African Studies Quarterly

Volume 12, Issue 2
Winter 2011

Published by the Center for African Studies, University of Florida

ISSN: 2152-2448

African Studies Quarterly

Executive Staff

Editorial Committee

Advisory Board

Table of Contents

Book Reviews

Personal Rule in Africa: The Case of Eritrea

PETROS B. OGBAZGHI

Abstract: Notwithstanding the on-going struggles for democratic transformation, many African countries still lack rudimentary principles of the rule of law and legitimate political institutions. Contemporary Eritrea exemplifies this type of situation in which personal rule is the embodiment of the political system. The article argues that the perpetuation of personal rule in Eritrea is explained by the political strategy of unleashing sheer coercive force against citizens by the military whose loyalty is bought off by providing its top echelons control over substantial state economic resources. This is facilitated by a culture of impunity fostered by a legacy of three decades of guerrilla conflict, and by deliberately keeping the rest of society off-balance in an economic situation characterized by rampant poverty. The regimenting of civil-society institutions within the power structures and chapters of party-controlled organizations has reduced them into instruments of social control in order to diffuse any form of organized resistance. Finally, the party and the bureaucracy as agents of the state function to accentuate the symbolic dimensions of socio-economic activities to which the entire society is mobilized in order to wedge the immense legitimacy gap and make the system appear popular. [1]

Introduction

In the 1990s, the promising transition in many African countries from dictatorship and authoritarianism to democracy seemed to be echoed in the apparent commitment of Eritrea to a similar transformation. The paradigm shift from dictatorship to democracy in African states led some scholars to refer to 1989 as a "landmark" and others to describe developments in terms of "waves," "foundations," and "experiments" in the history of African politics.[2] It was a time of "the opening wide of the electoral floodgates."[3]

Indeed, there was an explosion of political parties and countless elections were held almost everywhere in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, the elections conducted between 1990 and 1994, showed that more than thirty-eight out of a total of forty-seven sub-Saharan countries involved rival political contenders.[4] It is particularly important to note that out of these elections, thirty-five countries had larger opposition party representation in legislative seats.[5] Domestic and international political and economic factors played, in varying degrees of interpretation, of course, a major role in the transition process of the early 1990s from authoritarianism, personal rule and military despotism to a fledgling democratic government.[6]

This was also the reasonable expectation of many Eritreans inside the country as well as in the Diaspora who witnessed Eritrea become an independent nation and set about formulating and adopting a constitution. In the aftermath of independence, people held extraordinary hope of a democratic change once Eritrea had extricated itself from the oppressive rule of Ethiopia's

Petros B. Ogbazghi is former Senior Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, University of Asmara, Asmara, Eritrea. He obtained his Ph.D. in Politics and Administration from Tilburg University, the Netherlands. He studied both at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in the Heague and at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, where he obtained his Master's Degree in Public Policy and Administration. Currently, he works as a consultant and researcher on migration, refugees and racism in the Republic of Ireland.

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i2a1.pdf

ISSN: 2152-2448

Mengistu Haile Mariam. Indeed, the citizenry fervently believed, albeit sanguinely, that their now civilian-turned leaders would not betray the trust of the Eritrean people once they had taken over the reins of power. After all, these were the same leaders who three decades earlier had established a front so popular that it was joined by Eritreans from all walks of life. Sadly, it wasn't to be. The socio-economic and political situation regressed from the monarchical regime of Haile Sellassie and even the communist rule of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The equally held belief by foreign statesmen, diplomats, and commentators during the brief period of relative peace in the mid 90s that Isaias Afewerki was part of the "new generation of African leaders" was subsequently shown to be illusory. No sooner had Isaias Afewerki won independence through waging a protracted insurgency against the repressive military regime of Mengistu Haile-Mariam, than he, ironically, proceeded to establish a regime which repeated the oppression of his predecessor and indeed raised it to a new level. As Eritrea has finally come to a virtual standstill and desperation seizes large segments of the population, people, especially the younger generation, have entirely become estranged from both polity and the state. The end result is that those who feel their life is in danger decide to flee their country of origin to become refugees in neighboring countries with the goal of reaching their final destination—often Western Europe—at a very high cost to their lives. Those who remain suffer the consequences of a failed state.

The article argues that personal tyranny and its correlative, polarization of the state characterises the relationship between the state and civil society in Eritrea. Despite the dynamic phenomenon of personal rule and its manifestation in combination with other less formal and extra-legal procedures, not to mention the use of various expressions and terminologies by political scientists to describe similar political developments, personal rule as a model of analysis still remains valid in explaining the political system of many sub-Saharan African regimes.[7] It is argued here that Eritrea fits into the paradigm of personal rule. By utilizing the theoretical framework of personal rule, the article explores the political institutional elements—structures, strategies, and processes, including the ways by which society is politically mobilized and the symbolic issues of legitimacy are framed—and, hence, the way personal rule works and is perpetuated.

Personal Rule in Africa

The concept of personal rule became popular with the publication in 1982 of an influential book by Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*. Ever since, the concept has attracted a fairly large amount of commentary, critique and synthesis by many scholars of African politics and students alike. For example, Goran Hyden summarized and synthesised the phenomenon of personal rule with other aspects of political systems in contemporary Africa.[8] While admitting that the framework is useful, others have pointed out to its lack of being "adept at explaining where the dynamics it describes come from and how they are sustained over the long term."[9]

According to Jackson and Rosberg, personal rule is defined as "a distinctive type of political system in which the rivalries and struggles of powerful and wilful men, rather than impersonal institutions, ideologies, public policies, or class interest, are fundamental in shaping political life."[10] The political dynamics of personal rule, by nature, promotes personalized state-society relationships rather than institution-based practices of governance. This is simply because personal rule is based on loyalty to the president as opposed to institutions, which are constantly monitored and controlled to ensure that they will not achieve any balance of power that could threaten the system. The political system of personal rule is "shaped less by institutions or impersonal social forces than by personal authorities and power."[11] As such, institutions, by definition, are not governed exclusively by the formal rules as they are often flouted whenever and wherever they

come into conflict with the interests of the ruler.[12]

In personalist regimes, political institutionalization largely emanates not from the legally sanctioned institutions of law—whether constitutional or civic—but as a result of the personal wishes and whims of those who happen to hold the reins of power.[13] Larry Diamond could not agree more when he contended that "the political struggle in Africa remains very much a conflict between the rule of law and the rule of a person."[14] David Leonard and Scott Straus analyse the inherent structural weaknesses of personal rule as an inherited legacy of colonialism where personal decisions take precedence over formal institutions mainly due to lack of distinction between personal rulers and their formal institutions.[15]

In the absence of an institutional constitutional framework, the political system of state-society interaction and exchange in personalist regimes operates around specifically designed institutions and agencies of coercion. At the very essence of the problem of personal rule thus lies the monopolization of political power.[16] This phenomenon has particularly been well captured by George Ayittey, who combined personal rule with the system of what he calls "political sultanism" as the natural embodiment of the monopolization of power at the heart of Africa's political crisis.[17] The phenomenon of personal rule is directly linked with the "the monopolization of political power by one individual, the grotesque forms being president-for-life and military dictatorship coupled with state hegemony in the economy and the direction of economic activity."[18] The phenomenon of sultanism or state hegemony operates within a "defective economic system of statism," that is the monopoly of enormous power in the hands of a single individual, which is achieved by such devices as price controls, legislative acts, regulations, state ownership of the means of production, and the operation of state enterprises.[19] The result is heavy intervention of the state in economic and social programs that is "backed up by a coercive military and judicial force."[20]

The phenomenon of state repression is similarly captured by Seyoum Hameso who noted that "any expression of dissatisfaction or 'grievance' with the state is not tolerated as it is equated with a direct assault on the political elite or the President, who, in power, built his personality cult using state-owned and controlled mass media, in particular, radio and television."[21] The political history of many African independence and contemporary leaders has shown that they equated the practice of unrestrained power with state sovereignty. In this way, as Christopher Clapham noted, "even the most muted criticism of the internal autocracy of other African states was virtually non-existent."[22] This subsequently eroded state legitimacy and alienated the majority of the African society from taking active participation in the socio-economic and political life, which would in turn create a polarized state-society relationship, leading to a vicious circle of violence and repression.

In order for coercion to be effective, however, personal rulers often combine coercion with other less formal and extra-legal procedures, such as personal appeal, personal will-power and wiliness, connections and loyalties, social prestige, charisma and oratorical skill, all together meticulously applied in varying degrees.[23] The preservation of the unchallenged and near-total control of the machinery of government by one individual entails necessarily the provision of favours to the hitherto specially designed coercive institutions of the state, such as the military, the police and the secret services. To this end, all state funds, opportunities, and other resources, including government bureaucracy are used as strategic centres of enrichment and reward for such loyal clients. These clients preserve the system through the use of sheer force.

Taking a cue from Ernest Bramstedt, personal rulers do also establish a specific pattern of reasoning, thinking and acting and attempt to impose the same on the whole society in order to "personify the substance of national reason."[24] Personal rule as a system, therefore, does not encourage independent thinking and reasoning. Neither do personal rulers promote public

rationality. In fact, personal rulers do their utmost to deny society individually and collectively the "capacity to act intelligently" by using their own reason and intellectual insight, independent from the orders and rules that flow from the presidential palace all the way down the hierarchy of loyal military or bureaucratic personnel and their agents.[25] As a political strategy, personal rulers want to supplant general reason with the leader's individual reason, conventional wisdom with his individual wisdom, and collective rationality with his own "rationality." It is no surprise when Gerald Scott noted the tendency by many African leaders to reject or simply ignore conventional economic advice.[26] This is largely because the agenda of personal rulers "is not economic development or political democratization but rather simple survival and longevity in the uncertain and hostile political arena."[27]

The result is that common sense and rationality is substituted by "personal loyalty and fear … wrapped in a patina of familial political symbols and traditionally respected practices."[28] Personal rulers also use total devotion from the masses to the person of the leader as a litmus test to assess society and in particular, for those whom personal rulers put in their service, of their loyalty or lack thereof. Loyalty in this sense should not be bestowed to an overriding societal reason or goal but to the personal ruler's pattern of reasoning, including his ideals, wishes and decrees. Similarly, since recruitment to any key or even lower military or civil service office is from within the single political party, promotions are given to only those who proved loyal to the person of the leader in the already established clientelistic networks.[29]

In assessing the long-term viability of personal rulers many issues come to mind. For instance, in light of the cost of maintaining the system of personal rule, especially in cases where the system fails to connect to public will and aspirations, including the key ingredients for legitimacy in the eyes of ordinary citizens of social and moral values, personal rulers are far from rational actors. In their attempt to continue to hold on to power by exacting obedience and submission, personal rulers often devise radical political courses, portray themselves as sagacious and give unrealistic promises and indulge themselves in "mission complex."[30] However, when the masses, sooner or later, become unconvinced of the legitimacy of the ruler, and particularly when the long-anticipated promises of economic well-being fail to materialize, the masses become even further frustrated and disfranchised. Personal rulers not only fail to perceive the ideals and aspirations of the population but also make colossal miscalculations as in such cases as when they end up angering the whole population. Despite the futile attempts of personal rulers to reassure their people through various mechanisms that range from finding scapegoats for past failures and undertaking phantom socio-economic reforms, such "artificial attempts seldom bear any fruit, often invoking negative reactions by those who see through the manipulations and are angered by them."[31]

Secondly, the very lack of political will and commitment to institutionalize formal rules and bureaucratic norms is a structural malaise, which only the system of personal rule could have created in the first place. As personal rule becomes deeply embedded in the political system, personal rulers could too become captives of their own web of powerful vested interests, such as the party, army, and police, which simply do not allow any institutional change that calls for the abolishing of such networks to take place. Within the context of personal rule, George Ayittey describes how the political system of many African leaders has degenerated into "environmental defects" characterised by political malaises of "political instability, chaos, corruption, abuse of power and incompetent leadership."[32] These political defects coupled with the factors of time horizon and the legacies of the past, including wars of attrition, conflicts and human rights abuses, further trap personal rulers in a permanent siege mentality.[33] This makes the political system of personal rule as "a world of uncertainty, suspicion, rumour, agitation, intrigue, and sometimes fear, as well as of stratagem, diplomacy, conspiracy, dependency, reward and threat."[34] Put in

perspective, although the structural anomalies of personal rule could be considered "as shortcomings in the endeavour to establish modern social politics and policy government in Black Africa…. they nevertheless have become something more than can adequately be described in terms merely of the absence of rationalist characteristics.…Personal rule and its distinctive practices are the reality of what they have become."[35]

Eritrea: The State of the State

Eritrea is a dictatorial state that emerged from a thirty year war of liberation and formed itself on a cult of personality surrounding the liberation movement leader, Isaias Afewerki, who is the incumbent president. This state is based on a nexus of the military and the sole political party, the Peoples' Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).[36] The party, which consists of a very tight inner-circle, accords legitimacy to the president by rationalizing and implementing his policies of social mobilization. It has four departments: political, organizational, economic, and cultural affairs. Together they are ultimately responsible for political and cultural indoctrination, which is accomplished by appealing to nationalistic pride and symbols of national unity. Both the political and cultural affairs departments of the PFDJ, in particular, are considered to be the "brain box" of the government. They are ultimately responsible for the centrally directed mobilization of the sanctioned civil society organizations and groups, such as youth, women, workers, urban neighbourhoods, and various professional associations.

Party officials tightly monitor and control the organization, operation, finances, and personnel of these organizations. Thus, for example, these seemingly civil society organizations are not permitted by the authorities to engage in any policy activism or advocacy matters. In a country where the state is distrustful of its own population, it severely restricts the movements of tourists, foreign journalists, and foreign diplomats as well as expatriates who head the few remaining international agencies, such as the United Nations. Similarly, local associations and organizations, such as women's, youth and students, workers, and professional associations are strictly monitored and prohibited from making unilateral initiatives to forge any contacts with foreign counterparts, organizations, or agencies. State-controlled as they are, all aspects of their administration and organization, both structural and functional, including, their policies and priorities, financial, recruitment, and leadership positions, are determined by the PFDJ, of which the President's Office is at the helm. In fact, these organizations often come up with the sort of "decisions that only need to be rubber-stamped by a periodic meeting of organizational congresses."[37] The tight control of their operation by the representatives of the respective departments of the party has also meant that they are not allowed to receive any funding from foreign donors without the prior approval of the party.[38]

The organizational affairs department is mainly concerned with recruitment of membership in the party, which is compulsory as well as the collection of contribution fees from members. Its activities could also extend to include foreign intelligence, fund raising, and overseeing Eritrean diaspora communities. For this purpose, it employs overseas Eritrean embassies and consulates, which themselves are under the constant watch of the party. Finally, the economic affairs department is the financial arm of the party. It not only controls all the state-owned enterprises, but it is also engaged in a wide variety of economic activities, including service, agriculture, and manufacturing industries. While the major state-controlled service industries include trade, foreign exchange, banking, communications, transport, and shipping, the manufacturing sector is dominated by metal-working, auto-repair, road-surfacing, well-drilling, and building construction. Initially, most of these companies were privately owned businesses until "they were forced by the government to enter into joint ventures with the party in which the latter holds majority stakes, profits and other compulsory payments in return for the government supplied free national service

labour force."[39]

Similarly, the sedentary, agro-pastoralist, and pastoralist agricultural systems upon which over 80 percent of the population is dependent is the single most important economic sector of the state. The state cannot defer the tremendous potential gain to be made from the production of cash crops, including horticulture for both domestic and foreign markets. The state forcibly seized control of a vast extent of fertile farming land, mainly in the low lands but also in the southern and more recently the north-eastern parts of the Eritrean highlands. Last but not least is the state's involvement in various franchises and joint ventures such as mining and the beverage and brewing industries that involve foreign investment. While the state staunchly argues in favor of heavy government intervention in order to expedite the war ravaged economic situation of the country, in reality the ultimate goal of these economic activities is "to realize political ends through political and economic means."[40] Moreover, the operations of almost all of these party-owned businesses, be it agriculture, manufacturing, or construction, heavily rely for manpower on communist-style labor camps and compulsory national-service recruits supplied by the military.

The military with its hierarchy of regional military generals is under the direct control and leadership of the president. It is a superstructure that is imposed upon practically all segments of public and civilian life. Since 2003, the inherited regional administrative structure, which consisted of six provinces, has been reduced to four "operation zones." The former guerrilla fighters who were re-commissioned to civilian administration as governors and deputies for the regions have now been subordinated to four powerful military generals who supervise and oversee the political, economic, and administrative processes of their respective regions. The military generals have a considerable discretionary power at their disposal and they are accountable only to the president. This takes place outside the formal military bureaucratic channels as the generals and their staffs normally bypass the Ministry of Defence whose minister is considered less powerful and insignificant member of the cabinet due to his short-lived affiliation with the group of reformers, who in 2001 formally requested the president to hand over power to the public. In fact, the minister retracted his allegiance and soon turned against his former colleagues before they were summarily detained in an undisclosed prison location in the same year. As a result, he is less highly esteemed among the ranks of military generals and even colonels, not to speak of the president who is notorious for his contemptuous treatment of his subordinates.

Characteristic Features of Personal Rule in Eritrea

An intrinsic feature of any dictatorship is that first and foremost it serves political ends. The relationship between state and society in Eritrea is not a positive one because it is based upon the preservation of personal power of the president through the extreme use of the coercive apparatus of the state. In an atmosphere of virtual absence of a tradition of tolerance, the impact of such a heavy-handed political influence over citizen-subjects has always been direct and powerful. Isaias Afewerki has long nurtured the cult of state power, which is reflected in the near-total control of almost all facets of national life, including the economy and other institutions of government, such as the judiciary and the national assembly. Although in the mid-1990s there were initial steps at nation-building with an apparent commitment to democratization, such as the macro-economic policy reform, land reform, and constitution formulation, they were solely aimed at strengthening the legitimacy of the ruling class and its political organization, the PFDJ. For example, Bereket Habte Sellasie, the former Commissioner of the Eritrean Constitution Commission, noted "it seems to me [that] the rule of law has gone to the dogs in Eritrea. There was a very good beginning, a very promising beginning. We all hailed Isaias Afewerki and his colleagues in creating an enabling environment to lead to democracy and we were waiting for that when he and his group—in my view—hijacked the constitution."[41]

Debessay Hedru echoes similar expressions of shattered hopes and promises when he noted that "Isaias Afewerki, the popularly revered leader of the EPLF, was often heard to say that the western model of liberal democracy is not suitable for his country, and speculated vaguely about a system rooted in local tradition and customs. Such statements were taken on faith by a public that was not ready to question [his] motives….In retrospect, the constitution-making process was a public relations exercise. And not a very successful one at that, because it did excite the political imagination of many Eritreans who were to be bitterly disappointed before long."[42] As such, the promise and prospect to a democratic transition turned out to be a mirage. The process of nation-building and the concomitant reforms were indeed based on nationalistic rhetoric and a carefully controlled political exercise, embodied in a presidential decree rather than directly deriving from legitimate, independent and legally sanctioned institutions of law which are more predictable in guiding and establishing socially and politically acceptable forms of state-society exchange and interaction.[43] The institutional reform process, which was more of window dressing than a substantive democratic change, vanished away and in its stead has grown up specifically designed extra-legal institutions of coercion. In what follows, we will analyse these institutions, such as the president and the president's office, the military and the political party, including their roles, structures, processes, and policy strategies by which personal rule is perpetuated in Eritrea.

The President as Personal Ruler

Besides being the President of the State of Eritrea, Isaias Afewerki is head of government, chairman of the National Parliament, Commander in Chief of the army, and Chancellor of the now-closed University of Asmara, the only university in the whole country. He convenes at will and presides over all meetings of the party's central council, the National Assembly, the cabinet council, and regional administrator and military council meetings. Dan Connell aptly summed up when he noted that "the overriding problem in Eritrea today is the concentration of power in the hands of one man… President Isaias and the PFDJ maintain an absolute monopoly on all forms of political and economic power."[44]

In its 2001 report, Human Rights Watch noted that "decision-making in Eritrea remains tightly controlled within the governing People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ)…since the country formally became independent in 1993."[45] Almost a decade later, the same human rights organization asserted that "in less than two decades of independence, the government of President Isaias Afewerki has established a totalitarian grip on Eritrea."[46] Isaias Afewerki personally appoints cabinet ministers, regional administrators, national and regional court judges, the auditor-general, the governor of the national bank, new ambassadors, top military commanders, and many mid-level officials and civil authorities.[47] Although political institutions that are vital for democratic governance, such as the constitution, the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judiciary, may appear to exist in Eritrea, they are largely illusions.[48] For example, a few days after the President of the High Court declared in a conference that was held in 2001—the year in which a group of reformers, described below, demanded the president to hand over power—that he had been subject to incessant government interferences, he received a telephone call from the Minister of Justice who was instructed by the president to order him to resign effective immediately.[49]

The president can also make individual or summary dismissals of ambassadors or regional administrators, with practically no institutional restraints of government behavior existing.[50] As a matter of fact, the regime has a long history of unlawfully dismissing people from work, locally known as *midiskal* (literally, to freeze). In order to create a reservoir of a populist form of rabid nationalistic sentiments, Isaias Afewerki had also to unleash conflicts with practically all the

neighboring countries. Dan Connell observes that the war situation in Eritrea is not an accident but it is deliberately designed in order to justify Isaias Afewerki's near-total monopoly of power.[51] The regional wars and conflicts are, therefore, designed to keep the citizenry under a constant siege mentality, and as such, have to be prolonged by closing all avenues of negotiated conflict resolution with neighbouring countries. Eritrea is now "a nation in a perpetual state of emergency, under siege by its own leaders, with a population denied the most basic freedoms of speech, assembly, press, and religious practice."[52] Needless to say, any individual who does not give an unquestioning obedience to the dictates of the president and his military officials is destined to be portrayed as unpatriotic, which often means treasonous. And anyone who dares to stand in the regime's way can hardly escape imprisonment or being sent to the labor camps.

The border wars and conflicts with the Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen, and Ethiopia provide a typical example of how Isaias Afewerki uses conflict as a means to keep an iron grip on power. In the wake of the border war with Ethiopia, for instance, the regime adopted what could best be described as an undeclared state of emergency, which put an end to the fledgling free press by arresting all the private journalists, and prohibiting any public critique of the president and his policies, including demands for the implementation of the already ratified constitution.[53] It finally resulted in a clampdown on former ministers and high ranking party-members, a dissadent group, commonly referred to as the G-15. Shortly after the signing of the Algiers Agreement in March 2001 that ended the two-year border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, this group of reformers signed a letter that criticized the president for endangering Eritrean national sovereignty by keeping Eritrea on a constant war footing and called for the convening of the long overdue national assembly meeting and the implementation of the ratified constitution.

The president put off all their demands and the reformers began to write and give interviews to the private media throughout the months leading up to 18th September on which they were summarily arrested and have been held ever since without charge. A number of them, including journalists have been reported to have died of maltreatment and harsh prison conditions.[54] The regime further went on closing churches, imprisoning Christians and imposed a near-total restriction of freedom of movement inside and outside the country to such an extent that citizens are prohibited from gathering together in numbers larger than seven. In an attempt to curb the number of people fleeing the county, citizens below the age of forty are also not allowed to acquire a passport. The end result is that the president and the party he chairs "have fenced off the population from the outside world while fostering a xenophobic hostility to foreigners to distract the citizenry from the privations of daily life and the persistent denial of basic rights and liberties"[55]

In order to understand the political dynamics of Eritrea, it is important to put in perspective Isaias Afewerki's long political career. As a leader of the guerilla movement for over two decades and almost another two decades since independence as a civilian leader, Isaias Afewerki had to overcome political power struggles, especially during the formative years of the guerrilla movement, by employing cunning subterfuges and brutal repression against political rivals, sowing in the process what Gaim Kibreab called the "seeds of dictatorship in Eritrea."[56] For example, the creation by Isaias Afewerki of a secret "party within a party" known as the Eritrean People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) whose formal structures and roles Dan Connell attempted to explore was "more an instrument of control than one of leadership."[57] In fact, this secret party, which was composed of an inner-circle of select individuals operating in a violent and hidden manner, "guaranteed the ubiquity of internal repression of dissent, unmistakably putting the trajectory of the liberation struggle on the classic road to dictatorship."[58]

Many opposition groups and veterans of the liberation movement who now live in exile openly speak of what hitherto have been hushed-up secrets of the brutal killings and murder of

hundreds of people, possibly thousands, mainly those who resisted and challenged Isaias Afewerki during the early stages of the Eritrean military movement.[59] The infamous security apparatus of the time, known as the *halewa saura (*literally, the revolutionary guard) used to confine suspects in bug-infested traditional cottages and makeshift cells fettered by a rope made of rawhide as they awaited execution. The so-called political prisoners were inadequately fed and were made to recline on mud floors. As part of the torture technique, prisoners were not allowed to make any physical movement such as to scratch oneself because of an itch caused by lice or making a change of position on the ground. Doing these things in the absence of authorization would lead to the prisoner being beaten with a stick as a punishment. The result was that prisoners often asked for permission to do these trivial things by saying: "Guard could you please allow me to scratch my back?"; or "Guard, could I please change my sleeping position?"[60] The legacy of brutality has outlasted the war of independence, giving rise to the current political climate of fear in Eritrea. This legacy and its attendant repressive structures and anomalies meant that tyranny was fine-tuned so that it could be repeated in an independent Eritrea.

Personal Rule and the Use of Military Force

Many commentators describe the Eritrean political situation as illustrative of the sub-Saharan African reality in which the state is directly involved in coercion aimed to intimidate, suppress, and stamp out any real or imaginary threat to its power.[61] One of the recurrent features of the military in Eritrea is that it is designed to target individuals or groups across the board who are supposed to be a threat to "national security." The Eritrean military is characterized by its direct, widespread, systematic, and ferocious assault on multiple social institutions. The president and his office wield heavy clout in running the military. The ultimate goal of the president, his office of loyal allies, and the party he chairs is to stifle pluralism by imposing a single shared sense of identity based on the rhetoric of nationalism and patriotism. This forced identity is always accompanied by an attitude of belligerence, coercion, and repression against anyone who does not express loyalty to the memoirs of a unified body politic. It is important to remember at this stage the fact that the Eritrean military machine's success over the extremely violent regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam was secured after thirty years of protracted guerrilla fighting by maintaining a Marxist revolutionary mindset.

In post-independent Eritrea, this would, small wonder, mean that the Eritrean military is more habituated and hence strongly disposed to apply a level of ruthlessness that outmatches the level of brute force and violence, including security and intelligence tactics of their predecessors. Eritrea is now primarily what George Gagnon described "a giant prison" needing to "account for hundreds of disappeared prisoners and open its jail to independent scrutiny."[62] The *Guardian*, in its editorial titled: "Eritrea: the World's Biggest Prison" described Eritrea as "a country whose government inflicts extraordinary horror on its people."[63] According to Terrence Lyons of the United States Council on Foreign Relations, "all the major international human rights groups, monitors of religious persecution, and media watchdogs place Eritrea among the most repressive regimes in the world."[64]

Eritrea is indeed a country with the highest number of political prisoners in Africa. For example, the Oslo-based Centre for Peace and Human Rights, in its recent special report on Eritrea, estimated that between 10,000 and 30,000 political prisoners are held in a country of about five million people.[65] Out of this number, some 3,000 prisoners are from the various Christian denominations.[66] It is worth noting that the jailing of prisoners is arbitrarily decided by the military commanders who run and control their own makeshift prisons and detention centres that they themselves set up in their respective jurisdiction. According to Kjetil Tronvoll, "like a chain of islands, the Eritrean political prisons, detention centres, and labour camps are scattered

throughout the country…under the control of the military or the internal security service.[67] Apart from the traditional police-station prisons that are mainly located in the urban centres, there have been hundreds of newly established prisons, which comprise secret underground prisons, villas, housing units and storehouses-turned prisons, and military camp prisons built of corrugated iron as well as metal shipping containers. Most of the newly established labor camps—located in hostile climate regions of Eritrea, such as Gedeb, Wia, Assab, and Dahlak—double as prisons.[68] Moreover, the former Eritrean Institute of Management at Embatkala, 35 km. east of Asmara, was turned into prison in September 2001 under the instructions of President Isaias Afewerki to accommodate the former government officials before they were relocated in June 2003 to a newly purpose-built prison in the forbiddingly hot desert-village of Eira'eiro.[69]

It is difficult to know the exact number of these secret military prisons. According to Human Rights Watch, "each operation (command zone) has its own prisons and security and each level of operations has its own prisons. There's the headquarters prison at operational level, then a division central prison, brigade prisons, battalion prisons...for nine divisions there may be more than 50 prisons."[70] A joint report by the Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Human Rights Concern, however, put the total number of prisons in Eritrea at 300.[71] The forms and methods of torture include techniques called, *torch*, *otto*, *almaz*, and *helicopter*.[72] These forms of torture are always accompanied by wanton beatings of victims and sexual assault of women prisoners. There are also numerous accounts of abduction, mysterious disappearances of individuals as well as extra-judicial killing of innocent civilians and national service recruits.[73]

Military coercion in Eritrea is also accompanied by "purges and rehabilitation" in what Tom Young observed are "among the most common practices in personal rule" systems in sub-Saharan Africa. As forms of enforcing compliance, they involve various tactics.[74] For example, in Eritrea mysterious lethal force in which the victims would be reported to have committed suicide or died accidentally as a result of food-poisoning is common. In this way, the state outrightly eliminates opponents whom it considers to be a threat to the survival of the president. Alternately, those members of civilian groups whom it considers to be less dangerous—e.g., mothers in the urban centers to know who demand to know the whereabouts of their children or village elders who resist land grabs by the military—are summarily detained for a few months in makeshift semi-open prison structures before they are released on bail.

The level of repression against young people, especially students in the urban centers whom the regime faults for "unruly behavior" and "unlawful acts," is gratuitously cruel.[75] For example, when, in 2001 around 2000 university students refused to accept the terms and conditions laid down by the president of the University of Asmara to conduct a nation-wide survey research for the World Bank, the regime summarily detained them in Asmara Stadium in what some commentators then likened the situation to similar developments in Chile during the reign of General Augusto Pinochet. The students were eventually forced to mount trucks and were taken to the inhospitably infamous, makeshift military-camp of Wia to undertake what the government called "rehabilitation." As a punishment, the students were forced to undertake heavy construction work under such extreme heat. As a result, many students suffered ill health while two students died of dehydration and heat stroke.[76]

Alternately, if those whom the regime suspects in the least way of being disloyal happen to be former comrade-in-arms or "party-family members" as the regime wants to call them, they are more likely to be demoted, or frozen from their post for some extended period of time before they are again reinstated into a different post. Influential businessmen or women can also be haunted by suspicion of being disloyal. In such situations, their businesses would simply be co-opted or they would otherwise be dispossessed of their business assets altogether. The result of such extreme political measures, including arrests, dispossessions, purges, and rehabilitations—also

widely applied in many sub-Saharan Africa—is "the decline of political pluralism and the rise of political monopoly."[77]

Common to all personal dictatorships is also the establishment and masterminding of a well-structured secret police force or its equivalent to dispense arbitrary power.[78] The very existence of such a terror structure with all its dynamics and sophistication becomes, in turn, the cause for the escalation of more "situational and purposive terror campaigns."[79] The Eritrean security apparatus is made up of a wide range of security forces, such as the police, the armed forces, military police (MP), the National Security Office, Battalion Seventy-Two, the Office of the President, and other overlapping secret military agencies, all with their own well-elaborated web of secret detention centers at all territorial levels.[80] In a country where military rank, political office and promotions have more to do with political favors than ability, the secret police often seek to appear more loyal to the regime and hence increase their status by displaying ruthlessness in their torturing of political suspects and detainees.

Many top-level generals and colonels also vie with each other to extract what they can from impoverished citizens by resorting to various methods, including confiscation of personal effects of prisoners, imposing at will "financial penalties" on the same as a condition for release, granting exemption to national service recruits, and issuing leave permissions and movement cards in return for large sums of money.[81] Other military commanders, in cahoots with local administrators also extort money by the threat of a ban on licenses and closure orders. The military is often bestowed with favors by the state, such as residential villas, farm land, luxurious cars and other financial and material rewards aimed at buying off their loyalty. Past experience seems to indicate that the more the military officers received favours from the state, the more they were poised to make further demands upon it, especially in the light of rampant poverty, and the war-mediated insecurity of the government as well as the growing competing power relations among them.

