

"Beyond Governance and Democratization in Africa: Toward State Building for Sustainable Human Development"

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Introduction

For nearly four decades, African states have been buffeted by popular pressures to live up to the ideals of democratic governance and the promise of economic development that were the implicit as well as stated assumptions undergirding the struggle to attain an independent political kingdoms. The post-war generation of African leaders had mobilized masses of people into a formidable nationalist coalition that succeeded in wresting political control from European rulers in the 1960s. The apparent success of this nationalist effort generated goodwill and even effusive adulation for the nationalist leaders not only because they had proved their leadership mettle, but also because of the instrumentalist conception of independence as only a prelude to material progress and social welfare. These preliminary observations suggest that quite early on, a performance and participation criteria had been woven, implicitly at least, into an African social compact on the basis of which new leaders could legitimately claim the right to rule, the failure of which could result in an equally justified forfeiture of that right.

Drive Toward Political Enclosure

To be sure, future performance in the economic domain was complicated by two vexing realities: (1) the fragility of the captured post-colonial state, with its woefully limited administrative capacity for policy formulation and implementation due in part to the dearth of relevant socioeconomic data and partly because of the scarcity of skilled manpower; and (2) the social pluralism of African societies. The answer to this vexing combination of problems was found in the notion of state building, the attempt to forge national unity among disparate ethnic, regional, and religious groupings at different levels of socioeconomic and political development (Mengisteab and Daddieh, 1999).

In order to facilitate this process, African leaders made eloquent pleas for maximum political and social peace. Some even argued that a degree of authoritarianism was necessary to contain the centrifugal forces inherent in the ethno-regionally and culturally divided societies over which they presided (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999). It was necessary as well to meet popular "expectations of independence" (Ajayi, 1982). To that end, they insisted, as in Achebe's poignant invocation, "that all argument should cease and the whole people speak with one voice and that any more dissent and argument outside the door of the shelter would subvert and bring down the whole house" (Achebe, 1967:37).

Thus, employing a combination of charisma, new national symbols, cajoling, political pressure, and outright coercion, African leaders attempted to secure acquiescence to ongoing efforts to shrink the political arena (Kasfir, 1976). This narrowing of the scope of political participation and competition or, more to the point, this thinly disguised re-channeling of participation into state-controlled institutions began, as the Ghanaian effort illustrates, rather innocuously enough with the promulgation of legislation prohibiting the formation of political parties along narrow ethnic, religious or regional lines. This was followed by a backing away from the constitutional provisions mandating decentralized government, coupled with the gradual expansion of presidential powers, the elimination of constitutional checks on the executive branch of government, culminating, finally, in the imposition of one-party rule.

With the one party system reasonably well entrenched, strenuous efforts were made to incorporate all previously autonomous organizations into state structures in order to bring them under tighter political control. In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, all civil servants were compelled to become, willy nilly, card-carrying members of the *de jure* one party. Various laboring and professional classes - from farmers, fishermen, bakers, and transporters, to doctors, lawyers, secondary school teachers and university professors - were all subjected to unrelenting pressure to join up with the state-sponsored federation of Ivoirian workers, known as the UGTCl (Daddieh, 1996; Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999).

Democratic closure in Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, reached its apogee under military regimes which invariably ruled by decree, disbanded national parliaments, banned political parties, made strike action by workers and professional bodies illegal, shut down independent newspapers or promulgated draconian libel laws designed to muzzle the press or to compel journalists to practice self-censorship. Moreover, ordinary citizens were sometimes detained without probable cause and trial or were tried in extra-judicial or kangaroo courts (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999: 127). Whatever their actual merits, such measures robbed the African masses of their right to meaningful political participation and undermined their capacity to hold the new rulers accountable through the electoral and other decision making processes and democratic institutions. But, as the popular African saying goes that "No Condition Is Permanent," since the beginning of the 1990s, African states seem to have come full circle, embracing multiparty competition, citizen participation in elections that are intended to be "free and fair", conducted in a climate that is nominally "free from fear" of political reprisals, within a framework of nationally-approved democratic constitutions. In short, Africa is currently experiencing a second independence, with all that implies for a revival of democracy.

