruments of the state (Newbury). Ethnicity lends itself to manipulation by incumbent governments to split the opposition especially when political reforms are not sufficiently relevant to social demands (Longman).

Managing ethnic conflicts in democratizing countries involves developing mechanisms and institutions through which these tensions and demands can be resolved through structured dialogue. This observations suggests the need for constitutional engineering to devise political norms and institutions that facilitate bargaining and power-sharing among groups and the elimination of winner-take-all situations (Glickman). Together with a range of informal arrangements, constitutional guarantees of access to power and resources may reduce the stakes of losing out completely because of unrestrained political competition.

## **Remarks on Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict**

**by Marina Ottaway**

Georgetown University

Ethnic conflict appears to be on the increase in Africa, as it is on the increase in Europe and in Central Asia. Ethnicity in Africa thus needs to be analyzed as part of a worldwide phenomenon, not as something peculiar to that continent. The issue is not tribalism, but the resurgence of ethnic conflict in multiethnic countries experiencing a political opening.

I am making these points for several reasons. One, quite obvious, is that the idea of tribalism as a peculiar African phenomenon is still alive and well in the media discussions of conflict in Africa. We have seen a lot of this in relation to Rwanda and even to South Africa. The second reason for drawing attention to the similarity between what is happening in Africa and elsewhere is that African leaders playing the ethnic card themselves are stressing the parallels in order to give their demands greater legitimacy. The world looks down on tribalism as a primordial attitude unworthy of civilized people, but the world has long accepted nationalism as a legitimate although troublesome political force. The international community upheld the right of the Baltic States to their independence, so it should also recognize the right of African peoples who have the same aspirations. When Lucas Mangope invited official delegations from Ukraine, Lithuania, and Kazakhstan to visit Bophuthatswana, he was making exactly that point. The third reason why the parallel between increasing ethnic nationalism in Africa and in Europe is important is that we are probably witnessing a turning point in Africa concerning the issue of ethnicity. I expect that in the future formal political institutions, particularly democratic institutions, will have to take ethnicity into account. In other words, insofar as African countries move toward greater democracy, they will have to recognize the legitimacy of ethnic identities and aspirations and find ways of accommodating them in the political system, as many European countries have long been forced to do.

### **Ethnicity and Politics in the Post-Independence Period**

Two observations need to be made here:

Ethnicity was rejected as a legitimate political force by most African countries in this period. African leaders stressed nation-building, overcoming differences, and development of a common identity among all the citizens of the state. Colonial borders were declared sacred, and separatist movements were denied recognition. The only successful secessionist movement to date, that of Eritrea,

was very careful to couch its claims in the language of decolonization and the need to respect colonial borders, but African states still kept their distance. Nigeria was forced to take ethnicity into account, but it remained ambivalent. In the repeated restructuring of its federal system, it followed a two-pronged approach: 1) It sought to neutralize ethnicity by breaking up the territory occupied by the larger, most powerful groups into a number of states, and also by banning ethnic political parties. 2) But it also gave ethnic identities some recognition by giving smaller groups their own states. The repeated reshuffling of states shows that it never found a balance.

The only country that openly built formal institutions based on ethnicity was South Africa. We are all familiar with the apartheid system. Apartheid is no more, but its legacy is still there. I am not referring to the multiple socio-economic problems South Africa faces but to the fact that Africans are more familiar with a perverse rather than positive way of recognizing ethnicity in formal political systems. In European discussions of the same topic, people cite Spain and Italy, Belgium and Switzerland, i.e. positive examples of countries that have recognized ethnic diversity without sacrificing democracy. But in Africa, the best known example of a system that recognizes ethnicity as the foundation of its formal institutions is the apartheid regime. This tends to stop the discussion of the issue cold.

Ethnicity de facto has been a very important component of the political dynamics of African countries all along. Political appointments in Africa are rarely, if ever, ethnic-blind. Whether leaders carefully balance appointments to give representation to all groups or rely on narrow coalitions, ethnicity is part of the political calculus for leaders and opposition alike. I will not elaborate on this point, because we are all familiar with the issue. I am just calling attention to the discrepancy between the widespread reluctance by African governments and institutions to recognize the inevitability and legitimacy of ethnic identities and to

structure formal political institutions accordingly, and the great importance of ethnic considerations in the informal political process.

### **Political Openings and Ethnicity**

I deliberately use the word political openings rather than democratization to underline the fragility of the process of political transformation in Africa at this point. It is clear that most African countries have experienced a political opening of sorts, but in most of them the outcome remains extremely uncertain. The word democratization is an appropriate description of what is happening in some African countries, but it is premature at best in others. The term political opening can be applied much more widely.

Political openings often increase ethnic tensions because they represent a move away from state-centric political systems and enhance the importance of civil society. The post-independence African political systems were geared to protect the integrity of the state-and de facto the power of authoritarian regimes. The Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) was created to protect existing states. The rejection of ethnicity was part of the broader mechanisms that repressed civil society in order to protect the state and the incumbent government.

The resurgence of civil society is a phenomenon that has received a lot of attention in recent years. Such resurgence has taken many forms. In some cases, citizens have simply organized themselves to escape the clutches of the state-much informal economic activity falls in this category. Other manifestations of civil society represent attempts to influence the state or even to impose control on it.

Political openings change the balance between the state and existing organizations of civil society but also create the space for new organizations to form. Once existing groups force an opening, new ones can also come into

existence or become more active. A political opening also creates a power vacuum, and thus it increases all forms of competition and conflict.

Civil society affected the political process even under authoritarian regimes--an aspect of this is the importance of ethnicity I mentioned earlier. But a political opening greatly increases the political weight of civil society.

All aspects of civil society acquire greater importance. We have tended to pay a lot of attention to those that promote democracy, that is, to the freely formed Tocquevillian intermediate associations. But civil society contains a lot more, and not all of it is conducive to democracy. Many facets of civil society involve intolerance and conflict. Thus, while there can be no democracy without a major role for civil society, civil society can also destroy democracy.

Ethnic identities are an important aspect of civil society, not only in Africa, but everywhere. So are religious identities--and in fact the line between the two is not always easy to draw--as seen by the fact that the groups involved in the Bosnian conflict are Serbs, Croats, and Moslems. Political openings create the space for movements based on ethnic identities to grow, just as they create the space for other organizations of civil society to emerge. Political openings can thus be expected to increase the importance of ethnic and/or religious conflict.

Ethnic identities do not always lead to ethnic conflict. People belonging to different ethnic groups can and do live together without too many problems much of the time. But in a rapidly changing situation in which power is up for grabs, ethnic identities can easily become instruments of power and thus lead to conflict. I will return to this point.

Strengthening of ethnic identities easily becomes a major threat to the process of democratization. What makes democracy possible is the shifting of coalitions and of voters' allegiance, which create the possibility that in the future winners will

lose and losers will win. When people define their identities and interests in ethnic terms, divisions become crystallized.

Studies of ethnicity stress the fact that ethnic identities are to a large extent artificial and fluid-ancestry is always unclear and in most cases mixed, so that ethnic identification can change. But identities do not change easily in conflict situations, and identities are not always freely chosen-they can also be imposed. In South Africa, many Zulus reject the Zulu identity in favor of a South African one. But when militant, nationalist Zulus attack a township, other residents often turn against long time Zulu neighbors, without asking them whether they consider themselves to be Zulus or South Africans. In turn, these displaced families are left with little choice but to become Zulu nationalists. We see this problem in all situations of ethnic conflict. Fully one third of the population of Bosnia is ethnically mixed-the proportion is probably much higher if you look at earlier generations as well. People of mixed ancestry would greatly prefer a united multiethnic Bosnia, but the political dynamics of the country do not allow them to be simply Bosnians. In other words, in conflict situations, identities become more rigid, and people are forced to choose sides.

Once ethnic identities become crystallized, conflict increases, progress toward democracy becomes much more difficult, and a vicious circle sets in.

### **Instrumentalization of Ethnicity**

The point is often made that ethnicity in Africa is instrumentalized by leaders as a means to fulfill their own political ambitions. This is undoubtedly true. The National Party in South Africa blatantly tried to promote separate ethnic identities among Africans, in order to prevent the emergence of a common black identity. Buthelezi has been promoting "Zuluness"-rewriting history, creating symbols, inventing holidays, etc. in order to increase his own power. There is no shortage of examples one can use.

But Africa is no different from other parts of the world in this respect. Milosevic used Serbian nationalism, Zhirinovski is using Russian nationalism, etc. I do not think it is possible to make the argument that some ethnic nationalisms are genuine and have popular roots, while others are artificial and the product of the ambitions of some leaders. All nationalisms have both aspects.

Above all, no matter how ethnic nationalism develops in origin, once established it acquires a momentum of its own, and it does not disappear with the leader who tried to instrumentalize it in the first place. It is wishful thinking to believe that Zulu nationalism would disappear if Buthelezi was somehow neutralized.

In conclusion, even if it were true that some nationalisms are genuine and others simply instrumental-and I do not believe the distinction can be made in practice-the consequences would be largely the same.

## **Conclusions**

The United States is actively promoting democratization in African countries. The goal of promoting democratization is positive. There is a host of issues relating to our capacity to attain that goal, whether we know what we are doing, whether we are spending our money wisely, etc., but this is not the place to raise them.

It is clear, however, that any political opening creates the potential for an increased level of ethnic conflict. This can only worsen with time, because events in one country have a demonstrated effect on others. Thus, it is irresponsible to continue promoting democratization in Africa-or in multiethnic societies anywhere, without promoting at the same time a dialogue on what can be done to manage ethnic tensions, and on how political systems can be designed so that they will not exacerbate conflict, but will on the contrary recognize the existence of different ethnic and religious identities and accommodate them.

There is a lot of discussion in many African countries, including South Africa, on the pros and cons of federal and unitary systems. Federalism per se does not

provide an answer to ethnic tensions. Almost nowhere is it possible to create ethnically homogeneous regions-witness the convoluted map the apartheid regime had to draw. The discussion needs to go beyond federalism.

A lot of ideas have been set forth by outsiders-Donald Horowitz and Arend Lijphart are the most obvious names-on constitutional devices that can be used to bring about reconciliation in multiethnic societies. These ideas are all based on the experience of non-African countries-I have a great deal of trouble accepting the relevance of Switzerland as a model for Africa.

On a less grandiose and more practical scale, European countries, through the Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, have held a lot of discussions on and developed a wealth of ideas concerning issues such as the protection of minorities, or the creation of autonomous local governments and district governments, that can be used to ensure the democratic participation by all groups in multiethnic societies. Some of these ideas may be helpful in African countries, others completely nonapplicable. They certainly do not cover all issues of importance to Africa.

But while we should be very careful not to impose foreign solutions on African countries, we should be promoting a discussion of ethnicity in democratic political systems in Africa. Since political openings almost inevitably lead to increased ethnic tensions, we need to promote an effort to discuss how these tensions can be managed in a democratic framework. The experience of Burundi, where supposedly successful, democratic elections held under the eyes of international observers were quickly followed by a resurgence of ethnic violence, are a good reminder of why we cannot afford not to promote such discussions if we are going to promote democracy at all.

## Rwanda in the 1990s: Democratization and Disintegration

by Catharine Newbury and David Newbury

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

On April 6, 1994, a plane carrying President Juvénal Habyarimana of Rwanda crashed in suspicious circumstances as it was about to land at the Kigali airport. All on board were killed, including Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, the President of Burundi. In the wake of Habyarimana's death, Kigali was engulfed in violence and thousands of people died in what the media have described as "tribal warfare" pitting Hutu against Tutsi.

Over the next week, the violence was expanded to include rural areas. Within a month, an estimated 200,000 people had been killed, and more than 300,000 had fled to surrounding countries. Perhaps as many as 2 million people were displaced within Rwanda. With the May harvest compromised, and no further harvest possible until late December for most regions of the country, virtually the entire population of close to 8 million people was at risk of starvation.

We will never know how many perished in this cataclysm. But quantification is not necessary to realize that the scale of this catastrophe was immense. It thus raises many other important questions that need be addressed. What accounts for these massacres? What role has ethnicity played in the Rwandan crisis? Does this represent a "failed state," as many press reports suggest, or does it represent the failure of modern state structures to provide for the population? And what, if anything, do these horrific events have to do with democratization? In what follows, we contest the view often projected in the media that the Rwandan crisis is simply an example of an ethnic explosion resulting from a weakening of state power. Instead, we argue that this was a brutal political struggle, in which ethnicity was manipulated by a small clique who sought to avoid losing control of the state. And contrary to what we are told of "ancient

forces" unleashed, we see this as very much a modern problem, a product of our contemporary world, not an atavistic legacy of earlier, premodern forms of politics. In fact, this can be seen as a case of democratization gone awry, one which helps to dramatize what Philippe Schmitter has called the "dangers and dilemmas of democratization" (Schmitter 1994). Furthermore, the elements involved are not unique to Rwanda, but deeply embedded in the nature of contemporary political struggle; there are broader lessons to be learned from this horror.

Despite assertions of Rwandan government officials to the contrary, it is clear that the massacres have resulted from a coup d'état by a small clique in the military forces. The evidence suggests that this assassination was a calculated, deliberate act, with the ultimate purpose of neutralizing the democratic movement at all levels, using the confusion of Habyarimana's death as a pretext. To be sure, it was carried out under the cover of an "ethnic conflict," a cry which resonates with both groups in Rwanda—those who see Tutsi as colonial exploiters and those who see Tutsi as recent victims. And indeed the fighting quickly took on a marked ethnic character—but one clearly provoked and orchestrated by the competing armies, most especially by the Presidential Guard and its allies. Yet an analysis of what happened in the wake of Habyarimana's death and the patterns of the massacres suggest an alternative understanding. In fact, it is clear that in this case—as in many others—ethnic conflict was a derivative factor of the conflict, a political strategem, not a causal factor or a simple case of "primordial tribal hatred" unleashed.

Arguing this is not to deny the salience of ethnicity in Rwandan political processes, however. Indeed, in this case, ethnicity has been effective as a factor of mobilization precisely because of its perceived importance by the actors. And ethnic tensions in the country were already aggravated for various reasons. One of these was the 1990 invasion of Rwanda by an armed force calling itself the

Rwandan Patriotic Front, a group formed primarily of the descendants of Tutsi refugees from the civil wars of the early 1960s, challenging a Hutu dominated regime in Rwanda. Nonetheless despite the importance of ethnicity, this is far from "tribal warfare" following on "centuries of conflict," as often portrayed in U.S. press accounts. "Tribal warfare" conjurs up images of a spontaneous, widespread, chaotic outburst of violence. But this slaughter in Rwanda consisted of a planned, calculated, and directed policy of killing unarmed civilians by militias armed and orchestrated by the Rwandan army and its political allies. Pending a full inquiry, explanations of the crash that killed Habyarimana can only be tentative, but the circumstantial evidence forms a clear pattern. The plane was shot down by one or several rockets fired from a location in the vicinity of the camp of the Presidential Guard, near the airport; subsequently, the Guard did not permit U.N. observers access to the plane for examination. Within hours of the crash, the Presidential Guard had set up roadblocks around the capital, and the government radio station broadcast announcements calling upon people to remain calm and stay in their homes. Meanwhile, members of the Presidential Guard went house to house with lists of people to be killed. Among the first targets of the violence were opposition leaders involved in the struggle for democratization, both Hutu and Tutsi. These included the Prime Minister (a Hutu woman, Agathe Uwilingiyimana) and several ministers from opposition parties. Soldiers and gangs of militia armed with guns, grenades, and machetes were sent out to kill "rebels," defined as all Tutsi and any Hutu regarded as opponents of the MRND (the former ruling party) and the CDR (an extremist Hutu exclusivist party closely tied to the MRND). Elites, intellectuals, merchants, and clergy were particularly targeted, but all Tutsi and Hutu who were not members of the MRND or the CDR were prominent victims. There was a regional dimension to these killings as well: Since the Habyarimana regime was dominated by people from the northwest of the country, anyone from outside this region was suspect and likely to be targeted.

In short, immediately after the attack on the plane, the Presidential Guard and certain elements in the Rwandan army implemented what was clearly a pre-arranged, deliberate, and systematic plan to destroy the pro-democracy movement in the country and to eliminate internal opposition to the Habyarimana regime. In fact in some areas, notably Cyangugu, in the southwest, the killings started before April 6, and it was common knowledge in Kigali over the weeks before the assassination that political conditions had reached a crisis point: Many people had sent their children out of Kigali.

It is likely that the presidential plane was attacked in an attempt to thwart implementation of the power-sharing arrangements specified in the Arusha Peace Accord reached in August 1993. This agreement had brought a cease-fire to the three-year civil war sparked off by the invasion of Rwanda in October 1990 by the Rwandan Patriotic Front. At the time of his death, President Habyarimana had just negotiated the process by which these accords would be implemented, and thus bring an end to the fighting on the northern border. Part of this agreement was the establishment of a multiparty government, with certain defined ministerial posts to go to members of the RPF.

More important to understanding these events, however, Habyarimana also had committed himself to restructure the armed forces. By this accord, troops from the Rwandan army would comprise 60 percent of the reconstructed army, RPF personnel, 40 percent. The officer corps would achieve parity. This arrangement, in turn, would require the demobilization of large numbers of recent recruits to the Rwandan army, recruits who had no other employment awaiting them outside the army. Thus the Arusha accord threatened the army-and the privileged status of the Presidential Guard within the army-on three counts:

- It would end the fighting, and thus reduce the prominence of the army within the recent political configuration of the regime;
- It would end the hegemony within the governing circles of the small clique around President Habyarimana, including the army officers, by enlarging cabinet positions to those outside the single ruling party; and

- It would demobilize large numbers of enlisted men without the skills-or the land-for other employ.

The violence that ensued was different from anything Rwanda has ever experienced; it was not simply "another round" in a cycle of recurring violence. Although the RPF then entered the fighting, claiming to free the country from the mass murders, fighting between RPF forces on the one hand, and the Rwandan army forces (including the Presidential Guard), on the other, was not the main cause of deaths. Most of the killing was carried out by gangs of militia supported and directed by Rwandan army soldiers. In this catastrophe, gender was no refuge; not only men, but women and children were slaughtered. And churches were no sanctuary; tens of thousands were killed seeking refuge in the churches, mostly women and children. The violence of the militias has been promoted-some say guided and provoked-by broadcasting from an extremist radio station associated with an extremist political party. It is important to note that most of those killed were unarmed civilians; the killing in Rwanda has resulted not from conflict or confrontation, but from simple slaughter, in later stages directed primarily against members of the Tutsi ethnic category. Indeed, it is hard to avoid the conclusion reached by human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch/Africa and Amnesty International that this is genocide.

In this paper we wish to suggest some of the connections between fledgling-but vigorous-democratization movement in Rwanda and the turmoil that Rwandans have experienced. By reviewing the larger political context and historical social processes at work in Rwanda, we hope to raise questions about the stresses associated with such political transitions-or at least with this particular transition. For the cataclysm unfolding in Rwanda raises troubling questions about concepts and strategies. What is needed to achieve democratization in contexts where most of the population are very poor, and where an entrenched military apparatus (or competing military forces) are unwilling to yield the power and perquisites acquired through the authoritarian state? And where demobilization

threatens the prospects of youthful recruits with no education, no land, and no jobs?

Democratization is never uncontested terrain; but under these circumstances, where regime change provides little hope for those outside the political elite, the very concept of democracy is contested, not just the personnel and parties that hold power. Peasants and the poor seek to be included, not simply to decide who will benefit from the perquisites of power. And often they remain aloof from democratic processes as defined in the West. But they do not opt out of the political process from a lack of understanding of "democracy" but from a very precise understanding of what formal democracy means in this form and in these circumstances—the consolidation of power among a privileged oligarchy in a situation of increasing class differentiation. Furthermore, the dramatic proliferation of arms in recent years means that this "contested terrain" around the movement to democracy becomes a particularly lethal political topography. We argue that not only did Rwanda's catastrophe result from the administration's specific moves toward multiparty governance, but also that the reaction to these moves was premised on a basic contradiction between procedural democracy and the aspirations of the urban and rural poor in this extremely poor country. In fact, the strategies of those working for democracy along Western terms—and the way in which they and their external patrons define it—only mocked the realities of the social situation faced by the vast majority of the people in the country. What rural people want most of all is a change in the material conditions of their lives; they define democracy as a change in those social relations which perpetuate and consolidate the condition of their lives. What elites compete over, however, is access to the reins of power; democratization to them is seen as a process by which they gain access to those perquisites.

This discussion also relates to a wider debate over the nature of ethnicity and democratization, a debate molded largely in terms appropriate to European

struggles over democratization. In many writings, the universal aspirations of the models involved mean that Western procedures are prescribed as legitimate-even necessary-everywhere, even where the social conditions and political processes are very different. The common model to emerge from the recent history of Eastern Europe is that a strong state, along the lines of the Soviet behemoth, suppressed long-standing ethnic and national identities. With the collapse of Soviet hegemony, so such analysis asserts, these pre-existing identities and entities "re-emerged" and took center stage in the political process. While this argument may or may not be valid in understanding East European events, it is at best only a dubious working hypothesis for many African contexts. Ethnicity here, we argue, becomes important in the political process as the line of least resistance by which politicians seek to mobilize support in the new political context, rather than as a pre-existing concept ready to surge to the forefront with any erosion in state power. To the contrary, in many cases in Africa these conflicts result precisely from the overweening power of the state, not from the dissolution of state power. In other words, in many instances the contemporary state in Africa is not a buffer to chaos and insecurity; state power is the major purveyor of these ills, and often state policies aggravate communitarian conflicts among competing ethnic groups. Though they be weak relative to outside forces, state structures in Africa often form a very powerful presence in the lives of the people. This has all been said before, but rarely has it been shown with such drama as in Rwanda today.

There is, to be sure, an important ethnic dimension to the current conflicts in Rwanda. But the facility with which this leads to misunderstanding makes it more imperative to be clear about the nature of this dynamic. This is at root a political struggle over who will control the state, and a struggle which occurs in the context of multiple crises; the interactive effect of these crises has served to magnify their social impact. It is thus important to account for the manner in which political authorities used ethnicity as a tool by which to mobilize-or

rationalize-political action. In this case, where past external concepts of ethnicity are so powerful, it is also important to examine the meaning of ethnicity in the competition over power between the government, the invading force, the opposition parties, and the human rights groups in Rwanda, for that will tell us much about the nature of our assumptions as well as carry clues to the nature of social interaction in Rwanda.

Therefore, while ethnicity looms large in Western press accounts, the analysis of April 6 must start with the state. Over the past four years, the government of Juvenal Habyarimana faced a series of severe crises that profoundly affected the relation of the people to the government and to the governing elites. These included an economic disaster, a major famine, internal demands for democratization, pressure from Western governments on which Rwanda depended, and a military invasion from the north. Many were linked to each other, and they were all tied to the ongoing process of political liberalization. It was in the conjunction of these factors, we argue, that ethnicity became a salient factor in the political equation.

In the economic sphere, the catalytic event in the economic sphere occurred in 1989, with the instantaneous and catastrophic drop-by about 50 percent-in the international price of coffee. This was a threat both to the state and to the people. Coffee exports account for around 70 percent of Rwanda's foreign exchange earnings; more importantly for the democratization process, coffee is the only significant cash crop for the vast majority of Rwanda's rural population. The immediate governmental responses were a dramatic cutback on social spending and a freeze on hiring. Perhaps more important, this led to increased dependence on the international financial institutions, including the imposition of a Structural Adjustment Program for the first time. Before then, Rwanda had been one of the last African countries to submit to such a Structural Adjustment Program.

A second economic phenomenon of the 1980s was the marked growth of an aggressive bourgeoisie and the increased concentration of wealth in land, in town houses in Kigali and opulent rural estates, in private schools for the privileged elites, and in other prominent forms of class distinctions. This did not go unnoticed in this small country characterized by extremely close-knit interrelations and massive rural poverty. Over the same time span, the production of export crops was re-emphasized by the government. Yet rural producers preferred to grow food, both for their own consumption and for sale in the internal market. Food crops provided a hedge against a poor harvest. More than that, peasants say they could earn more by entering the internal food market than by the production of coffee for export, and many external economists agreed with this assessment. But because coffee exports were so essential for Rwanda's foreign exchange earnings, the government felt constrained to require coffee production at the expense of local food production. It was, for example, illegal for a cultivator to cut down coffee trees to plant other crops. In this context, the terms of trade moved significantly against peasant producers, and this was highlighted against the obvious growth in class distinctions. In 1982, the cost of importing one Mercedes amounted to the earnings from ten tons of coffee or the equivalent of 40 years of work days by a peasant farmer. The peasants did not have access to the figures, but they were not unaware of the growing differences between classes represented in these calculations.

A poor harvest in 1989 led to famine and several hundred deaths, particularly in the southern areas of Rwanda. Many more faced severe hardship, either outright hunger or economic hardship from the need to purchase food at the exorbitant prices that marked an economy of scarcity. Furthermore, this occurred in the wake of the coffee price drop; hence the abrupt rise in food prices came at a time of abrupt decline in peasant earnings. It also happened at just the time of a cutback in government support, for lack of foreign exchange reserves. Thus the decline in commodity prices and the hardships of the famine were not unrelated,

for many people were unable to purchase food in the private market for lack of funds, at just the time the government was moving more toward the privatization of food distribution and the reduction of government services, to accommodate the stipulations of the Structural Adjustment Program.

In this conjuncture, several hundred people died, but many more took note of where their government stood; they also noted that the private transporters did not suffer economically from the increased demand for food. It is not irrelevant, perhaps, that Rwanda faced the distinct possibility of another food crisis again this year. The political crisis occurred at the height of the major growing season, with an expected harvest in mid-May, and the harvest in many areas was predicted to be below normal. For most areas of Rwanda, the next harvest would not occur until late December or early January. While there was no casual relationship between the two, public support for and confidence in the government was clearly in ebb.

Over the same period (1989-94) the Habyarimana government also had been subjected to increasing demands for political reforms and greater democratization, both from within and from the outside. These pressures had an important impact on a regime that had been in power for 20 years, especially in the context of evident class formation on a major scale. In July 1990, Habyarimana had announced some reforms, but these fell short of full multiparty participation in the political process. Nonetheless, the tactical initiative at this time was clearly in the hands of the democratization movement, and in September, the president appointed a Commission of Synthesis to tour the country and collect ideas for political reform. The invasion by the Rwandan Patriotic Front occurred less than a month later, in the midst of this process, and just as Habyarimana is said to have also reached an agreement moving towards the partial integration of Rwandan refugees living in Uganda; this latter fact could not

have failed to have been known by the leaders of the RPF, with close ties to the Museveni regime in Uganda, the other party to this agreement.

As a result of the invasion by the RPF, there resulted two contradictory political processes within Rwanda, processes which most probably represented powerful divisions within the government and the governing elite. On the one hand, in the wake of the military invasion, the army and certain administrative agents engaged in the firm repression of opponents of the government. This resulted in serious human rights abuses, well documented by Africa Watch observers. Simultaneously, the government moved, slowly and in a highly controlled fashion, toward the implementation of internal political reforms. In June 1991 the government promulgated a new constitution that recognized opposition parties. But the initiatives were not only from above. From the perspective of the competition over defining democracy, it was equally important that there also emerged a proliferation of newspapers, pamphlets and other publications, many of them ardently involved in the discussions of new political forms and new meanings for democracy. In the competition over defining democracy, these publications provided a truly remarkable outlet for the grievances, concerns, and demands of a wide variety of groups within Rwandan civil society. Among these voices was a very active "peasant syndicate," articulating powerfully held peasant demands; in addition, plans were drawn up for a rural radio station to serve the same constituency. The new climate also permitted the organization of human rights groups, and these were to prove a major catalyst for the reaction of the army in early April 1994, at least judging from their early targets. By April 1992, then, a new government was in place that represented a coalition of opposition parties and the ruling forces.

Thus the invasion of 1990 was an extremely important catalyst in the events to follow. It led to severe repression on the part of the army, which in turn spawned engaged commentary on the part of a visible and active human rights

community. It led to the vast expansion of the army in both personnel and in sophisticated armaments. And it led to the crystallization of a template of ethnic identity. The Rwandan army, and particularly the Presidential Guard, presented itself as the "defender of the Revolution"-a reference to the revolution of 1959-62, in which a Tutsi monarchy had been replaced by a Hutu-dominated republic, to be succeeded in 1973 by a regionally based regime. The appeal was clearly to portray the invaders as Tutsi who intended to reinstate the monarchical apparatus of the colonial period. All three of these factors-invasion, ethnicity, and increased militarization-were to assume great prominence in the destruction of Rwandan society after April 6 and were likely to become, to some degree, an enduring part of the reconstructed political landscape-and political discourse-over the coming months and years, as Rwandans move to reconstruct their social vision in the wake of this horrible cataclysm.

As we write, the crisis continues. In a context where events are moving rapidly and where the larger structural factors are sometimes obscured by the enormity of the human catastrophe occurring in central Africa today, it might be well to end by recalling the comments of Gregoire Kayibanda, the first President of Rwanda after decolonization in 1962. As early as 1954, Kayibanda had begun to recognize the importance of linkages between educated elites and the concerns of rural people. But he was also acutely aware of the internal threats to those linkages-threats to come from the elites themselves. He argued forcefully that rather than rejecting rural people, the elites should attempt to help them in their "struggle against their moral, intellectual, and economic distress." This is something the elites of the 1980s in Rwanda manifestly did not do. They flouted their material wealth and revelled in their newfound class differences instead of following Kayibanda's observation that they need to spend time with people in the hills, to come to know their aspirations, their distress, their complaints. They needed to understand the injustices of which these people were the victims. Without saying so directly, he argued that the elites needed to remain cognizant

of the conditions of class formation, conditions that indeed had made them into elites.

The leaders of the 1980s, who had locked Kayibanda away to his death, forgot the message. Not that the jacquerie of 1994 can be characterized as a popular uprising-far from it. But because the "democratic" leadership had forfeited almost all credibility in the eyes of the population at large, the military clique was able to carry out their agenda without significant internal opposition and able to co-opt many who would not otherwise have joined. Kayibanda referred not to the army members but to their primary victims-the political elite-of the 1980s when he noted:

"These islands of Europeanized intellectuals could sooner or later find themselves uprooted by mounting waves of the exasperated popular masses. This `populace' which supposedly is `dormant' also poses a problem and if the rural evolues were not there, their absence would hasten the day when the `populace,' harassed and worn out, not discerning very clearly any more `the brothers who do nothing for them' would be opposed not only to exoticism [i.e., rule by a different ethnic group], but also, and even more intensely, to their brothers of the same race." (L'ami No. 110, February 1954, 694.)

Thus in the 1950s, Kayibanda argued for the irreducible need to truly open up lines of communication-and to recognize the mutual dependence-between peasants and political elites, and that the burden for such initiatives lay with the elites. Such an approach was important not only to combat the growing political hegemony of an increasingly closed political class but also to protect leaders from being implicated as accomplices of the oppressive system. He warned his fellow Hutu evolues not to separate themselves from the concerns of the masses; even to protect their own privileged status, he argued, elites needed to recognize their responsibilities toward the primary needs of the peasant majority.

In fact, Kayibanda was referring to the position of rural people living under an arrogant and exploitative Tutsi monarchy. But in the 1980s, some of the same conditions continued to prevail, only this time they did so under an arrogant and exploitative developmentalism—those who for the most part were tied to foreign development organizations and international agencies. How many of the new parties truly addressed the issues central to the concerns of the rural population, in this largely rural society?

Kayibanda fought against an arrogant and exploitative monarchical regime in the 1950s, but his words applied equally to the arrogance and exploitation of an increasingly autocratic regime in the 1980s. He may have misidentified the specifics of the process, but in identifying the larger danger, he was a prophet.

## **Democratic Ethnic Conflict Management in Africa** by Harvey Glickman

Haverford College

"There is now an open war between the army and these [Burundi] Hutu mercenaries... *Ethnicity has become an alibi for obtaining power.* We entered into democracy without having the means of dealing with it. The process was too rapid. There was no time to form political leaders. So parties formed on the simple criteria of ethnicity. With Rwanda, we have in common inexperience in democracy and ineptitude in managing power." [1](#)

### **From Conflict to Competition**

Ethnic and sectional conflict, hidden and often forcibly suppressed by authoritarian regimes, wells up as politics become freer, and as competitive elections occur, not as repetitions of ancient blood feuds (a favorite newspaper phrase), but as strategies of political combat, which erupt into violence in the absence of institutional arrangements to distribute rewards. Managing power that

recognizes ethnic group politics, rather than eliminating ethno-political expression, then emerges as the primary counter-strategy. That is the thesis of this paper.

Africa continues to demonstrate a range of political vectors with regard to ethnicity and politics. The warlord politics of Somalia or the savage massacres of Rwanda are widely reported but are unrepresentative of policy trends that address ethnicity in circumstances of liberalized politics and the search for popular consent. The spectrum of political maneuverings of the past few years in African states illustrate-not unexpectedly-ambivalence in dealing with ethnicity in an open and competitive political arena. Governments demonstrate wide divergence: the urge toward abolition, on the one hand (as in Uganda), and group representation (as in Ethiopia), on the other. But the spectrum spans positions in between: the attempt to overcome ethnic divisions by banning expressions of ethnicity in politics (Burundi), the practice of representing ethnic grouping when faced with the necessities of governance (The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire), the fear of ethnic group domination by out groups or groups with minority status (Djibouti, Ghana), the rewarding of ethnic group supporters and the underlining of ethnic connection as a ticket to power (Togo, Chad). As politics becomes more open, each of these trends spawns opposing forces as well. The argument here assumes that respect for liberty and pluralism invites the airing of cultural and social differences, and especially in the African context, where there is a rich history of the mobilization of ethnic sentiments in politics in open moments and the healthy respect for ethnic attachments when the system is closed. Not new, or original with me, this view and its implications for federalism, was expressed by W. Arthur Lewis, the eminent political economist and adviser to governments, after his service in Ghana. <sup>2</sup> Further, the argument is that despite the persistence of various forms of ethnopolitics in all African states, political democracy remains the instrument to deal with it. One reason is the historical character of ethnicity in most African states. Despite bloody

Rwanda, ethnic expression remains mostly instrumental and situational, rather than primordial, and responds to interest-based strategies. Second, as illustrated today in South Africa, certain constitutional practices (i.e., regularized restraints on government), such as federalism, a constitutional court, rights protection, proportional representation in voting, and an executive branch of national unity, are coming to be recognized as permitting the expression of ethnic differences in constructive ways. Third, ethnic conflict is not incompatible with institutions of democratic government, if it finds expression as a group interest among other interests, and if the means of expression provide openings for rewards and not merely sure defeats and deprivation, and, finally, if the process of competition holds out some promise of peaceful change.

Ethnic conflict does not disappear with modernization and development. Ethnic conflict does not diminish as people increase inter-communication. Ethnic conflict is part of the problem of factions and sectionalism in a plural society; it has been constructively attacked from the perspective of conflict management and institutional engineering within existing states. <sup>3</sup>

A democratization process that tames ethnic conflict would include processes and, quite likely, outcomes that reward inter-ethnic coalition making and moderation of demands, and that share or divide power on a functional or territorial basis. Thus dealing with the issue of ethnic group conflict on an institutional basis in the process of democratization contributes to the establishment and stabilization of democratic government.

A concerted effort to institutionalize the devices of *constitutional* democracy, devices that recognize restraints on government AND restraints on populist democracy, is required. The issue of ethnic group competition in the present era of democratization is one of control, not elimination. Managing conflict,

channeling ethnic group conflict into competition, reducing and aiming for the elimination of violence in politics, that is the main issue.

### **Elections, Federalism, and Ethnopolitics**

Multipartyism is now at least formally proposed or actively considered or instituted in all but a handful of African states. While the record of African party competition in coping with ethnic conflict is not auspicious, a successful transition to democracy is legitimized only by an election. We can distinguish between the act of an election and the rules which govern the competition process, i.e., define the path to accepted results. Second, we need to distinguish between the power-distributing role of an election and numerous other ways interests and identities can be represented. And third, the time period between elections and the scope of election choices (numbers affected) need exploration.

**Elections and Minority Exclusion.** The evidence is mixed as to whether recent competitive elections have uniformly invoked ethno-regional sentiments and reflected results that match parties to ethnic groups. For example, Mauritius, perhaps the only example of a functioning democracy in a *communally* divided society, has been governed in a stable fashion with cross-communal coalition parties. Patterns of ethnic cooperation, not only competition, can be discerned in the presidential and parliamentary elections in a number of states since 1990. Nevertheless, these results have accrued within largely inherited election and representation systems. Backsliding and breakdowns must be expected especially when competitive elections replace rulers in a "bifurcated regime." In Burundi and Rwanda, elections within the past year reproduced the divisions apparent in the previous military regimes, despite the efforts of elected presidents to reach out to the elements of the disaffected minority. Similar divisions are being manipulated by political leaders in Togo and Congo-Brazzaville. Another example of elections leading to a pattern of ethnic exclusionism is the perceived domination by a minority ethnic group (s) after a

manipulated election, such as the Kalenjin in Kenya, the Beti and Bulu in Cameroon, and the Ewe in Ghana. (These descriptions are subject to dispute by knowledgeable observers.) In the case of Ethiopia, in which a guerrilla war defeated ethnic authoritarianism, the Oromo boycotted the subsequent election charging Tigrayan domination of the government. (A post-election phenomenon is maintaining a landslide: an inclusive coalition that overthrows authoritarian rule, such as in Zambia, that lasts too long. The victorious MMD may have been "too" inclusive, in that previously excluded groups could not share in the rewards of victory proportionate to their perceived deprivation, thus leading to splinter opposition parties that reflect ethnic group disappointments.

**Election Rules and Strategies.** Elections can be structured so that they reduce chances of exclusionsim. It is interesting how little straying there has been from the colonial inheritance in decision rules for electoral choice in African states. First-past-the-post plurality election contests increase the chances for minority groups to win constituencies and regionalize parties in ethnically divided societies. Second ballot majority systems induce some coalition building but freeze out small minorities. Proportional representation and multimember districts, in effect in a number of countries in the world, can (though not always) yield bargaining incentives toward consensus politics. Until the major exception of the South African transition election, only Namibia adopted proportional representation for elections to its lower chamber, and Mozambique agreed to PR in the peace treaty between Frelimo and Renamo. (No more on PR need be added here. In an accompanying paper, the electoral system and the contribution of proportional representation in advancing democratization in Africa today is the subject of an incisive discussion by Goran Hyden. [4](#))

Donald Horowitz has emphasized the attractiveness of a "Malaysian-type" solution, pre-election vote pooling, leading to a multiethnic governing coalition. [5](#) But this occurs most easily where the country is almost evenly divided between

two large groups, where the groups compete in the constituencies of high population-in other words where neither group can win on its own-and where there are still substantial rewards outside government, in the private sector. This has not yet been reproduced in Africa. Nevertheless the thrust is constructive. The objective is to reward inter-ethnic moderation. It will not eliminate ethnic flanking parties; in fact the development of moderate and extremist wings within an ethnic group can be systemically helpful. African ethnic parties have paid little attention to pre-election vote pooling.

**Elections and Representation.** National elections recruit participants, legitimize decisions, and represent partisan groups, but they do not foreclose representation and participation by claimant groups. Liberalizing political systems also mean the growth of civil society. The same enlargement of politics that permits the coagulation of ethnic identities also permits a richer associational life and thus enhancement of opportunity for access to and pressure on government, via church, trade union, profession, producer co-operative, etc. Institutions of government, such as *ombuds*-type citizen advocates and judicial review, combined with constitutional guarantees for group and individual rights, also multiply opportunities for protecting ethnic group identities, thus reducing the decisiveness of the election moment and its perceived result.

Multiplying elective offices and differentiating the scope of their authority give minorities several chances to affect policies, reducing loser-lose-everything anxieties. Not all elections need to directly connect individual citizens to government. Indirect elections, in which people elect electors, such as the U.S. presidential electoral college, balance dispersed minorities and focused majorities. Elections for group-based or geographically based second chambers can have the same effect as indirect elections in providing alternative representation for ethnic groups vulnerable to permanent minority status in democratic elections. Traditional chieftainship never disappeared as a parallel

line of authority to public government in African states. Its institutional revival in second chambers at the national and provincial level in constitutional democratic states bears further exploration.

**Federalism.** Elections in multiregional, multilevel federal systems, with winning and losing outcomes for ethnoregional parties, give such parties mixed stakes in the overall system. Staggering national, provincial, and local elections creates time for bargaining upward in cases of small minorities and problems of cross-cutting pressures for larger minorities or majority ethnic parties. Federalism, conversely, modifies the effects of the perceived threat of exclusion, by counteracting the tendency of a regional majority/national minority to dominate. (In an accompanying paper, which places ethnic politics in Africa within a world context, Marina Ottaway is less sanguine about the utility of federalism in African states. [6](#))

At one extreme democracy may come down to a question of informal consociationalism and federalism or partition. The new South Africa may come to be compared with versions of the grand coalition of parties with mutual veto (classic consociationalism [7](#)). In other parts of the world this works for a time under two conditions that will be tested in South Africa: the equal ability of party elites to deliver their mass following on a number of key policy issues; and good prospects to distribute the rewards of winning to all groups. The independence of Eritrea reopens the issue of popularly acceptable territorial boundaries, not only for Ethiopia, but for Africa as a whole. Somalia's future stability and political formula may be tied to recognizing the repartition of the Somalilands, which to some considerable extent has already taken place and is defended by clan regional alliances. Shaba has declared its independence from Zaire. The forcible reunification of Sudan resubmerges an ethnic struggle of more than two decades, promising continued internal opposition and oppositions in exile. Pre-election maneuvering in recent years has exposed rifts between Zanzibar and

mainland Tanzania, between the Cabinda enclave and the rest of Angola, and between Casamance and northern Senegal. Ethiopia has proclaimed a constitution based on ethnically determined federalism.

At the other extreme is a federalism that counteracts ethnicity by prescribing provincial boundaries in sufficient number to cut across previously strong expressions of ethno-regionalism. Nigeria remains the exemplar of creativity in constitutional and electoral engineering to strengthen cross-cutting cleavages and the worst in putting its results into practice. "The operation was successful, but the patient died," killed by the military and by kleptocracy, but not by attempts at ethnic conflict management. Another positive contribution to rewards for inter-ethnic moderation can come from federalism that maintains a stake in a strong central government, so that regionally strong ethnic parties can find coalition partners at the level of central government. Something like this seems to have been operating in achieving the temporary constitutional compromise in South Africa now in place after the election of April 1994. Inkatha and the Nationalists, junior partners in the national governing coalition, have each won at the sub-national provincial level.

***Sequencing Elections.*** Finally, we have discussed reducing the scope and therefore the stakes of elections by utilizing federalism, but the role of elections in the sequence of events in a transition toward democracy remains significant. So a key question on elections would be how can we hold elections whose results are not destabilizing. Perhaps elections better serve stable democracy when they come relatively late in the process of democratization, rather than early. For example, the national conference in Benin and the CODESA and other negotiations in South Africa (which preceded PR voting and an executive of national unity) both suggest that a considerable time period of discussion before actual elections reduce (though do not eliminate) their destabilizing potential.

### **Conclusion: Constitutionalizing Democracy and Privatizing Rewards**

Ethnic conflict is not Africa's only problem. Other powerful, debilitating forces are at work. Weak and debt-ridden economies of low or zero growth, the increasing gap between the well-off and the poor, the spreading normality of graft and corruption, the continuing strength of the military and the widespread availability of small arms all also undermine the urgency and continuing support of a government by popular consent. Some sort of elected governments likely will survive in many post-authoritarian African states, not least because they channel domestic pressure and satisfy international standards. Naked authoritarianism pays a higher price for survival than 10 years ago.

Nevertheless ethnic and regional pluralism will have to be reflected in the practices of competitively elected governments. It is a pattern that has been recognized in the politics of all African states for many years. It seems clear that participation by ethnic groups and ethnic parties in democratized politics will not be eliminated, and it will be suppressed only by undermining democracy. Ethnic loyalty continues to play a positive role for many people, offering security, reciprocity, and protection of interests in an environment of vulnerability. The sense that ethnic communities are in political competition will not go away, and is behind the formation of parties as politics is liberalized. In most other African states the problem persists of the great gap between the proximate rewards of winning office, thus controlling public resources; and not. There is low incentive for sharing and high reward for not sharing when public office "is the only game in town." Africa needs a larger private sector as an arena for rewards and achievement.

If victory in electoral politics literally means winner take all, and there is nothing in government for political losers and nothing outside of government, then ethnic party competition will polarize into ethnic conflict accompanied by violence and

probably slide back into authoritarian rule and military dictatorship. That is why a variety of constitutionalizing devices are worth exploring, part of the process of democratization, because they offer political space in which groupings do not get wiped out-in which powers can countervail.

