Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change

Edward Shizha, Wilfrid Laurier University

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Remapping Africa in the Global Space
Propositions for Change
Edward Shizha (Ed.)
Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford, Canada

What are the benefits and risks for Africa’s participation in the globalisation nexus? Remapping Africa in the Global Space is a visionary and interdisciplinary volume that restores Africa’s image using a multidisciplinary lens. It incorporates disciplines such as sociology, education, global studies, economics, development studies, political science and philosophy to explore and theorise Africa’s reality in the global space and to deconstruct the misperceptions and narratives that often infantilise Africa’s internal and international relations. The contributions to this volume are a hybrid of both ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ perspectives that create a balanced critical discourse that can provide ‘standard’ paradigms that can adequately explain, predict, or prevent Africa’s current misperceptions and myths about the African ‘crisis’ and ‘failure’ status. The authors provide a holistic, and perhaps, anticolonial and anti-hegemonic perspective that can benefit a wide spectrum of academics, scholars, students, development agents, policy makers in both governmental and non-governmental organisations and engage some alternative analyses and possibilities for socio-politico and economic advancement in Africa. The book provides up-to-date scholarly research on continental trends on various subjects and concerns of paramount importance to globalisation and development in Africa.

“The book is brilliant! Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change explores Africa from the perspective of academics specialised in subject matters pertaining to the continent. In this age of globalisation, I find this book invaluable. It is a good read as it dissect, analyses and presents issues affecting the continent in an articulate and cogent way. I highly recommend its use in academic institutions!”

– Magnus Mfoafo-M’Carthy, Assistant Professor, Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work; Fellow of Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa, Wilfrid Laurier University, Kitchener, Canada

“More than anything else, Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change speaks to the complex, multifaceted, and interfused character of the development challenges and prospects of Africa. Indeed, few books have examined contemporary Africa as comprehensively and insightfully as this edited volume; it is widely welcomed in the African academic, scholarly and research arena.”

– Joseph Mensah, Professor of Geography, York University, Toronto

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Propositions for Change

Edited by

Edward Shizha
Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford, Canada
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Oliver Masakure</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Africa in the Global Space</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Edward Shizha</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I. Nation-State, Immigration and the Diaspora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The African State: Can the Future be Stable?</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ian S. Spears</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trials of National Cohesion: Root Causes of Violence in Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Siendou Konaté</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Working with African Communities in the Diaspora through a University-Community Framework: A Community Development Model</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ginette Lafreniere and Lamine Diallo</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Globalisation, Globalised Labour Markets: Migration and Translocations in Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Edward Shizha</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section II. Challenges and Propositions to Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Education for Development: An Africanist Postcolonial Perspective</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Edward Shizha and Ali A. Abdi</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Globalisation, Foreign Aid and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Options</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Girma Defere Tegegn</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Climate Change and Environmental Challenges in Southern African Development Community (SADC): Responses in the Age of Globalisation</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Charles Chikunda and Caleb Mandikonza</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

8. Health as an Agent for Africa’s Development: From Colonialism Architectures to Renaissance  
   *Palesa R. Sekhejane and Thabang S. Dladla*  
   119

### Section III. Educational Propositions in the Global Space

9. Indigenous Knowledge and Science Education in South Africa: What Messages from the Curriculum?  
   *Audrey Msimanga and Edward Shizha*  
   137

10. Africanisation of Epistemology in the 21st Century University in Africa  
    *Amasa Philip Ndofirepi*  
    151

11. Globalisation and the Academy: The African University within the New World Order – Inclusion or Relegation?  
    *Clemente K. Abrokwa*  
    167

12. Legal Frameworks on Educational Provisions for Pregnant and Parenting Teenagers: Implications on the MDG Targets of Gender Equity in Education for Sub-Saharan Africa  
    *Tawanda Runhare and Munyaradzi Hwami*  
    181

Contributors  
197

Index  
201
FOREWORD

This book provides a refreshing critical re-examination of Africa’s development from a range of disciplinary perspectives. It makes it clear that hope is vital and knowledge is critical. The book underscores some key aspects of Africa’s past, misconceptions about its present, some of the realities it confronts, and the promise that it embodies in moving ahead in a competitive global environment. The lost post-independence decades of trials and tribulations in Africa have been painful, but it is time to stop treating Africa like an exotic economic basket and recognise that Africa’s influence in many aspects of global life is growing.

Of course, it must be acknowledged from the outset that the task of reconstructing social understanding of a complex and diverse continent as Africa is not easy. It demands us to be conscious of the relevance of history, local knowledge, economic conditions, political systems and, of course, of equal significance the role of external economic, social and political forces that shape the everyday life of people in Africa. With Africa’s population poised to overtake that of China and India in the coming decades, Africa is increasingly becoming central to the global economy. A nuanced and holistic understanding of Africa’s development trajectory should start and end with a discussion on how globalisation in its many forms affected Africa and how Africa has responded to the challenges wrought by the process.

Africa today is characterised by some significant strides from the Africa of the early 1970s to 1990s. Its people are resourceful, tenacious and resilient. Studies by the World Bank and numerous scholars indicate that economic policies have improved, and in some countries, debt reduction has served to free up resources for education and health care, while new technologies (especially the cell phone) have boosted Africans’ access to markets and information in a revolutionary way. While poverty is lower and the middle class is growing, ensuring that the recent growth is more inclusive and sustainable remains a challenge due to issues of corruption, intra-country and intraregional conflicts and limited incentives for innovation, competition and indigenisation (black empowerment) among others.

Beyond economic governance, political institutions have improved as well; democracy and electoral competition have become the norm across the continent. It is to be recognised that in Africa, democratic governments have been successful, while authoritarian governments have largely failed. Over the last two decades the prevalence of war has diminished, reducing the number of civil war casualties in recent years to historic lows for the region. While improving democracy and sustaining peace have traditionally been a challenge in some parts of Africa, the rise of a new generation of political leaders has brought new ideas and attitudes to the fore. In most of the continent, leaders are taking initiatives to tackle ethno-nationalism and its corollaries of xenophobia, inter-communal mistrust and social divisions. Newly democratic regimes have been more eager to embrace new information technologies that can improve the efficiency of markets and facilitate the formation of grassroots political and civic organisations. Although not without
its problems, democracy is highly desirable because of its intrinsic merits – notably, accountability and participation in social and political life. Moreover, it is both a reminder and an indicator to us that we have moved on. This is commendable, as it implies a learned focus on eliminating barriers to the exercise of one’s liberty and making social life more hospitable and respectful.

Notwithstanding these considerations and other fundamentals, one of the realities Africa faces in the 21st century is global climate change and the challenges it poses to agriculture and Africa’s ability to feed a growing population. African economies are still heavily reliant on agriculture, and within that sector itself a majority of the farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture. A growing number of studies suggest that extreme climate change will intensify food insecurity and the spread of disease; they also suggest that climate change has a strong probability to instigate conflicts and imperil Africa’s recent economic turnaround. While African countries cannot do much about their geography, there have been significant improvements in growth fundamentals in other dimensions that play an important role in both understanding and responding to the challenges of climate change, notably, increased the frequency and length of droughts, greater rainfall variability, and diminishing crop yields. Agricultural markets have been liberalised and there has been an opening of domestic markets to international trade, all contributing to stronger macroeconomic stability. Likewise, research and technology in agriculture have also improved. However, agriculture, like manufacturing, is hindered by a ‘poor business climate’ due to corruption, high costs of electricity, poor transport, unwieldy regulations, and policy uncertainty, among other impediments. In addition, agriculture also faces its own specific problems that demand urgent governments’ attention, such as agricultural extension services, land rights, and input provision. Looked at from this angle, it need hardly be said that adapting to and addressing the vulnerabilities posed by climate change will require both market and non-market incentives and initiatives. This situation, therefore, urges us in a practical sense to see things in interrelated ways as opposed to simply assuming that all solutions are embedded in an exclusive market logic.

Education is fundamental to liberation and empowerment, and underpins long run-economic development. Education is equally important for promoting tolerance, peace, and combating discrimination, political stability and thus lowers the potential for crime and conflicts. It is the basis of both individual growth and social harmony because it opens opportunities for employment and knowledge development and it contributes to stronger social literacy and participation. Investment in education therefore must be seen as an investment in strengthening Africa and Africans in the now and the future. While achieving universal education remains a challenge in much of Africa, notable gains have been made in increasing access to education. There is also growing acknowledgement by scholars and policy makers of the importance of preserving and using indigenous knowledge systems to guide development initiatives. Indeed, the ‘Africanisation’ and indigenisation of knowledge in African education is one step in this direction.

The connection and movement of people between Africa and the rest of the world has never been more dynamic and complex, and must likewise be given
attention in any discussion of remapping Africa in the global context. International migration is one of the most important factors affecting economic relations between Africa and the rest of the world in the 21st century. Mass migration is to a large measure a response to global inequality, and immigration profoundly impacts the way we live. Unfortunately, our views and those of politicians remain caught up in debates around the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’; yet as migration accelerates, there is a need to think more about the challenges and possibilities that it engenders. On the one hand, migrants may be viewed as an economic and social asset in receiving countries while, on the other, the remittances they send back home to their country of origin are crucial for family survival, poverty reduction, education, health, and entrepreneurship. Institutions that support good governance and the functioning of markets have benefitted immensely from international migration and remittances. It is important to repackage our understanding about this interconnectedness and acknowledge that Africa plays a key role in the global economy and its diaspora has played a key role in Africa itself.

The book *Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change* is timely and critically considers the development issues discussed above. Chapters in this collection range from how Africa can respond to climate change, the impact of wars on development, and the challenges and opportunities of creating education systems that are relevant to Africa’s needs. It fills a gap in contemporary African studies, and is an important read to those who want to know more about Africa.

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Africa has often been infantilised as a continent of failure which needs saving from those with capabilities and competencies to function effectively in the global space. The ‘Save Africa’ perception and interpretation of African reality are both ahistorical and analytically inaccurate. The purpose of this book is to deconstruct the misconceptions about Africa’s space and role in the global matrix and point out that the reality is far more complex and points to an active, and perhaps less acclaimed African role in today’s globalised world. The authors in this book discuss some models and lessons arising from development experiences in Africa and argue that social, economic and political development should be culturally contextualised and local models proposed that blend the local and the global. Africa’s position in the global space should be understood from its interaction with both colonial globalisation and contemporary globalisation. Therefore what is the connection between globalisation and Africa’s present precariousness? These colonising and hegemonic processes tend to see Africa as irrelevant, incompetent, inefficient and ineffective in the global matrix. The questions that need addressing are: What are the risks and benefits for Africa’s participation in the globalisation process? What are Africa’s contributions in its internal and international globalisation trajectory? If globalisation is changing the way people around the world communicate, produce, relate to one another and to themselves, how is Africa being affected by these changes both locally, regionally and internationally? If globalisation is inevitable, then what does it mean for Africa, and what is the role and position of Africa in this globalised space? Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change answers these and other related questions.

The book’s themes and topics are examined using multidisciplinary paradigms and perspectives in light of political, economic, ideological, eco-environmental and sociocultural influences aimed at sustaining or questioning the realities of Africa’s involvement on the global space. The contributors to this volume fill a large and longstanding gap in the study of the African space and location in the global village and its path towards sustainable development. The book also bridges the theoretical and ideological void that exists in explaining the developments taking place in Africa and how they impact internal and global/international relations. The approach and discourses focus on the multifaceted and interdisciplinary intersections of educational paradigms, cultural theories, critical theories, ecological theories, development methodologies and democratic political engagement theories to determine possibilities for economic growth and social development in Africa.

The aim of the book is to redefine, reframe and rethink Africa’s often misunderstood and misperceived internal and international relations in the 21st century at a time when Africa’s massive socioeconomic and politico-cultural resources are being mobilised to address the significant challenges that it faces. The book challenges the danger of oversimplifying the importance of and role of Africa in the global space. It explores and captures Africa’s experiences in
education, democracy, socio-economic and political developments, gender and institutional development. Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change addresses the key issues in rethinking, redefining and reframing the way Africa is perceived in the global context.

