

# **African Renaissance in the New Millennium? From Anarchy to Emerging Markets?\***

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## **Abstract**

*The political economy of Africa is at the crossroads. The centrally controlled economies are giving way to global liberalism. Yet many of the continent's economies are still suffering from the residual effects of centralism, while poorly adjusting to the new dispensation. In the meantime, regionalism as a development strategy seems to be getting a new lease of life in the general development discourse in Africa while assuming varying forms. Furthermore, under globalization, Africa maybe on the verge of becoming an important player as an emerging market. Such forms of development are creating a dynamism in the new political economy of the continent, which may drive the African renaissance.*

## **Introduction**

"Globalization offers African countries opportunities for accelerating the process of economic recovery."<sup>1</sup>

Slowly and painfully, the era of Africa's Big Men is grinding to a halt ... As the Big Men leave the stage, they are being harried by a loose alliance known as the "New Africans", comprising Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Rwanda, Angola and Congo-Kinshasa (ex-Zaire) while South Africa looks on approvingly ... Putting Central Africa together again will be Africa's dominant project in 1998.<sup>2</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing its most profound changes since the early years of independence ... Africa's postcolonial despotic order is finally breaking down ... Africa's new leaders have begun to fill the vacuum left by the end of the Cold War ... Africa's new bloc ... is led by market-oriented men who earned their mandates through protracted struggle ... Together they comprise a new political-

military alliance that is engaged in joint campaigns from the Great Lakes to the Sahara. However imperfect, the bloc changes Africa's balance of power<sup>3</sup> West Africa is becoming *the* symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental and social stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real "strategic" danger.<sup>4</sup>

The African continent – *companies and communities as well as states and regimes* – is at a crossroads as the new millennium approaches in terms of both development performance and policies. After almost two decades of problematic reforms – political and social as well as economic – its stereotypical image of marginalisation compounded by "anarchy" may be yielding to a more positive status of "emerging markets".

As the limits of globalisation become apparent everywhere symbolised by the intense crisis in Asian economies – given the decline of the near-Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) "Asian values" are no longer so attractive as models? – prospects for an authentic and sustainable "African renaissance" improve.<sup>5</sup>

This paper seeks to understand the apparent turnaround in the continent's fortunes as well as persona as it envisages the next century<sup>6</sup>: how its resilience – beyond Afro-pessimism<sup>7</sup> – begins to stand in contrast to the contagious "Asian flu" around the Pacific Rim as well as to the unanticipated costs of "big bangs" in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.<sup>8</sup> We conclude by identifying "lessons learned" for the continent since the early 1900s, with implications for several parallel disciplines/discourses, not just African or development studies but also comparative and international politics, comparative foreign policies, comparative regionalisms, international political economy and security studies and policies.

This somewhat unanticipated, yet welcome conjuncture is a function of *changing "triangular" relations among states, economies and societies* at three interrelated levels in particular: internal, regional and global. Sustainable development has always meant change in both these trios – i.e. both sectors and levels – yet analyses and policies have all too often tended to focus on the rise and fall of national regimes to the exclusion of other forces and contexts. Susan Strange correctly and persuasively argues that "international relations" at the end of this century is not just state-state but also state-firm and firm-firm.<sup>9</sup> Given the rise in both the practice and analysis of "civil society" under the "new" world order, such antidotes to state-centrism need now to embrace society as well as governments and companies; i.e. we need to bring civil society into our purview. Nowhere is this more imperative today than in the South, especially Africa.

### **Contemporary Continent: Emerging Characteristics Require Changing Perspectives and Policies**

After almost two decades of proliferating (in terms of numbers of both states and sectors affected) *structural adjustment programmes* (SAPs), the continent's governments are quite diminished (if not in some cases "failed" or "collapsed")

whereas its corporations and civil societies are considerably enhanced. The initial generation of SAP conditionalities – economic liberalisation – encouraged the private (international rather than national) sector through deregulation, devaluation, privatisation, etc; in practice, this typically advanced the informal sectors as coping mechanisms in response to the shrinkage of the formal. The second decade of post-Cold War political liberalisation advanced formal, multiparty democracy through new constitutions and elections.

In short, by the end of the century, Africa's internal and international political economies are characterised by the active roles of all three types of actors; i.e. not just states but also companies and civil societies. However, the balance among these varies between countries and periods. Moreover, as these three are quite heterogeneous, numerous typologies have been generated for each type, usually in splendid isolation from each other.