## **Democratization and Civil Society: The Case of Rwanda**

**by Timothy Longman**

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Most recent discussions of democratization in Africa have focused on a handful of changes in the structure and operation of the state-constitutional and legal reforms, the multiplication of political parties, the organization of elections. Although these changes in the central institutions of rule have made a positive contribution to the expansion of personal liberties and popular control of government in some countries, they are but one aspect of a much broader process of social and political change sweeping the African continent. In most countries, state reform has been a reaction to substantial transformations occurring in the society. Public attitudes toward authority and the exercise of power have been changing, and people have organized themselves into numerous new associations to pursue their interests, usually outside the sphere of state control.

Reforms to state structures adopted to respond to the changing social circumstances appear in many countries to offer only cosmetic changes to the conduct of politics. The new competitive parties involve familiar faces carrying on politics in familiar ways. They often have little connection to the emerging associations, and as a result they garner little public support. Governments meanwhile continue to undermine reforms that could seriously reshape structures of power. Government officials frustrate effective popular opposition both by accepting cosmetic changes to co-opt or appease many elites and by

harassing and intimidating opponents. In many countries, government officials have fostered ethnic conflict in an effort to "divide and conquer."

For serious democratic improvement to occur in African countries, therefore, the simple adoption of the Western trappings of democracy is insufficient.

Institutional reforms must respond more effectively to changes in civil society. Links need to be drawn between states, which in Africa have often been unresponsive to the conditions and needs of the population, and the burgeoning number of associations to which people have increasingly turned for protection and assistance. Social reforms need to be supported and financed rather than viewed as irrelevant or hostile to democratization. The tragedy of Rwanda demonstrates the dangerous social and political deterioration that can take place when state reforms and social demands do not coincide.

### **Political Reform in Rwanda**

The process of social and political reform began in Rwanda in the late 1980s. In the first decade after President Juvénal Habyarimana assumed power in a 1973 coup d'état, he earned substantial support at home and abroad by calming ethnic tensions and presenting an image of honest government and competent economic management. Significant international investment financed major improvements in the infrastructure, and the economy showed modest growth. The benefits of this growth, however, accrued to a small elite, primarily individuals associated with the government, while the majority of the population experienced declining standards of living.

In the 1980s, the economy turned sour, then declined sharply when the price of Rwanda's main export, coffee, plummeted. The peasantry found themselves facing increasingly harsh conditions, while government employees and their friends continued to enrich themselves by demanding bribes for the execution of

their duties and embezzling government funds. Public disillusionment with the government increased, encouraging a belief in many quarters that the country needed new leadership. To preserve his hold on office, Habyarimana moved to consolidate power in the hands of trusted allies, primarily from his home region and family.

The declining international tolerance for authoritarian government and the proliferation of democracy movements across the globe in the late 1980s influenced the political climate in Rwanda, suggesting to many people that political reform was not only justified but possible. In 1988, *Kinyamateka*, an independent Catholic newspaper that was instrumental in the rise of Hutu politicians to power in Rwanda in the last days of colonial rule, began to publish stories that violated media standards set by the government. The paper printed accounts of official corruption and of the extravagant lifestyles of some government officials, and it described a famine in the south of the country. By violating the taboos against stories critical of government officials and challenging government claims of good economic management, *Kinyamateka* inspired an explosion of free press in Rwanda. In 1989 and 1990, a large number of new publications appeared representing various political positions. The government attempted to contain the press by arresting journalists, but ever more candid critiques of the government continued to appear.

The expansion of press freedom in Rwanda helped both to express general public disillusionment and to clarify reasons for discontent with the government. Throughout 1990, pressure rapidly grew for a wide variety of state reforms. Southerners complained about bias in education, employment, and state expenditures in favor of the north, Habyarimana's home region, and Tutsi complained about their near exclusion from the administration and the army. Calls arose in various quarters for an end to the political monopoly of the Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND). Political

dissidents demanded a separation of party and state, the elimination of mandatory membership in the MRND, and the legalization of opposition parties. Public criticism mounted against official corruption, disregard for the law by state personnel, and animation, required displays of loyalty to the state and the MRND. Peasants objected increasingly to umuganda, a program of required communal work, for which they felt they provided an unfair portion of the labor while receiving little of the benefit.

The Catholic bishops released pastoral letters in February and May 1990 that expressed dismay at the growing ethnic, regional, and class tensions in Rwanda. The bishops condemned regionalism, nepotism, corruption, and the use of public office for personal gain, and they supported human rights and press freedom. In early June, a minor disagreement at a concert in the university city of Butare broke into a fight in which gendarmes shot one student dead and injured five others. Strikes and demonstrations took place in Butare and in Ruhengeri, the location of another university campus. Seeking to quell the growing discontent with his government, Habyarimana announced in July that he would begin a process of reform. He would appoint a commission to chart the country's political future, allow free discussion of ideas, and reform animation and umuganda. Nevertheless, pressures for reform continued to build. A group of leading intellectuals published an open letter in September detailing demands for reform and calling for a national conference. The editor of *Kinyamateka*, who, along with several of his writers, was brought to trial for sedition, used his court appearance as a forum for expressing complaints against the government. Late in the month, the president, as promised, appointed a national commission to chart political reform.

In addition to the economic and political challenges confronting Habyarimana at home, the status of Rwandan refugees living abroad posed an international problem throughout the 1980s. Thousands of refugees, mostly Tutsi who fled

violence in the 1950s and 1960s, live outside Rwanda, where they remain vulnerable to discrimination and attack. In the early 1980s, the Ugandan government targeted Rwandan refugees in a campaign of harassment and violence. Thousands of the Banyarwanda attempted to flee to their home country, but the Habyarimana government closed the border and forbid their return, claiming that Rwanda had no space to accommodate them. After these events, negotiations to allow the return of refugees took place but made little progress. On Oct. 1, 1990, an army composed primarily of Tutsi refugees in Uganda, sensing the vulnerability of the Habyarimana government and their own growing vulnerability within Uganda, attacked northern Rwanda. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) demanded the right of return for refugees and an end to authoritarian government.

In the wake of the attack, a number of Tutsi and many Hutu opponents of the government were arrested, but tensions within the country soon eased as government forces appeared to gain the upper hand in the war. To discourage internal support for the RPF, Habyarimana pledged to speed up the process of political reform, and he committed himself to eliminating official registration of ethnic identities, one of the main complaints of Tutsi within the country. Political activism nevertheless continued to grow in Rwanda. Several human rights groups organized to demand the release of those imprisoned at the beginning of the war, and new publications continued to appear. The national commission appointed by the president released proposed constitutional reforms for public discussion, and in June 1991, the national legislature adopted a new constitution, eliminated the MRND's monopoly on power, and legalized the formation of independent political parties.

In subsequent months, a variety of new political parties formed to challenge the MRND. Although each claimed a diverse national following, they very quickly were categorized according to the source of their primary support. The

Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MDR) drew most of its support from the central region of the country, home to Grégoire Kayibanda, the first president of Rwanda, who was deposed by Habyarimana. The Parti Social-démocrate (PSD) was based in the south, and the Parti Libéral (PL) appealed primarily to Tutsi. The MRND drew its support primarily from Hutu in the north. Nearly all of the people who emerged as leaders in the new parties were familiar faces in Rwandan politics, having been involved in the government under either Kayibanda or Habyarimana. Almost none of the leadership of the parties was drawn from the various groups and institutions that had emerged in recent years to press for democratic reform—student associations, human rights groups, various organizations supporting peasant interests, religious groups, the press. In fact, other than a few newspapers that took clearly partisan lines, very few connections appeared to exist between the parties and the rest of civil society.

After their formation, the new political parties took the lead in pushing for government reform. The MDR, PL, and PSD formed a coalition to press Habyarimana for a national conference and for the formation of a multiparty government to ease the move toward competitive elections and full democracy. They held several large rallies in support of reform, and with momentum in favor of reform growing, Habyarimana agreed in early 1992 to create a government with a prime minister drawn from an opposition party. In April, a "government of transition" was put into place with ministries evenly divided between the MDR, PSD, and PL on the one hand and the MRND and an allied party on the other, with a prime minister from the MDR. The president directed the government to negotiate a peace accord with the RPF and to prepare the way for free, competitive elections.

### **Civil Society and Political Reform**

To outside observers, the creation of a multiparty system and the move toward elections might appear to have represented a fundamental change in the

structure of Rwandan political life, but to Rwandans themselves, the most significant changes took place outside the state sphere. In fact, in research I conducted in Rwanda from June 1992 through April 1993, I found that many Rwandans did not support the adoption of a multiparty system, because they did not consider it to represent a real change. In the view of many of the people I interviewed, the only substantial difference between the parties was in their geographic and ethnic bases of support, not in their programs. As one peasant near Butare stated, "This multipartyism doesn't say anything to me. It is for the rich. When you have nothing to eat, you cannot go into a party. [I will support] the party that helps me to live well." Even many of those who supported the principle of multiparty democracy did not support the parties that arose because the parties presented no fundamental challenge to the nature of politics in the country. They involved politicians who were tainted by their past association with the government, and many people believed that if the opposition parties were to take power, they would conduct themselves no differently than Habyarimana's party.

At the same time, according to nearly universal opinion in Rwanda, certain profound changes were in fact taking place in the country. Most notably, a fundamental transformation of the society's attitude toward authority had occurred, and this had altered the nature in which power was exercised in Rwanda. Authority in every society rests on some combination of legitimacy—the public perception that rule derives from the will of society—and force or the threat of force. In Rwanda, since the late 1980s, authority needed to rely increasingly on force, not simply because support for the individuals occupying positions of authority had declined, but more importantly because of a growing sense that existing institutions, particularly state institutions, did not serve the best interests of society. With diminishing legitimacy for both individuals and institutions, the power of authority to command obedience deteriorated. In many parts of Rwanda, people simply stopped participating en masse in umuganda and

animation and other unpopular programs, they began to speak their mind without regard for the legal consequences, and they no longer offered authority figures (whether inside or outside the government) the respect and deference to which they previously were accustomed. The authority of law in the country declined noticeably, with crime rates rising sharply and the public resorting increasingly to vigilante justice.

What is particularly interesting in the process of socio-political change in Rwanda is the transformation that was taking place outside the formal political party arena. Given the growing disillusionment with government, people began during the 1980s to organize themselves into a myriad of independent associations to pursue and protect their interests. The expansion of personal freedom that the population claimed during the past five years accelerated this process of group formation. Some of these organizations, such as human rights groups and newspapers, addressed themselves to the state, but most did not have overtly political intentions, (at least in the traditional sense of the term "political" as relating to the government). Farmers' associations, women's groups, student groups, savings societies, and many other associations sought not so much to gain rights or resources from the state or any other institution as simply to bring people together to achieve something on their own, most commonly to pursue some economic goal. Churches played an important role supporting the formation of many of these groups, and several other national level associations provided support as well. IWACU, a center in Kigali, acted as a resource for peasant cooperatives, providing training and other assistance to groups throughout the country. OXFAM likewise worked to support local-level economic initiatives. Duterembere worked to support women's groups, primarily by providing them with credit.

The various local groups that arose, even if they were not overtly political, served as a support for people opposing corruption and the abuse of power. They

helped to fight fatalism, ethnic prejudice, and other conditions that opened the peasantry to manipulation and exploitation by political officials. They provided options for peasants and other poor to earn an income and decrease their economic vulnerability outside the patrimonial system, thus undercutting support for state officials and other authorities. Participation in these organizations helped raise the self esteem and the expectations of the poor, thus contributing significantly to the changes in public attitudes toward authority.

### **Government Responses**

Many government actions over the past decade can be viewed as a reaction to these changes occurring in civil society. The government adopted legal and institutional reforms in an effort to build support for the current regime and re-establish legitimacy for the state. The government reformed laws on the press, speech, and political parties to counteract both internal and external criticism of the regime. The adoption of multiparty government and the move toward elections sought to bring opposition figures into the government, thus co-opting and quieting them by offering them a stake in the system. MRND officials tried to build alliances in particular with opposition figures who shared their views on issues such as ethnic relations. Bringing these allies into government was intended to earn the loyalty of their supporters, particularly Hutu in the south of the country, without undermining the essential structure of power that benefitted Hutu from the north.

At the same time, office-holders sought to preserve their personal hold on power by undermining the process of reform that they were themselves implementing. Even as the Habyarimana government legalized opposition and free speech, military personnel and other supporters of the president harassed opposition party activists and journalists who wrote unflattering articles. The opposition parties brought into the government were given little real power. The president's supporters encouraged a certain amount of chaos in the country-using their

youth wing to disrupt opposition party functions, heightening ethnic tensions by organizing attacks on Tutsi-because this divided the opposition and created nostalgia among the masses for authoritarian government. Habyarimana's supporters successfully provoked a split in each of the major opposition parties between factions opposing rights for the Tutsi and negotiation with the RPF and those committed to interethnic harmony. These divisions and the growing sense of insecurity in the country devitalized the opposition and undermined their support.

The practice of creating insecurity and division in order to retain power, like many of the practices of the Habyarimana government, effectively demonstrates the tendency described by Joel S. Migdal in *Strong Societies, Weak States* for officials in Third World states to protect their own hold on power even by means that contribute to state decay. Government policies in Rwanda successfully undermined the ability of the opposition to assume power, even as they carried the country further and further down the road to chaos.

### **Public Reactions to Socio-Political Change**

The Rwandan population reacted with great ambivalence to the social changes and government reforms. Most people strongly supported the diminished capacity for local officials to cause them difficulties. They appreciated the ability to speak their mind without fear of retribution, and they were glad to be freed from the burdens of umuganda and animation. Those who participated in associations enjoyed the benefits of those groups, and many felt that less government interference with the groups would allow them to achieve greater success. At the same time, people regretted the growing insecurity in the country. Many people condemned the government because it did not maintain order but rather served as a vehicle for a minority to enrich themselves. They complained that the competitive party system did not change the fundamental nature of politics, as the new parties involved few new faces and few new ideas.

In the two years after the MRND ceded its monopoly on power, opposition politicians appeared more interested in obtaining power than in supporting the people, reinforcing the impression that no matter who was in charge, the government would do little to benefit the majority of the population. As a result, people viewed the process of political reform with increasing cynicism. Because reform efforts lacked consistent and unified public support, those in control of the government were able for a long time to resist the implementation of meaningful changes, changes that could open the political process up to greater public participation and accountability. Nevertheless, the government itself lacked public support, and the combined pressures of internal opposition, the ongoing war with the RPF, and foreign governments and international agencies, who were scaling back their presence in Rwanda in reaction to human rights abuses and other manifestations of resistance to democracy, forced the government to accept more serious reform in a peace accord negotiated with the RPF. A substantial portion of supporters of the status quo continued to resist reform. The level of insecurity in the country increased dramatically in early 1994. In the months leading up to the death of President Habyarimana, several leading political figures were assassinated, human rights activists and opposition politicians were attacked on the radio and in government newspapers as traitors deserving to be killed, and the youth wing of the MRND was given militia training. Available evidence suggests that the president's plane was shot down by his own people, who used the event as an excuse to carry out a preplanned program to crush all of sources of political opposition in the country. The presidential guard and the MRND militias set out with lists of people to kill, including opposition politicians and Tutsi and also employees of progressive church groups, IWACU, OXFAM, and other nonstate organizations that had supported the transformation of the civil society. The killing has undoubtedly expanded beyond the scope originally imagined, but even if in the end the current regime is unable to hold onto power, the chaos they have created should ensure that any other group that

rises to power will have an extremely difficult time ruling the country, if for no other reason than because their basis of support has been largely eliminated.

### **Implications of the Rwandan Case**

An important fact to observe in the Rwandan case is the discontinuity that existed between changes in the state and in civil society. The expansion of personal freedom for many people in Rwanda was linked less to government reform than to their own action and organization in civil society. People organized outside the state sphere in an increasing number of associations to pursue their own interests. The political parties focused on the state and had very little link to these organizations. In part because of this, they failed to build links with the population. The changes that garnered the widest public support—the expansion of press freedom, the end of *umuganda* and *animation*, the refusal to obey corrupt officials—occurred not as a result of formal political movements but from actions taken by individuals independently, often encouraged and empowered by organizations that were not overtly political. The lack of connection between the civil society and the state and the failure of meaningful reforms to take hold in the state sphere (and thus to provide the population an effective voice in the government) created a situation of increasing disillusionment and insecurity and declining respect for the authority of the state. State office-holders encouraged this social deterioration because it discredited and thwarted the opposition, making a regime change improbable. The killing of Habyarimana (who was probably assassinated by his own associates) and the subsequent reign of terror initiated by the army and the RND represent a desperate effort by those in power to block the move toward more effective democracy—and a likely loss of power—that was likely to come as result of a peace accord negotiated with the RPF.

Discussions with other researchers indicate that some of the same conditions that existed in Rwanda can be witnessed today in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and perhaps elsewhere. Associational life has become increasingly

vital in these countries, while, as in Rwanda, the political parties have only tenuous connections with organizations in civil society. Entrenched authoritarian rulers have sought to divide and undercut the opposition, and reform has often been little more than cosmetic. Unless more meaningful processes of reform are begun, other countries might follow Rwanda down the road of chaos and violence.

I am not arguing in this paper that the formation of political parties or the staging of elections are unworthy goals. Rather, I contend that these formal changes of state institutions must be tied closely to reform within the civil society. Some means must be found to appease the public, to provide greater accountability and participation, to allow greater freedom. This may mean the adoption of state reforms that do not mimic Western models. If, as in Rwanda, political parties do not reflect these changes in public attitude toward power and authority or if reforms do not accommodate the emergence of civil society, then the mere adoption of the formal trappings of Western-style democracy are unlikely to succeed in bringing positive change to the society. The population is likely to become more and more frustrated, possibly fueling the type of chaos experienced in Rwanda.

## **I. CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA**

### **3. Political Liberalization and Economic Reform**

It is often argued that the achievement of democracy is subject to developments in the economic sphere. Can the new African democracies deliver economically and socially? Are economic structural adjustment requirements in conflict with political reforms? On one side, there have been claims that democracies are better equipped to handle the complex tasks of economic adjustment by assuring greater governmental accountability and popular legitimacy. On the other, some scholars assert that centralized forms of decision-making offer better prospects

for promoting the initial stages of economic growth by facilitating long-term capital investment rather than consumption to satisfy key constituencies. F. van der Kraaij cites freedom of speech and of the press as vital to the sustainability of both political and economic reforms. He argues that popular participation goes hand-in-hand with good governance and economic development and provides a base for the appropriate design and implementation of adjustment programs.

N. van de Walle suggests that economic success is not well explained by regime type, and that economic growth depends on socio-political stability and a reduction of uncertainty. The key ingredients in achieving this stability are an honest, efficient, and motivated bureaucracy and state-society relations that reflect a common purpose and cohesion between state officials and citizens. He therefore places emphasis on reforms that facilitate the emergence of a developmental state with strong government institutions and civic associations. Developmental states can emerge in both parliamentary democracies and authoritarian regimes. Moreover, economic growth is not dependent on the presence or absence of regular multiparty elections or of participatory politics.

## **Economic Reform and the Consolidation of Democracy in Africa**

**Nicolas van de Walle**

Michigan State University

### **1. Introduction**

The biggest threat to the consolidation of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to be the continent's continuing economic crisis. The twenty or so African countries that have undertaken significant political liberalization in the last four years are all beset by daunting economic difficulties. The consolidation of these political gains almost certainly depends on finding ways to revive what have become moribund economies. In this paper, I investigate the economic prospects

for fledgling African democracies. Although there is no reason to believe that democratic regimes in Africa will be less able to promote economic growth than their authoritarian predecessors, they will nonetheless have to overcome the same daunting obstacles that have always undermined economic prosperity in post-colonial Africa. I argue that which specific economic policies these regimes adopt is ultimately less important than whether they begin to build institutions in the state and civil society that are supportive of economic development. In the short run, it is clear that these states have to find the right mix of expenditures and revenues in order to restore basic macro-economic equilibrium. New democracies need to take advantage of the "honeymoon" period they are likely to enjoy initially to achieve rapid progress on stabilization, which is bound to be politically difficult. In the long run, they need to promote economic policies that are stable and sustainable. Such policies are likelier to emerge if and when nations can combine a professional and impartial public bureaucracy and a broad consensus regarding economic public policy. I end by sketching out the strategies democratic societies can employ to become *developmental states*.

## **2. Regime Type and Economic Reform**

The consolidation of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa depends on ways to overcome the continuing economic crisis. Economic crisis is generally unfavorable to office holders, so that any regime's stability and survival over time is in part dependent on its economic performance. If the new democracies in Africa do not make significant progress on economic stabilization and reform and begin to reverse the recent deterioration in the quality of life, the consolidation of democratic rule is likely to be undermined. African citizens may well value democratic government as an end in itself and be more patient of lower economic performance from the new democratic leaders than they used to be from authoritarian rulers, but in the final analysis, it would be illusory to believe that governments can long avoid getting blamed for the absence of economic progress.

The economy that the new democratic elites inherited in countries like Mali, Zambia, Benin, Madagascar and the other new democracies was moreover in dreadful shape. It had typically suffered from two decades of mismanagement, exogenous shocks and inappropriate policies, resulting in a growing debt crisis and a semi-permanent process of negotiations and debt rescheduling with international creditors. In addition, the democratic transition itself had occasioned large economic costs, either because of extensive civil unrest and sometimes violence, or because of the fiscal recklessness of authoritarian leaders trying to hold onto power.

What are the economic prospects for the dozen or so fledgling democracies that have appeared through electoral contests since 1990? On the one hand, there is no reason to believe that the new democratic regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa will be less able to undertake economic stabilization and adjustment than their non-democratic predecessors. True, a well known and longstanding view in the political economy literature suggests various economic policy making advantages for non-democratic regimes <sup>1</sup>. In brief, democratic governments are believed to undermine economic growth by favoring policies that promote consumption rather than investment in order to please key constituencies. Likewise, the main obstacle to economic reform is believed to be political pressures on the government to maintain these policies in exchange for support.

A number of recent studies focusing on Latin America have found little empirical support for this proposition of inferior democratic management of the economy, however <sup>2</sup>. In Africa, the handful of competitive regimes before 1989 (Botswana, Mauritius, Gambia, Senegal) do not amount to a large enough sample from which to make precise generalizations, but certainly at the very least do not confirm the proposition either, since Botswana and Mauritius have enjoyed the highest sustained growth of any states in Africa over the last twenty years.

As I have argued elsewhere at greater length <sup>3</sup>, there are reasons for believing that, on balance, the new democratic governments actually have some advantages in promoting economic reform. It is true that insofar as democratization results in increased participation, governments will be under greater pressures from various constituencies to promote current consumption at the cost of investment, growth and future consumption. At the same time, democratization will also result in greater governmental accountability and transparency, which should impact positively on policy making and implementation. A free press and the presence of opposition parties should help curb governmental corruption, for example. I would suggest that on balance the benefits of the latter will outweigh the costs of the former. But I would not exaggerate the impact of either of these changes: press, civic, union and professional associations may be empowered somewhat by the new climate of openness, but they are likely to overcome past weaknesses and organizational difficulties only slowly and incompletely, and their ability to pressure the government and the state -- for or against pro-growth policies -- will continue to be limited.

Ultimately, the evidence suggests that economic success is not well explained by regime type. Instead, rapid development occurs in societies characterized by socio-political stability and low levels of uncertainty. Guaranteed property rights and low transaction costs serve to encourage investment and entrepreneurship which results in growth. Such circumstances do not just happen by chance however, however, but result instead from the actions of enabling state structures operating alongside of strong civic associations, which together create what are sometimes called *developmental states* <sup>4</sup>. Developmental states can emerge in parliamentary democracies as well as in authoritarian regimes, and sustained economic growth is not historically correlated with the presence or absence of regular multi-party elections, or of participatory politics.

What is key is not the degree of political competition and participation characterizing the regime, but rather the presence of a common set of institutional characteristics linking state and society <sup>5</sup>. First, and in very general terms, developmental states typically benefit from a professional, disciplined and cohesive public bureaucracy that is able to devise and implement the government's economic policies impartially. Such a bureaucracy is honest, meritocratic and bound together by a well developed "esprit de corps". It uses a strongly developed corporate identity to promote standards of excellence and prevent clientelism within its ranks. Such a bureaucracy provides the state its capacity, or the ability to get things done, a pre-requisite of development. Secondly, state-society relations are characterized by some degree of common purpose, cohesion or what Putnam (1992) has called a "civic community". The state's economic policies enjoy broad legitimacy, in part because a series of informal networks across individuals and associations promotes communication and dialogue between state agents and citizens, embedding the state apparatus within the social system. Public life is characterized by strong norms of honesty, reciprocity and trust, which condition public behavior and expectations vis a vis the state. That such a civic community can exist in authoritarian regimes is suggested by the experience of the Asian NICs, where governments have maintained a high degree of legitimacy and moral authority despite sometimes highly authoritarian practices. Nonetheless, strong civic traditions are at least as likely to flourish in democratic states.

The post-colonial state in Africa has, with a handful of exceptions, been largely anti-developmental; prebendal, rent-seeking and inept, it has been simultaneously very coercive and extremely weak, needing to prey on the economy and civil society with devastating effect just to survive, yet unable to affect development positively. The bureaucracy's effectiveness has typically been undermined by the patrimonial logic of politics, weakened by pervasive patronage and private oriented behavior, while state-society relations have been

characterized by clientelism rather than citizenship (Fox, 1994). States have been unable to command much respect or loyalty from the population and have resorted to clientelism and coercion to retain minimal, usually passive, acquiescence.

Policy debates about economic reform have unfortunately for the most part avoided the issue of the state, and have instead been framed by issues of economic efficiency and macro-economic equilibrium. True, the World Bank, in its recent discourse on "governance" (the World Bank, 1992), has come to recognize that without improvements in the developmental nature of African states, renewed economic growth is unlikely. But in practical terms, this insight does not seem to have yet led to any significant substantive or procedural changes in Bank lending practices [6](#).

Criticism of the Bank and of orthodox adjustment programs have also been largely economistic in nature; they have focused on the distributional impact of the programs, have called for greater international financial flows to Africa, or have questioned Bank assumptions about the behavioral parameters of African economies, as in for example the debate about the price elasticity of supply of agricultural goods (for example, Cornia et al 1993). Some academic critics of the IFIs have rightly pointed to the "orthodox paradox" of conventional adjustment packages (Kahler, 1992), in which the state is paradoxically viewed as both the biggest obstacle to growth and required to take the leading role in overcoming the economic crisis, but the implications of this insight have for the most part not penetrated into policy making circles.

Economic policy matters, of course, and I do not mean to suggest that these debates are unimportant, but I do suggest that fine tuning of the policy content of adjustment programs is much less urgent than is creating more developmental public institutions in Africa. Thus, the rest of this essay does not address the

relative merits of specific economic policies, but focuses on the prerequisites of creating institutions that can promote development.

### **3. Economic Objectives in the New Democracies**

It is important to distinguish appropriate short term and long term economic objectives for these democracies. The economic crisis is much more constraining in the short term, during which the new democratic governments can at best achieve stabilization of the economy and can not expect major structural changes. However, stabilization is almost certainly a *sine qua non* of socio-political stability and long term economic success. In the longer term, governments have more choices and the possibility of benefiting from the establishment of developmental institutions.

**Short Term Stabilization:** In the short run, no more than 2-3 years, policy makers must address the dismal state of the economy, and may well have to address an imminent fiscal crisis. The top objective must be to stabilize the economy and reach a more or less sustainable macro equilibrium, by redressing the twin deficits in the balance of payments and public finances. In the absence of such stabilization, economic policy will continue to be dictated by crisis management and the immediate requirements of quarterly IMF missions and Paris Club negotiations every eighteen months. The dilemma for democratic governments is that it is hard to see how they can maintain sufficient legitimacy if they do not achieve some minimal degree of stabilization, once the "honeymoon" period accorded to new governments has exhausted itself, yet the policies required to bring about stabilization are likely to be extremely unpopular, at least in the short run.

It must be emphasized that there are no alternatives to stabilization for the new democracies. It is unrealistic to expect significant foreign direct investment, or the repatriation of African capital as long as the economic climate is so changing and

uncertain. For one thing, the high and variable inflation reached in some of these countries scares away all but short term speculative investments. Reaching such a macro-equilibrium would be itself quite an achievement, that few if any authoritarian regimes in Africa have achieved in recent years. Indeed, the failure of African states to achieve short term stabilization in the past has sealed the fate of more ambitious structural adjustments of the economy.

Nor are there any magic formulas for securing stabilization, which essentially means some combination of state revenues increases with expenditure decreases to restore a sustainable fiscal equilibrium. The new leaders have to use the structures of the anti-developmental state to stabilize the economy. Whatever improved governance structures they are successful in eventually establishing will not have significant impact in the short term.

How then can governments manage the erosion of popularity that stabilization measures are likely to incur? Democratic governments must use the same strategies all governments use to dispense unwelcome medicine: persuasion, coalition building and selective side payments to "grease the squeaky wheel" and defuse opposition. Unfortunately, their primary resource will probably be the good will and popularity generated by the transition from authoritarian rule, and it is crucial that they exploit it fully, notably by moving fast. Increased net international financial flows or debt forgiveness from the West will obviously help ease the pain of the stabilization. Donor discourse has in recent years emphasized "the social dimensions" of adjustment, but social welfare programs to protect the most vulnerable elements of African society during adjustment have typically remained quite modest in size and scope (Gibbon, 1992).

Donor finance is not a panacea, however, as it treats the symptoms of macrodisequilibrium but not its causes. Aid levels are already extremely high, reaching in 1991 some 14 percent of GDP in Zambia, for example or as high as

20 percent in the some of the Sahelian countries <sup>7</sup>. Further, the last decade suggests that reliance on handouts from the West is disruptive in a number of ways. First, it undermines long term economic planning, as the government's actual resource constraint is externally determined and ambiguous. The national budgetary process itself becomes tributary to external negotiations and their requirements. Second, and most critically, it redirects governmental accountability away from domestic constituencies and obscures the nature of the economic choices that societies need to make regarding national resources.

**Long Term Adjustment:** In the longer run (5 to 10 years), and once stabilization has been reached, the objective must be to set the basis for sustained growth by establishing more effective policies and institutions. In the new democracies, different policy choices will reflect the welfare and distributional preferences of the citizenry, made explicit through electoral politics. Some choices probably imply faster economic growth than others, and if political parties misjudge the preferences of the citizenry, they will presumably be sanctioned in the next election.

Democracies are significantly more likely to survive if their citizens make the right economic policy choices for both the short and long term and their governments are able to carry them out. What are the "right" policies and to what extent are they compatible with democratic government? These questions are difficult and contentious precisely because not all people share the same set of policy preferences. It must be recognized that different political systems exhibit quite distinct preferences in relation to key economic tradeoffs, for example between equity and growth. However, I believe it is possible to specify some general guidelines for policies that should be beyond controversy.

Societal preferences must be respected if the democratic process is to be meaningful; on the other hand, some predictions can be made regarding the best

way to ensure economic stability. First, wide policy lurches, for example according to the electoral cycle, should be avoided. Productive long term investment will be undermined by the perception that each election is likely to result in substantial policy shifts. Regardless of the policies chosen, economic prosperity is more likely when there is widespread political consensus around the policy so that private agents know it is thus likely to last for the foreseeable future. Second, regardless of the policies adopted, it is important that the policy regime be stable, predictable and credible over time. Economic actors can accommodate themselves to a wide range of policies. What they fear above all is uncertainty and change. Thus, it is important to ensure stability in the basic orientation of economic policy. First, to be credible, policies must be perceived as sustainable into the foreseeable future, barring some unforeseen exogenous shock. The less sustainable policies are perceived to be, the less they will appropriately shape private market behavior and the more they will lead to self-defeating speculation. For example, by the time it was devalued by fifty percent this last January, the CFA Franc's parity had long ceased to be credible, and economic actors had come to assume it would soon be devalued; they withheld investment to the zone and engaged in massive capital flight away from the CFA currency.

What are credible and sustainable economic policies likely to look like? I would argue that two elements have almost universal validity g.

1. Stable macro-economic policies, in particular a small fiscal deficit, not to exceed 1-3 percent of GDP.
2. Micro-economic policies that communicate predictable and reasonable incentives to economic agents.

There is still considerable dispute among economists on any number of policy matters, reflecting the different values within the profession as well as doctrinal differences. However, there is almost unanimous agreement on these two broad guidelines. No serious economist still argues that governments should run up operational deficits of more than a couple percentage points of domestic GDP,

for example, or that governments can and should enforce prices that completely fail to respect relative scarcities. None of Africa's fledgling democracies can today claim to have policies that embody these principles. For example, fiscal deficits of 7-10 percent of GDP are not uncommon. In the Congo, past governments mortgaged as much as the next five years worth of oil revenues in order to avoid fiscal discipline, and the present government continues to find it impossible to increase non-oil revenues or to decrease expenditures. It is urgent that a general consensus develop over the importance of these policy principles, a point to which I return below.

#### **4. Promoting Developmental Democracies**

I have argued that the economic success of the new African democracies depends in large part on, first, creating developmental states and, second, on forging economic policies that respect societal preferences but that are predictable and sustainable. The remaining question to be answered is how can these new democracies best accomplish these two overlapping aims.

Fortunately, the introduction of democratic rule in the continent is an opportunity to make progress on the governance agenda. Democratization in countries like Zambia, Mali or Benin represented a significant gain for the rule of law and a setback for arbitrary personal rule. Every effort should now be made to consolidate these gains in order to enhance transparent and accountable decision making, a sine qua non for economic success. How can this be done, and how is it related to the forging of stable, sustainable policies? I sketch out three areas in which progress can and should be made.

**Administrative Capacity:** The first, and most obvious answer consists of institution building in the central administration in order to enhance its capacity. Promoting the creation of a strong, honest, non-partisan and professional bureaucracy is critical to economic growth, and should become a central preoccupation of donor assistance. It might be objected that such a prescription

advocates traditional institution building, which, if a long history of efforts is any indication, is first, extremely expensive and, second, rarely successful. After all, what is there to show for the hundreds of millions of dollars spent in virtually every African country on institution building during the last thirty years?

Regarding the second objection, the challenge is clearly to devise institution building strategies that are more successful than in the past, although it is true that the climate is more favorable for such institution building today. In the past, there was always a negative synergy between neo-patrimonialism and low state capacities; insofar as democratization weakens neo-patrimonial institutions, it facilitates institution building. It should also be noted that there is one powerful domestic constituency for a strong central administration, namely the civil service itself, which yearns for greater professionalism and end to political interference. The civil service can be better mobilized on behalf of institution building in the new democratic regime than was the case in the old regime.

The second objection relates to the issue of cost, obviously a critical issue in an age of fiscal retrenchment. The entire state apparatus must be strengthened, but efforts should target the public institutions most narrowly relevant to the developmental state, for example those involved with justice. In addition, strengthening the bureaucracy is not incompatible with public sector retrenchment. For example, substantial salary increases can be obtained to attract highly skilled mid and high level managers while at the same time continuing to remove phantom and low skill patronage positions.

**Promoting the Rule of Law:** There is general agreement that a strengthened and impartial judicial system is critical not only to the health of democratic rule, but also to the health of the economy, insofar as it is a pre-requisite for the protection of property rights and the enforcement of contracts. Thus, every effort must be made to focus on strengthening the judicial apparatus, and on codifying and/or

protecting legal rights. This includes support of the NGO and civic associations, notably the Bar, which promote judicial values, in addition to support of the judicial branch of government.

**Agencies of Restraint:** Paul Collier has defined agencies of restraint as "institutions which (a) protect public assets from depletion, (b) prevent inflationary money printing, (c) prevent corruption, (d) protect socially productive groups from exploitation and (2) enforce contracts" (Collier, 1991, p. 155), and has suggested that Africa's economic failures are in part due to the weakness or absence of such agencies. An example of such an agency would be an independent Central Bank, autonomous from the executive branch of government, that is able to resist politically motivated calls for inflationary deficit spending. Another might be an independent judiciary that was empowered to enforce property rights, even of private citizens against government agents.

Governments must develop new agencies of restraint, not so much to overcome stabilization difficulties today, as to ensure macro-economic stability in the future. This will not be easy. Governments have many short term incentives to act in unrestrained ways when difficulties emerge, and it is not clear why they would agree to respect these agencies. Donors should however encourage the creation of agencies of restraint, wherever they are desirable. The donors could, for example, help finance supra-national agencies of restraint, such as monetary and customs unions.

**Forging Policy Consensus:** The foregoing applies to all regimes, and are not prescriptions that apply specifically to democratic states. The transition to democratic rule does however make possible progress in perhaps the most important area. It is clear from the analysis in the previous sections that forging consensus on economic policy among the main political actors in the new democracies will be a critical requirement for long term prosperity. Every effort

must be made to reach broad agreement on the general orientation of policy and to place it beyond partisan bickering. This does not imply the end of partisan debates about the economy, but rather suggests narrowing the scope of these debates as much as possible. Thus, for example, budgetary priorities can still be the object of considerable partisan debate, but there is a consensus on the actual size of what is a permissible budget deficit.

The sooner this consensus is developed the better. By the time democratic regimes appeared in 1990-1992, African populations were both exhausted from a decade of austerity and embittered by the many broken promises of their governments. Although they may grant a grace period to the new government, it is unlikely to last very long. For stabilization policies to be politically sustainable, governments must thus not only move fast, they should also mobilize as wide support as possible. This implies promoting a broad policy debate, public education campaigns and a highly transparent budgetary process -- involving the elected parliament as much as possible -- in which choices and tradeoffs are made quite explicit. The difficulties should not be underestimated, as the benefits of this consensus will be evident only with the passage of time, and success will require creative leadership. One example concerns tax collection and state revenues. As the economic and political crisis has worsened in Africa, the state has found it increasingly difficult to collect revenues. Civic indiscipline has reached dangerous proportions, as people both powerful and weak have sought to avoid paying taxes and state fees, on the one hand, and the state's extractive capacity has decreased, on the other hand. What is at issue here is fundamentally the state's fiscal legitimacy. The new democratic states must recover the trust and loyalty of the citizenry and of its own agents, in order to be able to promote economic growth. This can happen only through dialogue and persuasion, in which citizens become convinced of the state's right to collect revenues for the public good.

## 5. Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to emphasize the causal links between strong institutions, stable policies and economic growth. Sustained institution building is not possible in the absence of prior economic stabilization. In turn, a strong central administration is likelier to result in sensible economic policies that result in long term sustainable growth. Today, the first priority must therefore be the establishment of a modicum of economic stability. That will almost certainly prove politically difficult and will require great leadership. It is likelier to succeed if political elites quickly begin the process of forging policy consensus. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the prominent role of donors in the adjustment process has not favored the emergence of a domestic policy consensus in the past. Governments have not felt the need to engage the citizenry in policy debates conducted for the most part in western capitals. Governments and citizens have both viewed budgets as a "soft" constraint on spending, to be endlessly loosened through lobbying and clientelism, internationally for the former, domestically for the latter. Today, political elites need to focus on establishing that consensus and the mechanisms to generate it as a regular element of democratic governance. In time, the development of policy consensus will enhance the state's extractive capacity and promote support for agencies of restraint, reinforcing the ability of the political system to generate stable and productive economic policies. A strong central administration and widespread respect for the rule of law will ensure that economic policies reach their desired objectives.

The strategy I have sketched out is ambitious and faces daunting difficulties. Nonetheless, today there are no good alternatives for Africa's democracies.

## References

Collier, Paul. 1991. "Africa's External; Economic Relations, 1960-1990", in Douglas Rimmer (ed.) *Africa, 30 Years On: The Record and Outlook after Thirty Years of Independence*. (London: James Curry Ltd).

Cornia, Giovanni Andrea, Rolph van der Hoeven and Thandika Mkandawire. (eds.). 1993. *Africa's Recovery in the 1990s: From Stagnation and Adjustment to Human Development*. (New York: St. Martin's Press).

Evans, Peter. 1992. "The State as Problem and Solution: Predation, Embedded Autonomy and Structural Change", in Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman. *The Politics of Economic Reform*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 139-181.

Fox, Jonathan. 1994. "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: lessons from Mexico". *World Politics*. Vol. 46, no. 2, (January) pp.151-184.

Gibbon, Peter. 1992. "The World Bank and African Poverty, 1970-91", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Vol. 30, no. 2 pp. 193-220.

Kahler, Miles. 1990. "Orthodoxy and its Alternatives: Explaining Approaches to Stabilization and Adjustment", in Joan Nelson, (ed.). *Economic Crisis and Policy Choice: the Politics of Economic Adjustment in the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

OECD. 1992. *Development Cooperation: Efforts and Policies of the Development Assistance Committee*. (OECD: Paris, France.)

Przeworski, Adam and Fernando Limongi. 1993. "Political Regimes and Economic Growth", in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol.7, no. 3 (Summer), pp. 51-69.

Putnam, Robert D. 1992. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Remmer, Karen. 1993. "The Political Economy of Elections in Latin America, 1980-1991", *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 87, no. 2. (June). pp. 393-406.

Rodrik, Dani. "How Should Structural Adjustment Programs be Designed?", *World Development*. 18:7: 1990: pp. 933-947.

Sirowy, Larry and Alex Inkeles. 1990. "The Effects of Democracy on Economic Growth and Inequality: A Review". in *Studies in Comparative International Development*. Vol. 25, no. 1 (Spring), pp. 126-157.

van de Walle, Nicolas. "Political Liberalization and Economic Reform in Africa". *World Development*. Vol. 22, no. 4 (April, 1994)

Wade, Robert. 1991. *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

Williamson, John. 1993. "Democracy and the 'Washington Consensus'", in *World Development*. Vol. 21, no. 8, pp. 1329-1336

The World Bank. 1994. *Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results and The Road Ahead*. (New York: Oxford University Press, for the World Bank.)

The World Bank. 1992. *Governance and Development*. (The World Bank: Washington DC).

The World Bank. 1989B. *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth A Long term Perspective Study*. Washington DC: the World Bank.

	Selected Democratic Regimes	
	ODA as % of GNP	
	1986-87	1991-92
Benin		
Congo		
Madagascar		
Mali		
Zambia		
SSAfrica	6.6	13.4

## **POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION AND ECONOMIC REFORM IN AFRICA**

### **A Closer Look at Freedom of Speech and of the Press**

**(as of mid-1994)**

**by Fred van der Kraaij**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**The Netherlands**

**Paper Prepared for the Carter Center**

**Seminar on Democratization in Africa**

**The paper represents the personal views of the author.**

### **Introduction.**

Between 625 and 650 million people live in Africa, scattered over no less than 53 countries: five in North Africa and 48 south of the Sahara. In 1991 some 120 million people were living in North Africa, and about 515 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

Democratic presidential elections, i.e. involving more than one party (though in some cases not more than two, e.g. in the Comoros and Côte d'Ivoire) have been held in over 30 African countries since 1989. This number also includes the 1993 legislative elections in three countries (all kingdoms): Morocco, Lesotho and Swaziland. Power has since changed hands in more than 10 countries: Benin, Burundi <sup>1</sup>, Cape Verde, Central African Republic (after French pressure), Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi <sup>2</sup>, Mali, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Africa and Zambia. In 16 countries the elections were won by the sitting president, in some cases with little or no opposition: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire <sup>3</sup>, Djibouti, Egypt, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Sechelles, Togo and Tunisia. Some of these elections were highly controversial. The extent to which they were fair has been discussed elsewhere <sup>4</sup>. In two countries the second round of the elections were cancelled (Algeria and Angola); in one country the election results were annulled before any official announcement of the results (Nigeria). When finalizing this paper (July 1994) the results of the presidential elections in Guinea Bissau were not yet known since the outgoing president failed to win a majority of votes, making a second round necessary.

As a result of these elections, there are now 36 countries which are 'democratic' in the sense that they have leaders elected through multi-party elections: 3 in North Africa and 33 in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, many of these regimes have retained their authoritarian characteristics. Experience clearly shows that introducing a multi-party system and organizing 'democratic' elections does not automatically lead to democracy or greater respect for human rights.

Economic reform programmes were introduced in Africa in the 1980s. In 1980 the World Bank for the first time financed structural adjustment programmes in Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius and Senegal. Since then the Bank has granted Structural Adjustment Loans (SALs) and/or Sectoral Adjustment Loans (SECALs)

to over 30 African countries. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) supports economic reform programmes in Africa in three ways: by means of (i) stand-by credits, (ii) the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) and (iii) the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). Since 1986 SAFs and ESAFs have been granted to over 30 African countries. These two groups of countries (with economic reform programmes supported either by the IMF or by the World Bank) were, and still are, by definition not the same, though in practice many countries receive support from both institutions. Most economic reform programmes nowadays are formulated in a Policy Framework Paper (PFP) which is approved by the government of the adjusting country and by the Bretton Woods institutions. In early 1994, 37 African countries were implementing an economic reform programme in one form or the other, supported by the World Bank or the IMF, or have recently implemented one. Among them are 4 North African countries and 33 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Objectivity obliges us to emphasise that it is very questionable to group all these economic reform programmes together, as it is with political reform programmes. The reform programmes - both political and economic - are often as varied as the countries involved <sup>5</sup>. Given the limitations of this short discussion paper this important characteristic will not be taken into full consideration here though one has to keep it in mind when formulating any conclusions.