The foregoing reflections focus our attention on a number of important questions: why did African states jettison inherited democratic constitutions and institutions in favor of authoritarianism? why has authoritarianism, in turn, been roundly repudiated across the continent in favor of democracy? Can democracy now do for Africa what authoritarianism had failed so miserably to accomplish? Can

it contribute to the achievement of the expectations of Africa's "second independence"? To put it differently, is it possible to assert a linkage between democratic governance and development in a way that trumps the linkage between authoritarianism and development in the African context? These are some of the critical questions that the balance of this article will seek to address. In the penultimate section of the article, we return to the preoccupation of the nationalist leaders. We suggest that the preoccupation was as relevant then as it is today. However, we reformulate their problematic in light of their performance experience and current problems of state disintegration and social fragmentation by making a strong case for linking current efforts at democratization with genuine state building as a way of improving access to resources especially among the vast impoverished peasantry, conciliating ethnic, gender, class, and other cleavages and thereby sustaining human development.

Post-War Political Activism and Colonial State Reactions

As indicated above, Africa came of age in the decade of the 1960s when broad nationalist coalitions waging anti-colonial struggles triumphed over European colonial rule. With few exceptions, notably in the settler colonies of Algeria, Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, South Africa as well as the Portuguese colonies, the process of decolonization was remarkably straightforward and devoid of major violence. For the most part, it was characterized by piecemeal reformism rather than radicalism on the part of nationalist groups who resorted to letter writing campaigns, deputations to London, Paris, Lisbon, etc., protest marches and rallies, boycotts of certain European merchants and goods, civil disobedience, etc.). The response of the colonial state was equally remarkable for its gradualism, reflected in the ceding of political ground by allowing groups to organize into competing political parties, registering voters, staging multiple competitive elections to fill positions in local, municipal and national legislatures or, as in the case of francophone Africa, to elect representatives to the French National Assembly, followed by internal self-government and finally independence).

Although the process was relatively benign once, as in much of Anglophone Africa, the colonial power accepted the inevitability or the legitimacy of self-determination, colonial administrators were not averse to using baton-wielding, gun-totting and grenade-throwing police regiments to disperse demonstrators and haul leaders to jail to try to moderate their demands, to protect their interests in the colony and control the pace of the reform process. Nevertheless, these evolutionary political processes eventually culminated in the transfer of power to nationalist parties and leaders that succeeded in capturing legislative majorities in winner-take-all (majoritarian) pre-independence elections and the subsequent hoisting of new national flags, one of the three palpable symbols of national sovereignty in post-colonial Africa.

The departing colonialists bequeathed to the new African leaders freshly minted liberal democratic constitutions with the usual guarantees of civil and political rights such as freedom of the press, freedom of expression, freedom of association and the right to political participation through voting

and the holding of political office. As well, they left behind Westminster-type parliamentary institutions for Anglophone countries and, for Francophone states, presidential systems. In both cases, emerging legislatures consisted of a governing party and opposition parties in considerably weakened positions especially under the more presidential model of francophone Africa. Despite the preference for centralized systems of governance, some measure of decentralization was also introduced into new constitutions primarily through local government provisions.

The democratic forms of governance that were inherited by African states at independence were not only of the minimalist variety (Mengisteab, 1999), but they were remarkably short-lived. As soon as politically feasible or practicable, they were dismantled and replaced by authoritarian alternatives. The emerging African version of authoritarianism took the peculiar form of neo-patrimonial rule, characterized by personalization of authority, institutionalized relations of loyalty and dependence or construction of patron-client networks, systematic concentration of political power in the hands of one individual, a stubborn refusal to delegate, let alone share power, the cultivation of a cult of personality and aristocratic effects in both lifestyles and physical appearance, preferably stomachs protruding from "too much eating" (Bayart, 1989), supplemented by appropriation of various honorific titles (praise names), and self-serving representations of leaders as father figures who knew what was best for their extended national households, etc. (Daddieh, 1988; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Forrest, 1998).

