

PART III

Doing Diversity and Facing Global Challenges

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Tale of Two Worlds

Unpacking the Power of the Global North Over the Global South

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Author's note: While this essay attempts to provide a picture of exploitation transnationally, as with other forms of exploitation and privilege, it is important to acknowledge that there are intersections among communities based on class, race, and gender in terms of who benefits the most from the exploitation of the Global South by the Global North and who loses in this relationship. Colonialism and racism have an intertwined history, and White colonizers from the Global North richly reward some individuals and families in the Global South for acting as intermediaries in the process of colonizing the South. The latter live in opulence in the South, relegating the majority of the South to destitution and poverty. Similarly, there are communities here who have been relegated to the lowest social class, as jobs are moved to the Global South because of the corporate quest for lower wages and fewer government regulations. Men and women in the North are recruited to fight in wars aimed at furthering corporate interests even though they do not get to enjoy the fruits of the war and may even have to give up their lives for the privileged in their own nations.

The countries colored blue in the map below are collectively referred to as the Global North, while the countries in red form the Global South. The nations of the Global North are located in the temperate zones of the northern hemisphere (except for Australia and New Zealand), while the nations of the Global South are located in the

tropical regions of the northern hemisphere and the southern hemisphere. The terms were coined by activists from the Global South who by giving themselves a name, wanted to forge a collective political and economic identity. The aim was to facilitate a struggle for more equal distribution of resources. Most of the world's population lives in regions that can be termed the Global South. Since about the 1500s, countries in the Global North colonized much of the South, thereby establishing dominion over its lands and resources. In the early years after nations in the Global South obtained independence from the North, the countries belonging to the North came together to create rules for world governance that kept power and resources in their own hands. They thus ensured an unequal distribution of wealth, resources, materials, and privileges that continues into the present day. Mainstream social sciences reinforced notions of superiority of European societies by classifying cultures in the Global South as backward and in need of civilizing influences, just like male scientists had argued a century earlier that women were not as capable as men.

I first read the article on unpacking racism by Peggy McIntosh when I was in graduate school, and have used it in my own classes as an instructor over the years. Readers cannot but be inspired by the simplicity of McIntosh's message and the deep truths that her list of privileges as a White person reveals about racism in our society. The privileges of the Global North over the Global South are



Figure 14.1. Map of the Global North (black) and the Global South (gray).

much harder to perceive than racism, sexism, and classism within our society, because many of us do not come across people or communities from the nations of the Global South except through the products we consume and the occasional news stories about the horrors of living there. I was born in India, part of the Global South. My family was advantaged within the context we lived in because we were Brahmin, one of the upper castes in a highly hierarchical society. I moved to the United States when I was 21, and since then have returned often to my native town in South India. When one travels across boundaries, the invisible privileges that one takes for granted become more visible.

Being a woman of color in the United States, and therefore marginalized, allows me to understand the many oppressions that communities from the lower castes experience in India. However, even though as a woman and as an Asian I am disadvantaged in some ways, I am conferred an important privilege as a result of my moving and settling down in the United States. I have become a citizen of the Global North. It is not easy to become a citizen in the nations that form the Global North for most people who live in the South, and my privileges came after a long and arduous process of obtaining a green card and later U.S. citizenship; I was allowed access to this exclusive club only because I had the skills resulting from an extensive education to offer to the United States.

Communities in both the North and South are negatively affected by the unequal distribution of wealth and access to resources between the most privileged of its citizens and its least powerful. It is thus important to acknowledge that there are powerful individuals and corporations in the South who benefit from this exploitation of the North over the South. However, the average citizen of the Global North still benefits from the unfair distribution of privileges that favor the North over the South. To people who live in the North, many of these privileges appear earned and therefore feel like a birthright.

The following is a partial list of benefits and privileges I enjoy that my family who still lives in the Global South does not enjoy. These privileges are interwoven with existing patriarchal power structures in the world of international politics and a masculine view of the world that takes for granted the rights of the rich over the poor and the powerful over the weak. Aggression and violence is the preferred weapon to maintain the hierarchy of dominance by the Global North over the South. Without a conscious exploration of these privileges, women in the Global South cannot enjoy the same rights as their brothers and sisters in the Global North.

As a Citizen of the Global North, the Privilege of Life, Work, and Worth

1. I can choose to visit, live, and work in most places on earth. Since the currencies in the South are valued at a fraction of what the currencies in the North are valued at, it is easier for me to travel and take vacations in the nations of the South. With a U.S. passport, I am not scrutinized to the same extent as people from the Global South. My brothers and sisters living in the South will find it much harder to gain entry into the countries of the North.
2. My life is considered more valuable than people living in the nations of the South. Policy makers with global influence constantly make trade and business calculations based on this assumption. There are several examples that illustrate the devaluing of life in the South. Toxic waste in the North is routinely transferred to the South to be disposed of, even though this practice has enormous negative consequences on the health and the environment of people living in the South. Similarly experimental pharmaceutical products are often tested on people in the South, sometimes without meeting appropriate ethical stipulations that are routine in the North before being approved for consumption among people in the North.
3. I am considered a legitimate citizen of my country and bestowed full citizenship rights, while people from the Global South who cross the borders from the South to the North without appropriate government documentation are branded as “Illegal,” thereby reducing them to less than human even though they may make similar contributions to society that I do. Most people who enter the North do so out of economic desperation caused by exploitation of the South, both historical and contemporarily, by governments of the North. The escape to places with better opportunities is constrained by punitive policing of the borders between the North and the South. When they are caught, they are treated as criminals, housed in prisons, and sent back. People in North Africa flee to Europe, while Mexicans and citizens of Latin American countries seek refuge in

North America. They contribute to the economic wealth of the nations that they reside in but live and work in exploitative conditions.

4. I have a disproportionate amount of resources devoted to exploring issues related to my health needs versus those of people from the South. There is a lot more resources devoted to research about diseases that I might suffer from than diseases more prevalent in the South. Only about 1% of medicines brought out by pharmaceuticals are devoted to diseases prevalent in the Global South. When research has led to the development of medicines for diseases like malaria or yellow fever that are prevalent in the South, it has often been because the nations of the North wanted to colonize the South or the medicines found have been side products of research to address diseases prevalent in the North.

Cultural Privilege

1. I can go to most places on earth and be assured that there are feature films, TV shows, books, and music available that I enjoy in the North. Movies and music that are products of Hollywood and other media capitals in the North are profitable all over the world. Books that win major prizes in the North are given due recognition in the Global South and translated into the many languages spoken in the South. Today, there are about seven media companies mainly located in the United States that own much of the world media outlets. Robert McChesney, the noted media critic, calls this global cultural domination by the United States the “Hollywood juggernaut,” and compares it to the cultural assimilation within the United States that minority communities are subjected to. In recent years progressive community media groups in the Global South (and in marginalized communities in the North) have been fighting back by trying to organize for a more democratic popular media.
2. I do not have to travel outside of the North to view and experience the riches of ancient history from the

South. As the North colonized the South, many of the ancient relics from the South were brought back to the North and enjoyed by its citizens. Some nations in the South are currently engaged in court battles in the North to get those artifacts back. One famous example is the demand for the return of the Rosetta Stone, which Britain plundered from Egypt when it was still ruling the country. Britain has consistently refused to return it, even though according to a United Nations 1972 agreement artifacts are considered properties of the nations of origin.

3. I am used as the yardstick to judge the mental health of people living in the Global South, while their worldviews about what constitutes a healthy individual are ignored by the therapeutic community in the North. Thus, it is considered “normal” and “healthy” when people hold values of independence, assertiveness, and mastery over the environment, while dependence, attributing primacy to the group and to nature, are considered unhealthy and “treatment worthy.” Even though the prognosis for diseases like depression and schizophrenia are best in places like Zanzibar in Africa, where family members do not associate mental health with being independent and being in control, ideas from the Global North are penetrating these communities and pharmaceutical medicines from the North are offered as panaceas for problems.
4. I can choose to ignore the cultural and religious beliefs, celebrations, and social conventions in other countries without it having a negative impact on my experiences and work life, even when I am in the Global South. People from the South have to acquaint themselves about the cultural values and languages of the North, even to get jobs in their own countries. One example is the monopoly of the English language in business and the impact that has on people in the Global South. In developing countries like Philippines, India, and China, in order to be employed at a professional level, a candidate needs to know English or some other European language. Employees are expected to wear professional clothes that are dominant in the North.

Economic privileges

1. I benefit directly and indirectly because of access to natural resources everywhere in the world. If other countries do not give them up readily, my government and others in the North consider it appropriate that they “persuade” them to exploit the resource for the good of the world. Governments of the North routinely topple governments, create unrest, and invade sovereign nations in the South in order to have access to minerals that can be used by corporations and researchers in the North. One current example is the Congo in Africa, considered perhaps the richest tract of land in the world. The country has been in the throes of civil war because the North funds rebel groups who have taken over some very mineral-rich land in Congo; the rebels then lease the captured land to mining companies based in the North who in turn give them weapons and finance them.
2. I can be assured that the rules of Global economics and international trade favor me over citizens of the South, since my government and others of the North have made the rules through organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO has the clout and the power to punish nations that do not abide by their economic regime set up by the North. The existing trade laws allow me to use disproportionate amounts of the earth’s resources. One example is in the area of agriculture. The governments of the North subsidize their agricultural industries heavily and then force the nations of the South to buy farm products from the North. This impoverishes the rural population in the South and destroys local industries. At the same time, my need for cash crops like tea, coffee, sugar, and chocolate that can grow best in tropical climates have made farming communities in the South susceptible to starvation and have depleted water tables in those regions because of valuable local farming land being diverted to cash crop production that uses a lot of water.
3. I and my fellow citizens from the North benefit from the uneven flow of resources and wealth in favor of the North from the South. Most big banks and lending institutions

(i.e., Citibank, Chase, etc.) are located in the North. They lend to nations of the South charging high interest rates and demanding terms that are favorable to their own financial bottom-line. The financial resources then flow back to the corporations of the North. A second way in which money flows back to the nations of the North are through the profits that corporations make in the nations of the South. Some of the biggest global corporations (GE, GM, IBM, Microsoft, etc.) are located in the North. They set up businesses in the nations of the South, but the profits are sent back to their investors who live in the North. *Again, the largest beneficiaries are the wealthy who live in the North but they do pay taxes and consume goods produced in the North, thereby leading to better infrastructure and the availability of other services in the North that are unavailable in the South.*

4. I can expect to get paid a lot more for the work that I do compared to a worker who does the same work in the South. For instance, workers in the manufacturing sector earn \$21.56 per hour in the United States, but only \$2.61 in Mexico, and \$2.58 in Brazil. While workers in a manufacturing plant in the North live in relative comfort, their brothers and sisters in the South live in shantytowns and in cardboard houses.

International Laws and Security

1. I and my fellow brothers and sisters from the North are much better represented in international institutions that make up the rules for war and peace. One example is the Security Council in the United Nations, whose permanent members are made up of countries from the North, except for China. Most issues related to war and peace are brought to the Security Council to be debated and ratified. My government can veto any resolution that the Security Council makes that it does not feel would benefit my nation or actively harm it. Thus, my government can choose to ignore international laws that it does not support, while punishing nations in the South for acting on similar principles. For instance, the

North has consistently voted to sanction nations that possess nuclear plants even if it is for peaceful purposes. When some nations like Iran, India, and North Korea developed nuclear programs in secret, the countries of the North punished them with sanctions even though most of the active nuclear weapons are located in the nations of the North, and private contractors located in the North have made huge profits selling nuclear technology to the South.

2. I am much better protected when it comes to legal rights as a citizen than a person from a nation of the South. My brothers and sisters who live in the South and who have never visited the North can be accused of committing a crime and can be convicted without due process by my government and others in the North. In the War on Terror, under the pretext of protecting me, the U.S. government secretly arrested suspects who were citizens of other nations as enemy combatants. Many of them were imprisoned indefinitely and interrogated in secret without U.S. laws being implemented appropriately. On the other hand, it is hard to bring a citizen of a nation in the North to justice. After the worst industrial accident in the history of the world that was perpetrated by a U.S. chemical company, Union Carbide (now Dow Chemical), in Bhopal, India, the Indian government has been trying unsuccessfully to get the CEO of Union Carbide sent to India for a trial for over three decades.
3. I have more military power to “protect” me than a citizen of the Global South. Much of the world’s military might rests with the nations of the North, especially the United States and the European Union. The United States spends more on its military in general than the next 10 countries combined. The United States, Russian Federation, France, and the United Kingdom possess the most nuclear weapons of all of the nations in the world.

We in the North do not have to do much to earn these privileges. Our government does much of the policing and enforcing of these unjust global laws for us. The excellent roads, bridges, parks, museums, art houses, institutions of higher education and research

universities, and other infrastructural amenities that we take for granted have been collectively obtained for our use by the national and transnational institutions that make this unequal transfer of wealth possible. It is also true that not all of us benefit equally from the unequal distribution of resources between the North and the South. Powerful corporations, agribusinesses, defense industries, the commercial entertainment industry, and mining interests are some of the biggest beneficiaries of the current trade regime. However, they are able to silence the voices of people in the South because of inaction on the part of citizens of the North who have the power to collectively object to this unequal distribution of privileges.

While much of the struggle for equal rights are being waged by citizens of the Global South, as we observed in earlier chapters, the privileged are invaluable allies in the fight against injustice. The average citizen of the North has a lot to gain by pushing for an equal distribution of global wealth. The current unjust trade and governing mechanisms were set up by vested interests in the Global North, with the collusion of the powerful and the wealthy in the Global South. Throughout the South we can see palatial mansions tended by innumerable servants, right next to shantytowns that lack basic access to safe drinking water and food or even functioning toilets. In the North, corporations have relocated factories and manufacturing units to the Global South on a massive scale, because of low wages prevalent in the South. The unequal world order that exists today destroys communities in both the North and the South. It would benefit everyone to upset the status quo of privileges.

Bringing the Global struggle home to our communities by engaging in action that benefits our brothers and sisters in the South helps strengthen our own local communities. There are many problems today that transcend the artificial borders between the North and the South; some examples of struggles that require our collective strength of action in both the North and in the South include:

1. Impending climate change due to industrial activity: Climate change affects us all by altering our environment, pushing the globe to experience extremes in weather leading to droughts and floods, and making large tracts of land unlivable in both the North and South.
2. Food and water security: In recent years industrial activity and industrial accidents (as recent events in the aftermath of the earthquake in Japan have demonstrated) have polluted our land, air, and water leading to toxins being leached into our food system on

a global scale. The unsafe products that we consume affect our individual and community health. Excessive exploitation of our farming land has led to a depletion of water sources. This phenomenon is especially visible in the South.

3. Wars for profit: The North spends an enormous amount of its financial resources building its military might to support the numerous wars engaged in by its governments. The wars are often about maintaining control over minerals and other resources that the North lacks, or to find new markets to sell products from the North. Sometimes the wars are overt, and at other times they are covert, with the North funding local militias or rebel groups in the South to fight other groups. The resources spent on the military can be better spent supporting local communities and improving health and educational infrastructures in the North. It benefits us all to work together for peace and justice in the world.

A worldview based on patriarchal values that emphasizes competition over cooperation, aggression over diplomacy, and negotiation and exploitation of nature over working with nature have led us to a crucial fork in our collective history. These issues require all of us from the North and South to work together to resolve them. Feminist values offers us hope and faith in our collective strength to make a different world possible—a world where people from the Global North and Global South can share in the bounties of this earth equally and where the incredible benefits of modern technology can enhance life everywhere and not be used to exploit some communities.

Note

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Feeding the City and Financing the Family

Women Market Traders in Suva, Fiji

SUSAN DEWEY AND CEMA BOLABOLA

The Suva Municipal Market: An Introduction and Overview

Markets, whether centrally organized or ad hoc in nature, provide a critical source of income generation for women throughout the Pacific Island region. This chapter—based on research in the Suva Municipal Market, one of the largest and oldest of all Pacific Island markets—provides an overview of challenges faced by female traders in the everyday course of their work and home lives. The authors argue that a number of forces, including gendered intrahousehold power dynamics and the low status of feminized labor, continue to marginalize women market traders and create an exploitative labor environment despite their significant contributions to Suva’s economy.

An ample interdisciplinary body of literature demonstrates the absolute incorrectness of prevailing assumptions about women’s informal sector work as undesirable, poorly paid, and unskilled. Indeed, many women earn considerably more in the informal sector and may enjoy more flexibility in their use of time than they would in other forms of work available to them (Anderson, 2008). Government elites and international organizations frequently undervalue the contributions made by market traders to national economies, leading the authors of one study to characterize the production and marketing of fresh food in Papua New Guinea as “one of the country’s biggest success stories” (Bourke, 2005). Nonetheless, most women market traders throughout the Pacific Islands do not belong to formal

organizations that advocate for their rights. Using the case study of the Suva Municipal Market in Fiji, this chapter explores some of the factors that inhibit women market traders from labor organizing to advocate for their rights.

Most definitions of *formal* and *informal exchange* stem from the state's level of involvement in particular forms of economic activity (Dallago, 1990), yet a number of anthropological texts have clearly illustrated that these lines are rarely clear in everyday lived experience (Castells and Portes, 1989; Dilley, 1992; Graeber, 2001; Hart, 1973). Research demonstrates that much of the labor characterized as informal trade, because it is untaxed and operates without a central supervising authority, is actually highly organized and exists partly in response to a lack of state engagement with the working poor (Ayit-tey, 2006; King, 2001; MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000; Hansen, 2000; Obukhova & Guyer, 2002; Meagher, 2010; Stoller, 2002). Market trade is perhaps the classic form of informal sector activity in that it is often untaxed and operates with minimal government intervention; in Fiji's municipal markets, traders pay a stall rental fee to the municipal authorities but are otherwise untaxed.

Recent anthropological analyses that address meanings ascribed to particular food commodities or other consumable goods in the Pacific Islands have illuminated the complex ways in which these meanings become intertwined with local and national identities, sexuality, and conceptions of modernity (Besnier, 2011; Gewertz & Errington, 2010; Wardlow, 2006). Some research regarding the impact of cash earned from market trade on rural producers who previously practiced subsistence agriculture finds that the introduction of a cash economy dramatically alters the gendered division of labor and related sex roles, with greater prestige attached to cash generation (Benediktsson, 2002; Feinberg, 1986; Mosko, 1999), while others contend that cash-for-goods exchanges are simply incorporated into previously subsistence-based groups' existing belief systems by utilizing multiple strategies to make sense of the use of cash (Curry, 2005; Sykes, 2007). One study of trade in Fiji has demonstrated that while increased involvement in the cash economy can benefit remote areas, it often comes at the expense of subsistence livelihoods that previously ensured a reliable food supply (Sofer, 2007). This is particularly relevant during a period in which the interim military government is embarking on a plan to reduce the amount spent on imported foods from just over U.S.\$283 million to U.S.\$59 million before 2012 (Vosamana, 2011).

A burgeoning feminist anthropological literature on market trade first began to emerge in the 1980s, as part of broader discussions

regarding the impact of development projects on women. These studies established the cross-cultural frequency with which market trade is a feminized activity (Alexander & Alexander, 2001; Babb, 1998; Boserup, 1970; Chalfin, 2004; Clark, 2010, 1994; House-Midamba & Ekechi, 1995; Kapchan, 1996; Milgram & Brown, 2009; Seligmann, 2004). This literature is complemented by a related body of feminist scholarship from Papua New Guinea that focused on documenting the significant role played by women in exchange transactions, including market trade (Gewertz, 1977; Lederman, 2009; MacKenzie, 1991; Strathern, 1990; Weiner, 1976). This chapter thus builds on a growing body of anthropological literature that focuses on the social invisibility and low value ascribed to feminized labor cross-culturally, and in Fiji in particular (Carswell, 2003; Leckie, 2000a, 2000b; Mishra, 2008; Pollard, 1987; Rakaseta, 1995). This literature spans a wide array of topics that are united by their focus on women's more limited access to resources, formal education, and opportunities for upward mobility, and include literature on sex work, feminized labor migration, and caregiving activities (Cabezas, 2009; Katsulis, 2010; Kelly, 2008; Parrenas, 2008, 2010; Salzinger, 2003).