### **Freedom of speech and of the press.**

Political liberalization is a process which manifests itself in many different ways, too numerous to mention here. In this paper I shall confine myself to respect for human rights and the right citizens have to elect their government in free elections. Human rights include not only the 'freedoms from' <sup>6</sup>, but also the 'freedoms of' <sup>7</sup>. I selected two 'freedoms' from this great variety which I consider important both for the process of political liberalization and for that of economic reform. They are freedom of speech and freedom of the press. They form

important ingredients of the basic principles of good governance and the rule of law. The latter two principles to a very large extent determine the outcome of both processes of reform. However, given the complexity of these principles and the relatively limited scope of the discussions during our seminar, I have focused on freedom of speech and of the press only. In addition, I took a close look at respect for political rights in the various countries, in particular the right of citizens to change their government.

Table 1 presents a classification of the 53 African countries, subdivided into North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa 8, under the following headings:

- i. countries currently undergoing or recently having implemented an economic reform programme, supported by IMF or World Bank; this does not say anything about the type of reform programme, nor about the quality of its implementation;
- ii. **the population**; in general the data refer to 1991 but they have to be treated with much caution; demographic data in Africa are not very reliable; the data do not take into account recent flows of refugees which greatly influence the real size of the population (notably in the cases of Liberia, Burundi, Rwanda, Angola, Mozambique, Sudan, Somalia and neighbouring countries);
- iii. an appreciation of the **democratic quality of the political régime**; since in virtually all cases the qualifications given could not be exactly measured, they constitute, to a certain extent, a personal interpretation of reality which therefore contains certain subjective elements 9; the qualification 'democracy' refers to recently held democratic multi-party presidential elections and does not imply respect for all kinds of freedom ('freedoms from' and 'freedoms of');
- iv. respect for **freedom of speech**; this is based not on existing legal provisions but reflects instead the real situation; the two categories (freedom; lack of freedom) have been subdivided: freedom but incidental

- exceptions and no freedom combined with severe repression; this freedom of speech also includes academic freedom;
- v. respect for the **freedom of the press**; as mentioned under (iv) [10](#)
  - vi. the **current political system**, based on the right of citizens to change their government, subdivided in (1) multi-party system (2), limited multi-party system (3), the one-party system (4) and the no-party system;
  - vii. finally, the table shows when recently `democratic' **presidential elections** took place;

All data are based on the situation as of 1993 or early 1994.

The preliminary general findings may be summarized as follows:

I. *In North Africa:*

1. Freedom of speech only exists in two of the five countries (=40%), Egypt and Tunisia, though more than half of the total North African population lives in these two countries (63 million people). In the remaining three countries, Algeria, Libya and Morocco, the free expression of one's opinion is not without serious risks (56 million people).
2. Unrestricted freedom of the press does not exist in any of the countries of North Africa. In two out of five countries (Algeria and Morocco, with a total population of 30 million) the authorities have reacted with severe repression thereby violating other human rights. In Algeria critical, honest and outspoken journalists are murdered by fundamentalists opposed to the government.

II. *In Sub-Saharan Africa:*

1. In 24 of the 48 SSA countries one may speak of complete freedom of speech though this is true only of 38% of the total population of SSA (192 million people). In six more countries freedom of speech is occasionally limited. There is no freedom of speech in a little over one third of the 48 countries. Governments in nine countries severely repress this right.
2. 40% of the population of SSA enjoys freedom of the press to a greater or lesser extent: some 200 million people in 27 countries (see note 10); 60% of the population does not have this right (in 21 countries).

It is obvious that many people in Africa still have a long way to go on the road to complete political liberalization - even if we only look at the respect their

governments show for two basic rights: freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

### **Freedom of Speech and the Press and Economic Reforms.**

Neither research literature nor practice agrees on the question of whether political liberalization is benefiting or slowing down economic growth and economic reform <sup>11</sup>. I have analyzed the situation with regard to respect for freedom of speech and of the press in both North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa in the light of the economic reform programmes being implemented in these countries. This attempt was made in order to investigate whether there is any relationship between these phenomena. The result of this exercise is the following.

The picture is the bleakest in North Africa: here there is not a single country where *both* freedom of speech including academic freedom, *and* freedom of the press are fully respected. This raises very serious questions regarding the possibility of achieving effective popular participation in the economic reform process, involving both the urban and the rural population, professional organizations, trade unions, the academic community etc. The principles of popular participation and of participatory development are increasingly accepted by the Bretton Woods institutions as a necessary base for the design and implementation of adjustment programmes, at least officially <sup>12</sup>. The international donor community shares this idea as do most adjusting governments. Moreover, good governance and popular participation go hand in hand <sup>13</sup>.

In Sub-Saharan Africa the outcome is mixed. In 19 adjusting countries there is freedom of speech and of the press whereas in 14 countries with an economic reform programme at least one is lacking. In the majority of the adjusting countries these rights are thus respected. However, when looking at the number of people involved the picture is the opposite. Some 140 million people enjoy

both freedom of speech and of the press, whereas some 250 million do not. It will be clear that an investigation in more depth of the situation in these two groups of countries could provide us with valuable and interesting material. It is therefore important to continue research in this field.

When further analyzing the data used we observe a most interesting phenomenon. The average size of the population in SSA countries which respect the freedom of speech and of the press is less than in SSA countries where these rights are not respected. It is **also less** than the average of all SSA countries. The average population size in adjusting countries with freedom of speech and of the press is 7.1 million [14](#), in non-adjusting countries which respect the freedom of speech and of the press it is 8.1 million [15](#) whereas the average size of the population in all 48 SSA countries amounts to 10.7 million [16](#). For the sake of comparison: countries **not** respecting freedom of speech and of the press in general have a population which is greater than the average for all SSA countries. For adjusting countries this is 17.6 million and for non-adjusting countries 9.4 million [17](#).

It seems as if there is a relationship between the size of the population and respect for freedom of speech and of the press. However, we have insufficient data to know whether this correlation is significant enough to draw conclusions from. Hence, further research is needed on this subject and possible explanations for it.

### **The role of external actors.**

To conclude this discussion paper I would like to draw attention to the role which external actors may or should play. Understandably, it is beyond doubt that it is necessary to promote greater respect for basic human rights in countries where this respect is lacking. However, external actors may have to choose a certain strategy given the large number of countries involved (not only in Africa). It is well

known that the `democratic' structures in virtually all African countries are very fragile. For this reason I would like to advocate an active role for external actors in **the consolidation** of what actually has been achieved in these countries, notably in the field of respect for freedom of speech and of the press. (It is understood here that the group of `external actors' comprises donors, bilateral governments, multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations etc.) In doing so, however, one has to be careful to support and not undermine the economic reform programmes. In non-adjusting countries <sup>18</sup> the development and prospering of these two rights may contribute to the process of perfecting the rule of law. This will provide the economic development of the country with a more solid base. With respect to the remaining categories (adjusting and non-adjusting countries which lack freedom of speech and of the press) one could adopt a more passive attitude, which, however, should not be interpreted as acceptance. In any case, the foregoing relates only to the two named `freedoms of' and certainly does not apply to any of the `freedoms from'.

## **II. MANAGING DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS**

### **1. Imperfect Transitions**

An initial enthusiasm of scholars and policy-makers accompanied the rush of transitions in Africa that seemed to echo the collapse of authoritarian systems in the Soviet bloc. It has been followed by a more sober outlook on the current transitions as reflected in the questioning of what is occurring under the emblem of "democratization." Even where transitions appear to presage a pluralist democracy, assumptions about the inevitability or irreversibility of such an outcome must be carefully scrutinized (Harbeson).

Despite a certain disenchantment with the number of derailed or partial transitions, there is still a pervasive hope that the current wave of democratization will persist. This sentiment reflects an awareness that an evolutionary or incremental approach to democratization may be necessary in

many cases. With regard to the unsatisfactory conduct of transitional elections, it is important that opportunities to promote progress are not missed, especially when there may be few available options to encourage political renewal (Joseph). For some African countries, such as Senegal, the challenge of advancing beyond the stage of a "semi-democracy" has become the central issue (Beck). Entrenched patterns of clientelist and clan politics can become a barrier to more open, competitive, and participatory systems.

A pressing challenge for political activists and scholars is the exploration of ways in which prevailing patterns of elite politics in Africa gradually can be transformed. One avenue could be the nurturing of a political culture of wider democratic participation and accountability through civic education programs and grass-roots mobilization. Such an approach would emphasize citizens' rights, the responsibilities of elected representatives, and ways to foster greater responsiveness of government institutions to the needs of politically marginalized groups. Innovative education programs, implemented by indigenous NGOs, may also contribute significantly to the achievement of such objectives. (Ndegwa)

## **Imperfect Transitions**

**by Richard Joseph**

African Governance Program, The Carter Center

Beginning with the democratic elections in Namibia in March 1990, there was a rush of transitions in Africa that seemed to echo the collapse of authoritarian systems in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Since 1992, however, the process has been very uneven, prompting serious concerns about whether "democratization" or just "liberalization" was occurring in Africa (Bratton, 1993); "whether a transition toward more sustainable democratic forms of government in Africa is now taking place" (Riley, 1992: 540); and whether these transitions will

turn out to be "limited in number and scope" and mainly "involve a transition from weak authoritarianism to weak and fragile democracy" (Sandbrook, 1993: 30). It is important to adopt a medium-term view of developments in the continent. After a quarter-century of deepening authoritarianism, a democratic age was not going to be ushered in in one or two years. The same can be said about the first set of multiparty elections, a threshold event in the transition from an authoritarian past to a potential democratic future. In this regard, Joel Barkan's formulation is very pertinent: "Democratic electoral practices like democratic political systems are not created overnight but evolve over many years" ("Nurturing Democracy":5).

Not only must we be prepared for an **incremental** process in the making of constitutional democracies, we must also anticipate that the transitional arrangements, including elections, are also likely to be **imperfect**. Most adult Africans today have either never participated in an election or, if they did, it was usually symbolic in nature. It was, therefore, very sensible of the Election Commission in South Africa to use the designation "substantially free and fair" as the base line of acceptability for the April 27, 1994, balloting.

What prompted me to examine this particular set of issues was an article on the Gabon presidential election of Dec. 5, 1993, in which author James Barnes pondered: "Should observation teams agree to participate in circumstances where it is reasonably clear that the incumbent does not intend to play by the rules and possibly face a loss of power?" (1994:69). The anticipated answer to that question, in the manner in which it is framed, regarding most of the transitional elections that occurred in Africa since 1990, should be "no," since the incumbent usually does not intend to play by the rules nor to countenance a loss of power. More than that, most incumbents are unwilling to see a set of rules enacted that would make possible a "substantially" free and fair election. They are usually prepared to make use of their immense advantages in financial

resources, control of the governmental machinery, powers of intimidation, choice of electoral commissioners and the rules they implement, as well as any last-minute adjustments to electoral arrangements, to bias the process decisively in their favor.

We are therefore obliged to promote transitions to democracies that we know beforehand are likely to be "weak and fragile"; and we consent to engage in electoral operations that we expect to be flawed in one or more significant ways. As external "observers," however, we seek to enhance the fairness of the electoral process in incremental steps from the time pre-electoral assessments are conducted to the moment the ballots are counted and the voting results are announced. Moreover, if we have been effective in our collaborative work with local actors and organizations, we expect to help generate a momentum toward a less flawed electoral process during and beyond the first set of transitional elections.

There is an understandable sense of disenchantment that follows transitional elections in Africa that are not "substantially free and fair," and even more so when they have been blatantly falsified. In most cases, however, it may be seen in retrospect that such failures contain the germ of future successes. Election assistance involves the "laying down of markers," beginning with the pre-election assessments that identify obstacles to a "substantially fair" election. An evolutionary or incremental approach to democratization in Africa, including the conduct of elections, is of the utmost necessity if we are not to miss opportunities to promote progress, especially where there seem to be no other options for political renewal. To illustrate this perspective, I will now review aspects of some concrete cases.

## Zambia

The Zambian election **was** substantially free and fair. It involved an incumbent president, and other leaders of the ruling party, who stoutly resisted a return to multiparty democracy. They subsequently rejected and then accepted, internationally monitored elections. Gradually, they also ceded ground in the face of steady pressure from the opposition Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) and international organizations and diplomatic missions.

Zambians went to the elections in October 1991 with a woefully inadequate voter register. Individuals who had reached the voting age of 18 during the previous year were not given the opportunity to register for this historic election. A week before the balloting, a virulent attack was published in one of the government-owned newspapers against the international observers. The article, prepared by senior officials of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), accused the organizers of these missions of preparing to bring chaos to Zambia as part of a western capitalist plot against their social democracy.

It took a special combination of circumstances for Zambia to become the first major African nation to experience a change in government via the ballot box. The MMD leadership made a calculated gamble. They did not insist on a new voter register, although they knew that many of their supporters were not registered. They believed that the UNIP government was manifestly unpopular and that the efforts of international and domestic monitors in guaranteeing a "sufficiently free and fair election" would be enough to ensure a decisive defeat of the incumbents. Unfortunately, other African leaders, who were more determined than Kenneth Kaunda to cling to power at any cost, learned from the experience of that defining election to resist more forcefully attempts to "level the playing field."

## Senegal

In 1988, before the current wave of democratic transitions began, Senegal was one of Africa's quasi-democracies. The level and range of political freedoms enjoyed by the Senegalese people seemed substantial at the time, especially in comparison with the political repression elsewhere in the continent. Today, Senegal has lost its luster as a pacesetter for democracy in Africa. I was present for the national elections of February 1988 and was able to witness the contrast between a relatively open political campaign and the subsequent fraudulent electoral operations. The announcement of the election results provoked violent unrest in the major urban areas, especially Dakar, and before long several of the major opposition leaders, including Abdoulaye Wade, were clapped behind bars. In February 1993, Senegal had the opportunity to refurbish its image as a standard bearer for a democratizing Africa. Wade and other opposition leaders were brought into an inclusive government after the 1988 post-electoral furor had subsided. Keba Mbaye, Senegal's most distinguished jurist, had taken on the task of supervising the revision of the electoral code. [In a personal interview in Abuja, Nigeria, in July 1991, I heard Diouf and Wade jointly praise the work of the Mbaye commission, whose recommendations had received the assent of all the political parties.] Nevertheless, the barons of the ruling party would not allow these efforts to disturb their firm grip on the country, forcing Mbaye to resign in protest at the failure to follow procedures laid down following the balloting.

At this time [May 1994], Wade is back behind bars; Landing Savane, one of Senegal's most refreshing new political voices, is there with him this time; and Abdou Diouf appears paralyzed by the corruption and turpitude that surrounds him. Meanwhile, Senegal is enveloped by a pervasive political, economic, and social malaise. If the ruling party, and its encrusted structures, are unable to conduct a "substantially free and fair election" in Senegal, then some other way must be found to induce a genuine political renewal and the achievement of electoral transparency.

## Togo and Cameroon

These two countries share a common colonial history, having both been German mandates under the League of Nations and then French trust territories under the United Nations. They both underwent significant upheaval since 1990 as demands for a transition to pluralist democracy swept both countries. Cameroon conducted parliamentary and presidential elections in 1992, the former of which was boycotted by the strongest opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF). The SDF participated in the parliamentary elections, despite its grave misgivings about the electoral arrangements. Both elections were riddled with abuses despite, in the presidential elections, the presence of international observers such as a mission organized by the National Democratic Institute of International Affairs (NDI).

Togo's transition, unlike Cameroon's, involved the convening of a national conference. Nevertheless, Gnassingbe Eyadema, like Mobutu in Zaire, managed to frustrate the opposition by a series of maneuvers as well as the resort to armed force. In the case of Togo, international observers, including a small delegation organized by NDI and led by former President Jimmy Carter, took part in the lead-up to the presidential elections in August 1993. Although the Carter/NDI mission left Togo on the eve of the voting, to avoid lending any credibility to a fatally flawed process, and Eyadema was duly re-elected, it is possible that this firm stance paved the way for a more honest, though still flawed, parliamentary election in February 1994.

Eyadema still refused to name as Prime Minister the leader of the party with the largest number of parliamentary seats, and agitation for a genuine constitutional democracy will continue. However, the contrast with the situation in Cameroon is instructive. There the opposition is yet to benefit in any apparent way from the work of international observers. The government has not met any of its promises

regarding the creation of an adequate voter register, the revision of the constitution or the holding of municipal elections.

Substantially free and fair elections remain the first bridge that must be crossed in the transition to constitutional democracies in Africa. What is still manifestly lacking are the means to secure this fundamental right for the African people, especially in those countries in which former colonial powers, especially France, are prepared to pick and choose where they insist on electoral transparency and where they are prepared to cover up and defend the most egregious abuses.

### **Ghana**

Ghana remains one of the promising countries for the building of a sustainable pluralist democracy in contemporary Africa. The Rawlings regime resisted the demands for a multiparty system as long as possible, and then made use of its ample powers to facilitate its landslide victory in 1992. Even in a "substantially free and fair" electoral process, the incumbents may still have won (Joseph: 1993). The Ghanaian opposition was faced with the same options as their counterparts in Zambia. Should they take part in elections with so many built-in advantages for the governing party, especially a voter register that was inflated and defective in other ways, or should they risk losing out even more by boycotting the elections? A pre-election assessment by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) detailed the various obstacles to a fair electoral process.

The opposition parties, however, decided to participate in the elections for a number of reasons. They knew that their request for a new voter register would most likely not be granted; and that if the elections were conducted with only the support parties of the PNDC participating, the international community would recognize the resulting government just as it did that of Burkina Faso in similar circumstances. So, even in the face of obvious inequities, the four opposition

parties that contested the elections felt they might still carry the day in an internationally monitored vote. When they lost badly in the first round of the presidential voting, they withdrew from the subsequent parliamentary elections.

I directed The Carter Center Election Mission in Ghana. In the absence of President Carter, who already had a commitment to travel to Eastern Europe, and the difficulty we encountered in lining up a prominent American citizen to lead the mission-the Ghanaian election fell on the same day as the U.S. presidential election-I was also obliged to assume responsibility for the political and mediating tasks. There was considerable skepticism in the international community about the 1992 Ghanaian elections, including within the U.S. State Department and the Agency for International Development. As a consequence, the United States did not respond encouragingly to requests for assistance to revise the voter register and, at a time when the United Kingdom had committed 1 million pounds for the Ghanaian elections, the U.S. contribution was a paltry \$25,000 [It may have doubled by the time of the elections. The bulk of U.S. assistance instead went to support the election observer mission.]

Ghana is an example of a highly incremental transition to democracy. I had spent a week there in 1989 specifically to learn about the government's plans to return the country to a constitutional civilian democracy. I therefore knew fully well the grudging concessions that were made in the response to mounting demands for a democratic transition during the subsequent three years. I also knew the progress achieved in the drafting of a constitution that made possible a liberal pluralist democracy, an achievement that required overcoming the designs of the PNDC for an even stronger presidential system. The forthcoming elections were therefore going to be both an arena of political competition among contending groups as well as another stage in the incremental and evolutionary process of moving Ghana toward a sustainable constitutional democracy.

Recently, in April 1994, I spent a few days in Accra, my third visit since the 1992 elections. I had an extensive meeting with the Electoral Commission and learned of the plans that were being made to correct two glaring weaknesses of the 1992 elections: the faulty voter register and an inconsistent voter identification system. I was able to review with the Commission the possible pitfalls based on our observations during the 1992 elections. I was pleased to see how seriously the Commission had worked to avoid such problems. The U.S. government was also taking the lead to fund the introduction of a new voter identification card, to the tune of several million dollars, that would be part of a comprehensive new voter registration system.

There are other actions that have been taken to meet the complaints of the opposition in 1992, including the creation of an advisory committee to the Election Commission on which all the established parties are represented. Ghana still has a long way to go to create a fully open and competitive political system. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe a continuous line of progress, before and after the 1992 elections. It is often said that two or three transparent competitive elections are prerequisites for a consolidated democracy. Ghana illustrates Barkan's admonition that "democratic electoral practices, like democratic political systems, are not created overnight." I often said about elections in Ghana, what can be said about Senegal, namely, that there is no reason why virtually flawless elections cannot be conducted in view of the country's high level of administrative and educational development, and its previous electoral experiences. In 1996, Ghana will face the same test that Senegal failed in 1993: There will be no acceptable excuses for an election that is not overwhelmingly free and fair.

## **Conclusion**

Zambia and Ghana demonstrate the variety of factors that determine whether the people are given a fair opportunity to retain or remove an incumbent government via elections. In the former, a weakened government resting on a decaying economy had little capacity to resist the pressures for democratic renewal. And even when it rejected demands of the internal opposition and civic groups for a multiparty system, and for monitored elections and other adjustments needed to level the electoral playing field, it eventually gave way on every critical issue. In Ghana, the same process is taking place but over a longer time-frame because of the incumbents greater political strength, their broader popular base, their confidence in their political vision and priorities, and the high investment of external organizations in the economic reform program conducted in partnership with the government for over a decade.

In May 1993, we convened at The Carter Center a workshop on Election Monitoring to consider the array of unanswered questions spawned by the "growth industry" of international election monitoring. Although a number of suggestions were circulated in the hope that another organization would take up the challenge of a follow-up meeting, nothing has in fact been done. One of the points repeatedly made at that workshop was the need for consistency and agreed standards on some of the basic issues confronted by election observers.

There still do not exist guidelines regarding such fundamental matters as the decision to take part in election observer exercises, or when an evaluation concerning an election should be issued, or what criteria should be used in such evaluations. The case of Ethiopia, which had monitored regional elections in June 1992 for which the country was ill-prepared, and which will conduct elections for a constituent assembly in June 1994 in which several major political organizations are unable to take part, raises a host of perplexing questions. We now have a considerable body of information, based on the involvement of several organizations in Africa and elsewhere, about a variety of electoral

experiences. It is time that we distill, in a systematic way, what we have learned from these engagements. In view of the critical role played by international monitors, and their national counterparts, it is a responsibility that should no longer be shirked.

To return to the question put by James Barnes- "Should observer teams agree to participate in circumstances in which it is reasonably clear that the incumbent regime does not intend to play by the rules and possibly face a loss of its power?" -our revised answer is: "**It depends.**" What it depends on is both factual in nature and includes **judgments** about how much we feel we can influence a particular regime to make the minimal changes to ensure that the elections will be substantially free and fair. Right up to the very eve of the Togolese 1993 elections, NDI and The Carter Center hesitated over taking part in an election whose preparations were so inadequate. Even when a decision was made to give it a try, it was mainly because President Carter was prepared to see how much he could influence matters on the ground.

Africa's democratic experiments are taking place in an environment whose main elements are in flux. While calling ourselves "observers," we often do more than observe these processes. Our very act of observation illustrates the Heisenberg principle by influencing all the elements in play. It is not only Africa, but the "international community" that has come a long way in this regard. In Uganda in 1980, and Liberia in 1985, elections were given external stamps of approval by "observers," although they were known to be manifestly unfree and unfair. At that time, it was cynically argued that, by "African standards," that was all that could be expected.

Today, more appropriate standards are being set in a partnership between African democratizers and their external supporters, as exemplified by the cases of Namibia (1990), Benin (1991), Zambia (1992), and South Africa (1994). These successes are evenly balanced by obvious failures, as well as by the more numerous ambiguous and even dubious "transitions." On the eve of the Ghanaian 1992 presidential election, when international observers were, once again, being vilified by satraps of the ruling party in the state-owned media, the chairman of the Election Commission, Justice Josiah Ofori-Boateng, made a telling rebuke: the reason why Ghana welcomed international observers was because *Ghana* laid claim to be a member of the world community. International observers would ascertain if Ghana did or did not live up to the standards of fair elections recognized by that community.

That argument contains the essence of the common venture in which we are engaged, both those who observe and those who accept, or perhaps debate, observation. On our part, while acknowledging that "perfection" may not be at hand, we must still resolutely address all imperfections, including in our own operations.

## References

Joel D. Barkan, "Nurturing Democracy in Africa: Thirteen Lessons from the Field," paper written for USAID/REDSO/ESA (1993)

James Barnes, "The Tainted Win," *Africa Report*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (1994)

Michael Bratton, "Political Liberalization in Africa in the 1990s: Advances and Setbacks," MSU Working Papers on Political Reform in Africa, No 2 (1993)

Richard Joseph, "Ghana: A Winning Formula", *Africa Report*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (1993)

Stephen P. Riley, "Political adjustment or domestic pressure: domestic politics and political choice in Africa", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1992)

Richard Sandbrook, "Political Liberalization and the Politics of Economic Reform," USAID Workshop on Economic Reform in Africa's New Era of Political Liberalization, Washington, D.C., April 1993

## **Advancing Beyond Semi-Democracy in Senegal: A Fair Electoral Code Does Not a "Full" Democracy Make 1**

by Linda Beck

University of Wisconsin

Senegal, one of Africa's oldest multiparty democracies, is often held up as a model of democratization. Under long established democratic institutions and legal structures, freedom of expression and association flourish in Senegal while pernicious ethnic rivalries have been averted in national elections. These elections, however, have been marred by persistent accusations of fraud by opposition parties contributing to Senegal's continued status as a "semi-democracy" (Coulon 1988).

With the adoption of a new electoral code, progress was made during the 1993 elections in curtailing the history of violence and flagrant fraud surrounding the electoral process. Nevertheless, incremental advances in formal democracy did little to increase participation or enhance popular opinion of the electoral process as the familiar pattern of accusations of fraud and counter-charges re-emerged. In this working paper, I address how the "winner-takes-all," and controls all, nature of Senegalese politics resulted in the disappointment of "politics as usual."

In the first section, I discuss the economic as well as political stakes behind the theoretical debate over transparency versus alternance as a basis to evaluate democratization in Senegal. With few economic alternatives outside the public realm, the need to secure and retain access to the spoils of office has assured that, despite the new code, fraud remains a significant (if less blatant) feature of Senegalese elections. Secondly, I consider the party *qua* state that controlled the administration and arbitration of the elections. Although a double-edged sword, the advantages of political incumbency clearly influenced the ability of the code of assure a level playing field. Thirdly, I examine how despite changes in the code, Senegalese attitudes regarding the irrelevance of the elections have developed into general disgust with political scandals and maneuvering. After months of negative campaigning and political back-biting, the assassination of the vice president of the Constitutional Council-and the alleged violations of the legal and human rights that followed-was a devastating blow to public confidence in their political elites. Finally, in the conclusion, I consider the implications of Senegal's 1993 elections and challenges for advancing beyond "semi-democracy."

### **The Transparency-Alternation Debate**

Despite the restoration of "unlimited" multipartyism in 1981, the electoral process throughout the 1980s was unable to alter Senegal's dominant party system. Surrounded by accusations of electoral fraud and violence, each re-election of the ruling *Parti Socialiste* (P.S.) reinforced the country's status as a "semi-democracy." To consolidate Senegalese democracy, alternation-or at least the real possibility for all political parties to achieve power-was necessary to move beyond ritualized plebiscites and to legitimize the outcome of the electoral process. Therefore, electoral reform that would establish more equitable rules of the game was seen as a prerequisite to competitive elections through which political accountability and responsible, responsive governance could be assured (Young and Kante 1991).

Following the particularly tumultuous 1988 national elections and opposition boycott of the 1990 local elections, a new electoral code was negotiated by a commission composed of five jurists and representatives of each of the 17 legally constituted political parties. The code was approved by President Abdou Diouf and the National Assembly (alias *chambre d'applaudissement*) "without changing a comma," or consulting the electorate. Regardless, the code contained important amendments to assure competitive elections including: equal access to radio and television, revision of the electoral list, required voter identification, application of indelible ink, and obligatory secret balloting.

Lauded by all parties to be "the most perfect code," Senegal's newly negotiated electoral code gave rise to high expectations for the 1993 national elections. Expectations regarding the outcome of the new code were obviously different for members of the P.S. and those in the opposition. During the presidential and legislative campaigns, a debate arose over electoral transparency versus alternation that reflected the divergence between P.S. adherence to the code as a 'democratically negotiated' agreement that would enhance their legitimacy and commitment by opposition parties to the code as a legal structure that would permit (assure) them to attain political power.

In addition to regime survival, the 1993 elections represented for the P.S. an opportunity to legitimize the party's rule since independence. In a recent edition of the *Journal of Democracy*, Babacar Kante attributes Senegal's current legitimacy crisis in part to the undemocratic manner in which Diouf succeeded Leopold Sedar Senghor in 1981, and Diouf's subsequent inability to reform his aging, clientelistic party (Kante 1994: 102). While Diouf could be seen as having legitimized his inheritance of the presidency at the polls in 1983, he has been unable to wrestle control of the P.S. from the party's clientelist 'barons'.

As with efforts to reform the party, however, the question of legitimacy for the P.S. regime predates Diouf's accession to the presidency. Since the re-election of Senghor in 1978 under restored "limited" multipartyism, opposition parties have repeatedly charged that P.S. victories were founded upon electoral fraud. During my interviews with members of the P.S., party militants contended that the **possibility** of alternation is now assured by the newly negotiated electoral code to which the opposition was party. Therefore, if the *demos*-or a majority of the voting electorate-preferred to retain P.S. leadership in transparent elections, this would legitimate their rule.

For the P.S., what was essential to domestic as well as international legitimacy was that the 1993 elections be declared free and fair. To avoid repetition of the violent, destabilizing events of 1988, charges of fraud by opposition parties had to abate or be discredited. In addition, the Senegalese government needed the cachet of free and fair elections to demonstrate to its foreign donors that the country was still worthy of what one World Bank official described as the "democracy bonus". [2](#)

As Samuel Decalo points out in his contribution to this volume, democratization is regarded by many African leaders as the price paid for economic development, which is perceived to be dependent on external infusions of aid. Prior to the elections, Senegal became ineligible for support from the International Monetary Fund for failing to fulfill its economic conditionalities. The World Bank had also suspended all budget support when Senegal did not meet targets for civil service wage reduction. With the emergence of new forms of political conditionality, the Senegalese government apparently hoped to regain the confidence of foreign donors through excellence in one area (democratization) that could compensate for deficiencies in the other (economic reform).

For the P.S. regime, however, the instrumental value of democracy is not confined to economic issues of development but also its own political survival, which depends on the continuous flow of foreign assistance to Senegal's near-bankrupt state so that political goods may be provided to the party's clients. Unable to reform internal party structures, the dominant mode of political mobilization is still a patronage system that is based upon networks of "clans"-described by Edward Schumacher nearly two decades ago as informal political interest groups "typically of diverse kinship, ethnic, caste, and occupational backgrounds" united around a patron who provides material welfare in exchange for political support (Schumacher 1975: 3-4). This patronage system depends upon the perpetual replenishing of state resources as well as the party's access to them. Consequently, as the elections approached, the necessity of political survival for the P.S. clientelist network began to overshadow elite rhetoric regarding transparency.

Despite electoral reform encouraged by domestic and external incentives, Senegalese politics remained a zero-sum game with correspondingly high stakes in gaining and retaining political power. After more than a decade of unsuccessful structural adjustment programs and a lack of economic alternatives outside the public realm, the winner-takes-all nature of Senegalese elections emphasized to politicians and their clients the need to control the spoils of office. Lucy Colvin Phillips discusses in this volume the lack of power-sharing in Africa and widespread expectations that the dominant party monopolizes power, jobs, and graft. This makes losing an election unthinkable. Therefore, while the party *qua* state sought to ensure that the elections would be **perceived** as free and fair to assure domestic tranquility and continued access to foreign assistance, high political and economic stakes assured the persistence of electoral fraud-although in new forms that reflect an increased sophistication in influencing the less visible aspects of the electoral process, a trend observed in various African countries by Ned McMahon in his contribution to this volume.

Meanwhile, opposition parties argued that only alternation itself would provide irrefutable evidence that Senegalese elections were no longer empty rituals ridden with fraud. Referring to recent elections in other African countries such as Cape Verde and Zambia in which the ruling parties were turned out of power, opposition parties claimed that a level playing field would necessarily result in an opposition victory. Senegal's main opposition party-Abdoulaye Wade's *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (P.D.S.)*-maintained that the 1988 elections were stolen from them, and that free and fair elections assured by the new code would demonstrate their true electoral weight. Despite the past electoral pattern of bipolarity between the P.S. and P.D.S., other opposition parties who have consistently won less than 3 percent of the vote also held firmly to the belief that their poor electoral showings were a conspiracy by the P.S.-in possible collaboration with its chief rival/accomplice the P.D.S.-and insisted on presenting their own presidential candidates, effectively splintering opposition to P.S. rule. Nevertheless, all the opposition parties considered defeat of the P.S. to be inevitable since they believed that in competitive elections the ruling party would be held accountable for unresolved issues, such as the Mauritanian conflict, continuing clashes with separatists in the southern Casamance region, Senegal's poor economic performance, and corrupt mismanagement of the government. Consequently, the opposition reasoned that the new code meant no fraud, no fraud inevitably meant political alternation, and alternation meant that 'true' democracy had arrived in Senegal. The inverse logic was that there could be no democracy in Senegal without alternation. This resulted in what Leonardo Villalon describes as the duality of the opposition: "If we win, the system worked... if we lose, it didn't" (Villalon 1993: 16).

Political calculations of this sort were evident in the P.D.S. assessment of the presidential elections. When early results from the Dakar region suggested he had won, Abdoulaye Wade told a group of foreign observers that irregularities in the presidential elections were inconsequential. But several days later after Diouf

was declared the preliminary winner, these inconsequential issues-e.g., the delibility of the ink, and illegal *ordonnances*-became significant. [3](#)

### **The P.S. *qua* State Implementation of the Code**

In general, however, the opposition's test of democracy was not facilely based on a favorable outcome but also on their assessment of state/P.S. implementation of this `perfect' electoral code. The new code is a complex legal instrument that demands a high level of institutional capacity and administrative resources-both human and financial-seldom available to a poor, underdeveloped country such as Senegal. Although the new code was intended to bring meaning to multiparty electoral competition, civic education programs by the state, political parties, international NGOs, and bilateral donors such as USAID were limited, underfunded, elite, or urban-biased and undertaken too late to encourage registration or to disseminate information about changes in the voting process. For the opposition, however, more fundamental than financial burdens and time constraints in implementing the code was whether the P.S.-controlled state could be a neutral administrator of the elections, and whether members of the judiciary appointed by a P.S. president could be unbiased electoral arbitrators.

Prior to the elections, and shortly after the judiciary was given extensive arbitrate powers under the new electoral code, the Diouf administration's unilateral decision to completely overhaul the judicial system-and the reassignment of Supreme Court justices reputedly "too independent"-served to raise suspicion among an already skeptical opposition. And while the opposition applauded the creation of the *Haut Conseil du Radio et de la Télévision* to arbitrate disputes over political parties' guaranteed access to public electronic media, Diouf summarily appointed and dismissed members of the HCRT, which was limited in its jurisdiction, restrained in its criticism of both the state media and the P.S., and unable to enforce compliance with its rulings. Finally, there were numerous accusations by the opposition surrounding the administration of the

elections—from withholding voter registration and identity cards of known opposition supporters to tampering with results by government officials.

Therefore, the seeming duplicity of the opposition in praising the code while charging that the P.S. would distort the process reflected both opposition optimism about the new legal structures and their realism about the application of the code within the enduring context of the P.S. *qua* state. Despite the code's intention, the political playing field was not entirely level in that the P.S. retained control over the state's bureaucracy, judiciary and, perhaps most importantly, its coffers.

Although the opposition assumed that the party in power would be held accountable by the electorate for political and economic mismanagement, political incumbency proved to be a double-edged sword. In the end, P.S. access to state resources often outweighed criticism of its policy performance. Even if they had seen assistance dwindle, P.S. supporters stressed in interviews that they knew what the P.S. had done and would presumably continue to do for them and their families. International food donations, bilateral and nongovernmental development projects, and employment opportunities in the private as well as the public sector were seen as benefits distributed by the P.S. to its supporters. After more than a decade of P.S. dominance under the guise of multipartyism, many voters were hesitant to disinherit themselves, their family, village, or region by voting for an opposition party.

During the 1993 elections, the financial disparity between opposition parties and the P.S. became more pronounced as state resources—human and financial—were diverted to the P.S. campaign. For example, public SOTRAC buses, cars donated by the French government for judiciary supervision of the elections, and vehicles commandeered from nongovernmental organizations were used by the P.S. to transport campaigners (often absent state employees), and to bring large

groups of women from neighboring (and not-so-neighboring) areas to attend P.S. rallies where T-shirts, caps, and other paraphernalia were distributed. The cost of a single P.S. campaign rally is estimated to have exceeded smaller opposition parties' budgets for entire regions.

Distribution by the P.S. of small amounts of money, rice, cloth, etc. was not inconsequential to voters suffering from recurrent drought and economic hardship. For most Senegalese who do not have a stake in party patronage rivalries and whose daily problems are not addressed let alone solved by intellectual debates about transparency and alternation, the electoral process was seen as having little relevance to their lives-an affair of the elite. While people were eager to benefit from the "folklore" of campaign rallies, popular expectations of the new electoral code focused on it as the agreement among party leaders with the potential to end the pattern of violence surrounding the electoral process rather than a particular outcome. Consequently, some people were willing to sell their vote as this assured them of some immediate benefit (e.g., 500 francs CFA or a kilo of rice) from the political process. [4](#)

### **Disillusionment With Politics as Usual**

Beyond the prevalent attitude that elections are irrelevant, the 1993 elections intensified general disgust with politics and politicians. Regardless of the intentions of the party leaders who negotiated the new code, the familiar pattern of political maneuvering, accusations of fraud, and counter-charges re-emerged months before the official presidential campaign began in February 1993. The vicious pre-campaign set the stage for three weeks of outlandish promises and negative campaigning without any real policy debate among the parties' candidates.

Negative campaigning culminated with accusations about Diouf's personal life by Tijan marabout Moustapha Sy, a nephew of the brotherhood's *Khalife Général*

and a recent 'convert' to the P.D.S. cause. Although cassette tapes of his speech reached every corner of Senegal, there was no public response until the final day of the presidential campaign. After the parties' had made their last pitch to the voters, Abdoul Aziz Sy Jr.-the eldest son of the *Khalife* and his spokesperson-appeared on television and radio to deny the validity of and any association with the slanderous statements. <sup>5</sup> Although a complaint was lodged with the HCRT that this constituted campaigning outside the five minutes allotted to the P.S.-and after the period in which opposition parties could respond publicly on radio and television-the council characteristically ruled that this was not within its jurisdiction.

The presidential campaign was followed by the anti-climactic announcement of Diouf's re-election after 21 days of haggling in the electoral census commission between the representatives of the P.S. and opposition parties. Alleging fraud in many voting districts, the opposition claimed that Diouf had not received the 25 percent of the registered electorate necessary to win in the first round of the presidential elections. The delayed results and political backbiting only served to lower public opinion of the political players and prompted the resignation of Keba Mbaye, the president of the Constitutional Council-which adjudicates the electoral process-who had served as the president of the Electoral *Code* Commission.

Given the fervent accusations of fraud by representatives of the opposition on the electoral census commission and Wade's controversial comment in January 1993 that "civil war" would erupt if the P. S. was re-elected in fraudulent elections, it seems (peacefully) ironic that there was no public reaction to Diouf's victory. To explain why there was not the violence associated with the 1988 elections, Kante points to people's rejection of the entire political class and consequent disinterest in the electoral outcome (Kante 1994). This assumes that the outrage over alleged electoral fraud in 1988 resulted in a general uprising

over an unjust outcome; the 1988 rioters, however, were adamant opponents to P. S. rule-both those who voted and youths yet ineligible-who in 1993, though dissatisfied with the presidential results, were looking toward the legislative elections. While the presidential and legislative elections were held on the same day in 1988, under new code the 1993 elections were separated, conforming to requests by the opposition who sought to avoid P. S. coattailing. Therefore, rather than spurring on mass demonstrations, opposition leaders in 1993 were scrambling to meet the deadline to submit their slate of candidates for the legislative elections in May. <sup>6</sup>

Whether or not his intention was to circumvent opposition protests, Diouf offered the opposition a `carrot' they could not refuse. After his re-election in March, Diouf promised to appoint a prime minister from whichever party won the majority of seats in the legislative elections. In the name of democratic consensus (and social tranquility), the prime minister would then be allowed to form the government. The P. D. S. had the *deuxième tour* they sought that could permit them to gain the prestige of controlling the legislative branch as well as access to state resources.

In the end, the P. S. retained its majority in the Assembly, and Diouf reappointed longtime friend Habib Thiam to form a P. S. dominated multiparty government that excludes the P. D. S., allegedly discredited by the assassination of Babacar Seye, the vice president of the Constitutional Council. Slain several days before the council was to announce the legislative election results, Seye's murder was a final devastating blow to public confidence in their political elite. Senegal and Senegalese democracy are still reeling from alleged violations of the legal and human rights of those held in "preventative detention" while the state pursues an exclusively P. D. S. line of investigation. The theory that P. S. elites within the government have taken advantage of the tragedy to undermine their main political rival is given credence by the fact that no one outside the P. D. S. and its

allies has been questioned or detained. Despite the fact that one of the accused who admitted to having carried out the assassination reversed his original incrimination of P. D. S. leaders and now charges that he was hired by Prime Minister Thiam and one of his subordinates, neither member of the P. S. has been interviewed by the police or a member of the judiciary.

Without the P. D. S., which received over 3 percent of the vote in both elections, Diouf's new *Gouvernement de changement, de rassemblement, et d'ouverture* is not a consensus government that reflects the electoral weight of Senegal's political parties but rather an elite accommodation through backroom dealings that permits the P. S. to present an image of political inclusiveness to international and domestic public opinion. Following a pattern established under Senghor, repression of the P. D. S. and its allies has been combined with co-optation of three opposition parties who received five of the 29 ministerial posts, although their combined total in the legislative elections was less than 10 percent of the vote. Rather than power-sharing, this has in effect turned some opposition leaders into P. S. clients because in a winner-takes-all system the winner decides who gets a piece (or crumbs) of the proverbial *gateau*. As Senegal's political elites scramble to control the distribution of the *gateau* or at least negotiate a larger piece, each new political scandal intensifies general disenchantment if not disgust with politicians and the political system.

### **Moving Beyond Semi-Democracy**

In conclusion, I wish to consider briefly several questions suggested by Keith Klein's paper in this volume: What can we learn from Senegal's 1993 "flawed" elections? How can Senegal advance beyond "semi-democracy"? What is the role of the international community in promoting democracy in Senegal? While Senegal's new electoral code contains important amendments to encourage competitive elections, it is necessary but insufficient to guarantee transparent elections or to institutionalize alternance. No matter how 'perfect' the

code is, the political playing field in 1993 was not level in that the P. S. retained control over the state's bureaucracy, judiciary, and coffers. What's more, with few economic alternatives outside the public realm, the need to secure and retain access to the spoils of office assured that fraud would remain a significant feature of Senegalese elections.

If a decade of structural adjustment programs has been unable to diversify Senegal's state-dominated economy, it is difficult to imagine that in the near future political defeat will become thinkable and consequently make electoral fraud less of an imperative-although this could be a long-term goal. An alternative to changing the logic of elite politics is to promote a political culture of democratic participation and accountability through civic education, emphasizing citizen's rights, the responsibilities of their representatives, and the relevance of the political process (i.e., making government responsible and responsive to people's needs). This could encourage individuals to oppose fraud as well as corruption and the misuse of public resources. In 1993, however, Senegal's limited civic education projects began only several weeks before the presidential elections and lingered through the legislative elections only to disappear completely. Despite interest by various organizations, funding was not available to continue let alone expand these nascent projects.

Over the course of The Carter Center's seminar on democratization in Africa, participants repeatedly stressed that democracy is a process, not an event; therefore, democratization needs long-term, consistent support from the international community, not just during the high-profile moments of electoral competition. In addition to general civic education programs needed during the period between elections, conferences and workshops could be sponsored to discuss issues such as the role of government in administering the elections and the possibility of forming an independent elections commission. Both political parties and local human rights groups also need to train election workers well in

advance so that national observers may replace the small groups of foreign observers who cannot fully observe nor ultimately legitimize the electoral process. While recognizing that not all international actors have the same interests in promoting democratization, I would argue that international commitment to Senegalese democracy needs to be consistent as well as long term, upholding democratic principles even when they run counter to expediency.

**Sources Cited:**

Coulon, Christian. 1988. "Senegal: The Development and Fragility of Semidemocracy," in *Democracy in Developing Countries: Africa*, L. Diamond, J. Linz, and S. M. Lipset (eds). Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Kante, Babacar. 1994. "Senegal's Empty Elections," *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 5, no. 1: 96-108.

Schumacher, Edward J. 1975. *Politics, Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Senegal*. Berkeley: University of California.

Villalon, Leo A. 1993. "Democratizing a (Quasi) Democracy: The Senegalese elections of 1993," Paper presented at the 1993 meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D. C.