The Rise and Fall of the Authoritarian Project

It is noteworthy that one ostensible reason democracy was abandoned was its perceived inability to produce desperately needed developmental outcomes. In fact, the two were regarded as antithetical in the African context. The apparent nationalist disdain for democracy grew out of a rather peculiar understanding of democracy as disputatious or inherently conflictual rather than as a mechanism for mediating competing claims to institutions and resources. During a critical juncture when nation building was a priority goal and time was considered of the essence, especially given Africa's unenviable inheritance at independence, democracy was considered a luxury the continent could ill afford. It was certainly an irritating inconvenience. Rather than allowing African leaders the latitude to cut through the chase or being permissive of timely responses to serious societal problems, democracy was bound to hamstring them through endless, time-consuming, and fruitless debates. Thus, democracy was considered inefficient.

Moreover, given that African societies were riddled with ethnic divisions with the potential for real and grave conflict, they needed to be governed with a firm and steady hand. According to nationalist formulation, democratic liberties would only inflame ethnic rivalries, stimulate ethnic subnational revendications, as had happened in several countries during the runup to independence, and pose a danger to nation-state building or national integration (Ake, 1993; Daddieh, 1998; Ottaway, 1999). The authoritarian alternative proved appealing for another reason.

By fostering national integration and maintaining domestic tranquility, African states expected to be spared the ruinous financial and manpower expenses of trying to put out ethnic fires once they had been lit by democratic liberties. The savings could then be used to respond to pressing social needs. The irony is that one looks in vain for evidence of sustained material progress and associated political stability.

Furthermore, it was suggested that democracy was alien to, hence incompatible with, traditional African political culture in which the chiefs or councils of elders embodied the collective interest and decided for their people. While Africa's social pluralism and inherited development deficits make some of these arguments seductive, the latter, in particular, conveniently glossed over Africa's own rich democratic tradition of consensual problem-solving through many hours of discussion or *palavers* in village squares or in chief's compounds (Daddieh, 1998; Mengisteab, 1999). As the late Claude Ake, one of the most eloquent and persistent voices against authoritarian rule in Africa, had argued:

Traditional African political systems were infused with democratic values. They were invariably patrimonial, and consciousness was communal; everything was everybody's business, engendering a strong emphasis on participation. Standards of accountability were even stricter than in Western societies. Chiefs were answerable not only for their own actions but for natural catastrophes such as famine, epidemics, floods, and drought. In the event of such disasters, chiefs could be required to go into exile or 'asked to die' (Ake, 1993: 72).

Even if we accept the proposition that Africa's social pluralism poses a serious threat to governance, the antidote, as suggested earlier, is more, rather than less, democracy because, as Ake rightly asserted, "democracy implies precisely the assumption of differences to be negotiated, to be conciliated, to be moved into phases of higher synthesis. If democracy means anything at all, as a form of relationship, that is precisely what it means. If there is social pluralism, that is in fact an argument for a democratic form of governance" (Ake, 1990: 4). Furthermore, it is worth recalling the felicitous phrase of Chinua Achebe that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Achebe, 1983:1). Similarly, Ake insists that there is nothing inherently conflictual about ethnic differences. He assigned blame to elites whose manipulation or politicization of ethnic differences in their quest for power and political support has inflamed ethnic passions. According to him, leaders gain an additional advantage from exploiting ethnicity: "Having incited ethnic-based conflict, they then use the threat of such conflict to justify political authoritarianism. Some African leaders enlist this spurious defense to rationalize one-party rule" (Ake, 1993:72).

Ake was at his eloquent best when he remarked that "Somehow these leaders cannot see that repeating this argument after 30 years is precisely its refutation. A treatment applied for 30 years that continues to worsen the illness cannot be right" (Ake, 1993: 73). What is more, Ake argues that Africa's participative culture is incompatible with the authoritarian model. The organic nature of African societies has created a situation in which the burdens and rewards of citizenship are

shared, in which nothing is private, not even marriage, not even death. Everything involves the participation of everybody. He concluded, then, that "authoritarianism was much against the grain of African culture and has simply led to dissociation, confusion, and the phenomenon of withdrawal" (Ake, 1990: 3).