The book is of academic and developmental value to university faculty, students, development agents, political scientists and human rights organisations concerned with redefining and re-imagining Africa’s location in the global space. The book is luminary, valuable and informative in its historical, political, educational, social and economic approaches. It is valuable to anyone who needs to understand Africanist perspectives on comparative and international development in general and theories related to African socioeconomic and cultural and political developments, research and practice. Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change appeals to policy makers, planners, education specialists, governmental and nongovernmental officials and senior managers involved with African education, social, political and economic development. The book is also suitable as a course book/main text and supplementary reader for both the undergraduate or graduate-level audience and can be considered for adoption for courses widely taught in many international universities. Therefore, the book has a world-wide appeal in Africa, Europe, North America, the Caribbean and perhaps Asia.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Percentage per religion in Côte d’Ivoire from 1975 to 1993</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Employment characteristics of the young (15-24 years) by country</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Emigrant population, 15 years + in the OECD in 2010/11 by country of birth</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>African countries with highest physician brain drain percentage</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Synopsis of six out of eight MDG’s progress of SSA countries</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Prevalence of IK and IKS referents in curriculum documents</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Specific sections where IK/IKS is mentioned in the curriculum document</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Teenage girls’ childbearing at the age of 19 in Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>Average teenage pregnancy rate in Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>International policy frameworks on the right to education</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>Types of schoolgirl pregnancy policies in Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Percentage of international migrants living outside their region of birth</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Three pillars of sustainability</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Embedded spheres of sustainability</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Relationships between aspects of the environment</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDWARD SHIZHA

INTRODUCTION

Africa in the Global Space

Globalisation has had both positive and negative impacts on Africa. Many scholars have examined its impact from an economic perspective while others have focused on the cultural and technological dimensions of globalisation. Whichever perspective is used, globalisation is not something new for Africa. The process can be traced back to both slavery and colonialism when Africans were shipped to new hostile lands while on the continent, itself, there were incursions from European colonial predators. Both slavery and colonisation were implicated in the dissemination of new cultures, ideas and worldviews as well as political systems. For hundreds of years, Africa has occupied notable space in the global nexus. The continent has often been singled out as an exception to the story of increasing globalisation (Moss, 2009). However, this perception has largely been embodied in the contemporary economic global capitalist relations that have relegated Africa to the margins and periphery of the global economy for much of the postcolonial period since the late 1950s and early 1960s. According to Alassane Ouattara (1997), the globalisation of the world economy is the integration of economies throughout the world through trade, financial flows, the exchange of technology and information, and the movement of people. The extent of the trend toward integration is clearly reflected in the rising importance of world trade and capital flows in the world economy. Does Africa have any space and role in the rising world trade and capital flows in the globalised economy?

AFRICA IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC SPACE

The current global economic situation is a good lens for thinking about Africa’s place in the world. Can Africa open its doors to global partners (as it has done to the Chinese recently and to the West for many decades) without being exploited and without its resources being over-depleted? Can Africa also withstand climatic change and the environmental effects resulting from mineral resource exploitation? Can Africa compete equitably in the world system labour market and global capitalist economic system? The bigger question is: What are Africa’s potential benefits and risks? This book, Remapping Africa in the Global Space: Propositions for Change attempts to answer some of these questions. The story of Africa in the global space should be told and re-examined in relation to what the African countries are benefitting from globalisation. It is not my contention that Africa is not benefitting, but if it is, how much is it benefitting and has the quality of life of
people on the continent improved because of Africa’s position and relations in the
global neoliberal and capitalist connections. Africa has been and continues to be
active in the global space but it needs to rethink and redefine its contribution to the
global economic space. African governments have made considerable strides in
opening their economic and sociocultural spaces to the world trade, popular culture
and information and communication technology. A good indicator of this is the fact
that 31 Sub-Saharan African countries accepted the obligations of Article VIII of
the International Monetary Fund’s Articles of Agreement, to liberalise controls on
capital movements, since 1993 (Outtara, 1997). However, the opening of their
economies has created economic inequalities within the countries (through the
application of neoliberal structural adjustment programmes), and in the countries’
relationships within the international capital and trade flows (via the capital
outflows, instead of inflows, from Africa through debt servicing and undervaluation of Africa’s primary products as well as human capital migration to
high income countries of the West and Northern Hemisphere).

Globalisation is associated with rising trade, more markets, more business, more
information, more jobs and more opportunities. Yet, this is an elusive promise and
illusion of a globalised world. In both industrialised and low income countries,
many people feel threatened by the globalisation process. A globalised economy
presents a myriad of challenges, from protecting local cultures to protecting the
environment to protecting local jobs. Not all countries experience globalisation in
the same way. While Africa may not be benefitting much from global economic
relations, it is not alone in feeling this downside of globalisation. For instance,
some high economy and income countries have not been spared from the 2008
financial crisis. The European sovereign debt crisis which started in late 2009 and
early 2010 in Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain (the PIIGS) is a result of
the financial crisis created by Wall Street and the global recession in 2008. No
country is immune to the effects of globalisation. On the other hand, in some
countries like China global market-oriented businesses have raised economic
growth and living standards for millions of people. So globalisation benefits some
while others suffer.

For Africa, globalisation has created a paradox: a few countries like Angola,
Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Ghana and Tanzania are thriving, but the continent as
a whole seems to be falling further behind the rest of the world. However, there is
hope and optimism. As Devarajan and Fengler (2013) noted, poverty in Africa is
decaying, particularly for those countries that are doing well in socioeconomic
development and experiencing economic growth. Devarajan and Fengler further
report that since 1996, the average poverty rate in sub-Saharan African countries
has fallen by about one percentage point a year, and between 2005 and 2008, the
portion of Africans in the region living on less than $1.25 a day fell for the first
time, from 52% to 48%. They go on to argue that if the region’s stable countries
continue growing at the average rates they have enjoyed for the last decade, most
of them will reach a per capita gross national income of $1,000 by 2025, which the
World Bank classifies as “middle income.” The region has also made great strides
increased by nearly 50%, and over the past decade, life expectancy has increased by about 10%. During the 2008 financial crisis, most countries continued with prudent economic policies; some even accelerated their reforms. Partly as a result of such efforts, African economies kept expanding throughout the global recession, and sub-Saharan Africa has maintained an average annual growth rate of nearly 5% since then, despite continued volatility in the global economy.

The main problem for Africa is the capital outflow and inadequate foreign direct investment. Capital outflow from Africa is not a new phenomenon; it is a continuation of underdevelopment and dedevelopment of the continent that started during colonisation and the lopsided African countries’ economic relations with other countries, particularly the highly industrialised nations. Commenting on Africa’s economic growth and socioeconomic development, Jomo Kwame Sundaram with Oliver Schwank and Rudiger von Arnim (2011) state that:

Africa’s growth performance since gaining independence from colonial rule in the 1960s has been quite disappointing. So used are we to this assessment that we forget that Africa was, at least in the first decade of independence, growing faster than other developing regions in the world. However, the late 1970s dramatically set back the continent and led to stagnation and regression through the 1980s and 1990s. Africa’s role in the global economy is largely responsible for this, expressed most visibly in insufficient resource mobilisation and capital formation, and the continent’s lopsided trade relations. (p. 1)

While there are positive signals of economic growth in Africa, most of the growth is not in the manufacturing industry but in extraction of primary commodities. Capital and resource flows and mobilisation, as well as trade patterns, reveal crucial weaknesses of African economies that undermine their growth prospects: structural dependence on primary product exports, limited export variety and diversification of exports, underinvestment in domestic infrastructure, particularly for both agriculture and manufacturing and little domestic value added to extracted resources (Sundaram et al., 2011). Unfortunately, growth based on the export of primary commodities tends to create few jobs as Jumoke noted in analysing Nigeria’s economic growth and job creation:

While the last decade was marked by higher economic growth, the unemployment rate actually increased from 5.8 per cent in December 2006 to 23.9 per cent in January 2012. Note that this number measures the percentage of workers actively looking for work, and does not include the rate of the chronically unemployed who have stopped looking, and the underemployed working poor. Tellingly, the poverty rate actually doubled over the last five years and now affects 112 million Nigerians, meaning that 112 million Nigerians are consistently without food, clean water, sanitation, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education. (Hart-Landsberg, 2014, unpublished)

Pertaining to the problem of economic growth without job creation, which consequently creates and perpetuates poverty in Africa, Ibrahim (2013) adds:
African countries themselves and those that hope to assist them must first and foremost recognise this fact and commit resources and energies to harnessing the capacity of the African poor for their development. It is hoped that the global actors will realise that it is not beneficial to them or to anyone else to play globalisation-game without the poor. For globalisation to ultimately be beneficial to everyone—the rich and the poor—all must have certain levels of capacity that permit them to effectively participate in the game. (p. 91)

Therefore, Africa’s role in the economic global space should benefit its population and protect the population and countries from the detrimental effects of misdirected globalisation. Africa’s role in the globalisation process can no longer be ignored, whether it is in the production of primary products, in challenging climate change and environmental degradation, exporting labour capital in the form of immigrants or in rethinking its education systems. Africa needs to industrialise and protect internal markets from international competition before they gradually open up for total liberalisation of its socioeconomic space. The World Bank, IMF and other international financial organisations’ eagerness to implement strategies beneficial for already developed nations have to hold their share of the blame for the last decades of decline in the African economy. African nations should emphasise relevant economic history and development before they start to lean on the various ‘modern’ hypes in economic theory.

FOREIGN AID AND ASSISTANCE DEVELOPMENT

The contribution of aid to Africa hyped as assistance development is questionable and has been a subject for debates for decades. This development theory based on the “big push” for development of “backward areas” (Rosenstein-Rodan cited in Sundaram et al., 2011) and its policy recommendations has been challenged by some economists who argue that aid crowds out more efficient private investments and that it chokes-off economic growth, sponsors corruption, and fosters financial dependence on foreign donors (see Dambisa Moyo, 2009). Currently, that debate is echoed in relation to African development challenges by the conflicting positions of Jeffrey Sachs (2005) and William Easterly (2007), with the former arguing for a new “big push,” requiring much more plentiful and reliable aid flows, and the latter arguing that private investment needed for development has been crowded out by large aid flows to the region. Many African countries have received aid from donors, but that aid has not contributed to economic growth, neither has it reduced poverty among the poor in Africa. Contrary, it has created donor dependency. Aid has a tendency to infantilise Africa, and promotes an orchestrated worldwide pity on the continent. The assumption is that Africa is incapable of leading its citizens out of poverty and that African people do not have the capacities and competencies to handle and solve their socioeconomic problems. The debate and discourse on development assistance should move away from aid as the panacea to Africa’s development problems.
INTRODUCTION

Development debates should focus on how to bring Africa into the trade equation. Trade and foreign direct investment are of critical importance to Africa’s development. The answer to sustainable and substantial economic growth actually lies in market-based alternatives: foreign direct investment, trade, accessing capital markets, opening markets in the developed world to African products, sustainable use of natural resources and developing the growth of manufacturing industries. In the final analysis, Africa’s future lies in the hands of its people and its governments. African governments should create viable investment policies and environments; and development in human capital should augment these policies.

To improve its economy and reduce poverty on the continent entails getting a larger percentage of the population into labour and this labour can then be directed towards the exporting industries, and thus increase incomes (Naess, 2013). If Africa manages to do this, the future of the continent can be bright, but fulfilling this demands a clear plan of action. The education system can play a pivotal role as an action plan in developing Africa’s economy. Without doubt, the capacity to think, innovate, transmit, and utilise new knowledge is central to development (Ohanyido, 2012). The world today operates in a knowledge based economy and the benefits accruable from the increasingly blurring geographical boundaries across nations can be maximised only by nations with highly skilled and educated labour force. What is the place of Africa in this knowledge-based economy? How are African countries dealing with the challenges of education for development?

EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Education plays a considerable role in the development of human capital needed for the 21st knowledge society. According to Gyimah-Brempong (2010), modern theory of economic growth stresses the principal role of human capital, especially education and health. However, the relationship is not limited to national income growth rates but extends to the utilisation of knowledge outside the economic sector. Attained knowledge should be of use even in communities that have a limited or no industrial sector or base. In other words, knowledge should be relevant to everyday lived experiences of the people. Nonetheless, the relationship between education and economic development has long been recognised in the development literature. Comparative literature on education shows that educational attainment in Africa is low by all standards and lags behind educational attainment in the rest of the world (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2006; Gyimah-Brempong, 2010). Even though educational attainment in Africa is low, it has grown rapidly since 1960. For example between 1960 and 2005, the proportion of the adult population that completed tertiary education, average years of schooling at all levels and the average years of tertiary education increased by 464,408 and 400% respectively in Africa (Gyimah-Brempong, 2010). Earlier educational policies (e.g., World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning at the Jomtien, Thailand in 1990) that tended to focus on the provision of primary education to attain education for all targets and the promotion of investments in basic education as the actual foundation of human development have been replaced
by commitments to improving higher education. Today, there has been a shift from
provision of basic education to higher education as the cornerstone for economic
growth.

From the early 2000s, the key role of higher education within policies meant to
promote or improve development has been progressively acknowledged, reversing
the trends of the majority of the studies conducted in the 80s that gave absolute
priority to supporting primary education, basing their findings on the rate of return
Task Force on Higher Education and Society (TFHE) report, *Higher Education in
Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, argued that higher education is essential
to developing countries if they are to prosper in a world economy where
knowledge has become a vital area of advantage. It noted that the quality of
knowledge generated within higher education institutions and its availability to the
widener economy is becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness
(UNESCO/World Bank, 2000). One issue that educational policymakers should
address is the type of knowledge suitable for sustainable development in Africa.

Does Africa produce knowledge that makes its economy competitive? Signs of
progress in higher education are appearing in sub-Saharan Africa. The international
development community has begun to recognise the importance of advanced
schooling, while some African countries have introduced innovative policies to
strengthen higher education systems. Some countries like South Africa, Botswana,
Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar and Nigeria are making initiatives to
include indigenous knowledges and philosophies in their education systems. The
University of Botswana recently created a Centre for Scientific Research,
Indigenous Knowledge and Innovation (CesrIKi), which attempts to link scientific
research with indigenous knowledge systems. The universities of North West,
Limpopo and Venda in South Africa have also partnered to set up a Centre of
Excellence in Indigenous Knowledge Studies while the Centre for Indigenous
Knowledge Systems in Ghana is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, its
mission being to examine, preserve, adapt and use the local knowledge of various
communities in Ghana and the West African region.

While science and technology are seen as vital in the contemporary knowledge
society, indigenous discourses cannot be overlooked (Shizha & Abdi, 2014). They
play an important contribution in the cognitive development of students. In
addition, sustainable development cannot be dissociated from the culture of the
people and their perceptions of development and the knowledge relevant and
appropriate for that development. Therefore universities and the academy in Africa
are crucial in advancing knowledge and development discourses that are centred on
the needs of Africa and its people. African scholars must make a claim for a
renewal of curriculum knowledge and didactic methods that reflect local needs.
Africa needs to adopt Africanist perspectives on education for development.
Western paradigms on development might have worked for industrialised nations
but they have dismally failed for Africa.
One issue that bedevils Africa is the conflicts that tend to explode within countries and within its geographical regions. Political and ethnic conflicts as well as social conflicts dent Africa’s path to socioeconomic and democratic development. One way Africa can compete effectively in the global space is to increase stability within its borders. African countries are increasingly susceptible to civil violence because their colonial and post-independence history has left their governments extraordinarily weak. Colonial regimes created ethnic divisions through ‘divide and rule’ policies that created ethnic conflicts that crossed into the postcolonial era. Social conflict and political violence in Africa is a complex subject that may explain some of the development challenges facing Africa in the 21st century. A growing fraction of the world’s civil wars seem to be breaking out on the African continent, and in the last few decades it has acquired a reputation as a hotbed of violence and warfare (Spice Digest, 2009). Most of the world’s so-called “failed states” have emerged in Africa as a result of ethnic and tribal conflicts, coups, weak militaries and persistent rebel insurgency. Spice Digest notes that while internal conflict - civil war - is somewhat more common among African states than in other parts of the world, it is worth noting that since independence there have been very few wars between African states. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Somalia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire have witnessed their fair share of internal political conflicts and instability. Conflicts push back the continent’s path to socioeconomic development as the much needed resources for social and economic advancement are channelled towards military expenditure.

Mwagiru (2001) cited in Mpangala (2004) has underscored the importance of conflict resolution in order to advance development for Africa and to focus on satisfying the needs of its people and reduce poverty:

One of the distinguishing features of Africa’s political landscape is its many dysfunctional and protracted social and political conflicts. This problem is made worse by lack of effective mechanisms to manage these conflicts. Where they exist they are weak and, thus, social and political relationships in the continent have been disrupted. This has had negative consequences, including the interruption of the development and the diversion of scarce resources to the management of these conflicts. (p. 2)

African countries should find ways and means of resolving their political problems. Conflict resolution and peace building should be issues at the centre of African debates. We should, however, make note that the continent, through its continental organisation, the African Union (AU) and regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are leading in organising and promoting peace building in their respective regions. However, conflict resolution seems to focus on military interventions without seeking to understand the causes and sources of the conflict. Conflict resolution and peace building should examine and emphasise resolving the
main sources of conflict, socio-economic integration and transformations towards political integration. Africa needs to develop common principles that can ensure the building of democratic development that includes participation, social justice, equality, eradication of poverty and inclusive policies that are not divisive and based on segregative ideologies among the vast ethnic differences that exist on the continent (Mpangala, 2004). Without these inclusive and democratic policies, Africa will continue losing its human capital to the West creating obstacles to sustainable development. The obstacles to durable growth in the continent are primarily political. That hardly means that they are easy to solve, as even a cursory glance at the troubled record of governance in postcolonial Africa makes clear. But it does mean that they are not intractable. Sub-Saharan Africa’s recent history of political change and reform leading to growth justifies confidence. Believing in a more prosperous African future requires a healthy dose of optimism (Devarajan & Fengler, 2013).

ORGANISATION OF THE BOOK

This volume is organised in three sections. Section I: “Nation-State, Immigration and the Diaspora” has four chapters that focus on problem of the nation-state and its effects on immigration and the creation of the diaspora. In Chapter 1, Ian Spears describes the persistence of conflict in Africa focusing on regional and historical variations in the ways that states have been formed. The author concludes that long term peace will require Africans to look to new and inventive techniques to manage sovereignty, power and diversity. In Chapter 2, Siendou Konaté analyses the military and political crisis in Cote d’Ivoire. He explains how religious and cultural diversity could be a point of unity in Côte d’Ivoire yet some leaders have sought to exploit religious cultural/ethnic differences thus pitting one group against the other in search of social and political positioning. This chapter illustrates how identity politics has led to violence in political practice and shaped the process of democratisation from the early 1990s throughout 2011. Here, the implications of identity politics range from the politicisation of ethnicity and religions, the overemphasis put on ethnicity and religion in the public space, the categorisation of Ivorian nationals, and/or identity politics as expressed through violence. Ginette Lafreniere and Lamine Diallo discuss how public intellectuals working in universities should engage African families in the diaspora in ways which enhance civic participation, economic and social integration within host communities. In Chapter 3, the authors contend that ambassadors of the academe are uniquely positioned to work in tandem with Africans in the diaspora and their families in ways which are meaningful and mutually beneficial. The chapter explores four examples, in which four academics from Wilfrid Laurier University championed community based projects which encouraged Newcomer Africans to develop a heightened sense of entitlement in roles relative to community development initiatives. In Chapter 4, Edward Shizha explores how globalisation and the globalised labour markets have created an African diaspora through migration and the translocation of economic immigrants and asylum seekers (refugees). Shizha
INTRODUCTION

argues that through labour migration, Africa is contributing to the global space and making an impact on the global and international labour market. The chapter discusses and illustrates the impact of globalisation and globalised economic markets on the migration of human capital from Sub-Saharan Africa to more industrialised countries.

Section II: “Challenges and Propositions to Development,” proposes strategies for development in Africa. In Chapter 5, Edward Shizha and Ali Abdi argue that often in Africa, there is a disjuncture and dissonance between culture, the context of education and social development. The chapter concludes that there are multiple paths to development and that Africanisation of education is the appropriate pathway to African development. According to the authors, African education should be aligned to the aspirations and needs of people as a community to enhance appropriate social development. Girma Defere Tegegn’s Chapter 6 challenges the effectiveness of foreign aid in the development aspirations of Africa. He argues that foreign aid and neoliberal policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have not brought tangible outcomes to socioeconomic development in African countries. Girma concludes that Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, is still marginalised and undervalued in the global space and has a long way to go before it is taken seriously as an equal participant in the world system of socioeconomic development. In Chapter 7, Charles Chikunda and Caleb Mandikonza cross-examine the challenges faced by African countries in terms of environmental challenges that are exacerbated by climate change in the global context. Concentrating on the Southern African Development Community region of Africa (SADC), they focus more on how the sustainability agenda, the role of education and especially education for sustainable development can help southern Africa in responding to the challenges. Palesa Sekhejane and Thabang Dladla describe the relationship between health outcomes and socioeconomic development. They argue that in Africa, core developmental matters, such as providing equitable health services, have been side-lined for material wealth. Instead of prioritising meaningful sustainable quality of life, Africa is romantically swallowing the distasteful interventions of the West. For them, Africans should and must strive for health care that not only appraises the international health system frameworks, but that also takes cognisance of the colonial legacy, historical background and structural contexts left in place after political decolonisation.

Section III: “Educational Propositions in the Global Space,” brings together ideas and propositions on educational provision and improving qualitative education in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Chapter 9, Audrey Msimanga and Edward Shizha propose the integration of indigenous knowledges in science education. They use South Africa as a case study where the South African government and policy makers are generally in agreement with academics on the need to use indigenous knowledges as the epistemological foundation and basis of the science school curriculum. However, the authors observe that the South African science curriculum reform process is faced with the dilemma of attending to equity issues while striving to meet the country’s economic goals. Policy makers and academics
have to contend with the question of whether the curriculum should focus only on disciplinary knowledge which is believed to prepare students for science related qualifications in tertiary education and to be able to make a meaningful contribution to the economic development of their country so that South Africa can become competitive in the global economic space. Amasa Philip Ndofirepi’s Chapter 10 echoes Msimanga and Shizha’s proposition to indigenise knowledge in African educational institutions. In this chapter, Ndofirepi argues for an indigenous discourse for appropriate curriculum and knowledge base for the university in Africa. His chapter is informed by the question: What knowledge is necessary for the 21st century citizen in the globalised space, with respect for cultural knowledge, political knowledge, moral knowledge and knowledge required for economic productivity? He advances Africanisation of knowledge in the university as a positive move in this era of globalisation. In chapter 11, Clemente Abrokwaah examines the African university within the New World Order, in terms of its relevance, role, status, and contributions toward national and global knowledge and development. He contends that globalisation may reduce the African university to nothing more than an institution that offers African students internationally and, culturally diverse experiences, but incapable of achieving any global recognition as a serious academic site within the New World Order – unless it begins to re-orient its focus more on developing its local indigenous knowledge and technological resources, than the continuous importation of and concentration on external knowledge from the developed world. In the final chapter, Chapter 12, Tawanda Runhare and Munyaradzi Hwami focus on equity issues, particularly the provision of educational opportunity to pregnant and teen parents. Runhare and Hwami present and analyse international and national policy frameworks that seek to extend formal education to pregnant teenagers. The chapter opens with a brief overview of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in “developed” and “developing” states. Using international conventions on gender equality as tools of analysis, the authors review and discuss policy provisions for education of pregnant and formerly pregnant teenagers in selected sub-Saharan African countries. The authors conclude that although most African countries have ratified and attempted to domesticate international principles that aim to extend equal educational rights to pregnant teenagers of school going age, there remains a clear split between the espoused policy and practice. While policies may be in place, there are negative sociocultural attitudes and other variables in the form of conservative religious and traditional practices that militate against inclusion of pregnant girls into the formal school system.

REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION


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SECTION I

NATION-STATE, IMMIGRATION
AND THE DIASPORA
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1. THE AFRICAN STATE

Can the Future be Stable?

