Towards a New Type of Regime in Sub-Saharan Africa?

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS BUT NO DEMOCRACY

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Summary

Sub-Saharan African hopes of democratization raised by the end of the Cold War and the decline in the number of single party states are giving way to disillusionment. Even countries that were supposed to be islands of democratic stability, Senegal – since its independence in 1960 – and South Africa – since 1994 – are now threatening to veer towards authoritarianism. However, recent events in Mauritania, Niger and Guinea Conakry shouldn't be misinterpreted as representing the continent; elsewhere, the numbers of attempted and successful *coups d'État* are decreasing, including in countries like the Comoros or Nigeria that were once world record holders for coups. Most Africans are now ruled by regimes that are neither military juntas nor parliamentary democracies. Between war and peace, they are victims of daily insecurity that exposes the enormous fragility of the young developing states they live in.

Some American researchers classify these more or less failed states as "anocracies", typically presenting some of the following features:

- a non-existent or virtual central authority (Somalia, the Central African Republic);

- a government under threat of a return to civil war (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Burundi and perhaps Angola);

- high levels of corruption that impoverish public services, feed frustration and aggravate social inequalities when they don't allow an equitable and informal redistribution of natural resources (Nigeria and the two Congos);

- badly legitimized powers that are increasingly contested (Zimbabwe), sometimes combined with unresolved regional tensions (Cameroon, Ethiopia);

- a parliamentary system that doesn't work properly due to electoral fraud and politicians being coopted rather than elected (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda).

As a result, many African countries remain lawless zones that don't favor investment and development. Moreover, stuck demo-

cratization processes in many countries show the failings of Western-led programs to support "good governance". The international community has many preconceptions in this regard: an excessive focus on the moment of elections to the detriment of day-to-day politics; illusions about a "magic" correlation between development, democratization, conflict prevention and political stability; and misleading beliefs in the merits of NGOs and "civil" society.

Contents

Introduction

Sub-Saharan African hopes of democratization raised by the end of the Cold War and the decline in the number of single party states are giving way to disillusionment. The democratic transitions of the 1990s are stuck in a rut and don't seem to be radically reforming African leaders' governance styles. The Horn of Africa appears to be definitively mired in a state of war; Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Togo have perpetuated Syrian-style secular dynasties; while Mauritania, Niger and Guinea-Conakry have revived the "tradition" of the *coup d'État*. Today, even countries such as Senegal and South Africa, reputed for their democratic nature, are threatening to veer towards authoritarianism. Nevertheless, over the last two decades, the continent has made progress from the dictatorships of the 1980s. As we will see in the first part of this paper, the continent's political track record is not completely negative; most Africans are now ruled by regimes that are neither military juntas nor parliamentary democracies.

More or less failed states with a non-existent or virtual central authority, high levels of violence and corruption, contested and badly legitimized powers, recurring regional tensions and parliamentary systems that don't work properly due to massive electoral fraud are classified by some American researchers as "anocracies" [1]. Nigeria is a classic example of such a regime and the subject of the second part of this paper. The most populous country in Africa, it lives off its oil revenue; political groups compete over state prebends; the country's elections are a sort of masquerade; and the system of government is based on "godfatherism", that is, cooptation and corruption. As a result, Nigerians no longer believe in the benefits of democracy, ironically referring to it as "democrazy".

However, the failure of political reforms in Africa is also an indictment of the international community's limited influence in the region, especially when it comes to supporting "good governance". Democratic models exported by the West have revealed themselves to not always be up to the task in Africa. So the third part of this paper closely analyzes the international community's preconceptions in this area: an excessive focus on the moment of elections to the detriment of day-to-day politics; illusions about correlations between develop-

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[1] Weart, Spencer [1998], Never at war: why democracies will not fight one another, New Haven, Conn. : Yale University Press, 424p.

ment, democratization, conflict prevention and political stability; misleading beliefs in the merits of NGOs and "civil" society, etc. Under the pretext of improving the governance of weak states, Western donors have often bypassed corrupt administrations, "emptying" public authorities of their substance. Nowadays, however, development policies are changing and the state is back in favor, for better or for worse, as international aid still risks propping up presidential cliques.

The facts

Ghana – where Barack Obama inaugurated his first tour of Africa – is a symbol. In 2008, the country had a real democratic choice to make when John Atta Mills was elected. It also represents the smiling face of a continent on the path to development: it has a peaceful political life and its cleaned-up economy has started to grow again. Ghana is not the only country to have seen its situation improve since the end of the Cold War. Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Angola are no longer wracked by civil war; South Africa has definitely left the torment of apartheid despite the start of an economic downturn and the election of Jacob Zuma, a president suspected of corruption. It even seems that we can generalize, and claim that Africa is moving towards stability and democracy, in spite of the "old-fashioned" authoritarian regimes in Togo, Gabon and Burkina Faso, not to mention the dictatorships of Zimbabwe, Eritrea and Equatorial Guinea.

Undeniable progress since the end of the Cold War

Sub-Saharan Africa has made undeniable progress on the political front. Before 1990, almost no country was able to make a democratic choice as to its rulers. At the time, *coups d'État* or uprisings seemed to be the only way to overthrow dictatorial regimes. No African leader accepted to stand down from power after electoral defeat. Olusegun Obsanjo in Nigeria in 1979, Leopold Senghor in Senegal in 1980, Ahmadou Ahidjo in Cameroon in 1982 and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania in 1985 were exceptions that proved the rule as they only left office in order to better organize their succession [figure 1]. Most of their peers were at the heads of juntas or single-party states. In 1990, only five African countries out of a total of 54 weren't led by military or civilian dictatorships[2]! Ten years later, however, 16 had held elections and could be called "developing democracies"[3].

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[2] Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe & McConnaughay, Philip (ed.) [2004], *Human rights, the rule of law, and development* in *Africa*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, p.1.
[3] Lindbergh, Staffan [avr. 2001], « Forms of State, Governance, and Regimes: Reconceptualizing the Prospects for Democratic Consolidation in Africa », *International Political Science Review* vol.22, n°2, p.174.

Figure 1: The manner by which African leaders left office from 1960-2007

	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-7
Elections	0	0	1	12	7
Voluntary departure	1	2	5	9	10
Coup d'État	27	30	22	22	7

Source: Hydén, Göran [2006], African politics in comparative perspective, Cambridge, Cambridge university press, p. 19; Mustapha, Abdul Raufu & Whitfield, Lindsay (eds.) [2009], Turning Points In African Democracy, Oxford, James Currey, p. 2.

Another characteristic of sub-Saharan Africa was its extreme instability. From 1946 to 2006, 44% of successful and abortive *coups d'État* in the world happened in this region[4]. The champion of coups was Sudan with 18, followed by 15 in Nigeria, 13 in the Comoros and 12 in both Benin and Mauritania. In this time, only Bolivia, Syria and Iraq experienced more successful and unsuccessful coups (undergoing 22, 20 and 15 coups respectively). What's more, the continent was ravaged by war and armed conflicts. With 10% of the world's population, Africa counted for 18% of its murders and its wars produced more deaths then the rest of the world in the mid-90s[5]. As a result, the continent seemed condemned to remain plagued by recurrent humanitarian crises. One in four of the world's refugees were in Africa in 1990 (2.8 of 11 million worldwide); this ratio soared to almost one in two in 1995 following the crises in the Great Lakes region and in the Horn of Africa (6.8 of 14.5 million), before falling back to its previous level by the year 2000 (3.3 of 12 million UN-registered refugees)[6].

Ever since, the numbers of wars and coups have tended to decrease. It's important to try and balance the pessimistic vision of a "wild" Africa condemned to "perpetual" violence. Since 1945, no country

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[4] Mack, Andrew *et al.* [2008], *Human Security Brief 2007*, Vancouver, Simon Fraser University, pp.28 & 39. Voir aussi McGowan, Patrick [sept. 2003], « African military coups d'État, 1956-2001: frequency, trends and distribution », *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol.41, n°3, pp.339-362.
[5] Graduate Institute of International Studies [2004], *Small Arms Survey: Rights at Risk*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.175; Berghof Research Institute for Constructive Conflict Management (ed.) [1998], *Prevention and Management of Violent Conflicts : an international directory*, Utrecht, European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 466p.
[6] http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

has been at war as much as the United States has[7]. Contrary to received wisdom, the level of military spending in sub-Saharan Africa is rather low compared to developed countries: an average of 2% of its GDP between 2000 and 2003, against 3% of GDP in North America[8]. Another surprise is that secessionist tensions are lower than one might expect for a region whose artificial frontiers are a legacy of colonialism. From 1960 to 2002, 27% of wars South of the Sahara have had a separatist component, as compared to 44% of those in the Middle East and North Africa, 47% of those in Asia and 84% of those in Europe[9]. More generally, the African propensity for violence needs to be relativized; the average number of major conflicts per state in the period 1945 to 2007 was about 0,2, which is the world average and half the level in North Africa and the Middle East[10].

Finally, the continent's propensity for armed violence hasn't fundamentally changed – 30% of countries at war in the world in 2006 were in Africa, just the same as in at the time of Independence in 1960[11]. Although the situation is certainly better than at the peak of violence in the 1990s, when Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the two Congos were all ravaged by war at the same time. By 2008, only 3 countries (Chad, Somalia, and Sudan) remained racked by wars, compared with 6 in 2006 and 15 in 1997[12]. Specialists consider the continent's other hotspots (in the Niger delta, or in Kivu in the DRC) to be "low-intensity conflicts", not sufficiently severe to be qualified as wars[13]. This tendency is even more pronounced if judged by the decline in mortality: Africa claimed 68% of worldwide battle-related deaths in 1960, but only 13% in 2005.