That authoritarianism has few defenders in Africa today speaks volumes about its spectacular failure to produce either the developmental outcomes it had promised or the national unity or integration it had sought through the nation building project. Indeed, forty years of authoritarianism had failed to produce a single case of authoritarian developmentalist regimes (growth with development) à la Taiwan, Korea, and China or even authoritarian growth regimes (growth without development or welfare) à la Brazil under the military junta. Instead, about all African neo-patrimonialism managed to do was to nurture authoritarian state elite enrichment regimes (ASEEs), of which the kleptocratic Mobutu state was only the most celebrated example. The latter type of authoritarian regime produced neither growth nor welfare; its main aim was the enrichment of the elite with monopoly control of the state. It was often based on erratic autocratic rule by a supreme leader whose actions may not have made much sense when judged against the standards of formal development goals proffered by the state but are perfectly rational from the perspective of patron-clientelist politics (Sørensen, 1993: 74-80).

Moreover, patron-clientelism as a model of governance is expensive to administer because it relies heavily on state capacity to distribute economic and symbolic goods, combined with careful calibration of bureaucratic and political appointments along ethnic and regional lines in order to maintain loyal support. Thus, the longer term viability of a strategy of distributive politics hinges on a robust economy and the generation of increasingly expanding economic resources, enabling the state to broaden its distribution of economic and job opportunities as well as facilitating the co-optation of key political actors such as heads of corporatist groups and real or imagined dissidents with various offers they could not easily refuse (Woods, 1998).

By the late 1980s, instead of continued economic growth, Africa had been reeling from a decade or more of bad policies, bad government, bad luck (devastating drought and bush fires in the 1970s) and a double whammy of external shocks - unfavorable world market conditions for primary commodities and two devastating oil price hikes at both ends of the 1970s. The resultant economic failures and political instability pushed African states into international receivership, making the continent ripe for external co-optation of its policy making by the international financial institutions, most notably the IMF and the World Bank. Thus, virtually all African countries have been forced to embrace a new economic ideology which represents at the same time a fundamental shift in economic policy making from commandism (state ownership and central economic planning) to neoliberal economic orthodoxy, in a last ditch effort to arrest the deteriorating economic situation. The new policy framework, called structural adjustment programs or SAPs, had been mandated by the Bretton Woods institutions in return for balance of payments and other policy supports.

This package of economic reforms can be summarized as consisting of devaluation, deregulation, and desubsidization, destatization. More broadly, SAPs revolve around the twin conditionalities of trade liberalization and privatization of investment and production aimed at facilitating exports while constraining imports, especially of non-productive consumption goods. They have targeted government finances, aiming to bring them into balance or eliminate chronic budget deficits by subjecting national currencies, considered grossly overvalued almost everywhere, to massive and repeated devaluations as well as establishing more realistic exchange rates, the tightening of money supply, the dismantling of government price controls and import/export regulations, streamlining bloated bureaucracies and unburdening the treasury by retrenching the number of employees on government payrolls, some of whom were simply "ghost workers" while seeking to trim government expenditures through a combination of elimination of government subsidies for basic necessities as well as for education and health care and their replacement with "cost recovery measures" in the form of "user fees" for public services. SAPs have also aimed at not only reducing the size of the state but diminishing its economic role through privatization initiatives (that is, the liquidation of entire state-owned industries or parts thereof and other government assets by auctioning them off to private investors). In sum, SAPs had been designed to discipline a predatory and unruly state, shrink its size and diminish its involvement in the economy, unleash market forces that create incentives for private entrepreneurship, stimulate competition, channel investments into more productive rather than consumptive activities and make African economies more competitive internationally (Daddieh, 1995).