Such differences and varieties are important as both economic and political liberalisations lead towards *external or structural "interventions"*. The former advances what Christopher Clapham calls "the externalisation of economic management".<sup>10</sup> The latter leads to what he further characterises as "the externalisation of political accountability".<sup>11</sup> In turn, ensuing "internal" social conflicts generate demands/opportunities for "humanitarian interventions" in "complex political emergencies". Such responses vary widely in intent, scale, character and length. Nicholas Wheeler defines any such "non-forcible" intervention as "the pacific activities of states, international organisations and non-governmental organizations in delivering humanitarian aid and facilitating third party conflict resolution and reconstruction"<sup>12</sup>.

Economic and political liberalisations are not necessarily compatible as the former lead to increased inequalities which may be reflected in the latter, in some instances leading to the very social conflicts to which diverse Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) seek to respond (see below). Indeed, the expansion of civil society is caused by two contradictory responses to neo-liberalism: resistance to reductions of expenditures on and indicators for basic human needs (BHNs) on the one hand and opportunities/demands for increased services via INGOs. Hence the contradictory character of civil society, especially apparent within national and international NGOs: *resistance and subcontracting*. And as we will see further below, such tensions spill-over into the peace-building nexus, where INGOs have become crucial adjuncts to states' peacekeeping forces.

Together, companies and civil societies have begun to complement the state as major actors in the continent's inter- or trans-national relations. So many local and global issues require the active involvement of a range of heterogeneous actors, leading to complex yet more representative debates and outcomes.

This is especially so as SAPs along with the general trend of globalisation lead to external economic management and external political accountability. Indeed,

the latter puts apparent moves towards democratisation into perspective: as some if not all African polities appear to be moving towards greater degrees of openness, so their authority is being undermined by external conditionalities and competitiveness so that any effective recapture of internal sovereignty requires determined and innovative “foreign” as well as “domestic” policies.

Moreover, without due attention to the development of civil societies – a function of both new spaces/opportunities as well as of demands for policy changes/service provision – we cannot begin to account for the continent’s apparent revival under the dictates of neo-liberal conditionalities. Any prospect of renaissance (see (vi) below) is due not so much to formal economic then political and other liberalisations as to the adaptability of African communities under stress, from droughts and floods to civil strife and peace-building responses. And such dynamism occurs not only internally but also regionally as suggested in (iii) below.

At the outset, however, it is important to note that not all African(ist) scholars would share our relative optimism. Much of the field is fraught because of attacks from two sides: rational choice and global studies on the one hand and black “Africanist” exclusivism on the other. The middle ground of the mainstream has been eroded by this pincer movement, which may continue to threaten the field into the new millennium whatever the accomplishments of the “new African” alliance.

### **Political Economy: From Developmental Crises to Emerging Markets?**

“Africa is the Cinderella of emerging markets, better known for war and famine than booming stock markets. But a growing band of investors is being attracted to the continent’s nascent stock markets after some spectacular gains in the past two years”.<sup>13</sup>

“Africa’s sustained, albeit fragile, recovery over three consecutive years is encouraging, especially in relation to the poor record of the preceding 15 years”.<sup>14</sup> After more than one and a half decades of *structural adjustment* “reforms”, with their relentless and proliferating conditionalities, Africa’s political economies are quite transformed from their post-independence state-centrism even if their debt burdens have yet to be fully lifted. In the 1970s, African regimes competed with each other to see who could be the most “African socialist” or interventive. By the late 1990s, however, they’re competing in terms of who offers the most investor-friendly environment. Over the first half of the present decade, private investment has jumped tenfold, from less than \$1 billion a year in the early-1990s to almost \$12 billion in 1996. Furthermore, several of the continent’s twenty-odd stock markets are in the vanguard of emerging markets: rates of return in Africa averaged 24% between 1990 and 1994 compared with 18% for all emerging markets. And in the second half of the 1990s, they declined less precipitously than those in the NICs.