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[7] Gantzel, Klaus Jürgen & Schwinghammer, Torsten [2000], *Warfare since the second world war*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publ., p.95 ; Fearon, James & Laitin, David [fév. 2003], « Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War », *American Political Science Review* vol.97, n°1, pp.75-90.

[8] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute [2005], *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.310 & 316.

[9] Englebert, Pierre [2007], « Whither the Separatist Motive? », *in* Boas, Morten & Dunn, Kevin (ed.), *African guerrillas: raging against the machine*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.55.

[10] Schwank, Nicolas & Mayer, Lotta [2008], « The Global Conflict Barometer », *in* Ricci, Andrea (ed.), *From early warning to early action? The debate on the enhancement of the EU's crisis response capability continues*, Luxemburg, Office des publications de l'Union européenne, Direction générale des relations extérieures, p.26.

[11] Schwank, Nicolas & Mayer, Lotta [2008], « The Global Conflict Barometer », *in* Ricci, Andrea (ed.), *From early warning to early action? The debate on the enhancement of the EU's crisis response capability continues*, Luxemburg, Office des publications de l'Union européenne, Direction générale des relations extérieures, p.26.

[12] Banque africaine de développement [2009], *Rapport sur le développement en Afrique 2008/2009 : règlement des conflits, paix et reconstruction en Afrique*, Paris, Economica, pp.xii & 106-7.

[13] HIKK [2008], *Conflict Barometer 2008*, Heidelberg, Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 80p.

Scene of one of the continent's bloodiest wars between 1967 and 1970 when Biafra tried to secede, Nigeria is a symbol of how the region has changed. Africa's most populous country has never experienced a real guerilla movement – that is to say a political group which holds "liberated" areas and deliberately opts for armed struggle. Started originally by an Ibo-led military mutiny, the Biafran crisis was the exception that proved the rule. Nowadays, there are four main areas of regional tension in Nigeria. One, in the Niger delta, is an open conflict. The three others, in the West, the East and the Muslim North seem to be "dormant" conflicts, although they could flare up again at any moment. In the South-West around Lagos, the leaders of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), a Yoruba militia, have in fact been "bought" and more or less integrated into local power structures. In the South-East, the Movement for the Actualization of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has calmed down, especially in Anambra State. In the Muslim North the "talibans" haven't totally disappeared but they have recently been ferociously repressed.

Several factors lead us to believe that Nigeria is no longer threatened with disintegration, despite what one may read in certain sensational newspapers or catastrophic State Department reports in the United States. Economically, there is a growing interdependence linking the regions together and limiting their desire to deprive themselves of central power subsidies. Unlike in 1960, nowadays none of Nigeria's 36 states is viable alone. Today, even Ibo businessmen don't want to leave such a national "common market". What's more, memories of the traumatic Biafran war are still fresh enough to dissuade those tempted by the idea of secession, especially in the delta region where the balance of forces is unequal. Before being hanged by the military junta in 1995, for instance, Ken Saro-Wiwa, the leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), acknowledged that if millions of Ibo had failed to gain independence for Biafra, a handful of Ogoni had no chance to win a military victory[14]. This observation holds true today for the delta's Ijaw, who don't really want to secede but to reform the distribution of oil riches. "Warlords" like Asari Dokubo or Government Ekpemupolo "Tompolo" know that they can't fight the Federal Army in open terrain. They can only lead an economic war and block oil production in certain areas.

Another reassuring factor is the taking root of a civilian regime in Nigeria. The Fourth Republic has broken all the previous republics records for longevity. In 2007, elections enabled a transmission of power without a coup for the first time. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the former governor of Katsina state was definitely a product of the system. In 1990, alongside big players like Atiku Abubakar, he was one of the founders of the People's Front, which transformed first into the Social Democratic Party in 1991, then the People's Democratic

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[14] Interview with the author.

Party (PDP) in 1998 (in power since the end of military rule in 1999). Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was also the brother of a famous general, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, who died in prison during the military dictatorship in 1997, and who has sometimes been compared to Nelson Mandela. Presented as someone who would continue the political and economic reforms begun by his predecessor Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua eventually got the support of the international community, which was worried by the profiles of his rivals, the corrupt Atiku Abubakar, and the former military dictator Mohamed Buhari, known for his Islamist and Nationalist tendencies. But in the eyes of ordinary Nigerians, Yar'Adua represented a new breed of politician because he was unknown compared to his opponents. The same held true of Western diplomats: not one to travel much, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua had hardly ever left the country and didn't have much of a reputation in embassies in Abuja. His rise to become the head of state, manipulated by Olusegun Obasanjo, was therefore more than a little surprising.

Of course, it is still too soon to say if Nigeria is safe from future military dictatorships. Generally speaking, however, sub-Saharan Africa is less affected by coups d'état[15]. The recent events in Mauritania and Guinea Conakry, both taken over by military coups in 2008, shouldn't be allowed to cloud the analysis: the two countries don't represent the continent. As for Madagascar, the army backed the protesters, but it did not take power and the destiny of former President Marc Ravalomanana has yet to be sealed. In Guinea Bissau, the military didn't take power either after the fatal attack on President João Bernardo Vieira, probably because of fighting between drug traffickers at the beginning of 2009.

"Anocracies": democratic transitions stuck in a rut

Elsewhere on the continent, regimes that are neither military dictatorships nor parliamentary democracies are taking root. Most Africans live in a grey zone between war and peace, experiencing daily insecurity. Sometimes called "anocracies", these regimes show the fragility of developing states and the limits of the democratic transitions undergone in the 1990s. If Africa has definitely moved on from the single party states of the Cold War, at the start of 2009, fifteen of the continent's presidents had been in power for more than twenty years, notably in Gabon, Zimbabwe, Libya, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Angola and Cameroon. Plenty of other countries only have a superficial multiparty system where executive power is concentrated

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[15] Mack, Andrew et al. [2005], *Human Security Report 2005*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia, Human Security Centre, 158p.

in the hands of a small clique. Some, like Djibouti and Somaliland, even limit the number of legal parties allowed to exist from a constitutional point of view, while Uganda has banned them entirely[16].

Such "anocracies" are characterized by the concentration and the absence of separation of powers; endemic corruption; exacerbated clientelism; vacuous political programs; anemic administrations; repeated electoral fraud; weakly legitimate institutions; persistent ethno-regionalist tensions; social injustice; and the chronic instability of contested governments. In countries like Somalia, Liberia or the Central African Republic, central authority is either inexistent or totally virtual, especially in regions far from the capital. In other countries like Togo or Gabon, power is in the hands of a "polyarchy" – a small elite that controls the state and runs the economy. Behind the cover of parliamentary systems, presidential cliques are actually in the process of consolidating their grip on power through cooptation and selection disguised as elections. Fraud and manipulation, like in Nigeria in 2007, are not the only way to rig votes. Sometimes, the legal opposition is violently repressed, like in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe or Rwanda. Or the law is twisted to perpetuate a "strong man" regime. Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Djibouti have all violated their constitutions to put in place presidents for life, like in Algeria and Tunisia.

Of many elements that can be used to define "anocracies", the central notion is that of dysfunctional central power[17]. Numerous academic studies have characterized weak or failed states by high levels of criminal violence, the absence of authority over part or all of the national territory, deficient institutions, the systematic and abusive use of coercion, generalized corruption, low life expectancy, inflation, capital flight, recurrent risks of famine, underdeveloped infrastructures and the collapse of public services, in particular health and education. In fashion in the English-speaking academic world, such theses have dominated analyses of Africa since the end of the Cold War, but tend to overlook the historical and structural nature of the problem. Indeed, describing states as "failed" or "collapsed" implies that at a certain point in time their central power was more legitimate, less criminal, and better controlled the state monopoly on violence, especially during the colonial era.

As a matter of fact, some African states were already artificial creations at independence. Their national sovereignty was more or less virtual, due to a lack of economic and political viability[18]. Many were recognized by the United Nations for the simple reason that the

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[16] Carbone, Giovanni [2008], *No-Party Democracy? Ugandan Politics In Comparative Perspective*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 258p.

[17] Weart, Spencer [1998], *Never at war: why democracies will not fight one another*, New Haven (Conn.), Yale University Press, 424p.

[18] Jackson, Robert [1990], *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 225p. ; Englebert, Pierre [Sept. 1997], « The Contemporary African State: Neither African Nor State », *Third World Quarterly* vol.18, n°4, pp.767-76.

international community needed official interlocutors[19]. To put it another way, today's problems are also a colonial heritage, and not just the result of changes in the post Cold War world system. Textbook examples of failed states, Somalia and Liberia, for instance, are countries where the civil service was always underdeveloped. It would be misleading to blame their implosion solely on the withdrawal of the superpowers after the fall of the Berlin Wall; the reasons for their collapse are infinitely more complex. The difference now is not about the failures of their administrations but about their levels of violence since the start of the 1990s. Thus, some authors see a direct correlation between state collapse and human rights violations[20]. However, one would need to be able to measure how the situation has got worse since independence. As the monitoring of human rights violations has improved, it now takes into account less serious breaches. This can give the wrong impression that there are more violations[21]. In any case, dictatorships are not the only regimes to have experienced civil wars and an erosion of state authority.

Actually, violence and repression are not the only criteria that define an anocracy or a failed state – two terms that are far from synonymous. Another key parameter is the importance of kinship relationships that determine political structures at the risk of breaking nation-building into "ethnic" clienteles. This is not a new pattern, but some community-based lobbies have supplanted nationalist or socialist projects that were able to unite Africans against colonial powers at independence. Nowadays, most African governments don't seem to have a vision for their country, let alone a political ideology. Apart from South Africa, which is still constructing its national identity in opposition to apartheid, former anti-colonial struggles are no longer relevant to meeting the development challenges and are unable to unite the population against a common enemy. There are only a few authoritarian regimes that still rely on a strong ideological base, like Isaias Afwerki's Spartan nationalism in Eritrea or Paul Kagame's vision of a new Rwanda without ethnic divisions.