Young, M. Crawford and Babacar Kante. 1991. "Governance, Democracy and the 1988 Senegalese Election, in G. Hyden and M. Bratton (eds.) *Governance and Politics in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

**1The Green Belt Movement and the Kenya Elections of 1992: A Case Study of Grassroots Civic Education 1**

by Stephen N. Ndegwa

Indiana University

This paper examines a civic education initiative undertaken by a local nongovernmental organization (NGO) in the run-up to the multiparty elections in Kenya in 1992. Widespread civic education is necessary to enable citizens to participate in new institutions of governance and to encourage responsible citizenship in democratizing countries in Africa. I focus on NGOs because they are well-placed to pursue the civic education agenda for a number of reasons:

1. They command immense resources and have become indispensable actors in development in many African countries;
2. They are organizing themselves into networks within and across African countries for political and policy advocacy;
3. Their presence in local and often rural communities in many African countries is unmatched by that of any other member of civil society (except religious organizations); and
4. Their engagement in the production of tangible development provides an important foundation for "empowerment" goals such as civic education.

The example of the Green Belt Movement illustrates the possibilities and problems of grass-roots civic education initiatives by NGOs and other members of civil society.

The Green Belt Movement (GBM) is a national grass-root-based environmental NGO that focuses on mobilizing rural women for tree-planting in Kenya. GBM takes tree-planting as the focal point of advancing the fight against environmental degradation as well as inculcating a broader development ideology and political action elaborated by its vocal leader, Wangari Maathai. The Green Belt Movement consists of over 50,000 members organized in 2,000 local community groups in 27 out of the 42 administrative districts in Kenya. These groups are focused on tree-planting: They maintain over 1,000 active tree nurseries in which they raise seedlings and issue them free-of-charge to local farmers and institutions such as schools. In turn, GBM pays these groups for every seedling that survives to be a tree. Through its grass-root network affiliate women's

groups, the Green Belt Movement has helped plant over 10 million trees since its inception in 1977.

One of the political actions undertaken by the Green Belt Movement in the run-up to the 1992 multiparty elections in Kenya was a civic education program targeted at rural communities. The campaign was an important undertaking since the transition to a multiparty system in Kenya was in many ways incomplete. This was especially so given that the culture of the single-party state, along with its repressive structures, persisted due to the intransigence of the incumbent government of the Kenya African National Union (KANU). After nearly 30 years of single-party authoritarian rule, the transition to political pluralism presented problems of adjustment for the electorate. GBM believed that voter apathy and fear toward the state as well as a lack of knowledge about political pluralism would undermine the possibility of having free and fair elections.

While there was a lot of public euphoria over new political freedoms, there also was widespread suspicion and apathy regarding the potential veracity of forthcoming elections. Previous experiences with single-party elections had demonstrated KANU'S lack of respect for the power of the vote. For instance, the 1988 general elections were believed to have been massively rigged. These were the first national elections to employ a controversial queue-voting method where voters lined up behind the candidate of their choice. Massive rigging and voter intimidation is believed to have marked this poorly attended election-defying the much publicized logic of it being a more open and transparent method than the secret ballot. While the secret ballot was restored for the 1992 multiparty elections, there was nonetheless a widespread belief that the besieged KANU regime was intent on rigging and had already laid the groundwork for this. Among the actions that critics cited as compromising the forthcoming elections was the KANU government's unilateral appointment of the electoral commission

that would order and store the ballot papers, conduct the voter registration, and supervise the polls (see various issues of *Society*, [August-December 1992]). Where there was less voter apathy, the icons of the repressive state remained even as other indications suggested a more open political system. For instance, detention laws, licensing requirements for political rallies, the secret police, and ethnic violence in sections of the country as well as political prisoners languishing in prisons all made it difficult to believe that the political changes were complete and irreversible. There was widespread election-related violence and various mushrooming "operation" groups that mobilized different sections of the population to support different political parties (see *Society*, [August-December 1992]). Those associated with KANU were at first thought to be out to instigate violence, but they later emerged as equally disruptive conduits of "pouring money" to canvass for votes countrywide.

Finally, since neither the government nor its appointed electoral commission made any serious effort to educate voters on the facts and the implications of the transition to multiparty politics or to prepare them for the forthcoming elections, many voters were ignorant of the various registration and voting requirements. Given what was happening in the run-up to the elections (including campaign violence, persistent rumors of rigging, and other electoral malpractices such as vote buying), the Green Belt Movement believed the possibility for free and fair democratic elections in Kenya was severely compromised. In this uncertain transition period, it was especially important that vulnerable populations be educated about their rights and responsibilities in the forthcoming elections and in the new political system. As its own limited response, GBM launched its civic education program called the Movement for Free and Fair Elections.

### **The Movement for Free and Fair Elections**

The Movement for Free and Fair Elections was started in June 1992 by Wangari Maathai in conjunction with other opposition activists. This included well-known agitators for political pluralism in Kenya such as Rev. Timothy Njoya, lawyer Paul Muite, and members of newly formed pressure groups such as Release Political Prisoners (RPP) and Mothers of Political Prisoners. The goal of the civic education campaign was to hold 25 seminars countrywide and to translate educational materials into local languages for wider dissemination across the country before the elections expected in December 1992. The initial seminar was held in Nyeri town in the Central province of Kenya in June 1992. Thereafter, various seminars were held elsewhere and by the time of elections, 15 such seminars had been conducted, mostly in the Central province.

The Free and Fair seminars were usually held in local church halls where residents assembled in the form of a town meeting to listen to various presentations by guest speakers. This was followed by an open forum where members of the public would ask questions and venture their own opinions regarding various issues. A typical seminar attracted between 300 and 700 participants from the local area. Relying on the expertise and experiences of notable individuals and professionals, including leading agitators for political pluralism, the Free and Fair seminars covered a variety of topics on the nature of the recent political transitions and the role citizens were required to play.

Typical seminar presentations included expositions on the depth of repression in the former single-party state and the necessity for the transition to political pluralism; the workings of a multiparty democracy and expectations for both politicians and voters, especially in terms of accountability and political participation; the importance of elections and requirements for voting in the approaching elections as well as the way the winner (especially of the presidency) would be determined; building awareness on the need for safeguarding human rights, releasing political prisoners, and repealing repressive

laws. Other seminar themes were related to "fundamental flaws" in Kenyan politics such as idolizing politicians, the role of money (especially in elections), and corruption in government.

Few local leaders (and none of those associated with the incumbent regime) attended the seminars and in only one instance was a local administrative officer (a Chief) visibly present. Much of the preparation for the seminars (such as securing church halls and publicity) was undertaken by the local residents after contacting the GBM secretariat. The established GBM network of grass-root groups with their easy access to local communities (including tree beneficiaries) was invaluable for the logistics of convening the seminars. Indeed, one of the resolutions passed by GBM delegates at the 1992 General Meeting expressed support for the civic education initiative and members undertook to make arrangements to hold the seminars in their areas. GBM did not "export" a Free and Fair seminar to any given area or group but insisted on being invited by the area residents, notably members of the local Green Belt group/groups.

However, even as the country prepared for the elections, the fear of the repressive state was not totally erased. In certain instances, GBM had to re-schedule the seminars because of last-minute refusals by church leaders to allow the meetings to take place in their compounds. For example, on three occasions GBM had to find alternative venues after church leaders changed their minds about the seminar. In one telling case, a priest locked the church hall and left the compound leaving instructions that the hall would be "unavailable" for the scheduled Free and Fair seminar. Seminar organizers also were harassed by state officials, especially the provincial administration. This was particularly the case outside Central Province (that is, outside areas that were considered opposition strongholds), where GBM officials and volunteers were prevented from entering or from holding seminars.

It should be pointed out that despite efforts to make the civic education program objective, it was overwhelmingly anti-KANU. This was no accident. First, GBM had had many run-ins with the KANU government in its work, including its advocacy efforts. GBM had also suffered official harassment for its anti-government stands, such as its support for Mothers of Political Prisoners and its close association with oppositional politics. Such state harassment was not limited to Wangari Maathai (who had been arrested and once beaten unconscious) but was also directed against field workers who were hounded by the secret police and women's groups that had been told "not to plant Wangari Maathai's trees" at the height of previous confrontations.

Second, the people who helped organize the seminars and who were invited to give presentations and testimonials had been at the center of the agitation for multiparty democracy in Kenya. Among featured speakers were lawyer Paul Muite and clergyman Timothy Njoya—both vehement critics of the single-party KANU regime. Others included mothers of political prisoners still being held on charges of opposing the single-party state. More broadly, however, in much of the country the tide was clearly against KANU—the architect of the single-party state and an unconvincing convert to political pluralism. Many therefore considered the multiparty polls a prime opportunity to vote out the KANU regime. The Movement for Free and Fair Elections was also intimately linked to the Middle Ground Group (MGG), an *ad hoc* group of opposition activists whose main goal was to re-unite the main opposition party Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), which had spearheaded the campaign for political pluralism in 1990-91 but split into two rival parties in mid-1992. With the split in FORD, the opposition to KANU was bound to lose the election and consequently endanger many political reforms and reformers. Later, the opposition did field a single candidate against the incumbent President Daniel arap Moi. As the election date drew near, MGG's agenda became an integral part of GBM's Free and Fair seminars. It would have been difficult to separate the two even if the organizers

intended to since the two efforts shared the same major participants who were committed to taking both messages to all corners of the republic.

It is difficult to measure the impact of GBM's Movement for Free and Fair Elections in the communities it reached. The number of people reached is not likely to be very large, a couple of thousands at the most. Moreover, since these were spread out over 15 areas (which included many constituencies where registered voters may number over 20,000 per constituency), the effect may seem minimal and inconsequential. However, the Movement for Free and Fair Elections was not an ambitious program to educate all voters nationwide. Rather, its goal was to reach as many as possible through GBM's grass-root network of members and affiliated groups. A few other groups were also pursuing similar civic education initiatives, for example, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) and the Catholic Secretariat. The Catholic Secretariat, through its Justice and Peace Commission, held seminars for its clergymen from dioceses across the country, and they in turn trained others in their districts in order to propagate election education to their local congregations. Similarly, the NCCCK carried out its own civic education campaign most notably in a series of posters, advertisements, and political commentary in local newspapers and through politicized sermons in many of its members churches. Apart from these other efforts by church bodies, the Green Belt Movement was the only indigenous development NGO pursuing a nationwide civic education program through its grass-roots network of development activities.

## **Conclusions**

Given recent changes in political structures (e.g. the legalization of opposition parties and multiparty elections), what remains in the democratization project is making citizens aware of their rights, obligations, and role in democratic governance. The Green Belt example suggests possibilities available to sensitize citizens to the demands of and opportunities for political participation within new

structures of governance. The innovativeness evident in this initiative is important to note. First, local participation in GBM's civic education campaign ranged from local initiative in inviting the Free and Fair seminars to securing the venues and spreading word in the community. Moreover, the seminar structure allowed for give-and-take discussions between guest speakers and local residents. This also avoided a top-down approach to "political enlightenment." Second, the use of previously established networks of contact between the NGO and its local members was a way around the usual constraints of access to the grass-roots. Thus, the Green Belt Movement used its network of women's groups engaged in tree-planting to reach rural communities through credible, local community members. Similarly, the Catholic church trained civic education trainers drawn from its decentralized dioceses, and they in turn propagated election education to their own local congregations. In situations where radio-possibly the most effective tool of mass civic education-is controlled by a hostile government, such innovative use of existing networks is important in extending civic education to rural communities.

Two important problems are also evident in this example. One is the partisanship of such civic education in politically charged campaign periods. The other is the *ad hoc* and uncoordinated nature of such budding initiatives. The partisan nature of the GBM initiative stemmed from the NGO's history in activism as well as from the assemblage of notable oppositionists who participated in the campaign. To mitigate this partisanship, an alternative arrangement would be to form a broad-based coalition of interest groups (including those linked to the ruling party) with a view to propagating nonpartisan civic education. Such a collaborative effort may be desirable in order to establish broad agreements on effective pedagogy and subject matter and on coordination to ensure more areas are reached in a systematic fashion. An important step toward such collaboration is the recent formation of the Institute for Education in Democracy (IED), which brings together leading NGOs involved in civic education in Kenya.

Finally, because African NGOs are heavily dependent on external donors, the integration of civic education into regular NGO activities and development programs requires further donor support. Civic education programs should be given high priority because they are likely to enhance local participation in democratic governance. In particular, programs undertaken outside the intense election periods need to be encouraged. Such programs carried out in less politically charged off-election years would not only foster political participation in future elections, but also facilitate "the evolution of a democratic ethic and culture in the management of national affairs" (wa Gacheru 1994: 4).

### **Selected Bibliography**

*Society*. Weekly News Magazine. Nairobi: Nyamora Publications, August - December 1992.

wa Gacheru, Margaretta. "Why It Is Important to Educate Electors." *Daily Nation* Special Report, February 24, 1994.

### **Politics, Transitions, and Democratization in Africa**

by John W. Harbeson

United States Agency for International Development

The decade of the 1990s has been a decade of renewed hope in Africa, hope that first multiparty elections in memory foretell full-scale transition to democracy. Hope, also, that political democracy in conjunction with economic reform will produce sustainable improvements in standards of living for most Africans. Among the watershed changes wrought by these elections so far have been majority rule in South Africa, opposition victories in Zambia and Malawi, popular election of constituent assemblies in Uganda and Ethiopia charged with writing

democratic constitutions, and the promise of multiparty elections in Tanzania and Mozambique.

Initial multiparty elections do not democracies make-by themselves. As important and essential as these elections have been, they represent only one step in long, complicated, and problematic processes of political and economic development. It is a dangerous, even tragic, mistake to assume these multiparty elections prove that the existence of broader, more comprehensive political transitions are in process. If they assume that they are necessarily democratic in character, if they appear to presage full democracy, it is a mistake to assume that this outcome is irreversible and inevitable.

My hypothesis is that a thorough review of the current transitions literature would bring to light quite a pervasive tendency to rely implicitly on one or more of these assumptions. It follows, therefore, that the study of political transitions in Africa, or anywhere else, requires that each of these assumptions be recast in ways to make them testable empirically. Second, they deal in abstract analytic concepts like "transitions." They thus beg the question of how one would recognize such a thing as a transition on the ground; i.e. what combinations of events and actions are implied by the term.

Further complicating matters is the focus of democratic transitions. Whether political transitions are in process, and whether those that are occurring are democratic, are two separate and distinct questions. Moreover, even where there is prima facie evidence that democratic transitions are in progress, a classical fundamental philosophical problem impedes investigation of them: the relationships between thought and action. Before characterizing transitions as democratic, we must at a minimum investigate (a) who seeks democracy, and how do their ideas of democracy differ; (b) how they reconcile campaigns for democracy with their own quests for power and (c) how to determine when any

particular concept of democracy has prevailed and become legitimated in the eyes of the public as a whole.

The study of political transitions, let alone democratic ones, cannot easily stand up to the foregoing philosophical and methodological challenges. If it is to be even modestly successful in doing so, it must address certain basic empirical questions:

1. What sets of political circumstances and behavior support the hypothesis that *coherent movement* (a transition) is in process from one form of political order to another?
2. What evidence supports the hypothesis that a particular *goal* for such a transition (such as democracy) has gained broad legitimation?
3. What evidence supports the hypothesis that a particular *course of action* toward achieving that goal has gained broad legitimation?
4. What evidence supports the hypothesis that a coherent movement toward a legitimized goal by a legitimized process is *sustainable*; i.e. is in the interest of those who advocate and support such a transition as those people perceive their interests?

If one asks these questions of political events in Africa, at least in eastern and southern Africa, the hypothesis gains validity that our operational *definition* of transitions, not just our research and policy focus, has centered disproportionately on the holding of multiparty national elections. A serious risk entailed in undue preoccupation with a multiparty national election in any given country is importing insidious assumptions that ipso facto such an election signifies (1) the existence of a political transition, (2) political commitment to effect a transition that is (3) democratic, and (4) those having political commitments and existing influences antithetical to transitions, democratic or otherwise, have been marginalized.

What then, are appropriate indicators of the existence and status of democratic political transitions? And what is the evidence concerning them in eastern and southern Africa, with which I am most concerned at present?

**1. Public Government Commitment, Plans, and Progress in Restructuring National Political Institutions along Democratic Lines.** Relatively few governments in eastern and southern Africa have defined specific plans for, and commitments to, the achievements of democracy beyond the holding of multiparty national elections. The national charter approved by the Popular Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) is one of the few. South Africa has done likewise in its Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). Several have constitutional commissions at work (e.g. Zambia, Ethiopia, Eritrea) or in the prospect (e.g. Uganda). Others have taken specific and important steps toward democracy without defining comprehensive plans toward which those steps are to lead (e.g., Malawi). Several (e.g. Kenya, Tanzania) have articulated no specific commitments to democratization beyond the holding of multiparty elections. In short, the nature and extent of public commitment to comprehensive democratization in the region, not just to multiparty national elections, is at best an implicit, hopeful assumption on the part of donors and citizenries. In some instances, that assumption may well be fully justified (e.g. in the case of an ANC government in South Africa). In other cases, however, there are grounds for considerable uncertainty (e.g. Ethiopia and Tanzania) or pessimism (e.g. Kenya and Zambia).

Kenya is one of the clearest cases in ESA (Zambia may possibly be another) where the holding of multiparty national elections, brought about by strong donor as well as domestic pressure) has produced no semblance of a full-scale democratic transition. The government of Kenya has resisted any discussion of constitutional reform until recently and now only contemplates a process the ruling party is likely to be able to control and manipulate. Abuses of human rights (including freedom of expression and association, inability or unwillingness to control or prevent ethnic clashes, and attempted economic intimidation of districts controlled by opposition parties) are stark evidence of, if anything, a

transition away from democracy leaving only some of the institutional trappings of democracy.

Specific plans for democratization are, of course, no guarantee of progress nor is the absence of such plans per se proof that democratization is not contemplated in progress. But if governmental commitments to democratization do exist, public commitments and plans are one valuable indicator, not the least as a signal to the citizenry.

3. **Public Civil Society Commitments to and Plans for a Democratic Transition.** Operationally, civil society may be defined broadly (effectively synonymous with the NGO sector) or more narrowly (those NGOs which wholly or in part devote themselves to advocating, disseminating, exemplifying, and defending democratic values). One does not necessarily beget the other. Civil society, broadly defined, may flourish but turn in upon itself rather than direct its energies to promoting democratization of the state (civil society in the narrower sense). Tanzania may portray this phenomenon.

In other cases, ongoing less than democratic governmental behavior and/or developmental malaise may diminish the vitality of civil society broadly defined (e.g. Ethiopia and perhaps Kenya) while not dampening vigorous civil society activity in the narrower sense of pressing hard for democratization (e.g. Kenya). In still other cases the weakness of civil society in both senses of the term may undermine prospects for democratic transition (e.g. Malawi and Mozambique) and potentially Eritrea and several other countries). South Africa would appear to be the most prominent example of an ebullient civil society in both senses of the term.

**3. Ongoing, Publicly Encouraged Debate on the Content of and Progress Toward Realizing Democracy.** The process is as important as the product. Democratic debate needs to occur in the process of building a democratic state as well as within it, once it is established. Equally important is public debate about and during the processes of democratization. Such debate facilitates awareness and assessment of the interests and forces that a democratic state must at least minimally satisfy if it is to be legitimate and sustainable. A free, independent, and assertive print and electronic media sector is one necessary ingredient of such debate. But the media sector should reflect the broader, publicly encouraged debate, not simply attempt to carry the responsibility alone.

Moreover, the *public* media also has a responsibility. Governmental processes must be accessible, and public as well as private media carry an obligation to inform and educate regarding the broader debate that is part of the transition to democracy.

On these criteria, very few African countries get full marks, South Africa being a possible exception. Public media are characteristically bland. Private media are typically weak in terms of their numbers (or audiences), economic health, circulation, and effectiveness in promoting public education and debate. A weekly Zambian paper and some Kenyan publications are noteworthy exceptions proving the general rule. It is also the case that some government in the region in general do little more than tolerate private media, suppressing publications and/or arresting journalists (even if ultimately released) just often enough to produce something less than an enabling environment for free expression. Few, if any, governments have anticipated a commitment to the importance of free, independent media in a democracy, nor have they made clear their support for constitutional provisions to this effect where proposed or nominally in effect.

**4. Calls for Plans, Debate and Progress in Creating/Strengthening Participatory Institutions in Society.** The PFDJ's new charter and the ANC's RDP in South Africa would appear to be participation has occurred via constituent assemblies (Uganda, Ethiopia), referenda calling for multiparty democracy (Malawi). But such popular participation would appear to have been confined largely to formal legal, essentially electoral processes. Broader commitments to participatory society have been lacking.

True, older democracies often do not set a strong example. But when the occasion arises in these established democracies, the processes, institutions, and legitimation are in place. For democratic *transitions*, however, these desiderata must be established. Granted, in older democracies, civil society forced these on unwilling governments. For a variety of reasons having to do with the characteristics of African underdevelopment, I would consider it too cynical to leave the establishment of broad, societal political participation to civil society alone.

**5. Calls for, Plans, Debates and Progress in Creating/Strengthening Participatory Development Planning and Development Implementation.** Examples of participatory societies are part and parcel of many African transitions. Participatory development was the centerpiece of donor development initiatives in the 1970s and, once again, in the 1990s. The justification is not only the compatibility with democratic political institutions but its efficacy in promoting development. Participatory development may not be a necessary condition for political democracy, certainly not a sufficient one, but its utility as societal support for political democracy is undeniable.

One consequence of the electoral focus of transitions research and policy has been weak donor encouragement for participatory development, relatively few initiatives by African governments in this direction or, remarkably, by civil society broadly or narrowly conceived.

**6. Searches for and Identification of Cultural and Historical Precedents for Democracy. Evaluation of Preceding Regimes in Terms of Them.** A prominent and important feature of some African socialism initiatives in the 1960s and early 1970s (e.g. Tanzania and Senegal), this is a largely forgotten dimension of current putatively democratic transitions. Prosecution for anti-democratic abuses by former regimes is not uncommon (e.g. Ethiopia), but broader public debate, outside academic and literary circles, about the lessons to be learned from the past in order to secure democracy today are rather conspicuous by their absence.

**7. Public Commitment, Plans, and Progress in Disseminating and Inculcating Democratic Values in the Citizenry (Including the Schools).** Voter education has been an important feature of initial national multiparty elections in many countries in the ESA region. Voter education does not by itself create a democratic political culture. The extent, sponsorship, content, processes, and impact of broader campaigns for democratic political socialization deserve more investigation and more explicit treatment by governments, civil society, and donors alike for its role in democratic transitions.

**8. Public Commitment, Plans, and Progress in Empowering and Democratizing Sub-National Levels of Government.** The former colonial powers exported their own failings in this area to their African territories. Post-independence governments have generally continued or exacerbated the problem, ideological commitments (e.g. Nyerere's Tanzania) notwithstanding. This is one of the most critical, least considered aspects of democratic transitions, by donors and African countries alike, and one with rich potential for derailing them. The reality is that national, regional, and ethnic identities remain perhaps at best as delicately balanced in the 1990s as they were in the 1960s throughout the continent. The work of defining and legitimizing these balances, including processes of

modifying them, has only just begun. Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and South Africa are among only the more dramatic cases where inability/unwillingness on the part of governments and civil societies to incorporate orderly debate on this issue as part of a transition to democracy threatens portends potentially disastrous outcomes.

**9. Formal/Informal Processes in Place or Being Established to Foster Governmental-Civil Society Dialogue and consensus on the Above.** African realities give the lie to the proposition that states and civil societies can/do not exist independently of one another. But the hypothesis that democracy and processes of transition to democracy are best realized when visible and routinized as well as informal dialogue (not domination of one by the other) have gone untested by governments, civil society, and donors alike. For most of the ESA region, it would be a fair generalization that while civil society broadly defined as functioned with the support of governments (e.g. famine relief), civil society (the narrower explicitly political sense) and government stare at each other across a sizeable political abyss. Conversely, the contributions to both democracy and sustainable development from civil society-state dialogue without co-optation, along Toquevillean lines, remain largely underrecognized and underexplored.

**10. Absence of Commitments, Processes, Events, Political Behavior and Organized Activity Antithetical to the Above in Government and/or Society at Large.** Self-evidently, instances of such antithetical behavior abound, more in some countries than others. However, in a post-Cold War era when democracy approaches the status of a global ethic, there has perhaps been too little investigation (at least in the ESA region) to the prevalence and implications of dissent from democracy. We need to explore the extent to which what we consider antithetical behavior represents not just poor democratic performance

but active, systematic dissent from prevailing democratic dogma or from democracy itself based on belief and/or perceived self-interest.

In short, our research and policy initiatives must explore and address fully the extent to which the desirability and efficacy of democratic transitions are themselves the dominant political issues in Africa today.

## **II. MANAGING DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS**

### **2. Transitional Elections**

Democracies are not created overnight. Transitions from authoritarian systems are often prolonged and follow an uneven course. From this perspective, a transitional election may be a step, albeit a critical one, along this road. Such an observation suggests the need for the development of more nuanced frameworks and criteria of evaluation.

Ruling elites and authoritarian leaders often respond to the growing demands for democracy by organizing fraudulent multiparty elections aimed at satisfying the minimal demands of international donors. The success of such attempts often depends on internal cohesion within the ruling group, unity of the opposition, and the presence of external patrons (Gros).

If political transitions in Africa are to amount to more than a circulation of elites, a larger proportion of adult citizens must take part in these processes. Such increased popular participation can be promoted by revamping voter registration systems, expanding public communication and supporting indigenous association activity. On the other hand, increasing cynicism with regard to elite entrenchment can quickly erode civic engagement, and apathy can replace the surge of activism experienced at the time of a historic election (Bratton). Political parties and civic organizations should be involved in the organization and administration of transitional elections so that they can become "shareholders" in the process and assert their influence in a positive manner

(McMahon). In this respect, it is also important that political pluralism reflect and embrace social pluralism. Sufficient time should therefore be allowed for the formation of viable political parties before the onset of elections (Martin).

The nature of constitutional design, including the electoral system, can have a salutary impact on political behavior both before and after elections. It has been suggested that African countries should become more familiar with the system of proportional representation which, among other things, may reduce political polarization and promote coalition-building (Hyden).

## **Popular Participation in Transition Elections in Africa: Some Observations**

**by Michael Bratton**

Michigan State University 1

In his guidelines for this seminar, Richard Joseph asked: How broad has the democratic movement been in Africa? How widely have the lives of different categories of persons been affected? What have we learned about the interconnections between civil society and democracy in Africa?

These important questions take on new urgency in a context where African political transitions are manifesting at least as much continuity as change. Observers now perceive that "the more things change the more they remain the same" and question whether "the second wind of change (is) any different from the first" 2. The outcomes of several recent transition elections in Africa suggest that political elites are able to shape and control the process of political competition so that they come out on top. And, even where elections have resulted in the ouster of entrenched strongmen, new leaders appear to quickly lapse into the patrimonial and autocratic practices of their predecessors 3.

If political transitions in Africa are going to amount to more than a mere circulation of elites, the onus is on African citizens to become the main protagonists of democratization. Leaders must be *held* accountable by their own constituents. The voluntary goodwill of leaders and the aid conditionalities of donors will alone never be enough to guarantee political virtue. In short, popular political participation is a *sine qua non* for "government by the people". As Yves Fauré has commented, "one cannot really talk of an established democracy if elections do not enjoy the active support or enthusiasm of civil society" <sup>4</sup>.

But we know remarkably little about the extent to which ordinary citizens are participating in transitions from authoritarian rule and the consolidation of democratic regimes in Africa. Perhaps the best coverage has been given to the roles of students, unionists and church congregations in protesting abuse of political office and economic mismanagement. But protests are ephemeral and involve only an activist minority. We need to understand the sustained political values, attitudes, and actions of the full range of African citizens in relation to the political changes currently unfolding in their countries.

This paper selects for discussion several issues about popular participation in transition elections in Africa. I have chosen a narrow focus on electoral behavior not because I think elections are the be-all-and-end-all of democratization, but because I see elections as a necessary first step in holding political leaders accountable. The paper approaches the subject from two angles: the first part takes a macroscopic perspective, comparing electoral results across countries; the second part is more microscopic, examining the political behavior of individual voters in one African country. But the same questions are addressed in each case: Who participates? And why?

## **Transition Elections in Africa: Some Preliminary Comparative Analysis**

Between January 1990 and December 1993, twenty five African countries held competitive presidential elections <sup>5</sup>. In these historic transition elections, voters were offered a genuine choice among candidates from different political parties, often for the first time in a generation. Each constituted a referendum on the performance in office of an entrenched African strongman. Thus one might predict that voter interest in these elections would be intense and that voter turnout at the polls would be correspondingly high.

This proposition cannot be confirmed. In fact, there was considerable variation in electoral turnout rates (See Table 1). In some places African citizens fulfilled the prediction of high participation by turning out at the polls at rates greatly exceeding those in mature Western democracies. For example, some 92 percent of registered voters in Angola participated in the poll of September 1992, as did some 97 percent in Burundi in June 1993. On the other hand, in at least half a dozen of these elections, fewer than half the registered electorate exercised their right to vote. For example, just 16 percent turned out in Mali in April 1992 and approximately 30 percent in Nigeria in June 1993.

The relevant point of comparison for interpreting rates of participation is a country's own electoral history. Did voters turn out in greater numbers for the transition elections of 1990-1993 than for previous elections in the same country? Table 1 also presents official turnout figures for the last previous legislative election before 1990 <sup>6</sup>. Generally speaking, there were lower levels of mass political participation in the recent round of elections than in previous one-party contests. Table 1 indicates whether the reported turnout rate increased (+) or decreased (-) across time. Whereas reported voter turnout was higher in seven cases of transition elections, it was lower in sixteen cases. Moreover, where turnout dropped, it did so by a larger margin (mean change in turnout = -25.1 percent) than where turnout rose (mean change in turnout = +14.9 percent).

Thus, instances of declining participation were not only more frequent, but also more substantial.

What are the reasons for the unexpectedly low levels of popular participation in some transition elections in Africa? The following plausible explanations suggest themselves, among others:

- *Artifact.* The finding of declining participation rates may be a methodological artifact. Comparisons of African electoral data across time are fraught with measurement problems, not least of which is the poor reliability of official turnout figures reported by one-party governments. The officially reported turnout figure of 97.3 percent for Mauritania's August 1976 election, for example, is clearly contrived, reflecting either manipulation of results or voting under duress, or both. By contrast, scrutiny by international and domestic monitors has imparted somewhat greater credibility to published results of recent transition elections in Africa.

One might argue that, because data at the point of comparison are unreliable, one cannot pronounce on whether contemporary political participation rates in African countries are lower, higher, or about the same. I would contend, however, that one would expect lower reported rates of participation in free and fair elections precisely because people do not feel pressured to vote and because turnout figures are not falsely inflated. And even if we cannot pronounce definitively on participation trends over time, this does not invalidate the argument that some transition elections in Africa have been marred by high levels of voter abstention. This political behavior must still be explained.

- *Exclusion.* Political participation is constrained when potential voters are unable to fulfill the technical requirements for casting a ballot. For instance, voter turnout is often depressed by errors in the register of eligible voters. Incumbent political leaders who are forced into elections against their will may well try to limit voter registration as a means of keeping control of the dynamics of political change. In Ghana, for example, the government denied all requests from opposition parties and election observers to revise the electoral rolls despite controversies over impossibly high official registration figures. In Cameroon, voter registration became "the most contentious issue" in the 1992 elections, in part because the

government scheduled an early election without reopening the voter rolls <sup>7</sup>. The net result was that a significant number of potential voters was disenfranchised.

Indeed, all turnout figures for registered voters reported in Table 1 must be corrected to take account of the generally low rates of voter registration in African countries. For example, whereas 72 percent of registered voters turned out in Cameroon in the October 1991 elections, the figure drops to 54 percent when turnout is considered as a proportion eligible adults, and to 24 percent when calculated as a share of the total population.

- *Fear.* Voters stayed away from the polls because contestants for power used violence, or threatened to do so, during the election campaign and on polling day. In the run up to the August 1993 elections in Togo -- where the army stormed the interim legislature, the police fired at anti-government demonstrators, and opposition leaders were assassinated -- fear among voters surely helped to depress turnout (to 36 percent). By contrast, Angolan voters turned out in huge numbers in September 1992 despite the fact that civil war combatants had not been fully disarmed or demobilized and that escalating tensions and clashes marred the campaign. The South African elections of April 1994 suggest that voters who are set on voting are not deterred from turning out by threats of violence from extremists. Thus, violent intimidation alone cannot explain voter behavior; recourse must be made to other rationales. Perhaps violence deters voters only where they perceive the election to be illegitimate and that, where a genuine choice is available, people are willing to take personal risks in order to exercise political rights.
- *Illegitimacy.* Voters stayed at home because they perceived the election to be rigged, predetermined, or otherwise less than free and fair. The illegitimacy factor helps to explain the difference in turnout rates between Burundi (97 percent) and Nigeria (30 percent) in June 1993 under otherwise similar circumstances of a managed transition from military rule. In Burundi, the largely Hutu electorate apparently grasped at the opportunity to end the political dominance of the Tutsi minority and to take advantage of the chance to elect one of their own as the first-ever Hutu head of state. In Nigeria, the electoral process was so circumscribed by military decrees -- to limit the number of contesting parties, to control the content of electoral debate, to repeatedly delay the dates of elections, and even to suspend results of earlier primaries -- that voters evidently concluded that they were unable to exercise a free choice in the June 1993 presidential elections.

- *Competition.* The distinguishing mark of the recent transition elections was their competitive character. What effect did competition have on voter turnout? And what do African elections suggest about the general relationship between political competition and political participation?

On one hand, one could make the "horse race" argument that participation rises as elections become more competitive. People will be motivated to get involved as electoral choices widen, as races become tighter, and as electoral outcomes become more uncertain. From this perspective, we would expect political competition and political participation to be positively related to one another. On the other hand, one could cite a "bandwagon" argument in which participation rises in the presence of dominant candidates who seem certain to win. People are motivated to turn out to vote for a sure winner, not least as a way of associating themselves with the spoils of victory. From this perspective we would expect competition and participation to be inversely related.

The horserace argument derives from Western theories of democratic pluralism and would seem to reflect behavior in societies organized along individualistic and competitive lines. The bandwagon thesis is buttressed by organic statist theories of national unity and seems better attuned to societies that value consensus and community. By this reasoning, one might be tempted to conclude that the introduction of multiparty competition into politics has differential effects across world regions: in Western societies, political competition increases political participation, but in African societies, political competition reduces it. At face value, the finding of lower-than-expected participation rates in recent competitive elections would seem to support this thesis. As numerous incumbent African presidents have done, one might therefore conclude (though presumably for less self-serving reasons), that multiparty politics are not suited to Africa. These claims were first weighed in Collier's groundbreaking work on regime change in Africa, which uncovered no general relationship between electoral participation and "the ability of a single party to achieve dominance over its competitors" [8](#). Instead, Collier posited that colonial heritage determined the

effects of competition on participation at the time of pre-independence elections: whereas dominant parties were able to mobilize mass electoral turnout in French colonies (the bandwagon effect), it was multiparty fragmentation that led to high voter turnout in British colonies (the horserace effect). In that Collier included fourteen French and nine British territories in her sample, one might infer that the bandwagon effect was more common in Africa at the time of independence. Fauré advocates this position explicitly for the postcolonial period in Côte d'Ivoire: "competitive elections systematically register lower participation rates than elections organized under a single party" <sup>9</sup>. With reference to Ivorian electoral history, he finds that voter turnout is lower both in periods of intense competition (i.e. 1946-57 and 1980-1990) and for constituencies with several candidates (i.e. in the municipal elections of 1985 and the legislative elections of 1985 and 1990). To Fauré, this counterintuitive finding "contradicts...doctrinal justifications of democratic pluralism". It reflects "an ingrained political culture which values leadership and seniority" in which voters may be "irritated and indecisive when faced with a multiplicity of choice" <sup>10</sup>.

Fortunately, we can test such culturalist arguments. Has participation in African elections been depressed by the reintroduction of electoral competition? Table 1 presents data for 25 African countries on the winner's share of total votes cast in the presidential elections of 1990-1993 (See Table 1, last column). This measure constitutes a useful proxy for the degree of electoral competition: the lower the winner's share of the vote, the greater the degree of political competition.

Accordingly, the most competitive recent election was in Kenya in December 1992, where incumbent President Moi squeaked back into office with a slim plurality of 36.4 percent of the vote (see also Biya in Cameroon). The least competitive was in Togo in August 1993, where incumbent President Eyadema claimed to have won an overwhelming 96.5 percent of the vote in a context

where the opposition boycotted the election (see also Campaore in Burkina Faso).

The main finding is as follows: in the recent round of African presidential elections, the level of political competition was positively, strongly, and significantly associated with the rate of political participation (Pearson's  $r = -.4881$ ,  $p = .018$  with a two-tailed test). The sign of the relationship was in the predicted direction <sup>11</sup> with voters turning out in greater numbers for more closely contested elections.

This finding is supported by an analysis of the 1992 local government elections in Zambia: voter turnout, while extremely low overall (13.9 percent), was significantly higher in the Eastern Province (21.2 percent), the only area of the country where the ruling party encountered a major opposition challenge. <sup>12</sup> Far from jumping on the bandwagon, voters tended to stay away from the polls when the results were a foregone conclusion that favored a dominant party and rendered meaningless the popular verdict.

Thus voters appear to have had contrasting participatory responses to political competition in different countries: Fauré found that voters were repelled by closely contested races in Ivory Coast and I find that voters were attracted to the polls by such races in Zambia. Can different reactions to political competition be attributed to colonial heritage, as suggested by Collier? Widner has renewed this tradition of scholarship by tracing variations in the onset of political transitions to the distinctive institutional histories of anglophone and francophone Africa <sup>13</sup>.

When we examine change in turnout for the 1990-93 presidential elections, however, we find no systematic differences according to the culture of the

colonizer ( $p = .680$ ). Instead, explanatory power is gained by focussing on more proximate institutional factors encompassed in the notion of postcolonial regime type ( $p = .127$ ) <sup>14</sup>. The most relevant regime distinction here is between plebiscitary one-party states (one candidate, no choice) and competitive one-party states (more than one candidate in legislative elections, intra-party competition) <sup>15</sup>. Whereas voter turnout tends to decline in transition elections in countries emerging from plebiscitary one-party regimes (in 9 out of the 10 cases analysed), it tends to increase in countries emerging from competitive one-party regimes (in 3 out of the 4 cases analysed) <sup>16</sup>.

A more refined argument may thus be developed, namely that the nature of the preceding regime shapes mass political behavior during a political transition. In transitions from plebiscitary one-party regimes, where political competition has been strongly discouraged, voters may initially feel wary about participating in situations in which they may be required to express their true political preferences. In transitions from competitive one party regimes, where a modicum of intra-party competition has been tolerated, voters have more experience at expressing preferences at the polls and fewer inhibitions about turning out in competitive elections.

In any event we may conclude, that while rates of popular political participation are often unsatisfactory in African elections, this is not generally due to an innately African aversion to political competition. Nor need we infer, except for first elections after a long period of plebiscitary rule, that ordinary Africans are threatened and immobilized by political competition. Like people anywhere, Africans are generally stimulated to participate in elections by an open contest.

### **Explaining Political Participation: Some Evidence from Zambia**

Much more remains to be learned about political participation in transition elections in Africa. For example, what different sorts of behavior occur in and around elections? Which citizens are most active? And why do people choose to get involved or abstain? These questions cannot be answered from the wide-angle perspective of cross-national analysis; instead, we must focus in on the political attitudes and actions of individual citizens.

Some such information is available from a national sample survey of eligible voters conducted in Zambia in June 1993, eighteen months after the country's landmark election of October 1991 [17](#). The survey reports responses from 421 eligible voters selected in a multistage random/quota sample designed to represent the adult Zambian population as a whole [18](#). It was preceded by focus group interviews, convened to explore local conceptual constructs about politics and to test research methods. The research was made possible by the refreshingly open atmosphere for free speech and public opinion polling sustained to date by the Chiluba government. The survey and focus groups together provide preliminary insight into how citizens in one African country think, feel and act in relation to "democracy".

The case of Zambia is relevant for several reasons. The country is often held up as a model of peaceful transition in which the defeated incumbent agreed to accept the result of free and fair elections (See Table 2). Yet voter turnout was unexpectedly low in the transition election (45 percent) compared with previous one-party contests (55 percent in 1988, 63 percent in 1983, and 65 percent in 1978). Turnout was even lower in local government elections held subsequently in November 1992 (13.9% [19](#)) and in parliamentary by-elections in late 1993 (an estimated average of 21% [20](#)). While turnout is usually sparse in non-presidential contests in any country, these results imply an electorate that is seriously disengaged from politics, prompting debates in the national press in Zambia about purported citizen "apathy" and worrying about the future of democracy.

Findings from the survey of political attitudes in Zambia cast some light on participation issues.

*What sorts of participation?* According to the survey, a solid majority of Zambian adults is attitudinally predisposed to become active citizens. Two-thirds of the survey respondents considered themselves "interested in politics" (66.6%) and reported that they discuss politics with other people (68.0%) <sup>21</sup>. An even higher proportion (83.8%) reported involvement in associational life, answering affirmatively when asked whether they were "a member of a community organization such as a church, club, union or cooperative". Many fewer (36.6%) said that they belonged to a political party in the sense of carrying a party membership card. In sum, Zambians are attuned to politics and "joiners" in civil society. But they prefer to keep some distance from the national political institutions, including exercising the freedom *not* to participate, perhaps in reaction to having been forced to belong to a ruling party in the past.

Zambian survey respondents also claimed a substantial role in the transition election of October 1991, at voter turnout levels higher than officially reported. About two-thirds said they had registered to vote (65.1%) <sup>22</sup> and just over half (54.9%) said that they actually voted <sup>23</sup>. More than a third (39.9%) claimed to have voted in the November 1992 local government elections. A clear majority of respondents (58.7%) said they attended an election rally during the previous five years and one quarter (25.0%) said they had "worked for a political candidate or party", though this question was surely misinterpreted by some respondents to mean more casual levels of participation than being an official campaign agent. Between elections, other forms of political participation appear to occur infrequently. Only 17.4% of citizens reported having approached a local government councillor for help in solving a problem and only 6.9% had approached a Member of Parliament. While people contact their councillors far more often than MPs, they do so at only half the rate of contacts with headmen

(32.9%). These patterns reflect the nature of problems experienced by citizens (with headmen fielding many complaints about family and community disputes), and the relative physical proximity of leaders to their constituents (with councillors, though often judged unimportant or ineffective, having the virtue of at least being more accessible than MPs). Zambians rarely participate in politics by writing letters to newspapers (6.5%) or joining in peaceful (6.5%) or violent (3.6%) demonstrations [24](#).

*Who participates?* For the moment we will confine our interest to electoral behavior.

Voter registration rates can be partly explained in terms of political apathy, with approximately one-third of those without a voter's registration card (30.7%) stating that they were "not interested" in voting. A further one-third missed the registration exercise, either because of ill-health (14.3%) or other absences or preoccupations during registration. Relatively few respondents reported technical problems in obtaining registration, for example being under age at the time of registration (5.7%) or having lost a national identity card (10.0%).

Age is the most powerful explanatory factor for voter registration in Zambia ( $p=.000$ ). Whereas 79.6% of persons aged 45 or older reported being registered, only 41.2% of eligible voters aged 26 or younger did so. The result is largely due to the fact that large numbers of young people attained voting age since the last full voter registration.

Voter turnout in competitive elections in Zambia is greatly influenced by the gender of the respondent, with men much more likely to say they had voted than women. In the 1992 local government elections, for example, 70.1% of registered males claimed to vote versus 51.9% of registered females ( $p = .003$ ). For the 1991 general elections, urban voters cast ballots in somewhat greater

proportions (57.2%) than rural voters (53.2%) ( $p = .042$ ). Gender and residential location appear to exert independent influences on voter turnout; for example, rural women did not stay away from the polls any more frequently than their urban counterparts. Interestingly, neither occupation nor income nor age [25](#) had any bearing on who voted, suggesting that this aspect of political participation is not an exclusively elite preserve.

Voter turnout in the 1991 general elections was clearly influenced by access to the mass communications media. Those who listened to radio news programs ( $p = .004$ ) and who read newspapers ( $p = .013$ ) were much more likely to say they had voted than those who lacked media access [26](#). Since newspapers circulate almost exclusively in towns, urban residence accounts for almost all the variance in newspaper readership. When media access is measured as radio news listenership, however, its effect on voter turnout survives a statistical control for residential location ( $p = .007$ ). This suggests that radio broadcasts are an important resource for building participatory citizenship.

The immediate reason that many eligible voters fail to turn out at the polls in Zambia is that they are not registered to vote. This reason accounts for 77.3% of the nonparticipation in the 1991 elections and 58.7% in the 1992 elections. In addition, about one of five registered non-voters cited technical obstacles with balloting; they explained that they had either lost their voter cards [27](#) or had moved away from their "home" polling area. Even so, the dramatic expression of voter indifference in the 1992 local government elections demands explanation. Focus group discussions conducted in March 1993 revealed that many voters did not vote in 1992 because they already felt disillusioned that the new government had not delivered on its promises [28](#). This leads us to explore attitudinal causes of mass political behavior.