While the IMF and World Bank insist that SAPs have stimulated economic recovery in countries such as Ghana, the model adjusting country since 1983, that have summoned the necessary political will to stay the course, critics have questioned the wisdom and efficacy of adjustment. SAPs imposed short term hardships in anticipation of future economic and social recovery or development. However, critics have charged that the programs have not produced the hoped for panacea. Instead, they have increased the burdens and misery of long suffering vulnerable groups such as children, women and the laboring poor (Olukoshi, 1998). Rather than restructure African economies away from their roles in the international division of labor and toward new and higher forms of production, they have merely reinforced Africa's traditional role and low power status while producing, as Zimbabweans have quipped, "Suffering for African People" (Nyang'oro and Shaw, 1998: 30). It is arguable that given the lacklustre performance of African economies beginning in the seventies and absolute declines in standards of living in the lost decade of the 1980s, African states had little choice but to turn to these International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

At the same time, the programs and the associated external co-optation of African policy making have provoked charges of a re-colonization of Africa and renewed debates about alternative and appropriate frameworks for dealing with Africa's economic problems (ECA, 1989). Given the high

stakes involved, it is hardly surprising that the pressures on the states mounted and became more sustained for a new governance alternative (Daddieh, 1996; Olukoshi, 1998).

The Case for Democracy

Whereas the earlier generation of African leaders had viewed democracy and development as antithetical, associated democracy with ethnic conflict resulting in a wastage of limited resources, new African elites and organizations in civil society have taken to the barricades to demand democracy not only for its own sake but for its instrumental value as well. In contrast to the intellectual consensus and state practice of the earlier era, a strong linkage between democracy and development has been vigorously asserted in the post-Cold War era of superpower disinterest and withdrawal (Ake, 1990; 1993a; 1993b; Anyang' Nyong'o, 1987; 1990; Bates, 181; 1990; Holmquist, 1989; Mengisteab and Daddieh, 1999; and Sklar, 1987).

According to the persuasive formulation of Ake (1990: 2), the persistence of underdevelopment is related to lack of democracy in Africa. While democracy is desirable in itself, Africa needs democracy because it would greatly enhance the prospects for development. He attributes the failure of the development project in Africa to political authoritarianism. By engaging in political repression African leaders turned politics into warfare. They then found themselves besieged by a host of hostile forces they had unleashed through their coercion. This resultant state of siege distracted African leaders from paying attention to development which they relegated to a very low priority. Secondly, African governments became disconnected from their people and governed without accountability. "As a result of this, public policy is completely dissociated from social needs and even from developmental relevance. We live in a world of humans not angels. In this very human world, people will not automatically act out the public interest unless they are constrained to do so" (Ake, 1990: 2). Furthermore, the trauma of repeated subjection to arbitrary and coercive rule has turned African societies into:

Hostile force to be feared, evaded, cheated and defeated as circumstances permit. They turn their loyalty from the more ecumenical level of the state and localize it in community groups, kinship groups, ethnic associations, or even religious organizations. *What is happening in Africa now is in effect the strengthening of the process of the localization of loyalties. We might say that as a result of political repression, we are witnessing, not nation building, not development, but in fact, the dissolution of society* (Ake, 1990: 2).

Finally, Ake goes on to argue that repression has caused Africa's human resources, the very engine of development, to be squandered. At the level of the community, it has undermined the peoples' traditional capacity to cope, leaving many of them at different stages of confusion, withdrawal, despair, or silent revolt. The resultant human toll can be seen in the growing multitude of refugees. As many elites have voted with their feet by migrating outside, African countries have lost the bulk of their most capable and talented people. Lamentably, those who have stayed behind have been

denied opportunities and room to cultivate their talents for the development of their countries (Ake, 1990: 2-3).

The case for democracy in Africa goes beyond its potential development payoffs. There is a humanistic case to be made for democracy as well. Ake has testified to the horrors of human rights violations perpetrated by the autocratic rule of Nigeria's military. He recounts the fate of a passenger who had the misfortune of jostling a Nigerian military officer in a rush to get on board a plane. The poor soul was beaten mercilessly by aides to the officer, then made to crawl on the tarmac and drink from small pools of accumulated rain water. Then he is kicked repeatedly. At a certain point, one of the two aides beating the man places his shoe on the victim's face,

hands proudly akimbo as he looks around for any murmur of protest. Now this is a common occurrence. I have not talked about the shootings, nor about mass torture chambers, and the dehumanizing punishment and the excruciating pain, trauma and the silent despair of our prisons, of the many who languish and suffer for months and years in pain and agony for charges that are never even made (Ake, 1990: 4).