On the rest of the continent, governments and oppositions give the impression of competing for power to control state's prebends. They do not fight over how to govern, but how to share resources between various groups. As the Communists never managed to launch mass movements in Africa, fundamentalist Christians and Islamists are perhaps the only groups to propose social reforms! By contrast, incumbent governments seem more interested in sharing out prebends. In fact, the 1990s "democratic" transitions did not end political systems based on endemic corruption and the informal redistribution of public goods to buy social peace.

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[19] Clapham, Christopher [1996], *Africa and the international system: the politics of state survival*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 340p.
[20] Akinrinade, Babafemi [2009], *Human rights and state collapse in Africa*, Utrecht, Eleven International Publishing, 252p.
[21] Mack, Andrew *et al.* [2008], *op. cit.*, p.47.

Such patterns are of course different from one country to another. Rwanda, Botswana or Eritrea, for instance, are relatively unaffected by corruption. But in Zimbabwe, inflation has emptied the state's coffers and enabled the ruling class to speculate with the exchange rate. And in most African states, embezzlement and overpriced contracts are common practice, especially in Nigeria, Kenya and the two Congos. If this informal redistribution of state resources sometimes compensates for the collapse of public services, it also exacerbates people's frustration and social inequalities that can lead to conflicts or destabilize poorly legitimized political authorities.

Indeed, sub-Saharan Africa is not safe from violence despite improvements over the last ten years. Everyday criminality remains a huge problem in a large number of countries, as wars usually represent only a small part of violent deaths worldwide: 250,000 out of 740,000 according to the most recent figures[22]. In Africa, demographic and economic structural inequalities are still worrying. Even though the continent has begun its demographic revolution and its birth rate has decreased, one in two Africans is under twenty. And we know that the greater the proportion of young people in a population, the greater the chance of conflict[23]. What's more, "classic" causes of international wars haven't completely disappeared, as frontier disputes between Cameroon and Nigeria and Eritrea and Ethiopia show. The risk of a resumption of civil war also threaten countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Burundi, and perhaps even Angola. Finally and most importantly, in democracies that aren't really democratic, political blockages can result in violence. The problem is not limited to Africa. According to statistics covering 1816 to 1992, young, weak and incomplete democracies are more at risk of falling into war than dictatorships[24]. Georgia's recent history is a good example. But the pattern is supposedly more pronounced in low-income countries[25]. In Ethiopia after the fall of Mengistu's dictatorship in 1991, for instance, the country tried to democratize and found itself at war with Eritrea in 1999.

Elections are often a flashpoint for violence. In Angola, fighting restarted in 1992 after UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*) guerillas refused to accept their electoral defeat; in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002, the political crisis stemming from the inability to register voters properly led to civil war; in Kenya there were ethnic cleansings after the fraudulent victory of the presidential party in

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[22] Geneva Declaration [2009], *The Global Burden of Armed Violence*, Geneva, Small Arms Survey, 162p.

[23] Brunborg, Helge, Tabeau, Ewa & Urdal, Henrik (eds) [2006], *The Demography of Armed Conflict*, Berlin, Springer, 396p.

[24] Hegre, Håvard, Ellingsen, Tanja, Gates, Scott & Gleditsch, Nils Petter [Mars 2001], « Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816-1992 », *The American Political Science Review* vol.95, n°1, pp. 33-48.

[25] Collier, Paul [2009], *Wars, guns and votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, New York, Harper, p.20.

2007; in Zimbabwe the level of oppression increased during the 2008 elections; and finally, in Gabon, pillaging took place after the result of the 2009 presidential elections was announced. Of course, there are also young democracies that "pass the test", like Ghana in 2008. Elections are certainly not the only factor that provokes political violence; according to other statistical studies, there is a higher risk of violence when regimes are less scrutinized between elections[26]. The key question is to know whether violence is favored by the absence of democracy or by its introduction. The debate is far from closed and gives rise to lively discussions. On one side, "traditionalists" and "culturalists" say that Africans are not ready for democracy and are "naturally" predisposed to dictatorial regimes. From their point of view, the introduction of multiparty democracy opened the Pandora's box of ethnic cleansing. Their assertions are opposed by researchers who observe no link between democratization and conflict[27]. They claim that it is not the degree of democracy that causes instability and the risk of armed confrontations but rather the speed and harshness of the transition from one form of regime to another.

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[26] Hegre et al, *op. cit* ; Henderson, Errol & Singer, David [Mai 2000], « Civil War in the Post-Colonial World, 1946-92 », *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 37, n°3, pp.275-299 ; Soysa (de), Indra [juil. 2002], « Paradise Is a Bazaar? Greed, Creed, and Governance in Civil War, 1989-99 », *Journal of Peace Research* vol.39, n°4, pp.395-416.

[27] Vreeland, James Raymond [Juin 2008], « The Effect of Political Regime on Civil War: Unpacking Anocracy », *Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol.52, n°3, pp.401-25 ; Treier, Shawn & Jackman, Simon [Janv. 2008], « Democracy as a Latent Variable », *American Journal of Political Science* vol.52, n°1, pp.201–217.

Nigeria

As violence is definitely not the only criteria to define an anocracy, incomplete and mafia-like democracies appear to be key characteristics. Nigeria, an oil-producing country with the largest population in Africa, is an interesting case-study in this regard, because it possesses most of the ingredients of an anocracy – high levels of corruption, fraudulent elections, criminalized political clientelism, a ruling class with no social project, unbridled racket-eering, manipulations of ethnic tensions, and resurgent regional tensions. The poorly legitimized central government in Abuja is weak. President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, ill, and named by his predecessor, is heavily dependent on the support of regional governors. This situa-tion means that he is constantly forced to renegotiate alliances of convenience with extremely corrupt politicians, something that saps his authority and compromises his integrity. As a result, politics in Nigeria is built around the distribution of siphoned-off state wealth. It is a never-ending game of shifting alliances based on patronage relationships whose shared interests transcend so-called ethnic "borders". These allegiances are more important than the rivalry between the country's three main political parties, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's PDP (*People's Democratic Party*), retired general Mohamed Buhari's ANPP (*All Nigeria People's Party*) and former vice-president Atiku Abubakar's AC (*Action Congress*); ideology is not the decisive factor in Nigerian politics.

The importance of regionalism

Thus the candidates in the 2007 presidential elections didn't really disagree on political programs and their manifestos weren't funda-mentally different. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, late entrant and eventual winner, was pushed to center-stage by the political machinery of the state party. He simply had to position himself as the successor to Olusegun Obasanjo, his predecessor, and not question his legacy. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua therefore represented a kind of status quo and, apart from good intentions, he didn't announce any clear plans for dealing with the Niger delta crisis, democratizing the country's institutions or cleaning up the economy. Except for his fierce opposi-tion to Olusegun Obasanjo, former vice-president Atiku Abubakar's was just as vague. Only Mohamed Buhari had any real political propositions to make, but these were more a symptom of his firmness

and his career as head of the military junta that ruled from 1984-85, when he fired several thousand civil servants. Opposed to the idea of a national conference to discuss the redistribution of oil revenues, Mohamed Buhari favored a reduction in the number of federal states from 36 to 15, despite strong resistance from local elites. For a while there was even a rumor that he was planning to renationalize the Nigerian oil industry, no doubt sparked by his track record when, in 1984, he refused to devaluate the naira, privatize publicly-owned companies or sign agreements with the International Monetary Fund.

Apart from Mohamed Buhari, debates between candidates were surprisingly poor for a country that prides itself on its freedom of speech, has hardly any censorship, and has an active intelligentsia and some of the strongest media on the continent. The only real discussion before the elections was about the "zoning" principle of the regional distribution of powers, which is the informal rotation of the presidency between the Muslim North and the Christian South. Discussed during the 1995 constituent assembly, this system was never clearly written down in the 1999 constitution, but it frames the country's whole political process. The 2007 election effectively passed the zoning test: after Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian Yoruba from the South-west, the presidency went to Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, a Muslim Northerner and a Fulani aristocrat of the Sokoto caliphate, hailing from Katsina State (just like Mohamed Buhari in fact).

Power sharing arrangements based on informal "ethnic" quotas touch all levels of territorial administration. Zoning stipulates that not only does the presidency rotate between six sub-regions in the North and the South, but also that governors should be drawn in turn from the three senatorial districts that make up each federal state and that succeeding chairmen of Local Government Areas should hail from different constituent wards. This unwritten rule forces incumbents to find suitable candidates from different communities to their own. In Rivers State, for example, there had already been Ogbia and Okrika governors – Melford Okilo from 1979 to 1983 and Rufus Ada George from 1992 to 1993. Following the Ndoni Igbo-speaking Peter Odili, in power since 1999, the Ikwerre were "given" the post, which went to Celestine Omehia then his cousin Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi when the Supreme Court forced Omehia to leave office in 2008. In the neighboring and ethnically more homogenous Bayelsa state, the PDP bigwigs followed the same rotational principle, but at a clan level. In 2007, party primaries pitted men from the three senatorial districts (Sagbama, Brass and Yenagoa) against each other – Chief Francis Doukpola, Timipre Sylva and Ndutimi Alaibe. The latter, a politician close to Atiku Abubakar, came from the same region as former governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha (1999-2005) and was cut from the ballot. Party officials settled on Timipre Sylva, a protégé of the then Energy Minister Edmund Maduabebe Daukoru.