However, there have been profound social costs and consequences of almost two decades of structural adjustments as political economies/cultures respond to exponential “shocks”. Once again, as in the era of modernisation, the continent has served as something of a laboratory, this time for the former Second World as well as for the rest of the Third. Happily, because of the unacceptable social costs – the so-called “externalities” – the Bank has finally begun to reconsider at least some of its theological espousal of SAPs as noted in (iv) below.<sup>15</sup> And the Jubilee 2000 and related pressures for significant debt relief continue to gather momentum, in part for reasons of sustainable human development: onto a heterogeneous coalition to design and effect a post-“Washington consensus” over partnerships and renaissance!

Moreover, Africa still reveals much about the other side of globalisation – i.e. the inequalities and the costs, both social and ecological – as suggested by the “new” security perspective (see (v) below) which itself is reinforced by several new phenomena on the continent such as street children let alone child soldiers, proliferation of land-mines and other so-called small arms, private and vigilante proliferation arrangements, etc.

Hence the intrinsic/organic *connection between PKOs and emerging markets*: Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) and tourists for example cannot be attracted without the confidence of economic and social security/stability, which degrees of redistribution and confidence building measures (CBMs) may ensure/enhance. So, risk assessments/credit ratings are endless and crucial given pressures for competitiveness. But they are undertaken by non-African agencies, using universal, economic criteria.

Thus, because of cheap air travel and a declining shilling, Kenya may have attracted significant numbers of tourists to its game parks and coastal beaches in the 1980s, but once it became somewhat notorious for insecurity as well as growing infrastructural deficiencies such flows declined. Furthermore, while it may have successfully diversified into *non-traditional exports* – horticultural products are now its third export after tea and coffee – increases in ecological and BHN costs are exponential.

Nevertheless, the transformation in Africa’s macro economies is quite profound, as indicated, for example, in the burgeoning of its *stock markets*. Those in Harare, Johannesburg, Lagos and Nairobi have a considerable vintage, but they have expanded their listings and turnover in the 1990s, in part because of foreign investor interest, some of it from foreign mutual and pension funds, some of whom sanctioned settler states’ race relations before majority rule. Moreover, these pioneers have been joined by new exchanges in Botswana, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia and Swaziland, with others in places like Dakar, Dar es Salaam and Kampala to follow.<sup>16</sup> 15 of the continent’s 53 countries now have a stock market, just over half of them in the SADC region. Such stock markets

symbolise and facilitate the privatisation of the economy, as ex-parastatals can be floated and traded and building societies de-mutualised. Moreover, private mutual and pension funds, as well as mortgage and finance companies can invest their holdings more readily, while conglomerates can be more easily unbundled. And in the case of hitherto settler states, especially South Africa, black empowerment/redistribution can thereby be advanced. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange is the continent's oldest, biggest and most sophisticated. It has weathered not only sanctions and unrest in the previous quarter-century, but also the transition in the early 1990s along with the drop in the price of gold. Yet in mid-1998, it reached record stock prices and attracted record numbers of listings. African markets led all other emerging markets in 1994, partially because of the "discovery" of the continent by global mutual funds.

At the other end of the spectrum, *micro credit* has also been growing, partially through the adoption of Grameen-style not-for-profit associations; i.e. (I)NGOs at the border of civil society and the economy rather than the polity. Yet most informal credit in Africa remains private, expensive and open to mafia-style manipulation because it is in scarce supply.

Further, in terms of post-industrial niches, Africa has begun to play an important role not only in terms of green tourism/ozone replenishment/biodiversity, but also in the *telecommunications* revolution, especially the internet/world-wide web/satellite television etc. This is especially so for South Africa, which has the largest server on the continent as well as host to M-Net/DStv etc, which now stretch throughout COMESA states. Africa Telecom 98 was held in Johannesburg, where a continent-wide plan was agreed between states, international agencies and private sectors to spend some US\$750 billion over the next five years to almost double the number of phones from 14 to 23 million. South Africa is by far the largest host country in terms of servers and has over 125 000 internet host computers; aside from Egypt and Morocco in North Africa, the other major hosts are in Southern and Eastern Africa. Africa Online now serves seven cities, from Johannesburg to Nairobi and Mombasa and over to Accra and Abidjan. The continent has made something of a virtue out of necessity by "leapfrogging" technologies, going straight to cordless, cellular phones, especially in the regions with the least established infrastructure – West and Central Africa – or so-called collapsed or failed countries recovering from sustained civil conflict such as Angola and Somalia. And its larger cities are beginning to host call centres based on the new high-tech infrastructure as well as relatively cheap and English or French-speaking labour, typically trained in private technology colleges such as Damelin and Varsity College in Southern Africa.