As such, the political ties between the military and the president are maintained through clientelistic networks of financial and material incentives. For example, it is common for the core military generals and commanders to serve, apart from their role as the security apparatus of the regime, as members of the ministerial cabinet and some even run academic institutions, serve as sports commissioners, and manage party-owned public enterprises as a reward for their loyalty. In this way, the social, political, and economic life of the people is so deeply penetrated and structured to create "a more homogenous and malleable political and economic space, which is to be more closely controlled."[82] It is within this political context that one can get a clear picture of the primary political purpose of the military and the ruling party in Eritrea and how the system is deeply embedded and perpetuated in order to ensure the security of the president. With unrestrained military coercion, the president and his political aids have accomplished the near-total control of the socio-political and economic life of the nation.

Personal Rule and Civil Society Associations

Drawing from the Marxist notion of social reform, the party had been, since the period of the guerrilla conflict, setting up a military and political strategy of creating mass organizations of various sorts, including women and peasants. The initial aim was to mobilize the rural and peripheral urban population for the war of liberation. After independence, these organizations, which also carry a semblance of a civil society, have been reorganized within the power structures and chapters of party-controlled organizations. They were indeed inherited from the liberation war era and are now, as it were, co-opted under new management, with their number supplemented by a couple of urban-based associations left over from the period of Ethiopian administration of Eritrea. Today, they operate as channels of state mobilization and control. Participation in these organisations implies a total integration into the sole political party. An

academically relevant question here is the extent to which it is valid to leave unquestioned assertions about the "popular" nature of such associations during the period of the struggle for independence and their potential to become the future civil societies of Eritrea "providing a point of entry for social and political activism."[83]

After independence, the near-total control of the state was practically reinforced by the president and his cadres, who espoused, for reasons of political expediency rather than ideology, though, Gramscian social reform approaches.[84] These approaches are aimed to counteract what Antonio Gramsci called the "cultural and ideological hegemony" of the "associational realm," such as the church, trade unions, schools, families, and other civil societies and their institutions through which the state perpetuates its hegemony of the moral economic and political order.[85] Following this tradition, the state is expected to employ all its resources and coercive powers to neuter and undo such institutions which, if left unchallenged, have the potential to resist state power through again what Gramsci called "earthworks and buttresses."[86] In an interview with Dan Connell, the head of the Cultural Affairs Department of the PFDJ, Zemhret Yohannes, an ardent proponent of Gramscian reform, noted that "the question of class is not important in Eritrea today. There are other interests, that are more important – ethnicity, religion, uneven development from one region to another. Our priority now is to create a *viable political order* in which we can address the economic interests of all people [emphasis added]."[87]

Claude Ake noted that any economic development program in many African countries is not often anchored in some form of nationalist project.[88] In fact, "the ideology of development was exploited as a means of reproducing political hegemony; it got limited attention and served hardly any purpose as a framework for economic transformation."[89] Personal rulers are characterized not only by their lack of strong institutions with reliable rules and structures but also a development ideology that transcends loyalty.[90] Similarly, George Ayittey asserts that "ideology is not particularly relevant in the analysis of Africa's crisis. Regardless of their professed ideologies, most African regimes have been statist."[91] Indeed, in their attempt to hang on to power in the worst way, many African leaders have become hindrances to development.[92]

The domination of the political scene by a single party in Eritrean politics also means that there is no such thing as power sharing as there is no opposition party. Therefore, issues of tenure of office and continuity are foregone conclusions. As experience has shown even in countries where political parties are allowed to operate, their existence is intended to justify an apparent rather than real democratization process.[93] In fact, the likelihood of them being accused of treason or security risk still remains high.[94] Many political analysts note that Eritrea is reasserting its absolutist and hegemonic tendencies, characterised by extremely centralized and domineering government structures.[95]

Personal Rule and Social Mobilization

In a dictatorship, the state-society relationship can be understood through the idea of legitimacy between the ruler and the ruled. If dictators do not have enough legitimacy to rule, then they rely on sheer military power to stay in office while at the same time they never give up soliciting public compliance and cooperation from the masses by forging emotional and psychological bonds with them.[96] As a response to the declining legitimacy of the Eritrean president, the regime attempts to score social and economic achievements, hence government effectiveness, in order to generate public compliance and cooperation. Social mobilization in Eritrea can thus be understood as a response to the legitimacy crisis that the Eritrean president faces today.

Since the independence of Eritrea, a number of radical policies have been put in place with the ultimate goal of subjugating the Eritrean population to the rule of Isaias Afewerki. One such policy area is national service. In what can be described as an arbitrary proclamation, national service was

decreed by the president himself in the early 1990s. The apparent aim of national military service was to inculcate the ideals of the revolution into the minds of the younger generation. The state expressed its vehement distaste of what it called the inherited civilian culture of "indolence and slothfulness" and wanted now to replace them with such values as national unity, work ethic, camaraderie, cooperation, and sacrifice – a set of values the state claimed were the hallmarks of the liberation movement and helped achieve independence. But in reality, it is a ploy designed to cow society into giving in to the demands of the president and his coercive army.

The national service policy was succeeded by another similar policy, the *Wefri Warsay-Yikaalo* ("a campaign of the new generation") that Isaias Afewerki set up soon after the end of the war with Ethiopia in 2000. This most infamous and draconian proclamation, like its predecessor, had little to do with national development and everything to do with empowering and enriching his cadres and generals in exchange for their loyalty. As in many parts of Africa, buying the loyalty of influential military figures is an ordinary aspect of state formation and the strengthening of the ruling class, especially in moments of war and economic turmoil such as Eritrea currently faces. Most of the national service conscripts are forced to provide free labor for the army generals in various personal services. While the men are employed in house construction, women often work as cleaners, cooks, and wood/water fetchers and all, indefinitely, in the name of national service.[97]

The concept of "self-reliance," which encapsulates the ethos of the government, is yet another one in a series of radical policies directly linked to the government's efforts to build its legitimacy. In fact, the policy of self-reliance from the very outset has been portrayed by many internal and external commentators as a myth.[98] For example, a *Washington Post* reporter observed that, "while striving to be egalitarian, self-reliant utopia, Eritrea has become the most unapologetically repressive country on Earth."[99] Other major world media outlets, such as the BBC described Eritrea as one of the world's poor countries with critical food shortages in which the government "is deliberately rejecting help in the name of self-reliance" by insisting that it is best qualified to look after its own people and accuses the UN of seeking to distract attention from its own failures.[100]

In Eritrea most foreign NGOs and aid organizations have long been ousted after they were accused of being "Trojan horses" for foreign interests.[101] Even well-conceived and planned NGO development projects in the rural areas and in Asmara had to be terminated while the food supplies that the aid agencies had been supplying for many years were put on sale in the market by the Party.[102] Now, ordinary citizens have less than little likelihood of finding such staples as bread and sugar. The daily struggle and long queues to buy such basic necessities as bread, sugar, vegetables and cooking oil—commodities scarcely available even in the government-run stalls—are manifestations of a crisis so profound that the very fabric of urban and rural society is beginning to unravel. For example, the government recently placed a total ban on trade in grain, cereals, and livestock. People have been forced to obtain their monthly rations of grain exclusively from the party-owned shops. The regime has set up checkpoints all over the country to control the transport, selling, and buying of grain. In the villages, a network of military surveillance has been established covering every field that is ready to harvest. On the instructions of the military, farmers are obliged to report to the local military officers prior to harvesting their fields. The military will then send local party and military representatives who will decide on how much is left in the farmer's possession, which is often less than 100 kgs. per farmer. The rest of the harvested grain is bought by the government at a nominal price. According to a recent report by a BBC journalist quoting an Eritrean refugee who fled to northern Ethiopia, "farmers from Eritrea said the government had seized their harvest, paying them as little as 8 percent of the market value ….they [the government] have been confiscating the food and what the farmers have grown."[103]

The draconian trade ban has devastated farmers economically, especially since they have no alternative sources of income to compensate for the reduction in farm generated income. Private

grain shops have been ordered to close and people found selling grain informally on the street have their stock confiscated. To avoid confiscation people try to outsmart the security police by turning grain into flour or dough so as to lessen the chances of detection. Such is the current level of desperation in Eritrea that people speak bitterly about how grain has become "a rarity, and even when available" it is like a "prohibited contraband item that has to be smuggled in."[104] It is possible to argue that the seizing of farm produce and the total ban on rural-urban grain exchange reflects a naive confidence in the ability of the regime to override drought conditions and food shortages through its monopoly of food redistribution. However, in a wider sense, it is also an indication of the regime's paranoia about potential enemies and the need to subjugate them. It is within this context that one can understand why the government-controlled propaganda machine often broadcasts TV programs that paint a fantasy of everyday life where Eritrea is making exemplary strides towards self-sufficiency but at the same time lamenting "the famine ravaged continent of Africa."

The government even has the audacity to claim that there is no food shortage or crisis the kind witnessed in Zimbabwe or the riots witnessed in Egypt. Of course, the government never wants to be reminded of the political space for dissent that exists in countries such as Egypt where in 2008 many people took to the streets to complain about the massive shortage of bread and price rises. However, the regime in Eritrea can hardly feel secure that its attempts to maintain control through misinformation will prove to be successful, mindful as it must be that similar miscalculations at the height of the Ethiopian famine triggered the unrest that swept from power the regimes of both Haile Sellassie and Mengistu.

The irony of dictatorships is that the more they accumulate power the less they feel secure that their attempts to maintain power through their domestically-oriented military will prove successful. This contributes to the tendency, as has been demonstrated by Isaias Afewerki, to generate international tensions by designing an externally-oriented military imbued with notions of external threat. Since the border war with Ethiopia, Isaias Afewerki continued to raise the spectre of the West, particularly what he called the "subversive interference of the US and its allies," including international organizations such as the UN and foreign NGOs, menacing Eritrea's statehood and sabotaging its "reputable policy of self-reliance."[105] The end result is that Isaias Afewerki has practically sealed off Eritrea from the international community. And yet, the regime continues to exonerate itself from any blame for the socio-economic and political crises its policies have brought about. Of course, these crises need to be rationalised and this is achieved by attributing the causes to others. The list of scapegoats is a long one: from the Sudan in the early 90s to Ethiopia, the African Union, and the international community (particularly the US) at the present time. Nor is the blame solely attached to outsiders as is demonstrated by references to Eritreans who "collaborate with the CIA."[106] The attempt to apportion blame for the malfunctioning of the socio-economic and political system can sometimes become surreal such as when the whole Eritrean population is found culpable of becoming "too spoiled."[107]

Conclusion

The East African nation of Eritrea is a typical case of personal tyranny where political repression against the ordinary Eritreans has seemed much worse than the situation under both the Ethiopian monarchy of Haile Selassie and the communist rule of Mengistu Haile Mariam. The political culture of conflict and violence has indeed eroded established norms of behavior, further dragging Eritrea into a perpetual cycle of war, poverty, and backwardness. By using the typology of personal rule, the article examined the political system of Eritrea, including its institutions, structures, processes, and strategies for the past nineteen years. Central to understanding the phenomenon of personal rule in Eritrea are the various specifically designed institutions of coercion, such as the

army, including a myriad of extra-legal and less formal clandestine networks of police and the secret service as well as the political party, the bureaucracy, and above-imposed civil society organizations, which have become centers of mobilization and indoctrination of current and future generations.

Needless to say, there is a sheer disregard for the need to build autonomous state and economic institutions, such as the legislative, the courts, political parties, and an independent media. The result is that personalities rule, as it were, over political principle; sentiments supersede formal institutions; expediency circumvents hierarchies; and loyal ex-combatants head administrative operations in preference to skilled civilians. All the wider societal issues of socio-economic and political development are overshadowed by the overriding objective of preserving the president and his interests. In short, the Eritrean state has not only ceased to be the vanguard of development but has outgrown its purpose and turned into a liability.

As all avenues to development under the government's experiment in the last two decades have become exhausted, this political project has eventually brought about economic, political, and social collapse. The situation on the ground is now characterised by what Dan Connell aptly noted as the "resentment of a quiet population that is seething underneath."[108] When coupled with the recent targeted sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council, which involve arms embargo, assets freeze, and a travel ban on Eritrea's political and military leadership, as a response to the regime's role in Somalia and Djibouti, it is likely that the regime will not be able to sustain its closed autarchic tightly controlled rule for too long. Especially in the light of the dwindling loyalty and irreconcilable competition for rewards within the top echelons of the military, incessant stream of youth desertion, de-urbanization, declining legitimacy in the eyes of the masses, dwindling state services and virtual economic standstill, the regime is definitely showing signs of breaking up and is on the verge of rapidly disintegrating.

All these warning signals have not been able to secure the system, nor in the face of such a bleak prognosis does the regime appear to have any corrective mechanisms. The regime continues to rely on brute force, applied for the most part by the military. The military generals, who are driven by rivalry and personal gain, are held together by accommodation. This, in turn, may imply that the regime is in danger of losing control over the instruments of coercion as its application tends to be contingent on reward to military generals who operate as war-lords over their respective geographic areas. This may as well indicate that the military is inherently brittle than outward appearances would seem to suggest and, hence liable to violent and sudden break-down. Similarly, the repercussions of the creation of a huge unsustainable army composed of disenchanted and impoverished national service recruits who are held indefinitely only seems to aggravate popular discontent and even trigger massive social unrest that could imperil the political life of the personal ruler, Isaias Afewerki.

Epilogue

Since the completion and acceptance of this article for publication in December 2010, many countries in North Africa and the Middle East have witnessed radical political developments. In light of this piece on personal rule in Eritrea, it is appropriate to discuss the relevance of these events for Eritrea. However, given the fact that they are now "ex post facto" to the article at hand, not to mention the magnitude of these revolutions in terms of geography and the divergent political contexts within which they have occurred, the author can only provide a brief epilogue on the direct and indirect influences that these waves of change may have on Eritrea.

From the day a popular uprising broke out in Tunisia, on January 14, leading to the ouster of Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali from power, a chain reaction of political upheavals has engulfed countries

in North Africa and the Middle East. Egypt's President Mubarak resigned less than a month after the Tunisian outbreak (thus contradicting the immediate political prognosis that "Egypt is not Tunisia"); Yemen's President Saleh has faced continual demonstrations; Bahrain's ruler is under great pressure; a bloody civil war has erupted in Libya; and Algeria, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, and Sudan have witnessed anti-government protests of varying degrees. Even Saudi Arabia has felt the heat of the popular uprising, which some commentators have dubbed the "Arab Spring" Revolution.

As the unprecedented uprisings continue to have a domino effect over a large swath of the Arab world, citizens in many sub-Saharan African cities are, as one might expect, wondering whether they will see similar spill over effects in the political landscape of their respective countries. The worry and uneasiness that these revolutions may have unleashed on authoritarian leaders in Africa, in general, and Eritrea, in particular, cannot be underestimated. After the events in Tunisia and Egypt, a month or so passed, and yet the Eritrean regime had the audacity to maintain a total news blackout on such drastic events that otherwise have continued to grip the attention of news media outlets the world over. As time moved on, however, the regime realized that it could not continue to conceal political developments of such a magnitude from the public. In what amounts to a proclamation, it suddenly came up with what it called "Explanation of the Eritrean Government on Current Events in North Africa and the Middle East." The government controlled TV and radio announced a series of programs, and the public was accordingly advised to tune in.

People inside and outside Eritrea were reportedly dumbfounded, even a little sarcastic to learn what the regime would have to say. The broadcasts began with a so-called analysis titled "Popular Uprising: Eve of the End of Era of Domination and Transition to New World Order." A succession of broadcasts, which all shared the same above-mentioned title, has continued for eleven days on end at the time of writing this epilogue. By way of introduction, the government stated that it had deliberately kept quiet on the unravelling events in order to get a full picture of the situation, including determining who was behind these uprisings, how they would shape the future politics of the respective countries, and what would be their impact on the region and the world political stage at large.

Of course, this so-called analysis consisted of nothing but the usual diatribes and accusations employed, as suited circumstances, to apportion blame on the ''US and Western Capitalist greed." The regime even went so far as to rationalize the events in a self-satisfying way by putting the blame on the leaders of the affected countries for failing to anticipate the storm and thus create what the regime called its own harmonious society, self-reliant economy, and independent political path—values that it claims have given Eritrea the edge over the North African and Middle Eastern countries. For ordinary citizens, this too, is indeed a face-saving exercise by a regime already humiliated by its embarrassingly deafening silence following its failed cover up attempt. Behind the façade, though, the regime did not waste time in taking drastic precautionary measures by ordering the reshuffle of the military and further tightening control on its freedom of movement, including the relocation of "nonessential" military personnel out of the capital, Asmara, to the suburbs, some 20-30 kilometres away. Some Eritrean media groups in the diaspora have already noted that there has been some dissatisfaction, if not outright agitation, with the redeployment, especially among the heads of the affected military commands, reportedly raising questions as to the urgency of the reshuffle in the absence of military deployment, not least the inconvenience that would ensue from the reshuffle.

From political, diplomatic, military, and economic perspectives, the revolutions in Libya and Egypt, in particular, have an ironic twist for Eritrea. Libya's Colonel Muammar Gaddafi has been a very close ally of Eritrea's Isaias Afewerki, who has paid him frequent visits even in contravention

of the UN-imposed air embargo on Libya in the 1990s for the Lockerbie bombing. Libya, on its part, was the only member county of the Security Council to vote against UN sanctions on Eritrea in 2009. Moreover, Gaddafi is widely believed to have provided oil as well as military and financial support to Isaias Afewerki. Though it is too difficult to gauge the validity of the alleged presence of Eritrean mercenaries in Libya, there are unconfirmed reports that show that Eritrea has indeed sent military commandos to aid the now embattled Gaddafi, who is fighting for his political life with the help of mercenaries. Some are already known to have come from Chad, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, and the Sudan. What is certain, though, is that, having lost Hosni Mubarak of Egypt first and most likely now Gaddafi, Isaias Afewerki has day by day become an increasingly isolated leader with few if any political allies remaining in the region.

Similarly, with Eritrea's lack of success in tipping the balance of power in war-ravaged Somalia and its past attempts to create cordial relations with Mubarak as a proxy against Ethiopia, the threat to Ethiopia's interests both in forging some sort of political stability in Somalia as well as its efforts to renegotiate the Nile river treaty may now seem, with the ouster of Mubarak, thwarted, at least in the short term. Moreover, the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has not yet been resolved due to Eritrea's intransigence and, hence, Ethiopia's lack of faith in the merit of border demarcation absent a negotiated settlement. As such, Eritrea still continues to pose a threat to Ethiopia by maintaining a huge army near its borders and by continuing to arm numerous north- as well as south-based Ethiopian rebel factions. Moreover, as the domestic repression against Eritrean citizens heightens, leading to thousands of Eritrean refugees flooding into Ethiopia, the cumulative effects of such long standing regional grievances and provocations would mean that Ethiopia may not be willing to put up with Eritrea much longer, especially in the light of what has happened in the region. In fact, recent sources from Ethiopia seem to indicate that it is only a matter of time before Ethiopia moves to effect regime change in Eritrea, one way or another.

Finally, enter the Eritrean opposition groups in the diaspora. These political parties, which may be likened to mutating mushrooms, are characterized by division, rivalry, and disunity due to religious, ethnic, and parochial local sentiments. In fact, many of them were the creation of the liberation era, where an almost surreal absence of a tradition of tolerance and accommodation had often meant recourse to armed conflict as the ultimate method of resolving differences. The emergence of civil society based political groups in the Eritrean diaspora, however, including human rights organizations, associations of lawyers, journalists, research groups, and, not least, several media outlets means that they may play a major role in advocacy, political activism, and raising an awareness of current issues. By organizing demonstrations in various European and North American cities as well as forging political solidarity among different groups, many of these civic associations have indeed attempted to mobilize people in the diaspora to take active participation in the political life of Eritrea. In reaction to the upheavals in North Africa and Middle East, these diaspora organizations have heightened their call and activism for political change inside Eritrea.

Given the fact that internet and social media in Eritrea is deliberately kept on a tight rein and the regime's attempts to empty the cities and urban centers of youth by creating a highly militarized society, together with the inherent tendency of many Eritreans at home to favor the exit option rather than sheer confrontation, civil-society-led collective action inside Eritrea remains feeble, at best. It would be wrong, though, to rule out the possibility for the kind of revolutions that North Africa and the Middle East countries have witnessed occurring in Eritrea, especially when considering the common threads that run through these revolutions. The ubiquity of social strain, frustration, deprivation, corruption, and repression—mobilization factors which exist even more conspicuously in Eritrea than anywhere else in the region—indeed make popular uprising in Eritrea more likely if not certain. After all, it was the seemingly "small scale" and "contingent"

catalyst events that set off the North Africa and the Middle East uprisings that subsequently ushered in a "large scale" social transformation.

Notes:

1 This study is based on the author's PhD thesis on Eritrea, with research conducted 2001-2006 in Eritrea and the Netherlands. He is a former lecturer in public administration, University of Asmara, Eritrea. As a former lecturer and trainer for students and civil service officials and ex-combatants, the author has acquired extensive first-hand experience on the current social, economic, and political developments in Eritrea. He lived for most of his life inside Eritrea and has thus "participated as an expert witness," which can be considered as the classical methodology of participant observation, broadened considerably. Particularly, for the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured open-ended interviews supplemented by in depth dialogic discussions with former students, colleagues, and ex-combatants who recently fled Eritrea to the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Western Europe. Moreover, the information obtained through interviews and discussions have been cross-checked and corroborated by open-sources gathered from international human rights organizations, UN agencies, and governmental and non-governmental human rights organizations as well as news and analysis by media organizations around the world.

2 Hyden 1992; Huntington 1991; Wiseman 1996; Bratton and de Walle 1997, p. 104; Brown 2001; Hyden, Michael, and Ogundimu 2003:41; Ibrahim 2006.

3 Rabb and Suleiman 2003, p. 186.

4 Rabb and Suleiman 2003, p. 186; Diouf 1998, p. 5.

5 Rabb and Suleiman 2003, p. 186.

6 Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Clapham 1996; Joseph cited in Diamond and Plattner 1999, p. 10; Odhiambo-Mbai cited in Oyugi et al. 2003.

7 Since the 1980s and much earlier, many scholars on African politics, including Hollnsteiner 1982; Bugnicourt 1982; De Graaf 1986; Bayart 1993; Ayittey 1999; Bratton and van der Walle 1997:63; Leonard and Strause 2003:2; Oyugi et al, 2003:51, to mention but a few, have used various terminologies such as the "Big Man" syndrome, patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism, prebendalism, sultanism, autocracy, or "politics of the belly" to describe African leaders and their political styles.

8 Hyden 2006, p. 98.

9 Leonard and Straus 2003, p. 1.

10 Jackson and Rosberg 1984, p. 421.

11 Jackson and Rosberg 1984, p. 438.

12 Ibid.

13 Kamrava 1993:6.

14 Diamond 2008, p. 14.

15 Leonard and Straus 2003, pp. 5, 104.

16 Reno 1997; Ayittey 1999; Davidson 1993.

17 Ayittey 1999, p. 49.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Hameso 2002, p. 6.

22 Clapham 1996, p. 187.

23 Kamrava 1993, p. 15.
24 Bramstedt 2003, p. 2.
25 Ibid., p. 3.
26 Scott 1998.
27 Kamrava 1993, p. 18.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Bramstedt 2003:3; Kamrava 1993, p. 17.
31 Kamrava 1993, p. 17.
32 Ayittey 1999, p. 25.
33 Ake 1996, p. 116.
34 Jackson and Rosberg 1984, p. 421.
35 Young 2003, p. 28.
36 The Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF) later became the Peoples' Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), the only political party in Eritrea.
37 Connell in Kelly et al. 2007, p. 287.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., p. 291.
40 Ibid., p. 274.
41 Bereket Habte-Selassie's interview with Charles Cobb, Jr, for Africa Action, 5 Oct. 2001: Accessible at < http://www.africaaction.org/docs01/erit0110.htm >
42 Hedru 2004, p. 437.
43 Garcetti and Gruber 2000.
44 Connell in Repucci and Walker 2005, p. 235.
45 Human Rights Watch 2001.
46 Human Rights Watch 2009.
47 Connell in Kelly et al. 2007, pp. 275-76.
48 Ibid., p. 276.
49 Ogbazghi 2006.
50 Ibid.
51 Connell in Kelly et al. 2007, p. 274.
52 Ibid., p. 275.
53 The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Amnesty International and the US State Department reported the arrest of dissenters, journalists and the widespread use of torture, disappearances and extra-judicial killings. For example, the CPJ notes "with at least 19 journalists behind bars, Eritrea by far leads the list of shame of African nations that imprison journalists. Eritrea holds this dubious distinction since 2001 …the government has refused to confirm if the detainees are still alive, even when unconfirmed online reports suggest that three journalists have died in detention." See CPJ Annual Prison Census 2009: Accessible at < http://www.cpj.org/reports/2009/12/freelance-journalists-in-prison-cpj-2009-census.php >
54 CPJ. "Truth about jailed journalists is locked away in Eritrea." 9 April 2010. Accessible at < http://www.cpj.org/blog/2010/04/truth-about-jailed-journalists-is-locked-away-in-e.php. >
55 Connell in Repucci and Walker 2005, p. 235.
56 Kibreab 2008, p. 277.
57 Connell 2001, p. 363.
58 Mengisteab and Yohannes cited in Tronvoll 2009, p. 48.

59 Since 2001, former veterans of the liberation war who fled to the West have been writing extensively and giving interviews to various diaspora opposition and international human rights organizations concerning the disappearance, murder, and extra-judicial killing of their former colleagues.
60 Discussion with a senior veteran of the EPLF, September, 2003, Asmara, Eritrea.
61 Wilkinson 2007, p. 35; Ihonvbere and Mbaku, 2003, pp. 9, 30.
62 Human Rights Watch 2009.
63 "Eritrea – the World's biggest prison." The Guardian, 17 April 2009. Accessible at < http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/apr/17/eritrea-human-rights>
64 Lyons 2006, p. 12. See also Karatnycky 1998, p. 44; Rotberg 2005, p. 89; Karlekar 2008; Tronvoll 2009.
65 Tronvoll 2009, p. 11.
66 Human Rights Watch 2009.
67 Tronvoll 2009, p. 11.
68 Ibid., p. 67.
69 UNHCR-Refworld 2010.
70 Human Rights Watch, 2009.
71 Christian Solidarity Worldwide, CSW and Human Rights Concern - Eritrea 2009.
72 These torture techniques involve the tying of the arms and legs of the prisoner on the ground face down and then suspending the prisoner in the air from a tree with the arms and legs tied behind the back.
73 Tronvoll 2009, pp. 76-88.
74 Young 2003, p. 28.
75 Tronvoll 2009, p. 65.
76 Amnesty International 2002, p. 8.
77 Young 2003, p. 30.
78 Dallin and Breslauer 1970, p. 40.
79 Ibid.
80 Tronvoll 2009, pp. 11, 20.
81 Ogbazghi 2006; Tronvoll 2009.
82 Lemarchand 1992, p. 184.
83 Connell 2001, p. 359.
84 In September 2001 a national conference was held in Asmara, Eritrea where PFDJ representatives advocated for greater state intervention to counteract what they called "increasing sub-national sentiments in the population."
85 Gramsci 1971, p. 238.
86 Ibid.
87 Connell 2001, p. 351.
88 Ake 1996.
89 Ibid., p. 9.
90 Rosberg and Jackson 1982; Sandbrook 1986.
91 Ayittey 1999, p. 163.
92 Ake 1996, p. 116.
93 Hameso 2002, p. 5.
94 Hameso 2002, p. 5; Connell in Kelly et al. 2007, p. 282.
95 Karatnycky 2002: 227-29; Connell 2007: 274.

96 Kamrava 1993.
97 Ogbazghi 2006.
98 "Eritrea – A Myth of Self Reliance." *The Economist* 29 April 2006.
99 McCrummen 2009.
100 Harris 2006.
101 Connell 2001.
102 Ogbazghi 2006, p. 244.
103 Harter 2009.
104 This information is obtained from various diaspora Eritrean news websites. The researcher has been able to confirm the authenticity of this information independently.
105 Lyons 2006 noted "The Eritrean government became highly repressive and isolationist, arresting two Eritreans working for the U.S. embassy in 2001, expelling the United States Agency for International Development in 2005 and nearly all international humanitarian organizations in 2006."
106 Freedom House in a news release on 30 June 2009 entitled "Shadow Over the Horn" noted that the Eritrean President, in an interview with a Swedish journalist, accused the jailed private journalist as having been "funded by the CIA."
107 In an interview with the national media in January 2009, Isaias Afewerki asserted that people had become "spoiled brats who need to exercise restraint in the type and amount of food they consume."
108 Dan Connell interview with *New York Times* correspondent Jeffrey Gettleman. Gettleman 2007.

References

Ake, Cloude. 1996. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Amnesty International. "Eritrea: Arbitrary Detention of Government Critics and Journalists." 16 September 2002. Accessible at http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR64/008/2002.

Ayittey, George. 1999. *Africa in Chaos*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Bayart, Jean-Francois. 1993. *The State in Africa: Politics of the Belly*. New York: Longman.

Bramstedt, Ernest. 2003. *Dictatorship and Political Policy: The Technique of Control by Fear*. London: Kegan Paul.

Bratton, Michael. 1994. "Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa." In John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild, and Naomi, Chazan. (eds.). *Civil Society and the State in Africa*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner): 51-82.

_____. 1999. "Second Election in Africa." In Larry Diamond and Mark F. Plattner (eds.), D*emocratization in Africa (*Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press): 18-33.

_____ and Nicolas van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa. Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, Stephen. 2001. "Authoritarian Leaders and Multi-party Elections in Africa: How Foreign Donors Help to Keep Kenya's Daniel Arap Moi in Power." *Third World Quarterly* 22, No. 5: 725–39.

Bugnicourt, Jacques. 1982. "Popular Participation in Development in Africa." *Assignment Children* 59/60:57-77.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Human Rights Concern – Eritrea. 2009. "Stakeholder Report on the Human Rights Situation in Eritrea: Universal Periodic Review." April.

Clapham, Christopher. 1996. *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Connell, Dan. 2001a. *Rethinking Revolution: New Strategies for Democracy and Social Justice: The Experiences of Eritrea, South Africa, Palestine and Nicaragua.* Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press.

_____. 2001b. "Inside the EPLF: The Origins of the People's Party and Its Role in the Liberation of Eritrea." *Review of African Political Economy* 28, Issue 89: 345-64.

_____. 2005. "Eritrea." In Sarah Repucci and Christopher Walker (eds.), *Countries at the Crossroads: A Survey of Democratic Governance* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers): 233-50.

_____. 2007. "Eritrea." In Sanja Kelly, Christopher Walker, and Jake Dizard (eds.), *Countries at the Crossroads*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers): 273-95.

Dallin, Alexander, and George Breslauer. 1970. *Political Terror in Communist Systems.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

De Graaf, Martin. 1986. "Catching Fish or Liberating Man: Social Development in Zimbabwe." *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 1.1: 7-26.

Diamond, Larry. 2008. "The State of Democracy in Africa." Paper Presented for a Conference on Democratization in Africa: What Progress Toward Institutionalization. Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, February.

Diouf, Mamadou. 1998. *Democratic Liberalization or Democratic Transition: African Perspectives.* New Path Series No. 1. Dakar: CODESRIA.

"Eritrea – A Myth of Self Reliance" *The Economist.* 29 April 2006. Accessible at http://www.economist.com/node/6866625.

"Eritrea – The World's Biggest Prison." *The Guardian.* Editorial. 17 April 2009. Accessible at http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/apr/17/eritrea-human-rights.

Freedom House. 2008. "Freedom of the Press, 2008: Draft Country Reports." Freedom House. 21 August. Accessible at http**://** www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fop08/CountryReportsFOTP2008.pdf.

_____. 2009. "Shadow Over the Horn: Press Freedom in Eritrea" Freedom House. June 30. Accessible at http://blog.freedomhouse.org/weblog/2009/06/shadows-over-the-horn-press-freedom-in-eritrea.html.