INTRODUCTION

In their earlier work on juridical statehood and its impact on development, Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg noted the expectation that international legal norms that guarantee state sovereignty and the borders of states would contribute to the political development of statehood in Africa (Jackson & Rosberg, 1986, p. 14). The logic behind such assumptions was obvious and compelling: because states in Africa would be freed from having to defend themselves from external threats, they would be at greater liberty to devote scarce resources to their own development. But legal sovereignty did not produce the expected outcome. Instead, the authors argued, independence was followed by political and economic decline in many African countries. While a number of other factors were undoubtedly involved, the juridical nature of contemporary sovereignty appeared not to have aided development and may only have sustained the existing weakness of African states.

The views of Jackson and Rosberg were complemented by another argument, this time made by Jeffrey Herbst. Drawing on the path-breaking work of Charles Tilly, Herbst argued that the absence of interstate war in Africa had culminated in a continent of weak states. According to Herbst, interstate war created strong states in Europe; the most revolutionary and counterintuitive aspect of Africa’s political development, by contrast, was that it was done in peace (Herbst, 2000, p. 98). War, from Herbst’s perspective, may be destructive and cause untold suffering, but it also produces things that are valued: strong and effective administrative structures that are capable of managing the internal affairs of countries.

Finally, we can consider the views of William Zartman and his edited collection of essays on so-called ‘collapsed states.’ In the conclusion to the volume, Zartman confronted the question of whether, in light of instances of state failure so common in Africa, countries could now somehow be rebuilt to create more viable political entities. Zartman arrived at the view, now shared by the broader international community, that it was better to make existing states work than to engage in an endless, fruitless and potentially more hazardous effort to redraw Africa’s borders or to otherwise allow territorial size to reflect state power (Zartman, 1995, p. 268).

These three views capture the conundrum facing the many African states that continue to be challenged by institutional weakness, civil war, and unimpressive gains in political and economic development. On the one hand, never before have states had so many resources available to them to advance their development in the form of juridical sovereignty and financial and technical aid and assistance. The
World Bank provides capital resources for development projects; the United Nations and African Union provide means to intervene to help manage domestic conflict; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provides loans to avoid financial insolvency; and the practice of state-recognition allows countries to enjoy the legal benefits of statehood regardless of their internal weaknesses.

On the other hand, the range of methods to create more effective states internally is narrow and limited. With the contemporary globalised era, come assumptions about how contemporary states are expected to conduct their affairs and advance development. These expectations are, of course, largely concerned with processes of democratisation and inclusiveness, respect for human rights, and the orthodoxy of managing a state’s financial affairs. Regimes are expected to follow these practices and conventions. Importantly, in many cases these expectations are not the same as those that European states were subject to during their most formative years of political development. Indeed, as some critics have pointed out, developed states in the contemporary world suffer from amnesia about their own political development and hypocritically advocate methods of development that are divorced from their own experience (Schwarz, 1995). The expectation that democracy and market economies will lead to desirable outcomes is as often one of faith as one based on demonstrated evidence.

That African states continue to face difficulties in their political and economic development is not a justification for the wholesale upending of the existing state system; nor does it mean African states should repeat the violent European pattern of state formation. It is, nonetheless, a reminder of the unique circumstances in which African states exist whereby there are forces that both sustain them and undermine their authority. This chapter shows how African states must manage their affairs within a remarkably narrow range of policy prescriptions while also foregoing a broader range of restructuring options that might lead to both short-term violence and longer-term coherence and stability.

STATEHOOD AND THE DIFFICULTY OF CREATING STATES

Many scholars are of the view that Weberian conceptions of the state need to be at the centre of any discussion of political and economic development and conflict management in Africa. The state, writes Mohammad Ayoob (2002, pp. 40-41), “forms the cornerstone of tolerable political life within discrete territorial communities.” Without it, he adds, “life would be truly ‘poor, nasty, brutish and short’ … Only effective statehood can help solve the economic underdevelopment and poverty problems that plague much of the Third World.” Even in an era purported to be characterised by processes of globalisation, proponents say, the state remains paramount. Globalisation does not render the state irrelevant but rather highlights the fact that the countries that are most likely to prosper and thrive in the 21st century are those that already possess effective state institutions.

Scholars known for their celebration of the triumph of democracy and market economies have also refocused their attention on the importance of the state in managing the complex affairs of a country. “State-building – the creation of new
governmental institutions and the strengthening of existing ones – is crucial for the world community today,” writes Francis Fukuyama. “Weak or failed states are close to the root of many of the world’s most serious problems, from poverty and AIDS to drug trafficking and terrorism” (2004, p. 17). Marina Ottaway’s examination of challenges facing Africa’s “big states,” reinforces the idea that the presence and effectiveness of the institutions of a state are more important than the specific source of a given conflict (Ottaway, 2006).

Not surprisingly, reports on conflict zones in contemporary Africa lament the fact that states are unable to consolidate themselves and institutionalise their power. When Guinea Bissau descended into violence in 2008, even the International Crisis Group (ICG), an organisation that regularly advocates in favour of inclusiveness rather than state-building per se, identified the absence of state institutions as being at the centre of the country’s problems (ICG, 2008). Similarly, in its reports on the Sudan, the ICG describes an environment whereby the political leadership is in a constant state of crisis management and is unable to rely on political institutions to facilitate a more stable and conflict-free outcome (Temin & Murphy, 2011).

The principal problem is not that there is little knowledge of how state institutions were created in the past. Rather, it is not clear if and how these same institutions can now be built or transferred to developing countries (Ottaway, 2002). Institutions are not created by bricks and mortar. Rather they evolve out of existing local practices and ways of doing things. If they are seen as legitimate, even imported institutions can be effective. But because institutions are patterns of behaviour, only time can tell if local parties will follow them. To some extent, institutions also reflect the state’s capacity to project power across a territory and do things. Both of these dimensions of stateness are difficult to achieve in a continent such as Africa where there are multiple political and social traditions and few means to accumulate and concentrate power.

More problematic still is the fact that, according to the narrative offered by Tilly and others, states were an unintended consequence of the very processes that contemporary state-builders now seek to avoid: war. Political leaders prepared for war but these activities took on lives of their own and ultimately manifested themselves in the institutions of the state. “War making, extraction, and capital accumulation interacted to shape European state making,” argues (Tilly, 1985, p. 172). “Power holders did not undertake those three momentous activities with the intention of creating national states. Nor did they foresee that national states would emerge from war making, extraction, and capital accumulation” (Tilly, 1990, p. 75). Statehood also assumed political control of a territory as a precondition. Once this condition was met, statehood was assumed regardless of whether a given leadership explicitly requested it. It was not merely the premeditated response to demands made on the basis of the illegitimacy of colonialism, as is the case in contemporary Africa.

The territorial size and sophistication of a given state is also relevant to this discussion on the purposes and intentions of early state-builders. For Jared Diamond, the evolution and expansion of different forms of political organisation,
from bands to tribes to chiefdoms and to states, were determined by domestic forces rather than from outside as is the case today (Diamond, 1999). Larger and more sophisticated forms of political organisation came into being only if they solved the problems that inevitably came with their larger size. In other words, state size and function were more fluid and reflected the capacity of the administrative unit to address internal problems and external threats. Not only did dysfunctional states not evolve into larger and more sophisticated entities but they were usually subsumed by other stronger states. Diamond’s conception of political evolution, then, is that historically state size was not a consequence of decisions by technocrats, foreign diplomats or even “Rousseauesque social contracts”; rather it was a consequence of state capacity and state power. The idea that virtually all of Africa’s colonies would transform directly into states without any sort of “right-sizing” was directly counter to this process.

We can conclude that formal institutions of states are at once important, difficult to create and, until now, result in a largely unplanned and unpremeditated outcome. If nobody consciously set out to make states in the era of Europe’s political development, that is no longer true in the case of Africa. There is now an important literature and technical expertise invested with the task of state-building (Call 2008; OECD, 2011). But believing that states should be built and the intentionality of the process has not made state-building easier. If state institutions are better seen as the formalisation of long-established patterns of local behaviour, then, expertise and foreign personnel on their own do little to create state institutions.

The African context provides particular obstacles to any attempt at state-building insofar as institutions must conform to certain territorial and normative agendas. States can no longer grow and recede according to institutional capacity. Instead, rulers must engage in the Procrustean task of projecting their authority to all corners of an often-ethnically diverse and sometimes inhospitable terrain. To be fair, governments benefit from so-called “juridical sovereignty” which gives them legal authority regardless of their capacity to project power. But juridical sovereignty creates as many problems as opportunities insofar as the state is permanently challenged to reconcile security and sovereignty with democracy and liberty. Western democracy advocates who seek to build states often confuse that project with the far easier task of holding elections. Democracy is a political process that is better suited to limiting power rather than facilitating its projection. As the recent experience of Mali (with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), Kenya (with al Shabaab) and Nigeria (with Boko Haram) have shown, even states that have achieved some degree of democratic rule often fare no better at managing threats of religious or ethnic extremism.

COPING WITH THE COMPOSITION AND DIVERSITY OF STATES

Several scholars have claimed that the Tillyan narrative that “war makes states and vice versa” does not apply to contemporary African states (Sørensen, 2001; Leander, 2004). Others hold that this view of state formation is the wrong remedy,
is not necessary, or that its implementation would lead to a level of violence and upheaval greater than most African states experience today.

The resolution of this debate hinges in part on differing perspectives as to what kinds of states are most likely to be stable. A liberal view contends that the most peaceful states are also the most ethnically diverse. Paul Collier shows, for example, that ethnically “fractionalised societies are safer than homogenous societies” (Collier, 2000, p. 98). Increasing fractionalisation, he says, actually reduces conflict. While violence may manifest itself in ethnic terms, this position argues, the roots of conflict are better attributed to other issues such as economic inequality (World Bank, 2000). The appropriate remedy, then, is not secession but the enhancement of markets and greater prosperity for all. This perspective allows advocates to claim that it is better to leave Africa’s borders as they are rather than to divine ethnically pure states. Indeed, recent experiences of redrawing borders between Ethiopia and Eritrea or between Sudan and South Sudan show these changes do not automatically lead to reduced conflict outcomes. The fact that the world’s most modern and advanced states are also increasingly cosmopolitan is further evidence of William Zartman’s claim, noted earlier, that the appropriate response is to improve conditions within states.

A realist’s perspective, by contrast, claims that ethnic diversity is no small matter. Stability in Europe was achieved in part as a consequence of the widespread fulfilment of the ethno-nationalist project (Muller, 2008, p. 19). Contemporary Europe is the positive outcome that political realists point to in order to demonstrate their view that the often violent process of sorting out identity groups is a necessary if lamentable part of the process of achieving peace. From this perspective, the recipe for long-term stability is to be found where the state system has separated contending groups, concentrated their power, and provided them with the means, in this case, statehood, to protect themselves. Some have argued that in cases where violence between groups has reached genocidal proportions (for example, Africans and Arabs in Sudan; Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda), peace and stability are likely to be achieved only when contending groups are somehow rationalised into separate states (Matua, 2000).

To the extent that this latter perspective is true, an unwillingness to rethink Africa’s borders means that African states risk being permanently saddled with the problem of ethnic conflict. The respected Africanist, I. M. Lewis, notes the irony of the timing of African state creation. The 19th century partition of Africa, writes Lewis, created a series of “Hapsburg-style states” each comprising a medley of ethnic groups at the very moment when the idea of the nation-state was reaching its ascendancy in Europe (Lewis, 1983, p. 73). The conditions for an unstable political future in Africa were thus set. “The creation of a peaceful regional order of nation-states has usually been the product of a violent process of ethnic separation,” writes Jerry Muller who also argues that, “In areas where that separation has not yet occurred, politics is apt to remain ugly” (Muller, 2008, p. 18).