Finally, under SAP reforms and market pressures – endless downward pressure to the bottom for competitiveness – several African states have moved to establish Export Processing Zones (EPZs), mainly along the coast and on islands like

Mauritius, but also inland, such as Athi River outside Nairobi on the Masai plains. These enable the continent to be part of post-fordist, flexible global production chains in which only some parts/procedures are undertaken in any one location. These may also have implications for regional constructs and communications.

## **New Regionalisms: Onto Civil Societies and Security Communities**

“The end of the Cold War has certainly *changed the nature of international relations*. From the point of view of the South, it has both offered opportunities, in new coalitions and trading partnerships, and provided new constraints, in new political and economic conditionalities. For the discipline of IR, the end of the Cold War has opened up the security agenda to new thinking which has the potential to include concerns about development in a meaningful manner.”<sup>17</sup>

“Africa as a whole has begun to make significant economic and political progress in recent years, but in many parts of the continent progress remains threatened or impeded by conflict.”<sup>18</sup>

Africa in the late twentieth century has become the location of several innovative and problematic experiments in micro- through meso- to macro-level regional organisations, not just of the formal variety but also of less formal type: from de facto informal regional economic arrangements and *emerging regional civil societies to embryonic regional security communities* in addition to ecological and corporate regions, not all of which are necessarily consistent or compatible: onto competitive, flexible and/or open regions.<sup>19</sup>

Such creative regionalisms suggest the desirability of *revisiting and revising* Samir Amin’s pioneering schema for the continent’s real regional political economies in the early 1970s: the trio of Africas of the “colonial trade economy”, “concession-owning companies” and “labour reserves”.<sup>20</sup> Given contemporary global and local political economies, all under the hegemony of neo-liberalism, as the new millennium approaches, there are now more than three Africas. In the early SAP era of the early 1980s, there was a division between reformers and non-reformers. As conditionalities proliferated in the early 1990s, there were distinctions of degree between formal multiparty democratisation: consolidating and fragile democracies.<sup>21</sup> And by the late-1990s, as the divergencies of (incompatible?) liberalisations compounded, there appeared Africas of the failed or collapsed states<sup>22</sup> and of peace-making operations as well as those of emerging markets.

In addition to such established macro typologies, however, “*new*” meso-level *inter-state regionalisms* have emerged in response to the NIDL/NIDP as well as competitive regional proposals on and off the continent: from an expansive SADC to a preoccupied ECOWAS and on to a revived and redirected IGAD and

innovative East African Cooperation. Typically, these less exclusive, more open and often asymmetric regionalisms, have increasingly gone beyond inter-state economic agreements to anticipate inter-regime security arrangements (see below) along with the involvement of the private sectors. The former was increasingly cast in terms of peacekeeping capacities (e.g. ECOMOG) and confidence-building measures (CBMs), often of a "track-two" variety; i.e. involving non-state actors such as think-tanks as well. And the latter typically incorporated larger corporations and chambers of commerce if not labour and more informal sectors.

In addition, well-established intra- and extra-African multinational corporations (MNCs), especially private South African companies like AAC and SAB but also Zimbabwean companies like Delta and South African parastatals like Eskom, SAA and Transnet, are increasingly defining their own continent/regions through DFI and regional-scale hub facilities for both production and distribution. And major African cities and tourist destinations, increasingly connected through regional circuits, are linked into continental and global hotel chains, such as Intercontinental/Holiday Inn and Southern Sun (Southern Africa)/Serena (East Africa).

And the continent is developing its own set of Asian-style, private sector-activated *transnational corridors and triangles*, whether these are formally connected to established regional structures or not. These include the Maputo Corridor linking Gauteng to the Indian Ocean and Trans-Kalahari Corridor linking it to the Atlantic Ocean. Somewhat more distant dreams include Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI) along the Benguela, Nacala and Tazara corridors as well as the Kwazulu-Natal/Mozambique/Swaziland Lumbombo SDI and Kgalagadi Peace Park between Northern Cape and Southwest Botswana. The corridor from Mombasa to Mbarara is crucial for the Great Lakes, and potentially could be traversed by a Rift Valley community from Addis Ababa down to Gauteng.