_____. 2009. "Freedom in the World 2009 Report – Eritrea." Freedom House. January 13. Accessible at http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7604.

Garcetti, Eric, and Janet Gruber. 2000. "The Post-War Nation: Rethinking the Triple Transition in Eritrea." In Michael Pugh (ed.), *Regeneration of War-Torn Societies (*New York: St. Martin's Press): 215-37.

Gettleman, Jeffrey. 2007. "Resentment and Rations as Eritrea nears a Crisis." *New York Times*. 16 October. Accessible at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/16/world/africa/16eritrea.html.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hameso, Seyoum. 2002. "Issues and Dilemmas of Multi-party Democracy in Africa." *West Africa Review* 3.2: 161-201.

Harris, Ed. 2006. "Self-reliance could cost Eritrea dear." *BBC.* 5 July. Accessible at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/5121212.stm.

Harter, Pascale. 2009. "Eritrea's controversial push to feed itself." *BBC.* 24th December. Accessible at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8428492.stm.

Hedru, Debessay. 2003. "Eritrea: Transition to Dictatorship, 1991-2003." *Review of African Political Economy* 30 No. 97: 435-44.

Human Rights Watch. 2001. "World Report 2001: Africa Overview." New York: Human Rights Watch. pp. 66-70. Accessible at http://www.hrw.org/legacy/wr2k1/africa/index.html.

_____. 2003. "World Report 2003: Africa Overview - Eritrea." New York: Human Rights Watch. Accessible at http://www.hrw.org/legacy/wr2k3/africa4.html.

_____. 2007. "World Report 2007: Eritrea - Slender Land, Giant Prison." New York: Human Rights Watch. Accessible at http://www.hrw.org/en/africa/eritrea.

_____. 2009. "World Report 2009: Eritrea." New York: Human Rights Watch. Accessible at http://www.hrw.org/en/node/79224.

Huntington, Samuel. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late 20th Century*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Hyden, Goran. 1992. "Governance and the Study of Politics." In Goran Hyden and Michael, Bratton (eds.), *Governance and Politics in Africa* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner): 1-26.

_____. 2006. *African Politics in Comparative Perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

_____, Michael Leslie, and Foulu Ogundimu (eds.). 2003. M*edia and Democracy in Africa.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Ibrahim, Jibrin. 2006. "Legislation and the Political Process: The Third Term Agenda and the Future of Nigerian Democracy." Seminar paper, Centre for Democracy and Development. London: 21 April.

Ihonvbere, Omozuanbvo, and John Mukum Mbak,. 2003. *Political Liberalization and Democratization in Africa: Lessons from Country Experiences.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Jackson, Robert and Rosberg, Carl. 1982a. *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

_____ l982b. "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood." *World Politics* 35.1: 1-24.

_____. 1984. "Personal Rule: Theory and Practice in Africa." *Comparative Politics* 16.4: 421-42.

Joseph, Richard. 1999. "Africa, 1990-1997: From Abertura to Closure." In Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds.), *Democratization in Africa* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press): 3-17.

Kamrava, Mehran. 1993. *Politics and Society in the Third World*. London and New York: Reutledge.

Karatnycky, Adrian. 1998. *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political and Civil Liberties: 1997-1998*. Freedom House: Transaction Publishers.

_____. 2002. *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties 2001-2002*. Freedom House: Transaction Publishers.

Karlekar, Karin. 2008. *Freedom of the Press*. Freedom House: Transaction Publishers.

Keita, Mohamed. 2010. "Truth about Jailed Journalists is Locked Away in Eritrea." CPJ. 9 April. Accessible at http://www.cpj.org/blog/2010/04/truth-about-jailed-journalists-is-locked-away-in-e.php.

Kibreab, Gaim. 2008. *Critical Reflections on the Eritrean War of Independence: Social Capita, Associational Life, Religion, Ethnicity and Sowing Seeds of Dictatorship*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.

Lemarchand, Rene. 1992. "Uncivil States and Civil Societies: How Illusion Became Reality." J*ournal of Modern African Studies* 30.2: 177-91.

Leonard, David and Scott Straus. 2003. *Africa's Stalled Development: International Causes and Cures*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

Lyons, Terrence. 2006. "Avoiding Conflict in the Horn of Africa: U.S. Policy Toward Ethiopia and

Eritrea." CSR No. 21. December: Council on Foreign Relations Press.

McCrummen, Stephanie. 2009. "As Thousands Flee Regime, Eritrea Goes It Alone" *Washington Post* 14 December. Accessible at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/13/AR2009121302691.html

Mengisteab, Kidane, and Okbazghi Yohannes. 2005. *Anatomy of an African tragedy: Political, Economic and Foreign Policy Crisis in Post-Independence Eritrea.* Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press.

Odhimbo-Mbai, Crispin. 2003. "The Rise and Fall of the Autocratic State in Kenya." In Walter Oyugi, Peter Wanyande, and Crispin Odhimbo-Mbai (eds.). *The Politics of Transition in Kenya: From KANU to NARC* (Nairobi: Heinrich Böll Foundation): 51-95.

Ogbazghi, Petros. 2006. "Survival on the Edge: The State, Squatters and Urban Space in Eritrea." Ph.D. thesis, Tilburg University, The Netherlands.

Rabb, Theodore, and Suleiman, Ezra. 2003. *The Making and Unmaking of Democracy.* London: Routledge.

Reno, William. 1997. "Sovereignty and Personal Rule in Zaire." *African Studies Quarterly* 1.3: 39-64.

Rotberg, Robert. ed. 2005. *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. Baltimore, MD: Brookings Institution Press.

Sandbrook, Richard. 1986. *The Politics of Africa's Economic Recovery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scott, Gerald. 1998. "Who has Failed Africa? IMF Measures or the African Leadership?" *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 33.3: 265-74.

Tronvoll, Kjetil. 2009. "The Lasting Struggle for Freedom in Eritrea: Human Rights and Political Development: 1991-2009." Oslo: The Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights.

UNHCR-Refworld. 2010. "New Revelations by Former Guard at Eiraeiro Prison Camp." 12 May. Accessible at http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,,ERI,,4bf0ee411a,0.html.

Wilkinson, Paul. 2007. *International Relations: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wiseman, John. 1996. *The New Struggle for Democracy in Africa.* Brookfield: Ashgate.

Young, Tom. 2003. *Readings in African Politics*. London: The International African Institute.

The Micropolitics of Mining and Development in Zambia: Insights from the Northwestern Province

ROHIT NEGI

Abstract: After two decades of economic stagnation, Zambia witnessed sustained economic growth in the period 2002-2008 due to investments in the country's all-important copper mining sector. This article analyzes the political forms that took shape during the copper mining boom, bringing into view the new entanglements of capital, labor, civil society, and the state. It draws on ethnographic work in the Solwezi District of Zambia's North Western Province, where the opening of two large mines since 2004 placed it on the map of copper extraction. The article argues that the interlinked processes of structural adjustment and the privatization of mining in the 1990s significantly weakened the country's historically strong labor unions. Though still important as political actors within the workplace, the unions representing mineworkers are less salient in the arena of the broader civil society. Instead, loose networks of assorted groups have coalesced around the issue of capital's developmental impacts, namely the mechanism of Corporate Social Responsibility, making this a pivotal site of the emergent politics of mining. These and other more "formal" political contestations forced the state to revisit the neoliberal mining framework that was negotiated with and tilted in favor of capital, only, however, to be confronted with a changed landscape of possibilities as the world economy nosedived in 2008.

Introduction

This article is interested in the politics of copper mining in Zambia a decade after the near-total privatization of the sector in the 1990s. It is based on research conducted there at the height of a sustained boom marked by high copper prices and new investment in mining; a period roughly from 2002 to 2008. The boom consolidated the shift away from state-led mining—with a direct and "thick" association with the wider society—to a privatized industry with a substantially weaker relationship, as the state retreated from the sphere of production through the 1990s.

[1] There is a fairly sizeable literature detailing the contours of structural adjustment and the politics around it.[2] However, few ethnographic accounts are available on Zambia's post-privatization politics of mining.[3] This paper brings into view the contestations around the emergent entanglements of mining capital, labor, civil society, and the state.

I make three main arguments: first, while labor activism remains an important element in Zambian politics, it faces serious challenges due to shifts in the relations of production after privatization. Consequently, and at the very least, labor now has a significantly lesser impact on politics outside the workplace than has been the norm historically. Second, a key terrain of

Rohit Negi is assistant professor at Ambedkar University, Delhi. The research that this paper draws on was supported by grants from the Mershon Center for International Security Studies (Ohio State University), Foundation for Urban and Regional Studies (University of Essex), and the Department of Geography at Ohio State University. Negi wishes to thank Chris Mulaliki, Andreas Kahler, Thambani Zimba, and Prof. Kevin Cox for their help and support.

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i2a2.pdf

ISSN: 2152-2448

contestations around mining today is the civil society and here pungent critiques of the status quo are emerging around the institution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In the post-privatization scenario, "development" channeled through CSR is what links mining capital and local communities. Its rather emaciated form makes CSR easy to ignore as mere window dressing; an epiphenomena of sorts.[4] In doing so, however, there is a danger of overlooking the purchase CSR has on the ground, where it has become an important site of politics of and about development. Finally, despite "regulating its own withdrawal" the Zambian state remains an important arena of claim-making for oppositional politics and has to negotiate their demands while simultaneously balancing its espousal of the neoliberal agenda.[5] It recently responded to the rising tide of critique from the civil society by revisiting its lopsided agreements with mining capital. I discuss the politics around this response to situate the Zambian state in the broader context.

As a new mining enclave, one moreover that is the product of the post-privatization political economy, Solwezi District in Zambia's North Western Province is an apt window into emergent political forms. Two relatively large copper mines—Kansanshi and Lumwana—have started operation there in the last six years; together employing more than 7,000 workers. The district headquarters, also called Solwezi, is at the center of these developments. By 2007, its population had grown to somewhere between 120,000 and 150,000; up more than three times from the year 2000.[6] This transformation is visible in the influx of allied activities—like engineering and transportation—and supporting services both formal (banks, mobile phone and internet companies, retail, etc) and informal (such as taxicabs, street vendors, and sex workers), making the place a frontier of extractive capitalism.[7] This article draws upon my ethnographic work in Solwezi between September 2007 and May 2008, which included interviews with a cross section of actors and the observation of social life.

Though empirically focused on Zambia, the processes this article identifies are of a more general character. Privatization through the structural adjustment of state and economy occurred across the continent, and the emergent political geometries outlined here will likely be resonant to those researching similar contexts elsewhere. I begin though by briefly discussing the two paradigms that form the background for the empirical material.

State Developmentalism

To begin, the leaders of newly independent Zambia (1964) were keen to allay fears of capitalists and settlers related to a slide to a form of Soviet-styled controlled economy. The country's first president, Kenneth Kaunda, insisted that his political philosophy of "humanism" did not include any kind of radical state-led appropriation of capital or private property.[8] Instead, political energies after independence were to be directed towards the Zambianization of the state, that is, the progressive replacement of British and other expatriates by indigenous Zambians. It is thus of some interest and was a surprise when industries, particularly the key mining industry, were nationalized between 1968 and 1971 as part of the so-called Mulungushi Reforms. In the words of a commentator, with this move Kaunda turned from being "the favourite with the West…into self-styled 'humanitarian socialist.'"[9] The reasons for this transformation were both internal and external. The frontier of the war between Black Africa

and settlers in Southern Africa had moved all the way up to the Zambian borders with the proclamation of independence by Southern Rhodesian settlers. Given that a substantial chunk of capital in Zambia was in the hands of the whites—including the largest copper mining company, Anglo American Corporation—Zambian leaders were anxious about the gap between their rhetoric of Pan-Africanism and this embarrassing reality. Internally, and faced with growing challenges to the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP), the nationalization of the economy promised a party-led access to resources that could be channeled to fashion a strong one-party state, which duly materialized in December 1972.[10] In addition, the country's strong labor unions had demanded greater material rewards of political independence than those they perceived were being handed to them by private capital. Nationalization was then also a means to mollify the unions, and as early as 1969 state employment had risen from 22,500 in 1964 to over 51,000.[11]

As world prices of copper soared through the 1960s, the Zambian state nationalized copper mining in the name of Africanization and national development. Thus was born the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM). ZCCM was a vertically integrated firm run by state bureaucrats and technocrats and was responsible for all operations from mining to smelting and refining to transportation. Crucially, it internalized the reproduction of the workforce as well—schools and colleges, and clinics and hospitals now operated under the umbrella of the mining parastatal. All in all, ZCCM followed a "cradle to grave" policy of social welfare, a model that anthropologist James Ferguson called "socially thick."[12] It is for this reason that the ZCCM era is to this day fondly remembered by workers and Zambians at large, a theme to which I return below.

Increasingly then, access to resources was tied to a privileged access to Kaunda's UNIP. This system depended heavily on the surplus obtained from the export of copper, and the ability of the party to remain in power was therefore tied to the performance of Zambian copper on the world market. Copper prices were high at the time that the one-party state was created in Zambia but fell sharply in the mid-1970s. This was the result, among other things, of the oil shock and a generalized downswing in the world economy and proved tragic for the Zambian economy, which it brought down like a house of cards.[13] In the late 1980s, a coalition comprised of "trade unions, students, academics, the business community and parliamentary back-benchers" came together under the banner of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), and called for the establishment of multiparty democracy.[14] Faced by the articulation of bilateral and multilateral donors *and* the growing MMD-led opposition, UNIP had to accede to these demands. Multiparty elections were held in 1991 and Frederick Chiluba, labor leader and ex-president of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), was installed as the President of the Republic. Though Kaunda had flirted with structural adjustment, it was under Chiluba that large-scale privatization took hold and fundamentally reconfigured the Zambian state and economy.

The Mechanics of Privatization

As the mining sector moved from crisis to crisis through the 1980s there was a palpable sense of impotence due to Zambia's economic decline and a feeling of inevitability related to structural adjustment. There seemed little that Zambians could do in the light of the worldwide crisis and the neoliberal turn.[15] The last point was provided further cogency by the widespread notion of

'"footloose" capital. This was the idea that globalization had led to the so-called hypermobility of capital and those less-mobile entities like state and labor had no option but to accept neoliberal reforms for the sake of a continued flow of capital through their territories and workplaces.[16] Further, and for Africa, the way out of the debt crisis of the 1970s was through a set of political and economic "conditionalities" proposed by Western countries and international financial institutions.[17] The result was that workers and unions were faced with an impossible choice. They were asked to choose between an impending economic collapse on the one hand and a negotiated framework where they would have to willingly accept precarious work conditions while containing militancy among the rank and file in the interest of macroeconomic survival.[18] The previous social contract linking the state-led industries (particularly the ZCCM), workers, and society at large was disbanded. In its place, relations between the state and mining companies came to be negotiated through documents known as Development Agreements (DAs), and capital and local communities were now linked through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). I discuss these in this section.

The Mines and Minerals Act of 1995 was the principle mechanism that paved the way for the dismantling of ZCCM and the sale of individual mining companies. In place of a uniform tax regime and code of conditions within which private mining companies were to operate, the Act provided for the negotiation of unique DAs with each company. Several state officials who represented the Zambian people behind these closed doors have since been the subject of corruption charges. The companies that they negotiated the DAs with, however, have not been held similarly accountable. In their landmark study on the trajectory of this give-and-take, Fraser and Lungu have shown that the DAs provided extremely favorable conditions to capital, including low regimes of taxation, tax breaks, and relaxed labor laws.[19] They have also convincingly argued that throughout the process, representatives of the international financial institutions, namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), constantly pressured the Zambian state into expediting the sale of mines.[20]

As for the institution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), it has come a long way from the early admonition it received from Milton Friedman, the key intellectual forbearer of neoliberalism. According to Friedman, CSR—or the idea "that business has a social conscience" and takes seriously its responsibilities for providing employment, eliminating discrimination, avoiding pollution and whatever else may be the catchwords of the contemporary crop of reformers"—was "unadulterated socialism" and compromised the true "welfare" to society that would ensue if *all* enterprises were engaged in making as much profit as possible.[21] Interestingly however, as Friedman's free-market ideology has been universalized in the last three decades, his views on CSR are largely defeated. CSR has emerged as a key concept within the shifting configurations of capital and society.[22] But contra Friedman one could argue that it is precisely the advance of neoliberalism that has led to the rise of CSR as a sort of Polanyian "double movement" in the era of privatization.[23] The African state has retooled, of which the retreat from social spending has been a key component.[24] This is the backdrop for demands on capital to contribute towards the provision of social services over and above the payment of taxes. This is a further result of pressure from civil society groups in the West, who monitor the social effects of multinational capital in African and other Third World countries considered too weak or corrupt to be able to do so on their own.[25] Additionally, it has been argued that

responsible corporations are likely to do better in the stock market, although there is no consensus on the universality of this correlation.[26] What is clearer is that in the way mining capital operates in Zambia today, CSR is an important facet of its "social license" to operate in the country.[27] To that extent individual companies have to engage with it, though there is unevenness in its actual practice corresponding to the size of the companies and their respective origins.[28]

As CSR is widely understood today, there is a sense that private firms should "run their affairs, in close conjunction with an array of different 'stakeholders', so as to promote the goal of 'sustainable development'. This goal has…three dimensions, 'economic', 'environmental' and 'social.'"[29] I believe that this definition is apt, for these terms have become common currency today both in corporate presentations *and* in the vocabulary of Zambian civil society groups. A survey of the various mining companies in Zambia reveals that most have a social responsibility (or community development) department, have set up 'stakeholder' forums that meet regularly, and are legally obliged to undertake environmental assessments on an ongoing basis.[30] It is therefore imperative to pay attention to the practices of CSR. In what follows, and to ground this general discussion, I present evidence of the concrete processes and relations that have emerged in Solwezi, investigating the themes of labor activism, politics of CSR, and the responses of the Zambian state respectively.

The Micropolitics of the Boom

Labor Activism

The first component of the emergent mining-society relationship to discuss is the position of workers and unions in the different frameworks. From very early on, mineworkers have been—by and large—the most radical element of the Zambian working class. This was on account of "a consciousness of their unwarranted exploitation, the inequitable distribution of the revenue generated by their hazardous labour, and the importance of this labour in the strategically important copper mining industry and, through it, national development."[31] The African Mineworkers' Union, established in 1949 was strong and militant, and was a major contributor to the struggle for independence.[32] Workers' participation in the struggle was driven in part by the fact that they were the direct losers of the various color bars that were in place during colonial rule. In the state-led mining era, though unions were formally incorporated, their collective strength and continued militancy ensured that despite the parasitic nature of the one-party state, a considerable proportion of the surplus was redistributed to the workers and through them their extended families.[33] There was also a considerable expansion of social infrastructure like education and health, in addition to state support for sports and creative enterprises.[34]

Speaking of the contours of the union movement in the period of neoliberal transition, numerous blows throughout the 1990s meant that it has declined significantly in numerical and political terms. Ironically enough, workers are themselves implicated in this process, having supported the economic liberalization of the economy under the structural adjustment program in the 1990s.[35] The results though were disastrous: between 1986 and 2001, the umbrella organization of trade unions, the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), declined in membership from close to 350,000 to 250,000.[36] In more recent years, there has been an

expansion of mining activities, resulting from record prices for copper driven in large part by the industrialization of China and India, and the regional emergence of South African capital. This new investment, however, is of a very different kind, engendering labor regimes that are contractual, unorganized, and low paid; reflecting in part, the movement towards such labor practices occurring more generally, that is, the "shift from an economy characterized by the stable long-term employment typical of factory workers to one marked by flexible, mobile, and precarious labor relations."[37] According to Ian Mkandawire, the Vice President of the MUZ, more than half of the close to 70,000 Zambian mineworkers were nonunion and contractually employed in 2006.[38] It is within this context that the new mining boom is situated when unions are historically at their weakest.

Beyond the numbers, the shift from the vertically-integrated parastatal to several private companies linked to a plethora of smaller contractors has changed the concrete conditions under which workers must organize. Consider the arrangement at the large-scale Kansanshi mine in Solwezi. Here, operations are divided into three distinct parts, each of which is carried out by different limited companies that are owned completely or in large part by the Canadian First Quantum Mining Limited (FQML). The three main parts of copper mining are undertaken by the distinct companies; namely: 1) mining, which is the excavation of the ore from the open pit and transportation to the crusher, 2) the conversion of the ore into copper concentrate or processing, and 3) at Kansanshi there is a separate acid plant division, which produces sulphuric acid for use in processing and for sale regionally. In terms of the structure, the mining division is incorporated under First Quantum Mining and Operations (FQMO), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the parent company; the acid plant under FQM Zambia's Bwana-Lonshi Division (also 100 percent owned by FQML); and processing at the mine is undertaken by Kansanshi Mining Plc, which is 80 percent owned by FQML.[39]

Such organization of the labor process has important implications for workers. The employers of the three sets of workers are different, which is critical because wages and conditions of work must be separately negotiated with each company. While those employed directly by Kansanshi have company officials at hand, the Bwana Mkubwa Division—which employs acid plant employees—is headquartered near Ndola in the Copperbelt Province, about 200km away. In addition, the conditions of service differ—Kansanshi workers are on two-year contracts while FQMO and Bwana employees are hired on a permanent basis. The latter, however, get paid lower wages as a sort of trade-off for greater job security. On the other hand, because of their precarious contracts activists in the Kansanshi Mining Plc are under not inconsiderable pressure to temper oppositional politics.

Workers in each division have their contracts negotiated separately, which is important because a smaller group of workers enter into each separate capital-labor negotiation than they would under a single company. The Mineworkers Union of Zambia (MUZ), which is the largest of the mineworkers' unions, has a similarly organized structure with different units representing workers in the mining, acid plant, and processing division respectively. [40] According to a union activist at Kansanshi: "When it comes to the miners, we are divided because we have different contracts; but the managers, they are meeting together."[41] His point was that even though the employers are different, their bargaining strategies are derived from

the point of view of the parent company as a whole, while workers must bargain separately with their immediate employer.

Beyond job security, activism is also related to the respective level of skill. Those in the mining division have the most generalizable set of skills—many can work as machine and truck operators in other mines and even different industries but those engaged in work in the acid plant or processing are less mobile because there are only a handful of large copper mining companies like Kansanshi that house these facilities. Many smaller mines simply extract ore—where again they require operators—and transport it to the larger ones for processing. All of this leads to uneven political stakes. Workers that I spoke to were well aware of this unevenness and considered those in the mining division as the most radical and more likely to consider strikes and stoppages than others. In the specific cases when they indeed engaged in such actions, however, the talk of labor solidarity across the workplace was not necessarily translated into action. In 2007, for instance, workers in the mining division went on strike for better wages, were not joined by others, got isolated, and invited the wrath of the company and the state. President Levy Mwanawasa had planned to visit Kansanshi that month but refused to go to the mine until the striking workers went back to work; strongly denouncing their action. The isolation faced by each unit is further illustrated by the fact that when the processing plant employees carried out a protracted struggle for a new contract in early 2008, others did not join them because they had already secured theirs. Once again, the state did not waste time in intervening—the Deputy Minister for Labor camped in Solwezi and ordered the parties to keep matters solely on the negotiating table, a thinly veiled attempt to deter the unions from mobilizing workers on the matter, an act that must necessarily happen "off the table."[42]

My discussions with union leaders and members further suggest that workers in the branches owned by the Copperbelt-based units are mostly brought to Kansanshi on a temporary basis. Contrarily, those employed in the processing plant are permanent employees of Kansanshi Mining Plc and live in Solwezi; many are also long-time residents of the area. According to a union organizer, "when the mine opened they said local people should benefit…the indigenous should have an upper hand. They don't have enough copper in Bwana, so they're sending [workers] to Kansanshi. People from Copperbelt are replacing us from North Western Province….In the end people from here will find themselves out of the gate." [43] Similar issues have also emerged at the newer Lumwana copper mine. In response to localist demands, the mine implemented a recruitment system that reserved various unskilled and semi-skilled positions for the "indigenous" ethnic group—the Kaonde—and placed three Kaonde chiefs as gatekeepers of this system.[44] The result is a politicization of ethnicity such that job-seeking "outsiders" make allegations of discrimination and "tribalism," creating divides that unions must bridge.

The above insights reveal real challenges that mineworkers face in the privatized mining set-up. Instead of a single vertically-integrated mining company, as in the halcyon days of state ownership, they are employed by a number of private firms. Furthermore, these companies may be organized as separate corporate divisions. This adds another layer to the negotiations workers must undertake; balancing their differential skills, origins, and material stakes in place. In general, and despite these and other instances of labor activism in Solwezi, it was noticeable how rarely this activism traveled out to community-level organizing. What has been termed "social movement unionism" was largely absent from Solwezi. [45] Instead, a vibrant critique of

mining and development emerged outside the workplace, and in which unions played only a marginal role.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Critique

As workers—especially mineworkers—have declined numerically and politically, the critique of the new paradigm of mining and society is increasingly occurring around the perceived inadequacy of capital's developmental activities. Myriad political forces, including NGOs, religious institutions, and unions pushing for a greater redistribution of mining revenues increasingly find themselves coalescing around CSR. Contrary to Shamir's argument related to the progressive deradicalization of CSR in the North, there has been grassroots radicalization around it in Zambia in the 2000s.[46] I elaborate this assertion in this section.

Generally speaking, CSR is designed to ensure the fulfillment of capital's basic ethical and environmental standards. In Zambia, however, it is a significantly broadened concept associated with charity, donations, and capital's contribution to the creation of physical and social infrastructure in the specific localities in which it operates. This phenomenon has a clear logic. Copper mining has been and remains the country's all-important industry, but even the low-level of taxes accruing to the central government filter down to particular localities only via the national budget. This implies that the places where mining is located do not necessarily gain a higher share of the revenues than the rest of the country. This fact has spawned some interesting politics of regionalism in the Copperbelt Province in the past, where many have bemoaned their disproportionate contribution to the national treasury without adequate compensation in the form of development funds.[47] The upshot is that demands for local development are directly aimed at the mining companies and coalesce around CSR since it is the mechanism through which capital undertakes its specific forms of local development.

Viewing the matter from the vantage point of Solwezi, both Kansanshi and Lumwana have a department that is responsible for undertaking CSR activities. The former in fact set up the Kansanshi Foundation in 2006 with a mandate to co-ordinate developmental activities with the relevant state departments and the community. Lumwana on the other hand has a department for corporate responsibility headed by the social sustainability manager. Despite similarly structured CSR frameworks, however, the perception of the two mines' developmental effects and efforts diverge: Lumwana is widely considered to be much greater contributor to Solwezi's development than Kansanshi. This is a result of both the material practices of the respective companies and the discursive strategies through which they articulate their place in Zambian development. As for the latter, the following words of Lumwana's managing director are relevant: "We did not just take over ZCCM mines like others, but Lumwana had a dream that it has slowly brought to life…It is not only bringing massive investment, but jobs, expertise, and opportunities for Zambia. Others are merely plundering what Zambians built…other investors rape and pillage and sell what's left over…We took risks, others just bought mines for cheap."[48] The managing director here implicitly draws upon the wounds of structural adjustment and privatization that are still fresh for ordinary Zambians. The hurried sale of mines, mediated by corrupt officials, left thousands of workers unemployed while money for social services dried up. Zambians therefore hold deeply disturbing memories of the 1990s, and the mostly foreign companies that bought the public mines are widely disliked.[49]

Kansanshi's trajectory is of a more common kind. Bought from the state by Phelps Dodge, the mine passed ownership until finally being sold to FQML for a pittance ($27.5 million).[50] FQML realized over $3 billion in revenues from Kansanshi in the period 2006-2008, amounting to almost $2 billion in operating profits.[51] The CSR activities carried out by the Kansanshi Foundation—which generally comprise of digging bore wells, refurbishing and building school blocks, and the construction of a market in Solwezi—total less than $1 million a year.[52] The gap between the unprecedented windfall and concrete development in Solwezi is widely resonant and many are dissatisfied by the company's CSR practices.[53] This is firstly because its expenditure represents a miniscule fraction of the profits, a fact of which locals are well aware. Second, it is essentially piecemeal in nature, without any substantial contribution like a hospital, school, or stadium. Third, some of the Foundation's work—cloaked as CSR—is really for its own benefit. For instance, boreholes have been dug ostensibly to provide water to villages around the mine. But an official in the local water supply agency reckoned that these have been strategically placed to monitor groundwater levels at the mine, which has a long history of flooding. Further, a civil society activist once said to me that Kansanshi was good only for the police. This remark puzzled me and its meaning was revealed only later when I was told by a local police official that thefts from the mine—actual and attempted—accounted for a high proportion of all illegal activities in the area and that the local police had been equipped by the Kansanshi Foundation through its CSR funds. Clearly, CSR here is directed towards keeping the growing headache of ore and concentrate theft from the mine in check.

Kansanshi also attracts brickbats on account of the class character of its developmental practices. The company has built homes, pools, a gymnasium, and even golf course, but to the annoyance of workers and Solwezi residents, these are for the use of those high up on the mine's organizational structure. Given that there is a degree of overlap between race and the division of labor at the mine, these words of a Kansanshi worker are perfectly understandable: "This is apartheid…Kansanshi has created a new Cape Town."[54] This discursive connection is all the more pertinent because many expatriate managers at Kansanshi are from South Africa. Lumwana, however, is orthogonally portrayed. It has built houses—for all categories of workers—at its company town. The upshot is that Lumwana is perceived as being closer to the ZCCM model than Kansanshi and for that reason is considered better.[55]

The critique of Kansanshi is clearly observed at public meetings related to the developmental impacts of mining. Consider the case of a forum organized by the newly constituted North Western Chamber of Commerce. This is a collective of several local businesses and contractors who, in the main, seek business from the two large mines of the region. This meeting was termed "Doing Business with Lumwana and Kansanshi" and drew over a hundred people. Three expatriate Kansanshi managers and one from Lumwana gave presentations at the meeting. Each stressed how their respective mine was "empowering" local people by giving them contracts, even though each acknowledged that there were limitations to this goal because the companies, in the final analysis, sought to source the cheapest possible goods and services. During the event, the bulk of Kansanshi's time was taken by a manager responsible for procurement, and he started with an emphatic appeal in a thick Afrikaner accent: "Be proud! Be proud and sell your company to me." Thereafter, his intervention was directed mostly at explaining why exactly Kansanshi does not purchase more of its materials from local contractors. On the other hand, Lumwana's representative repeated his company's resolve to

develop the region, placing emphasis on the construction of the town. "We are in the bush…we are not five minutes from Kitwe or Ndola [towns on the Copperbelt]," he averred. In the discussion that ensued, successive speakers made similar distinction between the two mines. A speaker said, "Kansanshi, they're useless…my hat off to Lumwana for building a proper town."

To be sure, Kansanshi's place in the pecking order is not helped by the conduct of its expatriate employees. The president of the Kansanshi Foundation, for instance, was briefly in prison on charges of assaulting a local worker on his farm. Another expatriate employee caused anger among locals when he uprooted an electric pole to acquire the wires he needed to pull his vehicle out of a ditch, plunging entire neighborhoods in Solwezi into darkness.[56] But these are merely some particularly embarrassing occurrences for the company; the point is that the practice of Kansanshi's CSR is a much narrower definition of the copper mines' place in the wider society than Zambians have been accustomed to. It is for this reason that the public relations manager of Kansanshi has to consistently step in to defuse fiery confrontations between civil society representatives and the company. At a much publicized CSR event in March 2008, Kansanshi donated a refurbished SUV to the police in Solwezi. The event threatened to take an ugly turn, however, after it was revealed by a speaker that the company had buried tens of disused vehicles on its property. Participants thereafter questioned Kansanshi's representatives on the issue by making two criticisms. The first was related to the fact that this practice caused an environmental hazard for workers and nearby residents. The second criticism was that the incident revealed Kansanshi's careless attitude towards locals—the company had chosen to bury the vehicles instead of donating them to the community; thereby showing disregard for the uniquely Zambian skill of creatively reusing discarded items. The public relations manager had to step in and clarify but his arguments failed to gain purchase with the crowd and the issue of the buried vehicles dominated the media coverage of what was otherwise supposed to be a picture-perfect CSR event.[57]

It is at such moments that contentions around CSR as the dominant link between mining and society are most clearly revealed and become a critique of mining as such. Solwezi is just one site where the critique of privatized mining has emerged from the civil society. There is little doubt that this process is of a general kind in mining towns, and forceful—organized and more spontaneous—demands for a more substantial developmental paradigm of copper mining are resonant in localities like Solwezi. It is to this growing chorus that the state responds in contingent and often contradictory ways. To these I turn next.