*Why do people participate (and abstain)?* Do the political attitudes of voters govern their voting behavior? Space limitations allow discussion of only a few

political attitudes here, notably those relating to the quality and accountability of political leaders.

Let us first note that, to become politically active, citizens must be mentally engaged in the political world around them. Not unexpectedly, the Zambian data confirm that voters who evinced interest in politics ( $p = .007$ ), and who discussed politics with others ( $p = .007$ ), were likely to turn out to vote in the transition election [29](#).

Zambian survey respondents certainly held strong opinions about political accountability. A sweeping majority (70.7%, with 40.7% "strongly") opposed the statement that "bribery is rare among public officials in Zambia". Almost three out of four respondents (72.5%, with 48.9% "strongly") supported the notion that "most government officials and politicians are mainly concerned with enriching themselves". Respondents diverged on whether "corruption was a worse problem under the old UNIP government than these days". Whereas 43.5 percent supported this statement, 49.7 percent opposed. This finding can hardly give comfort to President Chiluba for fully one half of the citizenry think that the MMD government is *more* corrupt than its predecessor.

Focus groups discussants confirmed that popular disillusionment with politicians, and even with the democratic process, had set in rapidly following Zambia's transition elections. One man, who felt unappreciated for the campaign work he had done for a winning candidate, coined a bitter metaphor: "they treat us like matchsticks; they light their cigarettes and then throw us away". Respondents charged that elected representatives "don't attend to pressing national issues but only to issues concerning themselves". Zambians had gone to the polls with high and generally unrealistic expectations about rapid improvements in their own standards of living. Already discouraged, a woman marketeer opined that "many people will not be keen to vote next time because of the escalating cost of

goods". As another focus group participant put it, "people were expecting miracles after the elections; now they blame democracy".

In short, by the second year after the political transition, Zambian public opinion was already questioning whether the transition had really brought meaningful changes to political and economic life. People seemed to view democracy instrumentally, as a means to the end of raising living standards, rather than a form of government with value in and of itself. When asked to rank their "top priority national goal", Zambians chose "fighting higher prices" (53.4%) overwhelmingly ahead of "giving people more say in government" (8.1%) and "protecting free speech" (4.5%) <sup>30</sup>. They thus tended to appraise both the incumbent regime and the form of government in terms of their deeply-felt material concerns.

One would expect that negative assessments of regime performance would help explain voter turnout. As expected, we find no relationship between cynical attitudes and voter turnout for the transition elections of October 1991. The euphoria of an historic moment and the opportunity to exercise a long-denied electoral choice were apparently sufficient to override any voter doubts with the quality of candidates or the veracity of their promises. By November 1992, however, attitudes of personal dissatisfaction and political cynicism had begun to have a negative impact on political participation in Zambia. People who felt "less satisfied (with their lives) today as compared to one year ago" voted in significantly fewer numbers than those who felt "more satisfied" ( $p = 0.35$ ). And among males, who vote more frequently than women in Zambia and who tend to lead political opinion, the cause of growing political alienation could be traced to their perceptions of official corruption; men who saw MMD as more corrupt than UNIP were the more likely than other social groups to hold back from the local government polls ( $p = .025$ ).

*What promotes participation?* Robert Putnam has suggested that civic engagement, which occurs when people link together horizontally in a dense network of voluntary associations, is the key ingredient to "making democracy work" <sup>31</sup>. Can membership in voluntary associations be a catalyst for electoral participation in an African country?

The Zambia survey provides tentative support for this proposition. Membership in voluntary associations alone cannot determine whether a voter is likely to turn out at the polls. But members of certain select types of associations were more likely to vote than other Zambians in the local government elections of 1992 ( $p = .020$ ). Included here are occupational associations (like trade unions and agricultural cooperatives) and the Catholic church (though not the Protestant and independent African churches). The role of occupational groups in getting out the vote is understandable in the context of the leading role played by trade unions in Zambia's democracy movement. The positive influence of the Catholic church contradicts Putnam's portrayal of religious hierarchy as an obstacle to the development of democratic citizenship in Southern Italy, and requires further exploration.

Moreover, the effect of associational life on voter turnout in Zambia appears to depend on duration of membership; the longer a person has belonged to a voluntary association, the more likely that he or she is to be an active voter ( $p = .049$ ). And engagement in associational life appears to positively affect "higher levels" of political participation beyond voting. For example, members of occupational groups and the Catholic church are significantly more likely than other citizens to initiate contact with M.Ps ( $p = .012$ ) and local government councillors ( $p = .000$ ). Since associational life consistently has its effects on political representation at the local level, perhaps this is the appropriate level from which efforts to strengthen democracy should begin.

## **Conclusion and Policy Implications**

While election euphoria spread rapidly among Africans during the current era of political transitions (1990-1993), it did not do so evenly or everywhere. In some places, Africans celebrated newfound political liberties by flocking to the polls in record numbers; in other places, they stayed away.

Explanations for instances of low voter turnout do not lie with the introduction of the unfamiliar norms of multiparty competition. Africans generally voted in larger numbers wherever there was a close electoral race. Rather, low voter turnout can be traced to other factors. These include, first, inaccurate electoral rolls which disenfranchised prospective participants and, second, elite manipulation of electoral rules that delegitimized elections in the eyes of significant parts of the electorate.

In some cases, voters remained politically "uncaptured", expressing a generalized lack of interest in politics. But, if the Zambian data are anything to go by, only a minority displays true political apathy. Instead, a clear majority of citizens expresses interest in political life. But this same group is increasingly cynical about the will and capacity of leaders to address the felt needs of ordinary people. Even before political transitions are complete in all African countries, the "cynics" among voters already show signs of boycotting regular elections and other aspects of the democratic process. They constitute a veritable "reserve army of the unimpressed" who can be potentially mobilized once again into mass protest movements.

Against a rising popular tide of political cynicism one can find a few isolated signs of an emergent civic community. The available data suggest that the integration of citizens into networks of public communication and voluntary association has a modest, but positive impact on political participation. Citizens who pay attention to the mass media and who join occupational associations are more likely to

vote, to contact their representatives, and to otherwise seek political accountability. But in the race between deepening political cynicism and growing civic engagement in Africa, it must be conceded that cynicism appears to have the lead.

What, if anything, can the international donor community do to promote and institutionalize political participation in Africa? Technical assistance and material resources can be provided to African governments who show a willingness to revamp their voter registration systems, for example by instituting procedures to register citizens as they attain voting age. Election monitoring remains an important activity in situations where governments continue to show a predeliction to interfere in the electoral process, only now the emphasis should be on strengthening the capacity of domestic African institutions to undertake this task. Given the evident link between media exposure and involvement in political life, donors should help to strengthen and pluralize the press, for example through training journalists and providing independent resources for printing and publishing. Finally, civic education programs on the rights and duties of citizenship, perhaps targetted to encourage particiapation by women, would be a means to help build up civil society as a whole.

Table 1: Reported Voter Turnout, Recent Elections in Africa (percent registered voters)

	Elections (Parliamentary), Last Previous, before 1990		Elections (Presidential), Jan 1990 - December 1993		Change in Turnout	Winner's Share, Elections 90-93, (% of total votes)
	Date	Turnout	Date	Turnout		
Angola	Dec 9, 1986	indirect	Sep 29, 1992	91.5	-	49.6
Benin	Jun 18, 1989	86.0	Mar 24, 1991	64.0	-	67.7
Burkina Faso	Apr 30, 1978	40.3	Dec 1, 1991	21.7	-	86.2
Burundi	Oct 22, 1982	95.0	Jun 1, 1993	97.3	+	64.8
Cameroon	Apr 24, 1988	90.1	Nov 10, 1992	71.9 <sup>a</sup>	-	39.9
Cape Verde	Dec 7, 1985	68.9	Feb 17, 1991	59.0	-	73.5
CAR	Jul 31, 1987	50.0	Aug 22, 1993	56.1	+	53.5 <sup>a</sup>
Comoros	Mar 22, 1987	65.0	Mar 11, 1990	60.0 <sup>b</sup>	-	55.1
Congo	Sep 24, 1989	89.6	Aug 17, 1992	61.1 <sup>b</sup>	-	61.3
Cote d'Ivoire	Nov 11, 1985	30.0	Oct 28, 1990	60.0 <sup>b</sup>	+	81.6
Gabon	Mar 3, 1985	95.4	Dec 5, 1993	86.3	-	51.8
Gambia	Nov 3, 1987	80.2	Apr 29, 1992	55.8 <sup>b</sup>	-	58.4
Ghana	Jun 18, 1979	35.3	Nov 3, 1992	48.3 <sup>b</sup>	+	58.3 <sup>a</sup>
Guinea	Dec 7, 1980	95.7	Dec 19, 1993	78.5 <sup>b</sup>	-	50.9
Kenya	Mar 21, 1988	40.7	Dec 29, 1992	68.0	+	36.4
Madagascar	May 28, 1989	74.6	Oct 2, 1993	80.0 <sup>b</sup>	+	66.7
Mali	Jun 28, 1988	99.0	Apr 26, 1992	16.0 <sup>a</sup>	-	69.0
Mauritania	August, 1976	97.3	Jan 24, 1992	51.7	-	62.7 <sup>a</sup>
Niger	Dec 10, 1989	95.1	Mar 27, 1993	38.0	-	54.8
Nigeria	Aug 27, 1983	38.4	Jun 12, 1993	30.0 <sup>b</sup>	-	n.d.
Sao Tome	Sep 30, 1985	n.d.	Mar 3, 1991	60.0 <sup>b</sup>	-	81.8
Senegal	Feb 28, 1988	57.9	Feb 21, 1993	51.5	-	58.4 <sup>a</sup>
Seychelles	Dec 5, 1987	66.0	Jul 23, 1993	86.0 <sup>b</sup>	+	59.5
Togo	Mar 24, 1985	73.6	Aug 25, 1993	36.2 <sup>b</sup>	-	96.5
Zambia	Oct 26, 1988	55.0	Oct 31, 1991	45.0	-	75.8
			<b>Summary</b>		<b>+ = 7, - = 16</b>	

Notes to Figure 1.

- a. percentage of eligible voters (i.e. adults)
- b. percentage base unspecified (i.e. whether registered or eligible voters)
- c. percentage of valid votes

Sources: Africa Research Bulletin (Political and Social Series), Keesings Contemporary Archives.

Table 2: Reported Voter Turnout in Zambia, by Gender and Residential Location

	Frequency	Registered Voter	Voted 1991	Voted 1992
Urban Men	90	75.6	71.1	50.0
Urban Women	90	52.2	43.3	25.6
Rural Men	117	65.0	57.3	47.9
Rural Women	124	66.9	49.2	36.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>39.9</b>

Source: Survey of Political Attitudes in Zambia, June 1993 (Bratton and Katundu, 1994, op.cit).

## **Lessons Learned from African Elections**

by Edward R. McMahon

Director of East and West African Programs

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

### **African Elections**

Four years into Africa's democratic transition, many national elections have taken place throughout Africa. A number of these—symbolized by the recent South African polls—have succeeded in expressing the will of the people, and their political systems have moved on to meet new and perhaps even greater challenges in the post-election period.

Many of these countries held elections under transitional governments. One lesson learned is that countries where the former dictator has lost or abdicated control over security forces are environments where pluralistic political life can develop. In Benin, Mali, the Congo, and Niger, for example, sovereign national conferences and meaningful elections followed the withdrawal of support for the ruler by the armed forces. In a number of these countries, innovative election administration features helped to ensure confidence in the process, and ultimately, legitimate elections.

In several such cases ruling leaders ran for re-election, but lost. This occurred in Burundi, Zambia and Cape Verde.

Even in countries that held meaningful elections, there have been serious problems in the wake of the voting. The evidence points to the extremely difficult task of democratic consolidation in countries simultaneously undergoing economic crises and where the rules of the democratic game have not yet been fully disseminated. Elections have been followed by violence, for example, in the

Congo and Burundi and by civil unrest in Mali and Niger. Nonetheless, there is reason for hope that the fragile democratic consolidation process can take root in countries that have made it successfully to the post-election phase.

A second set of countries are those where authoritarian governments have attempted to carefully manage the democratization process, and where the election process has fallen short of expectations. In these cases, the legitimacy of elected governments is contested by many, who argue that conditions under which elections were held did not permit the expression of a meaningful choice. Countries that fit this latter category include Cameroon, Togo, Kenya, Ghana, Gabon, and Guinea. All countries have presidents who formerly ruled in an authoritarian fashion but who in recent years have expressed a commitment to democratic political reform, including multiparty activity and competitive elections. Unfortunately, national elections have neither resolved issues of political legitimacy nor succeeded in creating new political reform, including multiparty activity and competitive elections. Unfortunately, national elections have neither resolved issues of political legitimacy nor succeeded in creating new political equilibria in these countries.

Most of the fault for this state of affairs can be laid at the feet of the governments involved. This may well be because the downside did not appear to be great to governments interested in ensuring their continuance in power. After all, losing an election, especially in the African context, means a loss of access to resources that may not be available elsewhere. In addition, more than one leader has been, to varying extent, beholden to a specific and minority ethnic group or community that has depended upon him for continued resource flows. Such leaders have been learning that it is better to proceed with flawed elections than to fully open up the process. Their perspective probably is that in at least the short run the bark of the international community is worse than its bite regarding elections that lack legitimacy.

A third set of countries have yet to make it to the point of holding elections. Most often intractable political conflicts have impeded development of a consensus regarding the conditions under which elections would be held, and the sitting government has not attempted to hold elections under the prevailing conditions. Countries in this category include Zaire, Liberia, Somalia, and Rwanda.

### **Lessons Learned**

What lessons can be learned by comparative analysis of what has transpired in elections throughout the continent? At what points in the process did it break down? What are the implications for future elections?

It would be useful first to note two issues that have proved to be relatively less contentious than others. Political parties have generally been allowed to participate in elections, and campaigning has mostly been permitted, although at times security concerns have impinged upon freedom to campaign.

The balance sheet regarding other issues has proved to be much more mixed. Some problems that have occurred were the result of opposition political parties' lack of practice in the give and take of democratic politics. Other issues that arose were the result of inexperience rather than any concerted attempt at fraud on the part of the ruling authorities. For example, it is difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint the extent to which chaotic conditions that have accompanied voting day in many parts of Cameroon, Gabon, and Guinea were deliberate.

The bottom line, however, is that in a number of countries those in power have been reluctant to give it up and have adopted a policy of manipulating different stages of the pre-election process in order to ensure a pre-ordained result at the ballot box. Specific issues included:

- a. *Voter Registration.* Many countries experienced serious erosion of confidence in elections by the way the voter registration process was handled. In Cameroon, one problem in this regard was the hasty scheduling of the election, which had the

effect of ensuring the disenfranchisement of a significant number of opposition supporters. In Togo, even the president of the National Election Commission, who was appointed by President Eyadema, wrote the prime minister calling for a delay to permit a thorough review of voter registration lists. In Gabon, public distrust of the voter registries led to wide-scale demonstrations in the days leading up to the presidential election. In Guinea, international observers cited this problem as a key element in their decision not to observe the election. In Ghana, all observer groups highlighted voter registration problems.

While it would be unreasonable to expect near perfect voter lists, these governments failed to establish conditions under which a sufficient amount of transparency could be factored into the voter registration process to minimize this problem. In many other countries around the world at similar levels of economic and social development and where the will for legitimate elections has existed, this issue has been confronted and overcome.

- b. *Election Administration.* A key issue is whether a government ministry had a lead role in organizing the elections. Insufficient oversight or involvement by either neutral groups or the political parties at a minimum created the conditions in which the neutrality of the ministry could be legitimately questioned. In Cameroon, for example, the minister of territorial administration, in announcing results after only 20 percent of the vote had been tabulated, also included subjective analysis as to why the results indicated that President Biya would win. In both Cameroon and Gabon, governors of provinces resigned, claiming that the election authorities had acted in a biased fashion. Finally, electoral codes were weak in terms of ensuring transparency as vote totals were aggregated up to the national level.
  
- c. *Access to Media.* Taken by itself, this problem probably wouldn't have tipped the scales regarding the legitimacy of elections, but it was a significant contributing element. Problems could be divided into several different categories. First, most agreements regarding access to media only covered the campaign period, which ranged from two weeks in Togo to four weeks in Gabon. Thus, in the state media, opposition parties only had access for a short period of time. Second, news coverage, as opposed to campaign broadcasts, continued to be highly biased in favor of the government. Third, authorities used other means such as legal sanctions to inhibit publication of opposition newspapers. (It should also be mentioned that in Togo opposition demonstrators torched the printing facility of the government newspaper.) Domestic and international observers monitored the

press closely in the pre-election period during a number of the elections to develop a database demonstrating the extent to which the press was manipulated.

- d. *Lack of Nonpartisan Domestic Observer Groups.* In a number of countries, governments took hostile attitudes toward nonpartisan civic groups that attempted to organize monitoring projects to help ensure transparency in the process. While the overt reason for this attitude was a fear that such groups' political loyalties lay with the opposition, either discouraging or outright banning of such activities contributed to the perception that governments were attempting to limit public participation and the flow of election-related information.
- e. *Restrictions on International Observers.* In a similar fashion, some governments attempted to minimize and otherwise control international observers. In Cameroon, some members of the NDI delegation were refused entry into the country. In Togo, the government initially tried to permit only two observers. Gabonese authorities sought to impose restrictions on where observers could go in-country.

## **Election Monitoring**

A word needs to be said about domestic and international monitoring, as it has been the subject of criticism by those who claim that the quality of the monitoring varies greatly, and its ability to positively impact illegitimate elections is questionable. Others have claimed that the overall effect of monitoring has been to basically whitewash or endorse flawed electoral processes.

First, without the many election observation missions that have been undertaken to the various African elections, much less would be known about what transpired during them. One can never prove a negative, of course, but it is highly likely that without monitoring a number of successful elections might well never have happened.

Second, while it is true that the outcome of illegitimate elections such as those in Cameroon, Togo, and Guinea was not immediately affected by clear-cut and forceful statements by international monitors condemning the process, these

reports served to publicize to Africans and the broader international community objective internationally accepted norms regarding legitimate elections. It thus becomes much more difficult for autocrats to, in effect, pull the wool over the eyes of their people and outside observers. The effect of this is to deny the governments the legitimacy needed to proceed with business as usual. In all three countries cited above, political conditions remain highly unsettled and are likely to remain so until a legitimate electoral process results in a government that has the consent of the vast majority of the people.

It is true that some monitoring missions have performed more effectively than others. There is a growing understanding on the part of monitors that to properly assess an election, there must be focus on the pre-election period, and a sustained presence in country. There is a growing body of expertise and individuals with experience, and there is probably going to be more monitoring of elections in the future, rather than less, as was demonstrated by the massive domestic and international monitoring presence at the time of South Africa's elections.

## **Conclusions**

What conclusions can be drawn? Certainly elections have a higher chance of succeeding in environments where the political protagonists have adopted a positive sum approach to developing democratic institutions. This happened in South Africa; it did not happen in Burundi. Also, we have seen greater chances of success in countries where a transitional government has organized and conducted the election. It is not realistic to expect this practice to become institutionalized, however. In the upcoming round of second elections, incumbent leaders and governing political parties can be expected to run again, posing the delicate challenge of how to assure credible elections under these conditions. An alternative is to have elections organized by independent authorities. Unfortunately, in highly polarized political cultures, there is often a dearth of

independent institutions or individuals to play this role. Also, the Francophone political tradition of the administration of elections being conducted by the ministry of the interior is deeply embedded in the political culture of a number of these countries. One can hope that as the process of democratic consolidation moves ahead, there will be a growth in the number of credible nonpartisan and independent elements within the civil society.

The most realistic scenario remains involving political parties and civic organizations in the organization and administration of elections, thereby helping to ensure that they "buy into" the process and have the possibility of affecting it in a positive fashion. In Benin, Niger, and the CAR, for example, innovative structures were developed to increase confidence in the system. This was, of course, facilitated by the fact that these elections took place with caretaker governments in power. In addition, for the elections to succeed, all parties must be prepared to act constructively and accept the possibility of losing the election—which has not proved to be easy for parties in transitional environments. Creative thinking on the part of Africans and the international community alike is needed regarding the administration of elections as many African countries move toward their second round of national elections.

Parenthetically, innovative thinking is needed not only regarding the structure of elections but also for other, broader issues relating to constitutional development in those countries that have embarked upon the democratic path. As at the time of independence, many of them have adopted out of whole cloth a structural model, usually representing that of its former colonial power. We should expect changes as the systems adapt to their domestic socio-political realities and confront issues such as ensuring that regional, ethnic, religious, and/or other minority groups feel like they have a "stake" in the system. The international community can help to ensure that the wealth of experience represented by the

numerous democratic constitutional experiments throughout the world is accessible to Africans as they confront these issues.

While difficult to measure, it is clear that the presence of international election observer groups has had an effect in terms of disseminating more widely information about international norms for the conduct of elections. Perhaps ironically, just as political parties and civic society have benefitted from increased focus on what is needed for elections to be considered legitimate, we also note increased sophistication on the part of governments as they attempt to influence less visible parts of the election process, especially in the pre-election period, away from the prying eyes of monitors.

It is vital that attention be given to supporting the democratic institutions in the post-election period (which is really the pre-election period for the next elections). This period is not as "sexy" as the period during elections, and the challenges are more subtle. A range of activities are needed, including but not limited to working with parliaments, political parties, local government, and in civil-military relations.

The task of developing democratic institutions, which must also gain experience on how to interact with each other, is difficult enough under perfect conditions. Democratizing countries in Africa, however, must do this under conditions of extreme economic hardship and social stress.

**Whither Authoritarianism in Cameroon? An Examination of the 1992  
Presidential Elections**  
by Jean-Germain Gros

## Massachusetts Institute of Technology

### Introduction

The struggle for political change has undoubtedly intensified in sub-Saharan Africa, where formerly one-party regimes have been forced to open the political system for competition. However, when measured in terms of the number of incumbents who have actually lost at the polls and gracefully relinquished power, the results have been somewhat disappointing. With such notable exceptions as Kerekou in Benin, Kaunda in Zambia, and very recently Banda in Malawi, there have been relatively few cases of electoral turnovers in Africa south of the Sahara (South Africa is excluded). Whether by fraud or merit, many incumbents have done rather well. This article focuses mainly on elections of the "flawed" type. Using Cameroon as the case study, but with periodic references to other African (especially Francophone) countries, the article addresses three questions:

1. What distinguishes flawed elections from substantially free and fair ones? In other words, how do we recognize a flawed (as opposed to a free and fair) election when we see one?
2. What combination of factors appears to be most crucial in determining whether incumbent heads of states and the parties they represent are able to (a) organize flawed elections, and (b) survive politically-even in the face of internal and external pressure to act in accordance with the popular will?
3. Under what circumstances should international organizations, particularly those actors who are in the election observation and certification "business," extend (or withdraw) their participation in the electoral process?

### Flawed Versus Free and Fair Elections

Elections can be said to be flawed in one of at least three ways. The most serious type of flawed elections involves cases in which the outcome is very much preordained, and the process is, therefore, little more than a ritual exercise to openly affirm what has already been confirmed behind closed doors (Hermet et al., 1978). Elections under the one-party system were flawed and undemocratic because (a) other political parties, which could offer policy alternatives, were barely, if at all, tolerated, and (b) candidates from the ruling

party who often were the only ones on the ballot were assured success, even before any one had gone out to vote. Elections thus provided no opportunity for changing personnel or policy. "Noncompetitive elections," as Chazan called them (or flawed elections as they are called here), were the lot of African voters until very recently (Chazan, 1979).

Countries that allowed internal competition among candidates of the ruling party (e.g., Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania) differed only slightly insofar as candidates were not permitted to be critical of national policy issues and the incumbent of state. In such countries, MPs were expected to primarily serve their local constituents while remaining faithful to the ruling party's principles and dictates (Hayward, 1987a). With the advent of multipartyism, an even more insidious form of preordained elections has emerged, wherein there are both multiple parties and candidates but the incumbent, thanks in part to the support of an external patron-state and the internal security apparatus, is willing to do nearly anything to win. The latter situation is probably the one that James Barnes had in mind when he asks: "Should observation teams agree to participate in circumstances where it is reasonably clear that the incumbent does not intend to play by the rules and possibly face a loss of power" (Barnes, 1994)?

A more "benign" type of flawed elections is one where the outcome is somewhat uncertain, meaning that the incumbent might just leave if voted out of office, but to prevent this from happening the rules and procedures are such that the incumbent enjoys a significant advantage over the competition. At the end of the day, the legitimacy of all elections rests on whether voters perceive that the electoral game has been played on a "level playing field" and whether the final outcome truly reflects their wishes. There is a real smorgasbord of issues pertaining to the transparency of elections, but only the most critical shall be explored here. All elections are subject to electoral rules, including those having

to with timing, mechanics, resource availability and equity, administration, and electoral conflict resolution (Stoddard, 1994).

With respect to timing, the most important question is clearly how much time the contestants have to organize their supporters and campaign. Hastily scheduled elections provide a significant advantage to incumbents insofar as the opposition may not have sufficient time to garner the resources needed for voter education and campaigning. Mechanics (i.e., voting procedure, voter eligibility and registration, precinct location, ballot timing, delivery and inspection, voter safety both before and after the act of voting, etc.) are also very important; indeed, as far as elections are concerned, the devil is really in these details. Resource availability and equity can also have a significant impact on electoral outcome. The same factor that explains why House and Senate members in the United States seldom lose their seat against challengers, and why term-limit initiatives are succeeding in state after state, is also at work in sub-Saharan Africa: resource imbalance. It is costly to organize supporters, print campaign literature and distribute them in far-flung areas, conduct voter education, etc. In Black Africa, where radio and television networks are by and large in government hands, incumbents have had considerably greater media access than their opponents (Merloe, 1994); moreover, the use of state resources (e.g., vehicles, copy and fax machines, telephones, and most important of all, money) for political purposes is not uncommon.

The institutional arrangements governing election administration can make a difference between whether an incumbent loses or wins. In Francophone Africa, the tendency has been for the minister of territorial administration, rather than an independent electoral commission, to be in charge of election administration, even though the narrower process of vote counting and reporting may be given to a quasi-independent body (as happened in Cameroon). Finally, insofar as elections in Africa are likely to be marred by accusations of electoral

malfeasance (real or imagined), the transparency of grievance procedures becomes very important to the legitimacy of electoral results. The issues germane to conflict resolution include whether election losers have any way of challenging official results, and whether the authority in charge of investigating irregularities is also imbued with the power to overrule an outcome once it has been declared final. For the investigative authority to have credibility in the eyes of the public, it has to be perceived as both impartial in its judgement and independent in its power. (The institution that is best placed to arbitrate disputes is the judiciary, but alas, the authority of judges in many parts of Africa, particularly in Francophone Africa, is limited and subject to veto by the executive.)

Thirdly, elections may be flawed, not because of deliberate acts undertaken by the actors, but because the environment was simply not ripe for them to take place. Incumbents may be quite willing to surrender power if the voters so wish, and election rules may be among the most impartial in the world. But lack of security and logistics may make it impossible for "free and fair" elections to take place. Few people would argue that elections should take place in Sudan and Rwanda at the moment. A minimum of peace and security is necessary before any election can be conducted in such countries. Similarly, the 1992 election in Ethiopia, so soon after the fled from power of Mengitsu Haile Mariam and in the face of unresolved political and territorial questions, would appear ill-timed to many. The Angola case also demonstrates that things can fall apart for reasons unrelated to preordained outcomes or predatory electoral behavior incumbents. There, the main opposition party, UNITA, single-handedly derailed the democratic and national reconciliation process. UNITA decided to restart the civil war even after the international community had declared the 1992 election "substantially free and fair," and after the United States had decided to cut off aid, largely because it could. The proper sequencing should have been for UNITA forces to be *verifiably* disarmed, as called for by the U.N. agreement, or

integrated into the Angola armed forces before the election, so that once it took place, Mr. Savimbi would lack the military wherewithal to return to the bush. Much of the focus of this article is on the first two categories of flawed elections. It should be immediately apparent that the absence of the factors just discussed is what distinguishes flawed elections from free and fair ones. To summarize, in order for elections to be deemed free and fair, they must meet at least some of the following criteria: universal suffrage for *all* law-abiding citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, class, and gender; relatedly, one person-one vote, preferably through secret balloting; security and stability in the overall political environment to ensure that voters are not in any way coerced into voting for this or that candidate (or party); free flow of information about candidates and parties so that voters are reasonably well-informed about who and what they are voting for; freedom by all contestants to mobilize support through mass rallies, voter registration and education, media campaigns, etc.; honesty in the vote counting process and prompt reporting of the results; and respect for whatever verdict is rendered by the people, meaning that voters must be reasonably certain that losing candidates will not seek to seize (or stay in) power by force, or otherwise destabilize the country (Hayward, 1987b). Admittedly, what I have presented is a tall order, one that, if applied strictly, few African countries that have recently held multiparty elections would be found to have met. A word (or two) of caution is necessary at this point to set things in the proper context.

In the real world, the line between free and fair and flawed elections, or between the three categories of flawed elections, may not always be easy to demarcate, though the stark contrast drawn between them may have given the reader the reverse impression. Herbert Simon's apt description of human beings as boundedly rational (the term bounded rationality was first coined by Chester Barnard) living entities prevents election observers from knowing *in advance* whether incumbents intend to stay in office no matter the electoral verdict. In the absence of unusual access to those who wield power, intent can only be

assessed through proxy measures, such as whether electoral rules provide a "level playing field" for all of the contestants, and close examinations of the past behavior of incumbent regimes in other domains. Where the electoral process is so designed as to virtually ensure victory for the incumbent, and popular insistence for democratic participation in rule-making is steadfastly resisted, suspicion of intent to engage in "self-interest seeking with guile" is justified (Williamson, 1992). Moreover, where there is a pattern of surreptitious opportunism in the past, it is legitimate to surmise intent of bad faith in future events.

On the other hand, it is to be expected that, by virtue of their "newness," competitive elections in most parts of Africa will be fraught with irregularities, whether intended or not, and their significance to the final outcome may not always be apparent. Hence, in judging elections the question ought to be whether electoral lacunae are (a) so widespread as to throw in doubt the veracity of the official verdict, and (b) deliberately built into the process in order to ensure a desired outcome. Poor data and subjective biases on the part of election observers, among other things, make this judgment extremely difficult. It bears repeating that bounded rationality raises the specter of Type I and Type II errors being committed even by the most seasoned electoral observer. To put it more bluntly, it is at least theoretically possible for elections to be certified as free and fair when in fact the reverse is true, or vice versa. Moreover, it is not only possible but plausible that election observers may at times overestimate the significance of acts of electoral fraud. As the Cameroon case will illustrate, however, irregularities may be of such blatancy and scale that cases of flawed elections may be correctly identified in many instances. Again, the thrust of this essay is to focus on one of such cases, and then ask how the international community should respond when they arise.

If it is assumed that unpopular incumbents have every interest to organize elections in ways that increase the likelihood of their remaining in office, what then determines whether they are able to get away with it? Cameroon provides a good empirical case for answering this question, for most independent observers would probably agree that the 1992 presidential election was of the type described earlier as "flawed." Cameroon is not unique in this regard, however. Togo and Gabon have also been mentioned as possible companions. That it took considerable pressure from domestic forces and certain actors from the international community (the United States in particular) to get the Biya regime to agree to multiparty democracy is key to understanding the government's approach to the 1992 presidential election. The incumbent was clearly not prepared to relinquish power; nor did his main external backer-France-wish to see him lose, especially to a candidate who was clearly not to Paris' liking. The general hypothesis is that the ability of heads of states and ruling parties to organize flawed elections and get away with it is enhanced by at least three factors: internal cohesion within the "commanding heights" of the ruling regime, the nature of the opposition (i.e., whether it is, among other things, fragmented or united), and the presence (or absence) of an external patron whose role is to mainly alleviate the political and financial stresses of the besieged client regime.

### **The Transition to Multipartyism in Cameroon**

The drive toward multiparty rule in Cameroon started in 1989 when Yondo Black, a lawyer, attempted to create a political party, an act that was perfectly legal under the constitution and implicitly, if not explicitly, accepted in Paul Biya's literary *magnum opus*, *Pour le Libéralisme Communautaire*. Nevertheless, Black was arrested in February of 1990. The international community and Cameroonian artists reacted by protesting the arrest before the Cameroon government, which justified its action on the ground that the prominent lawyer was incarcerated, not because he was trying to form a political party, but rather because of his position as a Douala chief, Mr. Black was trying to destabilize the

government by fomenting ethnic tensions in the country's largest city. The government's own pronouncement prompted John Fru Ndi, a librarian from the Anglophone Northwest, to launch the Social Democratic Front in May of 1990, at which event a number of people (four according to government figures, but as much as a dozen according to SDF supporters and alleged "eyewitnesses") were apparently killed. The law officially permitting the formation of political parties was adopted in December of 1990; shortly thereafter (circa February of 1991) opposition parties formed the National Coordination of Opposition Parties (CNPO in its French acronym), largely in response to what some opposition leaders perceived as the government's attempt to control the outcome of the democratic game by single-handedly deciding on its rules (1).

As in other Francophone African countries, the main demand of the opposition was the holding of a sovereign national conference, which would have as one of its chief purpose the power to enact electoral rules and procedures for the upcoming local and national elections. The Biya government refused by arguing that the democratization process in Cameroon was already well underway, thereby making a sovereign national conference *sans object* (or pointless). In response to the opposition's demand for an impartial body to set the rules of the democratic game, the Biya government further contended that the Cameroon constitution, following the French model, clearly placed all elections in the hands of the minister of territorial administration who, again in the French tradition, was a servant of the state, not an instrument capable of being manipulated by political actors. The opposition responded by calling for an indefinite general strike, which would take place every week from Monday to Friday, until the government agrees to its main demand: a sovereign national conference accountable fully to all the *forces vives* of Cameroon society and imbued with the capacity to design, among other things, transparent electoral laws.

Biya's answer to the opposition's call for a sovereign national conference was unambiguously more modest. In November of 1991, the government, having demonstrated its ability to withstand the pressure of ghost town, succeeded in getting the opposition to the bargaining table. The tripartite meeting, as it was called, brought together the government, the opposition, and the *forces vives* of Cameroon society: local entrepreneurs, the media, the church, labor and student unions, etc. The fanfare that preceded the opening of this event led some opposition leaders to think that they were getting what they wanted—a national conference—but only under a different name. It did not take long for them to realize that the agenda fell far short of what they were demanding. One, the opposition did not succeed in getting Biya to participate directly; then prime minister, Sadou Hayatou, along with other dignitaries represented the government. Biya could thus maintain a stealth-like profile and claim to be above "faction" politics. Two, the Biya government accomplished a major coup by succeeding to limit the main purpose of the meeting to constitutional questions. Hence unlike national conferences in other African countries, where the terms of reference covered a whole range of issues—from the first days of independence to the present—the Cameroon tripartite meeting was restricted to constitutional reform. Three, and perhaps more importantly, the government led the opposition into thinking that electoral and constitutional reform would take place before the upcoming legislative and presidential elections. This did not happen; indeed, as of the time of writing, May 1994, the electoral commission in charge of constitutional reform had not finished its work! The legislative election in March of 1992 and the presidential election in October of the same year were governed by the existing electoral laws, which among other things, and as the government had favored along, put the minister of territorial administration in charge of running elections. From the government's standpoint, the tripartite meeting was a complete success in that it (a) compelled the opposition (some of whose members had withdrawn by the end of the conference, having realized they had been had) to stop engaging in civil disobedience, and (b) helped to improve the

image of the regime at home and abroad, while denying any real concessions to its opponents.

### **Fragmentation**

The Cameroon opposition's decision to attend the tripartite meeting, in spite of the fact that none of the preconditions it had set forth were met by the government, underscores its most serious weakness: fragmentation. At the end of 1991, there were no less than 70 political parties in Cameroon. The proliferation of these parties was made possible by the inability of the opposition to get its act together and articulate the interests of all segments of Cameroon society. In the highly uncertain and politicized environment of 1991, each group felt the need to create its party to ensure representation in the debate and its "fair share" of any *gateau national* that was to be distributed later on (2). Given Cameroon's reputation as "Africa's crossroads," it should come as no surprise there quickly emerged so many parties, many of which had little more than a leader and a handful of members claiming to represent a particular ethnic or civic group. Some of the small parties were closely allied to the ruling party and were even rumored to have been created by it. Maintaining unity among the disparate factions of the opposition would have required a Herculean effort, which in the end no one could do.

Opposition parties very much faced a cartel-like dilemma. The efficacy of any cartel depends on the willingness of members to play by the rules, but it is precisely this feature of cartels that tend to lead to their demise, for while group solidarity is a precondition for success, individual members can prosper if others do adhere to corporate rules. The incentive is for members to cheat in the hope that others do not. Usually, however, as soon as it is discovered that one member has been opportunistic, others quickly follow suit so as not to be left behind. As a result of one individual act, members of the entire group may find themselves worse off than before the cartel was created. The same dynamic may

have been present in Cameroon, where anyone who spoke openly against the incumbent was welcome with open arms. Anyone who was not "in" the government was a potential opposition member; formal accreditation was achieved as soon as one "came out of the closet." Thus the opposition included people who, until their sudden conversion to the canons of multipartyism, were staunch defenders and beneficiaries of the one-party system; it also included fifth-columns and moles allegedly implanted by the incumbent to dilute the potency of popular demands.

Given the disparate party composition of the opposition, with at least 70 members, it was far more tempting for leaders of the small parties to break rank with the large ones in hope of attracting the support of disenchanted followers and government financing. It did not make much sense for those parties to obey corporate decisions, when in the end they were going to be upstaged by the larger parties anyway. Besides, the large parties (SDF, UNDP, UPC) had nothing to offer to their sister organizations, other than vague promises of *future* reward following electoral victory, which was by no means assured under the circumstances. By contrast, to the extent that the incumbent regime was in a position to both punish and reward its opponents *now*, it made sense for the small parties to try to get on the government's good side. The strength of the opposition depended on its ability to hold its members together; its weakness stemmed from the fact that it would only take the acts of one or two opportunists to unravel the entire effort. Within 72 hours after one opposition leader had decided to accept the government's invitation to attend a nonsovereign tripartite meeting, all but one followed suit (Black, 1993).

## **The Politics of Boycotts**

The only weapon that the opposition had in its arsenal was "Operation Villes Mortes." It is hard to assess how much real support that ghost town as a political tactic did have amongst merchants and the population at large, for groups claiming to be in the opposition used intimidation to induce compliance. What is undeniable is that acts of civil disobedience and economic boycotts, with the exception of the South and Center provinces (which include Yaoundé), were highly successful in slowing down economic activities throughout the rest of Cameroon for much of 1991. Nevertheless, the opposition may have underestimated the ruling regime's staying power. Ghost town was indeed *un arme à deux tranchants*, meaning that while it may have scared away potential investors, reduced tax receipts, and to some extent embarrassed the ruling regime, it may have hurt the population even more. Indeed, even at the apex of the civil disobedience period (May to August 1991), the empirical-judicial authority of the Biya government was never in any serious danger. The regime remained in control throughout the country; there was no open threat of military insubordination; and donor confidence was demonstrated by the fact that at least two major accords were concluded: one with France, which retired part of Cameroon's debt, and the other with the IMF, which subsequently released several millions of dollars as part of an economic restructuring program. On the other hand, store owners could not keep their shops closed forever, nor could middle class opposition leaders ask their less well-off followers to tighten their belts indefinitely. The general atmosphere of insecurity, created by the government's sometimes violent reactions to popular protest, continued support for it abroad, especially by France, random acts of banditry, and rising perception that things were just going nowhere, virtually forced the opposition to accept reform on Biya's terms.

In its desire to get what it wanted most—a sovereign national conference—the Cameroon opposition may have been too quick to inflict what it thought was the KO punch on the regime. Once it became clear, however, that the incumbent

was on the rope and not on the mat, the opposition was caught unprepared, as it simply lacked the means to deliver the final blow. The opposition had no strategy of either convincing people to stay the course by adhering to ghost town or move on to another tactic. Ghost town might have worked if it were part of an array of strategies, in which case the opposition would start by applying a modest amount of pressure on the regime and simply increase its intensity as time and circumstances warrant. By opting for ghost town early in its confrontation with the regime, the Cameroon opposition may have exposed its most powerful weapon too early. From the ruling regime's standpoint, all it had to do was to withstand the initial stress of ghost town and simply allow it to take its tolls on the larger population.

As long as the Biya government could buffer its main internal backers (e.g., civil servants, the security forces, and traditional chiefs) from the effects of the economic boycott, sometimes with the assistance of the external patron, it could afford to wait it out. Rather than complying with the opposition's main demand (i.e., the sovereign national conference), the regime was probably quite prepared to let Cameroon's economy and social fabric deteriorate even further. Biya had the advantage of incumbency (i.e., by merely having control of the state he had the resources to shield the most significant internal actors) and at least two of Cameroon's nine provinces solidly behind him. There was, therefore, little to lose by prolonging the crisis or insisting on implementing reform on the incumbent's terms, since caving in to democratic aspirations would probably have resulted in the loss of power anyway. The strategy was relatively simple: selective rewards for key actors most directly responsible for regime survival, even if all other institutions were falling apart, dividing the opponents by swelling the number of opposition parties, and maintaining the appearance of normalcy in the areas considered to be government strongholds: the Center and South provinces generally and Yaoundé in particular (3).

To be sure, cohesion with the ruling CPDM (Cameroon People's Democratic Movement) party was severely tested periodically. The resignation of Jean-Jacques Ekindi, former secretary general of the party, probably shook party stalwarts severely, as did the spectacular resignation of George Achu Mofor, former governor of East province, who in his final letter to the president accused the minister of territorial administration of pressuring all governors to do everything in their power to secure a 60 percent margin of victory for the incumbent. At the apex of the civil disobedience period-summer 1991-it did look as though the incumbent was becoming more and more isolated. Biya's alleged extended stay in his village, rather than at the national palace, did little to alleviate rumors of an increasingly reclusive head of state. This having been said, there is little doubt that the military remained firmly behind the government during the period (May 1990 to December 1992), quite unlike Benin and Congo, where military support for the incumbents disintegrated when cohesion was most needed. Indeed, my conversation with Cameroon officials suggest that Biya might have been willing to make more concessions to the opposition, but was prevented from doing so by hard-line civilian advisers and military officers from his ethnic group, the Betis, who feared that too much might inadvertently be given away. One well-placed journalist went so far as to suggest that units within the military were willing to take over the state rather than allowing the opposition to assume power.

The argument is not that the civilian government is merely a front for military rule; Cameroon is neither Nigeria nor Ghana. The traumatic circumstances surrounding independence and the long and violent *maquisard* war that followed it probably helped to create one of the most experienced and professional military in Black Africa, one that has clearly been subordinated to civilian rule, but that is not afraid of asserting its influence when things are thought to be getting out of hand. The military's willingness to articulate its views and interests before civilian leaders means that it cannot be ignored or taken for granted. In some

instances the military will prevail as in 1990-91, and in others it will not, as last February, when some soldiers apparently and unsuccessfully pushed for a military answer to the Bakassi peninsula border problem between Nigeria and Cameroon (4). With the alleged "Betization" of the military, it is not also unreasonable to imagine that some in the military might have been concerned about what effects a loss of power by one of "theirs" would have not only on southern soldiers but on the larger Beti ethnic group as well.

### **The French Connection**

Finally, the ability of incumbents to organize flawed elections and get away with it not only depends on internal factors, but external ones as well. Anyone who has observed the recent history of elections in Africa knows how significant is the role of France in its former colonies. "La France est incontournable chez nous," as I have heard it said many times in Cameroon (5). As a general rule, a besieged regime needs an external patron as a source of financial support and a buffer against pressure from other external actors. Under conditions of economic adversity, external financial support is needed to protect key domestic actors from crossing over to the other side. It is also needed to actively repress popular aspirations, while the patron looks the other way. At the same time, the external patron plays the role of a legitimizer; it convinces the regime that in a world in which pressure is coming from all directions, it still has at least one major friend. For Francophone incumbents, France weighs in heavily in their psyche, for the *ancienne métropole* is both their "piggy bank" and the ultimate source of validation in a hostile world. Thus, to be able to fly to Paris and meet the man at the Elysée is very comforting even if London and Washington have not extended an invitation.