It has been suggested that the fact repression has not led to rapid rates of growth may only have shown that a particular form of repression is not sufficient and perhaps even not necessary for capitalist accumulation. In itself, the failure of one form of repression does not establish the proposition that democracy might be better. It could be that there are other "structural constraints" that would thwart accumulation in a country regardless of the political regime. Besides, some authoritarian states such as Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Malawi (among non-oil producing countries) may have actually produced reasonably stable periods of accumulation since independence, as evidenced by high growth rates almost throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Mkandawire, 1990: 10). In the first place, this oft-repeated assertion mistakenly equates economic growth with development. Secondly, these economic performers also happen to be instances in which the states had exhibited greater accountability to their social base - however narrow this is - when compared to the other one-party regimes and military dictatorships. This confirms the *prima facie* case made by Robert Bates nearly a decade before Anyang' that where there has been more respect for democratic practices (however minimal) higher rates of growth and more successful models of accumulation have been ensured along with better terms of trade for the peasant producers (Anyang' 1990; Bates, 1981).

Thus, notwithstanding these apparent counter-factual cases that reveal that the authoritarian presidency may have actually produced high growth rates, they cannot be presented as evidence that existing personal rule need only be replaced by more developmental types of personal rule or by the Latin American model of "bureaucratic-authoritarianism", based on a dominant coalition of high level technocrats, senior military officers, and powerful Multinational Corporations(MNCs) in partnership with local entrepreneurs (Mkandawire, 1990: 9). Significantly, political stability, a *sine qua non* of sustainable development, has eluded them as well. It has been suggested that the

inherent brittleness of the authoritarian presidential system gives rise to intra-bourgeois conflicts that are then settled very violently. While such violence has not resulted in a complete rupture of the system, there is no guarantee that this good fortune will continue unless meaningful systemic change occurs, preferably through some democratic opening (Anyang' Nyong'o, 1990: 13). Moreover, perhaps because of their brittleness, Anyang' contends that such systems are incapable of promoting such developmental values as equity, social justice, human creativity, etc. Their lack of accountability leads them to misappropriation of public resources and hence low levels of accumulation and development. Were they to have more sense of accountability they would be less likely to impose such models of political repression and economic disaccumulation. Thus, Anyang' concludes that part of the "foundation of every true humane society" is "democracy"; and the "foundation of social creativity" or the "foundation of development" in the modern world must, of necessity, be found in democracy" (Anyang' Nyong'o, 1990: 14; Ake, 1990).

State Disintegration and Nation-State Building: an unfinished nationalist project

The search for structural solutions to the African crisis that are permissive of progressive expansion of civil society, popular or genuine participation, equitable distribution and access to critical economic and social resources, and protection of minority rights brings us full circle to a reexamination of the nationalist project of nation-state building. My colleague and I (Mengisteab and Daddieh, 1999) think that unfinished project is that important and that relevant. And in seeking to nurture sustainable democratic development in Africa, we must be wary of the anti-state ideology that pervades neo-liberal orthodox thinking. An important factor that necessitates state building is the worrisome dangers associated with the state's collapse or disintegration. The civil wars and the shocking human tragedies of Somalia, Liberia, and Rwanda occurred with state collapse. Such tragedies can reoccur since many African states are "verging on dissolution" (Zolberg, 1992). Many attribute the failure of state building in Africa to the nature of the state. Presently, the African state is generally considered to be highly centralized, authoritarian, self-serving or serving the interests of what Keller calls "the state class" (Keller, 1991), which includes, the reigning political authorities, the central bureaucracy and its regional functionaries, the top echelons of the military, and members of, where it exists, the dominant political party. The capabilities of the African state in responding to social needs and interests, even when the political will is present, are also limited. Jackson and Rosburg (1982) have, in fact, described African states as states *de jure* but not *de facto*. The failure of the state to advance social interest by providing health care, education, and basic infrastructure, and so forth and the increasing surrender of its policy making powers to external agencies have clearly weakened it and undermined its legitimacy among its constituents as well as in the eyes of the global community. Its chronic failure to provide minimum security and to correct the prevailing gross inequalities among ethnic groups has also led to an increase in interethnic conflicts, which, in turn, threaten to bring about the disintegration of the state.