The State Response

Among other things, neoliberal cosmologies prescribe that the state enact and enforce mechanisms to make its territory attractive to capital. As discussed above, important elements of this task in Zambia were the lopsided Development Agreements (DA) negotiated by the state with capital that instantiated a lean regulatory framework and low taxes. During the mining boom that forms the context of this paper, this neoliberal framework was coming into question. The state—*qua* political party in a multiparty democratic polity—in turn responded to popular sentiments that were increasingly articulating demands for greater national control over

resources and their extraction.[58] An analysis of recent politics around the state's reformulation of the policy framework of mining reveals how this process unfolded in Zambia.

Despite undertaking a comprehensive structural adjustment of state and economy, the benefits promised were not apparent to many, even though the mining sector witnessed a substantial boom in the 2000s, and copper production reached an all-time high. This was a direct outcome of the fact that the DAs with mining companies were signed from a position of weakness. Copper prices in the early 1990s were at historic lows, the state was under huge foreign debt, and the consensus was that prices would remain low for the foreseen future.[59] But by 2003 prices had rebounded and Zambia had attained the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status, leading to new investment and debt-cancellation respectively. The feeling of "impotence and inevitability" highlighted above now started to give way to incipient popular demands asking the state to revisit the DAs. It was in this context that in its 2008 budget the Zambian government announced sweeping changes to the country's tax structure, which by extension made individual DAs with companies redundant as far as the tax-regime contained within them was concerned. A new windfall tax tied to global copper prices was introduced, mining royalties were increased to 3 percent from the hitherto 0.6 percent, accompanied by the reintroduction of withholding taxes on interests, royalties and management fees, and an increase in corporate income tax to 30 percent from 25 percent.[60]

The state's actions can be located with respect to the wider dissatisfaction with the neoliberal regime of accumulation, seen, among others, in the increasing base of the opposition Patriotic Front (PF). The PF enjoys overwhelming support on the Copperbelt Province, where it has secured a large majority in the last two presidential elections (2006 and a mid-term election in 2008 due to the erstwhile President's death), in addition to winning every single parliamentary seat. Most recently, an alliance of the PF and another opposition party (United National Democratic Party) defeated the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) candidate in a Solwezi by-election; the first such occurrence in what has long been an MMD stronghold. Opposition to the MMD has strengthened through espousal of a critique of the post-privatization political economy.[61] The ruling party had to counter its growing irrelevance in the Copperbelt and beyond. This was an important part of the reason for the announcement of the new taxes and with it, the reexamination of the neoliberal compact. Having said that, and while the formal opposition political parties are important, their antagonistic relationship to the party in power is of a more general kind and moreover is not disconnected from the micropolitics of mining at concrete localities. In places such as Solwezi, mining capital faces daily critique to which opposition parties themselves are in a way responding. To that extent, an exclusive focus on national party-politics is less well suited to uncovering the particularities constitutive of broader political articulations, such as that against neoliberal orthodoxy in Zambia during the boom.

For their part, mining companies reacted guardedly to what amounted to the state's repudiation of the DAs. While the Chamber of Mines expressed disappointment and warned of impending layoffs, individual companies did not present a united face, in part because each wished to privately negotiate with the state to avoid public confrontation with the party in power.[62] Some mines—most notably the Konkola Copper Mines (KCM)—decided in due course to comply with the reconfigured tax regime, but others refused to accept the new taxes, arguing that the DAs were legally-enforceable. The most vocal among the latter group was First

Quantum Minerals, which repeatedly insisted on the sanctity of the DAs and threatened to take the Zambian state to court. Backed by opposition parties and the civil society, however, the government initially stood firm on the matter.

Interestingly, Lumwana continued to draw upon its discursive distance from other mines to insist on the unfairness of the taxes and the need for the state to respect the DA, if only for Lumwana. The managing director insisted that if Lumwana were "put in the same basket as other investors" its promise to develop the North Western Province and the country would be compromised. He stated that the new windfall taxes were justified for the mines that took over existing ones and made a windfall but were unjust for Lumwana because it was an entirely new project, adding that his company had spent a million and a half dollars a day, employed thousands of Zambians, and renovated many schools and clinics in the neighboring rural communities. All of this was before a single pound of copper had been mined, which meant that it was a serious investor and needed to be treated with special concern. In contrast to Kansanshi that has better grade ore, at Lumwana the concentration of the copper is very low—less than a fourth of the Kansanshi ore. Changes in tax regime would in this scenario push costs up, shift the bottom-line, and make it increasingly unprofitable to operate the mine. The mine life, put another way, would shrink by as many as fifteen years from the estimated thirty-seven, *ceteris paribus.* This careful articulation proved effective. While other mines were unequivocally directed to pay the new taxes, uncertainty prevailed over Lumwana's position. Later, however, even Lumwana had to accede to the taxes but only after they were substantially diluted.

The tax episode illustrates the contingent negotiations taking place within the state regarding its developmental role and relationship to capital. Its resolve to implement the new tax regime was in part an attempt to fashion a more developmentalist framework—that is, expanding its revenue base for the program of national development—*within* a privatized mining set-up. At best this led to mixed results, with government having to ultimately concede defeat at the hands of the world commodity markets. Following the housing meltdown in the US and with the global economy collapsing into recession, copper prices tumbled in late 2008. Between August 2008 and February 2009 they dropped from over $4/lb to less than $1.5/lb. As companies began to cut hours (Kansanshi), lay-off workers (KCM), or shut-down completely (Luanshya), the government backtracked on the introduction of the new taxes. In the main though, the state acted too late to make any substantial recovery from the profits hitherto accumulated from copper extraction. One does not know what the future holds for copper prices or for the social critique highlighted in this paper. What is clearer is that Zambia's inextricable ties to global capitalism continue to condition the menu of available options that are being internally negotiated and reworked between capital, state and society.

Conclusion

The 1990s witnessed a shift in Zambia from the developmentalist framework presided over by a one-party state to the neoliberalization of the economy and a simultaneous move towards multiparty democracy. In so doing, the relations between state, capital, labor, and society were substantially changed to favor capital. The regulatory and tax framework was separately and secretly negotiated between the state and capital, and Zambia implemented one of the leanest—

attractive, in corporate parlance—tax regimes in the world. In the same period, the number of formally-employed workers and their organizational strength was significantly reduced, while the hitherto developmental link between mining and society was reshaped via the weaker institution of CSR. However, considering these shifts from the vantage point of the mining boom in Solwezi, while these contours were clearly discernible, the process of the reconfiguration was neither smooth nor complete.

Formally employed workers and their unions remain an important part of the political landscape; their position is however significantly weaker than before. It is easy therefore to be overly pessimistic about progressive change in Zambia given the historical strength of unions. Such a reading, however, risks missing entire micro politics of mining and development that is underway in several places in Zambia. Here, the sharpest critiques of mining capital increasingly pivot on civil society-led politics around CSR, which creates several points of rupture in the status quo. The Zambian state responded to this political emergence by announcing significant changes to the tax regime, but its measures were stunted by the unfortunate alliance of oppositional mining companies and the collapsing world price of copper. By late 2008, several mines laid off workers and a few closed down entirely. Since then the prices have rebounded, nearing $4.50/lb. in February 2011, but the political momentum pushing for a new political economy of has dissipated. It will take renewed efforts and organizing of the kind highlighted in this paper at multiple sites to reinvigorate such a movement.

Notes:

1 Ferguson 2005; Lungu and Mulenga 2006.
2 See Craig 2001; Larmer 2007; Larmer and Fraser 2006; Rakner 2003; Simutanyi 1995.
3 Notable exceptions include the recently published Fraser and Larmer 2011.
4 This is precisely the phrase used by a fellow researcher in Zambia when we discussed the issue of CSR.
5 Sassen 2006, p.269.
6 Central Statistical Office 2001; and Personal Communication, CSO Solwezi Branch 2007.
7 See Tsing 2005.
8 Kaunda 1966.
9 Cohn 1968, p.341.
10 Gertzel, Baylies, and Szefte, 1984, pp.1-28.
11 Rakner 2003, p. 46.
12 Lungu and Mulenga 2006, p. 37; Ferguson 2005.
13 Burdette 1988, p. 95.
14 Rakner 2003, p. 63.
15 Larmer and Fraser 2007.
16 See Cox 1993.
17 Abrahamsen 2000.
18 See Catchpowle and Cooper 2003, p.13.

19 Fraser and Lungu 2007.
20 See also Silwamba 2007.
21 Friedman 1970.
22 Carroll 1999.
23 Polanyi 1944, pp. 136-228.
24 Carmody 2007.
25 Kapelus 2002, pp. 277-78.
26 See for opposing views, Drucker 1984 and Cochran and Wood 1984.
27 Lungu 2008.
28 Haglund 2008.
29 Henderson 2001, p. 15.
30 This is the picture one gets from the survey of the various—large—mining companies in Zambia: Equinox; First Quantum Minerals; Konkola Copper Mines; and Mopani Copper Mines. KCM succinctly summarizes its notion of CSR by saying that it "is committed to the principles of sustainable development" – which it takes to mean "development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" because it believes it is fundamental to its long-term success. (http://www.kcm.co.zm/sheq.php).
31 Larmer 2006, p. 295.
32 Larmer 2005; Parpart 1983.
33 Cliggett 2003.
34 Lungu and Mulenga 2006.
35 Simutanyi 1995, p. 825.
36 From Rakner 2003, p. 98 and Larmer 2002, p. 117.
37 Hardt and Negri 2004, p. 112.
38 Personal communication 18 July 2006.
39 The rest of Kansanshi Mining Plc is shared between a group of international investors and ZCCM Holdings, which is owned by the government of Zambia.
40 In recent years, several workers have broken from the MUZ and formed the National Union of Miners and Allied Workers (NUMAW), which has a significant strength on the Copperbelt.
41 Personal communication 18 May 2008.
42 "More Riots…" 2008.
43 Personal communication 14 April 2008.
44 Negi 2011.
45 "Social-movement unionism implies an active strategic orientation that uses the strongest of society's oppressed and exploited, generally organized workers, to mobilize those who are less able to sustain self-mobilization: the poor, the unemployed, the casualized workers, the neighbourhood organizations" (Moody 1997, p. 59).
46 Shamir 2004.
47 See Larmer, 2007.

48 Personal communication, 28 February 2008.
49 See Ferguson 1999; Larmer 2006.
50 Kansanshi Fact Sheet: http://www.first-quantum.com/i/pdf/Kansanshi_Fact.pdf
51 First Quantum Minerals Ltd, 2008 p. 17.
52 Kansanshi Foundation 2007.
53 See Kalaluka 2007.
54 Personal communication 17 March 2008.
55 During interviews, informants often made comparisons between private mining companies and their memories of the ZCCM-era as a conceptual tool to grasp the present. Many remembered that time fondly and spoke about the provision of good housing to workers, quality education for children, and how the Zambian football teams regularly competed for continental championships. In short, Zambians continue to evaluate the changing mining-society relations through the template of the country's developmentalist past.
56 He was subsequently released upon the payment of settlement to the worker (Mulaliki 2008).
57 *Times of Zambia* 2008.
58 See Larmer and Fraser 2007; Negi 2008.
59 Scott 2009.
60 Lungu 2008.
61 Larmer and Fraser 2007.
62 Mulowa 2008.

References

Abrahamsen, Rita. 2000. *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa*. London: Zed Books.
Burdette, Marcia. 1988. *Zambia: Between Two Worlds.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Carmody, Padraig. 2007. *Neoliberalism, Civil Society and Security in Africa*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Carroll, Archie B. 1999. "Corporate Social Responsibility: Evolution of a Definitional Construct." *Business Society* 38.3: 268-95.

Catchpowle, Lesley, and Christine Cooper. 2003. "Neoliberal Corporatism: Origins and Implications for South Africa". In Tom Bramble and Franco Barchiesi (eds.), *Rethinking the Labor Movement in the 'New South Africa'* (London: Ashgate): 12-24.

Central Statistical Office. 2001. *Census Survey Report: 2000*. Lusaka: Republic of Zambia Central Statistical Office.

Chiluba, Frederick. 1998. *Beyond Political Rhetoric: Speeches by President Frederick Chiluba.* Lusaka: ZPC Publications.

Cliggett, Lisa. 2003. "Gift Remitting and Alliance Building in Zambian Modernity: Old Answers to Modern Problems." *American Anthropologist* 105.3: 543-52.

Cochran, Philip L. and Robert A. Wood. 1984. "Corporate Social Responsibility and Financial Performance." *Academy of Management Journal* 27.1: 42-56.

Cohn, Hans. 1968. "Zambia—Land of Problems." *Intereconomics* 3.11: 341-43.

Cox, Kevin R. 2001. "Territoriality, Politics and the 'Urban'." *Political Geography* 20.6: 745-62.

Craig, John. 2001. "Putting Privatisation into Practice: the Case of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Limited." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39: 389-410.

Drucker, Peter F. 1984. "The New Meaning of Corporate Social Responsibility." *California Management Review* XXVI: 53-63.

Ferguson, James. 1999. *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ferguson, James. 2005. "Seeing Like an Oil Company: Space, Security, and Global Capitalism in Neoliberal Africa." *American Anthropologist* 107.3: 377-82.

First Quantum Minerals Limited. *Kansanshi: Fact Sheet: 8*. 2007. http://www.first-quantum.com/i/pdf/Kansanshi_Fact.pdf.

Fraser, Alastair, and John Lungu. 2007. "For Whom the Windfalls? Winners and Losers in the Privatization of Zambia's Copper Mines." http://www.minewatchzambia.com.

Fraser, Alastair, and Miles Larmer (eds.). 2011. *Zambia, Mining and Neoliberalism: Boom and Bust on the Globalized Copperbelt.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Friedman, Milton. 1970. "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits." *The New York Times.* 13 September. http://www.colorado.edu/studentgroups/libertarians/issues/friedman-soc-resp-business.html.

Gertzel, Cherry, et al. 1984. *The Dynamics of the One-Party State in Zambia.* Manchester: Manchester University press.

Haglund, Dan. 2008. "Regulating FDI in Weak African States: A Case Study of Chinese Copper Mining in Zambia." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 46: 547-75.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2001. *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Henderson, Ian. 1975. "Early African Leadership: the Copperbelt Disturbances of 1935 and 1940." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 2.1: 83-97.

Henderson, David. 2001. *Misguided Virtue: False Notions of Corporate Social Responsibility.* London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

Kansanshi Foundation. 2007. *Status Report for Kansanshi Foundation Trust.* Solwezi: Kansanshi Mining PLC.

Kalaluka, M.. 2007. "Development in Solwezi not benefiting residents-Nabanda." *The Post* 23 September.

Kapelus, Paul. 2004. "Mining, Corporate Social Responsibility and the "Community": The Case of Rio Tinto, Richards Bay Minerals and the Mbonambi." *Journal of Business Ethics* 39. : 275-96.

Larmer, Miles. 2005. "Reaction and Resistance to Neoliberalism in Zambia." *Review of African Political Economy* 32.103: 29-45.

Larmer, Miles. 2006. "'The Hour Has Come at the Pit': The Mineworkers' Union of Zambia and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy, 1982-1991." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32.2: 293-312.

Larmer, Miles. 2007. *Mineworkers in Zambia: Labour and Political Change in Post-colonial Africa.* London: IB Tauris.

Larmer, Miles and Alastair Fraser. 2007. "Of Cabbages and King Cobra: Populist Politics and Zambia's 2006 Election." *African Affairs* 106.425: 611-637.

Lungu, John. 2008. "The politics of reforming Zambia's mining tax regime." Presented at the "Mine Watch Zambia Conference" (Oxford, Oxford University).

Lungu, John and Charles Mulenga. 2005. *Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in the Extractive Industry in Zambia.* Ndola: Mission Press.

Moody, Kim. 1997. "Towards an International Social Movement Unionism." *New Left Review* 225: 52-72.

Mulowa, Anthony. 2008. "Mines reject tax regime." *Times of Zambia*. 12 February.

Mulaliki, Mulimbi 2008. "CCJP accuses N/Western administration of blocking expatriate's prosecution." *The Post.* 23 April.

Negi, Rohit. 2008. "Beyond the 'Chinese Scramble': The Political Economy of anti-China Sentiment in Zambia." *African Geographical Review 27*: 41-63.

_____. 2011. "Mining Boom, Capital and Chiefs in the New Copperbelt". In Alastair Fraser and Miles Larmer (eds.), *Zambia, Mining and Neoliberalism: Boom and Bust on the Globalized Copperbelt* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

Parpart, Jane. 1983. *Labor and Capital on the African Copperbelt.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Polanyi, Karl. 1944. *The Great Transformation: Economic and Political Origins of Our Time.* New York: Rinehart.

Rakner, Lise. 2003. *Political and Economic Liberalisation in Zambia 1991-2001*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

Sassen, Saskia. 2006. *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Scott, Guy. 2009. "Zambia and Recession-Part 5." *The Post*. 21 May.

Shamir, Ronen. 2004. "The De-radicalization of Corporate Social Responsibility." *Critical Sociology* 30.3: 669-90.

Silwamba, David. 2007. "World Bank Failed to Predict Copper Prices. "*The Post.* 27 November.

Simutanyi, Neo. 1995. "The politics of structural adjustment in Zambia." *Third World Quarterly* 17.4: 825-839.

Times of Zambia. 2008. "FQMO Buries Junk Vehicles." 21 March.

Tsing, Anna L. 2005. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Debunking the Myth of the "Good" Coup d'État in Africa

ANDREW C. MILLER

Abstract: In response to the recent coup in Niger, which ousted the country's president-turned-strongman Mamadou Tandja, the capital erupted in pro-coup demonstrations. Many commentators and foreign governments also showed tacit support for the junta. What is the likelihood that this coup and the other coup regimes in Africa will lead to the institutionalization of durable and stable democracies? Based on historical analysis of past African coups that brought brief democratic transitions, this article argues that it is unlikely. For the four African coups that briefly put in place democratic institutions—Sierra Leone (1968), Ghana (1978), Sudan (1985), and Niger (1999)—the juntas and proceeding civilian governments failed to address core political and economic issues, lacked durability, and did not engender long-term political stability. To further debunk the myth of the so-called "good" coup d'état in Africa, this article also demonstrates that coup regimes, which consolidate governing authority in failed states, attempt to institutionalize autocracies.

Introduction

The story of deposed Nigerien President Mamadou Tandja is an all too familiar one in Africa. Although elected in generally free and fair elections, Tandja attempted to tighten his grip on the presidency in a blatant violation of Niger's constitution.[1] In August 2009, after ten years in power, he pushed through a new constitution by referendum that extended his presidential mandate for three years so he could, in his own words, "finish some projects."[2] Considering that opposition groups boycotted the referendum and Tandja had dissolved the country's resistant parliament and constitutional court, the 92.5 percent of "yes" votes did not indicate genuinely popular support for the president.[3] Rather, it demonstrated his success in systematically dismantling Niger's democratic institutions.[4]

This transparent power grab, coupled with languishing socioeconomic conditions in the country, meant that there was little dismay among Nigeriens when a group of military officers arrested the president-turned-strongman on 18 February 2010.[5] That same day, the junta, calling itself the *Conseil suprême de restauration de la démocratie* (CSRD), broadcasted over the radio its intention to "make Niger an example of democracy and good governance," and to "save [the country] and its population from poverty, deception and corruption."[6] The response

Andrew C. Miller is a graduate student at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. Prior to attending the Walsh School, Mr. Miller lived in West Africa and conducted independent research on post-conflict reconciliation in Sierra Leone. He recently authored "The Burdensome Neighbor: South Africa and the Zimbabwe Dilemma" published in the *Cornell International Affairs Review*. The author would like to thank Professor Lise Morjé Howard for her guidance during the drafting of this article, Dr. Monty G. Marshall for providing the datasets that made the research possible, the editorial staff at *Africa Studies Quarterly* for their insightful comments, and Sara Zettervall for her support.

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v12/v12i2a3.pdf

ISSN: 2152-2448

in Niger, where 10,000 people took the streets of the capital Niamey in pro-coup demonstrations, suggested that the CSRD enjoyed considerable popular support.[7] While tactfully declining to praise the extralegal takeover in public, even Niger's nongovernmental organizations backed Tandja's ousting. Ali Idrissi, head of a prominent civil society coalition, commented, "Deep down, we are cheering it. For us, it's a good coup d'état."[8]

Sharing in the enthusiasm, the international community expressed tacit support for the coup. The Nigerian daily, *This Day*, called it "inevitable" and posited that "the panacea for coups is not to ban or condemn [them]."[9] While foreign governments instinctively chastised the seizure of power, the vast majority of countries opted not to call for Tandja's restoration. Instead, they highlighted the positive steps that the CSRD and its leader Colonel Salou Djibo were taking. As the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs William Fitzgerald said, "[the CSRD] seems to be saying the right things…we've seen some encouraging signs."[10] Likewise, Western media outlets pondered whether or not the coup was a positive occurrence. *The Christian Science Monitor*, for instance, featured an article with the headline "Niger coup: Can Africa use military power for good?" while *Newsweek* asked, "Is There Such Thing As A [sic] Good Coup?"[11]

If one defines "good" as the institution of a durable democracy, the answer to this second question is an unqualified no. A look back at the history of African coups suggests that the Nigerien people's enthusiasm and the tacit support of the international community will prove to be unwarranted. Beyond the Niger case, a number of other African countries are in similar political circumstances. In West Africa alone, Guinea-Conakry (December 2008), Mauritania (August 2008), and Guinea-Bissau (April 2010) have recently endured military takeovers. While these coups and others around the continent ousted largely corrupt and autocratic regimes, this type of extralegal takeover has never succeeded in engendering durable democratic institutions throughout Africa's history.

Commentary attempting to predict the results of the coups in Niger and elsewhere is plentiful, but this article stands as the first empirical study analyzing the long-term polity results of coup-implemented democracies. Current scholarly literature on the topic focuses heavily on explaining why coups occur and developing models to determine coup risk.[12] During the 1960s and 1970s, however, a school of thought in academe existed, which viewed and promoted African militaries as progressive forces. A number of prominent scholars argued that military regimes were best positioned to politically and economically modernize African countries – a viewpoint mimicking the justification many coup regimes have used for taking power.[13]

While the prevalence of the military modernization model has faded considerably in recent decades, some of today's scholars continue to press for so-called "good" coups.[14] Oxford economist Paul Collier wrote in 2009 that putsches "do not come cheap, but if they are the only way of removing a bad regime, then perhaps they are welcomed."[15] Based on this reasoning, Collier has called for military takeovers in Zimbabwe and elsewhere.[16] Although many Zimbabweans and international observers would not be sad to see the end of Mugabe's reign, the real difficulty would lie in establishing a durable democracy, which coups have universally failed to deliver.

Other scholars today stop short of outright support for coups but express hope that they could positively change the polities of African countries. Boubacar N'Diaye, for instance, wrote that the 3 August 2005 coup in Mauritania was the "best opportunity to turn the page on decades of the deposed quasi-military regime's destructive politics."[17] Another scholar even suggested that the Mauritanian coup was "a model for political reform" in Arab North Africa.[18] But, as N'Diaye himself conceded, "[the] transition process exemplified the African military junta leader's familiar proclivity to manipulate transitions to fulfil [sic] suddenly awakened self-seeking political ambitions."[19] Thus, although academe has largely recognized the perils of coup-implemented democratic transitions, the idea that the military can be a welcomed force in African politics persists.

In addition to democratic transitions, policymakers oftentimes view the military consolidation of central authority during state failure as "good" coups.[20] This seemed to be the case, for instance, when the international community only half-heartedly condemned the 1996 Burundian putsch, which reestablished the country's much deteriorated state structure. Belgium Foreign Minister Eric Derycke emphasized that the self-installed president, Pierre Buyoya, was "the least of all evils," while France stated that "peace and the search for national reconciliation overrides everything else."[21] And, according to the United Nations' (UN) Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), the United States "appeared to be softening its line" days after the takeover.[22] Similar to other cases where coup regimes consolidated central authority, however, the Burundian putsch attempted to reinstitute autocracy.

Addressing the democracy deficit in Africa remains an acute challenge for policymakers and scholars.[23] While many African leaders attempt to build democratic façades around their regimes, they oftentimes rig elections and modify constitutions to extend their term limits. A Nigerian commentator aptly characterized the political developments on the continent when he wrote in 2005 that Africa is "demo-crazy."[24] The difficulty of engendering African democracies through legal means, compounded with the unseemliness of many regimes, has made coups seem more palpable. The end result of these military takeovers, however, is invariably the same: the reestablishment (or attempted reestablishment) of autocratic institutions.

This article seeks to fully debunk the myth of the "good" coup d'état in Africa. First, the vast majority of successful African coups have not resulted in transitions to democracy. Second, for the small number of coup regimes that briefly put in place democratic institutions, the juntas and subsequent civilian governments lacked the will and/or capacity to address their respective country's core political and economic problems; the polities were not durable; and, the brief democratic transitions failed to yield long-term stability as demonstrated by the prevalence of coups in proceeding years. Last, juntas that consolidated authority during state failure institutionalized self-administered autocracies or attempted to do so but were prevented by internal disorder and/or external political factors.

Methodology and Scope

This analysis employs data compiled by George Mason University's Center for Systemic Peace of coups taking place worldwide between 1946 and 2008.[25] The center used Keesing's Record of World Events to determine which transfers and attempted transfers of power fell within the

scope of a coup. In order to encourage accuracy and comprehensiveness, the data collectors also cross-referenced their determinations with Arthur S. Banks' *Cross-National Time Series Archive* and with *Archigos: A Database of Political Leaders*.[26] Geographically, the data pulled for this study encompasses the entire African continent including the predominantly-Arab countries in the north.

According to the dataset codebook, a coup d'état is defined as a "forceful seizure of executive authority and office by a dissident/opposition faction within the country's ruling or political elites that results in a substantial change in the executive leadership and the policies of the prior regime (although not necessarily in the nature of regime authority or mode of governance)."[27] It is important to note that the following events are not considered coup d'états: social revolutions, transfer of power to opposing force(s) during civil conflicts, popular uprisings, voluntary transfers of powers of authority, and the unseating of regimes by foreign invading forces.[28] The data is further parsed into specific coup outcomes, which include (1) successful coup, (2) attempted (failed) coup, (3) plotted coup, and (4) alleged coup plot.

This article pays particular attention to the first category of outcomes, successful coups, as it sheds the most light on determining the end results of these events. These results are identified as a change in polity that leads to a (1) democracy transition, (2) adverse regime change, (3) consolidation of authority, (4) state failure, and (5) no change/minor adverse change. The coup must "voluntarily transfer executive authority to an elected civilian government," indicated by an increased score to greater than zero on the polity index employed in this analysis, to qualify as a "democracy transition." An "adverse regime change" classifies a coup that results in a decrease of six or more points on the polity index. A "consolidation of authority" takes place when a coup reestablishes central governing authority after a transition period or full state failure. Conversely, "state failures" encompass a coup that leads to a "collapse of central authority." The final category of "no change/minor adverse change" characterizes a coup that does not impact the country's polity or results in a decrease of less than six points on the index.[29]

To determine the criteria for each result, the data collectors used the Polity IV Project's index scale, which annually measures a country's "polity" on a continuum between institutionalized democracy and institutionalized autocracy. According to *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, "polity" denotes a "political or government organization; a society or institution with an organized government; state; body politic."[30] On the one hand, an institutionalized democracy is defined as a political structure in which citizens have the ability to express dissent or support for alternative policies, institutional constraints limit executive power, and the legal code safeguards citizen civil liberties. On the other hand, the suppression of political participation, selection of executives by political elites, and limited institutional restraints on executive power characterize an institutionalized autocracy. Upon determination of individual scores for the level of democracy and for the level of autocracy, the autocracy point value is subtracted from the democracy value to render a unified polity score ranging from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic) for each country.[31]

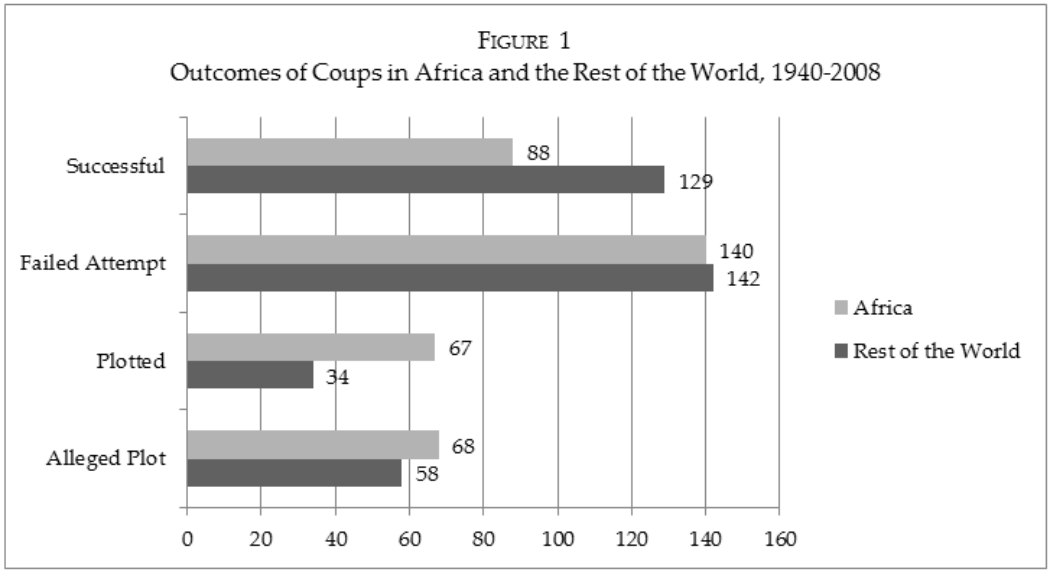
Lastly, the scope of this analysis is intentionally limited to counter the notion that some coups are "good" rather than address the broader and considerably more discussed topic of

democratization in Africa. As mentioned, there are two types of coup-implemented results that could plausibly be considered "good"—a coup that leads to a democratic transition or a coup that reestablishes the central authority of the state. This study is meant to fill the gap in academic literature as to why and how coups either fail to engender durable democracies or lead to authoritarian regimes during consolidations of central authority. Thus, although this article does not address the topic of how African countries can most effectively build durable democratic institutions, it demonstrates that coups are not a reliable path to this polity.

Coup d'états in Africa: A Bird's Eye View

Between 1945 and 2008, approximately 363 successful coups, attempted coups, coup plots, or alleged coup plots occurred in Africa. The starkness of these figures is further highlighted when compared to the rest of the world, which altogether endured an equal number of coups during this same period. As shown in Figure 1, only eighty-eight of the 363 African coups, or 24.2 percent, led to successful transfers of power compared to 128 of 363, or 35.3 percent, in the rest of the world suggesting that African coups are less likely to succeed.

FIGURE 1
Outcomes of Coups in Africa and the Rest of the World, 1940-2008



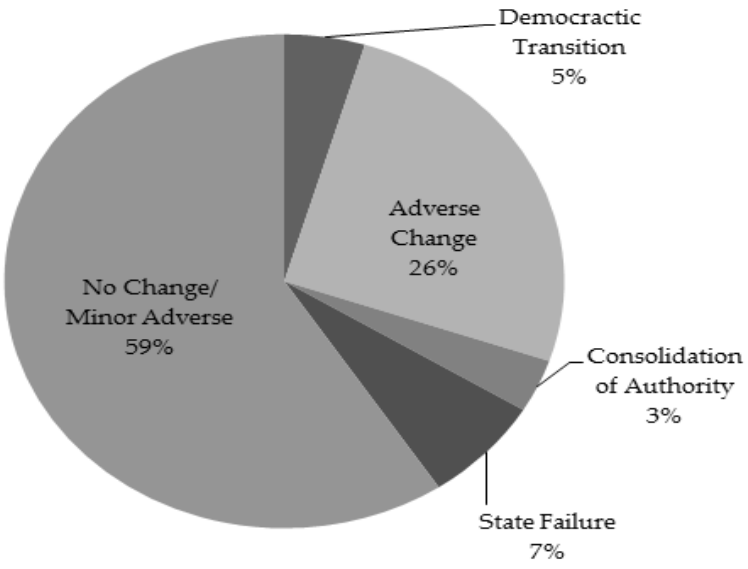
Furthermore, it was not until the 1980s—the decade in which the last African colonies gained independence—that the continent's rate of coups outnumbered those taking place elsewhere, specifically by eighty-seven to fifty-five.[32] Coups began to decline in Africa after the 1980s per the global trend, but they remained a commonly used method of taking power. During the 1990s, eighty-two putsches occurred, as many of the regimes propped up by Cold War alliances lost their superpower sponsorship. This rate seems to have abated only modestly as fifty coups took place between 2000 and 2008. According to one scholar, the continued prevalence of extralegal takeovers is due to the fact that "(a) African democracies are not yet consolidated and (b) there is a continued military threat to democracy all over the continent."[33] This diagnosis of a "continued military threat," however, does not adequately explain why some coups—i.e. so-

called "good" coups—succeed in orchestrating brief transitions to democracy or consolidating authority but fail to establish durable democratic institutions.