The same system reproduces itself inside the PDP's structures. After Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's election, the post of National Chairman was supposed to revert to an Ibo in March 2008.

Just as in December 2006 during the party's primaries, the zoning "rule" left little choice for grassroots members. Most proposed candidates came from Imo (Ezekiel Izuogu) and Ebonyi (Sam Egwu, Anyim Pius Anyim and Frank Ogbuewu) because officials from these two Ibo states were said to be less well represented within the PDP. This pre-selection therefore eliminated more popular candidates who came from other – "wrong" – regions. Olusegun Obasanjo also had a hand in this. Just as he had selected Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, he preferred to give control of the PDP to a politician who would be easier to manipulate due to his lack of popular support. He was particularly keen to eliminate Anyim Pius Anyim, president of the senate from 2001 to 2003 and the instigator of impeachment proceedings against Obasanjo in 2002. If he had been elected to the head of the party, Anyim would surely have eliminated the post of chairman of the board of trustees, a made to measure committee designed to keep Obasanjo in power behind the scenes and protect him from potential lawsuits. Finally PDP delegates rallied round Vincent Ogbulafor, a consensus candidate, an Ibo from Abia and previously national secretary of the PDP until 2005 when Obasanjo had sacked him.

The 2008 PDP convention was also a chance to reintroduce regional lobbies that were not represented in the upper echelons of government. The Ibo, in particular, felt marginalized since their 1970 defeat in the Biafran War. During the 2007 elections, their pressure group, *Ohaneze*, had criticized the PDP for having chosen Goodluck Jonathan, an Ijaw, as Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's vice-president. According to the unwritten "rule", it should have been an Ibo to make up for their being systematically overlooked from the presidency. This was the price to pay to control a region where MASSOB was agitating for independence and where an opposition party, the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), was led by the former leader of the Biafran secession, Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. It was therefore especially important to reinforce Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's hold on power by promoting an Ibo during the 2008 PDP convention.

Regional lobbies like the eastern *Ohaneze* or the western *Afenifere* therefore remain strong. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's moves to try to free himself from Olusegun Obansajo's patronage made the Yoruba feel threatened, as the former president was himself a Yoruba. Some Ijaw weren't happy either with the nomination of a son of the soil like Goodluck Jonathan to be vice-president. This former zoologist from Bayelsa State had very little previous political experience, so he was perceived as weak: at best a puppet, at worst a traitor who betrayed his brothers to rally the federal government. More generally, the Southern Christian elites were quick to complain about the number of posts given to Northern Muslims closely, or vaguely, linked to their regional lobby, the *Arewa Consultative Forum*. The myth of a conspiracy by the so-called "Kaduna mafia" became popular again, in both secular and religious versions – a military *coup d'État* or a jihad.

The strength of clientelism

Yet it would be too simplistic to assume that government nominations are decided on purely ethnic lines. Since independence, Nigerian politics has been analyzed as an on-going competition between the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the West and the Ibo in the East. Together, these "Big Three" constitute about half the population of the country. But when one looks at ethnic groups from a linguistic, geographic, religious or biological point of view, the concept appears to be too fluid to explain political alliances. Often it complicates the analysis of a situation. There is no space here to study the limitations of tribalism theories. It should simply be noted that, although the 2007 election was rigged, a moderate Northern Muslim like Umaru Musa Yar'Adua had lots of support in the Christian South and in the Middle Belt. The PDP candidate managed to reassure non Muslim populations when compared to his main ANPP opponent Mohamed Buhari, who was in favor of sharia law and whose campaign director Ahmed Sani Yerima was the Islamist governor of Zamfara State. A candidate at the ANPP primaries, the latter had withdrawn from the race in exchange for guarantees as to his political future. Close to fundamentalist groups, he scared the Christians and funded Mohamed Buhari thanks to his Jaiz International Islamic Bank, an institution linked to the Saudi Islamic Development Bank, launched in 2003 with the backing of famous Nigerians like Aminu Dantata (a Kano businessman), Abdullateef Adegbite (the general secretary of the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs), and Arisekola Alao (the leader of Yoruba Muslims).

As a matter of fact, personal rivalries and the support of kingmakers transcend ethnic, religious or clan-based competition, especially during gubernatorial elections. This pattern, known as "godfatherism", highlights the mafia-like characteristics of a system where political "entrepreneurs" expect a return on their investment. It's a protection racket of sorts and it brings lots of violence with it, as there are numerous conflicts between governors and their godfathers. The cases of Kwara, Oyo, Anambra and Enugu States show well how many PDP governors were dismissed, officially because they were corrupt, in reality because they had fallen out with their protector [Figure 2]. Their successors were chosen by influential businessmen or traditional chiefs who fund the PDP.

From this point of view, the 2007 elections didn't deviate from the rule: the kingmakers ran the show, just as they had done in 1999 and 2003. Andy Uba, an assistant to Olusegun Obasanjo, was anointed as PDP candidate in Anambra, even though he was accused of money trafficking in the United States. His brother Chris Uba was one of the State's godfathers who had brought about the removal of the previous governor. In Plateau State, Joshua Dariye was also backed by the PDP's local kingmakers in 1999 before being accused of money laundering, arrested in London in 2004 and finally removed in 2006. His first godfather, Solomon Lar (the state's

governor between 1979-1983) had in fact fallen out with Olusegun Obasanjo and changed allegiance to his rival Atiku Abubakar. At the 2007 election, Lar supported the AC candidate, Pam Dung Gyang, who was beaten by the ex-military Jonah Lang, allied to Obasanjo.

Godfatherism therefore distorts electoral competition and limits the apparent renewal of the ruling class. In reality, new politicians are supported by long-time political players. Such sponsorship is worrying not only because of shady deals, but also because the godfathers try to make sure by any means that "their" man is elected so that he can protect them from charges of corruption. In 2007, the majority of governors under investigation for corruption were not allowed to stand for a third term and knew that they would be accountable for their misbehavior once out of office. They therefore attempted to cut deals with Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, exchanging their support for guarantees of protection against charges, even going as far as threatening to sabotage the electoral process if they didn't get what they wanted. At state level, incumbents did anything and everything to make sure that people loyal to them were elected. In Rivers State, Peter Odili had to accept that his candidate Rotimi Amaechi couldn't stand because he was under investigation for corruption and suspended from the PDP in April 2007. But he managed to wrangle the nomination of another deputy of his, Celestine Omehia, a former regional minister of education. In Delta State[28], to take another example, James Ibori, an Urhobo, succeeded in getting an Itsekiri cousin of his, Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan, elected in spite of the opposition of Ijaw kingmakers like Chief Edwin Clark.

This system means that the influence of a shadowy clique of power-brokers remains intact. They enrich themselves enormously when in power and use their money to place faithful supporters throughout the state administrations in order to buy their immunity from prosecution once out of office. James Ibori, the former governor of Delta State, epitomizes the system well. He cleverly negotiated with Umaru Musa Yar'Adua to escape charges by the police and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) despite strong evidence against him. He and his wife, Tessi, are suspected of having sponsored violent groups and gained financially from the illegal "bunkering" of oil in the region. Their immunity confirms the role of corruption as the engine of Nigeria's clientelist political system at every administrative level. Olusegun Obasanjo himself created a tailor-made political post as head of the PDP's "board of trustees" just before the 2007 elections in order to protect himself from corruption charges after he left office.

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[28] The Niger delta should not be confused with Delta State (with a capital 'D'). The former denotes a geographical and ecological region going from Edoland, around Benin City, up to the Cameroon border near Calabar. The latter is a Nigerian State; its capital is at Asaba and its main city is Warri.

Discredited Democracy

The obvious result is that the parliamentary system is discredited. Many Nigerians see it as a legal way to loot public funds. Olusegun Obasanjo deserves part of the blame. After two four-year terms as president, he attempted to amend the constitution to allow him a third term, going as far as bribing senators and members of parliament. He also lost a lot of credibility when he used the fight against corruption as a cover for targeting his political enemies, starting with his vice-president Atiku Abubakar, that he tried in vain to exclude from the 2007 presidential elections. Court proceedings for graft were opportunely concentrated on dissident governors, for example in Plateau, Anambra and Oyo. Finally, Olusegun Obasanjo didn't bring the "dividends" that Nigerians were expecting after the end of Sani Abacha's military dictatorship in 1998: the improvement of basic public services, a real economic development policy and a better distribution of the state's revenues at a time of rising oil prices.

In 2007, the vacuity of the candidates' manifestos also contributed to the low turnout. Voters didn't trust the political system and though that, apart from different personalities, there was no real difference between the PDP, the ANPP or the AC. They were right. Once the results confirmed that the PDP would stay in power, the state party literally bought the defection of opposition leaders, inviting them to join the government. It thus managed to split the grassroots supporters of the ANPP and the AC. The aim was to isolate Mohamed Buhari and Atiku Abubakar who refused to withdraw their complaint against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and continued to call for the results to be cancelled. In Abuja, the federal government quickly succeeded in giving opposition leaders a few posts so that they would instruct their supporters not to make witness statements in the court cases brought by Mohamed Buhari and Atiku Abubakar. The Supreme Court eventually rejected the appeal calling for the elections' cancellation at the end of 2008: just like for the 2003 elections.