In Cameroon, if a free and fair election was going to result in the defeat of Paul Biya by Ni John Fru Ndi, the populist Anglophone, Mitterrand was probably more than prepared to do whatever was necessary to save a good friend and a reliable ally, including tolerating the political excesses of the regime and bailing it out

financially, if necessary. A Fru Ndi presidency would have affected Franco-Cameroon relations in very significant ways. Fru Ndi has never hidden his desire to move Cameroon away from France's grips; as president, he would probably have followed a foreign policy course that would bring the country closer to Britain, the United States, and Nigeria at the expense of what France saw as its interests. At the domestic level, Fru Ndi has on numerous occasions indicated that he favors a return to the federated state system that existed prior to 1971 (6). This would mean greater autonomy for the Anglophone provinces of Northwest and Southwest, the latter being the principal oil-producing region in the country with significant French multinational involvement. The uncertainty surrounding what a Fru Ndi presidency would mean for relations between Yaoundé and Paris probably led France to choose the status quo over change.

Franco-Cameroon relations, as all patron-client relations, are also influenced by a high degree of personal contact developed over time between leaders of the two countries (Scott, 1987). Paul Biya's relation with the French started during his years as a student in Paris, and was further solidified during his 10-year tenure as Ahidjo's prime minister. Indeed, to this day, suspicions remain about the key role played by the French in Ahidjo's abrupt resignation and Biya's accession to the "throne." It is no secret that throughout the tumultuous period of 1991-92 the former French ambassador, Mr. Yvon Omes, through highly biased reports, played a key role in sanitizing the incumbent regime's image in Paris. Thanks to the envoy's intervention, at least twice in 1991 France bailed out the Biya government by providing it with the cash necessary to pay the arrears salaries of civil servants; it also forgave much of Cameroon's bilateral debt during this time. Mr. Omes retired shortly after the 1992 election; he now lives in Cameroon and serves as a special adviser to president Biya.

### **Examining the Evidence**

Did the rules governing the Cameroon 1992 presidential election provide for a "level playing field," or did they favor the incumbent and how? Here the reader might be well-advised to review what was said earlier about electoral rules; namely, timing, mechanics, resource availability and equity, administration, and conflict resolution procedures play an important role in determining whether contestants are on an even keel. A number of issues can be raised to cast doubt on the fairness of the electoral rules and the veracity of the official results. First, the timing of the election was unconstitutional. Article 51 of the Cameroon constitution clearly states that at least 30 days should lapse between the start of the electoral campaign and election day. The presidential election was officially launched on Sept. 17, 1992, with election day to follow on Oct. 11; thus the time frame between the two dates was almost exactly 24 days, or less than the 30 days required by the constitution. Many of the opposition parties, the Social Democratic Front in particular, had no experience in running for office and simply did not have the time to organize. Moreover, the important task of voter registration and education could not adequately be carried within such a short period of time, in spite of the willingness of foreign organizations (i.e., the National Democratic Institute) to provide assistance. Not surprisingly, many voters were turned away on voting day because they lacked the proper identity documents and (or) their names were mysteriously omitted from the register.

Second, the integrity of the electoral process was compromised by the fact that the unabashedly partisan minister of territorial administration (or the interior minister in most countries), a close ethnic kindred of president Biya, was put in charge of the entire election. In France, which the Cameroon political system purports to emulate, this decision might elicit little objection from voters, for civil servants are seen as officials of the French state, not stooges of the incumbent government. In Cameroon, as elsewhere in Francophone Africa, civil servants are very political in the exercise of their functions; putting the minister of territorial administration in charge of the electoral process all but guaranteed that there

would at least be widespread suspicion of foul play. The opposition had pushed for an independent electoral commission to be in charge of running the election, but had to eventually settle for the National Commission of the Final Counting of Votes (NCFCV). This body was composed of 19 members, of whom 13 were appointed by the government with 11 of those coming from the incumbent's strongholds of South and Center Provinces.

Third, the government retained its overwhelming advantage in the amount of resources under its control. The public media, Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV), the most accessible source of news and information for many Cameroonians, gave much greater coverage (all of its positive) to the incumbent than it did to the opposition. Here, too, incumbency provided an advantage to the government candidate. In addition to the time allotted for official campaigning, the incumbent received further coverage when events that were really staged political propaganda were passed as "news." Numerous irregularities were noted on election day; they covered the entire gamut: from stuffed balloting to nonexistent or so-called "ghost precincts" to physical intimidation of opposition supporters, not to mention unexplained omission of voters on voting lists (NDI Report, 1993). In fairness, the opposition probably engaged in undemocratic practices of its own in areas in which it was strong (7). However, the blame for the betrayal of the democratic process must be put squarely on the government, for it had the opportunity to "get it right" by seating with the opposition and decide on the ground rules, but it refused. Moreover, given its extraordinary advantage in financial resources and personnel and widespread dissatisfaction with its performance, the incumbent regime had both the wherewithal and the motive to engage in fraudulent behavior on a much larger scale than the collective opposition.

Finally, electoral conflict investigation and resolution was left to the Cameroon Supreme Court, which in its final report admitted the possibility of widespread

fraud; but the Court also made it clear that, since it lacked the power to annul the election, it had no choice but to declare the incumbent the winner! The impotence of the judiciary was vividly underscored four days after the election when the minister of territorial administration—with only 20 percent of the vote counted—conferred victory on Paul Biya even before the Supreme Court could announce the final results. The foregoing discussion is meant to convey one essential message: As in all elections, it matters very much who is in charge of the governing laws and procedures. In the Cameroon case, the lack of transparency was especially important given (a) the government's lack of credibility with the people, and (b) the fact that by most indications the 1992 presidential election was a close one. Data provided by the government as well as the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front, suggest that the election was decided by fewer than 180,000 thousand votes among more than 2 million cast, meaning that acts of fraud, even if they took place in a few places, could have had a significant impact on the final outcome.

### **To Withdraw or Not To Withdraw**

In the wake of the 1992 presidential election, there were severe criticisms from the U.S. government (through its former ambassador in Yaoundé, the Honorable Frances Cook) and foreign observers (particularly the National Democratic Institute). Meanwhile, France, though perhaps embarrassed, remained firmly behind Biya. The Cameroon experience is not unique. Controversial elections will remain a reality in African politics, as more countries test the muddled waters of multiparty democracy. In view of this, Barnes' question is worth restating: "Should observation teams agree to participate in circumstances where it is reasonably clear that the incumbent does not intend to play by the rules and possibly face a loss of power?" As this question was indirectly debated at the African Governance symposium that took place at the Carter Center last May (1994), two seemingly opposite views emerged.

The more dovish position is that the international community should expect elections to be flawed for some time after the disappearance of authoritarian one-party rule, and that it may be more appropriate to judge elections, not by the fairness of their rules or the extent to which they contribute to office rotation, but rather by the degree to which they help to transform formerly passive and disenfranchised citizens into active participants in the political process. According to this view, elections ought to be seen more as learning opportunities as opposed to power alternation events. There should, therefore, be an overall deemphasis on elections and election observing and greater focus on participation enhancement and empowerment of the citizenry. Elections, it is argued, should be judged not according to some near-perfect criteria, but according to whether they are, in the words of one participant, "good enough" (Klein, 1994a). The more hawkish position, which I tend to agree with, advocates the use of political conditionalities as a way of achieving free and fair elections. The basis for this perspective is at least three-fold.

First, incumbents and opposition members both agree that international observers play a critical role in validating (or invalidating) elections. In the absence of independent and impartial local election monitors, opposition party leaders and their followers take seriously the evaluation reports of foreign election observers. Incumbents, on the other hand, often use the same reports (when they are favorable) to lobby for what one World Bank official derisively called the "democracy bonus." There is a real danger that if the international community is perceived to be condoning flawed elections, Africans, who see in the international community (or some actors within it) a potential ally against the awesome power of incumbency, could become disillusioned with the democratic experiment. Incumbents, meanwhile, would have little incentive to conduct "free and fair elections," especially when they stand a good chance of losing power as a result. Flawed elections, if overlooked, could well result in widespread voter apathy and indifference, clearly not what the "doves" intend. Second, while

newcomers in the democratic game cannot be expected to "get it right" the first time around, electoral mediocrity and malfeasance could become permanently institutionalized. At what point, should the international community insist on "free and fair" elections-after two, three, or four tries? The case of Senegal is rather instructive. For years, Senegal's status as a semi-democracy virtually insulated its elections from Western criticism. Now that other African countries are democratizing, it is clear that Senegal will no longer have a special status (Joseph, 1994). Yet with a long history of semi-democratic elections, Senegal could have a tougher time conducting free and fair ones than its neophyte neighbors. It is reasonable to postulate that the more experience countries have at conducting fraudulent elections or half-baked free and fair ones, the more difficult it will ultimately be to get them to conduct honest ones. Conversely, countries that are encouraged to conduct "free and fair" elections in the early stages of the transition to democracy stand a better chance at developing a honest electoral culture than latecomers.

Finally, there are African countries in which "free and fair" elections have taken place, and long-time incumbents have even lost power as a result, are not the new democracies more deserving of Western assistance than regimes where autocrats insist on holding to power by hoodwinking the electoral process? Surely, the "doves" would not agree that students who rarely show up for class, never do their homework and fail their examinations should get the same grade as those with assiduous attendance, excellent homework assignments and strong test records; why should a different standard be applied in the school of democracy or to Africans? Clearly, there is a need for the international community to appreciate the difficult conditions under which the transition to multipartyism is taking place in Africa and what it means for incumbents and their supporters to be out of office, there may be an even greater need to focus on governance, but there is no reason why any of this should come at the expense of elections; they can all be pursued simultaneously.

The international community should withdraw its participation in electoral circumstances in which there are reasons to believe incumbents have no intention of conducting "free and fair" elections, let alone giving up power. Why, to use Hirschman's phrase, is "exit" superior to "voice?" Primarily for three reasons: risk, cost efficiency, and efficacy. As intimidation is usually part of the repertoire of measures designed to steal elections, foreign observers may put themselves at great personal risk, when the "returns" are not favorable. Second, it is costly to monitor elections and issue reports. Scarce resources might be better spent where the outlook for free and fair elections is more promising. Finally, the intensity effect of an outright withdrawal, as a sign of protest, is greater than that of issuing a report, however critical, thanks to the tendency of couching criticisms of sovereign states in diplomatic and platitudinous terms. The problem, as stated earlier, is in knowing about adverse circumstances *ex ante*; oftentimes it simply cannot be ascertained what people's motives and intentions are. Limited cognitive competence makes reliance on proxy methods necessary, meaning that election observation teams have to be on the ground before realizing how bad things are. Precursor signs are sometimes available, however.

An incumbent's insistence on having a monopoly in the design of electoral rules, in defiance of international pressure for greater transparency, may be a bad omen. Intimidation of opposition leaders may be another. Limits on the number of foreign observers allowed into the country may be a sign that the government is trying to limit monitoring to a handful of voting districts. (In the Cameroon case, the National Democratic Institute [NDI] decided not to withdraw its participation even after three of its team members were denied entry.). Failure to assist foreign observers in finding the means necessary to move about (e.g., vehicles, security guards-where necessary-translators, etc.) may be an attempt by the government to prevent outsiders from eye witnessing fraudulent behavior. A government's refusal to accept foreign assistance in such key areas as voter

registration and education-in short, in local electoral institution building-when it clearly lacks any experience in these domains, may signal an intent to deceive.

Finally, election observation by foreigners loses its *raison d'être* when major opposition parties are not participating. In these and in other cases, the international community must decide whether it is better to observe and issue a honest report, or to not observe-as espoused in this article. There has been some inconsistency on this most Shakespearean dilemma, in part because the decision to observe or not appears to be made on a case by case basis. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), for example, decided to stick it out in Cameroon in 1992, in Togo in 1994 it left. It may be time to develop standards for election observing and make them available to countries before elections. The absence of compliance with these standards *by all sides* might be ground for a pull-out.

Whatever the decision, foreign election observers and the organizations they represent must be balanced in their behavior. It is proper to put the largest share of the blame on incumbent governments, where they have failed to conduct "free and fair" elections, but the opposition in many African countries is not exactly blameless. Many opposition parties in Africa appear to adhere to a rather peculiar and false syllogism: elections are "free and fair" if the opposition is the winner, where it loses, elections must, ipso facto, have been "flawed." It is possible for elections to have failed to meet internationally recognized standards in large part because of bad faith by the opposition. This could happen where the opposition controls large chunks of the country and is able to forcibly imposed its will. Recent elections in South Africa, with Inkatha apparently having been engaged in widespread fraud in Natal province, may fit this profile.

The international community must be equally forthright in its repudiation of acts of electoral malfeasance by the opposition. In Cameroon, as mentioned earlier, the

Social Democratic Front in the aftermath of the presidential election came out with two sets of figures that significantly differed from one another, without ever bothering to offer an explanation as to how the data were collected and why there were discrepancies between the two data sets. My interview with people sympathetic to the opposition also revealed that SDF militants engaged in intimidating opponents in areas in which their party was strong, and NDI reported a similar behavior by the third major party, the UNDP, in the Extreme-North (NDA, 1993b). Again, the Biya regime may have had the financial and repressive wherewithal to cheat and intimidate more effectively than the opposition, but this does negate the apparent truth: There were no saints at the ballot box in Cameroon in October of 1992. The National Democratic Institute's report promptly and correctly criticized the incumbent, but virtually overlooked irregularities perpetrated by the opposition. In truth, this is probably because the NDI team was unable to have an adequate presence throughout the country, having had some of its members denied entry. A withdrawal would have been justified on this ground alone, but the decision to act otherwise meant that NDI could not carry out its mission the way it would have wanted.

## **Conclusion**

It goes without saying that the three factors mentioned at the outset as the most critical in determining whether incumbents organize and survive flawed elections (i.e., ruling elite cohesion, opposition fragmentation and external patron support) will not be present in all cases. Africa's 50 states are not monolithic in terms of regime types and/or the strength of civil society institutions; nor are all former colonial powers equally influential in effecting change in their ex-colonies. To wit, in Kenya the role of an external patron may not have been as critical to Moi's political survival as it may have been to his Francophone counterparts, but few would deny the important role played by KANU and the armed forces in remaining firmly behind the incumbent. Moreover, it is widely agreed that the inability of FORD Kenya to field a single candidate against Moi during Kenya's

first truly multiparty presidential election had an impact on the outcome. Hence in the Kenya case, only two of the critical factors were present. The universe of factors covered in this essay is unquestionably limited, but it is nevertheless a good starting point for understanding the underlying causes of flawed elections.

In the end, while "elections do not a democracy make" (Klein, 1994b), flawed elections are particularly problematic since they make good governance more difficult to be achieved. If we accept Hyden's proposition that "good politics" is facilitated by the presence of four properties, namely authority, reciprocity, trust, and accountability (Hyden and Bratton, 1992), and if we agree with the more conventional view of elections as the ultimate expression of citizen oversight of those who rule their lives, then flawed elections cannot be overlooked. Flawed elections rob citizens of one of the most basic tenets of democracy: voter choice and with it accountability. Flawed elections can also undermine citizen faith in the democratic experiment, especially if the international community, some of whose members are regarded as potential allies in the fight against autocratic rule, is seen as too lenient on their perpetrators. In the wake of the October election, many Cameroonians felt betrayed because they had fought for more than two years against a determined gendarme-like regime, only to be deprived of their candidate of choice and be faced with a state of emergency in parts of the country. Despite US grumblings, no effort was made to sever ties with and isolate the regime. USAID's decision to close its mission in Yaoundé had more to do with budgetary considerations than political differences with Biya's autocratic rule. Cases such as the one examined in this essay are likely to become common, as more elections are held in sub-Saharan Africa and as external powers such as France continue to try to prop up client regimes. The challenge for the international community will be to decide what its proper role should be. While there may be a moral imperative to participate in all elections, even the

most fraudulent, there are strong arguments for developing discriminatory standards.

## Endnotes

1. Author interview with Yondo Black, lawyer and leading opposition figure, February 12, 1994, Douala, Cameroon.
2. Author interview with Chief Agbor Tabi, Anglophone entrepreneur and SDF supporter, February 18, 1994, Yaoundé, Cameroon.
3. The strategy of the government was best articulated (perhaps inadvertently) in the fall of 1991. Upon touring the other nine provinces of Cameroon, Biya chose Yaoundé for the final salvo. In a speech given to supporters, Biya confidently declared: "Tant que Yaoundé respire, le Cameroun vit." Translation: "As long as Yaoundé is breathing, Cameroon will live." It was important that Yaoundé remained under tight government control not only because it was the seat of power, but also because it was part of Biya's own 'backyard,' the place in which he would either survive or fall. If things were falling apart all over Cameroon, Yaoundé, and by extension the provinces of the Center and the South, had to at least present the appearance of normalcy. It is in this sense that Biya's pronouncement can perhaps be understood.
4. Author interview with army captain, February 19, 1994, Yaoundé, Cameroon. The name is being withheld to protect the person and because he so insisted.
5. "La France est incontournable chez nous" might roughly be translated as: "France cannot be avoided in our country."
6. Interview with Ni John Fru Ndi by Peter Essoka, director general of Cameroon Radio, sometime after the 1992 election. See also the Beua Declaration, which emerged in the aftermath of the all Anglophone Conference that took place in that city in April of 1993.
7. Author interview with his Honorable Mr. Leonard Assira, member of the Cameroon Supreme Court, February 17, 1994, Yaoundé, Cameroon.
8. A significant portion of the original essay dealing with the implausibility of some of the results was omitted. Electoral returns provided by the government show it to have won votes in areas in which little support was expected. Moreover, the same data also tend to show a pattern of high turnout rates in areas of strong support for the government (South and Center provinces) and below average turnout rates in areas of main opposition strength (Southwest province). A detailed analysis of the data will be provided in a forthcoming essay.

## Bibliography

Barnard, C., *The Functions of the Executive*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938.

Barnes, J., "The Tainted Win," *Africa Report*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1994.

Black, Y., *Le Parler Vrai: De notre Combat pour le Changement*, MSND, P.O. Box 1641, Douala, Cameroon, 1993.

Chazan, N., "African Voters at the Polls: A Re-examination of the Role of Elections in African Politics," *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 17 (1): 136 - 58, 1979.

Hayward, F., *Elections in Independent Africa*, Boulder and London: Westview Studies on Africa, 1987.

Hermet G., Richard Rose and Alain Rouquié (eds.) *Elections Without Choice*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978.

Hirschman, A., *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Declines in firms, Organizations, and States*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Hyden, G., and Michael Bratton (eds), *Governance and Politics in Africa*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992.

Joseph, R., "Imperfect Transition." Unpublished paper. Prepared for *Seminar on Democratization in Africa*, May 13-14, Carter Center of Emory University, 1994.

Klein, K., "Who's Afraid of Flawed Elections? or What Does Free and Fair Have to Do With It?" Unpublished Paper. Prepared for *Seminar on Democratization in Africa*, May 13-14, 1994, The Carter Center of Emory University, 1994.

Merloe, P., "Election Campaign Broadcasting in Transitional Democracies: Problems, Principles and Guidelines" London: Article 19, 1994.

McKesson, J., "France and Africa: The Evolving Saga" in *French Politics and Society*, Vol 11, No. 2, pp. 55 - 68, Spring, 1993.

Monga, C., "La Recomposition des Marchés Politiques Africains: le Cas du Cameroun." Unpublished Paper. Presented at the *International Studies Conference*, Harvard University, June, 1993.

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 election in Cameroon*, 1993.

République du Cameroun, *Rapport Général de la Rencontre Tripartite, 30 Octobre - 17 Novembre 1991*, Cabinet du Premier Ministre, 1991.

Scott, J. C., *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

Simon, H., *Models of Bounded Rationality*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992

Stoddard, M., "Evaluating Elections: Basic Principles and Issues and Selected Case Studies," Washington D.C.: National Democratic Institute, 1994.

Williamson O., *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism: firms, Markets, Relational Contracting*, New York: Free Press; London: Collier McMillan, 1985.

Table 1

Voting Turnout by Province as Compared to National Population Turnout Rate

Province	Govt Turnout	SDF Turnout	National Turnout
Adamaoua	25	26	25
Center	26	26	25
East	26	26	25
Far North	25	23	25
Littoral	18	18	25
North*	33	33	25
Northwest	25	24	25
South*	43	43	25
Southwest	16	23	25
West	26	25	25

Note: \* denotes cases of "significant" deviations from the national turnout average. Figures are expressed in thousands.  
Source: Extracted from report by National Democratic Institute for International Affairs entitled An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 Election in Cameroon 1993, Appendices XI and XII.

Table 2

Voting Patterns Revealing " Surprising" Deviations in Selected Provinces

Province	Govt-SDF Disparity for SDF	Gov't-SDF Disparity for Biya	Gov't-SDF Disparity for UNDP
<b>Far North</b>			
Diamare	-4,138	7,138	0
Logone-Chary	-7,697	0	0
Mayo-Kani	1,857	-	19,594
Mayo-Sava	0	0	6,000
<b>Southwest</b>			
Fako	-2,826	-4,808	0
Manyu	-35,063	11,471	13,013
Meme	-47,685	1,162	3,125
Ndian	-8,194	3,106	42
<b>Northwest</b>			
Donga-Matung	-3,416	9,774	85
Mentchum	0	0	19
Ngohk-Entunja	0	972	0
Boyo	0	-972	0
<b>West</b>			
Bamboutos	-288	-5	-9
Menoua	0	269	0
Mifi	-100	0	0
Noun	-164	26,080	345

Notes: all figures are expressed in thousands.  
Source: Extracted from report by National Democratic Institute for International Affairs entitled An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 Election in Cameroon 1993, Appendices XI and XII.

Table 3

Comparison of CPDM and SDF Results for Votes they Received as Share of Total Provincial Population and Provincial Electoral Turnout

Province	CPDM vote as % of Prov. Prop	SDF Vote as % Prov. Prop	CPDM as % of Rep. Turn	SDF Vote as % of Rep
Adamaoua	7	2	26	6
Center	19	5	71	19
East	18	2	68	7
Far North	11	2	48	7
Littoral	3	12	14	68
North	14	1	43	3
South	41	2	95	4
Southwest	3	19	18	83
Northwest	2	22	10	89
West	3	18	12	72

Note: All figures are in percentages.  
Source: Extracted from report by National Democratic Institute for International Affairs entitled An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 Election in Cameroon 1993, Appendices XI and XII.

## The Electoral System: The Forgotten Factor in Africa's Political Transitions

by Goran Hyden

University of Florida

### Introduction

This paper addresses the question whether there has been an overemphasis on elections in current assistance to democratic transitions in Africa. It argues that while it is understandable that elections have been treated as important vehicles for bringing about a new regime, the effect has been to ignore a closer look at the issue of how well the existing electoral systems in Africa serve the transitions to democracy. It is time that this issue is given more attention. More specifically, there is a need to make Africans more familiar with the system of proportional representation (PR).

These notes grow out of work that I have been engaged in over the past two years in trying to make more information available about the pros and cons of PR in the African context. In this connection I have had the privilege to address members of the Constitutional Commission in Ethiopia, the Electoral Commission in Tanzania, present a paper to a constitutional conference in Uganda, and hold discussions with interested parties from Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

As governance consultant to SIDA in Eastern Africa during this summer break, I shall continue working on this issue. There are three reasons why I have engaged in this project and why I wish to share these notes with The Carter Center seminar on "Democratization in Africa." The *first* is that there is a general dearth of information about PR in Africa. The *second* is that, where knowledge of the system exists, as in Uganda and Zimbabwe, there is a great interest in adopting it. The *third* is that some countries have recently adopted PR. Namibia did it in 1990 for use in election of members to its Lower House. Mozambique adopted it as part of the treaty signed in Rome between Frelimo and Renamo for the country's transition to peace and democracy.

### **The Importance of the Electoral System**

Electoral systems do have important implications for political behavior and conduct. One seasoned observer refers to electoral systems as "the most specific manipulative instrument of politics" (Sartori 1968:273). Countries around the world that have introduced democratic political practices have paid particular attention to the design of their electoral systems. It would be wrong to imply that electoral reforms alone will enhance democracy and stability, but it is hard not to agree with Arend Lijphart (1991:72-73) that such issues are vital elements in democratic constitutional design. Africa is no exception and to the extent political scientists can make a contribution to such designs, it seems the question of what electoral system to adopt becomes particularly appropriate.

### **The Plurality/Majority Legacy**

The story of why PR has received so little attention in Africa begins with its colonial legacy. Both Britain and France brought to Africa their own versions of plurality ("first past the post" in single-member constituencies) or majority (two rounds of balloting to give one candidate absolute majority) systems. These types of electoral systems, which produce a majoritarian form of democracy and are quite suitable in socially homogeneous societies, were soon abandoned by

the former colonies because in Africa's plural societies, these systems tended to deepen the cleavages between social groups. In some countries, elections were abandoned altogether as military leaders seized power by force. In others, like Tanzania, Zambia, and Kenya, efforts were made to hold semicompetitive elections within the context of a de facto or de jure one-party system. In no place, however, did PR ever get considered as an alternative in the transitions that took place in the 1960s and early 1970s away from multiparty politics. Nor did it feature in the transition to the Second Republic in Nigeria in the latter half of the 1970s.

Although PR is being practiced around the world socially in both homogenous (e.g. the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and many Latin American countries) and heterogeneous (e.g. Belgium, Holland, Surinam, and Switzerland) contexts, it has proven to be particularly effective as a stabilizing mechanism in plural societies because it has a tendency of producing a consensual, as opposed to a majoritarian, form of democracy. Acting with no apparent knowledge of PR, Nyerere, Kaunda, and Kenyatta-devoted as they were to retaining at least a veneer of democracy within the one-party system-found that the only way they could handle the latter in their context was by practicing it within a consensual system that was established by ruling out opposition parties. When these semi-competitive one-party systems were first established, they were viewed as a step away from democracy, yet at least some of these efforts (e.g. in Tanzania) were well-intended and must, in today's perspective, qualify as the first efforts to genuinely deal with the issue of democracy in Africa's plural societies.

### **The Literature on PR**

The literature on PR is quite extensive, although the bulk of it deals with the experience of Western democracies. The single most important contributions come from *Arend Lijphart*, who in a series of articles and books (notably *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-*

*One Countries*, 1984), has addressed the issue of PR. Edited volumes on the subject of electoral systems in democratic polities include *Samuel Finer's Adversary Politics and Electoral Reform* (1975) and *Vernon Bogdanor and David Butler's Democracy and Elections* (1983). Among the few who have addressed the question of PR in the context of developing countries are *Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset* in their collection of volumes on *Democracy in Developing Countries* (1988). These notes cannot do justice to the full scope of issues raised by these and other authors but try to summarize their most important points and apply them to the contemporary African context.

### **The Advantages of PR in Africa**

Space here does not permit a lengthier discussion of the various forms of PR that are currently being practiced around the world. What these forms tend to have in common is that parties nominate lists of candidates in multimember constituencies, that the voters cast their ballots for one party list or the other, and that seats are allocated, according to a particular mathematical formula, to the party lists in proportion to the number of votes they have collected.

There are two reasons why this system has relevance in contemporary Africa. One is that even where elections have been held in a reasonably free and fair fashion, as in Zambia, they have left behind a widespread distrust between government and opposition because the current electoral system encourages a majoritarian form of democracy that inevitably leaves some groups in opposition. This may not cause much tension in countries that are socially homogeneous, but it usually does in societies that are culturally plural. A second, and related, reason is that the single-member constituency set-up, associated with the current plurality system, tends to regionalize the party presence in ways that further polarizes the country. Thus, for example, in Zambia, UNIP is now essentially confined to the Eastern Province. In Kenya, KANU is almost singularly representing the Rift Valley Province, Ford-Kenya, and Nyanza Province.

It is against this background that some of the advantages of the PR system need to be stated. There are at least five that can be briefly listed here.

1. *Reduces Polarization.* PR reduces the risk of ethnic or religious polarization because there is the prospect in each constituency that more than one party will gain representation. It takes away the notion that "winner gets everything, loser gets nothing." When PR was first introduced in Europe, it was precisely to provide minority representation and thereby counteract potential threats to national unity and political stability.
2. *Promotes Coalitional Behavior.* While PR often gives rise to many political parties, it also encourages coalitional behaviors. Instead of representatives being primarily patrons of specific communities, they have to focus on cooperation across party boundaries. For example, in Surinam, parties representing different communities (Creoles, Javanese, Indians, etc.) have formed a Front for Democracy and Development as a coalitional instrument to enhance governance efficacy.
3. *Diminishes Parochialism.* By being based on large, multimember constituencies, PR tends to diminish the parochialism that often comes with small, single-member constituencies, particularly in culturally plural societies. By making representatives appeal to members of more than one ethnic or religious group, they tend to become tolerant and open-minded.
4. *Encourages Issue-Based Politics.* PR encourages an issued-based rather than a "pork-barrel" approach to politics by making parties bargain over issues that cut across plural boundaries. PR can make a real contribution to improved policy-making and governance by facilitating a more open and transparent handling of issues. Neither structural adjustment nor multiparty politics under the present electoral system have eliminated the tendency for leaders to handle public issues *in camera*.
5. *Sustains Fairness Claims.* PR tends to encourage a political climate in which it is easier to make and sustain fairness claims. The human rights situation in Africa still leaves a lot to be desired, and it is not likely to change to the better as long as exchanges in public are viewed as zero-sum games. PR can contribute toward greater respect for human rights by helping to provide a notion of politics as a positive-sum game in which bargaining and respect for the rules prevail.

### **The Disadvantages of PR in Africa**

Of the disadvantages that analysts have associated with PR, four are of particular relevance to the contemporary situation in Africa:

1. *Produces Weak Governments.* Because PR tends to give rise to many political parties, governments are typically made up of coalitions or alliances that do not last very long. The result is that PR tends to be associated with weak governments. African governments, however, are already weak in that they are based on clientelistic forms of support. Chances are in fact that PR may generate

- stronger governments in Africa than the present electoral systems because they are more likely to be based on agreements on policy issues than "hegemonial exchanges" among leaders of various ethnic or religious factions.
2. *Generates Too Many Parties.* PR is associated with multiple political parties and hence often a messy parliamentary situation. In Africa, multiple parties have arisen in the context also of the plurality/majority systems, which elsewhere in the world tend to foster only two or three parties. The problem of too many parties, therefore, is independent of the electoral system in the African context as long as parties are formed primarily along ethnic or regional lines. Because the plurality/majority systems rule out representational "thresholds" in the form of minimum percentages of votes for national representation (which PR permits), these systems may in fact in the African context induce the creation of even more parties than PR would do.
  3. *Complicates Calculation of Results.* Because the final distribution of seats is dependent on the use of a mathematical formula that is not immediately understood by everybody, there is a tendency to accuse PR of being too complicated or too technical. This concern is real, especially in countries where literacy rates are low, but it can be mitigated by strengthening and professionalizing electoral administration. The fact that PR leaves each constituency with more than one winner may reduce the pressure to rig elections and in that sense also pave the way for use of a more complicated system of counting votes.
  4. *Does Not Mix with Presidential System.* Experience from Latin America suggests that PR in combination with presidential systems of government does not work very well because deadlocks easily occur in the relations between the executive and the legislature. Although African countries are presidential systems, the problem there has not been deadlocks but the tendency for presidents to "railroad" proposals past intimidated legislators. A return to the system that prevailed in Africa at independence when the parliamentary system of rule prevailed in Anglophone countries may in fact help create more effective governments than the current ones because they would be derived from majority coalitions constituted on the basis of agreement on major policy issues.

## Conclusions

Whatever the views one holds on the pros and cons of PR, the point is that it must not be pushed down the throats of Africans like so many other proposals of political reform have. My purpose is only to bring PR to the African reform agenda so that it gets publicly ventilated and considered together with other constitutional proposals. The lesson that we should have learned from the first five years of work on governance and democratization issues in Africa is that being in a hurry hurts the cause. Africans must be given an opportunity to discuss and digest these crucial issues and decide on their own what steps to

take next. We as academics can make a contribution by providing a comparative perspective on experiences that are relevant to their concerns and priorities.

## **II. MANAGING DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS**

### **3. External Actors and Assistance**

It is readily agreed that democracy cannot be simply imposed on a people by outside actors. Nevertheless, outside assistance is often essential in providing material support, training and in keeping pressure on recalcitrant regimes. What is now needed is greater coherence and consistency in the provision of external support for democratic transitions.

The bureaucratic practices of international agencies often prevent them from acting in a responsive, timely, and pro-active manner. To help build sustainable democracies, the achievement of greater security and popular participation should be priorities of international donors. (Meijenfeldt).

Democratization is not the occurrence or nonoccurrence of a single event such as a multiparty election. External assistance is needed on a long-term basis because democratization involves the building of appropriate institutions and the establishment of a supportive political culture (Barkan). The development of strong legal systems and legal institutions, for example, is crucial to the success of these efforts, and Africans can benefit from the experiences of established democracies in these areas (Stayden).

Assistance to the electoral process should continue to be an important component of external support for African states undergoing democratic transition. Initial contributions from bilateral and international agencies has centered on the provision of election observers. Such assistance, by its very nature, has been short-term and narrowly focused (Colvin Phillips). Electoral assistance should be part of a long-term democracy program that is responsive

to the incremental and multifaceted nature of the process. Moreover, such assistance should take account of successive phases of transitional elections, from the initial one to "second-" and "third-generation" elections (Klein). Any external assistance to African democratization efforts must also be sensitive to the severe economic difficulties faced by many countries. To maintain the momentum of political reforms, long-term planning and coordination of economic assistance by international financial institutions and bilateral donors is imperative (Barkan). The important political and economic transitions occurring in Africa have created opportunities for significant new initiatives and directions in bilateral relations with the United States (Johnson). Increased participation by American business and investors in the recovery and expansion of African economies should also be designed to support emerging democratic institutions (Johnson).

## **Assisting Democratic Transitions in Africa: Constraints and Opportunities 1**

**Joel D. Barkan**

**University of Iowa**

Can established democracies assist the process of democratization in Africa? What are the implications for countries attempting to provide such assistance-for their foreign policies, and for the operations of their agencies charged with implementing programs to support democratization in the field? What lessons have been learned from the initial round of interventions made to support this process?

In the rush to nurture the "second liberation" of Africa, many of us in this room including myself, have become involved in what has become a veritable growth industry-"the democracy industry." Like any growth industry, the first years have been marked by the investments of several basic ideas, technologies, and management systems as those involved in the enterprise have sought to put

theory into practice. This has been an exciting period of new opportunities. Programs which were not previously on the agendas of most bilateral assistance agencies, have rapidly become so. The demand for programs to support democratization has exploded as many countries have embarked on political reforms while others have come under pressure to do so. A plethora of initiatives have been undertaken or are planned which have attracted participants and interest from academe, NGOs, and the consultant community as well as from other donor countries.

For many of us concerned with this exercise, the initiatives to date have been "heady stuff." The time has come, however, for us to pause and reflect on the constraints that bear on this effort, and on what forms of assistance truly "work" in this new area and which do not. Do our efforts really make a difference and in what context? While the events of the past week in South Africa have no doubt emboldened many to think of new initiatives for that country, the situation in Rwanda illustrates the broader systemic constraints under which these programs often operate. Not every country can or should be assisted in this area. All programmatic interventions in support of democratization are not equal. Some are more likely to make a long-term impact than others. Some are far more expensive than others. Different types of initiatives require different configurations of personnel, and expertise which may or may not be available on a timely basis. How, in short, should those in "the democracy business" proceed with their work so that today's growth industry matures into sustainable series of programs with measurable returns?

What follows are five "reflections" that began to emerge in my mind roughly a year ago, but which are still undergoing revision. They suggest some tentative answers to the questions raised above.

1. **The opportunities and constraints of American foreign policy.** It is very difficult for any nation, including the United States, to articulate and apply a single and consistent standard of what democratization entails to every country

with which it does business. This is *not* because there is no single institutional configuration of democracy—we all know that democracy takes many forms, but we also "all know a democracy when we see one." Rather it is because support of democratization is just one of several objectives that form the basis of American foreign policy as well as the foreign policies of other countries that now share this concern. Maintaining peace and security, halting the spread of nuclear weapons, promoting and protecting America's share of world trade, and conserving the environment—all compete with democratization in an era when foreign policy is no longer tied to a single strategic objective. When coupled with the fact that the implementation of foreign policy is largely a bilateral exercise, the application of the "test of democratization" will vary greatly from one country to the next. It may be possible—indeed, I believe desirable from an analytical perspective—to compare the democratization records of all countries against a single set of standards. But having done so, such an exercise will not always result in treating all countries with similar records the same way. This in turn may place the United States and other established democracies in an uncomfortable dilemma—that of calling into question the credibility of the policy itself. For example, when the US quietly accepts the blatant irregularities of the June 1992 elections in Ethiopia and increases assistance to that country yet cuts off aid to the Cameroon after its elections in October, what conclusions are other donors and other African countries to draw from such decisions? This situation also begs the question of whether it is possible to formulate and articulate a viable set of decision rules so that all will know when and where the United States will be most supportive and/or aggressive in pursuing the objective of democratization and when and where it will not?

If there is a "rule" it would appear to be as follows: that the U.S. and other like-minded donors will be most supportive of those countries where there is a genuine commitment on the part of the government to respect human rights, increase political liberalization, and accommodate competitive politics. However, the converse of this rule—that the US and other donors will apply substantial pressure and condition our relations where these commitments are not present will *not* be invoked automatically but on a case by case basis. This in turn suggests that the US and other donors will need to distinguish between programs and forms of assistance that are possible in countries that have demonstrated a credible commitment to democratization and those which have not. To its credit, the Clinton Administration has begun to articulate this distinction. 2

Finally, it must also be recognized that the instruments available to the United States for encouraging democratization are limited insofar as they fall into three categories: "carrots," "sticks," and the specific initiatives designed to support the building and consolidation of democratic institutions. <sup>3</sup> The carrots consist of our bilateral aid programs, particularly quick-disbursing aid to cover balance of payments and budget deficits. However, at a time when the Development Fund for Africa has leveled off while assistance to South Africa is about to double, the US cannot, indeed will not, reward every country that embraces democratization. In other words, there are not enough carrots to go round; not every country embracing democratization is equally important to the US; <sup>4</sup> countries should pursue democratization because it is in their interest, not merely to secure quick-disbursing aid.

As for sticks, it is not clear that the suspension of assistance will achieve the desired result unless it is done in concert with other donors, particularly the IMF and the World Bank. The US is no longer the principal donor to Africa, and cannot exercise conditionality by itself. Moreover, where a regime is determined to resist democratization and economic reform, because its principal members conclude that reform is not in their interests (e.g. as in Kenya and Zaire), the return from the application of "sticks" will be limited. Indeed, the strongest argument for applying sticks in these situations is not for what they will accomplish in terms of substantive reform, but what they will save in terms of disbursements which would otherwise be wasted and which can be reallocated to another country where the commitment to democratization is real. <sup>5</sup>

Finally, there are the programs of specific initiatives in support of democratization. Here, the US, other bilateral donors, and NGOs will operate most effectively on the margin albeit a significant one-as facilitators of programs which have already been embraced by host

governments, indigenous NGOs, and/or individuals. The main point is that no donor is likely to be successful over the long run unless it can identify and establish working relationships with committed indigenous partners. Democracy, in short, cannot (and should not) be imposed from without. We can provide the fertilizer and even assist in the development of the seeds, but we cannot plant the seeds or tend the farm.

2. **Democratization is fundamentally a process of institution-building, and not the occurrence or non-occurrence of single events.** When mounting initiatives in support of democratization, whether as part of our bilateral assistance programs or as NGOs, it is important that we do not become overly preoccupied with single events, but remain sensitive to the fact that in the final analysis democratization involves the building of institutions and the establishment of a supportive political culture that is inherently a long-term process. The holding of a single multi-party election, even if free and fair does not a democracy make-witness the aftermath of elections in Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Russia and probably South Africa. Indeed, in the most recent case, one can argue that as much as the elections were/are a precondition for the future evolution of democracy, they would not have been held in the first place if a more basic precondition had not been established, namely the willingness on the part of the principal protagonists to bargain and accommodate each other on a new set of rules under which the polity will operate during an extended period of transition.

I do not mean to suggest that elections are unimportant. Rather that it is the periodic holding of elections over many years-the institutionalization of the process-that establishes the foundations for an enduring democratic system, and that programs to support the electoral process must be tailored accordingly. The same perspective must be maintained in respect to other institutional arenas that are normally part of a democracy-the establishment of a viable legislature, an independent judiciary, civil society or a free press. A study tour for a single group of MPs, the holding of a single workshop on human rights, or the publication of a single magazine which thoughtfully considers the affairs of a country do not guarantee the establishment of the desired institution. Should donors continue to sponsor such initiatives? How might these familiar forms of assistance be

better designed, configured, scheduled, etc. to support a process which by definition will play itself out over the long term?

- 3. If the building of democracy takes time, those in the "democracy business" must be patient by getting into the game for the long-haul and staying in.** Whether as bilateral donors or as NGOs, programs at the agency or organization level will need to be sustained over many years to establish and maintain credibility. There is no "quick fix" in this area, and there will be reverses or stalled transitions in more than a handful of cases. Given Americans' penchant for the "quick fix" and the dynamics of domestic politics, I worry whether today's emphasis on democratization will become tomorrow's "fad of the previous administration." At a policy level, it is therefore desirable to establish a public constituency and bipartisan support for such programs. This is particularly true in respect to Africa where, despite the recent "success" in South Africa, donor fatigue is clearly on the rise. [6](#)

It is also necessary to make long-term commitments at the field level by embarking on a coherent and selective series of interventions on a country by country basis that provide support over the medium term (i.e. three to five years), and which can be evaluated and renewed. USAID has begun to do just that, but most of these programs are at early stages of implementation or still on the drawing boards. Most necessary at this level is the sustained field presence of appropriate personnel, and here too I am concerned about whether sufficient commitments will be made. Programs that support the building of democratic institutions require an on-going series of unique non-replicable interventions that must be tailor made to local conditions. Unlike more conventional aid initiatives (e.g. in agriculture, family planning, the provision of infrastructure), there are few economies of scale in which interventions that work are easily expanded. On the contrary, field level programs that are successful in one intervention must move on to another that is usually unique because it is predicated on the outcome of the first. Most interventions are also relatively small, but politically sensitive. All this requires the presence of field personnel who have at least three skills: (1) a broad social science background and comparative familiarity with the working of democratic

institutions; (2) a sound understanding of the local political system or the ability to "get up to speed" fast; (3) "a good political nose" and brokerage skills to establish working groups that cut across local actors which often compete with one another for donor funds, as well as working effectively with other donors, both bilateral agencies and NGOs. <sup>7</sup> Personnel with a combination of these skills are not available in abundance, indeed there are relatively few given the need. More will need to be trained, and recruited by both bilateral agencies and NGOs which seek to establish or consolidate and expand democracy support programs. Resources for such recruitment, however, are limited and may already be declining.

4. **Not every country should have a democracy program.** Given the preceding discussion of opportunities and constraints, it is clear that not every country should have a democracy program. Nor, conversely, should every bilateral agency or NGO be active everywhere, or attempt to support all aspects of institution-building in this vast new area of foreign assistance. Just as the United States and other bilateral assistance programs are now in a process of prioritizing the countries in which they will operate, so too must NGOs move beyond what I perceive to be a "scattershot" approach via which they seem to be everywhere but rarely for more than a brief period. <sup>8</sup> Given the more limited resources of NGOs, the setting of priorities is particularly important, because it is only by making choices that they will be in a position to place their personnel in the field on a long-term basis. <sup>9</sup> It is also desirable that NGOs begin to specialize in the areas of support in which they have a comparative advantage. No one NGO can "do it all" (e.g. elections, legislative support, civic education, training a free press, etc.) and most that are currently active in this field are already stretched in terms of their resources. In short, the time has come to pick and choose, and arrive at a division of labor.
5. Last, but not least, **we must increase coordination with other like-minded bilateral donors**, and with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In terms of knowing what types of technical assistance to provide and how to provide it, the United States is unquestionably the world leader in this new area of foreign assistance. There are many reasons for this, but it is primarily because USAID maintains a strong field presence in the countries where we have mounted programs, and because the Agency has been willing and able to draw on appropriate expertise outside of its own ranks. American NGOs and foundations have also developed their own expertise. The United States, however, cannot and should not do it all. We must remember that democratization is a universal value and that our programs are both far more persuasive and less threatening in countries making the transition to democracy when they are conducted in concert, and even on a joint basis via parallel programs mounted by other donors.

Authoritarian regimes which seek to drag their feet on liberalizing their systems find it much more difficult to do so when confronted by a united front of like-minded donors. <sup>10</sup> For the same reason, citizens in these countries who seek donor help to support democratization initiatives, enjoy a greater degree of political cover when more than one donor supports their programs. Coordination is also desirable because it shares the cost of these programs, and because a greater sharing of information is needed to improve the quality of assistance in what is still an infant field. Coordination is most effective when it occurs in the field; that is to say, between the relevant staff of like-minded missions.

Such coordination, however, should be complemented by greater coordination between headquarters if for no other reason than it will rapidly enhance the institutional memory of a diverse number of agencies around the world which now seek to build democratic institutions.