How many of the total 726 coups d'état worldwide could plausibly be considered "good" coups? In other words, how many led to democratic transitions or consolidations of authority during state failure? According to the Center for Systemic Peace, four coups (5 percent of the total) in Africa—Sierra Leone (1968), Ghana (1978), Sudan (1985), and Niger (1999)—put in place democratic institutions while nine coups (9 percent of the total) did so outside the continent.[34] Conversely, 26 percent of coups in both Africa and the rest of the world led to an adverse regime change. Thus, for approximately every one coup in Africa resulting in a democratic transition, five more pushed countries toward autocracy.

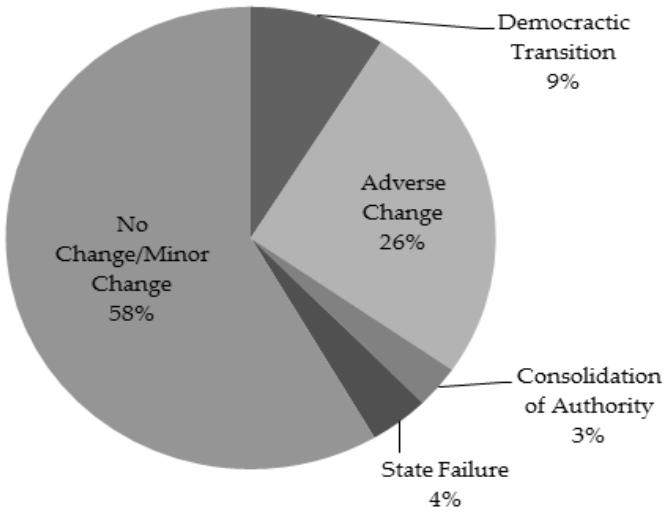
The vast majority of coups led to no change or a minor adverse change in polities suggesting that most coups simply amounted to power grabs. The juntas could have been motivated by a host of factors such as self-enrichment or aspiration for prestige. As this article demonstrates, coup leaders often had legitimate grievances against corrupt and incompetent governing regimes but lacked either the desire or capacity to substantially transform their countries' governing institutions. Regardless of motivations, the fact that the mean number of coups, successful or otherwise, for countries previously experiencing a putsch rests at 6.89 indicates a correlation between these events and continued political instability.

FIGURE 2
Results of Successful Coups in Africa, 1940-2008



Two result cases have missing data; valid percentages are represented in the chart.

FIGURE 3
Results of Successful Coups in the Rest of the World, 1940-2008



Twenty-eight result cases have missing data; valid percentages are represented in the chart.

In addition, coups d'état have created more instances of state failure than have successfully consolidated authority. In Africa, only three coups—Burundi (1966), Benin (1972), Burundi (1996)—have successfully consolidated authority while twice as many have led to state failure. Thus, 7 percent of coups caused the collapse of central authority while only 3 percent consolidated authority. It will prove helpful to analyze the cases for each of these coup results—democratic transitions and consolidations of authority—to understand how they failed to institutionalize durable democracies.

Democratic Transitions

As mentioned, four coups in Africa—Sierra Leone (1968), Ghana (1978), Sudan (1985), and Niger (1999)—led to the brief institutionalization of democracy. An in-depth analysis reveals that these four coups followed similar narratives in which they ultimately failed to substantially improve their respective country's polity. First, the coup regimes and the subsequent civilian governments could not muster either the capability or will to address the core economic and political problems facing their country. Second, the regimes lacked significant durability in that the civilian governments were ousted or slid into autocracy themselves shortly after the democratic transitions. Last, as the continued prevalence of coups indicates, they also failed to yield long-term stability. In the earliest of these cases, the deterioration of Sierra Leone's polity after the "sergeants" revolt aptly demonstrates the shortcomings of coup-implemented democracies.

Sierra Leone (18 April 1968): The "Sergeants" Revolt

The "sergeants" revolt serves as an example of a coup regime failing to accomplish its stated objectives and the proceeding civilian government willfully creating an authoritarian polity. This story begins with Sierra Leone's March 1967 elections in which Siaka Stevens's All People's Congress (APC) won the plurality of parliamentary seats in a hard fought campaign against the incumbent Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). Before taking office, however, Stevens was arrested by the head of Sierra Leonean armed forces Brigadier General David Lansana who demanded that tribal representatives be elected prior to declaring the APC victory. The political tumult continued when a group of army officers, the National Reformation Council (NRC), subsequently ousted Lansana and declined to place the government under civilian control.[35]

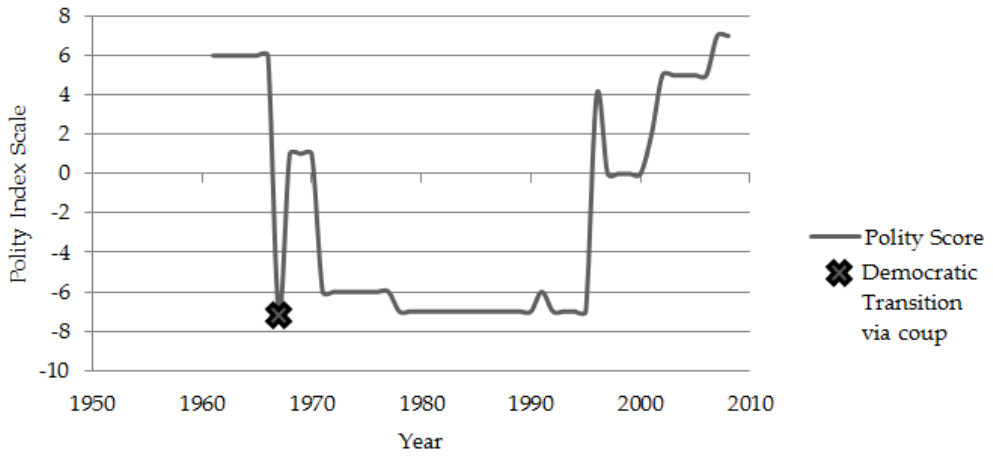
In a bid to restore Stevens's election victory, a contingent of enlisted soldiers, calling itself the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM), launched the "sergeants" revolt on 18 April 1968. The group successfully placed Stevens in power but failed to address the political and economic issues facing Sierra Leone. As its name suggests, the ACRM vowed to take a hardline on corruption and labeled the NRC "more corrupt and selfish than the ousted civilian regime" in reference to the pre-March 1967 government.[36] The ACRM's favoritism toward the APC, however, demonstrated that the junta was by no means nonpartisan or ethnically neutral. As scholar Jimmy D. Kandeh posited, "it is highly unlikely…the ACRM would have relinquished power to the SLPP." In addition, ethnic Mendes, who generally supported the SLPP, were systematically purged from the armed forces.[37] The corruption did not let up once Stevens took office. A *Washington Post* correspondent wrote that, by 1980, Sierra Leone was losing "about $140 million a year in cross-border diamond smuggling black market activities and corruption."[38]

The ACRM's stated goal of establishing a pluralist democracy also fell far short under Stevens's rule. In what some scholars have characterized as "redictoralization" Stevens showed a clear lack of will to maintain a democratic polity and attempted to institutionalize the APC as Sierra Leone's unchallengeable ruling party. By 1971, he had officially declared the country a republic and created the Internal Security Unit (ISU) to intimidate political opponents. ISU and APC coercion ensured that the SLPP could not field any candidates in the 1973 general elections.[39] In the words of a regional expert, "Sierra Leone thus became a *de facto* one-party state."[40] The one-party status of the country became legally formalized in 1978 when the APC pushed through a constitutional amendment banning all other political organizations.[41]

As Stevens's slide toward autocracy shows, the democratic institutions put in place by the ACRM lacked durability. According to the polity index in Figure 4, Sierra Leone's score plummeted to -6 in 1971, just two years after the "sergeants" revolt, and slid even further to -7 with the APC's institutionalization of one-party rule. This degree of autocracy remained in place until 1995 with only a brief shift back to -6 in 1991 when Stevens's handpicked successor Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh briefly reinstituted a multiparty system. By 1991, however, the APC's political authoritarianism and economic mismanagement had fermented a

rebel movement, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which plunged the country into a brutal eleven year civil war.[42]

FIGURE 4
Sierra Leone Polity Score, 1961-2008



The rash of coups following Stevens's installation further demonstrates that the ACRM coup failed to engender long-term political stability. First, an alleged plot and a failed attempt took place in 1970 and 1971, respectively. There were also three more successful coups in 1992, 1996, and 1997. In all, five failed attempts, two plots, and one alleged plot took place after the democratic transition. Thus, not only did the "sergeants" revolt fail to address the corruption that choked Sierra Leone's political system, it installed a democratic regime that was both short-lived and fermented future political instability. While Stevens willfully manipulated the system in the APC's favor, in the case of Ghanaian coup leader F.W. Akuffo, he possessed the will to reform his country's institutions but not the capacity.

Ghana (5 July 1978): Akuffo's Democratic Experiment

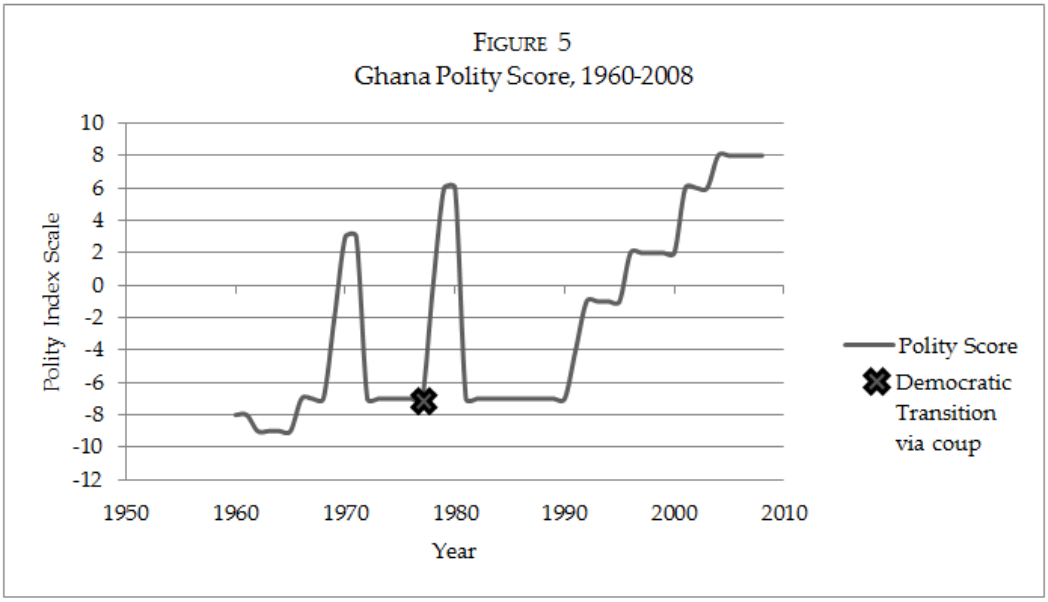
The 1978 Ghanaian coup led by Lieutenant General F.W. Akuffo shows that certain coup regimes were unable to follow through with intended reforms despite substantive efforts. Under Akuffo's predecessor, General I.K. Acheampong, Ghanaians had become increasingly discontented with the country's lack of economic development due in large part to an inflation rate hitting 73.1 percent by 1978, the skyrocketing cost of living, and a general shortage of goods and services.[43] This dire economic situation, coupled with the abject greed of high-level public officials, infused a culture of corruption in all ranks of the government. Among their many deviances, the government elite were known to divert the country's cocoa sales to their personal offshore bank accounts. Rarely-paid bureaucrats, for their part, felt little choice but to charge *kalabule* ("bribes") to citizens in order to feed their own families.[44]

Akuffo saw his opportunity to seize power when Acheampong introduced a highly unpopular "no-party" political system, called UNIGOV. Students and professional groups, identifying Acheampong's transparent attempt to extend his rule, took to the streets in droves for mass strikes and demonstrations in 1977 and 1978.[45] With the country in disarray, Akuffo arrested Acheampong on 5 July 1978 and declared himself the head of the government. Ghana's new leader promised citizens that he would "ensure the unity and stability of the nation" by reviving the spiraling economy and holding elections before 1 July 1979.[46]

Despite substantive reform efforts, Akuffo failed to bring these economic promises to fruition. A strict fiscal and monetary reform package, which included steps such as devaluing the cedi (Ghana's currency) by 59 percent, reducing public spending, and controlling the money supply, not only failed to restrain the ballooning inflation rate but also rendered everyday goods and services increasingly scarce.[47] He also refrained from punishing the dishonest officials from Acheampong's regime while the culture of corruption continued unabated under his watch.[48]

Although Akuffo was initially hesitant to establish a pluralist democracy, his political agenda moved in that direction. After first attempting to repackage the UNIGOV system as "national government," continued street protests eventually forced him to lift the ban against opposition parties on 1 January 1979.[49] Akuffo stayed on track to hold elections in July 1979, but they did not advance as scheduled due to continued social and political turbulence. After Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings's failed coup attempt just one month earlier, the charismatic officer successfully arrested Akuffo and took control of the government on 4 June 1979. To his credit, Rawlings conducted a "house cleaning" exercise against groups associated with corruption and moved forward with Akuffo's planned elections.[50]

The inefficacy of the civilian government, however, significantly weakened the durability of the newly-instituted democracy, which lasted little more than two years. Upon taking office on 24 September 1979, the elected president Dr. Hilla Limman and his People's National Party (PNP) became immersed in factional struggles, refused to recognize the structural issues plaguing the country's economy, and allowed corruption to continue unabated.[51] At the urging of his military subordinates, Rawlings seized power again on New Year's Eve 1981, suspended the 1979 constitution, and disbanded the government's executive and legislative branches.[52] And, thus, the democratic experiment begun by Akuffo was buried by one of its key implementers due in large part to the incompetence of the civilian government.



The brief democratic transition also failed to bring long-term stability to Ghana. As shown in Figure 5, the country immediately slid to -7 on the polity index where it remained for the following nine years under Rawling's leadership. Moreover, the frequency of coups stayed steady after Akuffo's putsch. Before he took power in 1978, Ghana had endured two successful coups, three failed attempts, one plot, and one alleged plot. Similarly, after 5 July 1978, Ghana had seven coups consisting of two successful coups, three failed attempts, and two alleged plots. While Rawlings's regime eventually instituted democratic reforms in the early 1990s, it undertook these steps only "under international and domestic pressure" according to the U.S. Department of State.[53] Indicating that Rawlings's supporters have also yet to fully accept Ghana's democratic system, his former bodyguards allegedly conspired to take power from then-president John A. Kufuor—a member of the opposing New Patriotic Party (NPP)—as recently as 2004.

The failure of Akuffo's experiment demonstrates that juntas sometimes established democratic institutions but the proceeding civilian governments were often unable to address the country's core problems. As a result, Ghana's democratic regime did not last much more than two years and has remained susceptible to continued extralegal threats to its standing governments. This story is by no means unique to Ghana as it is also reflective of General al-Dahab's 1985 coup in Sudan.

Sudan (6 April 1985): General Dahab's Laudable Failure

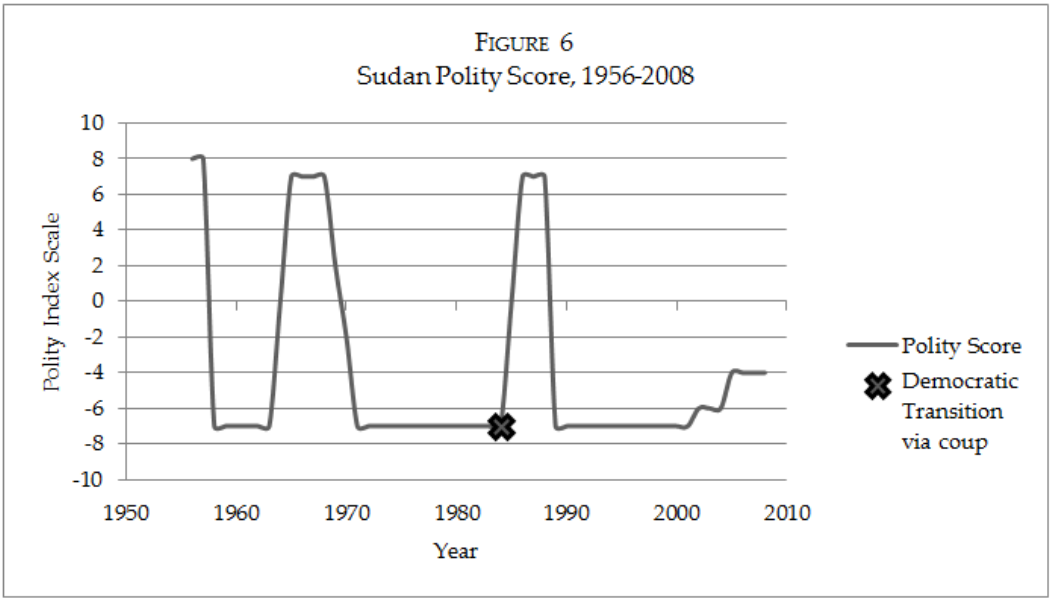
Despite General Suwar al-Dahab's successful transition to democracy, his regime and the proceeding civilian government failed to bring durable democratic institutions or long-term political stability to Sudan. Al-Dahab was able to take power due to the inability of his predecessor, President Guufar Nimeiri, to effectively manage the core political and economic problems facing Sudan. Three critical issues plagued the country under Nimeiri: (1) the

recently-rejuvenated civil war raging with the Christian and animist south, (2) the incorporation of *Shari'a* law into the Sudanese legal code, and (3) economic stagnation. When Nimeiri flew to the United States for a medical check-up in the spring of 1985, massive street protests signaled to the military that it had to take action to quell the unrest. Instead of backing Nimeiri by muffling the demonstrations, al-Dahab officially dismissed the president on April 6, established the Transitional Military Council (TMC), and scheduled elections for the following year.[54]

While the TMC followed through with the transfer to civilian rule to the surprise of many observers, it made little progress in addressing Sudan's problems. First, the TMC was unable to bring the south's main rebel leader John Garang into the political fold and subsequently pursued a military option to deal with the insurgents.[55] Second, despite rolling back certain aspects of the *Shari'a* reforms, al-Dahab declined an opportunity to completely repeal the laws making negotiations with the south even more tenuous.[56] Last, scholar Graham Thomas noted that under the TMC's supervision, there was a "continuing decline in the economy and the almost complete collapse of the infra structure [sic]."[57]

For its part, the elected civilian government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi proved incapable of holding together a politically viable coalition and oversaw the crumbling of the country's nascent democratic structure. Economically, the government devalued the currency by 44.4 percent and raised the price of basic goods such as sugar and gas. These measures not only failed to reverse the country's economic decline but also proved widely unpopular as shown by the reemergence of nationwide protests.[58] While al-Mahdi and his Umma Party expressed their desire to abolish the imposition of *Shari'a* law, the *realpolitik* of the Sudanese political scene, namely the objections of the National Islamic Front (NIF) party, prevented any meaningful move in this direction.[59] The stalling of this repeal coupled with bolder attacks by Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) meant that the civil war worsened under al-Mahdi's leadership. In fact, Garang and his forces made significant headway with the capture of the city of Kurmuk, further dissuading the rebels from sitting down at the negotiating table.

By the time a robust northern military offensive and international pressure finally forced talks between the parties in early June 1989, the incompetence and ineffectiveness had already made the al-Mahdi government vulnerable. On 30 June 1989, a staunchly Islamic group within the Sudanese military installed the NIF's General Omar al-Bahsir as the new president resulting in a return to institutionalized autocracy.[60] As shown in Figure 6, Sudan's polity score fell from 7 to -7 accordingly rendering al-Dahab's coup-implemented democratic regime with a durability of approximately four years. Sudan's polity increased to -4 by 2008, but the country remains highly autocratic with al-Bashir continuing to hold on to the presidency.



In addition to the lack of durability, al-Dahab failed to usher in any sort of long-term political stability as seen with the Sierra Leone and Ghana cases. Five months after al-Dahab took power, Garang orchestrated an attempted coup. Similarly, after al-Bashir mounted his successful coup, a group of non-commissioned officers in Nuba launched a failed countercoup. In addition to three more coup plots and six alleged plots, there have been two failed coups since the Nuba attempt. In the most recent African coup to briefly institutionalize democracy taking place in Niger, the junta leader acted in the mold of al-Dahab by transferring power to civilians. Unlike the al-Mahdi government that fumbled Sudan's democracy due to its ineffectiveness, the proceeding Nigerien government was both ineffective and willfully moved the country toward autocracy.

Niger (9 April 1999): The Slow Road to Autocracy

Despite coup leader Major Dauda Mallam Wanké's institutionalization of democracy in 1999, the elected President Mamadou Tandja failed to improve economic conditions and ultimately attempted to consolidate power. Prior to the 1999 military takeover, then-president Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara's mismanagement of the economy resulted in few opportunities for Nigeriens to make adequate livelihoods. The economic stagnation derived largely from a robust inflation rate and the government's inability to responsibly manage public expenditures. Similarly, Niger remained dependent on the agriculture sector and natural resources, which were highly vulnerable to international price fluctuations and unpredictable weather.[61] This economic vacuum left Nigeriens with some of the lowest standards of living throughout the world.

Much of the Nigerien people's discontent also stemmed from the ruling party's political manipulation. In the run up to the 1996 presidential elections, Amnesty International reported:

> Hundreds of people were arrested solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association. Party political leaders were placed under house arrest, and dozens of party members were held incommunicado and beaten. Many of them were publicly humiliated; some were exiled to the north of the country, others were subjected to mock executions.[62]

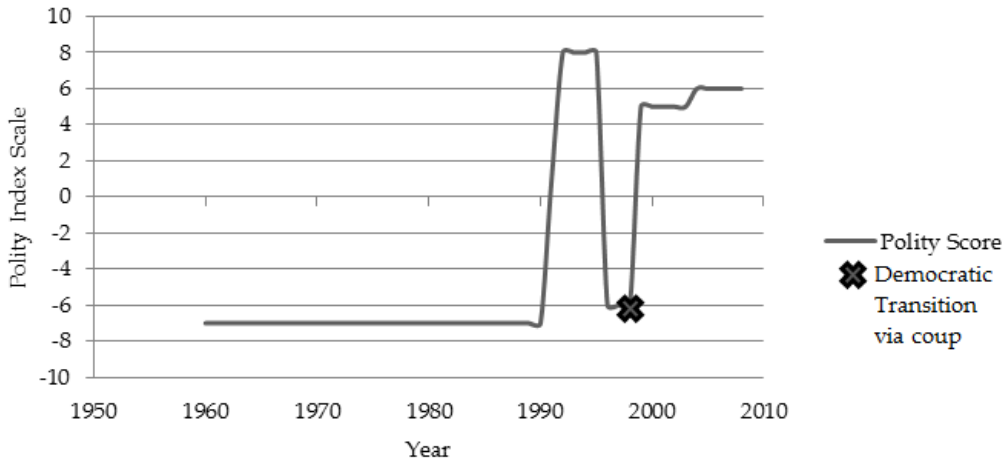
Consistent with this political heavy handedness, Baré had the Nigerien supreme court nullify the opposition party's November 1999 local election victory.[63] As result, according to a South African journalist, the government "lacked the trust and confidence of its population."[64] The mélange of economic ineptitude and political manipulation bred widespread discontent, which consequently manifested into mass street protests.[65]

Taking his cue from the civil unrest, Major Wanké had Baré assassinated and took control of the government on 9 April 1999. Wanké quickly established the *Conseil de Réconciliation Nationale* (CRN) and pronounced his intentions to hold presidential elections. As seen under al-Dahab's regime, Wanké followed through with his promise in this regard. The CRN established Niger's Fifth Republic, a French-styled semi-presidential democratic system, and elections that were deemed acceptable by international observers delivered the presidency to Tandja in November 1999.[66]

After almost ten years in power, Tandja began to willfully dismantle the Fifth Republic's democratic institutions. This undermining of Niger's burgeoning democracy included *inter alia* his dissolution of the National Assembly and Constitutional Court as well as empowering his government to crackdown on media dissent prior to the August 2009 constitutional referendum.[67] This new constitution, which passed in the deeply flawed referendum vote, provided Tandja with an additional three years in office and eliminated presidential term limits.[68]

Perhaps even more consequential to the Nigerien people, Tandja drastically failed to boost the economy or increase the country's development level. As of 1999, Niger had a per capita GDP of approximately $360. According to the UNDP's Human Development Index, which ranks the education, health, as well as standard of living in all countries worldwide, Niger places last in the world.[69] Under Tandja, Nigeriens could not expect to live much over fifty years, and less than one and three adults knew how to read.[70] With the Fifth Republic's ten year lifespan, Wanké's coup outlasted the other democratic transitions, but as the August 2009 referendum demonstrated, its institutions were by no means durable.

FIGURE 7
Niger Polity Score, 1960-2008



Although the polity index does not include data beyond 2008, it would reflect a significant decline due to Tandja's August 2009 referendum and other attempted steps to institutionalize autocracy.

The coup regime, which overthrew Tandja in February 2010, appears set to transition the country to civilian rule just as Major Wanké and the CRN did in 1999. The regime accepted a draft constitution of the Nigerien National Consultative Council (NCC), which called for a full democratic transition within twelve months of the takeover. Based on the constitution's electoral provisions, presidential and parliamentary elections were held 31 January 2011, resulting in a run-off election scheduled for 12 March. It remains to be seen, however, if a newly-elected civilian government will succeed in building durable democratic institutions. Considering that the coup-implemented democracies in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Sudan, and Niger's Fifth Republic had a mean lifespan of 4.5 years, the prospects of this most recent coup bringing a lasting democracy seem bleak.

As history shows, coups d'état have not been an effective tool for building durable democracies in Africa. In all the cases that led to brief democratic transitions, the military and/or the subsequent civilian regimes did not have either the political will (i.e. Sierra Leone and Niger) or the ability (i.e. Ghana and Sudan) to establish durable institutions. As a result, the democracies were either overthrown by an autocratically-oriented coup (i.e. Ghana and Sudan) or the new civilian government slid into autocracy itself (i.e. Sierra Leone and Niger). Along with these brief democratic transitions, some policymakers seemed to characterize consolidations of authority as "good" coups.

Consolidation of Authority

During state failure, three coups d'état—Burundi (1966 and 1996) and Benin (1996)—successfully consolidated central governing authority. What kind of polity generally emerged

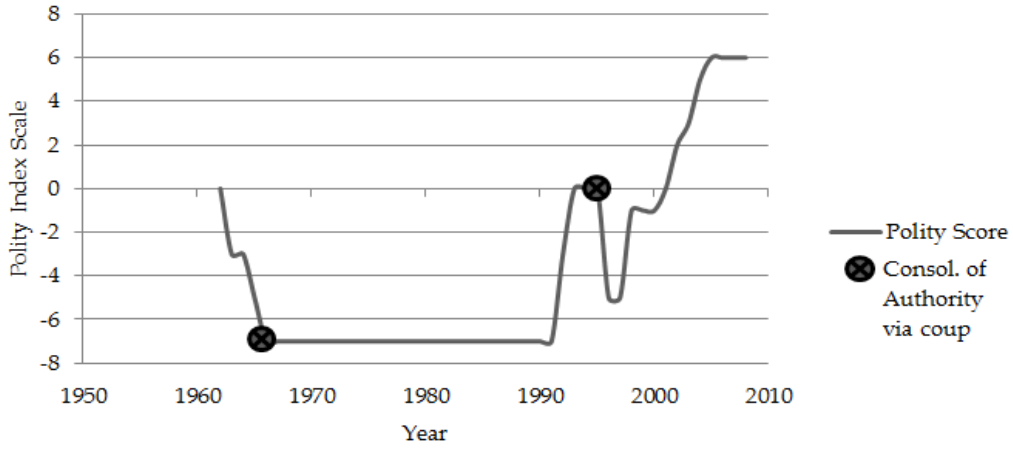
from these putsches? A historical analysis of three cases shows that military juntas institutionalized self-administered autocracies or attempted to do so but were prevented by internal disorder and/or external political factors. Also, just as the coup-implemented democratic transitions failed to engender long-term political stability, these putsches also led to future coups.

Burundi (29 November 1966 & 25 July 1996): From Chaos to Genocide

Upon declaring independence from Belgium in July 1962, Burundi's ethnic tensions between the minority Tutsi and majority Hutu drove the country into chaos. When a Tutsi gunman assassinated the Hutu prime minister, Pierre Ngendandumwe, the monarchy of Mwami Mwambutsa became increasingly feeble. The tensions finally boiled over when Mwambutsa refused to recognize the election victory of the Hutu parties in parliament.[71] This sparked a fierce Hutu revolt, which led to a number of political shifts. Ultimately, the then-prime minister and former army captain Michel Micombero emerged as the country's self-proclaimed president.[72]

While Micambero's coup and declaration of the First Republic may have been welcomed initially by some Burundians for halting the anarchy, the relative calm came at the cost of living under a authoritarian and genocidal regime for twenty-five years. As indicated by the polity scale in Figure 8, Burundi remained at a -7 institutionalized autocracy until 1991. Like most autocratic regimes, it exhibited a highly repressive nature, but in the case of Micombero's government, this repressiveness degenerated into genocide by 1972. In the spring of that year, the Tutsi *Jeunesses révolutionnaires rwagasore* were allowed to massacre approximately 100,000 to 200,000 Hutu, comprising of 5 percent of the country's population.[73]

FIGURE 8
Burundi Polity Score, 1962-2008



Due to the state failure, the years 1993 through 1995 are considered "interregnums" and thus are coded as "0" in the polity index.

As with coup-implemented democratic transition, the continuing number of coups after 1966 is evidence to the fact that Micombero's seizure and consolidation of authority failed to yield long-term political stability. Since November 1966, Burundi has endured six failed coup attempts, one plotted coup, and two alleged plots. Moreover, the country has had two more successful coups that led to no polity change as well as one on 25 July 1996, which consolidated authority during another period of state failure.

Although the 1996 coup consolidated authority during a tumultuous period, the regime attempted to put in place an autocratic polity and failed to bring long-term stability. When the former-president Major Pierre Buyoya took power via coup, he immediately institutionalized an autocratic governing structure. His actions included *inter alia* suspending the National Assembly, banning opposition parties, and imposing a strict national curfew.[74] An intense regional diplomatic initiative led by former South African President Nelson Mandela, however, eventually pressured Buyoya to democratize. Although its polity score has steadily improved since 1997 as a result of the diplomatic effort, this trend veils a high degree of political instability still prevalent in the country. Subsequent to Buyoya's 1996 consolidation of authority, Burundi has endured two more failed coup attempts, a plotted coup as well as an alleged plot.

The coups in Burundi demonstrate that consolidations of authority came at the heavy cost of authoritarianism and continued political instability. Burundians were able to escape autocratic rule in 1996 thanks in large part to the South African-led intervention, but instability in the country remains to this day as evidenced by the continued prevalence of coups. Unfortunately for the Beninese, their 1972 putsch mirrored Burundi's 1966 consolidation as it ushered in an extended period of authoritarian rule.