Insecurity also discredited the 2007 ballot, especially in Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers States, which recorded low turnouts. While Yorubas in Lagos or Ibos in the South-East didn't vote because they didn't want to condone a pre-rigged election, the inhabitants of the delta didn't go to polling stations because they feared getting caught up in violence, or simply because it is difficult to travel in the mangrove forests. The low level of participation enabled the authorities to stuff ballot boxes without being exposed. The terrain had been well prepared in advance, starting with the national census in March 2006. In a break from the normal process, the census wasn't used to build an electoral roll. Its provisional results also revealed some statistical anomalies: the size of opposition strongholds such as Lagos was probably underestimated in favor of PDP areas. Detailed statistics were not published before the election, allowing all kinds of manipulation at the local level, going as far as having more registered

voters than inhabitants. According to respectable sources, INEC, the commission organizing the vote, even gave out voter cards to children under the age of 13 in Bauchi, a remote Northern State. There are countless similar examples; it is worth remembering that in 2003 Olusegun Obasanjo was reelected with 101% of the vote in Ogun, a Yoruba State. The 2007 election was subject to the same abuses: two months before polling day, INEC claimed to have already registered 61 million voters, equivalent to 44% of the population – an impressive feat when half of Nigerians are under 20.

In fact, the outcome of the vote of April 2007 was decided during the PDP primaries in December 2006. In the first round, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua only got 100 votes from the 4,000 delegates present in Abuja. Olusegun Obasanjo therefore put all his weight behind his chosen candidate and bought the support of enough party chiefs to see his protégé picked. As a result, Nigerians, who are always keen to play on words, talked about a presidential "selection", instead of an "election". The winner was known in advance, so the question was not who would win the race, but how much fraud and violence there would be. Indeed, elections in Nigeria are often accompanied by outbreaks of violence that don't just come from competition between contenders, but also from state repression. Olusegun Obasanjo made the situation worse by claiming that elections were a "do or die" affair, especially against his archrival Atiku Abubakar. Badly trained, underequipped and riddled with corruption, the police was partial too. Half of its 300,000 officers only exist on paper, the rest are in the thrall of the authorities. The Nigerian army is not much better and was involved in various massacres in Bayelsa in 1999 and Benue in 2001. When "pacifying" a situation, Nigerian "security" forces usually shoot to kill, especially before, during and just after elections. The statistics are illuminating: when they intervene to enforce peace, the chance of the police or the army causing more deaths is higher than 50%[29]. This leads only to more reasons and martyrs encouraging the population to fight against the authorities.

Dangerous elections

In the months preceding the 2007 elections, a number of INEC's agents were thus killed and four gubernatorial candidates assassinnated in Plateau, Lagos, Ekiti and Bauchi. At the time of the vote, there were about a hundred further deaths. This is a lower proportion of the population when compared to other elections in 2007 in countries like the Philippines or Guatemala [30]. However, the electoral violence in Nigeria started well before. As we have seen, the result of the election was decided at the PDP's primaries. Significantly, more

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[29] Nigeria Watch [2007], *Second Annual Report on Public Violence*. http://www.nigeriawatch.org/annual_reports/annual_reports.html
[30] Nigeria Watch [2007], *First Annual Report on Public Violence*, idem.

political violence occurs between rival PDP factions than between the government and the opposition. The fact that the widespread electoral fraud didn't cause massive protests after April 2007 says a lot about how unimportant the vote was for many Nigerians. The disillusioned population didn't call for new elections or recounts. Some optimists see this as proof of the opposition's maturity: they didn't want to give Olusegun Obasanjo an excuse to declare a state of emergency and hold on to power. Others point to the fact that the two losers weren't very popular. Mohamed Buhari was a former military dictator known for his brutality; Atiku Abubakar, a former head of customs, one of the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria. Compared to them, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua was definitely seen as a moderate. He was not unpopular and he would have probably won the election anyway. Electoral fraud unfortunately deprived him of the legitimacy of the ballot box.

The 2007 elections finally confirmed that violence plays an intrinsic part of Nigerian politics. To get their way, candidates don't hesitate to raise private armies from street gangs or self-defense groups. In Yorubaland, some called upon the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) militia. In the Ogoni district of Bodo, Rivers State, PDP rivals used cult societies to fight as proxies. These criminal organizations are student confraternities with coded language and initiation rituals. Thus Kenneth Kobani, a regional minister for commerce and then finance from 1999 in Peter Odili's government, hired "cultists", the Klansmen, and their youth branch, the Deebam, as well as traditional self-defense units called Gbovinkodor. His archrival Gabriel Pidomson, who represented Gokana in the Rivers State Assembly, used another cult society, the Vikings, and its urban branch, Deewell. As for Fred Barivule Kpakol, the chairman of Gokana Local Government Area since 1999, he has fought back with the Gberesaakoo Boys militia that he founded in 2001 and that was named after a famous Ogoni warrior in the 19th century.

As a general rule, oil-producing regions like Port Harcourt in Rivers State epitomize the mafia-like practices of the ruling class. In a highly criminal context, political competition shows the extreme variety of actors using violence: corrupt police; privatized army units selling their services; self-defense militias; cult societies; street gangs; and proto-guerilla groups of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Militants who attack oil companies in the delta are difficult to identify. During the elections of 2003 and 2007, they were hired by the PDP to eliminate opponents, including within the party. Since the 1990s, they have professionalized because cult societies have started operating in conjunction with street gangs, reinforcing their capacity for violence. They complement each other perfectly: student confraternities gain territorial control of urban neighborhoods; street gangs gain access to the national network of cult societies which organize drug and arms trafficking on many campuses all over Nigeria.

In this respect, a more in-depth study of the delta's insurrection reveals the overlapping interests of the rebels and the ruling class. It makes it even more difficult to label violent acts as *criminal* or *political*. Without going into too much detail here, it is worth mentioning the Icelanders, a Port Harcourt gang founded by the Vikings student confraternity which had 17,000 members in 2007. This gang's internal politics played an important part in the fragmentation of the local insurrection. There were two factions: one based in the suburbs of Okrika was led by Ateke Tom, an ally of Peter Odili, former Rivers State governor; the other was led by a dissident, Soboma George, who broke his contracts with the PDP and started his own gang, the Outlaws. He was eventually recruited by MEND after his men rescued him in two spectacular jail breaks from Port Harcourt central prison in June 2005 and from the city's police headquarters in January 2007. Such changing of allegiances is proof of the operational links between political fighters and gangsters.

Three possible future scenarios

In this context, democracy in Nigeria is about managing chronic instability. It creates social inequalities and doesn't improve the lot of the majority of the population, living on the edges of the state and not benefiting from its oil revenue. So one wonders whether the current system of government can survive in its present form. There are three possible scenarios: the first, the most likely, maintains the status quo, containing the disorder and chaos without really changing political practices; the second sees the formation of a virtuous circle allowing the government to reinforce the state, improve basic public services and sooth tensions in the delta; the third is a military coup to suppress protests by force, provoking more conflicts.

Scenario one: "business as usual"

The 2007 elections heralded the arrival of a "new" president. But changing the head of state hasn't got much chance of significantly altering Nigeria's political practices of corruption, violence and "godfatherism". A former governor of Katsina State from 1999 to 2007, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua is a product of the system. Like his colleagues all over Nigeria, he was backed by PDP thugs who helped him get rid of the local opposition at election time. And he was sponsored by a "godfather", Dahiru Mangal, an importer who allegedly made money in smuggling and obtained big government contracts in Katsina in exchange for his support[31].

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[31] For more on the electoral fraud in Katsina in 2007, see Paden, John [2008], *Faith and politics in Nigeria: Nigeria as a pivotal state in the Muslim world*, Washington D.C., United States Institute Of Peace Press, pp.86-8.

Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's promises of political reform have to be put into perspective in this regard. Many were only for show, with little tangible effect. The committee established to modify the electoral system is a good example. Yar'Adua had recognized the "imperfections" of the April 2007 ballot. But he didn't sack the director of INEC, Maurice Iwu, who continued to maintain that the last presidential election was up to international standards. And the government didn't improve the organization of the local elections, which ran from November 2007 to January 2008, using the same electoral rolls as in April 2007. Ballot boxes were stuffed again and the levels of abstention were massive.

More generally, there was little chance that Umaru Musa Yar'Adua could succeed in stamping out the corrupt practices at the heart of the political system. To stay in power, he also had to "bribe" regional clienteles with contracts and prebends. The fight against corruption was only a way to target dissidents. It spared "big men" to whom Yar'Adua owed his election, especially the former governor of Delta State, James Ibori, who was probed in London by Scotland Yard about his role in money laundering. Officially, Yar'Adua promised not to interfere with the EFCC's investigations, including those against his predecessor Olusegun Obasanjo. But he did not support them either. So it's highly probable that the next president will also continue using mafia-like networks as a way to manage Nigeria's chronic instability without sizeable political reforms.

Scenario two: the virtuous circle

A more optimistic scenario sees a new government consolidating its position and getting rid of the "godfathers" that have made the delta crisis worse by siphoning off funds destined for improving public services. Such an outcome isn't impossible. We should remember that in 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo had very little popular support, even in his Yoruba home region that voted massively for the opposition Alliance for Democracy (AD). At that time, the PDP relied more on the networks of Atiku Abubakar and late Shehu Yar'Adua in the North. Obasanjo had to wait for the 2003 elections to break free of his mentors and build his own power base by ethnicizing the public debate, fixing the vote and chasing the AD from all Yoruba States except Lagos. In this regard, the next presidential elections, planned for 2011, will indicate if the influence of "godfathers" is really waning.