The origin of municipal produce markets organized and administered by a central authority with regulatory powers dates to the advent of the colonial period throughout the Pacific Island region (Connell & Lea, 2007), and in Fiji Dewey's research revealed that this system remains very much an extractive one through which the state, in the form of local government authorities, reaps an enormous profit while investing very little in market infrastructure. This is particularly significant given that Fiji's military government is currently in a state of financial crisis from which it is unlikely to emerge in the near future due to the loss of preferential trade agreements for sugar and a drop in tourism following the fourth coup (Serrano, 2007).

The Suva Municipal Market is the largest and most ethno-linguistically diverse venue for the exchange of agricultural products and cash in Fiji's capital city, Suva, the second most populous city in the entire South Pacific region. Several hundred traders sell from inside the market on any given Monday through Thursday, with this number swelling to over 2 thousand traders when functioning at full capacity on the weekend. Despite working in what many traders describe as less-than-ideal physical conditions, these women are a significant source of income for their families and for the rural villages in which many of them live. Even more significantly, income generated by their fees to the City Council, which regulates and oversees the market, provides Suva, Fiji's capital, with its second largest source of income after taxes. Market traders' substantial

contributions to both City Council (through their stall fees) and their own families (through their earnings) put them in the position of providing the vast majority of Suva's food, a significant portion of its revenue, and, of course, a much-needed source of cash income for hundreds of families.

The market is located in Suva's central business district, where it was first constructed in 1950 (*Fiji Times & Herald*, 1950: p. 5). Records in the National Archives of Fiji indicate that rural farmers exchanged agricultural products for cash in Suva since at least 1882, when Suva became the national capital (*Suva Times*, 1885, p. 2). The first colonial ordinances concerning market trade date to 1891 (Legislative Council of Fiji, 1891), and, while elaborated on since that time, closely resemble current legislation governing the market (Suva City Council, 1990). Despite the significant time elapsed, current market-related regulations closely resemble their colonial predecessors in focusing primarily on the use of space in the market, items allowed for sale, and hours of operation.

Women constitute the vast majority of market traders in Suva, as is the case elsewhere in Fiji and most of the Pacific Island region. Women traders in the market come from all three of Fiji's major ethnic groups, with just over half of all traders self-identifying as indigenous Fijian, 40% as Indo-Fijian, and the remainder as Chinese; this demographic has remained relatively stable for at least 20 years (Dewey, 2011; Lateef, 1994) and mirrors Fiji's national ethnic composition (Government of Fiji, 2007). A quantitative survey carried out with several hundred traders by Dewey in 2011 revealed that significant demographic differences exist between traders who sell daily inside the market's physical structure, who are ethnically diverse and live closer to Suva, and those who sell on the weekends in the area surrounding the market and have traveled long distances from their homogenously indigenous Fijian interior villages to sell produce they have grown themselves. Most traders are the sole source of cash income for their household, and the average amounts earned in the market are well above the daily minimum wage earned in comparably skilled jobs, which is particularly telling because the majority of market traders have never engaged in any other income-generating activities, and over half have been involved in trading for over 10 years.

The market opens at 6:00 a.m., just before sunrise, and closes approximately 12 hours later on every day except Sunday. In order to begin trading inside the market, one must approach the Market Master, who is employed by the Suva City Council, which administers the market. The Council, as this local government entity is typi-

cally called, generates considerable revenue from the stall fees paid by market traders, which comprise the capital city's second-highest source of revenue after taxes (Suva City Council, 2008). Stall fees currently stand at Fiji dollars (FJD) \$2.80 (\$1.40 U.S.) per day for traders who sell inside the market structure; FJD \$3.30 (\$1.65 U.S.) per day for traders who sell outside the market or who sell seafood; FJD \$3.60 (\$1.80 U.S.) for dry goods; FJD \$3.30 (\$1.65 U.S.) per day for juice sellers; and FJD \$20.25 (\$10.12 U.S.) per week for bean or sweet cart vendors; and \$56.25 per week for juice mall proprietors (Suva City Council, 2010). These prices, which prioritize the sale of fresh produce in order to promote local agriculture over imported foods, reflect the costs of various products. However, many vendors consistently remarked to Dewey during her fieldwork that they found these fees to be quite high.

Market traders display their produce on concrete tables provided by the Suva City Council inside the market. There is very little variation in the price of items throughout the market, and the vast majority of fruits and vegetables are sold by "heap" (*ibinibini*, in Fijian), which consists of the number of the particular fruit or vegetable that can be conveniently piled onto a small plastic plate. A "heap" of papaya, for instance, usually includes 4 medium-size fruits, while a "heap" of green chili peppers might include as many as 50 small peppers.

A quantitative survey Dewey conducted with nearly 2 hundred market traders in summer 2011 revealed that there are significant differences between those who sell goods from tables allocated to them from inside the market and those who lay their produce on the ground on the concrete verandah or unpaved area outside the market on Fridays and Saturdays. Those who sell outside the market travel much longer distances, often by carrier (as large transport trucks are known), often arriving in the early hours of dawn; whereas those who sell inside the market tend to live in Suva or its peri-urban outskirts, with an average commute time of 30 minutes or less by bus, taxi or, more rarely, private car. Approximately half of all traders are in their mid-forties and have an average of two school-age children, regardless of where they sell their produce, but similarities between these two populations stop there. Individuals who sell inside the market typically live closer to Suva, with an average commute time of just over 30 minutes, have more education and more years of trading experience, with approximately 30% of all traders working in the market for between 10 and 15 years.

According to Dewey's quantitative survey, 20% of those who sell inside have been trading at the Suva Market for more than 15

years. Approximately half of the inside traders report daily incomes of between FJD\$50 and FDJ\$100 (\$25 to \$50 U.S.), with this rising up to 2 hundred on Fridays and Saturdays. Traders who sell outside typically travel much longer distances, with just under half spending between one and a half and two hours to reach the market. Those who sell outside are also less formally educated, with a full 35% having completed no more than the U.S. equivalent of seventh grade. Outside traders have far fewer years of experience with market trading, with 30% selling between six to nine years, and one-fourth selling for four or five years. Just fewer than 60% of outside traders earn between \$1 hundred and \$2 hundred dollars on Fridays and Saturdays, the main days that they attend market from their rural homes. Women constitute the vast majority of sellers at the market, according to a June 2011 quantitative survey Dewey carried out with over 150 traders on all weekdays that the market is open. On Friday and Saturday, when rural traders predominate sales outside the market (and often traveling long distances to do so), the vast majority of traders are Fijian-speaking females. The demographic portrait of traders who regularly sell inside is more diverse, at approximately 75% female, and an ethno-linguistic breakdown among both women and men indicates that just over half of all traders speak Fijian as their mother tongue, and just under half speak Fiji Hindi as their mother tongue. A 1994 survey of approximately the same number of traders indicates that these numbers have remained relatively static (Lateef, 1994).

Challenges in the Workplace

Women market traders face a number of infrastructural and organizational challenges as they go about their work, which is the main source of cash income for many rural families. Despite their hard work and long hours, market trading remains a stigmatized, low-status occupation that many people in Fiji unfortunately view as a last resort for income generation. Market traders are not accorded the respect that they deserve as businesspeople, and do not receive many of the courtesies extended to other members of the city's business community. Most market traders Dewey spoke to during her research indicated that class privilege (and their relative lack of it) resulted in a situation that did not give them the same access to government elites as wealthy shop owners, most of whom are, not coincidentally, men. When Suva Central Farmers Association Prem Chandra complained to the press about what he regarded as unjust

parking fees for vendors and farmers, he noted that “shopkeepers in other parts of Suva are provided loading/unloading areas free of charge by the Council. So why are the poor market vendors being penalized” (*Fiji Times*, 1996, p. 4)? This disparity was ongoing in 2011 during Dewey’s fieldwork.

Women trading in the market face what can be serious risks to their health and safety through their long hours in a rather unhygienic environment. Women from the rural areas arrive as early as 10:00 p.m. the day before they plan to sell in the market, and arrange makeshift shelter for themselves using tarpaulins and bedding they have brought from their villages to create small sleeping areas on the market’s cement verandah. While away, they typically leave their children with relatives who function as caregivers; Dewey’s trip to a village from which many market traders come indicated that most women market traders have children who are older and thus easier to care for by women who remain in the village and do not go to market. These women are reluctant to leave the market prior to its opening due to fears that someone might steal their produce, which means that they must sit in groups until sunrise. During a 24-hour period the authors spent visiting the market at regular 2-hour intervals, they were struck by the vulnerability of women sleeping outdoors prior to the market’s opening. Intoxicated groups of men frequently pass through the market from the nearby drinking establishments, and police presence in the late night hours they observed was either negligible or nonexistent.

Market traders have not always passively accepted these challenges, and there have been numerous instances of social justice activism. Charismatic Fijian businessperson Apolosi Nawai established the Fresh Produce Agency in 1915 as part of his efforts to organize Fijian agricultural producers into an association that would negotiate favorable terms of trade with European settlers (Heartfield, 2003, p. 39). Market vendors associations, which exist to convey traders’ concerns to local government administrators, have been in existence since at least the early 1940s (*Pacific Islands Monthly*, 1942, p. 22), and a noble attempt to unite over 2 thousand market vendors and street traders into a centralized Fiji Municipal Market Vendors’ Association took place in 1977 (*Fiji Times*, 1978, p. 11). Difficulties related to geographical distance and uniting such diverse groups precluded long-term national organizing, a problem that remains in place today. Market traders organizations remain divided between rural producers who sell at the market on the weekends, and those who live in or near Suva and buy primarily from wholesalers, which precludes cooperation and labor organizing.

At the time of writing, Suva Municipal Market vendors could choose between membership in the Suva Market Vendors Association, which caters to traders living in Suva and its suburbs, and the Rural Farmers' Representatives, comprised mainly of agricultural producers who travel longer distances to sell their goods in Suva (Suva City Council, 2011). Market vendor associations, as well as individual vendors, frequently petition the Suva City Council for repairs and improvements to the market's physical structure, permission to sell outside the market, hours of trading, the conditions of sales, and reductions in stall fees.

Shortly after Fiji's first and second coups, in 1987, the Suva City Council received a petition signed by 640 market vendors that requested improvements to the market facilities and a reduction in stall fees due to the economic trauma induced by the coups (Suva City Council, 1987a, p. 6). The Suva City Council refused, and in protest vendors stopped paying stall fees pending the receipt of a final response from the Council; within one month, the Council confirmed its decision that existing stall fees remain in place (Suva City Council, 1987b, p. 15). The Suva City Council clearly recognized the need to respond to vendors' demands, and at the February 1988 meeting of the Suva City Council, the Town Clerk presented a report outlining plans to reorganize the market and shelter all vendors (Suva City Council, 1988a). This decision, taken at least partially in response to vendors' strike action, culminated in the allocation of funds to construct a new, two-story market (Suva City Council, 1988b).

The new market, built around the existing market structure at a cost of \$1.7 million, opened in January 1991. An article in Fiji's most widely read newspaper acknowledged the poor conditions of the previous market by noting "some Suva market vendors had the benefit of breaking away from tattered tarpaulins and rusted tin shacks when the top floor of the new market was opened for them" (*Fiji Times*, 1991, p. 3). Discussions regarding the need to replace its leaking, brittle asbestos roof that dated to the municipal market's opening in 1950 began just a year later (Suva City Council, 1992), but were not undertaken until 2009 despite numerous complaints of leakage and fears "that the roof could collapse anytime" (Suva City Council, 2005). *The Fiji Times* reported that most of the market vendors did not know what asbestos was, causing one market trader to opine, "If it can kill us, what can I do? This stall is my only means of earning a living" (*Fiji Times*, 2005, p. 2).

Tensions mounted again in the late 1990s, when representatives of the market vendors associations filed an injunction with the Suva High Court to prevent stall fee increases, arguing that they were

both unjustified and unfeasible due to the high costs of living (*Fiji Times*, 1997, p. 3). In March 1998, following the accumulation of FJD\$38 thousand (U.S.\$19 thousand) in unpaid stall fees, 20 police officers and security hired by the Suva City Council forcibly removed vendors from the market, where they took up positions in protest in the surrounding market area (*Fiji Times*, 1998a, p. 1). To justify the Council's decision, Suva Mayor Dansukh Lal Bhika said, "vendors always claim that stall fees are too high. And they are always using this excuse to refrain from paying the amount of stall fees owed to the Council. We understand that cost of living is high. But the council also needs money to operate. That's what they don't understand" (*Fiji Times*, 1998b, p. 1).

Despite the SCC's closure of the market, the protest was a success in that the Suva City Council eventually agreed to defer the stall fee increases for three months and draw up a five-year plan with vendors for implementing future stall fees. The impacts of the strike were far-reaching, and by March 1998, the Suva City Council was technically insolvent and unable to service its debts, prompting director of Administration and Operations to inform each individual vendor of the amount owed, with the SCC vowing to close the market if any vendors associations interfered with repayment (Suva City Council, 1998). In response to the Suva City Council's decision to close the market for repairs following nearly a year of sporadic protests, Suva's Mayor conceded, "while I do not accept the illegal action by the market vendors, I sympathize with their claims and acknowledge that further improvement can be made to the Suva Market," promising to request the Suva City Council's permission to allocate repair funds (*Fiji Times*, 1999b). Fiji's third coup in 2000 created political and economic turmoil that precluded significant investment in the market.

The Suva City Council last increased stall fees in 2002, with proposed increases, in 2010, of 14% for inside traders and 10% for others. During discussions in 2004 regarding raising stall fees, the director of Administration and Operations acknowledged that the SCC would generate more revenue this way; councilors should "bear in mind that these vendors came from villages trying to make an honest living in a tough environment and it would not be proper to increase the same" (Suva City Council, 2004). In 2011, representatives from the Suva Market Vendors Association and the Rural Farmers Representatives approached the prime minister's office directly with their concerns, leading to a directive instructing the special administrator (akin to the position of mayor), director of Administration and Operations, and the Market Master to meet monthly with representatives from

these associations regarding their concerns (Suva City Council, 2011).

Petitions and collective action by market vendors have clearly resulted in improvements to the Suva Municipal Market in years past, and yet significant challenges remain in terms of the everyday management of the market. As the following section will illustrate, these workplace issues are further complicated by challenges that many women market traders face in their home environment.

Challenges in the Home

Rural indigenous women market vendors live beyond the periphery of Suva city in rural villages and travel to market to earn an income. The situation of rural indigenous women market vendors are about hardship, heavy and multiple workloads, without appropriate labor-saving technology and face gender discrimination from all sectors of the family and community. Rural women face hardship in the form of having to manually do all work to support the family, the diminishing sources of fuel wood for cooking, the increasing distance walked to collect food and fuel wood, transportation, hours of work, absence of food preservation technology, and satisfying the conflicting demands of their time and hard-earned resources from family and community.

Rural women vendors as fishers and agriculturalists, face multiple challenges. They perform multiple production tasks to support the family and community economy and their work is not accounted for in national economic statistics. Village women are deemed part of the population of “economically unproductive” adults, and are classified as unemployed or underemployed. The production work of rural women vendors are carried out manually, they walk long distances under tropical heat and rain to harvest produce to meet domestic consumption and for the market. The multiple roles of rural women expose women to greater risk to their health, happiness, and well-being.

Rural women bear the brunt of prevailing standard of physical housing and development in rural villages. Though some rural villages of these women market vendors have had good standard housing and sanitation and water facilities, a majority of the villages of women continue to have substandard housing, sanitation, and water facilities. In such a situation, women’s health and well-being are at increased risk as their workload is doubled under unhygienic and uncomfortable conditions. Indigenous rural women, though part of the Fiji community that owns 86% of the land resources, continue to have unequal access to resources in the home and in the com-

munity. Though they are legally registered as landowners, they only have usufruct rights to the land they occupy and use courtesy of their husbands, male relatives, or their children. Generally women marry outside their own landowning unit, since the indigenous Fijian community is patrilocal. Consequently, the women market vendors have no legal right to the land of their husbands or children. Rural women market vendors plant on land owned by a male relative or generally harvest wild foods from the land and sea of the community where they reside.

The land tenure system of communally owned indigenous land bars rural women from using land as collateral to access loans available from financial institutions (Aruntangai & Crocombe, 2000; Bolabola, 1986; Ward & Kingdon, 1995). Such a situation forces women into continuing dependence on male relatives for their utilization of land. Marriage is of no help to legalizing the rights of women to assets, especially land that belongs to their husbands' landowning units. In such a situation rural women become dependent on their male relatives, and unable to leave subsistence agriculture to set up non-agricultural microenterprise they continue in market vending activities. Apart from the lack of access to land resources, rural women face further persistent gender discrimination as they are deemed not to have the ability to engage in income-generation activities. Rural women do not have access to start-up capital or access to appropriate training for microenterprises. Rural communities do not perceive market vending as business enterprise, but rather a weekly activity that women carry out to earn an income.

Rural women vendors experience further discrimination that exclude them from participating in domestic and community decision-making process and leadership. As the indigenous Fijian community is patrilineal, rural women are considered to be without authority, based on their residence status, to participate in community decision-making process. At the domestic level, women are deemed unfit to make decisions that affect family income, even though their labor contributes to domestic and community income. Rural women are deemed good fund-raisers, but decision making to raise funds and designating the purpose is a male domain. Self-help village development projects have only been possible with the fund-raising efforts of rural women. Studies have revealed that indigenous males make 85% of the decisions, and women carry out 90% of the work necessary to implement actions in support of those decisions at family and village levels (Bolabola, 1986).

Village-based indigenous women have organized themselves into a nonprofit group that affiliates with a district and national

association. The nonprofit group, Soqosoqo Vakamarama (Women's Cooperative), which started some 70 years ago, originally focused on training women to be better homemakers and mothers. The Soqosoqo Vakamarama was founded in 1924 as a Methodist organization, and presently plays an important role in fostering indigenous Fijian women's roles in traditional occupations, including trade and agriculture. Over the years the women's organization has neither supported women's programs designed to address gender equality nor the empowerment of women members in the decision making, economic livelihood, and access to resources and capital. In such a situation rural women as vendors feel good belonging to a national women's organization but look to other women's groups to meet and advocate for their development needs (Leckie, 2002).

Concluding Thoughts

There is a clear record of at least some amount of cooperation between the Suva City Council and the ethnically and socioeconomically diverse traders who carry out their activities in the Suva Municipal Market. Pacific Island markets must be acknowledged by local and national governments as significant sources of revenue. Market traders should be recognized as businesspeople in order to facilitate their access to credit, which has been an obstacle to many women engaged in trade (Sullivan & Ram-Bidesi, 2008). The work of market traders supplies local as well as global commodity chains (Benediktsson, 2002), and their careful investigations into ways to support themselves and their families should be recognized by local and national governments in order to help reduce some of the stigma associated with market trade (van der Grijp, 2002), and perhaps encourage further local agricultural production and sale.

Local and national government investment in infrastructural improvements to markets will benefit both traders and the communities that they supply. One Solomon Islands-based study recommended the improvement of road conditions to facilitate trade, as well as extending credit managed by a commercial bank into rural areas to support and encourage agricultural production (McGregor, 2005). Another study, based in Papua New Guinea, indicated that traders' lack of road transport negates any possibility for rural women to engage in trade, even if they have the desire (Hirsch, 1994). Market conditions in many Pacific Island countries require significant improvements to make them safe and hygienic places to work and sell. Making such improvements demonstrates institutional commit-

ment to markets and to market traders, who generate a substantial source of income for local and national economies.

Pacific Island governments should engage in more active promotion of agricultural production and marketing, which could reduce some of the widespread preference for imported and processed foods, the consumption of which has seriously negative health consequences (Gewertz & Errington, 2010). Linking agricultural producers to tourism industry service providers would be particularly useful in countries like Fiji and Tahiti, which derive significant sources of income from tourism. Currently, many such service providers import food rather than utilizing local farmers' crops, which would be both wasteful and unnecessary if proper provisions were made for the exchange of produce and cash between these two parties (Taulealea, 2005).