Benin (26 October 1972): A Classic Power Grab

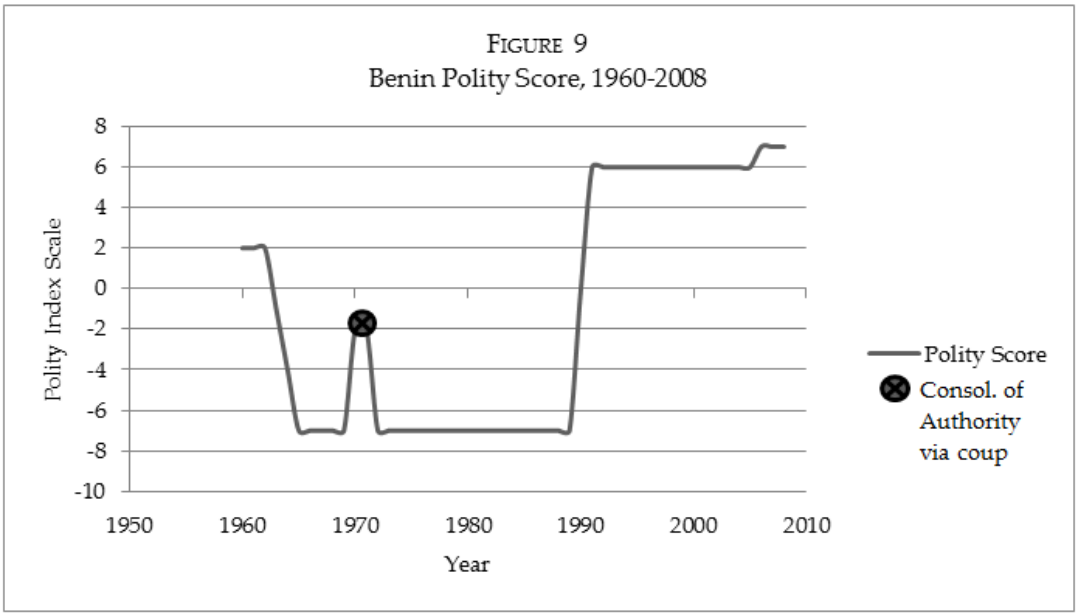
The Beninese consolidation brought the country nineteen years of communist rule that was only undone by internal disorder and shifts in the global political landscape. The political vacuum created by economic difficulties and fragmentation of the Beninese body politic allowed Major Mathieu Kérékou to seize power in 1972. Between 1960 and 1972, civil disorder in Benin had become increasingly acute as students and trade unions protested the government's mismanagement of the economy. The country's stark economic conditions were further exacerbated by its fractious political scene, which suffered five successful coups in the twelve years after independence. On October 26, the political tumult ultimately subsided after Kerekou's successful consolidation of power.[75]

Kérékou's junta rapidly institutionalized an enduring Marxist-Leninist governing regime. Historian Chris Allen described the initial authority consolidation as follows:

> Kérékou increased his own power by a series of administrative changes that strengthened the powers of the presidency and gradually downgraded or removed the coupmakers and their supporters in government… [and,] the new regime moved quickly against the local representatives of [political] networks—

> chiefs, priests of local animist cults, and other rural notables—denouncing their past role and reducing their power.[76]

Once the junta had consolidated power, the Beninese lived under these political conditions for twenty-seven years. As Figure 9 demonstrates, Benin's polity score slipped from -2 to -7 in 1972, and remained in this dismal state of autocracy until 1989.[77] Aside from expressing discontent, there was little that the Beninese people could do as the junta pushed forward its failed socialist economic agenda leaving much of the country's citizenry impoverished.[78]



In concert with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and street protests that "rendered the country increasingly ungovernable," Kérékou and the Beninese politburo saw little choice but to reform by 1991.[79] Almost two decades after taking power, the regime finally allowed multiparty presidential elections. This democratic transition—known as the *Renoveau Démocratique*—has made Benin one of the continent's strongest democracies. Given that this transition occurred largely due to external global developments and internal popular pressure, credit for this political stability does not rest with the former regime. In fact, the coup continued to have a destabilizing impact considering that the head of Kérékou's presidential guard Pascal Tawès attempted to overthrow the newly-elected president Nicéphore Soglo in 1992.

While the 1972 Burundian genocide stands out as the most startling of the events occurring under these coup-implemented regimes, the hardships faced by Beninese under Kérékou cannot be underemphasized in their own right. Moreover, Burundians in the 1990s seemed to be heading for a similar fate under Buyoya if the international community had not intervened. It is clear that these cases of authority consolidation are far from deserving the label "good" coups.

The way forward

The four African coups leading to brief democratic transitions—Sierra Leone (1968), Ghana (1978), Sudan (1985), and Niger (1999)—demonstrate that this method of regime change is not an effective tool for democratization. The juntas and subsequent civilian governments lacked the will and/or capacity to address their respective country's core political and economic problems; the polities were not durable; and, the brief democratic transitions failed to yield long-term stability. In addition, juntas that consolidated authority during state failure either institutionalized autocracies or attempted to do so.

On the African continent, the idea of the "good" coup d'état is a myth. With that said, it is not a fait accompli that Niger will revert to autocracy; to the contrary, the fact that Niger held elections in January 2011 is an encouraging sign. But, Nigeriens should be wary of their post-coup government's ability and willingness to establish a durable democracy. For its part, the international community must balance support for the nascent democratic polity in Niger to prevent its collapse—as seen in Ghana and Sudan—with strong disincentives to hinder moves toward the type of authoritarianism that arose in Sierra Leone and Niger's Fifth Republic.

Moving forward, one of the best remedies to prevent future coups may be the thwarting of all extralegal takeovers by African leaders. The African Union (AU) took the correct step to suspend Niger's seat in the body after the February 2010 coup, but many Nigeriens were asking why so little was done when Tandja became increasingly autocratic? The AU, regional groups, and sub-regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) must be much more proactive in addressing non-coup seizures of power.

Due to a host of factors including the legacy of distrust left from colonialism, it is important that African institutions take the lead in these interventions with financial and diplomatic support from the West. In fact, the current ECOWAS-led efforts to persuade Laurent Gbagbo to concede defeat in Côte d'Ivoire's presidential poll are a step in the right direction. If the West African body successfully pressures Gbagbo to step down, it could very well be preventing a future coup before it arises.

Notes

1 U.S. Department of State 2010, "Niger."
2 Anonymous 2010, *This Day* (Nigeria).
3 Anonymous 2009.
4 DoS 2010, "Niger."
5 UNDP 2010.
6 Alex Perry, "A Coup in Niger Adds to West Africa's Instability," *Time*, 19 February 2010.
7 Anonymous 2010, BBC (UK).
8 Armstrong 2010.
9 Anonymous 2010, *This Day* (Nigeria).
10 Ibid.
11 McLure 2010.

12 Scholarly literature on explaining and modeling coups include inter alia Jenkins and Kposowa 1990; Jackman1978; Lunde 1991; Belkin 2003; Fosu 2002.
13 Onwudiwe 2004, p. 26.
14 Most scholars today advocate methods other than coups to promote political democratization in Africa. Larry Diamond of Stanford University stressed that the "essence of democratic consolidation is a behavioral and attitudinal embrace of democratic principles and methods by both elites and mass" (1999, 20). In describing the Niger coup, former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia and professor at George Washington University, David Shinn, stated, "I don't believe there is a 'good' extralegal coup. What Tandja did by rejecting the decisions of Niger's established judicial and legislative institutions and extending himself in office was reprehensible. But the actions of the coup makers were equally wrong" (McLure 2010).
15 Collier 2009, p. 166.
16 Collier 2008.
17 N'Diaye 2009, p. 129.
18 Ibid., p. 130.
19 Ibid., p. 130.
20 In terms of the scholarly viewpoint of consolidations during state failure, Marion Levy posited that the military is the state institution that can provide "maximum levels of stability and control" (Kandeh 2004, p. 2).
21 IRIN 1996.
22 Ibid.
23 According to Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2010 survey, only nine of forty-eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa were considered "free," and not a single country in North Africa achieved this rating.
24 Widner 2005, p. 216.
25 Marshall 2010.
26 Marshall and Marshall 2009, p. 1.
27 Ibid., p. 1.
28 Ibid., p. 1.
29 Ibid., p. 2.
30 Marshall and Jaggers 2007, p. 1.
31 Ibid., p. 15.
32 This trend of decreasing coups is also discussed in McGowan 2003, p. 339-370.
33 Chuka Onwumechili, *African Democratization and Military Coups* (Westport: Praegar, 1998) xi.
34 The Center for Systemic Peace did not code the 26 March 1991 military takeover in Mali as a coup. According to the Coup d'état Events Codebook, this event falls under the category of "resignation of executive due to poor performance/loss of authority." The codebook describes the takeover as follows: "Gen. Moussa Traoré's personalistic [sic] regime faced

increasing open dissent in late 1990 and early 1991 as a coalition of five political 'associations' challenged his rule with widespread demonstrations and riots. Severe repression failed to control the demonstrations and, on March 26, 1991, Traoré and his wife were arrested at the airport, apparently preparing to flee the country. The military took control and Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Touré was selected to chair a National Reconciliation Council (CNR) to govern the country" (Marshall and Marshall 2009, p. 9).

35 DoS 2010, "Sierra Leone."
36 Kandeh 2004, p. 146.
37 Ibid., p. 147.
38 Dash 1980.
39 Kandeh 2004, p. 147.
40 Cartwright 1978, p. 83.
41 DoS 2010, "Sierra Leone."
42 Ibid.
43 Rothchild and Gyimah-Boadi 1981.
44 Jeffries 1989, p. 75-98.
45 DoS 2010, "Ghana."
46 Quote on "unity and stability" sourced from Doder 1978. Economic intentions sourced from Anonymous 1978.
47 Rothchild and Gyimah-Boadi, p. 5.
48 Ibrahim 2003, p. 9.
49 Hettne 1980, p. 184.
50 Ibid., p. 186.
51 Jeffries 1989, p. 92.
52 DoS 2010, "Ghana."
53 Ibid.
54 Salih 1990, p. 200.
55 Ibid., p. 216.
56 Anderson 1999, p. 14.
57 Thomas 1990, p. 227.
58 Salih 1990, p. 211.
59 Ibid., p. 213.
60 DoS 2010, "Sudan."
61 Nachega and Fontaine 2006.
62 Amnesty International 1996.
63 Ismaël 2007, p, 42.
64 Nabakwe 1999.
65 Ismaël 2007, p. 42.
66 Anonymous 1999.
67 DoS 2010, "Niger."

68 Ibid.
69 UNDP 2010.
70 Ibid.
71 Encyclopædia Britannica 2010, "Burundi."
72 DoS 2010, "Burundi."
73 Encyclopædia Britannica 2010, "Burundi."
74 DoS 2010, "Burundi."
75 Encyclopædia Britannica 2010, "Benin."
76 Allen 1989, p. 33.
77 Three attempted coups took place during this time period.
78 Ibid., p. 45.
79 Bierschenk 2009, p. 339.

References

Allen, Chris. 1989. "Benin." In Bogdam Szajkowski (ed.), *Benin, The Congo, Burkina Faso: Economics, Politics and Society*. (New York: Printer Publishers): 17-144.

Amnesty International. 1996. "Niger: A major step backwards." Online report: 16 October. http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/library/Index/ ENGAFR430021996?open&of=ENG-NER.

Anderson, G. Norman. 1999. *Sudan in Crisis: The Failure of Democracy.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Anonymous. 2010. "The Coup in Niger." *This Day* (Nigeria): 3 March.

_____. 2010. "Thousands rally support for Niger coup." *BBC* (UK): 20 February. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8526072.stm.

_____. 2009. "President wins referendum to extend term in office." *France24*:15 August. http://www.france24.com/en/20090807-country-votes-presidents-mandate-mamadou-tandja-niger-constitution.

_____. 1999. "Niger vote will restore civilian rule." *The Gazette* (Canada): 26 November.

_____. 1978. "Ghana's leader was forced out, new ruler says." *The Globe and Mail (Canada)*: 13 July.

Armstrong, Hannah. 2010. "Niger Coup: Can Africa use military power for good?" *The Christian Science Monitor:* 25 March. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2010/0325/Niger-coup-Can-Africa-use-military-power-for-good.

Belkin, Aaron and Evan Schofer. 2003. "Toward a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47.5: 594-620.

Bierschenk, Thomas. 2009. "Democratization without Development: Benin 1989-2009." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 22.3: 337-357.

Cartwright, John R. 1978. *Political Leadership in Sierra Leone*. Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

Collier, Paul. 2008. "Let Us Now Praise Coups." *The Washington Post*: 22 June. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/19/AR2008061901429.html.

_____. 2009. *War, Guns, and Votes, Democracy in Dangerous Places.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Dash, Leon. 1980. "Sierra Leone Bristles with Economic Discontent," *The Washington Post*, 14 July: A21.

Department of State (DoS). 2010, "Background Note: Burundi." Online report: 4 October. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2821.htm.

_____. 2010. "Background Note: Ghana." Online report: 17 September. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2860.htm.

_____. 2010. "Background Note: Niger." Online report: 12 October. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5474.htm.

_____. 2010. "Background Note: Ghana." Online report: 17 September. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2860.htm.

_____. 2010. "Background Note: Sierra Leone." Online report: 1 December. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5475.htm.

_____. 2010. "Background Note: Sudan." Online report: 9 November. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm.

Diamond, Larry. 1999. *Developing Democracy toward Consolidation.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Doder , Dusko. 1978. "Ghana's Leader Ousted, Replaced by Deputy; Shift Seen Caused by Economic Failures." *The Washington Post*: 6 July.

Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. "Benin." Online entry from Britannica Academic Edition: 6 April. http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-55091.

_____. 2010. "Burundi." Online entry from Britannica Academic Edition: 6 April. http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-93634.

Fosu, Augustin Kwasi. 2002. "Political Instability and Economic Growth: Implications of Coup Events in Sub-Saharan Africa." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 61.1: 329-348.

Freedom House. 2010. "Freedom in the World 2010," Survey posted on the Freedom House website: 12 January. http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=505.

Hettne, Björn. 1980. "Soldiers and Politics: The Case of Ghana." *Journal of Peace Research* 17.2: 173-193.

Ibrahim, Jibrin. 2003. *Democratic Transitions in Anglophone West Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN). 1996. "Great Lakes: IRIN Weekly Round Up #19 22-28 July 1996," Report posted by the University of Pennsylvania's African Studies Center: 22 - 28 July. http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/irin19.html.

Ismaël, Aboubacar Yenikoye. 2007. *La gouvernance sous la V^e République au Niger, 2000-2004*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Jackman, Robert W. 1978. "The Predictability of Coups d'état: A Model with African Data." *The American Political Science Review* 72.4: 1262-1275.

Jeffries, Richard. 1989. "Ghana: The political economy of personal rule." In Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, John Dunn, and Richard Rathbone, *Contemporary West African States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 75-98.

Jenkins, Graig J. and Augustine J. Kposowa. 1990. "Explaining Military Coups d'état: Black Africa, 1957-1984." *American Sociological Review* 55.6: 861-875.

Kandeh, Jimmy D. 2004. *Coups from Below: Armed Subalterns and State Power in West Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lunde, Tormod K. 1991. "Modernization and Political Instability: Coups d'Etat in Africa, 1955-85." *Acta Sociologica* 34.1: 13-32.

Marshall, Monty G. 2010. Email message to the author. 2 April.

_____ and Keith Jaggers. 2007. "Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2007: Dataset Users' Manual." Manual posted by the Center for Systemic Peace's Polity IV Project. http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2007.pdf.

_____ and Donna Ramsey Marshall. 2009. "Coup d'état Events, 1946-2008: Codebook," Codebook posted by the Center for Systemic Peace: 3 March. http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/CSP*Coups*Codebook2008.pdf.

McGowan, Patrick J. 2003. "African Military coups d'état, 1956-2001: Frequency, Trends and Distribution." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41.4: 339-370.

McLure, Jason. 2010. "Is There Such Thing As A Good Coup?" *Newsweek*: 19 February. http://www.newsweek.com/2010/02/18/is-there-such-thing-as-a-good-coup.html.

Nachega, Jean-Claude and Thomson Fontaine. 2006. "IMF Working Paper: Economic Growth and Total Factor Productivity in Niger (WP/06/28)." Report posted by the International Monetary Fund. http://www.imf.org/ external/pubs/ft/wp/2006/wp06208.pdf.

Nabakwe, Ruth. 1999. "Niger; Of *Coups* in Africa: Where Next?" Panafrican News Agency: 9 April. http://allafrica.com/stories/199904090262.html.

N'Diaye, Boubacar. 2009. "To 'midwife' – and Abort – a Democracy: Mauritania's Transition from Military Rule, 2005-2008." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47.1: 129-152.

Onwudiwe, Ebere. 2004. "Military Coups in Africa: A Framework for Research." In George Klay Kieh, Jr. and Pita Ogaba Agbese (eds.), *The Military and Politics in Africa: From Engagement to Democratic and Constitutional Control* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company): 18-35.

Perry, Alex. 2010. "A Coup in Niger Adds to West Africa's Instability." *Time*: 19 February. http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1966681,00.html.

Rothchild, Donald and E. Gyimah-Boadi. 1981. "Ghana's Return to Civilian Rule." *Africa Today* 28.1: 3-16.

Salih, Kamal Osman. 1990. "1985-9: The Fading Democracy." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 28.2: 199-224.

Thomas, Graham. 1990. *Sudan: Death of a Dream.* London: Darf Publishers.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 2010. "Statistics of the Human Development Report" Online Report: April 3. http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics.

Widner, Jennifer. 2005. "Africa's Democratization: A Work in Progress." *Current History* 104.682: 216-222.

BOOK REVIEWS

Peter Alegi. *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa, from its Origins to 2010*. Scottville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2010. xi, 230 pp.

A timely update released before the FIFA World Cup in South Africa during the summer of 2010, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa, from its Origins to 2010* brings Peter Alegi's work forward from the original ending in his first edition up to 2010. The work adds to the historiography of South Africa as it examines the political and social context of football during the struggle against apartheid in the twentieth century. The book is divided into nine narratives in chronological order, some examining regions, others specific time periods, and then two devoted to the tradition of sport in South Africa from colonialism onward. Alegi focuses the reader's attention to the way football in South Africa brought relief from apartheid through the creation of sporting bonds that were created through competition, camaraderie, and collective action on the football pitch. A reader of South African history will quickly see the parallels between the characteristics of the struggle against apartheid and that of football: solidarity, teamwork, and cooperative strategy. The book attempts to show how the Africanization of the game came about and how the power struggles of local and national football associations shaped the sport into a primary pillar of Black South African culture during the 20th century. Alegi is a specialist in the field of sports in South Africa, specifically soccer. This is the updated version of his first book, originally published in 2004.

Alegi uses the terms football and soccer interchangeably, just as they do in South Africa. This mixing of terms likely results from the twelve interviews that Alegi conducted personally, as well as the over twenty he used that were conducted by other scholars. Additionally, his use of the archives in South Africa and the newspaper collection at the National Library of South Africa in Cape Town greatly informed his study. Alegi himself notes that this continuation of his work on sport in South Africa was written in the revisionist school of South African historiography that started in the 1970s. The accounts that he incorporates illuminate the world of South African football in a manner that provides a first-hand account from players, managers, and organizers that any country would be lucky to have as part of its history. It allows him to take the reader on a journey of football from the colonial era up until the time just before the first African World Cup. While Alegi does his best to provide a place for sports in the context of politics and society in South Africa during the chronological chapters of the book, readers will do well to have a medium level of knowledge of South African history to get the most out of this work. While it can be an enjoyable read for a football fan with no knowledge of the South African story, those who look to benefit the most from reading this study are academic scholars focusing on sport or South Africa. With a third of the book devoted to the bibliography, notes, and index, the book will certainly serve those looking to continue scholarship in this area. Although the lack of a singular narrative and the plethora of

ISSN: 2152-2448

personalities throughout can make it feel disjointed from a casual reader's point of view, I believe the match highlights and anecdotes of the difficulties facing the nascent football associations will be of interest to the football world as a whole.

While the book focuses on South Africa, it provides information on the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the government in Pretoria, and the use of sport as public diplomacy tool. The way international sporting bodies impact social and political development can be given a South African perspective through Alegi's narrations of the fight by non-white football associations to see South Africa expelled from FIFA and Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF). The politicization of sport in South Africa and the Union Government's response (or in some cases their instigation) should give those looking at the intersection of sport and politics more data to use. How sport can be used to affect policy change or promote ideologies can clearly be seen in the efforts of the South African Soccer Federation's (SASF) campaign for multi-racial sports associations to be recognized by international sporting bodies rather than the white-only associations, which had been accepted into FIFA and the international organizations of cricket and rugby. For a historiography of apartheid *Laduma!* provides a discussion of the origins of the sports boycott against South Africa, beginning with the expulsion of the white-only football association from FIFA in 1961. Football was now fully ingrained in the politics of high apartheid from this time on, and Alegi shows how this struggle led directly to the formation of a professional league, the South African Soccer League. He calls this the most important force in the country until the Soweto Revolt in 1976, due to the connection the league formed with black popular culture and the anti-apartheid movement.

As a prediction, Alegi states in closing that the primary benefit of the FIFA World Cup will be the delivery of emotional benefits to the people of South Africa rather than the economic and branding bonuses professed by the Local Organizing Committee, FIFA, and the South African government. The prediction is nearly identical to the conclusion reached by Kuper and Szymanski in *Soccernomics*. If Alegi constructed this belief through his own significant and wide ranging research in primary sources and sporting background, this overlap gives weight to the finding, and thus is of greater importance to leaders seeking to use sport as a political tool.

Alex Laverty, *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)*

Tim Allen and Koen Vlassenroot (editors). *The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality*. London: Zed Books, 2010. xxi, 356 pp.

Richard John Neuhaus wrote that the Holocaust is "our only culturally available icon of absolute evil." For those whose knowledge of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is restricted to what's reported in the standard print and television news sources, the LRA might seem to approach the Nazis' level of evil, making up in duration, barbarity, and spiritual bizarreness for what they lack in the quantity of their victims and clarity of their ideological hatred. This important edited volume is not an apology for the LRA, but it is an effort to offer deeper

understanding and greater context to the superficial coverage so often given to central Africa's most famous and most durable guerrilla force.

Allen and Vlassenroot have gathered together fourteen chapters by fourteen different authors who analyze various dimensions of the LRA and the twenty year war it has brought to Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and now the Central African Republic. They have organized the chapters in three parts. Part One offers various "Interpretations of Uganda's War in the North." Its four chapters examine the causes of the LRA violence, the ways in which the Ugandan government has used the LRA violence to attract foreign aid, the internal spiritual dimensions of the LRA, and the real political grievances that have motivated the LRA over the last fifteen years. Part Two, with five chapters, focuses on various first person experiences with the LRA, and includes the perspectives of a journalist/interviewer, child abductees, and the leader of a Ugandan group terrorized by the LRA. Part Three discusses issues related to "Peace and Justice," especially the Juba peace talks, the ways the internationalization of the war have impacted the efforts to resolve it, the role of NGOs in the peace efforts, the impact of the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation and its indictments against five LRA leaders, and proposals to rely on supposedly more "traditional" mechanisms to achieve justice and reconciliation in northern Uganda. The volume also includes a valuable "Introduction," which provides a basic history of post-colonial Uganda in general, and of the LRA and its war in particular. Right away, the readers are treated to the complexities of the political situation in and around Uganda, Sudan, and the DRC. The book concludes with a short "Postscript" which notes that although the LRA appears to have finally been thrown out of Uganda, the long-awaited peace of northern Uganda has been purchased by exporting the war into the DRC and the Central African Republic, to the detriment of the peoples there who now get to learn firsthand what the LRA is all about. For them, as for the peoples of northern Uganda and southern Sudan, the problem is not the "myths" generated by poor news coverage of the LRA, but the reality of the often horrific violence that travels with the LRA wherever it goes.

This volume is, to my knowledge, the most important book yet published on the LRA. Allen, a professor of developmental anthropology at the London School of Economics, and Vlassenroot, a political science professor at the University of Ghent, have combined the work of scholars (to include political scientists, historians, and anthropologists), journalists, psychologists, NGO advisers, a documentary filmmaker, and a local Madi cultural leader, to produce a work of impressive breadth and wide interest. In Part One, Adam Branch's chapter, "Exploring the Roots of LRA Violence," shows that like all wars, this one had real and complex causes, related both to internal crises within the Acholi community of northern Uganda, but also to the misreading and misplaying of events by Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM). Andrew Mwenda's "Uganda's Politics of Foreign Aid and Violent Conflict" claims that the NRM has done a better job of using the war to secure international aid than it has of fighting the war or protecting civilians in the war zone. Kristof Titeca contributed a chapter on "The Spiritual Order of the NRA" that shows how, despite its strangeness to the Western mind, LRA "beliefs and practices are constructed into a spiritual order which serves rational and functional purposes in the operations of the rebel movement...guaranteeing

internal cohesion and controlling and motivating the combatants" while also "intimidating the outside world" (pp. 60-61).

Part Two begins Sverker Finnstrom's chapter "An African Hell of Colonial Imagination?" that shows that the popular media's focus on the exoticism of the LRA has led to a failure to acknowledge the rebel group's real political platform, complete with published manifestos. Of course, how sincere the LRA leadership is regarding its supposed goals, especially those relating to human rights, is a different question altogether, and it's one Finnstrom does not adequately address. Marieke Schomerus contributes two chapters, both of which deal with the famous 2006 interview of Joseph Kony. The first, "A Terrorist is not a Person Like Me," shows how the BBC and *The Times* of London distorted the event by ignoring basic facts and essential complexities in order to fit it into a Stanley-Livingstone motif, but with a bizarre and barbaric Kony as the mysterious figure lost in the heart of Africa. The second piece, "Closing the Kony Story," is a more straightforward transcript of Schomerus' conversation with Kony in which he denies everything of which he is so often accused--attacking civilians, killing adults, taking the boys as soldiers and the girls as "brides," and stealing whatever his force could use. According to Kony, it is the Ugandan government that is guilty of all those crimes, while also spreading the lie that the LRA commits them. Christopher Blattman and Jeannie Annan provide an essay discussing survey results on former male LRA abductees. They show that the often reported figure of 25,000 abductees is too low (it's probably closer to 66,000), that the extent of psychological trauma among the former soldiers may be overestimated, that the LRA seems to target twelve to sixteen-year-olds since they are more useful than younger children but more easily integrated (and brainwashed) than older youth, and ultimately that the LRA is more strategic and "coldly rational" than conventionally thought (p. 154). Ben Mergelsberg chapter "Between Two Worlds" presents conclusions from months of fieldwork with former abductees, most notably that although labeling the abductees as "innocent helpless children" may be well-intentioned, it often neglects a more complex reality in which the former child soldiers liked soldiering, had real human agency, and are not nearly as traumatized as commonly thought (p. 176). However, the fact that some former child soldiers might have grown to enjoy certain aspects of fighting in the bush, or that they were able to adjust to their difficult lives there, does not change the morality of child soldiering. Ronald Iya, an Opi (i.e., a chief) of the Madi people of northern Uganda, offers a short piece that claims the worst we read about Kony and the LRA are true, and that those crimes are too serious for any traditional methods of reconciliation.

Part Three begins with Sandrine Perrot's chapter, "Northern Uganda: A Forgotten Conflict Again?," on the ways that the media, humanitarian groups, diplomats, and new judicial groups internationalized the efforts to resolve the conflict. Ronald Atkinson's "The Role of the Government of the South Sudan in Peace Talks to End the War in Northern Uganda" gives an excellent description of the Juba peace talks of 2006-2008. It stresses the impact that the ICC indictments had on the process, and how LRA intransigence and, ultimately, Kony's failure to sign, brought the talks to a fruitless end. Simon Simonse, Willemijn Verkoren, and Gerd Junne combined their efforts in "NGO Intervention in the Juba Peace Talks" to describe the role of the Dutch NGO IKV Pax Christi in helping start, then later jump-start, the Juba talks. Matthew Brubacher, who worked on the ICC team investigating the LRA, contributes an essay, "The ICC Investigation of the Lord's Resistance Army," that offers a window into the inner workings of

the ICC attempt to catch and prosecute five LRA leaders between 2002 and the present. As was brought up by many previous contributors, he acknowledges the challenges of trying to bring war criminals to justice while others are trying to bring the war to a negotiated settlement. He also offers some clear statistics on LRA atrocities--with over 850 attacks, 2200 killings, 3200 abductions, and a high number of sexual crimes in just the twenty-four months from 2002 to 2004. Tim Allen adds a chapter on "Bitter Roots" that critiques a different way of securing justice and reconciliation--the use of a supposedly more traditional Acholi ceremony called *mato oput*. He shows that the claims made on behalf of *mato oput* are exaggerated and confused, and may even be dangerous to implement.

For anyone interested in moving beyond the simplified coverage of the LRA so often provided in the main media outlets, this book is essential. In the end, most readers will conclude that Josph Kony and his LRA are as brutal as they are reported to be, perhaps even approaching some reader's standard of "absolute evil," but they will know a lot more than that simple fact.

References:

Richard John Neuhaus. 1996. "Daniel Goldhagen's Holocaust." *First Things* 65 (August/September): 36-41.

Mark E. Grotelueschen, *United States Air Force Academy*

G. Thomas Burgess. *Race, Revolution and the Struggle for Human Rights on Zanzibar: The Memories of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009. xii, 333 pp.

This book is comprised of two first person narrative memoirs and an introduction highlighting the broader themes of interest within the memoirs and their relevance in considering the history and contemporary political situation in Zanzibar. The introduction provides both a whistle-stop tour of existing texts and important debates on Zanzibari history and an overview of the lives of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad in terms of their respective places in the political history of the isles, and how they fit into the broader themes and debates which the book aims to explore.

The two memoirs are representations of opposing arguments for and against revolution, the legacy and language of which is contested by Zanzibaris. Burgess suggests there are two dominant and opposing narratives that both explain revolution and mirror the political divide that is such a dominant force in contemporary Zanzibari politics. The first of these narratives is African nationalism, embodied by the ruling party, and represented in this volume by Issa's memoir. The second is that of human rights discourse, espoused by Hamad and the main opposition party. These dominant narratives, as it is framed by Burgess, provide a useful framework for understanding the form of the debates within Zanzibari politics and representations of the islands' past. He also introduces the idea of "memory communities," which it is implied follow the lines of this core debate. However, as Burgess demonstrates in his introduction, both memoirs demonstrate the complexities within these broader debates, even to

the level of the individual, particularly clear in Ali Sultan Issa's memoir, which is at times contradictory.

The real joy of this book is the insight gained from having such a large amount of personal testimony on subjects for which there is little historical media coverage, and indeed a shortage of academic texts as well. It provides detail on events which fulfils a severe gap in the existing literature, and also offers a new perspective on the way in which some events played out, contrary to often accepted accounts. For example, Issa discusses the role played by John Okello in the revolution, self-styled "Field Marshal" and generally accepted as the leader of the uprising. Issa staunchly denies this as a possibility and suggests Okello was used as a tool by the real planners of the revolution, who predicted his name would spread fear amongst islanders (p. 87). Similarly Hamad argues Tanganyika played a far greater role in the revolution than is generally suggested. He goes so far as to term it an invasion, rather than a revolution, which was masterminded by Nyerere (p. 190). It is these moments of profound insight into Zanzibari history, nestled amongst fascinating personal stories and a broader context of political trends at the time, that make this a continually surprising and interesting read.

The nature of this book clearly dictates its sources. Through a series of interviews with Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad, Burgess has constructed the first person narratives which comprise the bulk of the text. These are supplemented by footnotes that add detail or draw attention to related sources at particular points. As outlined above, the memoirs follow an introduction highlighting the themes that can be drawn from the volume and provide something of a theoretical and contextual framework, which is useful before embarking on the biographical detail contained in the main body of the text. The only criticism that could be drawn from this structure is that there may be perceived to be a slight disconnect between the introduction and the memoirs themselves. Due to the brevity of Burgess's opening, it is densely packed with historical and theoretical information relating to the memoirs, whereas the body of the book is more allegoric in construction. That being said, any slightly jarring stylistic contrast is easily forgotten when taking into account the quality of each component.