During the Cold War era, African states often held themselves together with a combination of juridical sovereignty and externally provided patronage; in the post-Cold War era, too, some regimes cast themselves as the last barrier to anarchy
or enlisted in the fight against terrorism in an effort to maintain access to foreign resources. More recently, the conventional wisdom that the role of the state should be reduced and state assets privatised has undermined some regimes’ ability to trade state access for influence. Again, though, the immediate consequences have not always been good. As Marina Ottaway writes, in these circumstances, “political space is monopolised by power struggles among confessional groups, fragmentation of the state between groups prevents effective legislation and governance, and there is no independent domestic arbiter to force compromise and cooperation” (Ottaway, 2007, p. 609). The consequences have challenged African states to find new ways to consolidate state authority and manage diversity.

Countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda provide diverging and, arguably, partially successful approaches to managing their ethnic diversity short of redrawing their borders. But these initiatives have often come at a cost. After the 1991 overthrow of Ethiopia’s Marxist regime, the new leadership in Addis Ababa sought to create new ethnically oriented states that, in theory, were entitled to secede from the rest of the country. The assumption was that this approach would undercut secessionist aspirations. Eritrea, under the leadership of the powerful Eritrean People’s Liberation Front, exercised this right in 1993. Critics have claimed, however, that Ethiopia’s other less powerful groups have effectively been prevented from seceding. Moreover, they argue, the strategy has allowed the minority Tigrayans to prevail over the regime’s rivals. Some groups such as the Oromo Liberation Front have been outlawed, and the government has failed to find peace with large segments of its Somali population.

Rwanda has taken the opposite approach. Following the 1994 genocide, the new Tutsi-led government effectively banned references to ethnic identity. The official government policy since 2004 has been that “there is no ethnicity here. We are all Rwandan” (Lacey, 2004). Rwanda’s approach to issues of identity, gender, and development has been hailed by some as visionary and progressive. But the government has also been challenged by critics and human rights groups who resent its authoritarian approach to ethnic engineering or who contend that Rwanda’s achievements have been at the expense of human rights (Amnesty International, 2010). Critics have also claimed that the ethnicity ban obscures the fact that Rwanda’s Tutsi minority remains in power (Reyntjens, 2010).

Finally, during the late 1990s, Uganda experimented with an innovative form of democratic rule. Under the claim that the inherently conflictual nature of democracy invariably leads political parties to become what are essentially ethnic parties, the regime of Yoweri Museveni banned them and imposed a system of “no-party democracy.” While it lasted, observers offered a qualified endorsement of the approach. Nelson Kasfir argued, for example, that the country was clearly more democratic under the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) than under its predecessors and often more democratic than its neighbours. Indeed, Kasfir pointed out, “most would probably agree that Kenya can hardly be said to be more democratic than Uganda, though the former has 27 parties and the latter has none” (Kasfir, 1998, p. 50). Once again, however, it was easy to remain suspicious
that no-party democracy only made it more difficult to remove the ruling NRM from office.

In each case, these approaches have been introduced by the winners of their respective countries’ civil wars. That fact alone provided them with the organisational capacity and control – if sometimes only temporary – to be able to implement significant new changes to their political systems. Their proponents argue that these regimes have been pioneering innovators who have explored new methods of managing their own internal conditions and ethnic diversity. Their detractors have claimed, however, that these high-handed and minority-driven approaches to the management of ethnic diversity do not in fact represent substantive change. Any alleged innovation, they add, is merely a facade for foreign consumption behind which are ever more creative ways to keep potential adversaries of a single powerful ruling group divided and at bay. Once again, then, finding a way to rethink Africa’s challenges and make states work is fraught with criticism and problems.

ESTABLISHING DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICAN STATES

An examination of classical state-building suggests that contemporary outcomes are a consequence of both “good” and “bad” processes. The “realist” worldview, for example, conceptualises a sort-of Adam Smith-like “invisible hand” insofar as it claims that the pursuit of even the narrowest political interests by leaders produced European states that are coherent and institutionally strong (Waltz, 1979). In this sense, even “bad” processes such as war have produced outcomes that are good. Some may find it distasteful that violent conflict could be so central to this process but, some realists argue, purposeful interventions to prevent conflict are both ineffective and likely to undermine the growth of structures that only war can produce (Luttwak, 1999).

A liberal viewpoint, by contrast, argues that only “good” processes or “best practices,” various formulations of democracy, inclusiveness, and respect for human rights, can produce outcomes that are themselves good. From this perspective, virtually all states have now succumbed to an international culture that effectively compels them to conduct their affairs in similarly benevolent ways (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997). States no longer die but are sustained externally with the expectation that applying the correct formula of legitimate governance and market economies will produce favourable outcomes. In this way, African states are relieved from the ruthlessly competitive environment that characterised political development in Europe and can focus instead on advancing their own development and protecting human rights.

The reality is that contemporary African leaders must balance both of these demands. States that have become heavily dependent on foreign assistance cannot easily dismiss those who call for a more normative approach to development. Nonetheless, as Mohammed Ayoob (2002, p. 45) proposes, these kinds of “concurrent but contradictory demands make the task of Third World state makers enormously difficult.” European state makers at a corresponding point in the state-
building process, he writes, “did not have Amnesty International and the U.N. Human Rights Commission breathing down their necks.” When it comes to democracy, African leaders must also adapt themselves to Western-imposed ideals of what a democratic state should look like, and adopt the entire body of human rights as accepted by established democratic states. Yet the African political system is unforgiving, and failure to correctly read the political winds can lead to a regime’s demise regardless of its observance of human rights conventions. As Arthur Goldsmith (2001) points out, the lifespan of an African leader can be short: even the most dangerous occupation in the United States is still sixteen times safer than that of an African head of state.

These conflicting forces help explain the contradictory nature of African politics. From a macro perspective, Africa has become increasingly institutionalised, as African leaders appear to be ever more responsive to externally imposed pressures to democratise and internally imposed term limits (Posner & Young, 2007). But while some observers claim that this shows how institutions can shape the behaviour of even the most independent minded leaders, others show how rulers circumvent or manipulate these same institutions (Clapham, 1996). Recent accounts from Kenya, for example, demonstrate that even when political leaders do engage in democratic processes, they are often unable to avoid violence or circumvent the necessities of political patronage. The apparent legitimacy of a democratic process has also not relieved Africa’s leaders from hedging their survival on forging alliances, sometimes with other local strongmen who have less impressive democratic credentials (Howden, 2011).

Indeed, it is not clear that the methods and approaches that outsiders recommend for Africa are at all suited to the continent’s unique circumstances. Some observers have now dismissed the idea that so-called “best practices” can be a useful approach to dealing with the continent’s most serious challenges. “In stable, well established political systems, the best practices do indeed solve local problems,” writes Marina Ottaway. “In countries emerging from collapse, what the international community considers best practices is not necessarily perceived by local actors as the answer to their problems” (Ottaway, 2002, pp. 1004-1005). Some Western scholarship also remains mired in arcane debates regarding the details of various forms of, say, political inclusion on the assumption that any democratic political system can be adopted regardless of its nuance and complexity or foreign origins (see Sisk, 1995; Horowitz, 1992; Lijphart, 1985). Implicit is the assumption that only peace processes which avoid violence are “good.” The relevance of these models to the circumstances in Africa, however, must always be questioned.

On the other hand, there is evidence that if states are released from the confines of state borders and the normative expectations of human rights conventions and state recognition, they do not in fact collapse into chaotic or oppressive states. Somaliland, for example, has proven to be a much more democratic, development-conscious, and institutionalised state than its environment or history would suggest (Helling, 2010). By contrast, Somalia, ostensibly the formal parent state from which Somaliland has seceded, remains the foremost example of state failure. These facts remain true in spite of massive international assistance and repeated
efforts by the international community to resurrect Somalia’s government. Notably, Somaliland’s achievements have been realised in the absence of international recognition, international expertise, or even development aid.

THE CHALLENGES OF REFORMING AFRICAN STATES

Unfortunately, examples such as Somaliland, where citizens and leaders have been able to determine their own future even with relatively few resources, are rare. Their situation is also qualified by the fact that they often aspire to international recognition and behave accordingly. What then are the prospects for addressing the most challenging state-related problems in Africa’s other states? African states and regimes have proven to be difficult to reform and yet the international community as a whole is understandably reluctant to change the grid of African borders. As this chapter argues, efforts by outsiders to manipulate political processes to certain ends do not often produce the expected outcomes. According to Jeffrey Herbst there is nothing exceptional about Africa in this respect; all countries have difficulty overcoming the political inertia such that positive change becomes a reality. “Once independence becomes the normal situation, as it has in African countries,” Herbst concludes, “it becomes extraordinarily difficult for leaders to make basic reforms of political arrangements, such as fiscal systems, which might hurt powerful groups” (Herbst, 1990, p. 132). What is peculiar to Africa, according to Herbst, is that the continent has been largely free of interstate war, and interstate war is the most powerful force in advancing change in any political system.

In the absence of war, there would appear to be few alternatives. Certainly, state dysfunction has not been incentive enough to bring about change. While there are many Africans who lament the lack of democratic governance, transparency or economic prosperity in their countries, such sentiments do not automatically lead to reform. In fact, as several observers have pointed out, the demand for reform among Africans tends to be relatively mild (Fukuyama, 2004; Herbst, 1990). The most strident demands for reform come instead from outside of the continent in the form of conditionalities imposed by the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund.

This intransigence on moving to greater state capacity is particularly evident in regard to the most ubiquitous characteristic of contemporary African politics: the issue of corruption, which is both stigmatised and widely practised. For regimes, patronage, along with coercion, is the principal domestic tool regimes have to keep their diverse states together. For many citizens, the perquisites of patronage or petty corruption also provide essential resources for survival. To disassociate from clientelism in the environment of scarcity in which many Africans exist would be, to say the least, detrimental to one’s interests. Africans remain disappointed with the inability of their leaders to stop their corrupt ways; yet they help perpetuate and contribute to it in small and large ways. They choose not to change the system, not because it offers lavish lifestyle but because, in an environment of scarcity, graft is a lifeline. This is why J.P. Olivier de Sardan (1999) places corruption within the framework of a so-called “moral economy.” Disappointment with the current
regime, regardless of whether it was the one-party state of the 1960s, the military regimes of the 1970s and 80s, or the struggling democracies of the post-Cold War 1990s and after, has been a constant of African politics. One may think that – like the “Arab spring” of 2011 – a new politics is in the making; what is clear, however, is that in the context of Africa’s unchanging nature patronage remains a deeply entrenched tendency that Africans use to survive and sustain themselves.

Even in Zimbabwe and South Africa, both countries with long established formalised political institutions, the trend has been for these institutions to break down and for patronage to dominate. “We thought that South Africa could be different from the rest of the countries that came before us on the African continent,” observed Gilbert Kganyago, a member of South African Communist Party. “But at the rate that things are happening, we have actually caught up to the African scenario quite more quickly than we might have thought” (Polgreen, 2012). Legitimacy, it turns out, has as much to do with the provision of perquisites large and small as with formal democratic institutions.

On the other hand, to the extent that patronage networks provide a modicum of stability in lieu of formal state institutions, advocates may want to curb their enthusiasm when it comes to democratic reform lest it leads to further conflict. “Patronage is a glue binding together weakly integrated, multiethnic peasant societies with very brief histories as united entities,” cautions Richard Sandbrook (2000, p. 93). “Reformers, in their zeal to eliminate bureaucratic waste and rent-seeking activity, will need to avoid undercutting the material basis of consent. Some degree of pork-barrel politics is unavoidable.” In this sense, corruption may be desirable if it keeps the peace. Even weakly institutionalised countries that nonetheless appeared stable and coherent have been undone by the current trend toward economic liberalisation. To the extent that globalisation and liberalisation have diminished the role of the state, the immediate outcome is not necessarily peace. As Catherine Boone (2007, p. 65) suggests in her analysis of Cote d’Ivoire in the last two decades, the “retreat of the state” diminished the capacity of African rulers to dispense political patronage, and thus destabilised old ruling coalitions and modes of governing.” In short, reformers, both inside and outside the continent, will forever be confronted with a choice: keeping things as they are or embarking on risky, open-ended and uncertain efforts at reform.