Moreover, in association with such embryonic regional corridors/triangles/SDIs, typically involving the private sector if not always local communities, the continent could yet advance some novel regional arrangements such as the Kagera River Basin, Great Lakes and Nile Valley as well as the macro-level Rift Valley "communities" with their transnational/ecological rather than inter-state-/regime basis. Potentially these could become the basis for de facto realignments of official international borders. Already, the Maputo Corridor Company constitutes a novel form of extra-, sub- or non-state governance. As indicated in the following section, such contemporary non-governmental arrangements present profound implications for old-fashioned inter-state regionalisms.

Unfortunately, relatively few regionalist structures on the continent to date embrace or reflect these dynamics or civil societies even if they build on shared cultures/ethnicities/identities, sporting interests and activities, shared media/music, etc. Moreover, they rarely include ecological factors, such as common

water or energy resources, which will increasingly become some of the new security issues in the coming century; hence the crisis character of droughts and floods in *El Niño* and other years. IGAD has had a greater concern for desertification as has the *Club du Sahel*, but these have been (non- as well as inter-state) donor-driven rather than indigenous initiatives. Seldom, except in a formal way in ECOWAS and in an informal way in SADC are issues of migration treated, even though the continent has in recent decades experienced large and growing numbers of economic, ecological and conflict refugees.

In short, although civil societies at regional levels are dynamic (*cf* regional NGO groupings like FAVDO, MWENGO and RADEV as well as *de facto* regional media like M-Net/DSTV and *Weekly Mail and Guardian*) they are yet to be recognised in emerging regionalist arrangements. This has important implications for the possibilities of enhanced and sustained human development/security in the new millennium as indicated in the following interrelated pair of sections.

Nevertheless, there is a new spirit of openness apparent in some African regional groupings, such as the new Centre for Civil Society Organisation in ECA. And the need for effectiveness means that this UN Commission has closed or amalgamated some moribund agencies. It also has redesignated and diverted resources to its sub-regional offices as Subregional Development Centres to facilitate their role as building blocks with established groupings for the expected African Economic Community.

## **Human Development: Towards Sustainable Democracies?**

The need to tailor our thinking about development strategies and our policy recommendations to the distinctive problems of each country, coupled with the continuing evolution of the global economy requires that we keep learning and adapting our views, otherwise yesterday's truths may well become tomorrow's mistakes.<sup>23</sup>

The World Bank's *World Development Report 1997* marked the end of the era of neo-liberal triumphalism and the inauguration of a new "Washington consensus" about the need for partnership. In turn, this new acceptance of corporations and civil societies has led to the generation of two sets of typologies to account for their heterogeneity: on the one hand, varieties of companies and NGOs and, on the other hand, typologies of the emerging patterns of interaction among this trio of actors; i.e. states as well as MNCs and NGOs.

In turn, there is beginning to be a revisionist debate about the utility of the notion "civil society" in Africa as elsewhere: is it too broad a concept as well as a creature of current hegemonic discourses? To be sure it needs to be subject to critical scrutiny, and diversity among NGOs, media, religions, ethnicities, etc should be recognised in typologies as well. But surely there are dangers in throwing the baby out with the bath water, especially when many Africans welcome its potential for

keeping state administrations at all levels a little more honest. Moreover, the concept comes under attack from a somewhat unlikely set of allies, such as old-fashioned leftists who see civil society undermining “class” forces and equally old-fashioned pluralists, who fear its erosion of formal party politics<sup>24</sup>! Meanwhile, the achievement of sustainable human development for all throughout the continent is jeopardised by the growing threat of human insecurity given the uneven incidence and impact of globalisation, structural adjustments, states’ shrinkage and social conflicts.

### **Human Security: New Threats/Peace-building Responses**

“Despite the devastation that armed conflicts bring, there are many who profit from chaos and lack of accountability, and who have little or no interest in stopping a conflict and much interest in prolonging it ...

In Liberia, the control and exploitation of diamonds, timber and other raw materials was one of the principal objectives of the warring factions ... The same can be said of Angola, where protracted difficulties in the peace process owed much to the importance of control over the exploitation of the country’s lucrative diamond fields ... (and) Sierra Leone ... ”<sup>25</sup>

Africa and Africans in particular suffered under the old post-war, bipolar dispensation. Conversely, it is the continent where a human security perspective and prospective may lead towards stability and sustainability. Its inherited tensions were frozen by the Cold War, only to explode after the dismantling of the iron curtain in the 1990s. Hence the proliferation of both social conflicts and peace-building responses after almost two decades of wrenching adjustment reforms.