Burgess has created two fascinatingly detailed biographies of key figures in Zanzibari politics and society. The book is of interest on a number of levels. It provides a compelling introduction to Zanzibari history from the advent of revolution to the recent past. The memoirs are intensely readable and of interest as standalone political biography. Furthermore, the book in its entirety, taking into account Burgess's succinct and illuminating introduction, coupled with explanatory notes, creates a captivating insight into the politics of nationalism and identity, colonialism, and the nature of power in Zanzibar, furthering understanding in a way that other texts on the subject cannot do, due to the unique personal nature of the text.

Charlie Wilson, *University of Central Lancashire*

Gaurav Desai (editor) *Teaching the African Novel*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009. ix, 429 pp.

What is the African novel and how should it be taught? The twenty-three essays in *Teaching the African Novel*, a volume in the MLA Series "Options for Teaching," set out to address these

questions. Given the quality and quantity of existing works, by Bibalsingh (1982), Gunner (1984), Rogers (1984), Allan and Zandy (1997), O'Brien (1998), Booker (1998), Sullivan (1998), Hay (2000), and Chesaina (2009) among others, the need for yet another volume exploring the teaching of African literature is questionable. However, *Teaching the African Novel* has certain qualities that make it a valuable resource for teachers of African literature at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Although the volume is geographically and linguistically broad in scope, including discussion of literature written in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, from sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, the introduction provides a useful reminder that what we know as African literature is actually a tradition of African writing in European languages, which results in a hybrid and elite literature that is of little relevance to the vast majority of African people. Although Gaurav Desai acknowledges that the volume does not set out to provide complete surveys of national, regional, or language-specific literatures, or comprehensive treatment of themes or authors, the introduction provides a helpful survey of trends in African literary production and a reminder that oral literature is often excluded from the classroom.

Teaching the African Novel is divided into three main sections. Contributors to Part One explore the various theories and methodologies that have been brought to bear on the study of the African novel. Olakunle George's opening chapter broadly examines the question of theory while the following contributions focus in turn on the importance of historical and political context, Marxist and feminist positions, and the translation of the African novel. Part Two develops these theoretical and conceptual questions into an exploration of regional imperatives and thematic cartographies which, Desai remarks, "attempts to present some of the thematic concerns that have evolved with particular prominence in specific regions of the continent" (p. 11). These include Zahr Said Stauffer's insightful discussion of the thematization of the Arab African novel, Louis Bethlehem's analysis of the political concerns of Apartheid and post-Apartheid South African literature, and Peter Kalliney's encouragement to include discussion of the relation between imperialism and globalisation in the teaching of African fiction. Part Three, "Pedagogical and Institutional Contexts," brings together essays that offer concrete suggestions for course organization and describe best practices. Contributors to this final section engage with the question of how best to engage in a pedagogy of African literature that is intercultural without becoming trapped in simplistic exoticism. Some essays engage closely with this question, but others lose their focus. For example, while Mohamed Kamara's contribution offers a useful survey of the Francophone African novel, it provides only limited discussion of pedagogy. More focused contributions include Harry Garuba's "Between Three African Locations: Teaching Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart at the Universities of Ibadan, Zululand, and Cape Town'"and Cora Agatucci's "Introducing African Novels in a Web-Enhanced Community College Survey Course."

As with any edited volume, the quality of papers varies, but most provide cogent analysis and reach sound conclusions. Interesting links emerge between essays in the different sections, and some could indeed be located with equal effect elsewhere in the volume. *Teaching the African Novel* would have been greatly strengthened by the inclusion of a concluding chapter to draw together more explicitly the arguments of the assembled chapters. However, where the volume is most successful is in balancing discussion of the general and the specific. Overall this

is a carefully edited volume which, due to the range of theoretical overviews and array of topics explored, will be very useful for teachers of African literature and of relevance to postgraduate students and academics interested in the complexities of the African novel.

Charlotte Baker, Lancaster *University*

Kwame Essien and Toyin Falola. *Culture and Customs of the Sudan*. Westport, CT: ABC-CLIO/ Greenwood Press, 2008. xix, 193 pp.

Recent events in Sudan have attracted the attention of the international media and governments of Arab and non-Arab countries. Sudan caught their attention especially in the post 9/11 period because of its' Islamist government unsuccessfully attempted to impose Shari'ah on non-Muslims and scores of other injustices that fuel divisions along ethnic and racial lines. Interestingly, the media and other people inside Sudan circulating information about the crises in Sudan often present a single-dimensional case to the world.

Essien and Falola could not have published *Culture and Customs of the Sudan* at a better time. The authors build a compelling case, which takes into consideration historical and contemporary antecedents that shape the crises. They discuss their work within the context of ongoing debates on Sudanese identity and argue that diversity has weakened government efforts in organizing Sudanese within one state. One recurring theme in the book, which ties the eight chapters into a single whole, is the effect of diverse influences on the society. The long history of these influences does not only make Sudan a fertile ground for conflict but a hub rich in cultural and customary heritage. Beyond ethnic, religious, and racial differences, various lifestyles shaped by geographic conditions lead to uneven distribution of resources and diverse occupational pattern, which tend to fuel tensions and clashes. Essien and Falola point out that a visible determinant of conflict in Sudan is the attempts of the Islamic-dominated north to impose Islamic traditions in the south, populated mainly by Christians and adherents of African traditional religion. Complaints of marginalization of minority groups have come to the fore.

The authors demonstrate that Sudan has a history of marginalization and resistance to foreign domination since sixth century A.D., when Coptic missionaries converted Nubian Kings and members of the upper class, sidelining a larger portion of the population. The non-Christian populace often complained of discrimination against their culture. The advent and spread of Islam from the fifteenth century also precipitated similar complaints and fierce resistance to Muslim dominance over the entire region. Religious hostilities were further aggravated by Anglo-Egyptian colonial policy of containing the spread of Islam and Christianity in the North and South, which sharpened the religious distinction. The colonial government suppressed the south. Civil wars and the Darfur crisis arose from this long history of discrimination, resistance to foreign domination, and marginalization among a host of factors. Further, conflicts over livestock, grazing land, oil production, inequality and other factors combined to destabilize the region since independence.

According to the book, Sudanese media and literature not only represent voices of various factions but serve as an important source of understanding the crisis and appreciating Sudan's multiple cultural heritage. These modes of communication have propagated deep-seated pride

in the various ethnic and religious groups. Oral traditions preserve elements of African traditional religion and are passed by word of mouth. To ensure continuity in traditions, the older generation disseminated traditional values and customs to the younger ones. Sudanese proverbs, poetry, songs, folktales, literary works, radios, and televisions show the extent of diversity. These ways of communication indicate Sudanese interest for a lasting peace. While Sudanese across the religious divide pray to the Supreme Being to intercede, Sudanese literary writers, newspapers, and magazines appeal for coexistence and attempt to create a national consciousness. Similarly, music and dance in Sudan testify to the long history of multiple cultural influences. Music, musical instruments, and dance indicate Arab, European, and Middle Easternern influences in Sudan. Music and dance serve as purposes of entertainment, present the voices of the oppressed and are a resort for the poor and marginalized Sudanese.

Also, Sudanese architectural designs and art works reflect their diverse cultural heritage and Sudan's contrasting geographical features. While urban dwellers build walls round their houses that provide security and forestall greater interaction, in rural areas houses are designed to facilitate greater interaction. In their works, artists tell the story of Sudanese historical connection and reveal issues of identity, religion, oppression, famine, food, family, and liberation; difficulties that require solutions. A longstanding history of interaction among culturally different groups within and outside Sudan has enriched Sudanese cuisine and dress. Cuisine and dress do not carry only gender implications but communicate both traditional and religious significance. Customs, the Bible, and Shari'ah condition gender roles, marriage and family in Sudan.

Culture and Customs of the Sudan corrects the assertion by non-Sudanese that Sudanese women are passive and helpless. Although women do not have as equal power as men, they play important role in the family, raise political consciousness in the grassroots, and relentlessly struggle for equality with men. The status of woman in the urban areas is better than those in rural settings. African culture largely shapes Sudanese customs and lifestyles, but Arab, Middle Eastern, and European cultural elements are visible in clothing, cuisines literature, music, dance, art, and so forth. However, the concept of family, lineage and traditional values set the customs and lifestyle of people living in rural areas apart from urban dwellers. The city dwellers have been influenced by recent foreign elements such as the media, newspapers, internet, television, and music. Although Sudanese observe stringent gender roles and take age differences into consideration during interactions, communal interest supersede these differences.

The authors adopt a simple style to convey their message. The book has a bibliographic essay that provides readers with further references and chronology, which reveal, at a glance, the dates of major events that significantly conditioned Sudanese history. Indeed, the authors have achieved the task they set themselves to analyze diversity in a holistic manner. However, the interpretation of jihad as a "holy war" rather narrows the meaning of the concept, which misses the point. "Jihad" embraces a wider concept meaning, "to strive for," and waging a holy war is a last resort of the Muslim and should be mainly defensive. Considering the broader view, a Muslim's first focus of a jihad is him or herself. Further, the authors assert that Muslims are permitted to marry at least four wives simultaneously. Although Islam allows polygyny under strict conditions, the maximum number of women a man should have is four. Finally, the

art and architecture chapter would have been more effective and better appreciated if the authors provided pictures to support their descriptions.

In summary, the book discusses the crises in Sudan within a wider historical and contemporary context. The approach offers interesting dimensions of understanding the present state of Sudan. Given the approach the authors adopt, it is indeed a book to be read for a deeper understanding of the crises, the news that floods our televisions and radio every now and then, and the rich Sudanese cultural heritage.

Waseem-Ahmed Bin-Kasim, *University of Ghana Legon*

Paul Wenzel Geissler and Ruth Jane Prince. *The Land is Dying: Contingency, Creativity and Conflict in Western Kenya*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010. xix, 423 pp.

The book's cover declares in yellow capital letters: "The Land is Dying." But don't believe it. The grimness of the title does not at all capture what Paul Wenzel Geissler and Ruth Jane Prince do in this thoughtful and creative book. Although the loss of land is the topic of one chapter, the emphasis is on the "capacity of touch and the nature of growth" in western Kenya's Luo-land (p. 1). The subtitle's reference to "conflict" is not to an armed one between states, but the much more nuanced "conflicts about the making of social relations" (p. 357). The ill-fitting title is a shame since it will likely lead many readers to avoid picking the book up; it will be their loss.

The authors' main goal is to investigate the Luo struggle "to grow in a time of death" by paying attention to everyday practice and "concrete acts of touch between persons' bodies" (pp. 10,11). The authors justify their interest by explaining that touch is really an exploration of what it is to be a complete human being, since humans can only be whole "through material contact with others" (p. 357). As they lay out their argument in the introduction: "all kinds of substance—body and bodily fluids, food or earth—and all substantial ties established through touch and material contact have the potential to bring about growth" (p. 7). While some of these connections are more abstract than others, in general, the focus on touch as something more than just a sense is persuasive and thought provoking.

The book has eleven chapters and begins with three of introduction to the region, the home, and the raising of children. Chapters 4-10 make up the core ethnographic section and describe the importance of the home; raising children; care of the sick and dying; sex and pornography; widow inheritance; funeral practices; and a chapter based on the title of the book exploring concerns about loss of land. There is also a short conclusion and an extensive bibliography, including a list of relevant websites and music recordings.

The studies of the "everyday" begin in chapter 5, "Growing Children," which describes the raising of children as "productive, creative work" (p. 151). The chapter examines the practices of feeding and naming children and the preparing of herbal remedies. Within each of these areas, sharing emerges as a central aspect of child nurturing—an act that connects a child to others in the community, and which relies on a particular type of touch. The "touch" of sharing food involves "the woman who cooked the food," those who consume it, and even the cook's relatives (p. 157). The discussion of herbal medicines further broadens the notion of touch, which becomes a way to "bring living and dead in touch with one another" (p. 171).

"Order and Decomposition," the focus of chapter 6, is about sickness, death, and bodily decomposition. Two contrasting case studies from the same family are presented. In the first, a mother takes care of a sick adult daughter who has returned home. In the second, the same mother—in her role as wife—takes care/neglects (depending on one's perspective) her aged and ill husband. The authors explore the community's response to this woman's behavior. In the first case, questions are raised about whether it is right for a grown woman to return to her mother's home. There is a discussion about whether the daughter's illness is "chira"—a Luo disease caused by the breaking of Luo-specific rules (p. 201). Many of those rules are concerned with prohibitions and prescriptions around all kinds of touch (p. 203). In the second case, women in the village question the wife's indifference to her husband and implore her to "remember her love!" (p. 212). When the old man finally passes away, practical problems arise about what to do with the decaying body. In the end, it is non-kin male community members who take on the physically demanding tasks of handling the body. In both cases, touch, and lack of, sent powerful signals about marital relations, kin obligations, and shifting roles within the community. A community member told the authors that although the touching of a dead body was unpleasant, it was "a work of love" (p. 222).

Geissler and Prince are particularly skilled in weaving their fieldwork experiences into their arguments. The chapters often present formal case studies derived from their time living in Luo-land. They are frank in admitting certain information is only revealed to them after particular events. When their child is born at the local hospital conversations begin about child rearing. Funeral practices become more than theoretical when their home is crowded with mourners for days on end, and the importance of inter-generational sharing is driven home when a small child urinates on Geissler and he is instructed to thank the child for the "gift." Although they are anthropologists, they deftly discuss the history of the region and recognize the dynamic nature of their subjects.

The couple has worked in Western Kenya as both scientists and anthropologists for fifteen years. Geissler was originally trained in zoology, while Prince was trained in the human sciences. They both eventually re-trained as social anthropologists and returned to the region for fieldwork. The authors' broad interests—in the past few years, they've written about medical ethics, inter-generational relations, medicinal plants, religion, popular music, and produced a documentary about new motherhood—make them insightful guides.

The Land is Dying will be useful for anyone conducting research in western Kenya. I imagine many anthropologists will be interested in how the authors investigate change and modernity through the lens of touch. The book is an excellent resource and it is a good read: theoretical without being overwhelming, anthropological without being off-putting, serious but amusing. In sum, it is a rare and valuable contribution.

Melissa Graboyes, *University of Oregon*

Bayo Holsey. *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008. 272 pp.

Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade explores causes and effects of silences entrenched in Ghanaians' understanding of the transatlantic slave trade. Like Saidiya

Hartman's *Lose Your Mother* (2007), Bayo Holsey also selects the Elmina and Cape Coast Castles as reference points and sacred sites for interrogating missing linkages entrenched with memories of an ancestral past. Indeed, these historical spaces have generated converging and diverging dialogues for probing the transatlantic slave trade—they remain contentious sites and a route of remembrance. In the words of Holsey, "the history of the slave trade is largely ignored [by Ghanaians] in order to maintain the coherence of the story of colonialism and independence" (p. 129). According to Holsey, the older generation "replace[s] narratives of enslavement with stories of their past integration into the Atlantic economy on favorable terms" (p. 22). She posits that there is a need for the contemporary generation to assemble their own views and that through this process they could refashion or establish new paradigms.

Holsey's central goal is to show how people in coastal locales are beginning to negotiate and create their own pathways in their definition of slavery. She does so by challenging the local people to excavate deeper into their past. This ambitious work seeks to unearth silences created by contemporary oral traditions that are manufactured by individuals, family histories, and other groups and institutions' traditions that purposely obscure the history of Ghanaians and establish their innocence in the middle passage. She notes that the government and tourism industry have both endorsed the comodification of sites of memories to accumulate revenue as they simultaneously erase historical facts (pp. 151-173). Here, Holsey grapples with a historical development that, in her opinion, is veiled by secret codes and covers up the sins and shame of the past.

Holsey's thesis is that, in general, Ghanaians' perception of slavery and the involvements of their ancestors are colored by Western narratives (pp. 3, 12), and that during the process of "construction of an urban coastal identity, early coastal elites eschewed discussion of the Atlantic slave trade" (p. 22). In the journey to refashion the slave trade in Ghana, Holsey is convinced that there is an awakening along the coastlines—one that has influenced people like Felix, her favorite tour guide, to use non-traditional approaches (incorporating Walter Rodney's thesis in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*) to dig deeper below the surface so that slavery could be discussed beyond the African diaspora (pp. 194-95). This kind of protest narrative is echoed in Holsey's book (pp. 137, 143, 221).

Holsey's anthropological approach heavily depends on interviews, her observations of junior secondary school (JSS) students in classroom setting, teachers, tourists to the slave castles, tour guides, and others. Through her interactions with the people of the twin cities of Elmina and the Cape Coast, Holsey takes the risk of tackling complex issues at the local level in addition to her controversial analysis of the Ghanaian school curriculum. The issues addressed in *Routes of Remembrance* are plentiful. They include, but are not limited to, the attempts of families with evidence of slavery to erase any unpleasant memories associated with slavery. The chapters cover broad themes including the role of elites in the construction of urban coastal identities. The work is divided into seven engaging chapters. The strength of the book lies in chapters where Holsey provides ample narratives and evidence to support her assertions. Chapter 5, "E-Race-ing History: Schooling and National Identity" is the most problematic and controversial part because of Holsey's excessive generalizations and her efforts to lump together the Ghanaian school system and curriculum since independence.

Chapter 5 suffers from an approach that adopts strategic nuances for coloring her views about how Ghanaians perceive slavery and the slave castles. Holsey conflates these complex historiographic debates with aspects of JSS/SSS (senior secondary school) textbooks. However, Holsey does not clearly tell her readers why the ongoing debates and epistemological matters in academia are significant to pre-college education in Ghana (pp. 130-141). Holsey fixates on one area, and in doing so she forcefully asserts that "postcolonial Ghanaian textbook writers have marginalized the history of the slave trade making it subsidiary to the story of colonialism and independence" (pp. 23, 123).

Holsey complicates matters when she proclaims that "fifty years later, in school textbooks, independence continues to be the end of the story" (p. 124). Probing the history of the educational curriculum without going back to what existed immediately after independence in 1957 or before the introduction of the JSS/SSS system in the early 1990s is misleading. What about the late 1950s through the 1980s? If Holsey is discussing the curriculum of the education system since its inception in the early 1990s, she must say so clearly and draw her conclusions within that time frame rather than generalize.

Certainly, postcolonial Ghanaian textbook writers provided adequate facts about the slave trade and wrote more broadly about this subject in postcolonial school curriculum than she admits. Holsey continues, "children learn to view Nkrumah as national icon and the embodiment of national struggle…the celebration of Nkrumah and independence extends outside of schools; it forms part of government's agenda…the history of the slave trade cannot find footing…thus, the history of the slave trade is largely ignored in order to maintain the coherence of the story of colonialism and independence" (pp. 128-129). Holsey tries to show the binary between the visibility of national history and the invisibility of slavery in Ghanaian historical discourse; yet she erases other key elements in her analysis. The background of how lessons about slavery evolved in classrooms over time is crucial to this discourse. Nonetheless, these facts are absent in Holsey's book. In fact, the nature/contents of textbooks for students preparing for Middle School Leaving Certificate Exams, General Certificate Exams (GCE), West African Examination Council Exams and other exams, all of which provide a wide spectrum of information, are neglected by Holsey.

Ghanaians who attended form five and six in Ghanaian public schools and those who wrote "sito" and GCE exams from 1960s-1990 would not find *Routes of Remembrance* very useful because it discredits the Ministry of Education of any meaningful contributions made to the educational system. Ghanaian scholars including historian F.K. Buah and others, did not distance themselves from this subject as Holsey suggests (pp. 123-24). Their works enhanced Ghanaians' knowledge of slavery, but they did not see slavery as a number of diasporan blacks do. Indeed, some of the themes that F.K. Buah and others underscore are absent from the JSS/SSS systems which were created by Jerry John Rawlings's government for various economic and political reasons in the early 1990s. It is imperative to add that the Ghanaian school curriculum has been crafted in different ways to provide different insights to suit the needs of different generations. Without a doubt, some positive aspects of JSS textbooks still remain.

It is clear that Ghanaians bring varying experiences to the forefront, but Holsey is often quick to conclude that they intentionally erase any memory of slavery, either in their family history or in oral traditions, in order to underscore their patriotic and nationalistic agenda.

Some sections read as if Holsey is hammering Ghanaians into submission or forcing them to surrender their unique cultural positions, generational differences, experiences, and worldviews. Also, it sends the message that the local people (especially the older generation) are living in denial.

Overall, *Routes of Remembrance*, as the name implies, provides another route for remembering the horrors of the past. Holsey forcefully concludes that "minimizing the slave trade within national history protects the narrative flow of colonial oppression and nationalist victory that allows Ghana to be viewed as member of a community of nations rather than a 'race of slaves'" (p. 235). Since the past is often in conversation with the future, refashioning the slave trade from the local to the national level would require a great deal of academic tolerance and objectiveness—one that would incorporate multiple historical accounts running next to one other—and "embracing" or sustaining oral traditions embedded in the history of Ghana at the same time. This "academic marriage" between the past and the present is possible as scholars continue to reconstruct these important historical events.

Kwame Essien , *Gettysburg College*

Lise Morjé Howard. *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 416 pp.

Peacekeeping is a technique which has been developed, mainly by the United Nations, to help control and resolve armed conflicts. There is no agreed definition of it nor even agreement on when the first peacekeeping operation was set up. Professor Alan James, in a carefully researched work published in 1990, traces its origins back to the delimitation commissions which were established in the early 1920s to redraw a number of European frontiers after the First World War.[1] The official view in the UN is that the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was the first UN peacekeeping operation. It consisted of unarmed military observers who were sent to Palestine in June 1948 to supervise a truce negotiated by Count Bernadotte in the first war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. It stayed on when, a month later, the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, "ordered" a ceasefire. A similar group was deployed a few months later in Kashmir. A major step forward was taken when the first armed United Nations force- the UN Emergency Force (UNEF)-was deployed in Egypt following the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on that country in October I956.

UN activities in support of maintaining international peace and security were designed to fall under either Chapter VI of the UN Charter—encouraging the peaceful settlement of disputes—or Chapter VII—calling for a range of coercive enforcement measures against errant member states. The system of collective security never came into being as envisaged. Instead, the UN embarked on the innovative practice of "peacekeeping," a word that famously does not appear in the charter yet has been the characteristic UN military operation. Since the UN's establishment in 1945, the nature of war and armed conflict has changed substantially, with interstate warfare steadily waning. With the end of the Cold War, the cover of superpower protection for local client regimes often disappeared at the same time that the major powers

began to discover common interests in inserting international troops and other peace-supporting personnel into conflict and postconflict situations.

Peacekeeping operations can succeed or fail but we are less sure of the conditions under which these outcomes occur. Improved understandings in this respect would enhance the potential for more successful outcomes. Lise Morjé Howard has written an important and stimulating text on the UN and peacekeeping, which leaves a lasting impression and which requires several readings to appreciate the depth of the analysis. This impressive work of scholarship subjects UN peacekeeping in civil wars to critical and rigorous scrutiny, concluding that accounts of their failures have been much exaggerated. Having been led to expect failure by the dominant narrative in popular, political, and academic circles, Howard instead ends up having to explain successes. The case studies selection which includes Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, eastern Slavonia, and East Timor—that centers on first level learning, Security Council interests and situational difficulty appear to be determing the outcomes, and learning or lack thereof remains an important and decisive factor.

Howard mentions that considering the civil war context of the interventions, the question is not why the UN fails but why it succeeds. Failure can be caused by a variety of factors including the warring factions, the lack of adequate UN funds or staff, or, finally, the internal UN failure due to bureaucratic rivalries. Thus, she does not neglect the failures, and indeed devotes a chapter to peacekeeping failures in Somalia, Rwanda, Angola, and Bosnia. But she focuses on the successes, devoting a chapter to each case. However, Howard's central point is that successful peacekeeping requires the kind of careful attention to local postwar situations that is best assured by according a high degree of autonomy to peacekeeping missions in the field.

The strengths and merits of the book easily and far outweigh relatively minor quibbles and a few more serious reservations. The cases are studied methodically using a common structure. The literature coverage is extensive, even while this book marks a self-conscious departure in the sophistication of its conceptual and theoretical analysis. The care with which Howard treats so seemingly simple a statistic as the number of people killed in Cambodia (between 1 and 1.7 million), citing several reputable sources for the lower and higher ends, is a good example of her scrupulous scholarship (pp. 131–32). She was able to interview an extensive range of relevant actors. Being a UN insider, she is able to draw on some important documents held inside the Secretariat. At the same time, she never allowed the mass of material to overwhelm her, cloud the big picture, or distract her from her main analytical story line. The writing is crisp, clear and succinct. And there are some gems: One is the description of Yasushi Akashi as too restrained and excessively tactful as a counter to his often self-effacing but (in the Cambodian context) effective style of leadership (pp. 148–49). Another is Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his UN memoir, *Unvanquished* (1999), writing thus: "I felt I had no choice but to rely on my political intuition, which told me I was right" (quoted on p. 170). That probably sums up his tenure as secretary-general about as well as anything can. Howard's wry comment that "the demise of the Khmer Rouge" has "not necessarily given rise to freedom and democracy in Cambodia" (p. 174) is reminiscent of the Japanese emperor's famous broadcast to his people—"the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage"—announcing surrender at the end of World War II.

The study precedes by way of answers to three questions consisting of first certain favorable "situational factors of the country emerging from the civil war; consensual but moderately intense interests of the powerful members of the Security Council and finally first level organizational learning on the ground on the part of the UN peacekeeping mission. For Howard, the last, whereby individual learning by key actors in their official roles is manifested as organizational change, is the most critically important of the three. It includes information gathering, coordination of international efforts, integration of the mission with the local postconflict environment, and the exercise of leadership and judgment. She also identifies preconditions ("permissive situational factors," p. 10) for organizational learning in the field: information-gathering mechanisms, centralized field coordination, experienced staff distributed over the field, and capable leaders. Additional preconditions include the supply of well-trained and well-equipped troops in adequate numbers and requisite funding.

At the second level of organizational learning—the Secretariat applying the right lessons from one mission to the next (as opposed to learning in the field within any given mission)—the typical behavior is incremental adaptation. One important lesson that has been learned is the division of labor in the use of force, whereby the UN leaves this to powerful states or regional organizations while concentrating its own efforts on state building. Likewise, the UN has been markedly reluctant to take on the burden of administration since the Kosovo and East Timor missions.

This is a very impressive book. However, there some points and aspects in the analysis that one might quibble. One such quibble relates to Howard's use of the peacekeeping measure of success and failure. It seems a rather binary analysis partly due to the fact that Howard relates the outcome of the operation to the mandate of the UN, thus, in Bosnia, for example, the safe-area resolutions were adopted against the professional advice of UN military ground reports (p. 46). Therefore, the book strengthens the impression that the Secretariat has been ahead of its political masters. Second, in terms of the concept of "civil war" or "intrastate conflict," in most cases what we face are transnational and regional conflicts. The role of leadership—especially by the head of mission, force commander, and the UN secretary-general—is also underemphasized. It would have helped to bring in the principal-agent literature in discussing the role of the Secretariat as an independent actor in relation to member states (pp. 339–42). The Somali case is very relevant to the last point.

In sum, this is a first-rate book that deserves wide readership in policy, university, and informed public circles.

Reference

Alan James. *Peacekeeping in International Politics*. London: Macmillan for International Institute for Strategic Studies, I990.

Ioannis Mantzikos, *University of Peloponnese, Greece*

David McDermott Hughes. *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape, and the Problem of Belonging*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. xx, 204 pp.

Whiteness without mastery?

Whites have been under close scrutiny recently; from Richard Dyer's *White* (1997) to Nell Irvin Painter's *The History of White People* (2010). Science has long demolished the argument for white superiority: David McDermott Hughes reports that "cultural anthropologists now concur [that] race is an imagined, constructed category" (p. xvi): somatic "whiteness" may not signify biologically, but, being socially constructed (and historically managed), it has existential meaning. In South Africa across the Limpopo from Zimbabwe where David McDermott Hughes' research was conducted, some whites in the community have been examining their commitment and their conscience and this book quotes from a number, including Melissa Steyn (*Whiteness Just isn't What it Used to Be: White Identity in a Changing South Africa*, 2001) and J.M.Coetzee (*White Writing*, 1988).

Hughes undertakes to focus "on the moral lives and imaginations of white Zimbabweans" seeking in various ways to answer the question "How have European settler societies established a sense of belonging and entitlement outside Europe?" The story begins with the Mugabe government's (if that's the right word) "project of social destruction" (xi), the farm invasions of 2000, but of necessity the dominion, colonial, and pre-colonial contexts are recalled.

Professor Hughes's drama is played out in two different scenes. Part One of the book, "The Zambezi," is concerned with literature and photography of the Kariba Dam (or Lake Kariba, a distinction important to the argument): Part Two shifts to the "practices of commercial agriculture" (p. xiii) in the district of Virginia, east and south of Harare.

Kariba was undertaken as a project of modernization and exploitation and in the process changed both the country's demography (a whole community of Tonga people had to be relocated) and its ecology (flora and fauna were threatened and had to adapt). Construction began in the 1950s, and the achievement was seen by the whites as a white triumph, among other things creating a land- (and water-) scape amenable to northern, temperate aesthetics. (There is no African word for "fjord": p. 60) As whites' political power dwindled, Lake Kariba became a place to be conserved, to which whites (and tourists and recluses) could retreat from independent Zimbabwe.[1] Using an impressive range of sources, Hughes paints a picture of a distinctive but still varied remnant, perhaps tolerated by those in power but still in their own way vital to the national economy.[2]

Water is also the central element of Part Two. In about 1990, the "hydrological revolution" (p. 86) was launched by the commercial farmers of Virginia, increasing the district's storage capacity seven-fold within a few years, and creating a "middle landscape…compromising between nature and civilization" (p. 97), which those responsible saw as both beautiful and productive.[3] Hughes gives a nuanced and vivid account of the responses of the commercial farmers to the farm invasions of 2000. Some defied the onslaught, some challenged (morally, legally, and politically), and some sought to compromise. The launch of the Movement for Democratic Change seemed to promise the chance of a return to the political bosom. Many made radical adaptations of their farming practices and in effect came to terms with the invaders, turning to more intensive farming of more concentrated spaces, and leaving peripheral areas for exploitation by their new neighbors, even managing what had become black-owned farms. Hughes reports that one white farmer in the district was killed (perhaps there were others). Many left the country: that option as much as their white skin had set them

apart. Some whites felt "more racist" in the new dispensation, some were able to move beyond racism to what Melissa Steyn calls "hybridity." As one white woman activist put it: "It's time for us to re-write that phrase [commercial farmer] as 'people of agriculture'" (p. 110). Hughes' last chapter is called "Belonging Awkwardly," and he writes movingly of one Greek-born farmer who built his dam "so that we, too, can leave something to the blacks. All these years while we have been living in Africa, these people have been taking care of us" (p. 129) .

Hughes's sympathetic account suggests hope for post-mastery whiteness, for "a more candid form of pluralism" (p. xv) in Zimbabwe. There is clearly a long way to go, though property and citizenship and class, but perhaps if a white commercial farmer can be an African, President Mugabe can be an African again too.

1 The process repeats that of some English country estates from enclosure and emparkment (commercial/aesthetic) to English Heritage and National Trust.
2 The South African poet Douglas Livingstone lived and worked in Rhodesia for some years, leaving in 1960 to return to South Africa. In late 1957, he worked as a diver on the coffer dam at Kariba, an experience recalled in his poem "The Skull in the Mud."
3 The phrase is from Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Tony Voss, *Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and University of KwaZulu-Natal*

Curtis Keim. *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2009. xiii, 234 pp.

The (so-called) Dark Continent of Africa conjures up in the American mind images that are distorted and not based on factual information. Moreover, according to the author, in his years of teaching African survey courses he found"…that students ability to approach the continent is deeply influenced American stereotypes about Africa" (p. 3). Accordingly, stereotyped images portrayed that are disseminated through media show Africa in terms of culturally loaded words like: jungles, tribal mud hut villages, cannibalism, witch doctors, wild life refuges, travel shows, safaris, etc., projected through,"…advertising, movies, amusement parks, cartoons and many other corners of our society" (p. 3). Also, Americans only hear about Africa when famine, disease, and governmental coups/internal civil wars are reported through global news sources.

Concomitantly, the author seeks to debunk these ethnocentric images by showing how Americans have acquired these stereotypes and "…where they appear in our culture and why they persist"(p. xi). Also, by tracing historical roots, he illustrates how stereotypes evolved and developed "into various words and ideas . . . [in order to] suggest alternative ways . . . to correct such negative outcomes" (p. 5).