The international community has continued to respond to the challenges of conflict and authority faced by African states in a number of different ways. Traditionally, the international community has responded with foreign intervention and humanitarian assistance. Far from generating reforms, however, some claim that the promise of aid leads to its own bizarre consequences. Danny Hoffman (2004), for example, shows how in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the most heinous war-related atrocities were perpetrated on the calculation that vast quantities of humanitarian resources would be provided by the international community from which rebels could benefit. More generally, Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) suggest that government authorities actually promote the image of a helpless and miserable continent as a means of generating a humanitarian response from which they too benefit materially.
The international community’s most radical suggestions for coping begin, however, with the assumption that African states are now beyond repair; that by themselves, African authorities will be unable to address the continent’s problems. “The stubborn facts of fixed borders, foreign aid, resource rents, and the low likelihood of final state failure or death,” postulates Stephen Krasner (2005, pp. 74-75), “combine to outweigh whatever incentives might exist for elites to craft self-sustaining arrangements that make everyone better off.” Similarly, Stephen Ellis (2005, p. 136) says that “the conventional view relies on a misleading mechanical metaphor, which leads policymakers to suppose that, like broken machines, failed African countries can be repaired by good mechanics.” Both authors recommend new partnerships with the international community. For Krasner, this means new forms of “shared sovereignty;” for Ellis, it calls for experiments with new forms of “trusteeship.” Both authors insist that these new relationships are not to be in any way “imposed,” that such engagement would be “voluntary,” and that Africans would remain “full partners.” Neither author adequately explains how such voluntary partnerships will bring about the hard decisions that positive change may require; nor do they explain what happens when African preferences inevitably come into conflict with external orthodoxies and norms. As Morten S. Andersen and Ole Jacob Sending (2010) have demonstrated in their paper on democratisation, these differences are not so easily reconciled.

CONCLUSIONS

Africans themselves have shown a remarkable capacity to make things work in their own way. There is reason to be sceptical, however, that African states can be made to “work” in Zartman’s sense. Indeed, one is right to be concerned that African states remain stuck in an unhappy middle ground. They are unable to reform themselves in meaningful ways; yet they are expected to develop and prosper as if they were fully autonomous entities without global external pressures. The combination of legal sovereignty, conditional foreign resources, state incapacity, ethnic diversity, normative expectations and rigid borders means that some African states become like sick patients who are kept alive but ultimately never dismissed from the hospital (Ottaway, 2002, p. 1002). State leaders are routinely criticised for human rights violations and their authoritarian ways; yet the combination of expectations and conditions under which they function are unprecedented and must surely be seen as equally contradictory and bizarre. For the reasons outlined above, it is difficult to see how these circumstances will change in the foreseeable future. African leaders, and indeed the broader international community, cling to the territorial and patrimonial status quo because to change them would involve too much risk and too much upheaval. Yet foregoing such change while having to conform to the demands of existing statehood, appears to condemn African states to a precarious existence of more-or-less permanent instability.
Ethiopia and Eritrea engaged in a border war between 1998 and 2000. Following the independence of South Sudan in 2011, factional divisions between Dinka and Nuer have resulted in renewed violence.

This took place even though Eritreans are not an ethnic group but have a common colonial history.

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2. TRIALS OF NATIONAL COHESION

Root Causes of Violence in Côte d’Ivoire

INTRODUCTION

There are officially 60 ethnic or language communities in Côte d’Ivoire. They are classified into five larger groups: the Voltaics (also called the Gur), the Malinke (Northern Mande), the Southern Mande, the Kru and the Akan. The Voltaic and Northern Mande also known as Diula live in the North. The Kru, the Southern Mande and the Akan are referred to as those living in the forest zone which also is politically referred to as the South.

This chapter is an analysis of Ivorian identity politics and how it led to violence among the people of Côte d’Ivoire, thereby gravely endangering national cohesion. The first part of the chapter deals with the connection between the controversial and divisive notions of “Ivoirité” and “Akanité” or Akanness, as well as the implications of these coinages. The second part sheds light on the implications of the two notions. The consequences here range from the politicisation of ethnicity and religions, the overemphasis put on ethnicity and religion in the public space, the categorisation of Ivoirian nationals, and/or identity politics as expressed through violence. The last part explains the reasons for the Forces Nouvelles (New Forces) rebellion based in Bouake which banked on the North/South divide and “Ivoirité” politics to attack Laurent Gbagbo’s regime on September 19, 2002.

FROM ‘AKANITÉ’ TO ‘IVOIRITÉ’ OR THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

The first president of the country, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, was a member of the Baule speaking group, a branch of the Akan. From 1945 to 1993, Houphouet-Boigny was a prominent figure in Ivorian politics. For 34 years, he ruled the country with an iron hand, though he managed the economy in such a way that the country was referred to as “economic miracle” from 1960 through the early 1980s. Politically, the country was considered to be stable because it had not experienced the usual political unrest and/or military coups in West Africa until 1999. While he was in charge, Houphouet-Boigny single-handedly made virtually all decisions in matters of politics and policy. An unrivalled goldsmith of domestic geopolitics, he would pointedly appoint people from the different regions of the country as members of Parliament, though later these had to contend to their posts through moderately fair legislative elections. Additionally, he personally appointed all ministers and would sack the cabinet whenever he deemed it necessary. It ought to be noted that in Houphouet-Boigny’s successive cabinets key departments were...
almost systematically held by people from the Akan group. The Ministers of Defense, the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and the Economy, as well as the Speaker of the House were exclusively Akan. Thus, despite the stability the country was constantly praised for, it had some major political convulsions resulting from the impact of Akan ethnocentrism and identity politics. Ivorian historians and political scientists who use the notion of “Akanité” or “Akanness” generally do it in relation to those forms of Akan identity politics.

This prevalence of politics of identity stems from French and British colonialism in West Africa. In the Gold Coast (present day Ghana), the British placed the Ashanti (the Akan group) in the middle of administrative and commercial relations between the indigenous people and the colonial master, thus offering a horizontal interpretation of these relations. In colonial Côte d’Ivoire, the French administration established a hierarchy of sorts, instead. The groups known for trade and commerce (the Mande) were ranked first in the indigenous category, hence second to the colonists. The Akan group was considered by the administration as “lowly status, integrated in the areas of crop production and gold mining” [My translation (Mt)] (Memel-Foté, 1999, p. 23). However, when Houphouet-Boigny became the leader of independent Côte d’Ivoire, he reorganised the hierarchy to the advantage of the Akan. Thus, as Memel-Foté writes, “the Akan group will now be at the top of the new hierarchy with a prominent position given to the Baule and the Agni against the Lagoon people. Then came the Mande group, and the Kru people at the bottom” [Mt] (Memel-Foté, 1999, p. 23). This hierarchy remained the norm until the death of Houphouet-Boigny.

The apparent peace and prosperity were shaken by a series of social upheavals. Already in 1959, the new hierarchy posed a domestic problem within the larger Akan group. In fact, the Agni people of the Sanwi intended to secede from the country; the Sanwi king, Amatifu (Amon Ndoffou III) who despised the traditional chieftaincy of the Baule could not imagine a Baule being President. In reaction to the king’s secessionist inclinations, Houphouet-Boigny had all the royalist members of the local government arrested. He was exiled in independent Ghana on March 19, 1959. While in exile, Amatifu proclaimed the independence of the Sanwi in May 1959. After independence in 1960, the Sanwi king still maintained his autonomist leanings. In 1966, a rebel movement claiming allegiance to the king made incursion into Côte d’Ivoire from Ghana, but the secession elements were harshly repressed.

In 1970, Akanness was dealt a blow by the Guebie people (a ramification of Kru) who revolted against Houphouet-Boigny under the pretext that he was governing Côte d’Ivoire like an Akan kingdom. The secessionist rebellion was brutally suppressed. 70,000 Guebie were killed, including Gnangbe Kragbe who instigated the revolt. Kragbe and most opponents to the regime accused Houphouet-Boigny of mostly favouring his region of birth by building major infrastructures, and a costly basilica completed in 1989. In the meantime, the Mande people (with low rates of Western education) carved for itself a high position in trade and commerce which are attached to a strong historical heritage for them, while remaining distant from contending for political appointments.
Ethnic groups in the North dedicated to agriculture and trade downplayed Western education which was a central element in the so-called South’s development. This state of affairs led to the belief that Northerners were unfit for political participation.

“Ivoirité” was born when Southerners assaulted this very imbalance, which allowed the growth of a pervasive sentiment that Northerners were somehow unfit for political office. The concept of “Ivoirité” made its first appearance and rose to prominence after Houphouet-Boigny’s death in 1993. Its content is not actually new in Côte d’Ivoire because of the events of the 1970s when some Ivorians felt that the country was invaded and, as a matter of consequence, that nationals from Ghana, former Upper Volta, Guinea-Conakry, Mali, Togo and Benin were pumping away the financial resources from Ivorians (Georges, 1996). In fact, Guebie sub-nationalism has its root in the belief that the country was becoming the home of foreigners who were taking advantage of their national economy.

When Houphouet-Boigny died, Henri Konan Bedie, as Speaker of the House, became the interim president as per the Constitution, but not before fighting a ferocious battle with Alassane Ouattara a Muslim and Mande economist officiating as Houphouet-Boigny’s first and last Prime minister. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist, Ouattara was called in by Houphouet-Boigny when the dire state of affairs of the national economy prompted social unrest and demanded radical reforms. The supporters of Ouattara (both in the government and the parliament and mostly those favourable to social and political reform), wanted a new brand of politicians with a clean history. Bedie was removed from Houphouet-Boigny’s government following accusations of embezzlement of public funds. Bedie’s supporters were called the “constitutionalists”, and they believed that Ouattara as a Prime Minister could not lay claims on the office of the president according to the constitution. Besides, they called into question the “Ivorianness” of Ouattara because Ouattara’s parents were supposedly from Burkina Faso.

While in power Bedie gave a new and much more vigorous impetus to the ethno-nationalistic tendency amongst certain Ivorians who found it unacceptable that their country was slipping away from their grip and resting in the hands of “foreigners.” The judiciary and the police under Bedie’s presidency started to vigorously act upon a decree that Houphouet-Boigny signed in 1991 upon the recommendation of Ouattara with regards to immigration and the strong presence of foreign nationals in the country. Also, the decree obligated foreign nationals to pay fees for their presence, which at the same time served to control the immigrant influx into the country. The police organised more and more raids to enforce the foreigners’ residency policy. During those raids, the police would break into mosques to arrest foreign nationals seeking refuge and mingling with Ivorian Muslims with whom they share the Islamic faith and often the same patronymics.

Bedie had supporters in academia that produced reflections on the political, ideological and economic situation of the country. For example, they showed that the country’s economy had been plummeting because most of the private economic sector was in the hands of foreigners. As a matter of fact, in a 1998 report, the members of the Conseil Economique et Social (Economic and Social Council or...
ESC) called the government’s attention to the phenomenon of massive immigration, a result of globalisation. They write, “Immigration started during colonisation has been growing from year to year [due to the openness of the global space]. The ration of foreigners in our country today has soared far beyond the threshold that the nation can tolerate” [Mt] (Le Conseil économique et social, 2000, p. 70). In 1965, foreign nationals represented 18%, in 1975 22%, in 1988 28%, in 1993 26% and in 1998 25% (Bouquet, 2003, p. 116). These statistics heightened the concern level of the ESC’s members. These members believed that “[…] the acceptable limit has been largely overstepped, and our country runs risks of socio-demographic disturbances as well as risks of upsetting the social unity, harmony and peace which have been hallmarks of Côte d’Ivoire” [Mt] (Le Conseil économique et social, 2000, p. 74). The ESC members believe that the country is overtaken by foreigners like Syrians, Lebanese, Mauritanians, and Malians who “totally dominate commercial activities […], thereby controlling the majority of the employment opportunities in the informal sector. […] Authentic Ivoirians are unemployed (6.4%) at a higher rate than those foreign nationals (3.6%)” [Mt] (Le Conseil économique et social, 2000, pp. 71-72). The influx of foreigners was a sign that Côte d’Ivoire had opened its borders to the global and taking its position in the global space.