With concerns about food security again becoming a priority throughout the world, governments can no longer afford to ignore the important roles played by women market traders in bringing affordable and high-quality produce to towns and cities. This is particularly true in the Pacific Islands, where climate change continues to create real and immediate threats to sustainable livelihoods. Now, more than ever, governments and policy makers need to work closely with market traders in order to determine ways to facilitate women's economic empowerment and poverty eradication measures while also ensuring a reliable supply of healthy local produce to Pacific towns and urban centers.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

China in Africa

Dislocating Cultures, Re-examining the Role of the Nation-State, and the China Model in the Process of Development

SETH N. ASUMAH

Introduction

In an ironic twist, China has done particularly well by taking advantage of the West's refusal to deal with "rogue states." In the Middle East and Africa, for example, China has openly refused to condition trade on compliance with international human rights treaties, have the European Union and the United States, giving China greater access to valuable resources in countries like Angola, Burma, Congo, and Libya. While many protest the U.S. government's inadequate peacekeeping and humanitarian response in Darfur, China has happily established itself as the largest investor in Sudan's massive oil fields.

—Amy Chua, *Day of Empire*

A Chinese official in Africa argued that "economic rights" are the main priority of developing nations and take precedence over personal, individual rights as conceptualized in the West. Indeed, the view among some senior Chinese officials is that "multi-party politics fuels social turmoil, ethnic conflicts and civil wars." China also sees human rights discourse as a tool of Western neo-imperialism. This is a particularly attractive philosophy for incumbent African political elites, and is helped by its plausibility.

—Padraig R. Carmody and Francis Y. Owusu,
Taking Sides, Clashing Views on African Issues

The tragedy is that the CCP's drive to survive has forged a brutal mercantilist policy that seduces impoverished, resources-rich regimes with low or no interest loans and the promise of non-interference in internal affairs in return for long-term lease of energy and mineral resources. Unlike the IMF and the World Bank, China's financial package comes without requiring government reforms, respect for human rights, transparency, anti-corruption measures or environmental improvements.

—Stephan Halper, *The Beijing Consensus*

From Angola to Zimbabwe, and from bicycle factories in Accra to soccer stadiums in Zanzibar, the Chinese presence in Africa is irrepressible, and China's investments on the continent are increasing at galloping rates. Recent economic downturns in the United States, Europe, and China's trade relations and economic development projects in Africa have Sino-Optimists, Sino-Pessimists, and Sino-Cautiousists reassessing the "China Model" in Africa, and what has become the role of the African nation-state in development. The foreign policy elites of China have not by any means hidden China's political agendas in Africa. They are proud to announce that China has a strategic partnership with Africa. This partnership places emphasis on political equality, mutual trust, win-win development projects, and exchanges based on cultural relativism.

Yet, the advent of the Chinese in Africa in the post-Colonial era has called to question the place of African cultures and the role of the nation-state in the process of development and modernization. China's development activities in Africa and the China Model for development are raising new questions about China's neobenvolent cultural imperialism, disregard for African cultures, and the relevance of the authority of African nation-states in dealing with China's hegemony and development approaches. African cultural studies and development research must, therefore, consider cross-cultural dynamics, and structural and systemic variables that contribute to sustainable development. Furthermore, in the processes of modernization and development, the convergence theory maintains that once African traditional cultures and nation-states are exposed to the forces of modernization, Chinanization and development, the marginal propensity of abandoning African cultures in the interest of Chinese ones is very high. In this chapter, I argue that the Chinese approach to development and the forces of modernization and development are contributing to the bastardization of the role of the nation-state in nation building, and Sino-Africanization is gradually

causing the extinction of African traditional cultures. Unless Africans are able to navigate the dynamics of cultural imperialism, Chinanization and the hegemonic development approaches from China to become true development partners with the People's Republic of China, African development problems will continue to be irrepressible and insurmountable.

It is not unusual that the United States Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) continues to accuse China of protecting "rogue states" and vampire regimes in Africa through economic and business partnerships. The interlocutors of Sino-Africa relations have even more complex issues to examine as African people in recent times have shown their desire to embrace their own cultures, improve human rights conditions, engage in democratic projects and concomitantly promote and support the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC); Beijing in 2000, Addis Ababa in 2003, Beijing, again, in 2006. Events surrounding the 10th anniversary of FOCAC are testimony to the fact that the dragon has secured a place in Africa.

Furthermore, one must not forget the fact that historically, the Chinese presence in Africa could be traced as far back the 15th century, when China's imperial fleet led by Admiral Zheng landed in East Africa. So, arguably, before Bartolommeo Dias, the Portuguese explorer became the first European to reach Africa, the Chinese have been on the continent 60 years prior to the European contact with Africa (TIA-MYSOA, 2009). Nevertheless, this author is not interested in the debate as to whether the Xhosas and the Khoi-San people of South Africa are indeed of Chinese origin. What is important to note is that the Chinese presence in Africa is not recent, but China experienced a period of dormancy in interacting with Africa, and now it has reached the apogee in engaging the continent. The dragon is now awake in Africa, and the Chinese socioeconomic involvement on the continent could easily be characterized as another "Asian Tsunami" because of the intensity and scope of these activities.

The decolonization discourse needs a deliberate inclusion of the "China Model" of development and the effects of Chinanization on Africa in order to assess the realities of the African self and the Chinese other. Africans must begin to interrogate the forces of Chinanization as imperative for redefining African cultures in recent times and should not just accept China's position as a benevolent neoimperialist as a given. This is not the time for Africans to surrender, again, after their experiences with colonialism; framing them as exotic "cultural objects" and a reservoir of natural resources to satisfy the insatiable desire of those outside the continent. In this chapter, Chinanization is defined as China's approach to neocolonialism and cultural impe-

rialism based on the Chinese perception of South–South relations and nation-state hegemony. Chinanization includes the utilization of many instruments and program for China’s self-interest and security. Chinanization comprises of foreign investments, infrastructural development, and dependence on soft power tools in exchange for noninterference in internal affairs of African countries and the exploitation of raw materials and resources from Africa. Even though Japan is not directly involve in Chinanization, part of the China model is based on the Japanese loan structure after World War II that required China to sign an agreement with Japan to repay the loans in raw material. China is using the same method in Africa today.

The interlocutors of the recent Chinese presence in Africa include Sino-Pessimists, Sino-Optimists and Sino-Cautionists. In the camp of Sino-Optimists are Deborah Brautigum, Dambisa Mayo among others, inter alia, who claim that the Western media hype, the West’s failure in Africa, and the fact that the West has been hypocritical about its own historical contradictions in Africa, are igniting this debate. Sino-Optimist maintain that China’s investment in Africa is a win-win form of cooperation, and that it provides real opportunity for Africa and a new look at African development without a foreign aid formula that is usually failure-prone for Africans.

Sino-Pessimists include Peter Brookes, Stefan Halper, and others, who argue that China’s human rights abuses, child labor law violation, employment conditions in most China-African projects, environmental disasters, noninterference approach, nonpolitical conditionality, empowering “rogue states,” use of Africa as inferior goods dumping grounds, disrespect for Africans, exploitation of resources, marginalization of Africans, and disregard for African cultures must be assessed before applauding China for its success in Africa. Sino-Cautionists are interested in forging coequal partnership with China through the effective participation of African nation-states and working with and not for China to sustain the glorious past of African culture. They believe both Sino-Optimists and Sino-Pessimists have legitimate reasons for taking their respective positions on China in Africa, but what is imperative is acknowledging the reality of Africa’s condition and uniting as a force for developing new principles in dealing with the China Model without culture wars.

Culture Wars: The Chinese Dragon and the African Warriors

The rift between African cultures and the process of the “China Model” of development and Chinanization could be characterized as the new

“culture wars.” The recent culture wars between African and Chinese cultures, development models, and the Chinese mode of interaction with Africans are different from that of the European colonialists. Chinese processes of modernization and development are at “war” with African cultures and economic activity or inactivity by nation-states in Africa. “Culture wars,” as a phrase is a neologism whose roots come from the German transliteration—*Kulturkampf*, which translates into a “struggle for the control of the culture.” A reference to German Chancellor Otto von Bismark in 1871 is appropriate in this perspective, in that he waged a *Kulturkampf* against the Catholic Church’s imposition of Roman-style education and politics on Germany. Nonetheless, Bismarck’s culture wars were discarded in 1878 because the general populace stood against it (Williams, 2003, p. 10). The recent culture wars between African and Chinese cultures and development are subterranean and yet more lethal to the African human condition and sustainable development because they evade the discourse over both discursive consciousness and practical consciousness.

With reference to the disregard for discursive consciousness, most Africans are not taking the discussion of Chinese cultural imperialism seriously now and many have already succumbed to verbalizations from Chinese cultures that are more palatable to their worldviews, because the Chinese are assisting in places where the Europeans and Americans have failed Africans. Neglect for practical consciousness ensues because there are no structured institutional arrangements to reconcile the forces of African historical, traditional, and contemporary cultures and the effects of Chinanization or Sino-Africanization on Africa. There are no known historical arrangements or policies established by African nation-states to mitigate the adverse effects of Sino-Africanization and development on African cultures. Perhaps, because culture is about everything we do, say, use, and acquire individually and institutionally and it evolves slowly, it is so elusive to realize when it is affected by outside agents and processes, especially in a time when global cultures are establishing hegemonic relations with indigenous African cultures.

Even though the Chinese presence could be seen as a blessing to Africa by many Sino-Optimists, Africans must prepare themselves against a reoccurrence of the cultural imperialism by European colonialists who have stifled Africans efforts toward development. Among the critical processes and institutions that Africans must put in place to balance China’s efforts are: (a) concerted efforts and structures that would deal with African traditional and contemporary cultures in the era of Chinanization; (b) reducing and demystifying the difficulty in defining what the “Chinese Model” and “Beijing Consensus”

are; (c) re-examining inherited cultural practices and traditions that obscure modern societal realities as they come in contact with Sino-Africanization; (d) finding solutions to the inability to utilize African traditional forms of arrangements and institutions to negotiate the China Model and Chinanization; and (e) developing agency to deal with Africa's inability to adopt cultural categories that could enable Africans to strengthen their moral compasses and behavior in order to interrogate foreign intrusion, the China Model and Chinanization.

Social and cultural capitals are important for the sustainability of any civilization in the era of Chinanization, nonetheless, the process of acquiring cultural capital has been distressing to many Africans because of China's recent influence in Africa, global forces, and the ease by which subordinate African cultures often dislocate the meaning of their existence in order to participate in global enterprises and accept Chinese socioeconomic activities, most of the time without questions because of Africa's vulnerable position in global politics. Anglo-American cultural imperialism in Africa was one thing, but it is another thing when Africans succumb to China's benevolent neoimperialism on the continent without assessing its ramifications. Ironically, where Anglo-American cultural imperialism in Africa may have failed, Chinese benevolent neoimperialism is succeeding. As Michael Elliot reports in *Time* magazine, January 22, 2007, a senior member of the United States National Security Council under President Bill Clinton, Kenneth Lieberthal notes, "The Chinese wouldn't put it this way themselves. But in their hearts I think they believe that the 21st Century is China's century" (Elliot, 2007, pp. 33–34).

Even though China's benevolent neocultural imperialism is unlike Anglo-American pomposity in cross-cultural interactions, Chinese traditional cultures and the history of the "Middle Kingdom" (in the middle of the heavens), guided parts of the Chinese people's perception of themselves as a great civilization. However within China, ethnic differences among Cantonese, Shanghainese, and Hunanese, for instances, could count for internal cultural and historical intolerance. Consequently, this internalized attitudes are easily transformed into the benevolent neocultural imperialism when Chinese of all ethnicities, regardless of "all their differences and mutual snobberies . . . think of themselves first and foremost as Chinese—as *Zhongguo ren*, literally, 'people of the Middle Kingdom'" (Chua, 2007, p. 292), when the dragon enters the "Dark Continent"—Africa. Lucian Pye asserts, "China is not just another nation-state in the family of nations," rather, China is "a civilization pretending to be a state" (Pye, 1990, p. 58). A civilization of that unique Chinese persona maintains a culture that sometimes interrogates African cultures in

the process of socioeconomic development. Recently, China has been signing cultural exchange agreements all over Africa. Malone reports:

And it's not just China trying to use culture to secure access to a continent overflowing with mineral resources and a largely untapped consumer market of nearly 1 billion people . . . Addis Ababa is host to Chinese . . . schools where Ethiopian children must sing the national anthems of those countries every morning, where they learn their languages, their dances, their songs, their particular set of manners. Such schools and "cultural exchange programs" are mushrooming all over the continent as the war for influence over African countries heats up (Malone, 2010, p. 1).

Across the continent, Confucius Institutes are mushrooming faster than African cultural centers. China continues to develop these institutes in order to make contacts with the rest of world in general, and Africa in particular. The rate of "youthification" in Africa, combined with lack of access to learning centers and opportunity for self-development and advancement, have made learning Chinese languages and culture attractive for young Africans who want to better themselves at the expense of their own cultures.

During these difficult times of economic downturns, there is a prevailing notion that Africans who learn and speak Chinese could trump the competition in the global market. But as noted by Li Haiwan, "we have brought a cultural performance troupe to the University of Lagos. We also brought a youth group here. We will have other cultural activities and new courses—not only language [and] things like Kung Fu" (Posthumus, 2011, p. 1). Is China able to engage Africa culturally and economically with alacrity because of the apparent underdevelopment of the continent, misdirected policies, and inability of the nation-states in Africa to maintain their *raison d'être*? Are Africans permanently vulnerable to systemic forces such as slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and Chinanization that the Chinese invasion in Africa could just not be epiphenomenal or anachronistic? To answer these questions one has to critically examine Africa's development problems and the "China Model" of socioeconomic development in Africa.

African Development Lacuna and Chinese Opportunism?

The development of underdevelopment of Africa and the gradual dislocation of African indigenous cultures, some may argue, are attribut-

able to traditional cultural values that tend to impede the process of modernization and development. China is easily filling the vacuum and development lacuna—Sino-Africanization. Yet, the lacuna created in Africa started as far back as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the first phase of globalization's effect on Africa, when Africa's human and material resources were taken by global traders and slavers, whose work only benefited Arabs, Europeans, Chinese, and North Americans (Henriot, 2001, p. 2).

The second phase of globalization was the period of colonialism, when the Portuguese, Italians, Belgians, British, French, and Germans divided and conquered the African continent for their self-interests in 1884–1885 at the Berlin Conference. Just as the present form of globalization indicates, the benefits for the West always outweighed what the African people acquired through the other processes. Now the benefit for the Chinese is outweighing that of Africans. The third phase of globalization was the period of neocolonialism, the postindependent era, where Africa's fate was still controlled by alien transnational companies and foreign nation-states. Trade patterns, debt arrangements, investment policies, and the general political economies of African nation-states were primarily controlled by former colonial powers in the neocolonial era. The fourth, the present phase of globalization, is a global village where interdependence has made Africa even more dependent on foreign powers and resources than the period of colonialism. This period is also concomitant with Chinanization and Sino-Africanization.

Financial flows, technology, information highways, byways, and thoroughfares, movement of people, and cultures have direct benefit to the Western countries and China that have very little in mind regarding Africa's condition. Moreover, the global village would be dysfunctional if the dominant actors failed to carefully implement the tenets of the catalytic agents of globalization—liberalization and Chinanization. Liberalization drives the free market of the global village to the desired destination of hegemonic, Chinanization, and benevolent neoimperialism. One would argue that Africa has suffered under slavery, colonialism, postcolonialism, and structural adjustment programs that were all forced on the continent. So, one would argue that it is hypocritical that Sino-Pessimists would disregard all the recent development projects, infrastructural developments, agricultural and land-tenure reorganization, construction of water systems, railroads, hospitals, soccer stadiums, and the fact that China has become the biggest investor in mining, natural resources, and ranks second in the world (after the United States) in bilateral investment treaties.

Cooke (2008) asserts, "China's voracious appetite for resources, especially energy resources, is widely viewed as the primary motive

for its expanding outreach to Africa” (p. 106). This may be the highest stage of Chinese “capitalism,” or as the Chinese used to call it a “responsibility system” that could be neobenevolent imperialism. On the one hand, China has to reach places of resources to support its continued economic growth. On the other hand, Africa needs development projects and investments in order to reach a takeoff stage in development. So, arguably, do Africa and China have symbiotic relations? Not quite the case. The rapid growth of the Chinese economy has outstripped its local supplies of essential minerals, petroleum, and other variables needed to nurture the rate of this economic growth and Africa is the answer to this dilemma. China’s economy is growing rapidly and the Chinese Communist Party has to find ways of maintaining sustainable development and stability. Natural resource-rich Africa is China’s solution. The economy of China is growing between 7% and 10% per annum since the 1980s, and has multiplied every decade. This continuing growth requires China’s presence in foreign markets and access to foreign natural resources, since China’s domestic resources have not kept up with this rapid growth. China’s economy has exceeded its domestic supplies of crucial manufacturing resources and petroleum products. Africa is the prime candidate for fulfilling China’s needs for this exponential growth.

Africa has large quantities of crucial, essential, and precious natural resources such as aluminum, alumina, bauxite, coal, coltan, copper, gold, diamonds, iron ore, lead, manganese, nickel, oil, platinum, uranium, and more. It would defy logic for China to look elsewhere for the resources that it needs to bring resource availability and the rate of economic growth into equilibrium. Africa is the most logical continent to feed China’s hunger for developmental resources. It is one thing to seek resources for economic growth and another to secure strategic minerals for weaponry. It is indubitable that China is doing both in Africa. So, if China is in South Africa, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is in these countries for chromium and cobalt, as these African countries lead the world in the supply of these strategic resources. China signed a long-term infrastructural development accord with the Democratic Republic of the Congo to a tune of \$9 billion (Whewell, 2008). China is rebuilding pipelines and infrastructure to strengthen Angola’s oil supplies, and it has provided over \$135 million for developing Angola’s electricity, road and highway systems, and water plants (Simoa, 2008).

The picture in Zambia is not any different from that of Angola. Zambia has one of the richest copper deposits in Africa and the world, so it’s not epiphenomenal or a deviation for the Chinese to secure their position in that African country. China has invested over \$800 million in improvement projects and another \$200 million in building

a new cooper smelter in Zambia (Behar, 2008). China is receiving its share of the Republic of South Africa's chromium resources, and it is not new information that out of the 54 African nation-states, at least 40 of them have received some Chinese foreign direct investments (FDI). Angola, South Africa, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Algeria, Gabon, Mauritania, and Nigeria top the chart for African nation-states with Chinese FDI. As one would assume, China's FDI in Africa is closely linked to trade and development assistance; consequently, FDI has increased over the past 10 years in tandem with increased Sino-African trade in the countries mentioned above. Although China's FDI to Africa remains marginal in terms of its total outward FDI flows, the total FDI received by Africa from the rest of the world is 3% in 2007. According to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, China's FDI in Africa has increased by 46% per year over the last decade (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2009). The stock of foreign investment stood at \$4.46 billion in 2007 compared to \$56 million in 1996 and \$7.8 billion at the end of 2008, but others estimate FDI to be at least \$20 billion (Shinn, 2010).

For a region that tops the developing world because of the numerical preponderance of the nation-states, Africa continues to suffer from decayed or archaic infrastructures that were built during the colonial period and newer ones are needed at this point of development. Infrastructural development is key to economic growth. Mary-Francoise Renard notes, "the Africa Infrastructure Diagnostic (AICD) study estimated that Africa needs \$93 billion per year to address the deficit in this sector. Historically, infrastructure was one of the first sectors in which China invested in Africa (Renard, 2011, p. 20). Owing to the development lacuna in Africa, the Chinese have made gains in their endeavors to build over 10 hydroelectric power plants, which cost about \$3.3 billion, roads and railway networks, \$4 billion; and information networks which is worth about \$3 billion (Renard, *ibid*). Nevertheless, most of these infrastructural development are in African countries with resources that are beneficial to the Chinese; Nigeria, Gabon, South Africa, Democratic Republic; and Sudan, to name a few. What is the actual role of the African nation-states in the process of Chinanization?"

The Role of the African Nation-States in the Process of Sino-Africanization

Defined succinctly, the nation-state is the largest, most sophisticated, self-reliant, self-sufficient political configuration in the modern world.

Nation-states have four basic characteristics: namely, territorial area, general populace, a government, and recognition from other nation-states. Territorial area is one of the most fundamental components of economic development. Size, location, and natural resources are concomitant with territory or, in simple terms, land. Land is also one major element that serves as a platform on which nation-states extend their boundaries at the expense of others, and it represents the frontier of an increasing conflict over legitimate rights between nation-states and society rights vis-à-vis state authority.