In the mean time, Abuja could send a strong signal by authorizing the arrest and conviction of Peter Odili and James Ibori, the former governors of Rivers and Delta States. Such a move would end the impunity of politicians who divert public funds. Otherwise, the new governors of Rivers and Delta, Rotimi Amaechi and Emmanuel Uduaghan, would have no reason to behave differently from their predecessors and "protectors". The dismantling of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) will also test the federal government's will to break the mafia networks that live off the "black

gold". If the reform succeeds, the next president would reap a double reward by placing his men at the head of the new NNPC and by improving the efficiency of a company known to waste a lot of public funds. Inspired by Norwegian and Brazilian models, the aim is to avoid conflicts of interest by separating the functions of production and regulation. The NNPC would be split into four: its production arm becoming the National Oil Company; its department of petrol resources becoming the Petroleum Inspectorate Commission; its Pipeline and Products Marketing Company (PPMC) passing under governmental control as the Petroleum Products Distribution Authority; and its investment fund, the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS), going private as the National Oil and Gas Assets Holding and Management Services Company (NOGAHMSC).

Scenario three: a *coup d'État*

But a third scenario is still possible: a return to military rule. Indeed, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua is sick, weak and not totally safe from a *coup d'État*. In the first instance, it is clear that there would not be a popular uprising in his favor if he was "officially" deposed by the army. A coup would meet little resistance, Nigerians having been disillusioned by fraudulent elections and "democrazy". As a matter of fact, there were no street demonstrations against the rigged ballot of April 2007: big protests happened only when the price of petrol went up two months later. So a coup could get the tacit backing of part of the population if military demagogues promise to improve Nigerians' living conditions. General Sani Abacha benefited from a sort of honeymoon period by doing this in 1993 when he confirmed the nullification of charismatic Moshod Abiola's election as president. Protests against the junta only started building up later on in 1994.

The risk of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua being overthrown is clearly higher than for his predecessor Olusegun Obasanjo, a former general. Protection mechanisms to prevent a coup have weakened. Since he left power, Obasanjo is less able to protect his successor, as he can no longer distribute state wealth to keep his political backers loyal. What's more, he has created many enemies amongst his former allies, both civilian (such as Peter Odili, to whom he lied and promised a post of vice-president in vain) and military (such as General Ibrahim Babangida, who wanted to stand at the PDP primaries in December 2006, and General Theophilus Danjuma, who denounced Obasanjo's maneuverings to try to get a third term). Finally, the army still contains several currents of thinking that are not controlled by senior officers. An unpredictable and bloody coup led by junior officers, is still possible, like the mutinies of 1966 and 1976.

Figure 2: Summary of governors and godfathers in Nigeria

State	Governor (Party)	Mandate	Godfather	Reason for disagreement
Adamawa	Murtala Nyako (PDP)	2007-2011	Jubril Aminu	Jubril Aminu, a close ally of Olusegun Obasanjo, supported a retired admiral, Murtala Nyako, to beat the candidate backed by Vice-President Atiku Abubakar (who was also from Adamawa).
Anambra	Chris Ngige (PDP)	2003-2006	Chris Uba	Nomination of state ministers: deposed in 2006 and replaced by Peter Obi (AGPA), Chris Ngige was not permitted to stand at the 2007 elections. Allied to Olusegun Obasanjo, Andy Uba (Chris Uba's brother) was then elected but the Supreme Court reinstalled Peter Obi to rule until the end of his mandate in 2010.
Bauchi	Ahmed Adamu Mu'azu (PDP)	1999-2007	Isa Yuguda	Isa Yuguda financed Ahmed Adamu Mu'azu's campaign in exchange for being appointed Federal Minister for Aviation. As soon as 2005, he wanted to succeed him as governor, so he joined the ANPP and was duly elected in 2007.
Borno	Mala Kachallah (ANPP)	1999-2003	Ali Modu Sherriff	Nomination of ministers approved by Ali Modu Sherriff and hailing from the so-called "Bama mafia". Ali Modu Sherriff took control of the state branch of the ANPP and forced Mala Kachallah to stand (and lose) as an AD candidate in 2003.
Delta	Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan (PDP)	2007-2011	James Ibori	Although an Itsekiri, Emmanuel Eweta Uduaghan was supported by his Urhobo cousin (state governor since 1999) despite the Ijaw opposition of regional heavyweights like Chief Edwin Clark.
Enugu	Chimaroke Nnamani (PDP)	1999-2007	Jim Nwobodo	Refused to give up his post in 2003.
	Sullivan Chime (PDP)	2007-2008	Chimaroke Nnamani	Chimaroke Nnamani fell out with his protégé and successor, Sullivan Chime. He then supported the opposition's legal challenge resulting in the nullification of Sullivan Chime's election in 2008.

Kwara	Muhammed Lawal (PDP)	1999-2003	Olusola Saraki	The godfather imposed his son, Bukola Saraki, as PDP gubernatorial candidate in Kwara in 2003.
Osun	Bisi Akande (AD)	1999-2003	Bola Ige	Disagreements between Bisi Akande and his deputy, Iyiola Omisore, led the latter to join the PDP and fall out with Bola Ige, who was assassinated at the end of 2001. Suspected of murder and banned from standing in 2003, Iyiola Omisore became the godfather of the state's new PDP governor, Olagunsoye Oyinlola.
Oyo	Rasheed Ladoja (PDP)	2003-2007	Lamidu Adedibu	Sharing power and prebends: Rasheed Ladoja refused to pay back his mentor and was deposed then reinstated in 2006. In the 2007 elections, Lamidu Adedibu supported Deputy Governor Christopher Adebayo Alao-Akala, who won.
Plateau	Joshua Dariye (PDP)	1999-2007	Solomon Lar then Ibrahim Mantu	First supported in 1999 by Solomon Lar, one of the PDP's founders, then in 2003 by Ibrahim Mantu, vice-president of the Senate. Joshua Dariye fell out because he was too visibly corrupt, did not manage properly the 2001 riots in Jos, and disagreed with his mentor about the Central Plateau senatorial seat in 2007. Taken to court and suspended from his functions, Joshua Dariye was temporarily replaced by an Abuja nominee, General Chris Alli, under a state of emergency in 2004. Finally removed in 2006 and replaced by his Deputy Governor Michael Bot-Mang, he was briefly restored to office just before the 2007 elections.

The role of the international community: models that need rethinking

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is symptomatic of the flaws in the continent's democratization. It also point to the limits of the international community's influence to improve the governance of developing countries. Since the end of the Cold War, sub-Saharan Africa hasn't lost its strategic importance because of the "threats" it poses: AIDS, the demographic explosion, illegal immigration, all kinds of trafficking, etc.

The multiplication of peace-keeping or peace-enforcement operations shows how the continent is still on Western agendas, especially with the post-2001 war on terror. A sign of this concern is the enlargement of the mandates of so-called "humanitarian" inter-ventions to cover state-building and the reconstruction of whole government sectors: the judiciary, health services, constitutions, electoral codes, security systems, etc.

Misleading preconceptions

Through international mediation or development aid, war-torn countries have often served as test beds to promote Western-style democratic and parliamentary models. Not always successfully, it should be noted. Peace-enforcement operations always have the potential to freeze a military situation and fix the front lines without resolving the dispute that caused the fighting to start. In several situations, they have in fact contributed to prolong hostilities, as in Liberia in 1990 or Côte d'Ivoire in 2003[32].

During the Cold War, armed conflicts were usually ended by military victories and not by the mediation of the international community. So peace often lasted longer because the underlying causes of the hostilities and the political crises had been solved in favor of the winner.

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[32] Pérouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine [juil. 2006], « Les Occidentaux peuvent-ils sauver l'Afrique ? », *Politique étrangère* n°3, pp.547-56.

In contrast, conflicts ended through mediation were more likely to restart between one and five years after the fighting stopped, or a ceasefire, armistice or peace treaty was agreed[33].

Since 1990 however, statistics show that civil or inter-state wars are less and less likely to end in military victories, whether in sub-Saharan Africa or elsewhere[34]. The proportion of conflicts resolved by mediation went from 21% between 1950 and 1999 to 50% between 2000 and 2005; conversely, the proportion of military victories fell from 40% to 5%. If the conclusions of this research are valid, such an evolution is proof of the increasing effectiveness of peace initiatives to stabilize the situation during the volatile five-year period following the end of fighting. Perhaps this is due to the fact that international military interventions last longer and are more often involved in state building. But it is probably too early to draw definite conclusions. More than half of the ended conflicts studied between 2000 and 2005 didn't pass the key test of the five-year post-war period. What's more the cases are extremely varied. On the one hand, there were military victories by the National Resistance Army (NRA) in Southern Uganda in 1986, the FPR (*Front patriotique rwandais*) in Rwanda in 1994 and the MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*) in Angola in 2002 that effectively put an end to bloody conflicts. On the other hand, the international community succeeded in supervising negotiations that enabled peace agree-ments in Sierra Leone from 1999, in Côte d'Ivoire from 2003, and in Burundi from 2000. Between these two extremes, many wars were neither concluded by military victory nor by mediation, like in Somalia, Kivu and Darfur.

One should therefore look at the impact of peacekeeping and democracy programs at the same time. The two often go together because the international community's policies on state (re)building are easier to implement after civil wars – but not only then. Their impact should be judged cautiously. Reconstruction efforts focus too much on the moment of elections and not enough on day-to-day political practices. As a result reforms don't affect states deeply and simply create superficial "multiparty" systems, confirming the hold of presidential cliques that have been in power since the times of single-party regimes. Clearly, the international community is not the only one to blame for this; sometimes voters do bring former dictators back into power, like Didier Ratsiraka in Madagascar in 1997 and Mathieu Kérékou in Benin in 1996 and 2001. However donors are to blame when they only back political reforms without trying to reduce social inequality.

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[33] Licklider, Roy [sept. 1995], « The Consequences of Negociated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-93 », *American Political Science Review* vol.89, n°3, pp.681-90.
[34] Mack, Andrew *et al.* [2008], *Human Security Brief 2007*, Vancouver, Simon Fraser University, pp.27 & 35.