On the ideological level, the ESC expressed an urgent need to recalibrate or redefine Ivorian identity, or what it meant to be an Ivorian despite the clarity of the legal provisions as regards to citizenship. According to the ESC, “Some Ivorians wonder if the approximately 1,500,000 foreign nationals living in Côte d’Ivoire will not someday lay claim to citizenship because of they were born here. In such case, they will use our political liberalism to claim political rights, namely top leadership posts in the Administration, over and against authentic Ivoirians” [Mt] (Conseil économique et social, 2000, p. 71). Konan Bedie and the PDCI (Parti Democratique de Côte d’Ivoire) founded by Houphouet-Boigny tasked some scholars with conceptualising “Ivoirité” the notion coined for the situation. According to Niangoran-Bouah:

“Ivoirité” means the sociological, geographical and linguistic data allowing to declare that a person is a citizen of Côte d’Ivoire or an Ivorian. The term can also designate the ways of life, that is to say, the way the inhabitants of Côte d’Ivoire are and behave in society. And ultimately, it can be about the foreigner that possesses Ivorian ways through imitation or co-existence. An individual who claims his ivoirité will be expected to consider Côte d’Ivoire his homeland, be born of Ivorian parents with ascendance in one of the autochthonous ethnic groups of the country. [Mt] (Niangoran-Bouah, 1996, p. 46)

No public debate was ever engaged on the assessment of the true concept of “Ivoirité.” However, the attempt of Niangoran-Bouah and others to rationalise “Ivoirité” as an objective socio-cultural phenomenon stands on shaky and subjective grounds. Their rationalisation carries political and ideological motives, and it breeds on the publicly expressed concerns of the then ruling party (the
PDCI). Niangoran-Bouah attempted to requalify the legal dispositions regarding Ivorian citizenship even though the law was absolutely clear. The *Code de la Nationalité* (Nationality Code) of Côte d’Ivoire (law No. 61, December 14, 1961, modified by law No. 72-852 of December 21, 1972) in its article 6, stipulates that: A person “Is Ivorian [if] the legitimate or legitimised child, born in Côte d’Ivoire, except in cases where both parents are foreign nationals; The child born out of wedlock, in a foreign land, and whose filiation has been legally established with one Ivorian parent” [Mt].

In the current global context of shifting and interlocking identities, the attempt of redefining national identity is not in and of itself wrong. Robert Koffi Niamkey writes, “Self-identification naturally supposes the differentiation with the other, and that demarcation posits, whether one likes it or not, discrimination. It is impossible to be oneself and the other at once [Mt] (Niamkey, 1996, p. 40). However, when the attempt to establish an Us/Them is guided by political and/or ideological ulterior motives, the ingredient for violent social conflict are always present. While they feverishly differentiated the Ivorian from the non-Ivorian primarily to solve the “Ouattara problem,” most people from the North saw their patriotism and citizenship abruptly called into question. Thus, the supporters of Ouattara who are sociologically and predominantly from the northern part of the country were labeled as “foreigners” in their own country, guilty of *delicto patronymus*, i.e. they bore the same patronymics as the people of some related ethnic groups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Gambia and Senegal. Besides the crime of bearing the wrong patronymics in a putatively all-Christian Côte d’Ivoire, a crime of physiology entered the public and political landscape. Physiologically, most northerners logically look like their kins in the neighboring countries. At police checkpoints nationals from the above mentioned countries as well as Ivorians with Muslim names were singled out for identity checks whereas those who had Ashanti or Akan and Kru sounding names were left alone or spared. These ethno-nationalists classify the people of Côte d’Ivoire in the following order: “Ivoiriens de souche multiséculaire” [Ivoirians of well-established ancestry (otherwise called 100% Ivoirian)], “Ivoirien de circonstance” [second zone Ivorian (or 50% Ivorian)] and “Ivoirien de nationalité douteuse” [Ivoirian of dubious nationality (or 25% Ivorian)]. The people who do not fit in the criteria of Ivorian national identity, as set forth by the Ivoirité-based sociology are not “pure blood” Ivorian nationals and therefore not fit for such public office as the presidency of the Republic irrespective of the official law regulating the modalities to access these public functions. At the peak of Bedie’s regime, a stark cleavage was being established between Ivorian nationals: “Ivoirians of well-established ancestry” and “circumstantial Ivoirians.”

“Ivoirité” became thereafter a source of law because it inspired the amendment of the article of the constitution relative to the Office of the President of the Republic. According to the defenders of “ivoirité,” the President should be an Ivorian. Bedie won the 1995 presidential elections, and he had a new term as the President of Côte d’Ivoire until 1999 when General Robert Guei seized power in a coup. The country was politically unstable and the administration was in a
stalemate. The head of the military junta declared that he had come to clean the mess made by the politicians. And yet, Guei subsequently decided to stand for President. Since Ouattara remained a political force to reckon with, Robert Guei followed in the footsteps of the “sovereignists” and nationalists who defend “Ivoirité” in order to further marginalise the former Prime Minister. Amendments were made to the electoral code, in the hopes to debar Ouattara from the presidential race. Initially, Article 35 of the Constitution stated that: “Le candidat doit être Ivoirien de naissance” [the candidate must be Ivorian by birth]. Henceforth, it stipulated that: “Le candidat doit être ivoirien d’origine, né de père et de mère eux-mêmes ivoiriens d’origine” [The candidate must be of Ivorian origin; Born of a father AND mother of Ivorian origin]. In the fifth sub-section of the same article, the conditions of candidacy are toughened with the formulation “ne s’être jamais prévalu d’une autre nationalité” [The candidate should never have used another citizenship than that of Côte d’Ivoire]. Ouattara is believed to have used Burkina Faso identity papers to attend college in the United States. Besides, his opponents claimed that he had used the same Burkinabé papers to work in the IMF and the West African Central Bank (BCEAO). Ultimately, they believed that since only Ouattara’s mother was an Ivorian citizen and his father allegedly a national of former Upper Volta, he could not stand for President. Thus came into being the debate over the coordinate “and” in the law (as in “Both parents [father AND mother] must be Ivorian-born and by origin” [Mt]). According to this conception, Ouattara and the people he stood for (Northerners and the excluded significant portion of disenfranchised communities) were all “circumstantial Ivorians.” Keen observers of Ivorian politics discerned that Ouattara was clearly the target of the amendments inspired and informed by Bedié’s understanding of what it meant to be an Ivorian. Yet, Ouattara claimed: “Though I am the target of this law, it does not worry me” [Mt] (Le Pape & Vidal, 2002, p. 296).

In order to run for president and therefore win the elections, Robert Guei pressured the Tia Koné of the Supreme Court to reject Bedie and Ouattara’s bid for presidency. Bedie was thus rejected on alleged accounts of moral demeanor; he was accused of embezzlement. As for Ouattara, the Court ruled that he had a “nationalité douteuse” (uncertain or dubious citizenship).

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS UNDERPINNINGS OF ‘IVOIRITÉ’

While political and ideological motives were to be found behind the attempts to redefine the Ivorian identity, religion was no less salient because it created cleavages that hitherto remained dormant to the country. Two regions and religions were opposed: Bedie, the Christian Southerner, was standing against Ouattara, a Muslim from the North. This opposition between religions became serious to such a point that the ESC hinted at the religious imbalance caused by immigration and the relative superiority of Muslims in Côte d’Ivoire. In reality, the ESC report reflected Southern politicians’ fears of being outnumbered by Muslim Northerners. Table 2.1 below illustrates the growth in the number of Muslims between 1975 and
As the table shows, while the number of Muslims has been growing, that of Christians and others has been declining.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animists</td>
<td>30.0</td>
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<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without Religion</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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</tr>
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Source: Institut National de la Statistique (INS), Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

The ESC report states,

Muslims immigrants (73% of foreigners coming from the northern neighboring countries) have considerably modified the preexisting religious balance […]. Such an imbalance in a most sensitive domain of the society may prompt some people to use religion for political purposes, thus endangering national unity and constitute risks against social peace which we consider of the highest importance. [Mt] (Le Conseil économique et social, 2000, p. 72)

Moriba Touré believes that the ESC members were guided by the anti-foreigner politics and policies of the Bedie regime and “preoccupied with the fashionable politicking games of the moment in favour of “Ivoirité” and ultimately save their own advantages” [Mt] (Toure, 2000, p. 83). In his analysis of the ESC report data, Toure shows that this institution was set on a dangerous course because it did not go past data showing that the Ivorian population had been growing from 1988 onward while the immigration was decreasing. From 1965 to 1988, the immigration rate dropped to 0.3% according to the 1988 census. As a geographer, Toure believes that “the concerns of the ESC members are scientifically unfounded; their ideological and xenophobic proposals are inappropriate and represent a danger for social peace in Côte d’Ivoire as well as a dot on the image of the country abroad” [Mt] (Touré, 2000, p. 75).

Such rectifications did not temper the concerns of the promoters of “Ivoirité.” They rather maintained the pressure on individuals and groups that were being increasingly discriminated against in its name. Ramses Boa-Thiémélé (2003) best exemplifies the positions of scholars who believe that the notion of “Ivoirité” has been completely misunderstood. He writes,

Some critics did not bother to read the texts of the political version of “ivoirité”; they had grievances that did not directly result from the externalisation of the concept. They rather emphasised the subconscious meaning of the texts. They chose to bring to light the concealed and truncated intentions of the texts. Rather than limiting themselves to the discourse of the
subjects, they focused on subjects of the discourse, thereby capitalising on the ethnic and religious origins of its authors. [Mt] (Boa-Thiémélé, 2003, p. 242)

Luckily for those who claim victimhood as regards “Ivoirité,” Boa-Thiémélé, recognises that the texts conceptualising the term not only had a “concealed and truncated meaning” but also, they had “ethnic and religious origins” that reside in the so-called “subjects of the discourse.” Boa-Thiémélé has also raised the question of religion and politics in the 2004 national context. He condemns some Muslim clerics for preaching politics in the mosques in the 1990s when the latter believed that their community was targeted by the Bedie regime. He warns, “What is to be done in order to avoid that illiterate [sic] Islamic clerics and their political allies take Islam hostage as has been the case in Côte d’Ivoire in the run-up to – and during – the civil war?” [Mt] (Boa-Thiémélé, 2003, p. 242)

Even though his preoccupation lies with the Muslim community alone, thus forgetting the Christian leadership, his questions were nonetheless relevant and pertinent. From the mid-1990s through 2002 and 2010, pronouncements by religious leaders were clearly revelatory of the social rift. First, the rift was perceivable within the Muslim community which began to get organised as a modern community in the 1990s. The only Islamic organisation in service since 1982, the Conseil Supérieur Islamique (CSI) was seconded by the Conseil National Islamique (CNI) in 1993 when Alassane Ouattara was still Prime Minister. A few years later, in 1996 and 1998 Le Front de la Oumma Islamique (FOI) and the Association Al Coran, respectively were created. Rightly or wrongly, the CNI is believed to throw his support on Ouattara unlike the FOI and Al Coran that were accused of supporting Bedie, until the coup, and Laurent Gbagbo until the time he was forced out. For instance, Imam Karim Fofana, the president of Al Coran accused some of his coreligionists of attempting to seize power. In 2001, Fofana wrote, “[…] a small group of agitated zealots with a literalist interpretation of the Koran and the Hadiths of the Prophet, in these capricious times, believe that they could use Islam as a lever to access secular power” [Mt] (Fofana, 2001, p. 8). In the meantime, Ouattara claimed during his fierce opposition to Bedie that his lack of fortune in politics was due to his being Muslim. The truth is that in 2000 the Ivorian Catholic leadership deemed that Ouattara’s decision to run for President was bringing more social instability. Therefore, he had to withdraw. The Conference of the Bishops of Côte d’Ivoire issued a substantially anti-Ouattara declaration:

In the eyes of the people of Côte d’Ivoire, there are some candidacies that raise more problems than they solve. For the sake of the country, which is dear to any Ivorian, be they naturalised or native, we pray so that these leaders should be highly brave and wise enough to reconsider their stand and pull out of the race. It is never too late to do good. [Mt] (Le Pape & Vidal, 2002, p. 268)

In the meantime, the Muslim leadership was rightly or wrongly accused of supporting Ouattara because of his Islamic background. When the tension along religious lines was growing more and more noticeable, Imam Boikary Fofana, the
Conseil Supérieur des Imams (COSIM) de Côte d’Ivoire – the High Council of the Imams – came forward and made a declaration in November 2000 stating that it was not wrong for Muslims to support another Muslim. He stated what follows, “We, Muslims, should not have any qualms about throwing our support behind Alassane. If the community deems him the best candidate, let them support him. Likewise, the Baule people won’t be criticised for supporting Bedie, or the Bete people for supporting Gbagbo” (*Le Patriote*, The collision between religion and politics could not be more explicit. The elections finally took place in October 2000 and Robert Guei claimed a victory backed by the Constitutional Council, whereas Laurent Gbagbo (president from 2000 to 2010) steadfastly held onto the contradictory verdict issued by the Electoral Commission. Laurent Gbagbo eventually became the president because he not only had the support of Kru military officials, but also the opposition parties (including Ouattara’s Rassemblement Des Républicains or RDR and Bedie’s PDCI) wanted no military in power.