The respective inhabitants of nation-states are another great asset that these entities could have. As human resources, the general populace of nation-states may differ greatly in their history, precepts, norms, culture, and their socioeconomic and political acumen. People make decisions in the global village, not computers. Productivity in any nation-state is dependent on the type of human resources available in that particular entity. Education and training can provide skilled or semiskilled labor and leadership. Intangible variables, such as knowledge, skill, and leadership can lead to the production of tangible needs, such as general infrastructures. African governments would have little to worry about in the global village if the majority of the general populace could be productive and reach a level of optimal efficiency. Population explosion, unemployment, refugees, health issues, and the preservation of human dignity are some of the problems that come with people in the nation-states of Africa.

The third characteristic, good governance is essential to the survival and sustenance of any nation-state in the global village. Governance refers to the arrangements and management of regime relations, and the laws and rules that create the framework to conduct politics in the global village (Hyden & Brattan, 1992). Here, formal institutional structures, sociopolitical processes, and their interaction with the general populace within the global village are the areas of contention. Governance in Africa in the process of globalization has become the most elusive “art form.” The frequency and scope of predatory regimes, praetorian governments, struggle with alien political philosophies, ideologies, and resource scarcity have all contributed to making governance in Africa within the global sphere a risky business. But the nation-states in Africa must survive the entrances and exits of governments and regimes in order to compete in the global village.

The fourth and final characteristic of the nation-state is recognition from other nation-states in the global village. Recognition relates to the “acknowledgment of the existence of a new state or of a new government in an existing state, coupled with an expression

of willingness on the part of the recognizing state to enter into relations with the recognized entity or government” (Von Glahn, 1981, p. 82). More recently, recognition has become a political act with legal ramification. Recognition involves diplomatic exchange, concluding of agreements respecting the existence of the nation-state in question, and perhaps, membership in the United Nations. Recent global forces have made some of the elements of recognition somewhat meaningless, since liberalization makes the borders and territories of especially weaker nation-states more vulnerable for entrance and exit of parastatal agencies, transnational corporations, and powerful nation-states.

As the modern nation-states evolve in Africa and it acquires all the aforementioned characteristics, it retires into a new type of entity in order to respond to the demands and needs of the society in the global village and in the process of Chinanization. Nonetheless, the authoritative actions of the nation-state to shape and constrain the expectations, demands, and pressure from the general populace, global actors like China, and institutions are modified according to paradigmatic reorientation of the nation-state itself. Two paradigms, the state-centered nation-state and the society-centered nation-state analysis could be utilized to describe how the nation-state responds to the forces Chinanization.

State-Centered and Society-Centered Nation-States in Sino-Africanization

In accordance with the state-centered nation-state model, the state acts as an independent entity—an independent variable that turns its preferences into authoritative actions. The nation-state’s autonomous actions often result in policy decisions that have little reflective value to the immediate society, because it is more concerned about global interaction and engaging China. Culminating in autonomous actions and reactions, the state’s ability to tap into resources outside its perimeters is diminished. From structural development within the state to global dynamics beyond the state’s apparatus, the nation-state propounds and makes policy choices that have little meaning to the general populace of its own. African private actors, businesses, political parties, as well as affiliation and affinity groups cannot easily transform their demands via the nation-state into preferable socioeconomic and political agendas because of global forces over and above their means. Since the Chinese political system itself is

authoritarian, it is easier for China to engage in Africa, especially in countries with authoritarian governments; Libya before the demise of the Kaddafi regime, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The society-centered nation-state approach postulates a condition in Chinanization, where the private sector, transnational corporations, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) within and outside the polity have symbiotic relations with the nation-state and China. The nation-state in this paradigm serves as a viable platform on which different sociopolitical and global actors come together to iron out their differences and galvanize their interests. These characterizations of the nation-state presume that the state has already reached a “takeoff stage”—a stage of prematurity, where the nation-state can interact with global forces without being marginalized or exploited. In fact, very few African nation-states, if any, fit this analysis or are able to maintain themselves during China’s engagement in Africa.

The nation-states in Africa have been unable to acquire the society-centered nation-state status because of structural heterogeneity, which is the transfer of advanced but inadequate technology and institutions from China to undeveloped areas in Africa. Chinanization enhances structural heterogeneity but stifles socioeconomic activities because of the inadequate capacity of African nation-states to deal with China’s leverage within the global village. Moreover, the lack of a sustainable private sector in Africa places limitations on the type of support the general populace could provide to the nation-state. Absent viable support from the external sphere of the state, it tends to rely on its own resources, which are insufficient to deal with forces within the global village.

For obvious reasons, most African nation-states would prefer the society-centered nation-state paradigm to deal with China. However, the society is not sufficiently equipped to provide the needed structures to facilitate the operation of such a paradigm. Indubitably, there is no entity that is exclusively nation-state-centered or society-centered. However, most Western nation-states are closer to the society-centered nation-state paradigm. China itself has a combination of state-centered and society center model—the Chinese model? The fundamental questions to be posed in attempting to determine the status of the African nation-state in the era of Chinanization are as follows:

1. How does the nation-state maintain its *raison d’être* in the process Sino-Africanization?

2. How are the nation-states' authoritative actions and inactions understood in reference to internal and external constraints during the process of Sino-Africanization?
3. To what extent do African nation-states still maintain their sovereignty in dealing with socioeconomic and policy initiatives from China?

The Fate of African Nation-States and Cultures in the Era of Globalization and Chinanization

Earlier in the twentieth century, both Vladimir Lenin and many internationalists projected the gradual demise of the nation-state—the withering away of the state, and that the highest state of capitalism is imperialism. In the 1990s, observers started revisiting Lenin's position and management consultants, such as Naisbitt (1994), have suggested that the contemporary advancement of globalization, Chinanization, and the activities of transnational corporations are creating a world beyond nation-state, cultures, and nationalities (p. 14). The present effects of Chinanization on the African nation-state only beg for a revisitation of the Weberian conceptualization of the state in order to determine the fate of the African nation-state in the process of Chinanization. Max Weber's defining properties of the nation-state include the following:

1. Defined boundaries under the state's control and an unchallenged territorial area. This property has been almost meaningless in the process of globalization and Chinanization in Africa since globalization and Sino-Africanization supports economic, social, and political activities across frontiers, regions, and continents.
2. The nation-state's monopoly of legitimate use of force to control its borders and general populace within its territory. Here, African nation-states, because of the forces of interdependence and Chinanization, have little monopoly of legitimate use of force and influence even within their own borders. China, great powers, and transnational corporations' irrepressible activities in Africa have diluted the nation-state's authority and the use of legitimate force in conducting its affairs.
3. The reliance on rules and regulations in the governance of its citizens and nationals. Here again, in the global

village, the rules and regulations propounded by China and transnational corporations prevail in the global village. The boundaries between domestic matters and global affairs have become increasingly blurred to an extent that the movers and shakers of the global village carry the day.

In reviewing the Weberian properties of the nation-state and how Chinanization has made the function and authority of the African nation-state questionable, one cannot confide in the sustainability of the nation-states on the continent. Yet, it would be erroneous to perform a premature autopsy on the African nation-state, even though there is sufficient evidence that Chinanization has intensified the crippling effect and paralysis of the nation-states in Africa. In general, Chinanization and globalization have uneven effects on African nation-states. One has to understand the China model of engagement in Africa well to evaluate the impact of China's presence in Africa.

The Implications for the China Model of Engagement in Africa: The Dragon Rules

Once upon a time in East Asia around 1978, an emerging powerhouse accessed resources from poor countries because this nation-state did not have what it takes to embark on its socioeconomic projects. It requested \$10 billion line of credit from another country to start its development projects. The borrowing country repaid this loan in oil and coal, but it paid it 70 times more. This was the birth of the diversification of the economy of that borrowing country. The lender country was Japan, the borrower, China. Is this the "China model" in Africa? If it is not a "development model" then what is it? Some say the "China model" is a myth. Others claim it is a combination of principles: Chinese culture, demography, geography, and governing philosophy (Halper, 2010). Resource-backed loans are the same approach China used to develop its economy. Africa is the source of one third of the world's productive resources. China needs these resources. In 2006, President Hu Jintao said, "The Three 50s" in Africa are: China has been in Africa for over 50 years, engaged in 50 countries, and has spent over \$50 billion in improving Africa. Is China submerged in benevolent imperialism, altruistic benevolence, or it is just a rogue donor? Halper notes that "To maintain its growth at current rates, Beijing must sustain relations with regimes across

the developing world, regardless of the implications of its policies for human rights, the environment, and basic freedoms for the affected local population. . . . Just in 2008, for example, autocracies were a vital source of energy for China's growing needs" (Halper, 2010, p. 44). This is one of the concerns of this author. Is this how one interprets the China model? If it is, then it should be a reason for one to be optimistically cautious about China in Africa

Even though the China Model is not a new thing, because China, as stated above has been engaging Africa for over 50 years, the intensity and scope of its recent activity on the continent is what make the China Model in recent times different. As far back as 1964, when Premier Zhou Enlai visited Ghana, China has maintained a principle of nonpolitical conditionality and noninterference with sovereign rights and domestic affairs of other countries. Therefore, in doing business in Africa, China cares very little about what happens to the general populace of a particular African nation-state. Zhansui Yu refers to Zhuang Zizhong's characterization of the China Model as "democratic one-Party dictatorship, rule of law with social stability as its top priority, an authoritarian government for the people, a state-controlled market economy, fair competition dominated by the central government-owned enterprise . . . and national rejuvenation of the incomparable Chinese civilization" (Yu, 2010, p. 2). The model has element of oppression and exploitation, monopoly of state power, abuse of power and a technocracy full of corruption. One may ask if this is the type of model African nation-states want to aspire to.

The China Model is about developing sophisticated investment schemes. China was able to merge the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, which became the largest in the world by value in 2007. The scheme included the purchase of some African banks, including South Africa's Standard Bank Group Limited for \$4.5 billion (Butts and Bankus, 2009). Standard Bank operates in over 18 African countries and it is a banking leader in loaning funds to Africans, with assets over \$120 billion (Caggese, 2007). China also purchased shares in Barclay's Bank, one of the leading banks for Africans. With all these purchases of financial institutions that most African countries are tied to, China has completely cornered Africa financially. Africa has nowhere to run to, except China. The China Model works effectively for China with these banking schemes and yet African countries have to be careful about taking these loans that are tied to massive resource exploitation and environmental degradation or what Chinese diplomats label as resource-backed financing agreements.

With regard to manufactured and processed good, many studies, including the works of Mary-Francoise Renard (2011) and Zhansui Yu (2010), conclude that there is a negative correlation between African economies and the intensity of Chinese trade. China does not encourage Africans to participate in building infant industries. Africans are reduced to huffers of firewood and diggers of natural resources. One will not argue that it takes a very long time to recover from the shocks of high vulnerability of commodity prices on the world market. Africans are therefore entrapped in the old thinking of gaining comparative advantage by remaining agrarians and continuing to depend on China and the West for finished goods. Even when Africans are allowed to participate in highly skilled manufactures projects or infrastructural developments, the China model requires that the Chinese use only 30% of African labor vis-à-vis 70% of Chinese (African Politics Portals, 2008).

The China model is submerged in a pool of bilateral, subterranean, secretive, government to government agreements. There is very little transparency in this process. The danger of engaging in deals that are not transparent is that a new genesis of bribery, corruption, cronyism, and nepotism will continue to engulf a continent that has suffered for a long time because of colonialism, imperialism, predatory regimes, and vampire states. Elite to elite collusion (China and Africa) and a new class formation are emerging because of the China model. Many African people who make it to China and receive Chinese training are remaining in that country, beginning a new process of brain drain. Over 14,600 Africans are sponsored by the Chinese government every year for personnel training and with China noninterference policy; these people can elect to remain in China, which is what most of them are doing at the moment (Zhongxiang, 2009).

Indubitably, the China model does not benefit all sectors of the country and all countries in Africa equally. The countries in Africa that have abundance of natural resources have some short-term benefits, but in the long run the negatives will outweigh the positive. The dragon's presence in Africa must be re-examined and it requires rethinking. *Mutatis mutandis*, African nation-states will continue to be victims in Sino-Africanization and Chinanization. Africa's primary drawing card in the global market is as a source of cheap labor and producer of raw materials, which are relatively low in value vis-à-vis finished but shoddy goods from China. Even though fiscal trade liberalization has increased financial mobility in recent years, African markets are vulnerable to external changes, yuanization, and external shocks. These facts will not dissipate; they are the realities of

Chinanization that African nation-states have to come to terms with before blindly embracing the dragon and Sino-Africanization.

The euphoric prognoses by African statesmen and -women, and political economists about the benefits of the China model and the engagement of China in Africa are beginning to be questioned because many developing nation-states and African nation-states in particular have realized the extent of exploitation, marginalization, and cultural imperialism associated with neobenevolent imperialism and Chinanization. European cultural globalization rose with technological advancement in transportation and communication systems, which helped the West expand into Africa and other areas with new ideas of liberalism, capitalism, socialism, and science. Now the Internet, satellite, and digital technology have enhanced the process of global culture. Through radio, television, movies, and the Internet, exposure to different cultures and values has been more rapid than ever. In a similar vein, Chinanization has contributed to the dissipation of indigenous languages and cultures of Africa. *McCulturalization*, *dollarization*, *Coca-Colarization*, and *Yuanization* all continue to pose a threat to indigenous cultures. The recent Chinanization of culture in Africa is spearheaded both by financial institutions and China. Cultural imperialism has been more rampant than ever, where the dominant corporations and superordinate cultures' practices, institutions, and processes have become the norm for the rest of Africa. What does this mean to personal national identities and the authority of the African nation-state in this process of Chinanization?

Conclusion

The process of Chinanization is unstoppable and yet inevitable. Chinanization is transforming the world, but the transformation is concomitant with prosperity and gains for mostly China while most African nation-states are entrapped in a pool of destitution and instability. Globalization and Chinanization have increased the gap between the wealthy nation-states and the poorest ones, who are predominantly African. As Held, Goldblatt, & Parraton (2001) correctly note, "globalization and [Chinanization] have disrupted the neat correspondence between national territory, sovereignty, political space, and the democratic political community" (p. 146).

Also, during Chinanization, when African culture becomes synonymous with Chinese culture, there is a need for subordinate cultures to go back to their source of the essence of being (*Sankofa*) to search for productive elements that will bring new meanings to their

lives. Indubitably, this is not the time for pessimism. Nevertheless, the nostalgia and trauma of slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, and now Chinanization, always remind Africans how non-Africans have exploited the continent in the past. Chinanization is not a panacea to most of Africa's problems, as those who claim that the Chinese presence in Africa is a win-win situation. If African nation-states want their relations with China to progress, they must without second thoughts define what China is, and the ramifications for totally surrendering to the China model. If this present process of Chinanization continues into the next 25 years, African nation-states are likely to permanently reinscribe in a position of subjugation, exploitation, marginalization, and life-threatening status that is mystified by China's rationalization of sovereign rights, equal benefits, disregard for environmental issues, and human rights violations. Africans must continue to rethink, re-examine, and reassess the position of the dragon in Africa.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Political Struggle of Rural Migrant Hostesses for First-Class Citizenship in Postsocialist China

TIAN TIAN ZHENG

Within the 50-plus years of Communist rule, China's sex industry has gone from bust to boom. During the Maoist era, the Communist Party attempted to level previous class distinctions and promote its egalitarian ideology by eliminating all forms of conspicuous consumption and "reactionary" leisure activities, including the consumption of commercial sex (Wang, 1995). The time, form, and content of leisure activities fell under the scrutiny and supervision of the state, and leisure itself was conceptualized as a form of collective action. In political indoctrination classes, unsanctioned leisure activities were denounced as capitalist behavior, and state propaganda advocated the ethos of "hard work and simple living" (Wang, 1995, p. 156).

Since 1978, the state's pro-consumption stance has opened the way for the reemergence of nightclubs and other leisure sites. To avoid any residual negative connotations left over from the previous era, when nightclubs, dance halls, and bars were condemned as emblems of a nonproletarian and decadent bourgeois lifestyle nightclubs, in the current post-Mao period such places are referred to as karaoke bars, karaoke plazas, or *liange ting* (literally, "singing practice halls"). These new consumption sites are prominent in the more economically prosperous Special Economic Zones (SEZs) (Jian, 2001). Visitors are mainly middle-aged businessmen, government officials, police officers, and foreign investors. Clients can partake of the services offered by hostesses and at the same time engage in "social interactions" (*yingchou*) that help cement "relationships" (*guanxi*) with their business partners or their patrons in the government

(Wang, 1995). Hostesses play an indispensable role in the rituals of these male-centered worlds of business and politics (Zheng, 2003).

The hostesses or escorts who work at karaoke bars are referred to by the Chinese government as *sanpei xiaojie*, literally, “young women who accompany men in three ways.” These “ways” are generally understood to include varying combinations of alcohol consumption, dancing, and singing. Sexual services are an additional, unstated part of the work these women are expected to perform. These women, mainly 17 to 23 years of age, form a steadily growing contingent of illegal sex workers. Hostesses first emerged in modest numbers at the end of the 1980s. Their numbers expanded rapidly in the mid-1990s, as karaoke bars became favored sites not just for male recreation but also for transactions between male businessmen and political elites. Paradoxically, the state agents responsible for policing karaoke bars comprise one of the main segments of the karaoke bar customer base.

The majority of these hostesses come from China’s countryside. Of the 2 hundred hostesses with whom I worked, only 4 were from cities. They were extremely averse to exposing their rural origins. At the beginning of my field research, hostesses always told me that they were from large, metropolitan cities, such as Dalian, Shanghai, and Anshan. It was only after becoming close friends that they confided to me that they were actually from rural areas on the outskirts of these cities.

During 20 months of fieldwork in Dalian, I lived and worked with the hostesses as a hostess myself. I lived with the hostesses in a karaoke bar for a year, where I worked as a hostess serving drinks, carrying out conversations, singing songs, playing games, and dancing with customers, with the exception of sexual services. My research sample includes approximately 2 hundred bar hostesses in 10 karaoke bars. I was intensively involved in 3 karaoke bars categorized respectively as high, middle, and low class. In the first section of this article, I explicate how rural migrants obtain political identities as second-class citizens. In the second section, I discuss how rural migrant women’s cultural and social identities are naturalized as derogatory second-class citizens in the media. Their bodies are a site where the imperatives of state politics become legible. In the third section, I demonstrate how such a derogatory cultural representation, while tying the hostesses to the constructed identities in a constraining way, paradoxically leaves some room for the hostesses to maneuver. Specifically, I argue that rural migrant hostesses perform this image as a means to accumulate the accoutrements for legitimate first-class citizenship, which is synonymous with elite status.

Migration and Political Second-Class Citizenship in Post-Mao Dalian

In 1958, the Chinese government initiated the household registration system, classifying the national population into mutually exclusive urban-rural categories possessing unequal political, economical, social, and legal access (Flemming, 1999). Rural residents found themselves on the losing end of a heavily lopsided distribution of social wealth. Concomitant with the broad-based restructuring of society, the “peasantry” as a derogatory cultural category but revolutionary mainstay, was further refined and concretized (Cohen, 1993). The Maoist government portrayal of the countryside in peasant administrative categories involving the household registration system and mobility restrictions reinforced the cultural stereotypes of rural identities and segregated and branded the peasants as the reservoir of backward feudalism and superstition and a major obstacle to national development and salvation (Brownell, 1995).

Relaxation of state mobility controls in recent years has allowed rural residents to migrate to urban regions, where they are now labeled the “floating population” (*liudong renkou*) (Solinger, 1995). In search of job opportunities and adventure, these migrants have become the “vanguard” in China’s largest population movement since 1949 and harbingers of the market economy in the post-1978 era of economic reforms (Solinger, 1995). As China’s engagement with the global economy and experiments with economic reform continue, cities highlight the deepening disparities between permanent urban “citizens” (those with urban residence permits) and migrant populations without residence permits.

Although the state today tolerates a higher degree of population mobility than under the Mao Zedong government, the urban-rural gap is still the main fault line between rich and poor in Chinese society. Inequalities are perpetuated and even aggravated by post-Mao state policies that transfer the brunt of the state and collectives’ tax burden onto poor rural households. This situation has not gone unnoticed by peasants themselves. Since 1985, peasants have launched collective protests against taxes, fines, cadre corruption, and the drastic urban-rural income gap. This unrest points to their discontent with local authorities and constitutes one of the major threats to the Chinese Communist Party’s power and stability (Li and O’Brien, 1996).