## **Who's Afraid of Flawed Elections? Imperfect Elections and Election Assistance in Africa**

**by Keith Klein**

Director of Programs, Africa and the Near East  
The International Foundation for Electoral Systems

The democracy community has adopted a new mantra in the last year or two that we repeat to each other whenever two or more of us are gathered. Someone intones "Elections do not a democracy make," and all heads nod soberly. With the adoption of this mantra, we have comfortably and wisely widened our perspective on democratization beyond the mere electoral event.

In our assertion that elections are a necessary but not sufficient condition for democracy, we have created an unanswered question for ourselves: "Just how important **are** elections in the spectrum of 'enabling institutions' for democracy?" How much emphasis should be placed on assisting elections and on judging the nature of a country's democracy by the nature of its elections? This paper will suggest some tentative responses to those questions.

This paper also may offer some partial means of resolving a related dilemma that the democracy community has created for itself with its recent rhetorical commonplaces. We assert rightly that democratization is a process, a series of steps, not all of them going in a single direction. At the same time, we suffer our own (and the media's) slings and arrows whenever an election observer delegation blandly asserts that an election, though flawed, "is a step in the right direction." Such statements are branded as wishy-washy sellouts, even though everyone (the media included) seems to be comfortable with the assertion that democratization is a step-by-step process. Do we really know what we mean when we state that an election is a step in the right direction? How do we know that the net effect is positive (particularly at the time when such statements are often made, only days or hours after polls are closed)? Is our only available measure the fact (or appearance) that the current election was "better" than previous elections?

My attempt to answer some of these questions starts with the assumption that elections are an indigenous reality, not one created by external forces. The power of outside players to cause an election to happen and to influence its timing, while partially true, has been overemphasized, and is becoming less and less true. At this time, and in the future, more effort by external forces may go into trying to slow down the pace of movement toward elections (e.g., in Ethiopia) rather than pressing for faster movement toward elections. In the foreseeable future, the occurrence of elections, and their timing, will be determined by internal forces (and laws) much more than by external players. Therefore, we should assume that in many countries in Africa democratization (and our assistance to it) will be periodically punctuated by elections. The question for the Western democracy community is not, "Should we pressure countries to hold elections?"

Nor is it, "Should we assist elections or should we assist the long-term democratization process?" Rather the question is, I believe, "In our assistance to the long-term process of democratization, how much emphasis should be placed on assisting the technical and political process of holding multiparty elections?" My short answer to that question is that it would be difficult to put **too much** emphasis on assisting periodic elections. An emphasis on election assistance is unjustified and unhealthy only if it is accompanied by short-sighted policy and by short-term programming. Democracy programming over-emphasizes elections if its support and assistance begin only in the pre-election period and end once an election is over. Democracy policy overemphasizes elections if the quality of a single electoral event becomes the litmus test for continuing or canceling assistance. If we can confidently assert that "elections do not a democracy make," then must we not accept the corollary that "one flawed election does not a democracy break?"

If, however, election assistance is part of a long-term democracy program that accepts the incremental and multifaceted nature of democratization, then a great deal of emphasis should be put on assisting periodic electoral events, whether they are "founding" elections, or "second- or third-generation" elections. This is because of the crucial importance of elections in the democratization process. Their importance derives not from elections as an opportunity to choose new representatives and national leaders. Rather, it comes from the nature of the election process, in which many of the critical aspects of democracy are displayed and tested. Elections are not merely a necessary condition for democracy; they are a heightened and concentrated testing ground for a country's democratic health.

Elections and the pre-election period are when the requirements of democracy are focused:

- **On the separation of powers:** Can an election commission (or an office within a ministry) operate independently of political interference from the executive

branch? Can the judiciary play an effective dispute resolution role without interference from the other branches of government?

- **On effective and efficient governance:** Can a cooperative and collegial manner of administration work as effectively as an autocratic manner? Specifically, can a commission run an election process as well or better than a minister?
- **On governance and consensus building within a multiparty framework:** Can political differences exist simultaneously with cooperative effort toward a common goal? Can the battle for political advantage stop short of institutional sabotage? Will political parties compete together and work together within certain accepted rules of conduct?
- **On a neutral State bureaucracy:** Can the civil service work reliably for the interests of the State and the people, and not for a political party?
- **On the relevance, strength, and effectiveness of political parties:** Are political parties, individually and collectively, a meaningful mechanism for mobilizing popular action and mediating popular opinion?
- **On the nonpartisan use of State resources:** Can the institutions of the State (media, ministries, etc.) be relied on to promote and protect rather than subvert, healthy political competition?
- **On the role of the military in a democratic state:** Can the military resist the temptation of taking sides in an election? Can it be sufficiently secure of its ongoing institutional basis, no matter who the victor, that it does not feel the necessity to subvert the process?
- **On civil society:** Are there alternative platforms and power bases for productive participation in consensus-building, policy-making, social-reforming, etc.?

- **On participatory democracy:** Are the citizens sufficiently informed and sufficiently confident of their individual and collective relevance to the State so that they choose to participate in the political process as voters?

These questions point to some of the basic requirements for a healthy democracy. They are also, emphatically, the requirements for a legitimate, free and fair election. Put another way, these are some of the **long-term** goals of a country's democratization process; and they are the **immediate** requirements for a democratic election. Therefore, it should be clearly understandable that (1) elections can be seen as a diagnostic tool in assessing a country's progress on the path toward democracy; and (2) elections in most "emerging democracies" are inevitably flawed. Election flaws, however, are not just election flaws: They are also flaws in democracy. **That** realization is the crux of the issue of whether too much emphasis is placed on elections: Elections are important and should be emphasized because they represent a revealing moment in a country's democratizing history; elections should not be emphasized as anything more than a revealing moment. What is being revealed are strengths and weaknesses in the democratic process, not merely in the electoral process. Inevitably, flawed elections should be used as a diagnostic tool, as a pointer for adjusting programs to strengthen democratic structures. They should not be seen as an end point, as a stopping place until the next election.

These conclusions, if they are valid, should suggest some further conclusions on evaluating elections and on the importance of election assistance. If elections in democratizing countries are inevitably flawed, then perhaps we should accept the fact that they all are going to fall short of an internationally accepted standard of free and fair. They are all going to be, frustratingly, "C+" (or B-, or D+) elections. Despite that, we can still hold out the possibility that they might be **successful** elections. To do that, we would have to redefine success, moving away from the simpleminded test: "Was the incumbent defeated?" Or the slightly less

simpleminded test: "Was the election free and fair?" How might a seriously flawed election be considered successful?

To answer that question, we should return to the series of questions listed above. If it is accepted that these questions, seen as the long-term goals of democratization, will be answered mainly in the negative in the context of a single election, then the domestic pre- and post-election response to these shortcomings would seem to be a critical determinant of an election's success. Where an honest internal evaluation of an election reveals flaws in the election process, does the political class (particularly the losers) take these flaws as an indication of the long-term challenges that must be addressed? Or does the political class (particularly the losers) take these flaws as an indication of the hopelessness and pointlessness of democracy and political liberalism? If insiders and outsiders alike view democratization as a long, multifaceted, and incremental process, then it is possible to see any election, no matter how flawed, as successful if it serves as a catalyst to move that country further down the road toward democracy. An election must be seen as unsuccessful, on the other hand, if, because of its flaws, it results in disillusionment, hopelessness, and a backing away from political liberalization.

Flawed elections, in fact, might be the best teachers and the most effective catalysts for progress in democratization. A bad election might provide a needed incentive for a disjointed opposition to put aside petty differences and seek common ground. It might point the way for civic groups to work harder on human rights and election monitoring programs. It might force the government to responsibly address issues relating to the size and role of the military. If more valuable lessons can be learned from the flaws of an election than from a relatively flawless election, it might be that, 10 years from now, democracy has progressed further in Kenya than in Zambia, or further in Togo than in Benin. Obviously, there are many factors influencing a country's democratization

process; the quality of elections is only one. The point is that elections should not be judged by their flaws alone but also by the lessons that are derived from those flaws and the responses of domestic actors to them.

It is in this sense that we can speak of a flawed election being a "step in the right direction" (a conclusion that may be impossible to reach reliably the day after an election, however). It is possible to imagine, on the other hand, a flawed election that is a step in the wrong direction, a pointer away from democracy and political liberalization. This watershed nature of an electoral event is another measure of the importance of elections. This nature, coupled with the recognition that elections will be periodic events in many African countries in the future and that they will continue to be flawed to some degree, points to some lessons for election assistance.

A recognition of the inevitability of flawed elections should not lead external supporters of democracy to de-emphasize election assistance. Rather, because elections are crucibles of democratizing institutions under pressure, elections should be a heightened period for democratization assistance. Elections-as-crucibles implies that the election period is a fertile opportunity for assisting democratizing institutions. More importantly, elections-as-watersheds implies that the election period is when assistance can make the most difference. Election assistance cannot produce flawless elections, and should not be expected to. Election assistance **can**, however, make a difference in whether an election is successful or not, within the definition of success suggested above. Simply put, it has been suggested that a successful election is one that points the way forward on the road toward democracy, that is catalyzing, energy-producing, and "enlightening", even if its lessons are mainly negative. An election that is disillusioning, that dampens the incentive for popular participation, that points in

the direction of autocracy rather than democracy, must be considered an unsuccessful election.

Many elections in the recent past and in the future in Africa could fall on either side of that divide. External election assistance sometimes has the opportunity to give the process the push needed to get an election onto the positive side of the watershed rather than the negative side. Sometimes this crucial assistance has been in the form of work with political parties, or with the military, or with civic organizations. Sometimes it has been in the form of assistance to the administrative and organization task of preparing for elections. This last form of assistance can be critical in pushing the process toward sufficient efficiency, transparency, and fairness so that the results have a minimum of legitimacy and produce a political and psychological move forward rather than a reversal in progress toward democracy.

In conclusion, I have argued that elections are watershed events in the democratization process, events that can catalyze forward movement or can begin to reverse the progress. Elections are also crucibles, a heightened testing ground for the social and political requirements for democracy. They are periodic peaks in the process of democratization. Democracy assistance should recognize the status of elections in the democratization process. Elections are neither the beginning nor the end. They are neither all-important litmus tests nor are they inconsequential. Election assistance, like elections, should be periodic, but also like elections, it should be a heightened, catalytic point in a longer-term program of democratization assistance. Elections are a heightened period of **testing** for a country's democratic institutions. Elections should also be heightened periods of **effort** for the democracy support community. For internal and external actors alike, elections should be heightened periods of **learning**, of evaluating flaws and their causes, and recognizing steps that need to be taken to move further down the road toward democracy.

# DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND US FOREIGN POLICY IN AFRICA

by Lucie Colvin Phillips

Vice President, AMEX International, Inc.

The orderly alternation of power through peaceful elections with universal adult suffrage is the sine qua non of democracy. Most Africans today clearly want democracy, of their own volition and independently of external pressures. What is wrong, then, with insisting on "free and fair" elections as a tenet of foreign policy, rewarding successes and sanctioning failures? Case studies from the experiences of the last three years suggest that it has been a costly misplaced emphasis, both among African policy makers and in US foreign policy. Why? The short answer is because neither we nor the Africans involved are yet very good at determining what constitutes a free and fair election. The sanctions and rewards we try to apply, moreover, are too late and too poorly targetted to have the desired effect. The long answer to the question involves exploring all the other elements that make elections work in a democracy. Time and experience are needed to work out internal power balances and election procedures that are both fair, and seen to be fair.

Initial US and UN assistance to the electoral process has focused on providing election observers. Essentially high-cost poll watchers, parachuted in for election day, international observers found themselves watching voters deposit their ballots in a statistically insignificant percentage of polling places. Often they could not properly observe the counting process. They were not there for the writing of the constitution and electoral laws, which may or may not have provided fair rules of the game. They were not there for the voter registration process.

Nor was much international help provided, in most cases, with the formidable logistical problems facing election organizers. Every election thus far has been haunted by logistical nightmares. If the ballots or voter lists did not arrive at the right polling places on time, fraud may have been at work. Frequently, however, spotty transportation networks, new procedures poorly understood, or even inadequate printing facilities were the problem.

English speaking observers tend to think that an independent electoral commission is required to ensure a fair election. Francophones, with strong French backing, assign this task to the territorial administration, the centrally appointed network of provincial governors, prefects and sub-prefects. Are all Francophone elections then flawed? Clearly not. Those in Benin were considered as fair as their counterpart success story on the Anglophone side, Zambia. Another election dilemma is that none of the political parties can envision a fair loss. Before the first multi-party elections, party leaders had exaggerated ideas of their strength, and no way of assessing it objectively. There was no voting history, no political map with its solid areas and its bellwether districts. Even the ethnic census data was filtered through radio-trottoir and came out with each large group believing it constituted a majority. No one had a fall-back strategy in case the election was lost.

The lack of alternative futures for losers of an election accentuated the mathematical void. Private sectors are too small. Most countries lack experience in sharing appointments in the civil service, or power-sharing at higher levels. Governments of national unity have been proposed, and seem to be emerging as an African model of power sharing. There are not yet, however, many good working examples. The mere agreement to institute one was enough to throw Rwanda into one of the most brutal ethnic wars the continent has known.

The most widespread expectation of African politicians and voters is rather "winner take all," in a peculiarly African sense. Power, jobs and graft are the stakes. The dominant party is expected, and itself expects, to monopolize all three. The outgoing leaders cannot look forward to a dignified retirement to law or business. They will be lucky to escape prison, exile or assassination. As one crude, but telling, observer from the Congo put it, "They have been eating for everyone else for twenty years, now it is our turn to eat for everyone."

This complex of confused election expectations converged first in Angola. Jonas Savimbi was sure that the territory he controlled could be counted as so many votes for his party. When the results from "his" areas came in mixed he cried fraud and pulled out before the rest of the counting was complete, plunging Angola into worse civil war than before.

In Congo-Brazzaville no ethnic group held a majority, but each large group believed itself the biggest. Ministers and party leaders, who might have been expected to benefit from some geographic census analysis, instead appeared to base their campaign strategies on extravagant wishful thinking. A Bateke Minister assured me that the Teke dominated four of the seven provinces. Lari, Pool and southern leaders each believed that their group constituted a majority. When elections, probably accurately, reflected that none did, each was sure that the other had cheated more than it had.

In Burundi, President Buyoya knew well that his ethnic group, the Tutsi, comprised only a 15 percent minority. Over a two year period he had carefully advanced Hutu appointees to key positions, formerly considered Tutsi preserves, in the cabinet, the ruling party, the administration and the parastatals-- everywhere, in fact, except the Army and the judiciary. His UPRONA party leaders, just a month before the election, thought that they had built a popular multi-ethnic team. The elections were free and fair, and the Buyoya handed over

power with extraordinary grace. But a few recalcitrant military officers had the power to subvert the process, even if they could not gain control.

Nigeria is the one country with enough electoral history to produce relatively predictable alliances and serious study of population geography. In previous elections from 1960 on, a northern Hausa-southeastern Ibo alliance has easily defeated the southwestern Yoruba candidates.

President Babangida and the northern army officers who controlled the government presided over the drafting of a constitution designed to discourage the kind of ethnic fragmentation and block action that had led the country to civil war in 1967. They engineered the elections to the extent of mandating two political parties with prescribed philosophies and banning all previous politicians from candidacy. The constitution required the winning candidate to have a majority in two thirds of the provinces, thus prohibiting blatant ethnic appeals. This has been an important Nigerian contribution to constitutional law in ethnically polarized societies. Nevertheless, when the classic Hausa-Ibo alliance failed to win, military leaders refused to accept the Yoruba winner. Yet another putsch was followed by yet another coup d'etat.

Francophone Africa has experienced a series of National Conferences, followed by transitional governments. Why have the National Conferences been held only in Francophone Africa? I hypothesize, for discussion, that they were resorted to for two reasons: (1) the territorial administration was responsible for organizing elections, and the current regime had created the territorial administration of whole cloth. This meant that no one believed they could organize a fair election. (2) the Francophone countries look back to the historical model of the Estates General seizing sovereignty in the French Revolution.

The National Conference mode of transition poses a legal dilemma. From the moment the Conference declares itself sovereign until the end of the transitional government it elects, often a year or two later, the government has no constitutional basis. It is, in effect, a civilian coup d'etat. The legality of US foreign policy measures vis a vis these governments becomes questionable, and the validity of existing legal accords is put in doubt. No economic strategies were implemented by transitional governments in most cases, and even routine procedures often ground to a halt. The result was economic paralysis, from which it is proving very difficult to recover.

The Cameroon is a good example of confusion and electoral failure that resulted from elections **not** preceded by a National Conference. Cameroon President Biya refused to hold a National Conference, but agreed to schedule multi-party elections in 1992. The Cameroonian constitution provided for election by plurality rather than majority. Unlike the French constitution and those France has helped install elsewhere in Africa, there was no provision for run-off elections. The winning Presidential candidate could be, and ultimately was, elected with far less than a majority.

The followers of the strongest opposition candidate, John Fru Ndi boycotted the March 1992 legislative elections, charging that the territorial administration could not organize fair elections. The ruling party nevertheless won less than the majority of the seats in parliament. Thus encouraged, Fru Ndi's Social Democratic Front participated in the presidential elections in October. The official results gave President Biya 1.185 million votes, or 39.9 percent, against John Fru Ndi's 1.096 m., or 36.9 percent. (figures from Jean Germain Gros, Carter Center Democracy Seminar). The opposition cried fraud. Registration rules had disenfranchised those who had boycotted the March parliamentary elections. Observers, both international and domestic, had not been able to accompany the ballot boxes or verify the polling place by polling place results, or the counting

process. The unofficial SDF count of the vote gave Fru Ndi 1.170 million votes against Biya's 1.120 million. Yet Biya stayed on, with French backing.

The election certainly involved incidents of fraud, as well as incompetence and unfairness (e.g. exclusion of voters who boycotted the parliamentary elections). It left in place a thoroughly corrupt government. In all these respects, however, its experience is quite similar to that of Kenya. In both cases, serious tactical errors by the opposition contributed to an unsatisfactory result. In Ethiopia, or even South Africa, many more than Cameroon's 134,000 disputed votes were estimated to be fraudulent. But in Ethiopia there was hope that the young military government would stabilize a long troubled country. In South Africa the massive ANC victory was so clearly hopeful for democracy that no one wanted to tarnish the celebrations with unseemly details.

National Security Council Africa Advisor Anthony Lake says that the US is applying a carrot and stick diplomacy to further democracy in Africa. The stick is to cut off aid. The carrot is to increase it, sometimes. This would make sense if the policies could be applied coherently, and if the countries were individuals that could feel the effects of carrot or stick, and react accordingly. They are not and do not.

In South Africa the US has announced a tripling of its already substantial assistance. South Africans celebrated and started looking for benefits. The US first had to figure out how to cut the program budgets in the rest of Africa by 50 percent in order to fund this aid. Then, despite the streamlined planning and contracting procedures introduced specially in South Africa, it needed a year or more lead time before programs become operational. South Africans, hoping for jobs and housing now, are becoming frustrated.

In Cameroon the US decided to close its AID mission and pack out. By the time that policy is being implemented (mid-1994), the results are hard to comprehend from a Cameroonian perspective. Reformers there have tired of rehashing the 1992 elections, and are focusing on eliminating administrative, constitutional and judicial abuses. The overvalued CFA franc, which was the second major reason cited for the pullout, has been devalued. Cutting off aid is not going to change Biya's tenure, nor even his group's welfare. Ostensibly to punish Biya, agricultural marketing, forest conservation, health, population, NGO, training and human rights programs are closing down--mostly in areas controlled by the opposition. The USAID democracy and governance project was stillborn. No one understands US policy in Cameroon. Those being punished are the losers, first to their own government, then of foreign assistance.

In Ethiopia, in contrast, despite quite dubious election organization, the US has increased its assistance. The government in power is dominated by a 10 percent ethnic minority that has set about suppressing dissent among other groups, and creating a network of its own, barely disguised, "opposition" parties throughout the country.

The record on democracy in most African countries is mixed. Some seem to have diverted from the path to democracy, if not aborted it definitively. The new democracies, i.e. countries in which new governments took power through elections, have, in many cases, begun reintroducing press controls and other human rights abuses. Yet the story is not over. Pressures created by democratic expectations cannot be so easily dismissed as in the past. Various groups will continue to stand up for, sometimes fight for, human rights as they understand them. They need our support, in countries where repression continues as well as those now classed as democracies.

Free and fair elections have proved a poor criterion for US foreign assistance. Election observers are a necessary, but inadequate measure. What are the

implications for US policy and assistance? One clearly is that outside assistance is needed in small doses throughout the electoral process, rather than in the big dollop of international election observers. Help with voter registration, training and logistics planning with election organizers, and training and logistics for domestic election observers have been critical missing elements.

Another conclusion drawn from the review of US policy on democratization is that punishment has to be quick and well targeted if it is to be effective. Usually it is the executive branch and/or the military that needs to get the message. The refusal to give visas to Mobutu's or Abacha's governments are good examples of effective messages, as are cuts in military aid, or seizure of assets secreted abroad by corrupt regimes. On the other hand, closing down the USAID population program in Nigeria and the entire rural health care program in Zaire have set back basic human welfare, and with it democracy. When Zaire's gradual implosion attracts sufficient attention, the cost in humanitarian assistance will likely far outweigh the current savings.

Sharp swings in US assistance have sent the wrong messages and will have lasting effects directly contrary to those intended. The big increase for South Africa will mostly go at first into funding US administrators and planners.

Meanwhile, closing and cutting back programs throughout Africa has wasted the USAID capital already invested in planning and implementing those projects, not to mention its effect on the populations. There was talk of program continuity under regional supervision, but it has not happened.

Ernest Wilson, on behalf of the National Security Council, at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies symposium on democratization in Africa in April 1994, gave criteria that are already broader than the early

emphasis on "free and fair" elections. His working definition of democracy included:

- open competition for political power,
- participation of the citizens in policy making, and
- respect for individual rights.

These are phrased to imply a long-term approach. They do not seem to be designed for black and white decisions like whether to cut off or increase assistance. There are many aspects to open competition for political rights, within parties and administrations, as well as through free multi-party elections. Participation of citizens in policy making is the main goal of what is usually termed the development of civil society. Individual rights, in this sense, appeared to include both human rights, in a legal sense, and liberalized economic roles. This suggests that US policy at one level is already being refined away from an overemphasis on "free and fair" elections. The practical applications, however, have yet to be defined.

It is time to move beyond this and formally delink economic and humanitarian assistance from the democratization carrot and stick. The debate about China's MFN status revealed the same counterproductive effects of economic sanctions as have been alluded to here. Yet the administration, in agreeing to delink for China, thought of it as an exception. It should not be. We have better, more targeted tools with which to sanction governments whose policies we do not like. And we cannot afford, morally or economically, to cut off the advocates of democracy in countries where they fail to achieve it in the first round.

The best example of US policy finally realizing and acting on this concept is South Africa. After years without significant aid to Black South Africans, Congress finally realized that it had targeted sanctions too broadly. It was hurting an already oppressed majority, and cutting off the US nose to spite its face. Congress reacted by passing the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid

Assistance Act. From 1986 through 1994, while we formally enforced widespread economic sanctions on the Government of South Africa, we had a substantial aid program administered through non-governmental organizations and the private sector. It was one, perhaps substantial factor, in the ultimate success of a movement that had been suppressed since the 1950s.

There are several critical ingredients in the democratic stew where outside assistance can make a difference, regardless of the attitudes toward democracy in the current government. These are in the following fields:

- Development of the private sector in the economy,
- Constitutional analysis and drafting,
- Individual rights, protected by an autonomous judiciary,
- Military reform.

A bourgeoisie, with its own sources of income and thus autonomous power, played a critical role in the struggle for democratic rights in most Western democracies. Economic liberalization preceded universal adult suffrage by decades, and in some cases centuries. The economic reform process in Africa also preceded political liberalization, but often by less than a decade. The fledgling African bourgeoisies' lifelines are not yet protected by a legal framework and fair court systems, much less autonomous regulatory bodies. US assistance helped develop a comprehensive new legal framework for business in Burundi, which, despite the political struggles that country is going through, may yet prove a lasting gain. Elsewhere the World Bank and the French are working on this area, but interventions tend to be piecemeal and not necessarily coherent with reforms in the other pieces of a country's donor pie. Legal reform is an area where assistance can cement fundamental rights needed to buttress Africa's domestic defenders of democracy.

The need for US assistance to constitutional processes has been demonstrated by its absence rather than its presence. It is our tradition, and a wise one, to hesitate to impose our models on Africa. France, unfortunately, does not feel the

same compunctions. The French system of proportional representation encourages the fragmentation of political parties. Such compromising as there is must be done at the national level, by party brokers. Party members defend each other and their group. Italy recently rejected proportional voting for that very reason. In contrast, in a single or even multiple-member constituency system they are responsible to the more diverse interests of a geographic area. In Africa, the proportional system coincides with a fundamental organization of society by ethnic group. It has the effect of deepening cleavages that need rather to be minimized if democracy is to succeed. It is true that some areas in Africa will have difficulty agreeing on districting and overcoming local conflicts. But if they cannot do it locally, how much harder it is at the national level! The US need not stand on the sidelines of the constitutional process in Africa out of modesty. The implications of these principles need to be taken into account, and it is not necessary to impose a US model to do so.

Protection for individual rights, buttressed by an autonomous judiciary, is another fruitful area for assistance. Established democracies also have autonomous institutions of restraint for the economy, which are little known in Africa, but crucial to the success of democracy and market economics. Such institutions, dealt with more thoroughly in Nic van de Walle's paper, include autonomous Central Banks and regulatory commissions. Again we must be careful not to impose our ideas. The French judiciary is appointed and promoted by the Ministry of Justice, yet manages to preserve a reputation for fairness and some might say achieves greater efficacy than ours. American means of assuring judicial and regulatory autonomy are surely not the only ones that work. American priorities in the human rights field may not be the same as different African communities. What Americans have is the luxury of access to information and the time to analyze the many models that might work. We can be facilitators of the process of reform in Africa by convening African policy makers to examine the options and choose for themselves.

Since the seminar in which this paper was presented, the White House Conference on Africa in June 1994 has proposed an institutional model for enhancing African research, debate and policy-making on issues such as the impacts of different electoral and constitutional provisions. The Democracy and Human Rights working group recommended that an African think-tank be established. It would offer seminars, short courses, and research grants on constitutional law issues.

Work with NGOs and community groups on human rights has also been remarkably successful. American approaches to training aim at empowerment, which is almost always a revitalizing concept to African participants. Even an occasionally uninspired program like International Visitors' Grants has produced some of the most powerful African responses I have witnessed since the focus recently became the practice of democracy. Critics complain that working directly with citizens will be too slow, that Africa's problems are now. It is true. But NGO and leadership training programs have already given a striking fillip to democratic movements, perhaps most clearly in South Africa. They aim only at providing a little leaven, but the other ingredients of democracy in Africa are already in preparation.

At the risk of ending on a sour note, we turn to African armies. In Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, The Gambia and elsewhere less obviously, they have been the nemesis of democratic movements that took years of national effort to build. In the three countries where I have worked directly with nationals on democracy and governance project design, Burundi, Cameroon and Chad, getting the military to assure citizens' security rather than harassing or even killing them is the number one priority of ordinary people.

Yet US assistance cannot deal with it. USAID is barred by Congressional mandate from providing assistance of any kind, including human rights training, to military and police. There are historical reasons for the ban. But the result is that military aid is exclusively in the hands of our military, which is ill-prepared for cross-cultural assistance. While we are still Africa's largest arms supplier, we can do nothing to channel military behavior toward protecting citizens rather than threatening them. The Clinton administration proposed a democratization assistance unit in the Department of Defense, but the proposal seems to have died with the retirement of Les Aspin.

If African priorities for the democratization process are to have any weight, it is time to fundamentally rethink our military assistance and to convene other donors to do likewise. The Congressional ban should be withdrawn, to let USAID and the Defense Department collaborate in designing and implementing aid. USAID has developed expertise over several decades in effective, culturally sensitive, sustainable modes of providing assistance. It would take years for the Defense Department to reach this point. Yet in the technical and professional fields it must be the aid provider. The logical solution is for the agencies to work together.

## **AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION DEMOCRATIZATION: LEGAL TRANSFORMATION**

### **The Necessity of Establishing Strong Legal Systems and Institutions in Emerging African Democracies**

by Rozann M. Stayden

Legislative Counsel  
ABA Governmental Affairs Office

#### **I. Introduction**

A crucial aspect of any democratization process is the development of strong legal systems and legal institutions firmly committed to and grounded in the rule of law. The perception that the transformation from a totalitarian, agrarian, or communist system to a democratic, market-based society follows a prescribed set of rules is misguided. Successful transformation to democracy requires no less than a complete and thorough assessment of existing legal systems to determine possible institutional restructuring or reorganization. Establishment of a state based on the rule of law is a necessary prerequisite to creating a lasting and vibrant democratic society. The methods used to achieve that result are both diverse and intrinsically interwoven.

Without the proper legal infrastructures, most notably constitutions and independent judiciaries, democracy will not be realized. Establishing meaningful protections for fundamental freedoms and human rights and liberties as well as attracting foreign investment to drive new markets-all depend on legal structures and institutions. Economic reform and political reform are inextricably linked. A functioning rule of law is paramount to sustaining the political and economic reforms underway in emerging democracies.

## **II. ABA Technical Legal Assistance Programs**

Over the last six years, the American Bar Association (ABA) has been providing technical legal assistance to emerging democracies throughout the world. A variety of programs have evolved, such as the ABA's Central and East European Law Initiative (CEELI), which operates in Central and East Europe and the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union; the ABA Cambodia Democracy and Law Project; and the Task Force on War Crimes in Ethiopia. In addition, the ABA has recently submitted proposals to conduct a U.S./Africa Judicial Exchange Program with Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia and a

Sister Law School Program with Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

All ABA democratization programs have been guided by three principles. First, these programs are designed to be responsive to the needs and priorities of the host countries; they define the need, not us. Second, the design of these programs recognizes that U.S. legal experience and traditions offer but one approach that participating countries may wish to consider. Third, these projects are public service programs, not a device for developing business opportunities. These legal technical assistance programs have responded to a wide range of critical legal priorities in the following areas: constitutional law; judicial restructuring; criminal law and procedure reform; commercial law reform; and local government law reform. The basic modalities of assistance have been: (a) reviewing and drafting legislation, laws, and codes; (b) providing U.S. and foreign experts to assist overseas in short- and long-term legal efforts; (c) hosting conferences and workshops abroad and in the U.S. on specific legal issues and processes; (d) developing publications reflecting new legal reforms; (e) providing important legal materials for library and research efforts; (f) assisting foreign bar associations in further development; (g) assisting countries in establishing independent judicial systems; and (h) training programs both here and abroad covering a range of legal disciplines.

CEELI is the most comprehensive technical legal assistance program of the ABA. Since 1990, CEELI has provided quality *pro bono* legal expertise. One of the major components of CEELI is its Sister Law School Program, in which each Central and Eastern European law school is paired with at least three American law schools with which they work on a continuing basis. CEELI has conducted 49 technical legal assistance workshops and training seminars and has assessed over 172 draft laws. One of the most unique aspects of CEELI is its ability to leverage ABA lawyer expertise. During the past four years, CEELI has been able

to leverage over \$20 million through the participation of volunteer lawyers, judges, academicians, and interns.

The ABA Cambodia Democracy and Law Project has been providing technical assistance and management support to Cambodia since 1993. ABA legal advisers have provided continuing assistance on a range of legal issues, including drafting the new constitution, development of an independent bar association, needs assessment of the law school in Phnom Penh, provision of donated legal materials for distribution to libraries and ministries, research on specific legal issues requested by the government ministries drafting laws, and provision of long- and short-term advisers in Cambodia and in the United States for hands-on training, institutional and program development, and review and commentary on draft legislation.

With respect to Ethiopia, an ABA Task Force on War Crimes in Ethiopia was formed to respond to a request for assistance from the Office of the Special Public Prosecutor (SPO) of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. The SPO was established to prosecute Ethiopians for alleged atrocities committed under the former regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. It became readily apparent that there was a need for experienced prosecutors to make a firsthand assessment of the efforts of the SPO, and if warranted, to ascertain how the resources of the ABA could be best used to assist in assuring a fair and impartial process.

The major focus of the Ethiopian Task Force has been to provide critical and timely support to those legal institutions in Ethiopia that will be involved with the anticipated trials of those accused of committing atrocities under the former regime. It is expected that the efforts of the Task Force will parallel those of the ABA's Cambodian project where steady support is provided on an ongoing basis.

### **III. ABA African Trip**

Last summer, ABA President R. William Ide III traveled to four African countries- Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Kenya-under the auspices of the USIA Speaker's Program. President Ide is the first ABA president to travel to Africa. While the ABA visits to the four African countries were brief, each trip was instructive. President Ide was able to see firsthand the needs of these countries as well as to identify possible ways in which the ABA may be helpful in providing assistance. In response to a growing number of requests for technical legal assistance from transitional African countries, the ABA is in the process of designing a more comprehensive program to these requests.

The purpose of the ABA trip was threefold. The first objective was to promote the process of democratization by showcasing important democracy and governance initiatives undertaken by the U.S. government. Other countries look to the United States' experience as instructive because its history provides a comparative advantage in providing foreign assistance to promote democratic institutions and values. Because the United States was the first country to rebel against colonialism and has remained democratic for over 200 years, the United States has a unique leadership obligation, which it should exercise in developing bilateral and multilateral programs tailored to the particular needs of countries, as well as to regional and global conditions.

The second objective was to offer assistance in advancing the rule of law and protection of human rights. The shift from U.S. military policy of foreign assistance programs has created opportunities to support initiatives that were once an anathema to totalitarian rulers. The Clinton administration has been conducting a thorough evaluation of both the objectives and modalities of U.S. foreign assistance. Future U.S. foreign assistance will be directed to those countries demonstrating support for democracy and the rule of law. Objectives of such assistance will be sustainable development, broad-based economic growth, the environment, population and health, and building democracy.

The final and most tangible objective of the ABA trip was to demonstrate the support of the American Bar Association for the creation and strengthening of indigenous bar associations (including law societies) by beginning an assessment process to identify existing needs and appropriate responses in conjunction with the U.S. government. As the world's largest private voluntary organization, the ABA is positioned to offer a wide range of legal expertise to evolving democracies.

As observed by President Ide during the African visit, one of the reasons that the democratic process and the institutions of justice in African countries are so fragile has been the absence of nongovernmental organizations and institutions that can serve as: 1) providers of important information regarding government actions; 2) providers of a neutral forum for dispute resolution; and 3) providers of support for institutions like the courts, the media, and other nongovernmental organizations. Bar associations have the potential to serve these monitoring, dispute resolution, and information/public education, and support functions in a way that enhances the democratic process. African law schools are seeking to ensure that their lawyers are trained to support the rule of law. The ABA trip emphasized the value of the rule of law efforts toward democratization and movement toward market economies.

The overall observations during this trip resulted in specific recommendations. Short-term assistance programs that could be identified and implemented on a more immediate basis, if funding were readily available, included assisting the African bar associations with structure, management, and publications and providing public education programs to help establish rural courts and teach civil rights and responsibilities. More long-term assistance programs included strengthening the judiciaries and establishing a sister law school exchange program.

#### **IV. Potential Technical Legal Assistance Program for Africa**

While there are some components of CEELI and other ABA programs that might be duplicated in specific transitional African countries, it is important to state that an African legal assistance program would probably have a different and more varied focus than CEELI and other ABA initiatives in the past. Unlike Central and East Europe and the NIS, the African continent consists of 52 diverse countries and cultures that are in various stages of development and have widely divergent legal systems. This requires an individualized approach to the needs in each country, and the utilization of African experts in the fields of anthropology, sociology, and economics.

More than 30 African countries are in the process of transition from one-party or military forms of government to systems of governance and economic policy marked by pluralism and free market reform. Many African countries are striving to create and institutionalize more democratic polities by establishing multiparty systems, writing new constitutions, holding free elections, creating new legal systems and making a variety of political and economic reforms. Lawyers could make a significant contribution to emerging democracies in Africa. Yet, in doing so, lawyers should provide these countries with sufficient flexibility to achieve their goals according to their own values.

In devising an action plan, which is relevant to democratization, the ABA's primary task is to concentrate on concepts and ideas that emphasize the development of strong legal systems and institutions for African countries. Thus, a potential legal assistance program in Africa could encompass a broad conceptual framework that will include:

1. the promotion of democratization, human rights, and the rule of law; and,
2. the promotion of legal infrastructure and institutions that support sustainable development along free-market lines.

The law reform efforts might include the drafting and review of constitutional, criminal, and civil laws; the review and revision of existing laws and regulations; development of legal structures necessary for privatization and the transformation of centrally planned economies to market economies by development of competition policies and law, banking and finance law, tax law, securities law, personal property law, real property law, custom and import law, and arbitration law; assisting with comparative law efforts; providing training for judges, lawyers, prosecutors, public defenders, court administrators, and arbitrators; assisting with law school development; assisting with bar association development; assisting with acquisition of legal materials for library, research, and training purposes; strengthening education programs for law faculties, law students, host-country legislators, and enforcement personnel; and assisting with U.N. and regional human rights agreements. The foregoing list is by no means exclusive or representative of all possible requests.

Drafting constitutions and assisting with crafting laws are basic to any democratization process yet also country-specific. Therefore, rather than elaborate on the importance of constitutional reform, which is a foundation and building block of any emerging democracy, the remainder of this paper will discuss a strategic focus on institution-building projects and training-based initiatives in three other fundamental areas: (a) judicial reform, (b) legal profession reform, and (c) citizen participation. These three areas are essential to the creation of functioning legal systems with competent legal professionals exercising independent judgments. In structuring the underlying rationale for these first two proposed areas of legal assistance for African countries, reliance on various concepts embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("Universal Declaration") <sup>1</sup>, the United Nations Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary ("U. N. Basic Principles of the Judiciary") <sup>2</sup>, and the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers ("U.N. Principles on Lawyers") <sup>3</sup> will serve as a basis for supporting the importance of these two

proposed areas of reform. These international tenets are relevant to the discussion not only because of their universal applicability but also because they are highly recognized and respected.

### **A. Reformation of the Judiciary**

Judicial reform refers to the assurance of independence and the efficient administration of the judiciary, which is essential to any democracy. The Universal Declaration sets forth the need to adhere to the principles of equality before the law, the presumption of innocence, and the right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent, and impartial tribunal established by law. Judiciaries that are perceived as being the puppet of the state or are held in low esteem must be reformed in order that the rule of law is followed and so that the judicial systems may operate independently and competently. The "U.N. Basic Principles of the Judiciary" recognize that a gap exists between the aspirations in the Universal Declaration and reality, and provides that the "exercise of judicial office should aim at enabling judges to act in accordance with those principles."

The "U.N. Basic Principles of the Judiciary" have set as one of the important goals the elaboration of guidelines relating to the independence of judges; the selection, professional training, and status of judges; and the enumeration of basic principles to secure and promote the independence of the judiciary. In doing so, the public's confidence in the judiciary will increase and in turn the rule of law will be able to flourish.

In addition to the "U.N. Basic Principles of the Judiciary," scholars have attempted to define characteristics of an independent judiciary, and these are helpful in providing an analytical framework. Susan Sullivan Logan, in "The Role of the Independent Judiciary," 4 *Freedom Papers* 9, United States Information Agency (July 1993), quoted political scientist John Schmidhauser's enumeration of attributes associated with judicial independence as: (1) Functional separation

of the highest judicial body from the political branches of government; (2) Tenure of judges; (3) Irreducibility of salaries of highest judicial personnel; (4) Compliance with highest judicial decisions and court orders; (5) Enforcement of highest judicial decisions and court orders; (6) Foundation of highest judicial power (for example, constitutional, statutory or dependence on political leader); (7) Extent of judicial review by highest judicial power (for example, guaranteed by constitution, limited to a few areas or nonexistent); (8) Cross-cultural representation on highest court (relevant in diverse societies); (9) High qualitative standards for selection of highest judges; (10) Fairness and objectivity in internal court procedures; and (11) Probity and standards to prevent unfair financial, family, or political influence on the court. These 11 points compactly identify the necessary elements essential to the establishment of any independent judiciary. A truly independent judiciary is derived not only from constitutional and statutory guarantees of independence but also from infusing the necessary confidence and knowledge in the judiciary to act in accordance with their professional positions as judges. To act independently, judges need to be involved in their own administration, such as areas of appointments, promotions, retirements, and in ensuring their protection against removal and reduction of salary. In addition to the guarantees of independence set forth in law, judges must have the self-confidence to exercise their independence, and they must feel free to associate with other judges. The "U.N. Basic Principles of the Judiciary" also provide that judges are entitled to freedom of expression and association, provided that "[j]udges shall always conduct themselves in such a manner as to preserve the dignity of their office and the impartiality and independence of the judiciary." Specifically, these principles state that "judges shall be free to form and join associations of judges or other organizations to represent their interests, to promote their professional training, and to protect their judicial independence."

Judicial systems must ensure that the provisions guaranteeing independence and other protections are implemented properly and that judges are competent to

carry out their function. Again, the "U.N. Basic Principles of the Judiciary" provide that "[i]t is the duty of each Member State to provide adequate resources to enable the judiciary to properly perform its functions." Many judges are poorly paid and work in substandard conditions. Moreover, few resources are allocated to training. The "U.N. Basic Principles of the Judiciary" also state that "persons selected for judicial office shall be individuals of integrity and ability with appropriate training or qualifications in law." A proposed judicial training initiative could reorganize and develop incountry judicial training programs regarding the substantive local law and judicial practice, with emphasis on issues of ethics, demeanor, and courtroom control. Development of judicial ethics codes and concepts, such as conflict of interest, could result in upgrading the public perception of judges and ensure that the judges decide cases impartially and independently.

In addition, offering four to six judicial practice courses that deal with matters of common concern to judges will allow each country to choose the types of courses most suitable to its needs. Suggested courses could include: judicial independence; separation of powers; ethics; demeanor; protection of rights; courtroom and trial control; media relations; judicial selection and discipline; and administration. A group of multinational instructors could be identified and developed to lead training programs in each country.

### ***B. Reformation of Legal Professionals***

A strong, competent, and professional bar association will promote and strengthen adherence to the rule of law as well as provide a key ingredient in ensuring an independent and competent judiciary. The "U.N. Principles on Lawyers" provide that "adequate protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which all persons are entitled, be they economic, social, and cultural, or civil and political, requires that all persons have effective access to legal services provided by an independent legal profession." Expressions of such fundamental concepts of human rights or closely related ideas can be found

throughout history. Earlier formulations have their roots in the Stoic concept of universal justice and in medieval notions of natural law, and assert that universal standards are applicable to all human societies. The 17th century brought a shift of emphasis away from natural law and toward a theory of natural rights. In the effort to counter claims of divine right, the idea evolved that every human being has rights that are to be recognized-not conferred-by the state. To achieve this end, lawyers have a significant role to play in protecting and safeguarding these fundamental freedoms and rights.

The role of lawyers within the development process is just beginning to be widely understood within the international community and the funding community. The discipline and expertise that lawyers bring to the process of expanding rule of law within the global community and to the efforts toward strengthening democratic institutions and processes worldwide can enhance these efforts and provide the growing framework for a more peaceful and stable world.

In enlarging on the role of lawyers, the "U.N. Principles on Lawyers" also states that "professional associations of lawyers have a vital role to play in upholding professional standards and ethics, protecting their members from persecution and improper restrictions and infringements, providing legal services to all in need of them, and co-operating with governmental and other institutions in furthering the ends of justice and public interest." A possible program to improve the stature of lawyers in the African countries could be one that provides education and training through the lawyers' associations. The "U.N. Principles of Lawyers" recommend that persons have access to lawyers and that professional associations of lawyers cooperate in the organization and provision of legal services. These principles also provide that "[g]overnments, professional associations of lawyers, and educational institutions shall ensure that lawyers have appropriate education and training and be made aware of the ideals and ethical duties of the lawyer and of human rights and fundamental freedoms

recognized by national and international law." Bar reform is of vital importance in order to achieve the goals set forth in the "U.N. Principles on Lawyers."

The "U.N. Principles on Lawyers" support lawyers' associations by guaranteeing lawyers the right of freedom of expression and association and "[t]o form and join self-governing professional associations to represent their interests, promote their continuing education and training and protect their professional integrity." In addition, the "U.N. Principles on Lawyers" provide that "[c]odes of professional conduct for lawyers shall be established by the legal profession through its appropriate organs, or by legislation, in accordance with national law and custom and recognized international standards and norms." The creation and adoption of codes of professional conduct for lawyers should be viewed as a priority area of reform. Such an effort is aimed at improving the rule of law and overall democratization goals in Africa.

### ***C. Citizen Education and Participation***

An essential ingredient in any democracy is active citizen participation. The value and necessity of such participation cannot be overstated or overlooked. Citizens must, however, know what their rights are and how they can maintain and preserve these rights. Thus, citizen education is an integral first step in working toward citizen participation.

Once educated, citizens will be more fully able to participate in the democratic process. Education of any citizenry must include urban as well as rural populations. The problems of educating citizens located in the rural and remote parts of countries must be effectively addressed because without their involvement, democracy suffers and is not fully realized.