The years that followed reveal the extreme polarisation of the political sphere along religious lines. Bishops, pastors and Imams were at loggerheads. The Christian leadership, to a major extent, chose Laurent Gbagbo, and construed his leadership as a Godsend. That’s why in 2002, when Gbagbo’s regime was attacked by Soro Guillaume’s New Forces, Archbishop Bernard Agre and a high-ranking member of the clergy did not hide their allegiance to the Gbagbo regime. They considered the rebellion as a band of foreigners that were mandated by Western capitalist powers preying on the resources of developing nations. During the New Year’s mass of 2007, Archbishop Cardinal Bernard Agre said in his sermon: These sponsorships and strange alliances that continue to destabilise both the minds and the souls of our country are a fraud. The crisis and its attending load of suffering have lasted long enough to open even the eyes of the blind. God and Ivorian people know who did what and who had which intentions. “Ivoirité” or xenophobia. Maybe. However, this Ivorian crisis reeks of the desire to plunder oil, gas, diamond, gold, cocoa, coffee, and precious timber. [Mt] (*Le Patriote*, 2006, n. p.)

The prelate aligned himself with the arguments of the regime of the time. Against accusations of xenophobia from the RDR party of Ouattara as well as most of the opposition, the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) regime of Gbagbo opposed the same answer as Archbishop Bernard Agre’s.

The clergy’s meddling with politics to the point of endangering the peace process dates back to 2005 when the African Union asked the incumbent president to allow Ouattara to run for president. Gbagbo summoned the different stakeholders and constituencies of the nation to advise him on the attitude to adopt, which was clearly part of his usual exercise in delay tactics. During this popular consultation, various religious representatives (Christians of other denominations and Muslims alike) spoke in favour of attitudes and decisions that privileged the wellbeing of the nation and warned against ethnic and religious war. Because a Muslim from the North sought to run for president, some members of the Catholic
clergy became hostile to Ouattara, thereby turning the church into an utterly politicised body. For example, Monsignor Mandjo nearly repeats word for word all the ideas that Archbishop Agre accustomed Ivorian people to. Mandjo believes:

Not all can become President of the Republic. It is the highest position in the country. Everywhere around the world this position is protected. […] The same applies to France and the United States. […] We are not xenophobic, but the law must be respected. In Côte d’Ivoire laws are trampled. […] The Marcoussis agreement […] legalised the rebellion. We should not legalise evil in the name of peace. [Mt] (Le Jour Plus, 2005, n.p.)

At the same meeting, the spokesperson of the CNI believed that the law that excluded Ouattara and some Ivoirians from political participation was wrong. He asked him to take the appropriate measures susceptible of bringing Ivoirians together again. Imam Dosso said:

We denounced the Constitution passed in August 2000 as we did the crime of patronymics and physiology, […] Politicians sought to hide behind the laws, and yet these are crafted by human being and therefore imperfect […]. Apartheid was the rule in South Africa and the entire world was against it. [Mt] (Le Front-Quotidien d’Informations et d’Analyses, 2005, n.p.)

Thus, it is imperative that one asks questions as to who was the foreigner wanting to run for President in Côte d’Ivoire, and who sought to break the laws of the country. The answer is Ouattara, the rebels, and possibly Northerners.

Laurent Gbagbo’s 2000 election into office was hailed by his neo-Pentecostal coreligionists as a victory of good over evil. The then First Lady, Simone Ehivet Gbagbo was also known for her uncalled for references to the Bible during political rallies as well as her opposition to France. She reads Ivorian politics in the lenses of the religious binary: us/Christians against them/Muslims or others. The following extensive quote from a speech she gave on January 31, 2010 in a meeting of the Congrès National pour la Résistance et la Démocratie (CNRD) shows the extent of Simone Gbagbo’s ethnoreligious engagement as well as the danger she personally posed to peace and intergroup social cohesion in the country:

God has waged this battle for us and he made these elections not to take place before 2010. We are at war against France and against foreigners; this cannot be construed in any other way than being reborn or delivered. It is not an accident that Laurent Gbagbo is still in command. We must win these elections in order to slam the door on the foreigner’s face and open them to sovereignty and exercise of power by authentic citizens only. [Mt] (Dion, 2010, n.p.)

Considering Simone’s religious background and the mixing of her political views with religion, the keen observer of Ivorian politics could see where she was coming from. Like any religion-based warmongering activists, the former First Lady had to be called to order in order to prevent the conflicts ineluctably lurking on the horizon. The threat of a “Rwanda scenario” became a reality because of religious
grand standing and radicalism in public politics. One ought not to only criticise Ivoirian religious leaders and ask them to observe some distance from the very political and social issues that brought the country down and cost the lives of some 3000 people and countless missing ones. Muslim leaders feel tempted to get some visibility as if they were intent upon replacing Christian fundamentalists in the public arena. Boikary Fofana, the Supreme Chief of the COSIM now attempts to touch upon an important political and social issue, i.e. the presence of foreigners in the country. He does so in a rather awkward manner. He states:

I hear people say that foreigners took everything from us, and that we are left empty-handed. I ask the question: where have been those who complain today when the foreigners were occupying these crucial sectors? [...] The foreigners are here to stay because Côte d’Ivoire is their country. [...] Money is earned when one works, and national identity does not feed anyone here. [Mt] (Lebel, 2011, n.p.)

That foreign nationals are counted in numbers defying the acceptable in the economic sector to the point of creating envy and frustration for some Ivoirians, Muslims and Christians alike, is a fact that stands the test of denial. Therefore, to state that “The foreigners are here to stay because Côte d’Ivoire is their country” is downplaying a serious issue. A public debate and practical policies susceptible to yield inter-communal understanding and peace is more than necessary. However, it will have to be inclusive of all the forces (political, economic, religious and secular) to reflect the multiethnic and pluri-religious realities of the country.

“IVOIRITÉ,” ITS IMPLICATION AND VIOLENCE

Historically and politically, the concept “Ivoiritë” had come to mean making difference between true Ivorians and “thieves of Ivorian identity,” Northerners and Southerners, and therefore Muslims and Christians. The clashes that occurred from 2000 to 2010 are revelatory of the fact that the lines were indelibly drawn between communities. Scores of people of Diula background had been reported missing or killed from December 1999 when Robert Guei seized power. Rightly or wrongly, he was believed to be in alliance with Ouattara only to be Gbagbo’s ally a few months later. This new alliance prompted a major rift between Muslims and Christians. The former were accused of throwing support behind Ouattara and the latter were also accused by Ouattara supporters of using xenophobia and Islamophobia to remain in power (Djereke, 2009). Tensions were such that the failed coup in 2002 would be invented if it did not occur. In fact, the Ouattara’s supporters claimed that when their leader had asked them to demonstrate for new elections in October, the military and armed forces targeted only the Diula or Mande demonstrators and shot them. Some 170 opposition demonstrators, mostly loyal to Ouattara, were killed. Some 57 bodies, all identified as Muslims, were found in the outskirts of a pro-Gbagbo suburb called Yopougon. The violent eruptions that preceded Gbagbo’s coming to power in the year 2000 brewed out of the South/North division of the country along religious lines by some Ivorians.
Also, as is the case in interreligious conflicts, mosques and churches were ransacked and burnt down in 2000. In September 2002 when the rebels attacked strategic posts of Gbagbo’s regime in Abidjan, they retreated to and used Bouake as their stronghold. The city is home to immigrants and native Mande nationals. The rebel movement from the North claimed that it was fighting for an inclusive country where religion and ethnic difference should be regarded as riches instead of a liability. Like the mutineers who overthrew Bedie in 1999, they attempted to justify their action with the South/North divide and the rejection of “Ivoirité.” When Gbagbo came into office in 2000, he did little to bridge the divide. Instead, his actions steered more toward further cleavage and the “religionisation” of the political sphere than uniting the nation. He claimed that the constitutional amendments were inspired by a desire to safeguard the country against foreigners’ involvement in politics and Ouattara was the paragon of this state of affairs. Perceived as a foreigner, Ouattara had to be away from Ivorian politics.

The last war, i.e. from December 2010 to April 11 2011, resulted from Gbagbo’s refusal to step down after he lost the presidential elections to Ouattara who got 54% of the votes according to the Independent Electoral Commission. Gbagbo and his partisans had always considered Ouattara as a foreigner. As a matter of fact, Gbagbo clearly branded Ouattara as “le candidat de l’étranger” (the foreigners’ candidate) during the 2010 electoral campaigns whereas he was referred to as “le candidat des Ivoiriens” (the native candidate). After a standoff that lasted four dumfounding months, Gbagbo was arrested by the regular army, Forces Républicaines de Côte d’Ivoire (FRCI) which Ouattara created while he was self-secluded in the Golf Hotel in the capital Abidjan while Gbagbo refused to step down.

CONCLUSION

Whether it is Ouattara or Gbagbo that is to be held responsible, the truth remains that Ivorian people died during this crisis, irrespective of their religion. Unlike the pattern of destruction in 2000 and 2002, only mosques were ransacked and burnt down. As Zio Moussa aptly underlines it, ethnic cleansing is no different from cleansing based on religious affiliation:

Just as some rely on their tribal origins, others use religion and believers become, in principle, captive activists. Religious identity serves as a substratum, a tie, an ‘ideological’ basis for political activism. With the same mechanism as for ethnic purification, religious fanaticism leads to exclusion on religious grounds and, even worse, to religious cleansing. (Zio, 2001, p. 16).

Unless they have not learned at all from the ten-year-long war, the Ivorian people need to be aware that setting communities poles apart on account of ethno-religious differences is conducive to violence such as they experienced for two decades. Failure to recalibrate debates on identity, social stratifications and nationhood in Côte d’Ivoire for the sake of peace and social harmony will result into more
troubles that will take several decades to be fixed. And yet, some scholars and intellectuals still have not come to realise their share of responsibility in the country’s descent into hell. Muslim radicals who instigate war-engendering threats to their “adversaries,” whom they deem Christian fundamentalists, as well as pseudo-intellectuals attempting to conceptualize and rationalise “Ivoirité,” have to be denounced and neutralised by the electorate at any cost. This is the only guarantee for a new start toward consolidating national cohesion like back in the 1960’s when religious and ethnic differences were a capital to bank on for stability, peace and development in Côte d’Ivoire. This is also a call for a productive form of multicultural and multiethnic politics in a country whose domestic stability requires that its rich diversity be seen in a positive light and be explored by its different children. Diversity politics – cultural, religious and ethnic pluralism – should be the hallmark of stability in a Côte d’Ivoire that is part of the global family and as a country that seeks to play an important role in the global space.

NOTES

1 Because the authors of this notion fail to properly conceptualise as they intended to use it as a foundation for the legal texts defining Ivorian citizenship, I will use it in quotation marks throughout this analysis.

2 All the quotations are translated from French by the author.

3 In 2007, former president Laurent Gbagbo initiated direct talks (les Accords Politiques de Ouagadougou or APO) with Soro Guillaume who became Prime Minister in replacement until the 2010 presidential elections. Soro was tasked with the same duty under by President Alassane Ouattara. He is now the Speaker of the National Assembly.

4 During the 2010 campaigns, Gbagbo used to say “L’original vaut mieux que la photocopie” (the original is better than the photocopy). Jean-Marie Lepen is reported to have said the same in France against Sarkozy.

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