With 100 million rural migrants on the move, modern China’s urban landscape is now faced with the management of individuals

who by definition are “outsiders” (*waidiren, wailaigong*) (Honig, 1992; Zhang, 2001). Despite their contributions to local and overall economic growth, migrants encounter severe institutional and social discrimination. Blamed for blemishing the appearance of cities and contributing to overcrowding, migrants have become the scapegoats for a multitude of social problems, ranging from crime to urban pollution (Siu, 1990). As the “losers” in China’s market reforms, migrant workers are denied civil, political, and residential rights.

Women account for over 30% of the total number of rural-urban migrant laborers (Sheng, 1996). Providers of labor power for the state, they are important social and political actors. Institutional (such as the household registration system) and social discrimination (such as the derogatory category of migrants) forces most female migrants onto the lowest rungs of the labor market, where they commonly work as garbage collectors, restaurant waitresses, domestic maids, factory workers, and bar hostesses.

Migration and Cultural Second-Class Citizenship in Popular Media

Defined and viewed as “the political economy of communication” (Bourdieu, 1991), discourse is the place where relations of power are exercised and enacted. In this section, I discuss the ways in which media discourse defines, constrains, and ties rural migrant women to their labeled identities in the coercive discursive regime that affects “their participation in employment, in development programs and in education in profound and immense ways” (Moore, 1994).

Concerned that an oversized population is a major impediment to economic growth and an indirect cause of a myriad of social ills that carry the potential for disrupting social stability (e.g., a tight labor market), the Chinese government has made population control a key item on its agenda of economic expansion and continued political dominance (Huang, 1988).

The state sees rural women’s mobility as a serious threat to government population policy. Women migrants’ “floating” lifestyle puts them out of reach of regular monitoring techniques administered through “grassroots” (*jiceng*) government organs—namely, the countryside’s village committee and the city’s street office (*jiedao ban-shichu*). Indeed, ruralists are sometimes even accused of purposefully using migration as a way to escape detection (Huang, 1988).

The government’s anxieties are amplified by the perception that rural women are naturally prone to high fertility. Indeed, the media

depict the entire countryside as a hotbed of sexual activity driven by raw, animalistic passions (Xu, 2001). Some scholars lend scientific credence to this view. Based on a nationwide survey of sexual behavior, prominent sex sociologist Liu Dalin claims that there is not only a higher rate of premarital and extramarital sex but also a greater overall frequency of sexual intercourse in the countryside than in the city (Liu, 1995). Rural women's sexuality is implicated as the critical variable for explaining urban-rural differences in sexual behavior:

Many rural women have precocious sexual biology but late-maturing sexual psychology. For many, the period of sexual hunger is too long, but they cannot get married in time [to satisfy this hunger]. Lovers have frequent contact with each other, but their sexual control is weak. If by chance a male shows interest, the female lover, also in the grasp of "an unbearable hunger," will give herself to the man (Tong, 1995).

In this passage, rural women's sexual promiscuity is portrayed as a product of their carnal urges. Other scholars emphasize rural women's lack of culture to explain their behavior (Wen & Zhong, 1991). These two angles—biological and cultural—are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary: Rural women's bodies intensify their sexual urges at the same time that their lack of culture reduces their ability to resist these impulses. This dual-level explanation reflects larger patterns in the discriminatory representations of peasants and national minorities.

Regardless of the approach, however, rural women's sexuality is always implicated as the critical variable that explains the differences in sexual behavior between rural and urban areas. Studies rarely draw attention to men's sexuality, implicitly taking the level of men's sexual desires as a constant across the urban-rural divide. By assuming that all men are equally likely to engage in sexual conduct, responsibility for the countryside's alleged sexual promiscuity is pinned on the rural woman for failing to fulfill the traditional female duty of policing the body and thereby maintaining the community's moral order. The culpability of those women is extenuated only because they are acting under the influence of passions, against which they are culturally defenseless.

Even before migration skyrocketed in the earlier 1990s, the *People's Daily* began featuring articles on the dangers of the unchecked fertility of migrant women. The earliest example—a 1988 article titled, "Concerns About Over-Reproduction" (*chaosheng de danyou*)—helped

introduce the issue to the general public: “They [migrant women] bear children above the one-child quota, disturbing the implementation of the family planning policy” (Huang, 1990). Urbanites suddenly awoke to find that their homes and neighborhoods had become a haven for rural fugitives from state reproductive policies.

These twin characteristics of mobility and fertility are condensed in the epithet, “over-quota guerrilla force” (*chaosheng youjidui*)—also the title of a comedy skit featured in the 1990 Spring Festival broadcast (Huang, 1988). In this performance, a rural husband and wife—performed by Huang Hong and Song Dandan, respectively—engage in a humorous dialogue about their reproductive travails. The husband is frustrated by the fact that, among the six children to whom his wife has given birth, not a single one is a boy. He vows to continue to enlarge his family until his wife successfully produces a son. To create such a large family, the couple has had to evade family-planning officials by wandering nonstop throughout the country. The names of their daughters testify to the breadth of their travels; each child is named after the place in which she was born, including some of China’s most exotic and out-of-the-way locations like Hainandao (on China’s southernmost tip) and Tulufan (on the eastern border of Xinjiang). Thus, by the early 1990s, the Chinese public was well acquainted with the “problem” of migrant women and the increased rate of their fertility.

In the popular media, violence and sexuality are intertwined in the portrayal of rural women in pornographic magazines sold at train stations. These pornographic magazines are meant to satisfy the sexual desires of travelers and city men and to provide economic profits. Because of the state censorship of pornography, these magazines combine violence (rape, abuse, and crime) and sexual descriptions under the camouflage of “legal education.” As McClintock argues, “There is every evidence that where sexual reciprocity is censored, sexual violence prevails” (McClintock, 1992, p. 114).

These magazines contain stories of promiscuous, sexually available, and fallen rural women. One article says that the goal of all rural women in a village is to “make love to every male worker in the adjacent village.” The women are said to invite the male workers to sleep with them. One rural woman allegedly sleeps with six men per night; some seduce the workers into a one-night stand just for a meal; others have 60 workers waiting in a line to make love to them (Li, 2000). Articles also recount stories of rural women who exchange male rural partners every day or make love to men in public parks. They not only engage in the “mad” process, but also cruelly murder

the men's wives. The magazines record stories of rural women murdering other women for a male lover, or seducing every driver who comes to the village. They even wait on the roads, targeting drivers to satisfy their primitive sexual desires (Dong, 1995).

Whereas pornographic magazines depict rural women as promiscuous to stimulate and satisfy male readers' sexual desires, the state media tries to control and manage rural women's alleged unbridled sexuality. A 40-episode TV drama called *Red Spider* provides a lively media education (Zhang and Xiao, 1998). This TV series relates the stories of the short lives of 10 female criminals. These women "used to have their own dreams and ideals, but chose a road to their ruin, for which they were severely punished." This TV drama is designed to "warn women to respect high morals, family responsibilities and social consciences and to lead healthy lives." Female criminals are compared to "red spiders," with "red" signifying "female," and "spider" signifying "poisonous," "dangerous," and "vicious." These women's criminal experiences are dramatized in the play by focusing on their locked handcuffs and tearful confessions before execution.

One of the episodes describes a vicious rural woman named Lan Hua. Lan is bought into her husband's village with 5 thousand yuan, and later gives birth to a son. She is involved with a married man, Zhu, from the same village. Because of her extramarital affairs, Lan's husband severely abuses her at home. Unable to bear the physical abuse, she deliberately irritates her husband every day by recounting her sexual escapades with her lover. Infuriated, her husband eventually succumbs to a fatal disease and passes away. After his death, Lan murders both her own seven-year-old son and her husband's brother because of their attempts to meddle with her affairs with her lover, Zhu. Irrational and dependent, Lan asks Zhu to take her away. In the end, Lan is arrested and executed because, as a police officer observes, "immoral love leads to death."

In this TV play, Lan is portrayed as a slave to her sexuality and emotions. In reality, this image has become so influential that Chinese police officer arrested and nearly executed one innocent peasant woman. Before any investigation or interviews were conducted, this peasant woman was presumed to have conspired with her "extramarital lover" to murder her own husband (Liu, 1998). After several years of petitioning the Supreme Court, her case was finally cleared. Other recorded cases involve rural women being brutally beaten up and mistakenly arrested by police on charges of prostitution (He, 2001; Yang, 2001). In these cases, a demonstration of their virginity is necessary for their release. A loss of virginity signifies moral

failing and prostitution (Liu, 2000). Lan's case in this play not only reinforces the stereotype of rural women, but also warns other rural women to protect their sexuality and morality.

This othering process is accomplished by the marginalization and degradation of the dangerous social group of rural migrant women. In particular, their "threatening" and "contaminating" sexuality and their desire to "occupy" and "transgress" the urban space constitute the state's biggest concern. The state's call for migrants' return to their rural hometowns becomes the central message. When this message fails to work and migrant women choose to stay rather than leave the city, the state has to reintensify the boundary between the moral, demure, and modest urban woman and the sexually unbridled, rural migrant women.

Performing Constructed Images

Media discourse powerfully locks in rural migrant women as static political and cultural second-class citizens. Do they have any way out? Moore argues that the resistance does not need to be "discursive, coherent or conscious" (Moore, 1994). In fact, if one cannot resist outside the dominant discourse or structure, one can at least displace oneself within it. Women can refuse the construction of gender by approaching it "deviously and ironically," or "refer to it endlessly," or, a shift in meaning can result from a "reordering of practical activities" (Moore, 1994). One of the major ways to contest the discourse is to interpret and reinterpret. In this section, I argue that hostesses' resistance takes place within this hegemonic structure, epitomized by their performance of the represented images.

Based on Foucault's work, Butler contends that there is no inner essential self; it is only through performance that identities are made in a hierarchical relationship (1993). As such, performance is both a constitutive and political act. More specifically, Butler theorizes gender as a performance or an enactment of cultural norms. In other words, female and male opposition become naturalized and reified as people repeatedly act out, perform, or cite the conventions of maleness and femaleness. Thus, Butler pinpoints the theatrical agency of the drags who, through performing a hyperbolic version of "female," parody the naturalized gender dichotomy and ultimately call it into question. Similarly, hostesses perform the constructed negative images imposed on them as a survival strategy and a means of resistance within a hierarchical relationship. Their performance is a self-conscious negotiation with the hegemonic imperative and

a vehicle or space in which to imagine a sense of belonging and a first-class citizenship.

The job of the bar hostess is to serve her clients. In exchange, the client compensates the hostess with money. Within this seemingly simple exchange relationship, however, hostesses are in constant negotiation with male customers. Hostesses attempt to extract from their clients additional benefits that go beyond the basic, flat-rate fee for their services. These perquisites include tips and gifts and, most important, access to the customers' social networks. One of my informants, a twenty-year-old rural woman from Hunan, explained to me that the key to being a successful hostess is the ability to establish a stable relationship with the customer and then to exploit him. To reach this goal, as she and many other hostesses emphasized, the hostess needs to play on customer's *expectations* and *stereotypes* of how a hostess should act.

Consider this scene I witnessed in a karaoke room during my fieldwork: Around 20 women, sent in by *Mami*, lined up before several male clients in a karaoke suite. The male customers, casually sitting on a sofa, inspected the women from left to right, with critical expressions on their faces. Eager to be chosen, the women struck provocative poses to gain the men's attention. They played with hair and winked at the clients. In the middle of this examination process, *Mami* pulled one hostess over to the front and said, "What about this one? She's got big eyes!" A customer pointed at the woman and said, "Big eyes mean big vagina!" followed by fits of laughter from the other customers. At these words, the woman quietly retreated into the group. This embarrassing remark did not stop *Mami*. "We also have one with tight buttocks. She will surely serve you well!" She called out, "Come over here, Tight Buttocks! Come to the front, Tight Buttocks!" At these words, I saw a pretty woman in a tight cheongsam move to the front. A male customer raised one finger at her, motioning her to come over. At this gesture, the woman almost leaped to the man's side and hung on to his arm. Another customer pointed at a plump woman in the group and shouted at her, "Hey, are those breasts fake or real?" The hostess responded by gently shaking her full figure. The customer, apparently unsatisfied, turned to all the women and cried out, "Whose breasts are the largest? Who wants her breast to be fondled? Come and sit beside me!"

In this scene, the hostesses perform in hypersexual manner with provocative poses and salacious winking in response to clients' licentious remarks. Such a hypersexual image projects the rural women's cultural portrait as sexually promiscuous and available. As shown in this scene, one hostess, despite the customer's insulting comments

about her breasts, continued her erotic performance to gain the customer's favor. The woman with "tight buttocks" demonstrated her willingness to be sexually dominated by jumping to the embrace of the customer.

To lure clients, hostesses present a hypersexual and lustful image by winking at the clients, wearing revealing clothes, and assuming seductive postures. They purr, laugh, scream, or moan when clients prey on their bodies, and they sing songs to seduce clients and convey their "devotion." For instance, a hostess chose a song titled "Why Do You Love Other Women Behind My Back? (*weishenmo ni beizhe wo ai bieren?*)" As she was singing the song, she fondled her client, leaned her whole body over him, and coquettishly asked him, "My husband [*laogong*], why do you make love to other women behind my back?" Outside of karaoke bars, hostesses send tantalizing phone messages to their clients, such as "Making love is fun. A woman with large breasts is like a tiger or a wolf. A woman with flat breasts has unfathomably superior techniques. Let's make love. . . ." Hostesses commonly boast to each other about the "whore-like sexuality" (*sao*) that their clients love most.

By allowing their bodies to be sexually fragmented and erotically staged for marketing, hostesses refuse the state's attempt to regulate rural women's promiscuous and transgressive sexuality and to control their sexuality for purely reproductive purposes. Hostesses perform media images of their hypersexuality in order to extract profit from male clients.

Cultural Legitimacy and Flexible Citizenship

In *Flexible Citizenship*, Aihwa Ong (1999) delineates the cultural strategy of flexible citizenship of the overseas Chinese business elite. Some purchase houses and send their children to prestigious universities in the United States. Others rely on *guanxi*—personal and kinship networks—to earn rights of residence in Australia, Canada, and the United States. As such, their economic power is converted into social and cultural capital. At times when it meets the obstacle of symbolic racial hierarchies already established in the American places of residence, some use philanthropy, particularly to the arts and to universities, as a strategy to gain social prestige and acceptance and offset White resistance to Asian mobility.

Similarly, hostesses convert their economic power and *guanxi* with clients to cultural legitimacy and first-class citizenship. Considering their job to be both a sacrifice and a stepping-stone to their

goals, almost every hostess derives some degree of social and cultural advantage from her relationships with clients. Such cultural legitimacy includes travel, marriage to clients, further education, and business investment opportunities.

My hostess friend Hong learned English, typing, and computer science from her client boyfriend Chen. Chen even offered her a computer to practice with. She told me that having Chen as a free instructor instead of paying for classes saved her a great deal of money. Ever since she learned to type and send e-mails, we have been updating each other about changes in our lives through the Internet. During my research in Dalian, I also witnessed quite a few hostesses who paid for classes to learn occupational skills such as tailoring, hairdressing, and beautification.

Hostesses also enjoy increasing physical mobility. Clients often drive hostesses around the city or take them along on sightseeing trips. Hostess Zhang used to show me piles of photographs taken in Shanghai, Beijing, Shenyang, and other major cities. Hostesses not only traveled with clients, but also traveled in groups or at times, alone. During my research in the karaoke bars, four hostesses traveled to Beijing to meet an internet friend who studied at the China University of Political Science and Law. My friends Huang and Li traveled to Shanghai alone for different purposes. Huang went to temples at Shanghai to pray for good fortune in the new year; Li went to Shanghai to meet with her hostess friends who were working in Shanghai. While physical mobility is hard to achieve for most in China today, hostesses' economic power and their relationships with clients give them easy access to travel.

Some hostesses managed to procure first-class political citizenship. It is by no means rare for their clients who are officials to issue them free temporary resident cards or urban household registration cards (*hukou*). This transforms them into legitimate first-class citizens. For instance, my friend Yu went out with a client who was an official. He arranged for her temporary resident card to be stamped for a whole year free of charge. Another hostess, Han, had an urban household registration card issued to her for free. She was then holding two registration cards, one rural and one urban. She was very proud and deemed herself "a very successful woman."

Wealthy clients kept a great number of hostesses. As a result, some hostesses became not only "legitimate urbanites with urban residency cards," but also entrepreneurial owners of businesses such as sauna bars, gift shops, karaoke bars, and restaurants. Of the 2 hundred hostesses I studied, 6 were able to move beyond their profession through marriage to their clients. For instance, hostess Han

was married to the treasury director of a prestigious hotel in Dalian. Before marriage, Han earned enough money to buy two houses, one for her family in her rural hometown in Heilongjiang, the other in Dalian. She told me that nine people in her family were supported by her income alone: her parents and seven other brothers and sisters. Han gave her brother 25,000 yuan as a wedding present and similar amounts to her sisters on the birth of their children. She has now been married for more than two years and runs a hair salon bought by her husband in Shenzhen.

Clients commonly introduce hostesses to new job opportunities, including work in other industries such as beauty parlors. While in Dalian, I helped out during the day at a small clothing boutique run by a former hostess, Zhang. At the time we were introduced, Zhang had already been retired from hostessing for a few months. Her ability to open the store and keep it afloat, however, crucially depended on the financial backing of her lover, whom she had met while still working at the karaoke bar. Money from her lover also made it possible for her to maintain her former fashion habits. Clothing remained a central preoccupation for Zhang, even though she was no longer subject to the occupational demands of hostessing. Her particular clothing practices, however, had been altered to fit in with her new environment. Zhang was now surrounded not by other hostesses but by city women who worked in the surrounding stores in the same shopping plaza. Her old wardrobe from her days at the bar would have scandalized these women and instantly revealed her former identity as a sex worker, exposing Zhang to discrimination, harassment, and most likely eviction. The threat of exposure was intensified by the talk of other vendors who claimed to be able to detect hostesses by their unseemly garb.

By looking for those elements that remain constant across these changes, we can tell which aspects of hostesses' clothing are nonnegotiable and therefore most likely tied up with their sense of identity and self. Zhang toned down her look but tellingly without discarding the hostesses' characteristic penchant for foreign fashion. In particular, Zhang switched from the sexy fashions of Korean clothes to cute and more modest Japanese fashion.

Zhang would sometimes take advantage of my presence at her boutique to slip out during lulls in business and do some shopping of her own. After one such shopping excursion, Zhang returned dressed head to toe in a cute, Japanese-style outfit. The centerpiece of the outfit was a form-fitting, pink T-shirt with the global Americanized girl-chic Hello-Kitty cartoon emblazoned across the chest. Zhang

introduced the outfit to the other vendors, emphasizing above all that she was wearing genuine imported Japanese clothes. Her strategy worked. Zhang was awash with accolades from the other vendors. "It's so cute!" (*Zhen keai!*), they chorused.

Zhang's case illustrates how some retired hostesses are transformed into legitimate first-class citizens through the acquisition of a legitimate economic identity. In this case, her body became a site where appropriate fashion could legitimate her first-class citizenship. As another hostess, Sun, proudly boasted to me, "My boyfriend always says that I do not look like a rural woman at all. When I walk on the street, police cannot tell that I am from the countryside, so they don't ask me for my temporary resident card anymore." Like other migrants in the city, Sun had previously been required to show her temporary resident card on the street, and this caused her to live in constant fear and anxiety. By not being harassed by the police, Sun had passed the most important test of the legitimacy of her first-class citizenship.

Hostesses' resistance and performance of their constructed image during sex work helps them redistribute urban men's political, economic, and social resources and obtain legitimate first-class citizenship. Hostesses fake, ridicule, and rebel against their representation in the media. Indeed, media representations become tools for hostesses' political, cultural, and economic gain. The expressive freedom enjoyed by hostesses in their offstage lives allows them to construct a "true" and "ideal" self. If the onstage hostess is a weak and vulnerable victim, the offstage hostess is a strong and aggressive manipulator. Boundary-maintenance performance in sexual transaction helps hostesses subvert gender and rural-urban political and cultural hierarchy by gleaning first-class citizenship from urban men. The high status that hostesses achieve, however, is always at risk because of the entrenched stigma attached to their rural origins and sex work.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Understanding Disability Rights in a Global Context

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This article discusses the historical and present-day situations of people with disabilities in the United States and internationally. Subjected to routine abuse, living in poverty, and denied basic rights and freedoms, more attention needs to be paid to equal protections for people with disabilities. By drawing parallels with other groups with minority status, critical disability studies theorists have indicated a way forward that demonstrates the capabilities and aspirations of citizens with disabilities, and with protections and rights guaranteed through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007), perhaps equality is in sight.