To a large extent, citizen participation is evidenced by the creation and growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The focal point of many NGOs is a

broad-based human rights program. Advancement of human rights in any society is virtually impossible without NGOs.

Lawyers can play a pivotal role in educating the public about their rights. In addition, many lawyers are members of NGOs or work for NGOs and can offer expertise and advice regarding the establishment of organizations that monitor governmental processes.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The ABA is not a stranger to rule of law/democratization projects. In fact, with the various projects that the association has been involved in throughout the world, the ABA continues to demonstrate its ability to provide legal technical assistance to evolving democracies on a long- and short-term basis. Activities such as assisting in the drafting of constitutions, reviewing draft antitrust laws, and helping to establish independent judiciaries are only a sampling of the type of *pro bono* legal services that ABA lawyers are providing to emerging democracies. Lawyers clearly have a contribution to make in the democratization process.

## **International Support for Democracy's Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**

**by Roel von Meijenfeldt**

European Center for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights Brussels,  
Belgium

The inauguration on May 10, 1994, of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected president of South Africa is an event of historic significance for South Africa, the African continent as well as the rest of the world.

On April 27, the world witnessed millions of South Africans of all races patiently queuing to cast their vote. After a sustained struggle (for the African National Congress over 80 years) against apartheid, the intense joy of people waiting for their turn to exercise their democratic right at the ballot box was deeply moving. The free expression of the will of the South African people constituted a celebration of democracy. And with the live media coverage around the globe, the universality of the value of democracy could hardly go unnoticed.

Alister Sparks compared the importance of this moment with the downing of the Berlin Wall that ended the Cold War divide between East and West. Both events are not unrelated, with the former President De Klerk announcing the release of Nelson Mandela and the lifting of bans on the exiled political parties in the wake of the end of the Cold War at the beginning of 1990.

That year marked the beginning of what has been termed "a new era" of democratization on the sub-Saharan African continent. A break with the recent history of anti-democratic domination during colonial rule and the single-party political systems that emerged after independence. An inheritance further compounded by the many Cold War-fuelled proxy wars, with the known devastating effect on so many people in Africa and on their natural habitat. With the important turn of history in South Africa, this seminar is convened at an appropriate moment to take stock of the issues that have emerged during the past five years of democratic transformation and reform in Africa, and to prepare for a more substantial and intense discourse in the future.

The context in which this seminar is taking place is further set by the appealing developments in Rwanda and Burundi. While a barbarous genocide is taking place in Rwanda, U.N. peacekeeping forces have been pulled back to a small impotent number. Requests from the African continent for humanitarian intervention by the United Nations to stop the killing have not resulted in action so far.

While the United Nations has successfully administered the transition toward democracy in Namibia in 1990, the international community failed dismally to guarantee the implementation of the Bicesse Accord on Angola, resulting in the resumption of the war in Angola after the successful U.N.-monitored elections in 1992.

If anything has been taught, it is that democracy is not developed overnight. It is more than and goes beyond the successful organization of elections, the introduction of a multiparty system, or improvement of the quality of governance. Just as there are no shortcuts to development, democracy can only be developed-on the basis of the universal human rights-in a process that takes account of the specific local circumstances.

It is a process that, if democracy is to be sustained, should be common property of the people. The intervention of the international community in this sensitive process, and the challenges it provides, is the specific focus of this paper. At the outset, I would like to assert that democracy is not a fixed system of political relations whose model can simply be copied. Rather, (with reference to Schmitter and Karl), it is a complex set of concepts for organizing political relations, of procedures needed if democracy is to endure, and of operative principles that make democracy work. Democracy embodies institutions, relations among the institutions, rules of the game, the democratic practice or

culture, and the interrelationship between state and civil society. (In short, a combination of structural and behavioral factors.)

Democracy is a dynamic concept, requiring modifications as societies develop. In many European countries, for example, the debate about improvement of the relation between citizens and the state indicates the need to improve the functioning of established democratic systems. The European integration process within the European Union itself is characterized by a "democratic deficit" that is only gradually being addressed.

In a recent essay, "The Culture of Contentment," John Kenneth Galbraith warns that democracy as it is practiced in the North is eroding to serve the interests of the "contented" only, while the less fortunate no longer participate, causing a threat to its very foundations.

While recognizing the complexities and the dynamic nature inherent in the concept of democracy, it is possible and necessary to work toward achieving the widest possible international consensus about a definition of democracy and minimal conditions that polities must meet in order to merit the prestigious qualification of "democratic." As a starting point, the application of the internationally accepted human rights standards, including the civil, political, socio-economic, and cultural rights, should be used as a valuable set of indicators.

Dialogue, networking, research, and education are needed to work toward such a consensus, while instruments and tools will need to be developed to assist the concrete development of democracy.

It may be argued to an extent that the international community has been sending mixed signals concerning the development of democracy in Africa through some of its actions, including:

- promotion of unrealistic expectations as to the time and resources required to develop, consolidate, and deepen democracy (the notion of working under compressed time);
- to end conflicts and facilitate the transition to democracy, the use of unlawful violence and serious human rights abuses condoned has provided perpetrators with passports for becoming the stakeholders in emerging democracies. How much does this compromise the very concept of democracy?
- condoning of "flawed" elections organized to satisfy the international community rather than allowing the free expression of the will of the people;
- lack of recognition of existing democratic cultural practices and traditional networks;
- single focus on economic reforms without linkages with the required democratic enabling environment;
- emphasis on the formal state institutions of democracy without utilizing the potential for mobilizing participation via the civil sector;
- failure to stop the unrestricted sale of arms (the one commodity of which there is no shortage on local African markets), and lack of control of shady financial flows of corruption.

Although efforts at greater policy coordination are attempted, the international arena still lacks coherence, consistency, and comprehensiveness in support of democracy, while bureaucratic practices impede the required institutional reforms necessary to become more responsive, operational, and pro-active.

The basic feature of democracy is the right of people to express themselves freely and without fear. The enthusiasm with which people cast their vote in free elections will often be based on the expectation that fair elections will end violent conflicts and provide for a political mandate that guarantees the security required to work for the fulfillment of one's aspirations and the improvement of living conditions.

For democracy and social-economic development to be sustainable, **human security** and **popular participation** should be among the top priorities on which to focus international support.

A piecemeal or one-sided approach is bound to fail as many genuine development efforts are blown to pieces when conflict demolishes the fruits of development while uprooting the social fabric of many African communities. Where the international community has been successful in bringing conflicting parties to the negotiating table and in facilitating the transition to multiparty democracies, it has not been able to guarantee the implementation of such agreements or to enforce the principle of settling conflicts through negotiations rather than the use of force. This failure undermines the credibility of the very principles laid down in the U.N. Charter and the Human Rights Declaration and Conventions.

An agenda for a **more inclusive international approach in support of democratic development** in Africa would seek, through **dialogue** with and generated on the **initiative** of governmental and nongovernmental partners in Africa, to address the following issues:

**1. Framework for security and stability:**

- conflict mediation, resolution, and preventive diplomacy;
- national consensus politics based on the principle of settling disputes via negotiations and the acceptance of minority rights;
- reconciliation programs to explore the causes of past conflict and to heal the scars of inflicted injustice;
- demobilization of redundant security forces and support for the professionalization of the required remaining forces under civilian control;
- negotiation of regional security pacts to avoid continuation of destabilization across boundaries;
- negotiation of international provisions to guarantee the security of societies that have embarked on a comprehensive program of democratic reform, including effective policing when domestic forces have not reached the capacity level themselves, arresting and prosecuting perpetrators of political violence.

**2. Framework for democracy's development:**

- civic education/literacy;
- good (transparent and accountable) local, regional, and national government;
- development of civil society in all its professional and voluntary aspects;

- diversity and independence of the press;
- free and fair elections;
- independent judiciary, accessible legal assistance, and human rights organizations;
- interaction between state and civil society, and balance between the "common good" and "specific interests";

### 3. **Framework for economic and technological development:**

- relief of the debt burden for countries that reached national consensus on a program for democratic and economic reform;
- economic reform programs including an explicit antipoverty focus and fair distribution of scarce resources;
- liberalizing markets to be accompanied by targeted efforts to make capital and technology accessible to people normally not serviced by the established economic forces;
- promotion of independent economic activity and investment opportunities;

It could be argued whether specific attention to the enforcement of human rights should be a separate window in such an inclusive approach, or whether it should be incorporated in the three chapters as suggested in this outline.

Where African societies are negotiating or have agreed to a national "compact" for democratic and economic reform, or are in the process of consolidating their new democratic gains, this approach could become the negotiated **international dimension** of such national and, for a number of aspects, regional compacts. For such compacts at the national, regional, and international levels to provide for sustained effort, as apposed to a crisis management approach, a **transparent analysis** of needs is required on a regular basis, together with provisions for **regular monitoring** of the implementation and the formation of **professional capacity** at the different levels to underwrite the development of democracy. Where the new international context has seen an outburst of conflicts, highlighting, the incapacity of current international institutional arrangements to safeguard and enforce essential human rights and basic needs of innocent people, global interdependencies and interrelatedness demand that we do not retreat into nationalism or passive acceptance.

The practice of a global art of peacefully living together, in a spectrum of the widest possible differences, needs not only imaginative and visionary new initiatives to guarantee security for people endangered by violence as a global domestic issue. It also requires investing in practical cooperation, coherence, and the improvement of operations of professional international organizations that work toward facilitating democracy's development. The proposed international conference may be a good vehicle in advancing that necessity.

## **Emerging Issues in U.S.-African Relations Likely to Affect the Course of Democratization in Africa**

by Willard R. Johnson

Department of Political Science  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

### **The Proposition**

I think that the case can be made for the proposition that, for decades to come, and perhaps increasingly, the United States and Africa will continue to have much relevance to each other and much to offer each other in a variety of domains. With growing U.S. concern for a stable, secure international "order" in the post-Cold War era, and with intensified competition for new export markets, one can expect some official U.S. recognition of the relevance of many African countries to its fundamental interests. And, despite continuing, if not deepening problems of governance and economic decline in Africa, but with the recovery in some economies and the emergence of real promise in others, especially if "the new South Africa" is a success, one can expect at least some African countries to attract genuine assistance and collaboration.

## **Background**

It is apparent that Africa confronts mounting problems relating to the achievement of political and social stability, economic and social progress, and mutually beneficial relationships with the rest of the world, precisely at a time when changes in domestic and international priorities and needs have reduced the attention and resources available to Africa in the United States.

### ***Political problems:***

The next steps in Africa's democratization process will be strongly affected by the evolving and emerging patterns in Africa's relationships with the most powerful actors in the global system, especially the United States. A crucially important factor will be the willingness of the U.S. to provide resources for both relief and development, to say nothing of fostering the democratization process itself, going beyond support merely for the immediate and technical aspects of electoral processes. The flow of private capital to the continent, itself an important element of economic advance elsewhere that has been largely absent from the African picture, will impact on and be affected by the democratization process.

Additionally, neglected conditions of instability are likely to have spillover effects that seriously challenge even the states that have made substantial progress toward accountability and transparency in their governance patterns.

Perhaps the most significant and far-reaching problems of the political arena stem from patterns of poor governance, the failure of political processes and institutions to achieve effectiveness and legitimacy, and the diversion of public resources into private use in a manner and on a scale that local people consider corrupt. These are all fundamental problems that affect all other domains of public life. They have both domestic and international causes as well as consequences, and have led to a pattern of conflict and social disorder that is likely to continue and to require increased commitment and willingness on the

part of the international community to commit resources, and even to undertake early and perhaps armed intervention.

For a decade or more, Africa has been a major arena of aggression stemming from motives and interests that have political implications, including some significant instances of international conflict, but the pattern is more generally one of intra-state conflict and "civil" wars. Such conflicts have involved one people taking up arms or committing serious violence against another, one element of a people against another element, one political faction against another, in competition for scarce resources and for control of the state, as the principal repository of capital and opportunity in the society.

Many of the interstate conflicts have involved issues and claims that might be considered spillovers from the decolonization process. And at least the Eritreans proclaimed the conflict in Ethiopia to represent a decolonization process against an African colonizer. Indeed, the Ethiopian Empire may be considered to have achieved some of its hegemony through the assistance of Britain and even the United States.

With the prospects of changed access to state support and resources, violence that initially may have been fostered by recalcitrant elements in the white racist states of Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique, and especially South Africa, broke out well beyond those boundaries to produce widespread and often seemingly mindless conflict. Southern Rhodesia created and supported the RENAMO in Mozambique, and South Africa continued their external support after Zimbabwe became free. RENAMO brutalized Mozambique for years. South Africa also gave similar support to the UNITA in Angola. And, within South Africa itself, conflict occurred between factions of the Inkhatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress and came to involve some violence based merely on Zulu versus Xosa identifications.

There are significant cases of conflict between independent Africa states as well. Even the recurrence of civil war in Rwanda may be considered to involve at least the perception of inter-interstate aggression, in as much as the Rwanda Patriotic Front received considerable armament, financial, logistical, and moral support from the government of Uganda, led by "Tutsi"-related President Museveni. Although there have been rather ancient patterns of subordination of Hutu by Tutsi in both Rwanda and Burundi, these patterns were exacerbated and ossified through Belgian favoritism of the Tutsi during the period of their colonial rule, and then this was reversed with Belgian assistance when the Hutu rebelled in the 1960s.

Tanzanian assistance to Milton Obote's successful effort to overthrow Iddi Amin, following Amin's unsuccessful effort to annex a portion of what Tanzania considered to be its own territory, was widely appreciated in the world morally but bankrupted the state with no external compensation. Tanzania was berated even by the member states of the Organization of African Unity for having violated one of the basic rules of the African game of regionalism, namely, non-interference in their internal affairs and respect for the boundaries inherited from the colonial era.

There are other cases of African "imperialism." Several states may have been subjected to interference and intervention by Quadaffi's Libya (Chad, Egypt, Liberia, Sudan, to name a few,), although territorial aggrandizement may not have been a dominant motive. Morocco has claimed that Algerian support to the POLISARIO amounted to intervention in its internal affairs.

Within the last five years, during an era coming to be called one of "failed states," there have been numerous examples of civil strife that involved group-framed conflicts. One of the most important examples of this type is Liberia, which may have started as an uprising of "tribal peoples" against the ruling elite of "Americo-

Liberians" but soon developed into wars between ethnic-based factions of the Khran, Geo, Mande, Grabo, and others. In Sudan, the long history of efforts to convert the entire country to Islam, which had been held in check by British power in the 19th century, pitted Arabized populations of the North against the Christian and pagan populations of the South. In recent times, even the southerners have split into warring camps, with Dinka fighting Nuer and Shilluk. In Somalia, war developed between even sub-clans, ironically in one of Africa's few mono-national states. The horrendous toll of recent interethnic and interfactional warfare in Rwanda, as earlier in that country and in Burundi, with perhaps three quarters of a million people hacked to death, and scores of thousands more dead from disease and starvation, all point to the outer limits of the impact of societal breakdown.

Clearly, the potentiality for aggression is great from the competition over scarce resources, over access to the few avenues of power and privilege that the state tends to monopolize in Africa, and the patterns of patron-client and prebendal governance and politics that prevail in Africa. One may wonder if the existing state boundaries can remain viable, if not the whole multinational, multiethnic state system, which is equally an inheritance from the colonial era. Neither Africa nor the world community can afford for long the present pattern of breakdown, widespread violence, massive starvation, death and destruction, and the consequent huge refugee movements.

These problems have already come to dominate the foreign policy agendas not only of the African states, or even of the former colonial powers, but of the United States and the United Nations as well. There are at least 14 U.N. peacekeeping operations or missions in the world, half of them on the African continent. This excludes U.N. efforts to support the transition in South Africa and the relief mission to Rwanda. The norms of international intervention, whether unilateral or multilateral, clearly are changing in the direction of the assumption by the

international community of responsibility to secure stability, peace, law, and order.

The problems of policy planning, of conflict resolution, of early warning, of mediation and, finally, of peace enforcement are all now issues of imperative significance. How are any of the important actors, whether states, interstate organizations, nongovernmental, or civic organizations going to deal with these issues in the future? Will past patterns continue to hold? What is happening now in the thinking and planning of these various sectors to make the future patterns any different?

***Economic problems:***

Economically, Africa is the most stagnant, if not actually retrogressing, region of the world. There has been a decline in the average standard of living in almost every country. At the base of this problem are both domestic and international factors. The international ones are serious and real and have been the principal focus of most discussions of these problems by Africans: weak markets with declining terms of trade for its export crops, barriers to the export of its manufactured and treated goods, lack of foreign investors, heavy debt repayment problems, socially and politically disastrous conditionalities for additional credit, and economic assistance.

In the domestic economic sphere, perhaps the most significant problem has been the lack of any progress in agricultural productivity. <sup>1</sup> In relation to population growth, the agricultural sector is fast slipping behind. Previous efforts have often been poorly targeted, as foreign assistance, money, and technical help tended to be directed to men when most of the food items are produced by women in Africa. Far too little has been done to bring substantial educational advancement to women, and to relieve them of some of their burdens for child care, for food

preparation, and for household maintenance, including fetching water and cooking fuel.

There are very poorly developed internal markets for distribution of surplus production. Infrastructure is poor and badly maintained. All this means that when drought or other natural setbacks occur, social disaster results, with abandoned crops, crowded refugee camps, and civil strife.

And, unless really dramatic changes occur, the situation will deteriorate. Even the terms of the most recent GATT will be detrimental to Africa in this respect, because food exports are permitted to grow by 10 percent. As a food importer, this means that Africa's imports will be even more expensive, when food assistance is likely to decline, with dwindling interest internationally in foreign aid programs of any sort. <sup>2</sup>

There are very few if any economic success stories, but there is clearly a difference in performance among African states, even among those in tropical Africa. Tropical African economies that have achieved growth and offer a long-term promise of effective use of international assistance in a manner that one could imagine would lead to their eventual success and "graduation" out of the category of countries perpetually needing "aid" as the basis of their progress include: Botswana, Lesoto, Egypt, Tunisia, Congo, Morocco, Cameroon, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Gabon. <sup>3</sup> Even during the difficult times since the "second oil shock" and either because of or despite structural adjustment programs, these states have achieved economic expansion beyond the rate of their population increase. The first six listed have per capita rates of GNP growth above the average for the low-income countries.

Despite their troubled economic past, South Africa, Egypt, and Zimbabwe may already be fundamentally strong enough and diversified enough to switch to market driven attractions to foreign investors to fuel their continued expansion. However, many other states, that lack resources, and that find themselves confronted with recurrent drought, may require something like a semi-permanent international relief and crisis assistance program that is more like a welfare system than a development assistance program. Each of these categories of states will require different policy approaches and will surely have different bases of public support for a foreign policy focus. <sup>4</sup>

Thus, it is predictable that in the coming decade many problems as well as opportunities are likely to arise that will demand the attention of U.S. policy-makers, not only where national security, economic, or political interests are directly involved but also where significant sectors of the citizenry, the African American community being only one, will have a special sense of interest and involvement. Without special effort on the part not only of officials and staff of the U.S. federal government, but of the constituencies most directly affected, the United States is likely to find itself even less well-prepared than usual to deal with these issues. Very little time, energy, and resources are devoted to planning for the future of our official relationships with Africa. This is generally true about how the U.S. government handles most areas of the world. It is even more true of areas of perceived marginal relevance.

### **Potential Issue Universe:**

#### ***General pattern:***

Current issues and trends that seem most likely to continue for many years include:

Issues that will dominate the agendas of international organizations:

- Involvement of major powers and international organizations in international peacemaking and peace-enforcing operations; and

- Their involvement in various forms of official as well as private sector mediation of conflict; and
- Fostering of conflict resolution as well as the restoration of state capacity to secure law and order in situations of political or social instability;
- Mounting problems of determining appropriate criteria for \$\$Word\$\$ limits to foreign aid and credit conditionalities;
- Problems of creating new forms of securing and delivering international economic assistance;
- Debt forgiveness and relief requirements that will impinge no the multilateral institutions that currently resist sharing this burden;
- Pressures to offer foreign investors facilities and conditions that challenge social progress;
- Also of likely concern is the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development programs and policies.

Issues I think are likely to be of continuing concern to the United States include:

- Expansion of export markets; and
- Participation by American businesses, perhaps especially African-American investors and business managers, in the economic recovery and expansion of African economies;
- Concern by both the United States and Africa to secure favorable trade block arrangements;
- U.S. immigration restrictions, requirements, and quotas that will engender domestic as well as foreign protest;
- Perhaps, with the emergence of a democratic South Africa, and economic recovery in the rest of Tropical Africa, opportunities for investment and trade in the Southern Africa region can be identified in which the United States and the African-American communities would want to participate;
- Among the nongovernmental organizations taking an increasing interest in Africa are likely to be ones that have close connections with the African-American community. Examples of large-scale agencies that are directed by African Americans and that could promote public awareness and involvement, as well as be directly involved in development promotion and policy dialogue, include Africare, the African Development Foundation, The U.S. African Business Round Table, TransAfrica, as well as individual businesses and consultants.

Issues that will dominate the agendas of African states and regional organizations include:

- Strengthening regional common markets and trading zones;
- Efforts to regain a niche in external markets. Africa has lost so much ground in external markets that it is likely to look inward;

- Renewed (but probably unsuccessful efforts to attract significant foreign investment outside of the traditional relationships developed during colonial times;
- Continuing, perhaps even intensified problems of political instability as authoritarian regimes that have given some ground to emergent popular forces during the early 1990s harden their position and attempt to consolidate;
- A social crisis in the wake of failed and illegitimate political leadership, quite apart from any problems warned of by predicted, pending "clashes of civilizations" or of "zones of turmoil" in less-developed areas;
- Thus, proliferation of regional and international peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace-enforcing operations, with attendant demands for financial support and perhaps even military involvement by the United States as well as more traditional security partners;
- Change in the forms, mechanisms and, procedures for providing "foreign aid." As offered in the past, especially for Africa, aid can be considered to have been as much a part of the problem as the solution. This applies whether the aid took the form of food (often resulting in displacement of domestic production, distortion of prices, deepened dependency, altered tastes) or money (where the offer was often laden with policy as well as project design conditions, and where local responsibility for outcomes and for longer-term mobilization and creation of resources remained moribund or stillborn);
- A revenue crisis for the state, with a diminished tax base and reduced external assistance for the states to live on where there are no petroleum or mineral resources;
- Almost certainly a major role in future development activities for nongovernmental and private volunteer development organizations.

### *Emerging issues:*

Examples of issues of likely future concern that currently may appear to have only marginal visibility in our official policy preparations, include:

- The crisis for African health care systems that will likely emerge with the continuing spread of AIDs, the mounting pressures to attempt to treat its victims, with consequent erosion of facilities and services devoted to other health problems. This is likely to occur within a more general context of the erosion of state budgets for social services generally, as a consequence of reduced international support, weakening economies, and pressures for privatization. Counter steps are: increased emphasis on education and prevention measures and increased support for other health operations (especially primary);
- Regional imperialism-attempts and perhaps even successes of annexation of border lands as state power weakens, ethnic rivalries mount, and patterns of autocratic government renews its prominence on the continent;

- There are also promising and *positive* African achievements that not only merit but actually could be imagined to get external support and assistance;
- Emergence of exemplary gains in political and economic development on the part of a few model states, justifying concentrated U.S. support (although this may result in neglect of many other troubling cases). The most likely possibilities are:

South Africa

Botswana

Ghana

Uganda

Namibia

Côte d'Ivoire

- A shift in foreign aid support from annual allocations as the sole or principal source, to a revolving investment fund that draws from annual allocations but also taps the private financial markets with backing by government, in the manner that the British and some of the European countries do (Commonwealth Development Corp., *Caisse Centrale*, DEG.);
- A push in Africa for partnership arrangements with donors in the form of authoritative mediating agencies for support to the volunteer development organizations (VDOs) and grass- roots organizations;
- A push by African and other poor regions for a greater role in the U.N. Security Council, and if they get it, for standing U.N. capability for rapid intervention in situations of state collapse or massive social conflict. There is also likely to be a demand for assistance in building up regional capacities for similar interventions;
- Other changes likely to emerge in the U.N. system, beyond issues of a permanent security force, is modification of the "Consultative Status" regime of the U.N. (under resolution GA 1296) to provide the NGO/PVO sector with a vastly expanded role in the whole U.N. system (and possibly in the allied Bretton Woods and Regional ancillary agencies) much more on order of the Rio conference. This will call for some changes in the relationships of some of the existing international organizations (some of which think themselves to be more representative of the people at large than some of the selfappointed nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that have sprung up);
- Quests for a Middle East "peace dividend" from the emergence of an ever wider peace in the Middle East. There will be pressures, of course, to create new aid categories for assistance to the Palestinians, and much of this may be diverted from Israel and Egypt. Continued massive support of those two states, which

- approached three fifths of the entire U.S. foreign assistance budgets for many years, cannot any longer be justified. The massive amount of aid given them in the past has not been well-used. This does not mean that other needy areas would not also merit some of this dividend, but unless Africa oriented interests are active, it may all go elsewhere and to less worthy ends;
- There may be pressures both in the United States and in Africa to internationally criminalize corruption by state officials and to press for international cooperation with banking and investment institutions to open up the secret accounts and the like in order to permit plaintiff regimes to recover money and assets stolen from state coffers, if not from private firms and individuals.

### **What Does This Mean for the Democratization Project?**

**Pessimistic scenario:** the state apparatus expands to capture more of the resource flows to pay for itself. It sloughs off the meager service operations it has already developed. The local business sector continues to orient itself toward commercial, more than directly productive, activities. People live off the bush, but are able to keep more/most of what little they produce. There continues to be deterioration in the educational and health systems as the brain drain continues, and resources dwindle for these sectors. There is little energy and margin for democratic participation. Ironically, there may be more, not less, freedom for people in ordinary pursuits, but no state support for progress. *There will be nominal increases in grass-roots levels of assistance, for relief and crisis response.* There will declining assistance in real terms.

**Optimistic scenario:** the state retreats to a security and service role, with moderate capital budgets for infrastructure restoration, maintenance, and some expansion. The private sector shows modest growth, oriented to regional markets as well as to export markets. There is a burgeoning of volunteer development organizations. There is considerable danger in neglecting the role of government in the economy, in providing infrastructure, and in performing regulatory functions.

There is recovery in the civic society, with growing organization of professional and sectoral groups, greater freedom of expression and organization, and

maturity in the judicial system. The informal sector continues to be the bulwark of the economy. Private or semi-private plantation zones expand. There likely will be free elections scheduled and perhaps held at the local level. The systems will be sufficiently open to justify external assistance and to inspire and tolerate internal criticism. *There will be arrested decline, if not recovery, although even this will take quite some time to be visible.*

**Next steps** under the optimistic scenario would be to give targeted assistance to debt relief, to electoral operations, to strengthening of civil society. It would also be important to expand trade access to the United States. Indeed, there probably would be no justification for any tariff or quota on imports from Africa. This would aid African development far more than the aid program.

There will be considerable empowerment of the volunteer organizations, with provision of more money than they can easily handle.

Constituency building for Africa is important under either scenario but it will be hard to avoid distortions of assistance to favor relief and short-term approaches under the pessimistic scenario.

## **Participants**

**Ahuma Adodoadji**

World Vision USA

**Jerome Ahouanmenou**

United Nations Development Programme

**Joel Barkan**

University of Iowa

**Linda Beck**

University of Wisconsin

**Michael Bratton**

Michigan State University

**Michael Chege**

Harvard University

**Samuel Decalo**

University of Florida

**Mamadou Dia**

The World Bank

**Harvey Glickman**

Haverford College

**Jean-Germain Gros**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**John W. Harbeson**

United States Agency for International Development

**Goran Hyden**

University of Florida

**Willard Johnson**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Richard Joseph**

The Carter Center of Emory University

**Keith Klein**

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

**Sahr John Kpundeh**

National Academy of Sciences

**Robert LaGamma**

United States Information Agency

**Timothy Longman**

University of Wisconsin

**Guy Martin**

Clark Atlanta University

**Andrei Maximenko**

University of South Carolina

**Edward R. McMahon**

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

**Catharine Newbury**

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Stephen Ndegwa**

University of Indiana

**Marina Ottaway**

Georgetown University

**Lucie Colvin Phillips**

AMEX International Inc.

**Earl Picard**

Clark Atlanta University

**Pearl Robinson**

Tufts University

**Donald Rothchild**

University of California, Davis

**Debra Spitulnik**

Emory University

**Rozann Stayden**

American Bar Association

**Scott Taylor**

Emory University

**Fred van der Kraaij**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs The Netherlands

**Nicolas van de Walle**

Michigan State University

**H.R. von Meijenfeldt**

European Center for Democracy and Development

**Jennifer Widner**

Harvard University

---

### Notes

**Note 1:** See for instance, Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa* (Yale University Press, 1976 and 1991). [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** Alison Des Forges, "Burundi: Failed Coup or Creeping Coup?", *Current History* (May 1994) p207. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** Richard Sklar, "Developmental Democracy", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Vol 29 No 4) 1987, pp. 686-714. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** Victor Azarya, "Civil Society and Disengagement in Africa," in John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild, and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *Civil Society and the State in Africa* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), p. 91. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution*, Updated Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 268. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: United Nations, 1992), p. 9. [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** Correspondent, "Mozambique: Looking to Luanda," *Africa Confidential* 35, 6 (March 18, 1994) : 7. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, Sub-Saharan Africa 94, 043 (March 4, 1994) : 19. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** Remarks by Sylvie Kinigi, who served briefly as Burundi's prime minister in 1993 to the competitively elected President Melchior Ndadaye (later assassinated), reported in *N. Y. Times*, April 26, 1994, A9. [Italics added.-HG] [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** *Politics in West Africa*, N. Y., Oxford University Press, 1965. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** My approach is influenced by Marc Howard Ross, *The Management of Conflict*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993. [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** "The Electoral System: the Forgotten Factor in Africa's Political Transitions," paper presented to this seminar on "Democratization in Africa," The Carter Center, Atlanta, May 13-14, 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, 394-427. See also his discussion in *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990, and "Democracy in Divided Societies," 4 *Journal of Democracy*, 4, October 1993, 18-38. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** "Remarks on Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict," paper presented to this seminar on "Democratization in Africa," Carter Center, Atlanta, May 13-14, 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 7:** Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** See Przeworski and Limongi (1992) and Sirowy and Inkeles (1991) for thoughtful discussions of this literature. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** See for example Remmer (1993), for evidence from Latin America. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** See van de Walle, (1994). [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** To avoid any confusion, let me say that I am using the word "state" in this context, not as a set of public institutions, but in its broader sense of a geographic political unit. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** See Evans (1992), Putnam (1992) and Wade (1991) for much more comprehensive discussions of these points. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** The World Bank's latest comprehensive report on Africa's economic problems (the World Bank, 1994) makes only passing mention of governance issues, suggesting a flagging interest since the landmark "Long Term Perspective Study" (1989). [Back.](#)

**Note 7:** See OECD, 1992, (p. A-26). Note that these numbers do not even include private non commercial flows, such as NGO, Foundation and charity

donations. In many countries some fifty or more of these organizations provide support and compete for the attention of government officials. [Back.](#)

**Note 8:** For similar arguments in much greater detail, see Rodrik (1990) and Williamson (1993). [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** The president, democratically elected in 1993, was assassinated within six months of his inauguration. His successor, appointed after several months, was killed in a suspicious plane crash in April 1994, together with the president of Rwanda. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** 'President-for-life' Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Africa's last surviving 'independence-president', was removed from office following his defeat in the May 1994 presidential elections. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** The democratically elected president Houphouët-Boigny died in late 1993. He was succeeded in a constitutional and democratic manner. [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** See Michael Bratton, 'Political Liberalization in Africa in the 1990s: Advances and Setback', in: USAID, *'Economic Reform in Africa's New Era of Political Liberalization - Proceedings of a Workshop for SPA donors'*, April 14-15, 1993, pp. 37-64. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** See e.g. John Toye, 'Structural Adjustment: Context, Assumptions, Origin and Diversity', in: Rolph van der Hoeven and Fred van der Kraaij (eds), *'Structural Adjustment and Beyond in Sub-Saharan Africa - Research and Policy Issues'*, James Currey Publishers, London, 1994, pp. 18-36. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** Freedom from political and extra-judicial killing, from torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, from disappearance, from arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile, from denial of a fair public trial (Source: 'Country Reports On Human Rights Practices For 1993 - Report submitted to the Committee On Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives and the Committee On Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate by the Department of State, February 1994). [Back.](#)

**Note 7:** Freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of religion, freedom of movement within the country, foreign

travel, emigration, and repatriation. (Source: `Country Reports On Human Rights Practices For 1993 - Report submitted to the Committee On Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives and the Committee On Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate by the Department of State, February 1994). [Back.](#)

**Note 8:** This distinction is in conformity with standing practice. Indeed there are fundamental differences between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa which justify the distinction between those two groups. However, within the group of SSA countries there are differences which may be as important as the ones between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. For the sake of convenience this has not been taken into consideration. [Back.](#)

**Note 9:** An overview of African political systems with interesting material for comparison can be found in `Africa Demos', vol. III, number 2, July-August 1993, (published by The Carter Center of Emory University), p. 19. [Back.](#)

**Note 10:** Of course one could object to the fact that freedom of the press cannot be considered in isolation from the literacy rate. This is true. Freedom of the press, however, also includes radio and television broadcasts. [Back.](#)

**Note 11:** Recent experience in some economically successful Asian countries have given this discussion more impetus. [Back.](#)

**Note 12:** Referred is here to the `ownership' discussion which was further stimulated by the Wapenhans Report (Report of the Portfolio Management Task Force, `Effective Implementation: Key to Development Impact', World Bank, Washington, 1992). [Back.](#)

**Note 13:** See OECD, `DAC Orientations on Participatory Development and Good Governance', DCD/DAC(93)20REV3, December 3, 1993, OECD/DAC, Paris. [Back.](#)

**Note 14:** 135.6 million people in 19 countries. [Back.](#)

**Note 15:** 56.4 million people in 7 countries. [Back.](#)

**Note 16:** 512.7 million people in 48 countries. [Back.](#)

**Note 17:** Respectively 245.8 million in 14 countries and 74.9 million in 8 countries. [Back.](#)

**Note 18:** Most of the seven *non-adjusting countries* which respect freedom of speech and of the press do not need an economic reform programme in the present circumstances: Angola, Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** This paper draws upon data I collected while doing field research in Senegal between October 1992 and January 1994 on political mobilization during the 1993 national elections in the *départements* of Matam and Mbacke. My research was made possible by grants from the Fulbright-Hayes Scholarship Board and the Social Science Research Council. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** The need for international legitimacy explains why in 1993, unlike the 1988 elections, President Diouf agreed (reluctantly) to permit foreign observers. Given the limitations of small groups of foreign observers (national groups were denied permission), the difficulty of 'observing' fraud that often occurs before elections, and the subjectivity of determining the level of fraud sufficient to declare an election invalid, Diouf will probably be more amenable in the future to foreign observers who lend legitimacy to the electoral process and its outcome. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** *Ordonnances* were authorizations to vote which could be obtained from a judge if, for example, an individual's name had been mistakenly stricken from the electoral list or the information on her voter and identity cards did not correspond. [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** These voters are hardly the real beneficiaries of the P. S. patronage system. The benefits they receive pale in comparison to the lavish gifts offered to traditional "*grands électeurs*," such as marabouts who have nevertheless seen a sharp decline in their spoils as state resources dwindle and attitudes change toward political *ndigguels* (orders) and their perceived effectiveness. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** Diouf did not take action against Sy until October 1993 when he was arrested for "inciting the public" at a P. D. S. rally. Sy's conviction in January 1994 played a major role in inciting his followers, members of the now illegal

*Moustarchdines wal moustarchidaty*, to participate in the violent demonstrations in Dakar on February 16. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** After months of demonstrations against the 15 percent salary cuts and then the devaluation in January 1994, the bloody riot in Dakar on February 16 can be attributed to not only discontent over devaluation and the sentencing of Moustapha Sy but also brewing hostility over the dual electoral defeat of the opposition and the marginalization of the P. D. S.. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** This paper is based on field research conducted between 1992 and 1993 on local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the transition process in Kenya. This research was made possible by grants from The Rockefeller Foundation and the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** This paper is based on interim results from two ongoing research projects: "Explaining Political Transitions in Africa" (with Nicolas van de Walle) funded by National Science Foundation Grant No. SBR 9309215 and a series of studies on the consolidation of democracy in Zambia funded by the United States Agency for International Development under Cooperative Agreement No. 623-0226-A-00-3024-00. Kimberley Ludwig and Yu Wang collected data and Philip Alderfer made a major contribution to data management and analysis. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** See Peter J. Schraeder, "The More Things Change the More They Remain the Same: African Presidents and the Process of Democratization in Africa". Paper presented at the Transnational Institute, Cologne, Germany, November 13, 1993 and Masipula Sithole, "The African Political Scene: Is the Second Wind of Change Any Different from the First?", paper presented at the African Studies center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, March 31, 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** Democratization may even cause elites to intensify efforts to exploit public office for private gain. Since their tenure is more uncertain in the face of

regular competitive elections, incumbents may reason that they should quickly take advantage of what may turn out to be a brief grasp on office. [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** Yves Fauré, "Democracy and Realism: Reflections on the Case of Côte d'Ivoire", *Africa*, 63 (3), 1993, 324. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** Competitive legislative elections were held in twenty six countries during the same period. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** Ideally one would like to compare legislative elections in the pre-transition period with results from the same sort of elections in the 1990-93 period. At the time of writing, however, data were not yet available for all types of elections in all periods, thus leading to the slightly awkward configuration of comparing legislative elections in one period with presidential elections in another. In a few cases of transition elections (CAR, Gambia, Kenya, Seychelles, and Zambia), parliamentary and presidential contests were held on the same day and the turnout rates were effectively the same for both elections. If there is any bias in the current comparison, it is a conservative one since voter turnout rates in the recent round of legislative elections in Africa are generally *lower* than in presidential elections. [Back.](#)

**Note 7:** National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *An Assessment of the October 11, 1992 Election in Cameroon* (Washington D.C., NDI, 1993), 21. [Back.](#)

**Note 8:** Ruth Berins Collier, *Regimes in Tropical Africa: Changing Forms of Supremacy, 1945-1975* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982), pp. 76-80. [Back.](#)

**Note 9:** op.cit. [Back.](#)

**Note 10:** ibid., pp. 325-6. [Back.](#)

**Note 11:** Readers should not be confused by the negative sign on the correlation coefficient. Because the competition data are inverted, with a lower winner's share of total votes indicating a higher degree of competition, we would expect a negative statistical coefficient. But the relationship between the two underlying concepts is a positive one, with higher voter turnout rates (i.e. higher

participation) being associated with lower winner's vote shares (i.e. higher competition). [Back.](#)

**Note 12:** See Michael Bratton, "Local Government Election Results, Zambia 1992", East Lansing, Michigan State University, mimeo, January 12, 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 13:** See Jennifer A. Widner, "Political Reform in Anglophone and Francophone Africa" in Widner (ed.) *Economic Change and Political Liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 49-79. The explanatory institutional variables in this analysis are: distribution of rents, interest group organization, electoral rules, and electoral resources. [Back.](#)

**Note 14:** Note, however, that this relationship is still not statistically significant. [Back.](#)

**Note 15:** For an elaboration of the regime type approach see Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa", *World Politics*, July 1994, 453-90. [Back.](#)

**Note 16:** Postcolonial regime type is a distinct variable from culture of the colonizer; for example, two of the four competitive one-party regimes in the sample are francophone (Seychelles, Madagascar) and three of the twelve plebiscitary regimes are lusophone (Angola, Cape Verde, and Sao Tome). [Back.](#)

**Note 17:** Further details are presented in Michael Bratton and Beatrice Liatto-Katundu, "Political Culture in Zambia: A Pilot Survey", *MSU Working Papers on Political Reform in Africa*, No. 7 (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, January 1994). [Back.](#)

**Note 18:** The confidence level for the reported data is 95 percent and the confidence interval is plus or minus 5 percent. All reported relationships among variables are statistically significant at the .05 level or better. [Back.](#)

**Note 19:** Bratton, 1994, *op.cit.* [Back.](#)

**Note 20:** Foundation for Democratic Process, "FODEP expresses concerns on Parliamentary by-elections: Future of democracy is threatened by unfair practices", Lusaka, press release, December 7, 1993, p.5. [Back.](#)

**Note 21:** While interest in politics was unrelated to media exposure, respondents who read a newspaper or listened to the news on the radio were significantly more likely to engage in discussions of politics. [Back.](#)

**Note 22:** The placement of the question on voter registration as the first on the questionnaire may have induced some non-registered voters to feel that they must answer positively, thus inflating this survey estimate. [Back.](#)

**Note 23:** Post-election surveys in other countries invariably show that more respondents claim to have voted than are documented in official electoral turnout figures. Discrepancies may be attributable to the natural human inclination of not wanting to admit one did not engage in the behavior under study, especially where there was an implied moral duty. [Back.](#)

**Note 24:** Predictably, educated people are significantly more likely to use written means to express political opinions. [Back.](#)

**Note 25:** If anything, young people (in the 18-26 year old age group) voted in somewhat greater numbers than their proportion of the adult population ( $p = .093$ ) (and especially their meagre proportion of registered voters!) would have predicted. [Back.](#)

**Note 26:** No such relationship could be found for the 1992 local elections, perhaps because turnout was so low that abstainers included both well and poorly informed citizens. Moreover, local politics are less well covered in the Zambia's predominantly national media. [Back.](#)

**Note 27:** Technically, they should have been able to vote with a substitute certificate in the 1991 elections, though few people knew about this option at the time (NDI, 1992, 35). [Back.](#)

**Note 28:** See Micheal Bratton and Beatrice Liatto-Katundu, "A Focus Group Assessment of Political Attitudes in Zambia", *African Affairs*, forthcoming October 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 29:** This relationship also holds true for voting in local elections ( $p = .000$ ,  $.003$ ) and for voter registration ( $p = .000$ ,  $.004$ ). [Back.](#)

**Note 30:** This question was derived from the survey literature on postmaterial values in Western Europe, as adapted in the World Values Survey. See Ronald Inglehart, "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies", *American Political Science Review*, 65, 1971, pp.991-1017 and Paul Abramson and Ronald Inglehart, "Economic Values and Value Change", *American Political Science Review*, forthcoming 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 31:** Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** A discussion paper prepared for a seminar on Democratization in Africa held at the Carter Center, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, May 13-14, 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** See, for example, *Strategies for Sustainable Development*. Washington: US Agency for International Development, March, 1994), p. 5. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** This tripartite breakdown borrows from a recent presentation by David F. Gordon at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, April 15th, 1994. [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** The fact of differential importance is fast becoming a theme of American foreign policy. What was previously unstated but tacitly acknowledged, is now stated officially. See, for example, Anthony Lake's statement on May 5, 1994 that the US cannot intervene everywhere even when the need to do so is there. [Back.](#)

**Note 5:** At a time when public support for foreign assistance is low, the suspension of programs which support authoritarian and/or corrupt regimes is at least good politics at home. [Back.](#)

**Note 6:** The decision by the Administration not to include the Development Fund for Africa in the proposed rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act is, perhaps, evidence of this trend. Indeed, were it not for South Africa, the Continent is "off" or "nearly off the radar screen." [Back.](#)

**Note 7:** Personnel of bilateral assistance agencies must also command the respect and support of the head of mission and the ambassador. [Back.](#)

**Note 8:** It should be noted that both NDI and the Carter Center are beginning to be exceptions from this generalization, but it is only a beginning. [Back.](#)

**Note 9:** NGOs are also more likely to maintain their independence from the "parent" donor agencies which finance their activities by establishing their own field operations. [Back.](#)

**Note 10:** In terms of expenditures and personnel, the other principal players in mounting programs to support democratization are Canada, Denmark, Germany (via the foundations of the four major political parties), the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. The United Kingdom also supports democratization programs, but at a much lower level. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** Adopted by United Nations General Assembly held at New York, New York in December 1948, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc. A/810, 71 (1948). [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** Adopted by the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders held at Milan, Italy from 26 August to 6 September 1985 and endorsed by the General Assembly resolutions 40/32 of 29 November 1985 and 40/146 of 13 December 1985. [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** Adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August to 7 September 1990. [Back.](#)

**Note 1:** This now widely shared opinion, cogently expressed to me by Dr. Hans Singer, of the University of Sussex Institute of Development Studies in an interview, June 30, 1994, was an object of some contention between African states and the World Bank. It came to be accepted in the World Bank's *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Development*. 1989. See especially Chap. 4. [Back.](#)

**Note 2:** Singer, *op.cit.* [Back.](#)

**Note 3:** Cf. World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, on Disks, 1992. Tables 1 & 2. [Back.](#)

**Note 4:** I am indebted to Mr. John Howell, Executive Director of the British Overseas Development Institute for this idea. Interview, July 4, 1994. [Back.](#)