As Shaw (1994) notes, there may be some cases where state disintegration may lead to a more homogeneous and relatively more peaceful small states. However, dividing states along ethnic lines is not feasible since ethnic groups often cohabit. Independence for the Oromo people in Ethiopia or creating independent states for Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi are, for example, unlikely to lead to peaceful coexistence. The decoupling of Eritrea from Ethiopia ended in an apparently peaceful settlement, only to be pulled into an ugly inter-cine border war recently. Even then, Eritrea is a special case that cannot be easily replicated. In the first place, the Eritrean conflict was not an ethnic conflict. Eritrea also had boundaries clearly demarcated by the colonial state. Although its self-declared independence has not received international recognition yet, Somaliland (the former British Somaliland) also has boundaries delineated by the colonial state.

The collapse of the Somali state also provides a useful lesson that, as long as the root or structural causes of conflict such as uneven access to resources, and uneven distribution of power, are not carefully addressed and mechanisms for economic, political, and social integration of different social entities are not developed, separation of ethnic groups does not prevent conflict (Peck, 1998). Even genuine nation states are likely to experience conflict along regional or even clan lines. Ethnic, religious and cultural homogeneity did not prevent clan conflict in Somalia.

The Dangers of Fragmentation

State disintegration, even if it could be attained peacefully, would also have another problem. In most cases, African countries are already economic midgets. Fragmenting them further through disintegration is likely to worsen the prospects for their economic development. Fragmentation would further weaken their resource base. They are also likely to be too small to support any meaningful industrialization, to attract foreign investments, or to be of any consequence in the emerging global order, although in the long run, state boundaries may gradually cease to be serious obstacles to economic development, if openness is fully attained.

To sum up then, the general crisis confronting Africa has threatened the survival of African societies. It is highly unlikely that their survival and development would be assured without a strong organization locally, regionally and at the level of the state. It must be recalled that it is multiethnic patriotic struggle that liberated Africa from colonial rule. The same kind of struggle together, coupled with a real commitment to new regionalism/functionalism (Lavergne and Daddieh, 1997; Nyang'oro and Shaw, 1998), is absolutely essential now in liberating Africa from its present crisis in the emerging global order. However, the state cannot be strengthened without transforming its nature from self-serving to one that advances social interests. Strengthening the state also requires developing mechanisms for accommodating the interests of different ethnic groups and integrating them politically, economically, and socially. Such interethnic accommodation and integration are prerequisites for broad based mobilization of resources to overcome Africa's general crisis.

Relations Between Democracy and State Building

Given the anti-state ideology of the new global order, the inequalities globalization generates, the built-in economy of affection, nepotism, and corruption that characterize African countries, and the ethnic and religious tensions that are rampant throughout the continent, state building is certain to be a difficult process in Africa. Historically, state building preceded democratization and was generally accomplished by coercive means through conquests or resistance to conquests. Referring to nationalism and state building in nineteenth century Europe, Lewis Namier (in Schwarz, 1995) notes that "states are not created or destroyed, and frontiers redrawn or obliterated, by arguments and majority votes; nations are freed, united, or broken by blood and iron, and not by a generous application of liberty." Economic interdependence, homogenization through education and administrative penetration, and democratic arrangements have, however, consolidated state building. In the African case, the colonial state imposed the boundaries of states without creating the economic, political and social conditions for the consolidation of the state or for homogenizing national entities. The post-independence state attempted, as former president Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia (in Neuberger, 1994: 235; see also Ottaway, 1999) noted, "to create nations from the sprawling artifacts the colonialists carved out." It is clear that the post-independence state has failed in this nationalist project. In a number of countries, such as the Sudan and Zaire, the state is even proving to be too weak to maintain the colonial creations by means of coercion although colonial boundaries have not yet disappeared. The current global democratization and growing concerns with human rights violations and refugees has also made the option of state building by means of coercion less viable. As a result, state building has become fused with democratization.