The field of disability studies is a relatively new area of critical inquiry that promotes a social model of understanding people with disabilities¹ in the context of their families, communities, and societies (Gabel & Danforth, 2008; Valle & Connor, 2011). By examining the intersection between and among race, class, gender, poverty, and disability, we can strengthen, and possibly revise, our culturally and socially constructed understanding of the issues for people with disabilities on a local (North American) and international level. This is important in terms of inclusive international development and assistance, human rights, health and welfare, and civil society (Berman Bieler, 2009). It is equally crucial to understand the varying conditions for persons with disabilities since there is a history of primarily Western nations offering technical and monetary assistance to developing nations, which are then obligated to demonstrate “tangible results and products” (i.e., building institutions and congregate

care facilities²), thereby reifying the social problems we have tried to remedy in North American society (Peters, 2008).

Consider Some Statistics About People With Disabilities

Persons with disabilities account for 10% of the world's population, with 80% of those living in developing countries (Disabled World, 2011). According to statistics provided by the World Bank, as reported by Disabled World (2011), 20% of citizens living in the poorest countries are considered to have a disability. Today there are an estimated 700 million people worldwide who have some form of a disability (Disabled World, 2011).

The United Nations' definition of a disability includes "those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with the various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UN, 2011). The definition of "daily life functioning" as described by the World Health Organization (WHO) is a condition whereby a person cannot complete activities that would ordinarily be considered part of daily life activities (Mont, 2007).

Seven hundred million people may seem like an extraordinary, perhaps exaggerated number of people. However, when we consider all the people living in poverty, with food insecurity or malnutrition in many countries; war-torn regions with children being armed for conflicts; a lack of education and health care for many young girls and women; children living in dangerous toxic environments and forced to work at an early age, without an education; and, those born having a congenital disability or developmental delay, in total there are a large number of people globally, who are affected by a disabling condition. In fact, people with disabilities constitute the largest minority in the world (Disabled World,³ 2011). Learning and living in untenable situations creates a huge barrier to academic and social success as a citizen (Collier, 2010).

In contrast to the social model of disability, the medical model for disability, formerly promoted by the World Health Organization and other United Nations entities, relied on identifying individuals as having particular disorders, diseases, congenital abnormalities, acquired disfigurements, and psychological problems (Mont, 2007). Understanding disability from a medical model perspective required one to consider that the person is sick, broken, damaged, or diseased in some fashion (Gabel & Danforth, 2008). For the purposes of "counting" the number of people who might have a disability, neither

the World Health Organization, nor the UN and the World Bank could agree on a comprehensive definition of disability. Further, if such a definition were to be determined, individuals were likely to underreport their circumstances and conditions due to social stigma (Mont, 2007).

From a Medical Model to a Social Model of Disability

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, negative definitions of people with disabilities caused significant trauma and social stigma within North American society (Goffman, 1961; Wolfensberger, 1971, 2011; Trent, 1994). The long-held medical view was that people with disabilities needed to be: diagnosed (within the medical community); prescribed a treatment (in a clinical setting such as an institution); governed and permitted to get better (with a professional cure, again, in an institution); or languish and die, without care for the “incurables” (D’Antonio, 2004). The professional judgment of the medical system was deemed omniscient and final (Penney & Stastny, 2008).

In Wolf Wolfensberger’s classic article, “Will There Always Be an Institution? I: The Impact of Epidemiological Trends” (Wolfensberger, 2011), institutions are characterized by efforts to separate people from the “outside” using a process of *deindividualization*. The following features of such places are:

1. An environment that aims at a low common denominator among its residents;
2. Congregation of persons into residential groups larger than those typically found in the community;
3. Reduced autonomy of residents, and increased regimentation;
4. Ordinary citizens sleep, study, work, and play in separate contexts and settings. . . . [T]hese settings tend to be physically fixed under one roof or on one contiguous campus (Wolfensberger, 2011, pp. 416–417).

In contrast to the limiting and dehumanizing medical model, the disability studies social model promotes the needs and interests of persons with disabilities within a social context, relying on individual perspectives and less on clinical professional judgment (Valle & Conner, 2011). Persons with disabilities can and do speak for themselves,

educating others about their unique situation in society. Learning directly from a person with a particular disability is the best way to understand and accept the person's capabilities, rather than focus on the deficits of the person (Giangreco & Taylor, 2003; Lehr, 2009). This way of thinking has opened up a new way of appreciating the gifts, talents, and opportunities we have when we include persons with disabilities in our everyday lives, whether professionally, socially, or/and personally.

Intersections Between Other Oppressed Groups

Scholars of disability studies often compare this emerging field to the civil rights movement involving African Americans in the 1950s, and as Longmore (2003) notes: “. . . social scientists studying the disability experience have increasingly turned to a minority group model, defining ‘disability’ not as fated and ‘inevitable’ condition, but as a socially constructed identity and role triggered by a stigmatized biological trait” (p. 37). Similar to the women's movement, a core issue for feminist disability studies scholars is to uphold the value of different ways of knowing and understanding borne of the lived experience of having a disability as a woman (Mairs, 1996; Garland-Thomson, 1997 & 2001). By making connections between race, class, gender, and disability, critical theorists have supported the intersectionality of all four groups (Conner, 2008). There is a shared history of oppression in North America among: people of color, with shifting definitions of “color” (Shapiro, 1993); those who are poor and living in poverty, including the “hidden” poverty of formerly middle-class citizens who are unemployed and now homeless;⁴ women, and exclusionary practices in education, the workplace and in general society; and disability, a condition that tends to frighten most people and make the “disabled body” disgusting (Bogdan, 1988).

Similar to other oppressed groups, people with disabilities in North America have been subjected to: experimentation (D'Antonio, 2004); segregation (Wolfensberger, 1971, 2011); punishment, and control (Lovett, 1984; Kohn, 1996); abuse at the hand of caregivers (Sobsey, 1994); and, are often considered to be subhuman (Bogdan, 1988; Wen, 2011). Further, individuals with disabilities are often trapped in social roles that deny their sexuality, ability to parent, and the fundamental right to live with whom, and wherever they choose (Shapiro, 2004).

Internationally, people with disabilities, in particular women and children, do not fare well either. As reported by the UN, and

the organizations Disabled World (2011) and Inclusion International (2011), persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence or rape, with less access to police intervention, legal protections, or preventive care. A survey in Orissa, India, found that almost all of the women and girls with disabilities were beaten at home, 25% of women with intellectual disabilities had been raped and 6% of women with disabilities had been forcibly sterilized (Disabled World, 2011). Research indicates that violence against children with disabilities occurs at annual rates at least 1.7 times greater than for their peers without disabilities (Global Campaign for Education, 2011).

Still a Long Way to Go

Even though the social model of disability sounds reasonable and acceptable on face value, we know there is still a long way to go in terms of attitudes in North America and around the world. Western society still holds ableist views, which hold the person with a disability up to the same standard of performance and ability as those who are able-bodied, and fears the person with a disability (Gabel & Danforth, 2008). It is one of the last bastions of discrimination in the United States, and can be very subtle and unconscious on the part of the citizen, in spite of laws to protect against discrimination (The Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990) and guarantees to educate all citizens (Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2009).

In fact, persons with disabilities have an employment ratio of 18% compared to 63% of workers in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Students with disabilities have the highest drop-out rate in secondary education, approximately 70% in the United States (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2010). Women and children with disabilities are more than 2.5 times likely to be physically or sexually abused, often at the hand of a caregiver (Sobsey, 1994; Morton, 2009). Persons with disabilities are more than 2.5 times likely to have physician-assisted suicide suggested to them as a viable “way out,” presumably to make things easier for the family caregivers (Not Dead Yet, 1996). Equally, there are examples of women choosing to terminate their pregnancy based on genetic counseling, after being advised that their child *might* have a disability such as Down syndrome. A recent court decision in Florida granted a family over \$10 million in damages because their son was born without arms and one leg; had they known in advance of his birth, according to the mother, they would have elected termination (Heasley, 2011).

Ethicist and animal rights advocate Peter Singer (1993) proposes a quality of life algorithm with which we can determine how likely a newborn with a disability will perceive his or her quality of life, with an argument that some infants with disabilities are not worth extending life-saving treatments, in contrast to higher-level primates and mammals who *clearly* [emphasis added] have a higher potential than a newborn with a disability (Drake, 2009). Singer (1993) has also written about individuals with physical disabilities, including quadriplegia, cerebral palsy, and hydrocephaly, to name a few, claiming they are considered to be a burden on society. Animal rights notwithstanding, some suggest that adding a binary argument that pits people against animals is not helpful to anyone, be it human or nonhuman animals (Nocella, Bentley, & Duncan, 2012).

The same arguments about an inferior or reduced quality of life are considered within the court system, enabling acquittal for defendants who committed infanticide, homicide, or fratricide against a person with a disability (Drake, 2009). Most juries “sympathize” with the heroic caregiver who has certainly given up a fulfilling life in order to care for their disabled loved one. Medical procedures have also been devised to keep a child’s body from growing into maturity, to “ease her comfort” (by not having to menstruate and having large breasts), to “keep her body small for lifting” (known as *attenuated growth* by a method using growth-stunting hormones), all with her “best interests at heart” (The Ashley Treatment, 2009). This technique could be considered as “boutique medicine,” forever altering a person’s body for the convenience of others and not for aesthetic value concerning the person (Gibbs, 2007). One could argue that the Ashley Treatment is not dissimilar to plastic and cosmetic surgery, however the main issue is that Ashley herself did not choose the procedure that fundamentally changed her life, keeping her in miniature.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons With Disabilities

In order to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, who obviously were not protected under the standard UN Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations developed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007), which has 181 states parties as signatories to date, and 106 ratifications by states (UN Enable, 2011). This convention is necessary to ensure that the needs and interests of persons with disabilities are considered and provided in all aspects of life: community, education, health care, and citi-

zenship.⁵ The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities contains 35 articles that are intended to ensure rights in education, community living, employment, legal capacities, health and welfare, and equal opportunity. The guiding principles of the convention are as follows:

1. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
2. Nondiscrimination
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
5. Equality of opportunity
6. Accessibility
7. Equality between men and women
8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities (UN Enable, 2008, preamble)

To bolster the efforts to educate children, the United Nations has also adopted the "Education for All by 2015" policy, which includes children with disabilities (UNESCO, 2008). Specifically, inclusive education is promoted as the best way to educate all children, by including students in their neighborhood, home school, with peers, and by providing specific pedagogy that benefits all children (Inclusion International, 2011).

Continued Vigilance Is Necessary

People with disabilities have not always been considered within the international context for human rights. For example, it has taken the Washington, DC-based nongovernmental organization Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI) several years to be fully recognized within the same context as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. While the latter organizations have rightfully been publicizing the disappearance, torture and inhumane conditions of

prisoners, MDRI has been documenting and reporting on the living conditions of persons with disabilities in institutions, which are abysmal, inhumane, and appalling to most citizens (MDRI reports, 2002, 2006, 2007, & 2011). Children are warehoused without clothing, proper nutrition, hygiene, and left to die in cribs, with their arms and legs bound in rags. *If* they survive, as adults with disabilities they now have permanent physical and emotional disabling conditions due to deprivation, abuse, malnutrition, disease, and have no hope for escape or release.

The work of MDRI has significantly affected the policy decisions made within the European Union, particularly as it relates to preconditions for state membership within the EU. For example, Romania was forced to examine its treatment of institutionalized children and adults with disabilities, as a precondition for accession to the EU, and subsequently, with advocacy from within the country, the group Pentru Voi has provided training, community living options, and support for families within a large area of Romania (Inclusion International, 2009). A report on the conditions on living conditions in Serbia was released (MDRI, 2007), indicating deplorable conditions for individuals with disabilities living in state care facilities. This report has been used as leverage to require Serbia to conform to better social conditions as a precondition for EU membership.

Another issue in international advocacy efforts is the use of electroshock (also known as electroconvulsive therapy, or ECT) against prisoners and people with disabilities as a punishment. For example, in Turkey (MDRI, 2008) and Argentina (MDRI, 2007), until recently it was a common psychiatric practice to use electroshock treatment, *without anesthesia*, to “teach adults [with a disability] a lesson.” The international standards for care within the psychiatric mental health community were not being applied in certain countries, even though the primary psychiatrists knew this would violate current practices and would certainly cause significant pain (MDRI Turkey report, 2008; MDRI Argentina report, 2007).

Lest we remain smug in the United States, believing we do it better here with more modern facilities, there have been several recent cases of abuse and neglect for individuals with a disability. One prominent case involves a behavioral intervention school in Massachusetts that has used aversive behavioral techniques for decades (Wen, 2011). Students have died in residence and while under their care, as a result of electric shock cattle prods; wearing specially designed helmets that emit harsh auditory stimulation; noxious substances squirted into nostrils; being held in four-point restraints for

days on end; and random shocks that exceed the industrial standards of care for animal livestock. It is reported that the cattle prods used at this school are designed to provide a shock that is twice the legal limit for cattle.

Mental Disability Rights International successfully petitioned the United Nations Special Rapporteur on behalf of the children and adults held at the “school” (known as the Judge Rotenberg Center), citing these violations as human rights abuses using the Geneva Convention Against Torture (MDRI, 2011). While the school is still operating, the Director, Dr. Matthew Israel, was forced to resign and serve five years probation in a plea deal (Wen, 2011). A court-appointed monitor is now in place at the school to keep an eye on the situation. The irony is that the school, originally called the Behavior Research Institute (BRI) was also under court supervision and renamed the Judge Rotenberg Center (JRC) when these recent charges were laid. Clearly government oversight in this situation was lacking and inconsequential.

While the previous examples of mistreatment of persons with disabilities in the United States are clearly harmful, more subtle forms of discrimination can be seen in our society. Here are a few to consider: the use of the word *retard* in everyday language in the media; a lack of physical accessibility, even though the Americans with Disabilities Act has been enforced since 1990; selective genetic counseling to terminate pregnancies for “suspected disabilities”; and neighborhood opposition to group homes continues. How can we turn the tide against abuse and discrimination of people with disabilities and support each other to become valued members in our society?

Given that this group is the largest minority in the world, we have an untapped sector in all societies that have been marginalized, ignored, and underappreciated. With a commitment to education, health care, nutrition, public safety, and security, these individuals and their families can be (and already are) contributing members of society. In the international development aid system, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) tend to view their mission as a single set of outcomes, such as providing wells for a village, better nutrition, immunizations, education, and organizational structures for civil society, all of which are laudable and necessary. A new framework of *inclusive development* considers all aspects of human growth and well-being within a society, with a particular emphasis on persons with disabilities as contributors with capabilities, and not as a burden on society (Nussbaum, 1997, 2006).

A Way Forward

There are positive examples to study and inform our understanding, using Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (2006), which offers 10 factors to promote the needs of people with disabilities, in order for them to live a fulfilling life. Nussbaum's work is an *aspirational* set of ideals, listed below in Table 18.1. If we combine these ideals with the guaranteed rights under the UN Convention, we have a newer, positive way of thinking about supports for our most vulnerable citizens. If we choose to support people with disabilities in our personal lives, in our communities, and in society, here are some ways we can use the Capabilities Approach as set of "golden rules" to live by.

Table 18.1. The Capabilities Approach Framework (Nussbaum, 2006) and Comparative Articles from UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (2007)

Capabilities Framework and Corresponding Articles From the UN Convention on Rights of Persons With Disabilities	Examples of Aspirations and Expectations
<p>1. Life Lived to the fullest</p> <p>Articles 10, 15, 25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life spans of WHO expectations for all countries • Quality of life and end of life decision-making
<p>2. & 3. Bodily health and bodily integrity Freedom to pursue a healthy life without restraint</p> <p>Articles 10, 11, 14–17, 19, 25, 26, 28</p>	<p>Freedom from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attenuated Growth Treatment, "Ashley Treatment" to artificially keep someone small, "easier" to care for • Forced sterilization • Do not resuscitate orders • Experimental drug and surgical treatments • Abuse & aversive behavioral therapy
<p>4. Senses, imagination, and thought Freedom to experience nature within natural ecosystem</p> <p>Articles 8, 10, 14–21, 24, 28–30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive community living • Education for all 2015 • Opportunities for exploration of environment • Sensory stimulation • Guaranteed a form of communication with assistive technology

continued on next page

Table 18.1. *Continued*

Capabilities Framework and Corresponding Articles From the UN Convention on Rights of Persons With Disabilities	Examples of Aspirations and Expectations
<p>5. Emotions Freedom to express natural emotional life and intelligence</p> <p>Articles 8, 12, 14, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 28–30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional lives interpreted as “appropriate behavior”; not dangerous • Permitted to marry and have families, or adopt • Seen as emotionally mature
<p>6. Practical Reason Viewed as capable, competent, sentient beings</p> <p>Articles 5, 12–14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 28</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally competent (i.e., rule of law, legal court system, witnesses) • Capable of decision making for self, have guardians who assist • Personal futures planning • Realistic to dream beyond present
<p>7. Affiliation Freedom to associate with all species of choice</p> <p>Articles 5–7, 12–14, 17, 21–23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with family and chosen friends • Inclusive communities • Inclusive recreation and leisure
<p>8. Other Species Respect for all species, not just own</p> <p>Articles 5, 10–18, 22, 23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given inclusive opportunities to investigate or explore nature • Animals viewed as companions or loved ones not just in servitude (i.e., guide dogs)
<p>9. Play Inclusive opportunities for play and recreation</p> <p>Articles 5, 8, 9, 18–21, 24, 30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive creation in communities • Accessible play spaces or adapted equipment
<p>10. Control over one’s environment Dignity of space, place in community and society</p> <p>Articles 5, 8, 9, 12–18, 30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living wage and opportunities for employment • Viewed as competent to own property • Permitted to speak or use technology to communicate • Valued roles in society • Freedom to live with whom you choose

In summary, people with disabilities, locally in the United States, and globally continue to face enormous obstacles for full participation in society. Constituting the largest minority in the world, cutting across all ethnic, cultural, economic, and social ties, there should be a stronger emphasis placed on public education, health, and inclusive community living in order to incorporate all citizens. With protections and rights afforded by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is within our reach to attain these goals in our society. By assuming that people are more capable, everyone can benefit with equal participation and inclusion.

Notes

1. The author uses “person-first” language to discuss people with disabilities. This terminology places the individual ahead of the disabling label. This is a legal requirement in New York State for all government offices and state-funded public institutions, and is a preferred term by self-advocates who have disabilities, according to Inclusion International that represents 200 member organizations from 115 countries.

2. In 2011 the organization Mental Disability Rights International reported that the EU was pressured to not grant funds to Serbia to build a congregate care facility.

3. For a more detailed, global account of the status of persons living with a disability see “World Facts and Statistics on Disabilities and Disability Issues,” from *Disabled World*, 2011.

4. For a detailed and thorough account of employment statistics for persons with disabilities see the 2010 Labor Force Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics at www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm.

5. For example, in China, newborns with disabilities are often abandoned at the hospital, without receiving their family name on official documents. This leaves the infant in a state of not being able to be legally adopted, thereby denying him or her the ordinary rights of a citizen. Similarly, other countries deny citizens the right to vote based on the perceived disability.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

Islam, Rentier States, and the Quest for Democracy in the Middle East and Africa

SETH N. ASUMAH

Introduction: Islam Today

The believers, men and women, are guardians of one another; they enjoin good and prohibit evil, perform the prayer, give alms, and obey God and His Prophet.

—Koran 9:71

Religion is among the strongest central categories of diversity in many nation-states, and Islam remains the fastest-growing religion among Africans of the continent and in the African Diaspora. In communities around the world, religion serves as a platform for cohesive organization of the general populace. However, religious diversity makes religious conflict inevitable. In contemplating the bloodshed that was concomitant with nation-building and nationalism, it would be difficult to ignore religion as a culprit. Nonetheless, religion also remains a dominant force in bringing about peace in many communities.