Human security perspectives on the continent can be subdivided into at least three types. First, a seemingly exponentially growing range of *new security issues* now extends from community, ecological, economic and gender security to the drugs/gangs/guns syndrome and onto viruses, etc,<sup>26</sup> even if these are problematic to both rank and react to.

Second, new security issues arise from *civil conflicts*, leading to a range of responses, from early warning and confidence building through the active peace-keeping/building phase and on, hopefully, to post-conflict reconstruction and redevelopment. At all stages, both international and non-governmental organisations are involved as well as states, albeit in changing proportions; from subcontracting to partnerships.

And, third, if Africa has recently become the leading region for a range of peace operations/interventions, as indicated by the quotation at the start of this section, it has also been in the vanguard of “new” mercenary operations, by such groups as its own Executive Outcomes plus DSL, Sandline etc. And it has experienced more *privatisation of security* given the decay of the state: from ubiquitous armed guards from transnational companies to community-supported vigilante groups, all of

which take advantage of regime weaknesses to find market niches/community acceptance and exploit technological advances such as infrared capacities/cellular phones.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding this trio of types of security threat, renewed optimism about the prospects of human development/security in much if not all of the continent has spawned a new consciousness of, as well as discourse about, the possibilities of a “renaissance”

### **Rise (and Demise?) of the African Renaissance**

Reflective of the post-Afro-pessimistic era, by the mid 1990s, a new debate was beginning to emerge characterised as the “African Renaissance”: renewed confidence and optimism that some if not all of the continent could begin to transcend its inherited problems and define its own path; i.e. indigenous definitions of human development/security. Such claims have been articulated by the trio of inter- or trans-national actors identified at the start of this chapter – i.e. states, companies and civil societies – particularly the first.

In turn, the notion has been advanced especially by the new set of latecomer, post-insurgent states in Eritrea, South Africa and Uganda: the erstwhile “alliance” of “New Africans” suggested in the second opening citation. Just as earlier eras of post-nationalist/liberation movement regimes generated first the Mulungushi Club and then the Frontline States, so the latest set of “new states” in the mid-1990s led to notions of an African Renaissance.

This Renaissance has been defined in a variety of not always compatible ways, orthodox economists – e.g. the World Bank and leading corporations – and external state (e.g. US) and non-state donors (e.g. Oxfam) the new generation of national leaders on the continent (e.g. Isaias Afwerki, Thabo Mbeki, and Yoweri Museveni).<sup>27</sup> Who defines and identifies with the concept/claim is not unimportant as its authenticity/legitimacy are thereby determined. Is it a machiavellian disguise for renewed US and/or South African dominance? Does it serve to justify regime changes in, say, Rwanda, Congo and Brazzaville: a set of African dominoes, which may yet (over?) stretch to the Southern Sudan and onto Kenya? Is it a timely counter to the fraying of “Asian values” in East Asia? Or does it merely constitute the latest version of post-independence aspirations which include aspects of culture as well as political and economic liberalisation etc and so may serve to camouflage difficult policy choices and directions, even regimes’ or incumbents’ intolerance or arrogance?

Ambiguities about this concept’s genesis and effects have already generated a new debate. But it remains symbolic of a new spirit, one which has not been credible since the heady days of the first round of new, albeit weak, states in the early-1960s: Africa’s independence era. It may also lead towards new forms of realism on the continent as state forces are mobilised to advance regime change in

neighbouring countries, as in Congo (Brazzaville) in the mid-1990s. In turn, such forcible changes may lead towards a revision of the continent's inherited borders, a century after the Treaty of Berlin first designated them.

### **Africa in the Twenty-first Century: Less Marginal/More Integrated?**

After a period of unprecedented decline, Africa's development prospects now appear brighter than at any time since the decade of independence. In 1995, more than half the nations of Africa enjoyed real GDP growth in excess of their population growth. At least a third of these countries recorded growth rates of 6 per cent and above in 1995, and only three countries experienced negative growth compared with 14 countries the year before.<sup>28</sup>

By substituting caricature for analysis, Afro-pessimists have offered a simplistic and distorted portrayal of Africa which only serves to reinforce deeply held racial stereotypes, perpetuate a distinctly distorted view of contemporary African realities, and deepen America's reluctance to become more engaged there.<sup>29</sup>

Given the above cautiously optimistic perspective, which reflects current analyses and discourses on the continent itself, African countries and communities may be more or less marginal/integrated in the new millennium depending not only on their location, but also depending on their relationship with the trio of states, corporations and civil societies.