Overall, the text is formatted and designed as an educational resource for teaching and learning about Africa. The audience for this second edition is for any interested individuals, not just teachers, students, travelers, and others, to learn"about what Africa is not" (p. xii). The book is divided into four major sections containing twelve chapters, along with an extensive

appendix, which includes a works cited bibliography and insightful notes plus information that is accessible from numerous websites and educational sources for reference purposes.

In Part One, Introduction, the author introduces the way Americans have stereotyped and filtered through the "popular culture" sieve, images of Africa portrayed in the media, videos, popular magazines, movies, and advertising. Such sources of information creates a mental image when pictures and words such as safaris, savage tribesman, sod hut villages, cannibalism, etc. appear for public consumption regarding Africa, thus promoting generalized stereotypes which generates spurious ideas not based on facts about the complex continent of diverse peoples and nations.

Part Two, Evolutionism, traces the historical impacts of evolutionary theory that began with Darwinism. These nineteenth century theories "showed how societies advanced from the simple to the advanced, from the simple to the more complex, and how the degree of advancement in one's society reflects the degree of advancement of one's race"(p. 5). Eventually over time such evolutionary ideas promoted European colonialism to spread their much heralded supposedly advanced societies to those purportedly backward primitive continents such as Africa (in this case) to help them to "catch up." To this Keim observed: "For example I frequently hear people say…'"How far behind us are Africans?' Such statements and questions imply a kind of cultural evolutionism, the idea that African culture will one day evolve to look like our culture"(p. 62). Consequently, such ideas translate into American foreign and military aid programs to "help" Africa toward modernization and upgrading their social and economic infrastructures.

Part Three, Further Misperceptions, explores in depth negative, positive, and "exotic" images that are shown in movies, television, magazines, and advertising. Also, the section describes in humorous anecdotes American beliefs about African cannibalism practices. Part Four, New Directions, challenges Americans to move from our isolationism and learn about Africa and to affirm that we "share the same time and place, that we are equal and different, and that our individual and collective well-being are inter-dependent" (p. 187).

This book is fully recommended. First, the research is thoroughly documented and clearly defines historical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives surrounding the problem of African stereotyping. Second, the book fulfills its sole purpose to be utilized as a teaching/educational resource to teach Americans about the real Africa.

Daniel Mitchell, *Independent Scholar, Silver City, New Mexico*

Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo. *Japan-Africa Relations*. New york: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. xv, 277 pp.

Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo deal with a really significant, newsworthy, and under-researched subject, that is the economic relationship between Japan and Africa in general. It also discusses foreign economic support to Africa by Japan.

Japan-Africa Relations seeks to study the complex nature of the dynamics of power relations between Japan and Africa since the Bandung Conference in 1955, with an emphasis on the period starting from the 1970s up to the present. The author examines specificities of the claims

of the Japanese state in pursuing these relations and those of the African states' demands as reflected in African conditions. The focus on Japanese economic assistance includes: technical assistance, grants, and loans. Additionally, the book seeks to identify and examine the dominant observable trends of these relations within the world system with comparative illustrations and to analyze the policy implications of these trends in both Japan and Africa in relationship to the issue of the search for new paradigms for social progress and democracy in Africa and a new power location in Japan.

Japan's relations with sub-Saharan Africa are, as Tukumbi observes early on, a virtually new area of inquiry. Previous treatments of the subject have tended to be somewhat journalistic or overly statistical, with Japan's diplomatic relations in the region being viewed as rather incoherent, and the statistics serving to underline the generally low level of economic interaction. Against this background, Tukumbi offers a laudably serious and yet readable inquiry into Japan's economic and diplomatic relations with the region as a whole, focusing on the period 1974-91, and reveals a consistency and dynamism on Japan's part which has typically been missed.

Following a useful overview of the state of research on Japan-Africa relations, the introduction outlines Japan's central dichotomy in its relations with SSA, which lay in its professed solidarity with the Afro-Asian group at the United Nations (and consequent 'obligation' to oppose South Africa's apartheid regime), on the one hand, and its desire to access the valuable natural resources located in South Africa (especially after the 1973 oil crisis had underlined Japan's general resource vulnerability), on the other. He then proceeds to explain how economic considerations guided Japan's external relations with SSA, and how this pragmatic orientation gradually took on a greater formality in the period 1977-84, under the sponsorship of successive prime ministers, as the Comprehensive National Security Strategy. It is his well-argued contention that Japan's relations with SSA can only properly be understood in the context of this strategy.

This book also highlights the significance of the G-8 Summit held in Alberta, Canada, where leaders of the G-8 countries adopted an Africa Action Plan (AAP). The plan was devised to enable G-8 nations to provide support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a newly launched program initiated by leaders of five African nations (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa). The AAP establishes how each of the G-8 partners, together or individually, will enhance its engagement with African countries in support of NEPAD's fundamental objectives. The G-8 Plan includes over one hundred specific commitments, which mirror the priority areas identified by NEPAD as the means to attain sustainable growth and eliminate poverty in Africa.

In the AAP the G-8 partners reaffirm the need for broad partnerships with countries throughout Africa to address core issues of human dignity and development. The fundamental premise is to enter into enhanced partnerships with African countries whose performance reflects the NEPAD commitments, including a political and financial commitment to good governance and the rule of law, investing in people to help build human capacity, and pursuing policies that spur economic growth and alleviate poverty.

The body of the work deals with a different dimension of Japan's interaction with the region. All are nevertheless crucial to the central argument which is carefully and

concisely synthesized in the conclusion. It offers an historical account of Japan's interaction with SSA in which the origins of the dichotomy above are traced back to the inter-war period. It also focuses on the evolution of Japan's trading relations with South Africa and how they changed with the institution of apartheid, as well as on the issue of resource dependency. Furthermore, it investigates Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria, which is found to have contracted from a low level and to have been market- rather than resource-oriented, leading Tukumbi to observe that "the popular idea that Japan was interested primarily in the raw materials in Africa was grossly exaggerated" (p. 133). The central concern is to analyse the degree to which Japan's votes on the apartheid issue in the United Nations General Assembly were influenced by questions pertaining to its economic interests. The author finds Japan sitting on the fence, with a refusal to countenance either outright sanctions against South Africa or violent means to bring down apartheid, permitting trade between the two countries to continue, albeit on a lesser scale. The book analyses the pattern of Japan's aid disbursements to SSA and why, especially during the period 1975-89, Tanzania received such a large share of them. In this context it is argued that Tanzania's favoured status was not directly related to Japan's economic interests in the country. Rather, in view of Japan's weak stance on apartheid, the consequent low popularity among the Afro-Asian group of states and desire to maintain economic ties with South Africa, "it became diplomatically essential, if not strategically crucial, for Japan to cultivate good relations with the most politically significant OAU [Organization of African Unity] member state," namely Tanzania under Julius Nyerere.

All in all, Tukumbi's central argument, that the various dimensions of Japan's diplomatic and economic relations with SSA were driven by economic security considerations, is convincing. Measured against this pragmatic yardstick, Japan's SSA strategy is viewed as successful as well as indicative of an often ignored dynamism in the country's foreign policy. At the same time, the hypocritical dimension of Japan's relationship with the region is properly exposed. Having read Tukumbi's book, the reader will feel satisfyingly enlightened about Japan's relations with sub-Saharan Africa.

Ilunga Tchoma Kitenge, *Institut de Recherche et d'Enseignement en Relations Internationales et Européennes (IRERIE)*

Kimani Njogu and John Middleton (editors). *Media and Identity in Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. xvii, 333 pp.

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century studies on media in Africa have proliferated, furnishing the reading public with books and journal articles on the subject. But the media-scape in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, is almost always undergoing rapid change. Oftentimes the changes that do occur are little anticipated. The mobile phone craze that has changed the entire globe has changed Africa, and on a more profound scale than any prescient theorist or business mogul would have imagined or conceived at the turn of the century. The use of mobile phones in Africa has significantly dwarfed that of landlines. But questions such as

how and why mobile phones were used as incitement tools in the 2007 post election violence in Kenya are begging for answers. It is therefore heart-warming to encounter any new studies that shed light on the fluid media situation in Africa.

Kimani Njogu and John Middleton's *Media and Identity in Africa* arouses tremendous interest because of its apparent novelty. And yet the lesson we draw is that no text will be new enough for media. The rapidity of change makes that impossible. It is therefore not surprising that the volume does not and could not keep abreast with the impact new-look telephony in Africa, for example.

Media and Identity in Africa is a constellation of diverse contributions on the mutually dependant relationship between media and identity in the Africa. The twenty-four chapters on media and the construction of identity in Africa emanated from papers presented at a conference held at Nairobi in 2004. The essays are divided into three main parts, with Part I dealing with theorizing media, community, and identity in broad terms; Part II, focusing on Africa's encounter with global media such as the internet, books, audiovisual media such as videos and video films, etc; and Part III tending to be more country specific in its treatment of global media. The divisions of the essays into parts seem to be somewhat inexplicable given the general overlap between the parts, although the fact that all contributions address the major theme of media and identity exonerates the editors from charges of arbitrariness and sloppiness.

The essays articulate insights into how media influences democratization and how democratization in term impinges on the media and the profound significance of this interplay between media and democracy on post-independence Africa. In a larger sense, the volume seems to suggest, and rightly so, that media forms are an integral part of the whole vexed and vexing question of Africa's being and becoming. The contributors highlight the use of media, mass and small scale, for information dissemination, propaganda, entertainment, social networking, and any number of at once multiple and contradictory purposes. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's contribution, "The Media in Social Development in Contemporary Africa," is particularly telling in this regard. Zeleza draws attention to both the constructive and destructive impact of media, and like several other contributors in the volume, cites the incitement role that radio played in the 1994 Rwandan genocide as a classic example of destructiveness of media.

The contributions are remarkable in their depth and breadth as they attempt to explain the media situation in Africa and what it means for the concept of identity and identity formation. But what is also remarkable is the broad range of audiences that the text aims to address given the varying degrees of readability and accessibility of the various chapters in the book. On the one hand, for example, there are pieces that are highly rigorous in their analyses and sophisticated in their theorizations while maintaining considerable readability such as Alamin Mazrui's "Language and Media in Africa: Between the Old Empire and the New" and John Kiarie Wa' Njogu's "Representation of Africa in the Western Media: Challenges and Opportunities." On the other hand, there are pieces poised to be beyond the grasp of the non-academic reader, notably V.Y. Mudimbe's "Epilogue: in the Name of Similitude," which is characteristically obscurantist in style and thrust. This is in fact not a critique of *Media and Identity in Africa* as such, but a commendation in that the volume has almost everything for

everyone because of the range of variety in the contributors' disciplinary approach and density of style and language. For a book aimed at meeting the needs of academic and general audiences, *Media in Africa* is an invaluable acquisition.

Ken Walibora Waliaula, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Victor Oguejiofor Okafor (editor). *Nigeria's Stumbling Democracy and its Implications for Africa's Democratic Movement*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008. xvi, 190 pp.

In light of the 2011 elections in Nigeria, this is a timely publication. The book examines the flawed Nigerian 2007 elections, the country's recent democratic environment and consolidation, and the progress of democratization on the continent. From this work, students of Nigerian politics will acquire a nuanced understanding of the endemic challenges that Nigeria faces in preparing for the upcoming presidential elections.

The edited volume was compiled, edited, and introduced by Victor Oguejiofor Okafor, a professor of African American Studies at Eastern Michigan University. Contributors include expert analysts and scholars of Nigerian politics based in Nigeria and the United States from the fields of political science, history, and international relations. The authors rely on various sources including online news articles, entries in scholarly journals, interviews, and independent and working papers. Few books are referenced. Since the majority of sources are by Nigerian authors, the book does not reflect the wide range of scholarship on this topic; perhaps this exclusivity limits the publication's scope.

Although the chapters in this work are not grouped into sections, the introduction briefly outlines the topics covered. The contributions can be divided into three thematic categories: Nigeria's 2007 elections, the democratic space/process in the country, and Nigeria's democracy in relation to democratization in Africa. According to Okafor, most authors in this compendium of essays argue that the real dilemma in Nigeria is the lack of commitment to democratic values and institutionalized rule of law by the political elite and not the feasibility of representative democracy. The chapters on the 2007 elections and the country's democratic space best validate his stated goal.

Chapters three, five, and six focus on the 2007 elections. In "Nigeria's Disputed Elections…," Okafor appropriately cites news articles to bring a detailed account of the 2007 elections. He offers an in-depth rundown of the political actors and institutions that contributed to the presidential and gubernatorial electoral debacle. In particular, he criticizes Olusegun Obasanjo, the incumbent president, for his unabashed manipulation of the electoral process.

Building on Okafor's solid foundation, Godwin Onu and Makodi Biereenu-Nnabugwu examine the electoral mishap on the sub-national level in "Dialectics of Patronage Politics…" Their essay provides a fascinating depiction of godfatherism, the patron politics that paralyze Nigeria's political institutions and subvert the democratic process. The coauthors convincingly argue that godfatherism has become institutionalized in Anambra state governance. However, in their eye-opening account of godfatherism and its tumultuous effects on state politics, the authors failed to elucidate a few key points. Nevertheless, readers will appreciate their analysis

of the underlying causes for godfatherism and the policy recommendations to mitigate its hold on Nigeria's political apparatus. Finally, in chapter six Onu reaffirms Okafor's introductory thesis. Yet perhaps he asserts the obvious: Nigeria's electoral irregularities will not be overcome with the introduction of electronic voting alone.

The second proposed category comprised of chapters two, four, seven, and ten, address the nature and consolidation of the democratic progress in Nigeria. "An Overview…" by Gloria Emeagwali falls short of a much needed, substantive examination of Nigeria's political history. Emeagwali does provide an informative biography of the presidential victor, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, as well as an optimistic analysis of his political record. In "Democracy for Sale…," Nkolika Ebele Obianyo offers a persuasive argument: Nigeria's market-oriented economic ideologies and policies have progressively shrunken the country's democratic space. Privatization policies decrease the size of the Nigerian state by selling state resources to elites in the private sector, who in turn finance or "buy" elections for select candidates. As witnessed in the 2007 elections, the democratic preferences of the public take the backseat to this market exchange. Obianyo's essay complements the chapter on godfatherism very nicely, unifying the two categories. Without financial assistance from godfathers, poor candidates could not finance their campaigns or secure party nominations in the last election.
Abayomi Ferreira's "The Role of Geographical Zoning…" provides a historical analysis of the federal character principle, which is the distribution of federal, state, and local level resources on the basis of geographic origins in Nigeria. Ferreira reviews the constitutional provisions for the federal character principle and outlines eight consequences of geographic zoning policies on the quality of Nigeria's democracy. However, a few of his observations are not convincing. One could contest that factors other than zoning are the true cause of these observed problems.

Rita Kiki Edozie in chapter ten argues that the 2007 elections reflect the economic and political problems caused by Nigeria's recent development agenda. She compares Nigeria with South Africa and Kenya. Despite, the comparative element of Edozie's piece, Edozie's and Obianyo's essays both discuss the failings of market-orientated democracy. Although, Edozie poses compelling questions about the democratic future of each country, it's a pity that her work does not include more scholarly sources.

Chapters eight, nine, and eleven focus on the democratization process in Africa. However, the pieces are underdeveloped and lead to the book's overall uneven quality. Sylvester Odion-Akhaine and Adeyinka O. Banwo both provide appealing but truncated essays; their works leave the reader wanting a more substantive analysis. The concluding chapter by Sule Bello possesses similar shortcomings.

This compendium of essays will be of interest to both the novice and keen follower of Nigerian politics. The publication is noteworthy for its detailed account and analysis of the 2007 elections. However, it falls short of a rigorous examination of Nigeria's elections on the democratization process in Africa. Perhaps, scholars seeking an in-depth portrayal of Nigeria's faulty general elections will appreciate the book's contribution to the topic as well.

Cynthia C. Ugwuibe, *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)*

Augustine S. O. Okwu. *Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions 1857-1957: Conversion in Theory and Practice*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2010. xi, 329 pp.

Augustine Okwu's *Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions* discusses the role of Christian missions in the southern region of Nigeria, also known as the Igboland from 1857 until the end of the colonial period. Focusing on two main missionary bodies, the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) and the Christian Missionary Society (CMS), the book explores the different missionary methods and strategies and Igbo response. The book's underlying goal is to explain that Christian missionaries sought to completely wipe out the traditions of the Igbo people, resulting in the unsuccessful conversion of the Igbo to Christianity. In discussing the overall Christianization efforts, Okwu explains that the missionaries had a non-transformative influence and that this could be the result of a variety of factors such as the abiding relevance of the indigenous culture, ineffective evangelistic strategies, poor missionary personnel, absence of true missionary spirit, and the lack of understanding of the indigenous culture (p. 306).

Chapters one through three discuss the history of the Igbo, their role in the transatlantic economy, and the early Europeans reaching Igboland, of which the Christian missionaries are the main focus. The fourth through tenth chapters examine in detail the role of missionaries among the Igbo. From the arrival of the first Christian missionaries in 1857 to the end of the foreign Christian missionary domination in 1957, Okwu explains that the sole purpose and the testament of the Igbo political independent existence was the preservation of the people's way of living, customs, and culture; and these were the sole targets of the missionaries and their agents. The Igbos believed that the missionaries tried to eradicate all their beliefs without giving thought to traditional practices that were innocuous to Christianity. For example, the social and religious system that made each head of the family the keeper of the family idols (p. 198) was one of the practices obnoxious to the Roman Catholic faith. Nonetheless, Okwu shows the similarity between the symbol and sculptures of the Virgin Mary and a misunderstanding of Igbo culture on the missionaries' part.

Both the CMS and the RCM saw schools as the means for evangelization, and the Igbo used this resource for their benefit as they were passionate about schooling (including the author himself) for beneficial reasons. The local communities thought that if they sent their children to school it would prepare them for the emerging colonial economy (p. 157). The increase of pupils in the schools was misconstrued by the missionaries as a sign of a departure from the primitive to the civilized way of life. In conclusion, he explains that instead of the Christian missionaries trying to completely eradicate the Igbo traditions, they should have tried to Christianize the African culture.

Okwu used a large number of primary sources including archival materials in Europe, church mission journals, memoirs and biographies of church workers, missionary records, papal encyclicals, and government records in the United Kingdom. He also includes oral traditions, secondary sources, and his own life experience as both a Christian convert and a missionary co-partner in the evangelization enterprise. However, Okwu does not show the type of oral traditions or interviews conducted by him personally. The map (p. xi) does not give a clear picture the Igbo country as fonts are tiny and illegible. For generalized audiences not familiar with the Nigeria, it is difficult to envision the map of Igboland without the bigger

picture of Nigeria as a whole. The author does not give a reason for the time period he chooses to focus on. Since it covers a century, it would have been easier to follow coherently if the chapters were broken into time periods.

In conclusion, *Igbo Culture and the Christian Mission* is a valuable contribution not only to Nigerian history and African history at large, but also to the popular discourse on history of the role of Christianity in Africa. The book is dense and contains all information pertaining to the author's main theme. He also does not fail to show the gender relations at play during the period. It is appropriate for both specific and generalized audiences interested in understanding the role of culture and the overall Christianization efforts in Africa. The book is a required reading for understanding the different traditional practices of the Igbos, the struggle to preserve their culture and customs, and the role and effect of colonialism on the Igbo.

Adaeze Nnamani, *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)*

David Peimer (editor). *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa*. New York: Seagull Books, 2009. xviii, 216 pp.

Editor and playwright David Peimer's selections in *Armed Response: Plays from South Africa* offer an insightful look at theatre in post-apartheid South Africa. Peimer's introduction situates apartheid in his discussion of the different styles and techniques used in resistance and reconciliation theatre. This approach provides new readers of South African drama with valuable examples of both apartheid and post-apartheid theatre productions. Specifically, Peimer focuses on *Woza Albert!* and *The Island*, canonical apartheid-era works, to explain the relationship between older anti-apartheid productions and the anthology's newer selections. Peimer's introduction immerses his readership in township culture, identifying the fundamental styles and approaches that define township theatre.

Relativity: Township Stories (premiered 2005) by Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom and Presley Chweneyagae explores physical violence, both police and domestic, in a township. Set in a community terrorized by a serial killer, dubbed the G-string Strangler, it revolves around a police investigation into the latest victim's life prior to her death. The inquest reveals a complex history of domestic violence that outlines problems of police corruption and sexual abuse in South Africa. The play also looks at the way destitution creates an economy of theft in the townships, showing the relationship between violence and poverty.

Bush Tale (premiered 2006) by Martin Koboekae develops from the accidental meeting between a black laborer, Jan, and a white madam, Marietta, in a remote forest. Marietta comes across Jan fortuitously as she escapes from a family friend on his way to vacation with her at the Beau Brummel Nudist Colony. Because of the small cast and single setting, the play has an easy, playful flow that uses humor to subtly address the political and social problems faced by the characters. Racial division is the prominent issue throughout the performance, but it also highlights the differences between male and female identities in South Africa, and the divides between rural/urban and private/public spaces. This play has a fun and witty style, relying on jokes and racial tension to drive the performance. Koboekae's work does an excellent job

underscoring the social divides in South Africa, suggesting education can help resolve present-day racism.

Xoli Norman's *Hallelujah!* (premiered 2002) depicts one poet's attempt to end violence among the black population in South Africa. The play mixes theatre, poetry, and township jazz to showcase the vibrant township culture for its audiences. Consistent with most of the anthology's other plays, murder and violent theft are at the heart of the performance. Bonga, a poet who has just risen to popularity, uses his fame to condemn the violent rape and murder of his highly religious Seventh Day Adventist neighbors, leading to an explosive and shocking climax.

Reach (premiered 2007) by Lara Foot Newton examines the connection between an elderly English woman and a former servant's black grandson. Set in the rural countryside around Port Alfred, this play looks at South African expectations surrounding the 2010 World Cup. Marion, living alone in a cottage, is frequently and mysteriously visited by Solomon. At first Marion is suspicious of Solomon, but once it becomes clear he is unemployed and lonely Marion accepts him into her quiet life. The play explores race, identity politics, loss, grief, and the divide between rural and urban spaces. The play foregrounds the divergent views between generations in South Africa, positing the World Cup as a potential solution to problems with racism, poverty, and violence for young and old.

The final play, *Armed Response* (premiered 2006) by David Peimer and Martina Griller, contrasts a German tourist's view of violence in South Africa with the public sentiment of her neighbors and friends. The play focuses on organized crime and private security in South Africa, highlighting the problems Anna faces when she decides not to employ private security to protect her house. Vusi, a spokesman from Armed Response, does everything he can to coerce her into signing with the security firm. When Anna's refusal to sign angers Vusi's colleagues and boss, the tension escalates as her life is placed in danger. Anna is not sure who to trust, the management from Armed Response, the police, or Vusi.

This anthology provides a strong foundation for the study of contemporary South African theatre. The selection of plays encapsulates many examples of township culture, such as jazz and poetry, central to the plays in performance. In doing so, the anthology presents an array of different perspectives on violence, identity politics, and theft—exploring each in relation to post-apartheid politics. This is an excellent collection for someone teaching political theatre or introducing new audiences to contemporary South African theatre; its manageable size and concise translations make the anthology accessible to a wide ranging audience. I would highly recommend this text to anyone looking for the newest works of township theatre or anyone studying political or African drama.

J. Coplen Rose, *Wilfrid Laurier University*

Jan Vansina, *Being Colonized: The Kuba Experience in Rural Congo, 1880-1960*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010. xiii, 342 pp.

One knows the Kuba well from Professor Vansina's numerous previous historical and anthropological studies of this "kingdom" in the southwestern part of what is now the

Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as from its celebrated standing among the paragons of African art exhibited in museums the world over. Or so one thought. But now we learn about the colonial experience leading up to the situation in which Professor Vansina found himself during his research there in the last years of the Belgian Congo. It is a revealing reconstruction of the realities of the times, from the contacts of the Kuba with Angolan traders in the late nineteenth century, documented in Portuguese records, through the turn-of-the century reports of self-styled "explorers," the administrative records and humanitarian exposés of the Leopoldian Congo Independent State, missionary, administrative, and company records of the Belgian period, down to Vansina's personal research notes, including the contributions of the assistants he employed. To set one's research in its own historical context, as this book implicitly does, is a courageous—and, one suspects, culminating—statement of intellectual honesty.

The format of the book is straightforward: it is for teaching as much as for scholarly audiences, and so the language is not technical, the apparatus is limited, and the narrative is filled out with what textbook publishers call "sidebars": short, often very personal, vignettes and documents bringing the arguments to life and offering instructors opportunities to grill historical innocents on the logic that links primary sources to integrated historical arguments.

The book's title conveys the concept: rather than the often-theoretically driven discussions of abstractions like "colonialism," or sensationalist condemnations of the well-known cruelties that overwhelmed parts of this region during the colonial period, it is a record of the Kuba experiences (*sic*—my extension of the title's misleadingly singular "experience") of encountering and handling Angolan traders, military columns, missionaries of Protestant and Catholic persuasions, their schools, road and railway construction companies, administrative officers, immigrant Luba from the east, tourists and collectors of famed Kuba art, and—finally—a skilled ethnographer and historian. The first half of the book lays out the arrivals of all of these outsiders, the shocks of the diseases and violence they brought, particularly early on, and the pressures of forced cultivation and construction labor that followed, though without melodrama. The Kuba kings, almost uniquely in the Belgian Congo, were accorded a degree of local authority (Vansina calls this relative autonomy "indirect rule"), and they took advantage of it to keep most of the outsiders on the fringes of their domains and to preserve a legitimating presence among the villagers. But the resulting cultural coherence and continuity, for which the Kuba became famed, came at the price of supporting two rulers, the local regime and the Belgians. This sense of the ironies of all history pervades Vansina's balanced account of "being colonized."

With the colonial presence thus established, the latter half of the book develops the Kuba experiences of it. "Village Life" in the Kuba kingdom suffered impoverishment similar to that of most of rural Congo, detailed in the concrete terms promised by the title's emphasis on day-to-day experiences. Administrative demands for the construction of infrastructure, plantation labor (palm oil in this region), a particularly hated system of "expert"-directed cultivation of food crops that had the effect of reducing the nutritional value of what people ate, relocations of residences, all eroded Kuba ways of working together in age-sets and left the generation of the 1950s in circumstances markedly less comfortable than those of their grandparents. Kuba life became more contentious under the relentless pressures. "In Pursuit of Harmony" highlights

the principal Kuba responses to the growing dissolution of their communities and their sense of lost abilities to preserve the proud heritages of their past. But the irony was that the Kuba did not blame the outsiders, who seem to have been tolerated as a bothersome sideshow. They might have hated intrusive agronomists, but they did not abstract "the problem" as a system. Rather they took responsibility for their own sufferings and sought to draw together through restorative cults of a sort that had brought the Kuba through hard times since long before the twentieth century. Over time, local charms blended gradually into local versions of missionary Christianity, in which the Kuba had no difficulty separating numerous elements of spirit familiar from their own cosmology from the irrelevancies of dress or other modern behavior of the European Christians. A thoughtful conclusion emphasizes the multiplicity of differing experiences of Kuba, behind the singularity of the book's title, emphasizing the costs of preserving the illusion of "tradition" in an isolated royal court to the many villagers in the region defined as a "kingdom," as well as the more familiar burdens of "being colonized." The book is as much about the Kuba managing to be themselves as it is about being colonized.

For this reviewer, the most far-reaching implication of Vansina's emphasis on "experiences," in all their multiplicity and contradictions, is its demonstration of the autonomy and dignity with which the Kuba peoples bore up under the intrusions of the traders, companies, scientists and technicians, police, and educators, all intent on trying to fix lives that the Kuba did not regard as broken. In epistemological terms, this alternative experience of "being colonized" begins to free African studies from its suffocating subjugation to social-science theorizing that inherently highlights the projects of the colonizers and limits the African actors depicted in terms so selective that they appear to have no opportunity other than to "resist." Somehow, the politics of nationalism notwithstanding, local communities throughout the continent got on with their lives, as did the Kuba. If African historiography continues to develop toward understanding modernity as people in Africa experience it, rather than as it is often theorized, this careful reconstruction of the diversity and ironies of "being colonized" will join Professor Vansina's shelf of previous contributions as a paradigm in the field.

Joseph C. Miller, *University of Virginia*

Kerry Ward. *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 340pp.

In the early modern period, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) developed into an "empire" of its own and enjoyed tremendous exclusive prerogatives such as imposing laws, establishing forts, factories, and settlements, exercising trade monopolies, signing treaties, waging conflicts with foreign nations, and inflicting capital punishment under its own jurisdiction in the Indian Ocean region. In the years between 1620 and 1799, the company empire, a colossal enterprise by all standards, established a web of territorial, transport, military, legal, cultural and exchange networks between South Africa and Java (Indonesia).

On the basis of extensive VOC archives and using postcolonial critiques, Kerry Ward shows how these imperial networks mixed, overlapped and intersected geographically and chronologically into a large and complex web; examines the diverse facets, peculiarities,

strengths and instabilities of imperial power; and argues that the networks' sovereignty was indeed effective and enduring, but also fragile and partial. Imperial networks are formed, empowered, broken, reconnected, and ultimately disintegrated.

Networks of Empire is about one of these VOC networks: that of free and forced migration, which places people into categories of slaves, convicts, and political prisoners and intersects with categories of bondage and with other networks made of the slave trade, penal transportation, and political exile. The VOC network of forced migration is based on the extension of Dutch sovereignty, which made up an imperial domain in which the company could impose its laws, run its businesses and make profits. Forced migration was legitimate, and it was the United Provinces that granted that legitimacy to the Dutch East India Company. The VOC put forward its proper legal system to run its imperial networks and impose an imperial order, but in the process of encountering other peoples and subjecting them to that system and order, Company officials had to negotiate cross-cultural concepts of legality and the rule of law to justify their claim to colonial rule.

Ward's book is interesting insofar as it examines the complexities of historical reality and the experiences lived by individuals within these networks and more generally empires. It is full of the lives of ordinary people and is fundamentally concerned with what these people did, thought in relation to, and as part of, the VOC Empire. The book is concerned above all with the peopling of the empire, which did not only involve the one million people who were transported from the United Provinces, but more significantly, the many more free and enslaved indigenous peoples, who were crucial for the Company's maintenance of its imperial networks and nodes.

The ever-growing scale of the Dutch East India Company over the two centuries of its existence was such that different internal layers of sovereignty appeared and were strongly characterised by tensions between the Company's concern with strict discipline to ensure the running of its business and the people (traders, sailors, etc) keen on promoting their own interests. This was one of the many challenges that VOC faced. Desertion, illness, crime, prostitution, piracy, and the diverse forms of illegal behavior, which were responses to the Company's building its empire on the blood, sweat, and tears of these people, were further challenges to the Company. Over time, they destabilized it.

Out of the network of free and forced migration, an Islamic network, according to Ward, grew. It was a network of pivotal importance since it was central to the Company's policy of exile, which was used whenever the political interests of the Company were at stake. People were exiled if they threatened the Company's ideology of social and political hierarchy. This Islamic node reveals both the strengths and limitations of the Company. If people could be physically removed from one colony or settlement to another, their ideas, beliefs, authority and charisma remained, and therefore challenged the Company's strict social hierarchies in its empire. Exile as a tool was not always successful indeed. The sites of sale, exile, and banishment shifted into grounds for conversion and the learning of Islamic laws and culture. The influence of religious scholar-exiles in the spread of Islam at the Cape of Good Hope extended to Java in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Sheik Yussef was one of the Islamic scholar-exiles whose religious influence shook up the Company's authority and its imperial networks. Sheik Yussef and many like him transmitted and transformed Islam practices all over the

region. Today, Sheik Yussef is still revered as a national hero in both South Africa and Indonesia.

Networks of Empire offers a different perspective on the Dutch colonial past. By focusing on the history of forced migration, it does justice to imperial networks that the historiography of Dutch East India Company overlooked. This socio-cultural history provides a new interpretation of the historical narrative of the nations of South Africa and Indonesia by focusing on their shared colonial past, and therefore their common history, a history of mutual encounter.

Adel Manai, *Universite Tunis El Manar.*