Of the major monotheistic religions in the world, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, people who pursue the Islamic faith are ridiculed and stereotyped by many non-Muslims more than any other groups in the United States and Africa. In my course on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), when I ask my students in the United States to participate in an exercise called “first thoughts” (what one thinks first of when, for instance, Islam is mentioned), I get a long list of stereotypes: “warmongers,” “towel heads,” “religious fanatics,”

“terrorists,” “militaristic,” “hijackers,” “kidnappers,” “polygamists,” and “undemocratic.” My students represent a cross-section of the opinion of not just the American populace but also Africans.

Some of these stereotypes may have validity, but most of them are the products of ignorance and xenophobia. Many people, especially Westerners, erroneously equate Islam and Islamization with Arab and Arabization. Certainly, they are related. The Prophet Muhammad, after all, was an Arab and received some of his Arabic cultural training from the Bedouins, the ancient desert dwellers in Arabia. Similarly, Muslims all over the world turn toward Mecca to say their prayers in Arabic. Yet not all Islamic adherents are Arabs, nor are all Arabs Muslims. Non-Arab Islamic people include Africans, African Americans, Persians, Indians, Chinese, Indonesians, and even Europeans.

Despite this diversity, in the balance of this essay, I will argue that Islam is not always compatible with Western democracy. Nonetheless, in the process of nation-building, African leaders in predominantly Islamic nation states have utilized rentier politics as a tool for securing acquiescence and quiescence from the general populace in order to sustain their hegemony through liberalization to legitimize their *raison d'être* until the recent Arab Spring. These rentier approaches and rentier shifts by regimes are concomitant with restructuring of power relations between the nation-states/power holders and different Islamic organizations and institutions within the African polity. Islam and rentierism in Africa present a challenge to the process of democratization. Concomitant with religion, Islamist movements, terrorism, conflicts over petrodollars, and the anthropomorphic nature of these nation-states are issues and questions involving the combined effects of Islam and rentier politics on the efficacy of state-citizen interaction. Contrary to the position of some political observers, for an example, Bernard Lewis (1993, 2011), that Islam and rentierism tend to distort the democratization process because they enhance hegemony maintenance of those in power, I argue that Islam supported by rentierism could reduce religious oppression and produce reasonable stability for political liberalization. Case studies from Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, and Libya are used to analyze the effects of Islam and rentier politics on these nation-states.

The Arabic word *Islam*, derived from the root *salama*, meaning peace, is a neologism. The word's meaning is therefore currently open to several interpretations, and it has been translated to connote “submission,” “resignation,” and “obedience” to the will of Allah—the Islamic term for the only omnipresent, omnipotent, and merciful God, who has no feminine or plural attributes (Husain, 1995, p. 5). With

over 1 billion adherents in the world today, it remains the second-largest religion spreading throughout Europe, Asia, North America, and Africa.

Nevertheless, the discourse over Islamic fundamentalism and the challenge to the authority of the modern nation-state, television images of a Muslim, events such as terrorism, the September 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York by Muslims, the challenge to the authority of the state by Islamic revivalists in Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, and Libya and the renewed War on Terrorism by the West have all called for a re-examination of Islamic theosophy and its relationship to democracy. Furthermore, the dynamics of the world's political economy and the West's dependence on petroleum resources have posed a new challenge to the nation, the Islamic community—the *umma*. In the *umma*, Shiite-Sunni divergence, the nature of rentier politics in Africa, and the seeming incompatibility of Islam and democracy are complex issues that raise new questions about the authority of the nation-state.

In most Islamic nation states in Africa, politics and religion are inseparable, and rentier politics supported by primary resources such as petroleum can facilitate the process of legitimacy of the rulers in maintaining their hegemony. Islamic Middle Eastern nation-states around the Arabian Peninsula have been more successful in engaging in rentier politics than African countries with oil and large populations of Muslims. Yet Islamization, supported by rentier philosophies in some countries, has facilitated the process of nation building with a modicum of democracy in predominantly Muslim countries in Africa. As Calabresi, Crumley, Ghosh, MacLeod, McGirk, Hasnain, and Taseer note,

Even Muslim critics of the Bush Administration's style say that its post-9/11 push for political liberalization has helped rekindle debates that have long simmered across the Muslim world. . . . how Islam can accommodate the influence of democratic ideals and Western culture. In this, Ayatollah Ruhol-lah Khomeini had it right when he declared that Islam is inseparable from politics (2004, p. 60).

Even though Islam advocates peace and harmony in the community, the process of attaining and maintaining power is somewhat different from that of Christian democratic entities. In traditional Islamic communities, the principle of election has no practical significance, nor were there mechanisms whereby the general populace could request accountability from the rulers. So far as the governors

promised to abide by the Sharia—the Divine Law, legitimacy by def-
erence ensues. I will return to this discussion later in this article.

Many non-Muslim Africans, Americans, and Europeans are appalled by the infusion of mosque and state in Islamic countries. The fact is that the principle of separation of mosque and state does not technically exist in Islamic countries. Does this lead to prejudice and, at times, discrimination against people from different political cultures? Is Islam a threat to Western democracy? Is the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism aimed at purging the Muslim world of Western corruption, a “new” dynamic for challenging the state’s authority and instituting the Holy Koran as the state’s highest authority? Does the failure or the inability for the three monotheistic traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—to work out their problem of identification of divine exclusivity with ethnic-religious exclusivity serve as harbinger of ethno-religious prejudice? Will Islamic ethnonationalism continue to haunt predominantly Muslim countries in Africa where Islam is also a political force? To address these questions, I am inclined to argue that Islamic revivalism in the twenty-first century presents a new challenge to the power structure of the state and to Western democratic thinking, resulting in a misunderstanding of Islamic political culture and attitude in Africa.

Fundamentalism or Revivalism: Which Is More Oppressive and Threatening to the Nation-State?

Islamic Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is one of the favorite terms used by the Western mass media in reporting about Muslims. The term was originally used and continues to be applied to a conservative Protestant movement of nineteenth-century America. It (fundamentalism) fell into disuse and was recoined to signify and symbolize conservative movements among the major religions in Africa and the world. Islamic fundamentalists are rather aggressive in political action. They spearhead the revolutionary spirit of Islam. Islamic fundamentalists become even more aggressive when modernizing institutions of the nation-state threaten their existence. They advocate anti-Western cultures and are against lifestyles that include such things as rock music, pornography, dancing, gambling, the use of drugs, and the sale of alcohol. Fundamentalists strictly observe and abide by the teachings of the Koran—God’s holy book, and the Sharia—Islamic laws governing the individual and societal arrangements of Muslims.

The founding father of Wahhabism, Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703–1792), engaged in total iconoclasm of “refined” Islam by returning to purity, simplicity, austerity, and the piety of Islam’s classical period (Husain, 1995). Wahhabism has spread and sustained quite well in Egypt, Nigeria, Libya, and Algeria, and it is catching on quickly in the United States of America among African Americans. In Egypt, for instance, the founder of Egypt’s Dchwan Al-Muslimun, a fundamentalist leader named Hassan Al-Banna (1906–1949), outlined ambitious plans for the establishment of an Islamic state.

Islamic reform movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood have concentrated their efforts on eradicating secular Islamic governments. Fundamentalism in Islam irritates Westerners because of its “antimodernist” position and tendencies. Most Western democratic nations associate Islamic fundamentalists with groups such as Hezbollah, and movements that have followed Khomeini’s theosophy in Iran. Such groups advocate the expulsion of foreign influences and ideas, then work toward the achievement of social justice within the nation-state. Khomeini clearly painted the fundamentalist position on religion and politics and rejection of foreign conceptions of the politics/religion dichotomy. He asserts:

Do not heed those who imagine that Islam is like present-day Christianity, that the mosque is no different than the church or that Islam is merely a relationship between individual and God. Imperialist institutions instilled evil in the hearts of men, saying that religion does not mix with politics. . . . [M]ost unfortunately, some of us have given credence to those lies (Khomeini, 1979, p. 7).

Islamic fundamentalists have a passionate and sincere desire to establish an Islamic nation state based on strict interpretation of the Sharia and antimodernist positions. Denunciation of Western ideas, including the challenge to Western democracy, becomes part of the revolutionary spirit of most fundamentalists. What then is Islamic revivalism? What is the connection between Islamic fundamentalists and revivalists? Is Islamic revivalism a threat to the West and democracy?

Islamic Revivalism

Islamic revivalism invokes the insurgence, reawakening and reinterpretation of the Islamic interests, symbols, precepts, norms, and ideals, especially after a long period of relative dormancy. Ali Hillal Dessonki reiterates this position:

Islamic Revivalism refers to an increasing political activism in the name of Islam by governments and opposition groups alike. . . . Islamic groups have assumed a more assertive posture . . . as contenders for public loyalty. . . . Thus, Islamic resurgence refers to the increasing prominence and politicization of Islamic ideologies and symbols. Muslim societies and in the public life of Muslim individuals (Dessouki, 1982, p. 4).

Islamic revivalism is thus a broader concept than Islamic fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is therefore a recent embodiment of revivalism. Husain carefully notes that the manifestation of Islamic revival can include a broad spectrum of the Muslim society: populists, grassroots movements, schools, fundamentalists, government officials, and academicians, including religious approaches in solving sociopolitical problems (Husain, 1995). For this matter, it is important to emphasize that Islamic revivalism is not a monolithic force spearheaded by a single person or a group of Muslims. Islamic revivalism, as a generic term, refers to anyone, a group of people, or process that has contributed significantly to the revival of Islam.

The present form of Islamic revivalism is more globalized than localized in predominantly Islamic countries. Its presence is evident in Africa, Asia, the United States, as well as Europe. This globalization of the faith makes Islamic revivalism polycentric and anthropomorphic. Islamic revivalists are generally preoccupied with the discourse over theology, culture, economic disparity, justice, and the politics of modern-day Islamic nation-states. Foreign affairs and international relations for the good of the *umma* are a recent serious concern of revivalists. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), established in 1969 by Islamic revivalists is charged with the promotion of Islamic solidarity through socioeconomic and religio-political activities. The OIC encourages cooperation among 56 Muslim countries including over 20 African countries and adherents of the Islamic faith in other countries. Libya, Egypt, Algeria, and Nigeria are member nation states of the OIC (Wright, 1993). The OIC practices “linkage politics,” a conception propounded by James Rosenau (1969), which stresses the interconnectedness between domestic and international dimensions of organizational functions. Domestic and international politics of Islamic nations are inextricably connected and “linked.” The extraordinary turbulence that has defined Islamic fundamentalism and that of revivalism, especially in between the 1980s and 2000s, continues unabated in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, and even in some European countries such Spain and the United Kingdom. The demise

of communism and the reemergence of political Islam in both fundamentalism and revivalism have made the Western democracies and emerging nation-states of Africa more conscious and cautiously perturbed about Islamization. In Western democracies and Africa today, the preoccupation with political Islam is probably at the same level as it once was with communism at its apogee. Similarly, Western fear of the re-emergence of political Islam is rooted less in reality than in misperceptions and misunderstanding of Islamic theosophy, culture, and politics during the process of development and nation-building. Included in development crises are identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, and distribution (Roskin, 1995).

First, identity crisis probes the issue of how the general Islamic populace identifies with each other, accommodate Jews, Christians, and other religious groups, and identify with the total “nation” of Islam worldwide. Second, legitimacy is a nation-building crisis that questions the authority and leadership within the nation-state. Legitimacy is how the governed perceive that the governors are rightful. Legitimacy is not only seen in the leadership of the community, it is sought through the authority of the Koran and other religious teachings. The basis of legitimacy is the Sharia, which is a body of regulations drawn from the Koran and tradition. Third, political penetration relates to how community leaders gain legitimacy, formulate, and implement community policy or goals without force or the threat of force. There is no need to use force to gain obedience from the general populace or convert to Islam. Fourth, political participation, the process whereby individuals within the community engage in activity that impinges on the community structure and leadership capabilities, brings the populace into the decision-making process. Elie Kedourie (1992) acknowledges that:

The duty to obey the caliph was not simply the outcome or concomitant of a civil contract between rulers and the ruled: it was grounded in religion. The Koran declares; “O believers! Obey God and Obey the Prophet and those who are in authority over you” (p. 4).

Finally, the crisis that the community would have to transcend in order for it to maintain sustenance is distribution. This involves equitable distribution of resources and political power. The problem with political power is that it is the one thing in any community that is never equally distributed, and the Islamic community is no exception. Yet, Islam as a religion opposes all ethnic and racial differential that would justify the superiority of one group over others (Enayat, 1993).

Several questions arise at this juncture. First, to what extent do Islamic revivalism and rentier politics come into conflict with the nation-building process and democracy? Second, owing to Islam's specific quality as a religion that advocates submission and obedience to the will of Allah and the nation-state, there remains a theoretical and doctrinal irreconcilability between Islam and democracy. So, what then are the chances for democracy to succeed in Islamic African countries? Third, do rentier states succeed in nation building by providing the basic needs for the people and buying the silence of the general populace so that there is very little opposition to the hegemony of the state? Fourth, what is unique about Islam that complements political rentierism in the process of liberalization or democratization? In order to address these questions, I will provide a synopsis of rentier politics and with specific references to Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, and Libya, I will assess the relative propensity for democracy to succeed or fail in these nation-states.

Rentier Nation-States: Social Programs, Acquiescence, Quiescence, and Democracy

The crises of nation-building discussed above apply to all nation-states and not only Islamic ones. The modern nation state is the largest, self-sustaining, self-reliant, self-sufficient political configuration in the modern world. What political scientists call the modern nation-state is only about half a millennium old and could be traced back to the demise of older European monarchies and the emergence of strong states (Roskin, 2004). Strong modern nation-states have characteristics such as defined territorial areas, general populace, governments, and recognition from other nation-states. Nonetheless, because of global interaction and interdependence, the principles of self-sufficiency and self-reliance are all relative terms.

Rentier nation states obtain most or a substantial portion of their national revenues from the rent and profit attained from local primary resources such as oil sold to foreign clients and investors. These states therefore live off rent or income of oil or other natural resources and purchase support from their populaces by buying legitimacy through distribution of goods and services via the process of depoliticization and cooptation. Furthermore, rentier authorities practice *politics of emanation*, where the leaders treat themselves as an extension of the omnipresent and the people. If the superordinate regards him- or herself as an extension of an omnipotent being, then the subordinate denies him- or herself of independence due to mysticism surrounding the power holder.

A rentier state is anthropomorphic and it acts as a father figure for the citizens. The state indulges in placatory politics, subsidizing foodstuff, housing, and social benefits to the society. For placatory politics to be effective, in Islamic rentier states, the leaders play on Islamic philosophies, balancing the opposition and dividing resistance in order to remain hegemonic.

In Leonard Seabrooke's work on social source of financial power of Western states, he argues that "a rentier shift . . . leads to a propagation of economic social norms from the state on how the economy should work" (Seabrooke, 2006, p. 14). Furthermore, he contends that a "rentier shift is therefore a period in which the state has negatively intervened according to the above social mechanism" (Seabrooke, 2006, p. 15). In his observation of rentier politics in democratic capitalist states of England, Germany, United States, and Japan, Seabrooke conceptualizes rentier shift as negative intervention in the free market by the state when it provides assistantship to low-income groups (Seabrooke, 2006). Nonetheless, in Islamic nation-states of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as well as other Muslim countries in Africa, the phenomenon of states providing assistance to the general populace out of profits from exports and investments in primary resources may be seen by the objector as negative, but the process has produced, arguably, positive results. One may argue that the negative aspect of this practice (rentier politics) is the state's interference with the free market in addition to buying off resistance from the opposition.

Yet it is important to note that even the champion of democracy and the free market, the United States, under the Obama administration in 2009, engaged in a sort of rentier shift by bailing out Wall Street, the automobile industry, and major financial institutions to the tune of over 700 billion dollars. The Obama administration stimulus economic package of another 850 billion dollars in 2011, to assist middle income America is another rentier shift. Is this a rentier behavior? Why is rentier politics in Islamic African nation-states and the Middle East criticized, especially by Western observers?

Sorenson's work attempts to address the questions above by noting that in rentier wealth creation in Africa and the Middle East, only a few people are involved. These rentier states count on foreign investors and revenue for most of their income (Sorenson, 2006). Furthermore, in rentier politics, the states perform most of the economic activity on behalf of the general populace. The *Arab Human Development Report* of 2003 indicates that, "Economic returns do not necessarily accrue from hard work and high productivity, particularly in political systems that constrain freedom and do not encourage people to be industrious" (p. 134). In 2009, *The Arab Human Development*

Report characterized human security in the Arab world as “pervasive, often intense with consequences affecting large numbers of people—inhibits human development” (p. 2). Critics of rentier politics in the Arab world and Islamic nation-states have used the above arguments against states that lack democratic institutions and processes, and attempt to purchase the silence of the opposition in order to maintain state authority. Nonetheless, proponents of rentier politics have a concrete argument for state stability and the effective distribution of social programs and wealth of the nation-state, absent democratic processes. To tackle the issues of lack of democratic engagement in African Islamic countries, the following questions should be raised: Do all nation states need democracy to survive? Is the Western-style democracy the only process of governance for Islamic African nation-states?

Some Perspectives on Democracy

In order to appreciate the process and meaning of democracy in the Islamic countries of Africa, it is essential to have a clear understanding of democracy itself. According to Stephenson, democracy from a Western perspective requires a system of government based on the following four objectives:

1. majority rule expressed in free, periodic elections
2. full protection of minority rights against an irrational or tyrannical majority
3. protection of individual rights to freedom of speech, press, religion, petition, and assembly
4. equality before the law for all citizens, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, or national origin (Stephenson, 1992, p. 15).

Stephenson maintains that the four objectives for democracy are “to a degree, in conflict with one another” (p. 29). For democracy to work, therefore, there must be compromise in little bits, persuasion, and a deliberation until a specific goal is attained. Yet Stephenson’s characterization of democracy affirms procedural more than relational democracy. While procedural democracy is more concerned with the process of governing fairly, relational democracy emphasizes freedom and justice where “the individual and society are inextricably

linked in a range of possibilities and limitations . . . An aspirational idea—the dignity and equality of all human beings and their rights to freedom, justice, opportunity and self-determination” (AAC&U, 1995, p. 17).

Dahl (2000) argues that “Democracy cannot guarantee that its citizens will be happy, prosperous, healthy, wise, peaceful or just” (p. 60). This means that both the general populace and the nation-state make concerted efforts to secure the success of democracy. Yet, in countries where democracy has been successful, there is sufficient evidence that it evolved rather than being forced on or juxtaposed with indigenous structures or other forms of governmental systems. Regardless of the inadequacies and flaws of democracy though, most Western observers believe that the benefits outweigh the costs of establishing it.

If many of the benefits for democracy are true, then why have most Islamic African countries not been subscribing fully to the ideals of democracy? One can argue that the implications of the Western perspective of democracy to Islam are immense. In Islam, as noted earlier in this essay, the Sharia or Koranic holy law is the law of the land. This is critical when one speaks of human rights in Islamic African countries. The Sharia is what gives rulers their legitimacy and mandate to rule. This is a divine right to rule. Also, legislation passed by government may not contradict the doctrine laid out by the Sharia. Despite the legal authority of the Sharia, leaders in rentier nation-states circumvent the laws of the state in order to pacify the general populace in their efforts to establish their hegemonic powers. Under these circumstances, how could governments in Islamic nation-states carefully balance their democratic civic duties and rentier politics vis-à-vis the sacred obligations of their religion, Islam?

Islam, Rentier Politics, and Democratic Challenges in Algeria Before the Arab Spring

The case of Algeria is a clear example of the perceived incompatibility between Islam and the fundamental nature of democracy. Events before the Arab Spring of 2011, and, in particular, in Algeria, demonstrate this assertion. Since 1962, Algeria has been ruled by a one-party government. In 1988, there were a number of insurgencies, and a six-day civilian food riot in which 400 people were killed (Brumberg, 1991). This riot was indicative of the people’s disenchantment with the incumbent government at that time. The government responded by amending the constitution on November 3, 1988, to enable more

parties to participate in an electoral process. The socialist system in Algeria met its demise after the constitutional amendment, forcing the National Liberation Front (FLN), the party that has ruled the nation since independence, to entertain opposition for the very first time.