Focused on electoral procedures, human rights, and the freedom of the press, such democratization programs risk reinforcing authoritarian regimes as long as they formally adhere to the prescript-tions of "good governance"[35]. The international community, for instance, tends to place all its attention (and funding) on presidential elections. Local elections nevertheless deserve to be observed with just as much attention as they are among some of the most fraudulent elections. In Nigeria, for example, stuffing local election ballot boxes is even easier because the levels of participation are lower than for national elections[36]. However, international observers concentrate mainly on presidential and parliamentary elections, thus reducing their capacity to improve the governance of the most corrupt level of a three-tier federal system.

Going beyond the conventional narrative on the merits of "good governance", a closer examination shows that the failings of reforms undertaken in Africa don't just come from a local rejection of democratic transplants because of nationalism or cultural incompatibility. They are also caused by misleading preconceptions about a "magic" correlation between development, democratization, conflict prevention and political stability[37]. Western donors continue to believe that their economic aid can effectively influence reforms aimed at improving the governance of African administrations. Their beliefs rest on the hypothesis that the higher the GDP per capita, the more chances a democratic system has of lasting[38]. Programs fighting poverty are thus expected to have a political impact.

But for this to be true, development aid would have to prove that it effectively sustains economic growth. There are numerous controversies surrounding the repeated failures of international assistance. Suffice to say that from 1913 to 1950 the GDP per capita in Africa increased, while in Asia (excluding Japan) it decreased slightly[39]. However, since African countries gained their inde-pendence, the situation has reversed. At the same time, Africa also became the most assisted continent per capita, receiving a total of $ 568 billion between 1960 and 2003[40]. During the Cold War in particular, international aid reinforced the ruling classes, discouraged

[35] Robinson, William [1996], *Promoting polyarchy: globalization, US intervention, and hegemony*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 466p.

[36] Of course, this pattern cannot be generalized to all developing countries: in the Phillippines, local elections have higher levels of participation because voters feel more directly concerned. Ballots are therefore harder to rig as more people monitor them.

[37] Pérouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine [2005], « États, ONG et prévention des conflits dans les pays du Sud : quelques éléments de réflexion », *in* Bagayoko-Penone, Niagalé & Hours, Bernard (ed.), *Etat, ONG et production de normes sécuritaires dans les pays du Sud*, Paris, L'Harmattan, pp.135-49.

[38] Przeworski, Adam [janv. 1996], « What makes democracy endure ? », *Journal of Democracy* vol.7, n°1, pp.39-55.

[39] Maddison, Angus [2007], *Contours of the world economy 1-2030 AD : essays in macro-economic history*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 418p.

[40] Easterly, William [sept. 2005], « The Utopian Nightmare », *Foreign Policy* n°150, p.61.

saving, fed corruption, caused inflation and undermined state's fiscal stability. According to the available figures, there appears to have been an inverse correlation between aid and the growth in national wealth in Africa[41]. The higher international aid was, the lower the GDP and vice versa. To this, we should add the fact that no link has been established between national wealth and political pluralism. There is another way of looking at this: even if development aid really does help economic growth, nothing shows that this has a beneficial effect on democracy and social justice. The poorest countries aren't necessarily the most dictatorial; conversely, the richest aren't necessarily the most respectful of civil liberties. Gabon and Senegal, for instance, show that there isn't always a correlation between the GDP per capita and democracy.

So, economic growth doesn't cause multiparty political systems to develop automatically and can in fact aggravate social inequalities. In the same way, democracy is not fundamental to development, no more than dictatorships are. According to Mushtaq Khan, for instance, Western countries are not rich *because* they are democratic, even if their parliamentary systems are stronger because of market economies that redistribute resources well and states that tax up to half of the GDP[42]. In developing countries such as India, the majority of the population doesn't benefit from public services and isn't part of a modern economy. Citizens therefore have no reason to discuss their government's budget because its spending doesn't affect their life. As a result the population doesn't protest about social problems and can gain more from the patronage of corrupt officials who redistribute some of the state's wealth that they have skimmed off. Even though they are very unstable, such systems are in fact a "normal" form of government, and not an aberration deviating from a European hegemonic model. Sub-Saharan states are classic examples of this.

However, Western donors continue to imagine that their development aid can strike two targets with one blow and help political reforms as well as economic growth. Officially, assistance to "good governance" is not about copying the West. Old-fashioned "imposed" development projects used after and during the colonial period are no longer in fashion. Through "ownership", the objective is now to transmit skills, build "partnerships" and reinforce the capacities of so-called "civil" society, even if this means allowing certain divergences from the European model. But there is still a difference between theory and practice! In reality, donors continue to apply their own models. Inspired by de Tocqueville's study of American democracy in the 19th century, they maintain misleading ideas about the merits of NGOs whose vitality is supposed to guarantee "good governance".

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[41] Erixon, Fredrik [2005], *Aid and development : will it work this time ?* London, International Policy Network, p.3.
[42] Khan, Mushtaq [dec. 2005], « Markets, States and Democracy: Patron-Client Networks and the Case for Democracy in Developing Countries », *Democratization* vol.12, n°5, pp.704-24.

The example of German political foundations

The experiences of German political foundations in Africa is worth looking at in this respect, as they worked there before the rise in power of NGOs and liberal models at the end of the 1980s. Launched by German parties and funded by the Parliament, these private organizations originally intended to contain the communist threat before being converted to supporters of "good governance" at the end of the Cold War. Linked to the ruling parties in power in Bonn, the two main ones – the Konrad Adenauer Foundation or KAS (*Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*), founded by the CDU (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*), and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation or FES (*Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*), founded by the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) – contributed greatly to their country's diplomacy. Their executives were often called to take up important positions in Christian Democrat or Social-Democrat governments. At the start of the 1960s, for instance, Siegfried Bangert, the director of the FES's international department, was also the *éminence grise* of West German foreign policy in Africa.

When they opened offices in Africa following independence, the German political foundations used to support "brother" parties in the Christian Democrat and Socialist Internationals. At the time, the FES especially tried to privilege "progressive" regimes that were likely to share its ideals. The foundation was not allowed to operate in Ethiopia, Algeria, Guinea Conakry and Tanzania and so concentrated its energies on pro-Western countries like Uganda, Madagascar and Kenya, where it ran civic education programs in conjunction with Milton Obote's, Philibert Tsiranana's and Jomo Kenyatta's presidential foundations. In 1964, the FES started to export the German model of trade unions to Kenya, Madagascar and Zambia. It moved on to cooperatives in 1973, then the media and political parties in 1976 under Willy Brandt's presidency of the Socialist International, and finally small enterprises from 1983[43]. A critical innovation was when the foundation, no longer happy to only work with ruling parties, decided to start supporting extra-parliamentary oppositions: a very controversial decision. In the 1980s in Southern Africa, the FES notably chose to back liberation movements that were fighting the government, such as the ANC (*African National Congress*) in South Africa, the SWAPO (*South West Africa People's Organization*) in Namibia and the ZANU (*Zimbabwe African National Union*) and the ZAPU (*Zimbabwe African People's Union*) in Zimbabwe.

Above and beyond political affinities within party Internationals, the involvement of these German foundations also had to do with their directors' personal links in Africa. Created by the Bavarian CSU

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[43] Hillebrand, Ernst & Vinai, Volker [2002], « The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Germany policy on Africa: some remarks », *in* Engel, Ulf & Kappel, Robert (ed.), *Germany's Africa policy revisited: interests, images and incrementalism*, Münster, Lit, pp.127-39.

(*Christlich-Soziale Union*), the HSS (*Hanns Seidel Stiftung*) worked in Zaire and Togo because CSU leader Franz Josef Strauss was very close to Presidents Mobutu Sese Seko and Gnassingbé Eyadéma. In Zambia, Siegfried Bangert, the FES's international director, was a personal friend of Kenneth Kaunda. Another feature was that foundations were less interested in "good governance" than "freedom" or "progress". As a result, they weren't so bothered about working with dictators or condoning their actions. It took a long time to realize that too often, the authoritarian regimes the foundations supported hindered economic development and political reform. The FES, for instance, started up projects in Guinea in 1980 when it was ruled by Sékou Touré and carried on working with single state parties such as KANU (*Kenya African National Union*) in Kenya, UNIP (*United National Independence Party*) in Zambia, FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) in Mozambique, CCM (*Chama Cha Mapinduzi*) in Tanzania, PAICV (*Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde*) in Cape Verde and UPC (*Uganda People's Congress*) in Uganda.

Ideological divides also played a role during the Cold War. In the same country, it was not unusual to find German political foundations working in opposite directions. In South Africa, for example, the FES supported the ANC's underground organizations while its liberal counterpart, the FNS (*Friedrich Naumann Stiftung*), backed the South African Institute of Race Relations, a research centre launched by the Progressive Party and its leader Helen Suzman, the only opponent to apartheid in a white-only parliament. At the other end of the political spectrum, the KAS supported a black conservative movement, the Inkatha Freedom Party, which fought against the ANC. As for the HSS, it provoked controversy because it cooperated with the authoritarian government of the "independent" homeland of Bophuthatswana, condoning the segregated plans of separate development.

Yet some German foundations also had to start working with NGOs in states that didn't permit the formation of political parties. In Uganda, where it had supported the Democratic Party against Milton Obote's authoritarian government in 1981, the KAS criticized President Yoweri Museveni for refusing to re-establish multiparty democracy after coming to power by force in 1986. Unlike the FES which cooperated with the new regime by training town councilors, it decided to back cooperatives and development NGOs like ACFODE (*Action for Development*) and USCU (*Uganda Savings and Co-operative Union*). One of these, the FAD (Foundation for African Development), was started in 1979 and discretely funded the Democratic Party, using the same hymn and green emblem. This activism eventually earned the KAS country director an interrogation by the secret police and accusations of meddling in the country's internal affairs during his posting in Kampala from 1988 to 1993[44].