In turn, at the start of the new millennium, this may lead towards a revived/redirected OAU/ECA, especially given their novel peace operations and civil society mechanisms. Indeed, they are increasingly reaching beyond states towards the other pair of non-state actors in a search for strategic non-state partners given the financial and often intellectual impoverishment of their official membership: onto mixed actor coalitions not just over bio-diversity and landmines but also agricultural commodities (e.g. Cairns Group), Atlantic and Indian Ocean Rims, currency speculation, debt burdens, development corridors/triangles, droughts, new regionalisms, oceans development, peace-building partnerships, privatisation of security, etc.

One symbolic anniversary, but of decreasingly substantive importance, which coincides with the end of the century is the renewal and redirection, if not revival, of the Lomé Convention between the expanding EU and the growing number of ACP countries. Whilst its economic and financial centrality has long since past, even for the francophone states, its potential in terms of new multilateral conditionalities, such as human rights and democratic practices, remains. This is especially so for Africa, given new security/peacekeeping and related issues like ecology and migration. Yet the continent is already divided between associated Mediterranean countries along with the special case of South Africa. Nevertheless, even if of

residual salience, some version of Lomé will be extended into the twenty-first century, hopefully with some North-South version of the Maastricht Treaty on social agendas.<sup>30</sup>

### **Implications for Related Fields of Analysis: Into the New Century**

Africa's relations with the outside world were privatised, not only through their subversion by the private *interests* of politicians ... but through the displacement of traditional state-to-state relations as a result of the processes of globalisation ... the privatisation or de-stating of Africa's international relations ... seeks to correct a view of international relations which placed excessive or even exclusive emphasis on the role of states ...<sup>31</sup>

... the study of development has been relatively neglected in modern IR ... the question of development can contribute to the creation of a more reflective and inclusive discipline which is global in scope ... What would be needed is the creation of a new global political economy of development which takes account of the specificity of development in a changing global system ...<sup>32</sup>

As already indicated above, this analysis of Africa at century's end holds relevance for several parallel discourses over comparative and international politics/IPE/development and security studies, including the broad range of peace-building partnerships, comparative (both between states and between official and non-state actors) foreign policies, and new regionalisms. It may also contain some lessons for as well as from Africa, such as the potential of the African Renaissance or the continent's new realist alliance.

Compared to the analysis of African realities of only a few years ago, the present *revisionist perspective incorporates a trio of crucial issues hardly raised just five years ago: (a) civil societies, (b) peace building, and (c) emerging markets*. These clearly hold relevance for a set of interrelated fields and debates, even if they are largely absent from Dickson's otherwise informed perspective on development and international relations. All but the last cluster are treated in Clapham's seminal monograph. The interrelatedness of these five sets of factors is indicated in, say, the variety of (I)NGO participation in PKOs or the roles of MNCs in new regional corridors or triangles. It is such novel dimensions which give rise to sufficient optimism that the notion of an African renaissance is no longer fanciful.

But the longevity of the "new African" alliance cannot be assured given the intimidating range of development challenges which confront the continent, in part a function of poor leadership over the last quarter century. As already emphasised, DFI and emerging markets require economic and political as well as ecological and policy stability, hence the continued relevance of track-two CBMs and peace-building coalitions. As has become all too apparent in the last half of the 1990s, even in the supposed success stories of the Asian NICs, security

cannot be taken for granted, whether defined by local communities or currency speculators.

## Notes

- \* An earlier and shorter version of this article appeared in Richard Stubbs and Geoffrey R.D. Underhill (eds) *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order* (Toronto: OUP, 2000. Second edition) pp. 275-284.
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- 1 ADB "Fostering Private Sector Development in Africa" *African Development Report 1997* (Oxford: OUP, 1997) p. 6.
  - 2 Patrick Smith "The Big Men Go" *The World in 1998* (London: The Economist, 1997) pp. 85-86.
  - 3 Dan Connell and Frank Smyth "Africa's New Bloc" *Foreign Affairs* 77(2), March/April 1998, pp. 80 and 93-94.
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