This fusion has serious implications for the manner in which the process of state building can take place as well as to the nature of democracy. In regards to state building, it implies that integrating the disparate groups and determining the relations between them and the state can only be accomplished through collective decisions of all the parties involved. Democracy entails empowering the general population to control decision making. As such, it implies that integration of ethnic groups with each other to form a state would need to be on voluntary basis and on carefully negotiated terms that are acceptable to all of them. It also implies that if such agreements are not reached, the option of secession is available to ethnic groups. For this reason democratization may involve the risk of accelerating state disintegration (Ottaway, 1995). However, few ethnonationalist movements in Africa have demanded to form their own states (Scarritt, 1993). Even movements such as the Sudan's People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in the Sudan and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Ethiopia have not sought secession as the only solution to their cases. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in South Africa has also clearly rejected independence. Thus, democratization appears to pose much less risk to state building than not democratizing.

The process of state building through the affirmation of the rights of nations may be viewed as reinforcement of national loyalties which may undermine the effort towards building "nation-states"

(Neuberger, 1994). However, the aim of building a nation-state out of a multination state is an unrealistic goal. The countries that were believed to have succeeded in this process have not been all that successful. The United Kingdom, France, and Spain, for example, can hardly be regarded as nation-states (Connor, 1994). The aim of state building should thus be a realistic one that integrates different nations to form a workable and peaceful multination state. Its aim should not be to transfer the loyalties of citizens from the nation to the state but to minimize conflict between the nation and the state and among nations.

The fusion between state building and democratic development also implies that the nature of democracy is subject to the outcomes of the agreements and negotiated compromises among the disparate groups. The levels of centralization/decentralization of power, the question of how to manage the relations between minority and majority ethnic groups, and what electoral systems to adopt are highly contentious issues. The demarcation between the spheres of the private and public decisions, for example, how much state intervention in economic activity is acceptable is also a difficult issue that has to be settled by agreement among the different parties to state building. This suggests that African countries may have to invent their own version of democracy as Sklar (1987) notes. The forms of democracy that exist in other countries, such as those of the West, are unlikely to be suitable for their conditions. This does not suggest that democracy is to be reduced to power sharing among ethnic groups or establishing other mechanisms that govern relations among ethnic groups. It also establishes rules that govern relations among social classes.

While democracy does not equalize the influence of different social classes on the state, it mitigates the domination of the state by the elite by providing the lower classes a collective voice. Democracy also governs relations among individuals and protects citizens from excesses by the state. In other words, democracy can be organized in such a way that rights of nations can be safeguarded without subjugating the rights of individuals and social classes, just as much as rights of states and those of individuals can be reasonably maintained simultaneously. The elections that are currently taking place in different African countries are important. However, if they do not quickly address the issues of state building and the type of democratization compatible with it, they are likely to advance neither state building nor democratization, especially in the countries where ethnic tensions are high.

The specific arrangements that deal with the contentious issues of democratization and state building are likely to vary from country to country since the balance of power among ethnic and social classes in African countries differs considerably. However, given the similarities of the ethnic problems and malintegration of economic sectors that these countries face, the approaches that deal with these problems are not likely to be very dissimilar.

As we (Mengisteab and Daddieh, 1999) concluded in our recent collection of essays, there is agreement that democracy and state building have become closely intertwined and fused with development, not just economic growth. It is, for example, strongly shared that democratization

makes the state more transparent and transforms its nature to become more responsive to social needs. This transformation, in turn, strengthens the state both by enhancing its legitimacy and by integrating different national entities. And so we end where we began. As Holmquist (1989: 53) has noted, the apparent exhaustion of authoritarian routes to the developmental state has brought us back to where we started, to democratic forms of accountability and transparency as the only means to disciplining unruly ruling classes and regimes.

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