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[44] Dicklitch, Susan [1998], *The elusive promise of NGOs in Africa: lessons from Uganda*, New York, St Martin's Press, 294p.

More fundamentally, several practical, economic, and structural reasons explain why the German foundations gave up supporting political parties and turned increasingly towards NGOs. First of all, from a legal standpoint, they were not allowed to finance electoral campaigns directly. Hence they had to support intermediary organizations to do so. Moreover, German foundations had to find private partners in countries where there were no "brother" parties. Unlike in South America, for instance, in Africa the KAS couldn't rely on a powerful Christian Democrat movement. The FES too had problems identifying reliable socialist groups. Over the years, disillusionment with ruling and opposition parties eventually played a decisive role. As a result, German foundations switched their funding to NGOs that were allegedly more representative of "civil society".

In 1980 in Dakar, for instance, the FES set up a system called POLIS to pool the resources of various West African parties, allowing them to meet up regularly. But the project was terminated after four years due to communication problems between the network's members. Since this failure, the FES has worked with a limited number of carefully selected political parties: the PS in Senegal, the ANC in South Africa and the SWAPO in Namibia. In "socialist" Tanzania, where the foundation had been very active since independence, it started distancing itself from the single party and in 1991 began to support constitutional reforms, helping the Organization of Tanzanian Trade Unions (OTTU) to adapt itself to multiparty politics. Other German foundations also came to back the transition to democracy. Close to the opposition party CHADEMA (*Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo*), the FNS thus supported independent journalists and organized a debate on television between the two main presidential candidates in 1995.

The NGO delusion

German foundations and Western donors' craze for the media, "civil society" and NGOs asks questions about the way international aid weakened African states and circumvented their administrations. Tocqueville's thesis was that private voluntary associations represented democratic aspirations and were an effective counterweight to strong governments. But "civil society" is more than just NGOs. In Africa, it reflects the state of the state. In the same way that the Nazis or Islamists infiltrated associations, civil society can have perverse effects, destabilize a country's politics, divide nations, exacerbate social divisions, awake ethnic tensions, encourage xenophobia and weaken government power. The proliferation of NGOs and newspapers does not guarantee multiparty democracy,

not to mention social justice[45]. The Weimar Republic in the 1920s, Lebanon in the 1970s and Rwanda in the 1990s are all examples of how active civil societies have not prevented wars, or worse[46]. In Africa, the highest concentrations of NGOs per capita are thus to be found in Gambia, a military dictatorship, and Swaziland, on of the world's last absolute monarchies[47]!

In fact, so-called "civil society" can be as shady and corrupt as the state administration. The dysfunctions that "anocracies" suffer from come as much from the ruling classes as from their supporters in the population. Moreover, many African NGOs are run as one man shows to enrich their leader and benefit from tax facilities. The Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade caricatured them as vultures looking for grants and victims[48]! Indeed, the accountability and the internal governance of African NGOs are far from perfect. Sometimes their leaders even admit their authoritarian nature as a necessity. According to Makau Mutua, one of the founders of the Kenya Human Rights Commission:

> *"it is precisely because it is not constrained by the dictates of democracy that civil society – and in particular human rights groups – can be effective as pressure groups. Democracy is slow, cumbersome, and prone to gridlock. In contrast, non-democratic pressure groups, such as human rights groups, are nimble and can react quickly without the paralyzing fetters of the democratic process. How effective would a Human Rights NGO be if it had to wait for its staff, the board, and its membership to vote on an operational question? In that case, virtually no NGOs would have any impact on human rights condition"[49].*

Yet one can question the quality of elitist organizations that, unlike trade unions, are not elected by the groups they claim to represent. Financed from abroad, Human Rights NGOs are usually based in capital cities, far from rural dwellers. In Uganda, for instance, their unrealistic demands don't correspond at all to the villagers'

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[45] For example, the FES' support of African media from the 1980s onwards didn't improve political dialogue, as the foundation itself recognizes. Cf. Hillebrand, Ernst & Vinai, Volker [2002], « The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Germany policy on Africa: some remarks », *in* Engel, Ulf & Kappel, Robert (ed.), *Germany's Africa policy revisited: interests, images and incrementalism*, Münster, Lit, p.137.

[46] Edwards, Michael [2007], « Some Practical Limits of the NGO Role: A Critical Perspective », *in* Brinkerhoff, Jennifer, Smith, Stephen & Teegen, Hildy (ed.), *NGOs and the Millennium Development Goals: citizen action to reduce poverty*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp.49-52.

[47] Fisher, Julie [1998], *Nongovernment : NGOs and the political development of the Third World*, West Hartford (Conn.), Kumarian Press, pp.162-3.

[48] *Liberté* (Genève) 23 April 2008.

[49] Mutua, Makau (ed.) [2008], *Human Rights NGOs In East Africa: Political and Normative Tensions*, University Of Pennsylvania Press, p.35.

immediate material needs[50]. As they are afraid of opposing their sponsors and President Yoweri Museveni's government, they do very little investigation of human rights' violations, a dangerous activity, and are happy to hold seminars on multiparty democracy and elections. As a result NGOs risk de-politicizing civil and social rights to the point of emptying them of all meaning[51]. Under the pretext of fighting poverty, they effectively channel and stifle claims but do not respond to the needs of the silent majority – who is asking questions about the merits of democratization without development. On the contrary, NGOs tend to fragment social protests, unlike trade unions. According to critics, they are often led by former leftwing revolutionaries who have signed up to reformist liberal agendas. Because they divide up the world into different categories of "beneficiaries" (women, peasants, handicapped), they break class solidarity and prevent the formation of people's fronts[52]. For Harri Englund, they even "dispossess" rural masses with their technocratic and incomprehensible advocacy. In Malawi, for example, civic education and legal assistance programs have simply reinforced existing hierarchies by promoting models that the ruling class could identify with[53]. In other countries, some authors generalize and claim that the work of NGOs "contributes marginally to the relief of poverty, but significantly to undermining the struggle of African people to emancipate themselves from economic, social and political oppression"[54].

In such a context, reinforcing the capacities of "civil society" by supporting NGOs does not guarantee the democratization of "anocracies". On the contrary, international organizations' money can corrupt grassroots initiatives. In the DRC, it has "perverted the spirit of associations" and "annihilated civil society" according to specialists[55]. By damaging the sovereignty of governments, it can even do harm to democratic ideals. As a matter of fact, it sometimes causes xenophobic reactions against meddling Westerners. It also feeds conspiracy theories that all too often allow dictators to bang the

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[50] Dicklitch, Susan & Lwanga, Doreen [May 2003], « The Politics of Being Non-Political: Human Rights Organizations and the Creation of a Positive Human Rights Culture in Uganda », *Human Rights Quarterly* vol.25, n°2, pp.482-509.

[51] Jenkins, Robert [2001], « Mistaking "Governance" for "Politics" : Foreign Aid, Democracy and the Construction of Civil Society », *in* Kaviraj, Sudipta & Khilnan, Sunil (ed.), *Civil society : history and possibilities*, New York, Cambridge University Press, pp.250-68.

[52] Petras, James & Veltmeyer, Henry [2002], *La Face cachée de la mondialisation : l'impérialisme au XXIe siècle*, Paris, Parangon, pp.193-211.

[53] Englund, Harri [2006], *Prisoners of freedom: human rights and the African poor*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 247p.

[54] Manji, Firoze & O'Coill, Carl [juil. 2002], « The missionary position: NGOs and development in Africa », *International Affairs* vol.78, n°3, p.568.

[55] Giovannoni, Marco, Trefon, Theodore, Kasongo Banga, Jérôme & Mwema, Charles [2004], « Agir à la place -et en dépit- de l'État : ONG et associations de la société civile à Kinshasa », *in* Trefon, Théodore (dir.), *Ordre et désordre à Kinshasa. Réponses populaires à la faillite de l'État* Paris, L'Harmattan, Cahiers africains n°61-62, pp.119-134.

nationalist drum to justify their failures and rally the population under their banner. Thus Western-funded NGOs can be counterproductive because they raise the suspicion that all protest movements are manipulated by foreign hands, despite the legitimacy of the masses' democratic expectations.

The golden age of NGOs is probably over in this regard. They will survive by default, as donors haven't yet found any better place to invest their funds. But development policy is clearly changing to rehabilitate the role of the African state. In the 1980s, the emergence of NGOs coincided with the rising influence of liberal critics over corrupt governments' heavy bureaucracy. Today, donors are again trying to fund governments directly, especially in countries under reconstruction such as Mozambique (and Afghanistan). By doing so, they acknowledge the failures of the liberal models of structural adjustment programs (even if Africa still didn't solve some of the major problems that caused the intervention of the World Bank in the 1980s).

The incomplete democratic transitions started in the 1990s also show the limitations of policies that aimed to circumvent and weaken corrupt administrations by supporting NGOs or by privatizing public services. Today, "anocracies" in many African countries are neither military dictatorships nor parliamentary democracies. They have deficient administrations, corrupt ruling classes and enduring social inequalities. But such an assessment brings the state back in to organize democratization, peaceful political competition and a fair sharing of natural resources. Of course, it remains to be seen how the international community can help to improve "governance" without bypassing civil servants or strengthening presidential cliques that are used to divert foreign funds. This is the double challenge faced by aid policy in the 21st century.