In June 1990, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won 55% of the popular vote compared to 31% for the FLN (Brumberg, 1991). After the FIS stressed its desire to establish an Islamic state, the FLN engineered a coup d'état. The coup makers installed Muhammad Boudiaf, an Islamic modernist, to head a five-member "collegial presidency." Boudiaf was assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists in July of 1992. Algeria continues to sit on a time bomb of the development crisis of legitimacy, participation, and distribution discussed earlier in this article. An important question that arises after one study the Algerian case is, Can Islamic political fundamentalist movements coexist with secular parties in a "democratic system?" Also, if the party of Islamic fundamentalists believes it alone speaks for God, what are the chances of it handing over power graciously to another party after losing an election?

These questions are profound but need to be examined in the context of modern Islamic revivalism and its concomitant activities. In the wake of the Islamic Salvation Front's (FIS) victory, for instance, statements made by its leadership reiterated the seeming incompatibility between Islam and democracy. Entelis and Arone report that Sheikh Abdelcader Moghni of the FIS proclaimed: The Algerian people have given victory to Islam and have defeated democracy, which is nothing but apostasy (pp. 23–27).

The irony of this statement is that the FIS utilized the democratic process quite well to its advantage during the electoral campaign, but once it attained the votes, it planned against the very process that earned it victory. Had the FIS victory been recognized by the state's secular authorities, it would have marked the first time in Algeria's history for the fundamentalists to gain power through direct and legitimate elections.

The quest to establish an Islamic government and a nation-state based on Koranic law has not subsided. In the 1990s, militant Islamic laws continued to frustrate the hard-line military-backed government by attacking and killing innocent Algerians. Many of these murders have occurred during the Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, when most Muslims indulge in a rigorous, monthlong fast. Absent health problems, all adult Muslims during this holy month must abstain completely from drink, food, and sexual intercourse from dawn to dusk. Human endurance and resilience are at their

lowest point and it is rather “unholy” or an act of cowardice that the militants elected the month of the Ramadan to make a religio-political statement to the government.

In January of 1998, *Liberte*, the Algerian independent paper, reported that 412 people were killed near the city of Relizane at sunset, just as they were breaking their fasts on the first day of the Ramadan. The insurgents killed indiscriminately. Men, women, and children died by swords and daggers. Throat slitting and beheading were not uncommon with the insurgents. Violence between government security forces and Muslim insurgents had claimed the lives of 75,000 since the Islamic Salvation Front was denied the right to change Algeria into a theocracy (Dunn, 1992, p. 16).

Relative peace returned to Algeria under President Boutiflika in the early 2000s, because of a peaceful negotiation by the president for the FIS Islamists to lay down their weapons in exchange for amnesty. During this negotiation, though, the struggle against other Islamists did not end. Currently, Algeria could be termed a multiparty state, but party politics is filled with antagonism. The government refuses to allow religious parties to send candidates to run for elections. This could be termed the politics of antipolitics, if some groups are deprived of the avenues for contesting in an election. In April 2004, President Boutiflika convincingly won 83% of the vote and propounded a Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, offering an olive branch to the Islamists (Sorenson, 2008). In the 2012 elections, the National Liberation Front won 220 seats with only 66 seats going to the moderate Islamists. The Islamists challenged without success (Nossiter, NYT, 2012). The Algerian leaders made substantial efforts to publicize the elections to prevent the Arab Spring of 2011 that caused the toppling of governments in Egypt and Libya from reaching Algeria. Nonetheless, Algerian leaders have not been successful with rentierism.

Algeria’s national oil company, Sonatrach and many foreign investors have not developed sufficient profit to pacify the Islamist opposition. There are signs of Algeria’s transition to democracy, but as one observer succinctly notes, “Algeria’s future includes the possibility that its petroleum resources may one day provide the springboard for sustained economic development and political stability” (Sorenson, 2008, p. 411). The observation above alludes to the fact that rentier politics could facilitate the process of democratization in resources-rich developing countries. With France’s refusal to interfere in Algeria’s domestic affairs and the oil industry’s inability to pacify opponents of the regime, it would take a well planned strategy by the current Algerian government that would include the pacification

of the opposition through the provision of social programs from oil revenue to achieve a lasting stability.

The Egyptian Example: Islamist Opposition and Weak Rentier Politics Under Mubarak

In Egypt, Islamic extremists and fundamentalists are challenging the state's authority and questioning the secular power of that nation-state. Historically, the fundamentalists group, Ikhwan ab-Muslimun, had supported state power under Gamal Abdel Nasser, who attained power by overthrowing the monarchy of King Farouk in 1952. Nasser's rise to power was based on anti-imperialistic, revolutionary, Arab-nationalist inclination. The fundamentalists' support for the secular pan-Arabist position of Nasser lasted only up to 1954, when Nasser refused to accommodate their Islamic fundamentalist/revivalist position. This was hardly the end of the fundamentalists' politics in Egypt. They re-emerged in 1967, especially after the state relaxed its restriction against them.

Egyptian government's strategy to defuse fundamentalist violence against the state has been to reintegrate the latter into Egyptian political sphere, thus separating violent revivalists from nonviolent ones. Divide and conquer? Sadat not only did this in the 1970s, but also appropriated the title the "Believer President" and had the mass media cover his activities as a Muslim, including praying at the mosque, increasing the number of mosques in the country, and giving support to Islamic student's organizations. Paradoxically, Anwar Sadat's support for Islamic activities enhanced the legitimacy and revivalism of militant Islamic groups who later on condemned Sadat for being a hypocrite, un-Islamic, politically corrupt, and controlled by infidels of Western democracies (Esposito, 1991).

Sadat's pro-Western political and economic ties, the Camp David accords, and his condemnation of the Ayatollah Khomeini reconfirmed the fundamentalists' accusation against him and the Egyptian society as being "unbelievers." Even worse, was Sadat's vehement denunciation of his religious critics in February 1979, by calling for the separation of religion and politics in Egypt. This was clearly against Islam and the notion of an Islamic state. On October 6, 1981, he was assassinated by members of the Islamic fundamentalist group, *Tanzim al-Jihad* (Esposito, 1991).

In the 1990s and 2000s, President Hosni Mubarak, successor to Sadat, has been tested both by Islamic revivalists and fundamentalists. Still, while Islamic revivalism and extremism are on the

rise and have become a significant irritant to government and society, it seems unlikely that the Algerian situation could replay in Egypt. The Mubarak administration was faced with a tough choice of fighting internecine warfare with Islamic militant groups like Al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya and the Muslim Brotherhood. It was projected that the only group that could undermine the government is the Muslim Brotherhood, because of the composition of its membership. Egypt's bourgeoisie, including scholars, lawyers, engineers, doctors, and businesspeople strongly support for the Muslim Brotherhood. The organization has seats in parliament, but would like to establish an Islamic state through nonviolent means. Hala Mustapha, a specialist in Islamic extremism, who operated in a Cairo-based think tank organization, relates the government's fear:

When the government saw the growing presence of this group in associations and political and social organizations, it wanted to put a stop to it. The new law . . . indicates the government's concern (Grauh, 1993, p. 9).

The government's crackdown continued to be severe. It included widespread arrests and mop-ups of entire villages (Dunn, 1994). The Mubarak regime had engaged in state violence, mass arrest, and sometimes tortures to crack down on Islamist groups such as Jamaat al-Islamiyya (Fletcher, 2008). One complex aspect of the Egyptian case is that it has a profound international dimension because of extremists' attacks on foreigners. Violent activity by Islamic fundamentalists and extremists echoed not only along the Nile but in other nation-states. In 1993, Sheikh Umar Abd al-Rahman, the blind spiritual leader of *Al Gamaa al Islamiyya*, an extremist group that has continued to irritate the Egyptian government, was accused of complicity in the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, and in an attempted coup to bomb the United Nations and traffic tunnels in New York. Abd al Rahman's connection to El-Sayyid Nosair, an Egyptian serving time in the United States for his involvement in the killing of the Jewish fundamentalist Rabbi Meir Kahane has heightened the awareness of violent activities by Muslims in the diaspora. These cases make the Egyptian Islamic revivalists even more threatening on a global level.

In 2005, to balance the efforts of dismantling Islamic groups and their leadership such as al-Jamaal and al-Jihad from politics with allowing more room for civil society to participate, President Mubarak was faced with a new challenge by the intelligentsia (Sorenson, 2008). This group, the Egyptian Movement for Change, also

known as Kifaya, continued to denounce the Mubarak regime for being a puppet of the United States and an instrument of Zionism.

The Mubarak regime did not have adequate natural resources to be a good player in rentier politics. It has not been successful in silencing the opposition by providing them with socioeconomic benefits. The Egyptian economy, once dominated by the agriculture sector and infant industries, has shifted to the service sector with small industries. The unemployment rate of 10.1% is better than most African countries, yet the population explosion of 79 million people is creating a nation of unemployable youths that tend to depend on government for support (*CIA Factbook*, 2008). Furthermore, the tourism industry has suffered since the attacks by terrorist against tourists occurred in 2005. This sector generates about \$9 billion annually for the Egyptian economy (Sorenson, 2008, p. 250). Aside from revenue (about \$3 billion) from vessels using the Suez Canal, the United States' foreign aid to Egypt is the third-largest source of revenue for that nation-state.

The Arab Spring resulted in the demise of the Mubarak regime and the re-emergence of the Islamic Brotherhood and President Mohamed Morsi, the fifth president of Egypt. President Morsi, the first Islamist to be elected leader of an Arab state in 2012 made attempts to increase his power by sidelining the military, secular activists, and judges. Yet, without oil and the needed foreign assistance, he and the Muslim Brotherhood have a long road to travel in rentier politics. In 2013, Morsi's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), backed by the Islamic Brotherhood, continued to face resistance from the people after he granted himself unlimited powers to "protect" the nation-state without judicial review and the ability to use executive instruments in policy making without checks from the judiciary. Morsi had gradually disassociated himself from the Islamic Brotherhood, claiming that he was a president for the entire Egyptian populace. Nonetheless, with the Egyptian bureaucracy filled with Mubarak's sympathizers, Morsi and the Islamic Brotherhood had the herculean job of convincing the Egyptian populace that an Islamist government is more effective than the secular one under Mubarak. The military did not give the Morsi regime time to mature and regime change through a bloodless coup d'état occurred in July 2013

Egypt has indulged in periodic rentier shifts by using United States' aid to thwart the efforts of the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamists, Jihadists, Tarfir wal-Hijna, and the new intelligentsia, but the previous government and the Morsi regime did not have the means or investment profits from primary resources to buy acquiescence and

quiescence from the close to 94% Muslim population (Podeh, 1996, pp. 45–46; *The Washington Post*, 2004). The rentier shifts by the previous regime had supported the commercial and military elites in order for the government to maintain hegemonic power for qualified democracy to ensue. It was certain that Morsi's regime was too young in 2013 to stand the test of time, rentier politics and democracy.

Nigeria: Islam, Democratic Experiments and Failed Rentier Shift

Oil, petroleum products, foreign aid, and other resources are the major assets for Islamic African nation-states in this essay to sustain political power. Nigeria, the most populous Black nation-state (population of 146,255,312) has about 50% Muslims, and the country belongs to many Islamic organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Conference, nonetheless, the state is more secular than theocratic (*CIA Factbook*, 2008). Many of Nigeria political leaders have been Muslim, yet that nation has resisted the pressures of becoming a purely Islamic state. Nigeria is a megastate in the African context, and with over 250 ethnic groups and two major religions—Islam and Christianity, there is always an avenue for tribalism, nepotism, and religio-ethnonationalism.

Precolonial Nigeria was not a nation-state. Nonetheless, there were several city states and kingdoms such as the Hausa, Benin, Oyo, and Ife. The Hausa state is relevant to this work in that Islam reached Northern Nigeria around the fifteenth century (Aborisade & Mundt, 2001). Madrasahs and Koranic schools, concomitant with Islamic cultures, emerged in Northern Nigeria. The Hausa and the Fulani people sustained their Islamic culture from that time. The Fulani have their origin in Western Sudan. Even though the Hausa and Fulani developed trade routes and established a commercial capital in Sokoto, now Northern Nigeria, the Fulani, under the leadership of Usman dan Fodio revolted against the Hausa kings, and Usman dan Fodio's son became the sultan of Sokoto until the sultanate was defeated by the British in 1903 (Aborisade & Mundt, 2001).

British colonial policy galvanized Nigeria by bringing the north and south together as one nation-state in 1914. In most African states, the scars of colonialism and imperialism can never be totally erased in Nigeria. Exploitation of indigenous resources, missionary activity, Eurocentric political institutions, Western education, duality of cultures, dual economy, and interference in traditional institutions

are some of the colonial legacies in Nigeria today. After gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria was submerged in praetorian politics (soldier in governance and coups d'état) for many years. From 1966 to the present, that nation-state has experienced over 10 major military coups. One interesting phenomenon in these military juntas is North/Islamic and South/Christian rivalry. For instance, the 1990 failed coup against the Babangida regime was seen by most Nigerians as a "Christian coup against the Northern Muslim leadership" (Chazan & LeVine, 1991, p. 207). Furthermore, Northern Nigeria's Grand Kadi once stated, "a Muslim could not accept a non-Muslim to lead the nation and that if a Muslim leader is not acceptable to Christians, the country would have to be divided into two parts" (Forest, 1995, p. 117). Arguably, in Nigeria, Muslims, and Christians alike have maintained opposing viewpoints so far as leadership religious affiliation and autochthony are concerned.

Nigeria's membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference is a perplexing matter to the Christian population in that country, especially if one puts in perspective the objectives of the OIC. The charter has provisions, which include: (a) to preserve and promote the lofty Islamic values of peace, compassion, tolerance, equality, justice, and human dignity; (b) to endeavor to work for revitalizing Islam's pioneering role in the world while ensuring sustainable development, progress, and prosperity for the peoples of member states; (c) to enhance and strengthen the bond of unity and solidarity among the Muslim peoples and member states; and (d) to respect, safeguard, and defend the national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of all Member States (OIC Charter, 2008). It is noteworthy that there are 20 objectives and over 20 other items in the charter that emphasize cooperation, solidarity, education, economics, science, and religion. The major issue at this point is whether it is prudent for a country that is slightly over 50% Muslim to become a member of the OIC, and if it is, where does that place the rest of the population?

Nigeria continues to toy with the Islamic question, but the issue of rentier politics or lack thereof and the struggle over oil and petroleum products are serious enough to create commotion and civil war in that country. Oil exploration started in the 1930s, but the production of petroleum products reached marketable levels in Nigeria in the 1970s and has since changed the nature of the political economy of that nation-state. One would think that Nigeria, with an Islamic population and oil resources, could easily engage in rentier politics to establish stability in that country. Nonetheless, oil has brought both

a blessing and a curse to Nigeria. In 1995, after the Nigerian government executed an environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, against the plea of many observers in the world, the conflict between foreign-owned companies (Chevron-Texaco, Royal Dutch Shell, Total Fina Elf) and the Nigerian government, on one side, and the residents of the Niger River Delta, on the other side, has reached the apogee.

Nigeria's oil industry is the largest in Africa and the fifth-largest source of United States oil import, yet the residents of the Niger River Delta, especially the Ogoni people, dwell in poverty. Despite former President Olusegun Obasanjo's election in 1999, which was the beginning of a democratic transition in Nigeria, conflict over oil resources has ensued. Even though the conflict is more ethnic in nature, there have been "several communal clashes in recent years which led to death of hundreds of people in Plateau State . . . in clashes between Christian militias and Hausa Muslims" (*Afrol News*, 2008). Former president of Nigeria, Mr. Umaru Yar' Adua, worked to bring peace to Ogoniland, where the indigenous people were exploited and abandoned by Shell Oil Company 15 years ago. He promised to replace Shell Oil with another company that would develop a positive relationship with the Ogoni people (Clotey, 2008, p. 1). In 2010, President Goodluck Jonathan came into power, and the problems over oil and religion have not subsided.

Nigeria has ample petroleum resources to enable the state to engage in rentier politics, yet there are endless conflicts between the government, oil companies, and the Niger River delta resident. These residents are both Christians and Muslims, so the issue is not about Islam, but an ethnonationalism and autochthony. It is only on Christmas Day 2009 that the failed attempt to blow up a Northwest Airline flight 254 from Amsterdam to Detroit by a young Nigerian Muslim, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, has called the world to question the Islamic revivalists motives against democracy in Nigeria. In recent times, Boko Haram, a Jihadist militant organization based in Northern Nigeria is engaged in iconoclasm of modern Islamic structures in order to establish the "true" laws of the Sharia in Nigeria. This Islamic extremist organization has killed between 5 thousand and 10 thousand people in the name of Islam and the organization's campaign against Western cultures (Shwayder, 2012). The transition to democracy, one would argue, could have been smoother if the government could "buy" peace with some of the oil revenue, but communal conflicts, Christian/Muslim rivalry for leadership, and mismanagement of the rentier resources have all reduced Nigeria to a failed rentier nation-state.

Libya: An Emerging Rentier State and Qualified Stability Before the Arab Spring

Libya, for most of its history, has suffered from foreign invasions and control. These conquerors included the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, and the Turks. The name *Libya* was crafted by the Italians, referring to its coinage by the Greeks to describe North Africa, except Egypt. Consequently, after independence was attained in 1951, and King Idris was overthrown in a military junta, there was a restructuring of Libya from a kingdom to a republic. The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya remains the official name of Libya today. *Jamahiriya* was a term coined by former Libyan President Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, which was symbolic of the deliverance of state ownership to the rightful people, not the aristocracy, after his successful coup d'état in 1969. This North African country is a quintessential case for an Islamic rentier nation-state that is recently flirting with qualified democracy.

The 1959 discovery of petroleum in Cyrenaica, Libya, was the birth of petrodollars and wealth to Libya. As it is in most cases in the developing world, and Africa in particular, oil brought both a blessing and a curse to Libya. Colonial powers, and oil companies from both Great Britain and the United States exploited the country, and this exploitation was associated with resentment from the indigenous people, giving birth to autochthony, nationalism, and ethnonationalism (Sorenson, 2008, p. 384).

After the demise of the Libyan monarchy, Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, a praetorian leader, not only promoted a political theory of Afro-Arab socialism but initiated a new people's revolution. This revolution started with the politics of antipolitics, dismantling the King Idris's power base, developing a Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), later called the General People's Congress (GPC), and propounded the "third universal theory," which de-emphasized the tenets of Islam, but did not abandon it. The "four pillars" of Qadhafi's Afro-Arab socialism include: socialism, Arab unity, popular democracy, and progressive Islam (Sorenson, 2008, p. 385).

Qadhafi's challenge at the beginning of the revolution was to dismantle the Islamic base of the monarchy, which was a strict theosophy structured on the thinking of an Algerian Islamist, Sayid Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi—hence the Sanusi order. Al-Sanusi's theosophy is an aspect of Islamic revivalism. Al-Sanusi settled in Libya in the nineteenth century after being deported from Egypt and could not return to Algeria because of the French occupation (Zia-deh, 1958). Even though the monarchy's legitimacy was derived from

Islam, its illegitimacy was revealed by its lack of result-legitimacy. Before oil was found, it was only Islam that galvanized the tribal society of Libya as a nation state. Why then did Qadhafi dismantle Sanusi Islam?

Indubitably, it would be lethal for any leader with over 98% Sunni Muslim population to attempt to dismantle the very base of his or her legitimacy. With that in mind, Qadhafi forged alliances with the *ulama* (Islamic clerics), used Islamic institutions such as the mosques for political events, injected the Sharia (Islamic law) into the legal system, and Islamic educational institutions flourished. Nevertheless, by 1973, the colonel had sustained hegemonic power by redefining his position and vision on Islam and by effectively engaging in rentier politics. The ideological base for the consolidation of Qadhafi's power was the Third Universal Theory and three volumes of his *Green Book*. Egalitarianism, socialism, Arabism, and anti-imperialism will shape the "new" Libya (Al-Qadhafi, 1980). One could easily deduce from Qadhafi's philosophy that if he was not equating Islamization with Arabization, then, he almost circumvented Islam. Not too fast.

The "new" Libya did not totally eradicate the old form of Islam. Traditional Islam reemerged, and the only way President Muammar al-Gaddafi could curtail another Islamists revolution against the government was to consistently engage in rentier politics and using oil revenue to purchase the acquiescence and quiescence of the general populace. Sorenson asserts:

Libya is a classic rentier state . . . Even before Qadhafi came to power, Libya derived considerable revenue from selling oil to other countries. The massive oil revenue allowed Libyan authorities to bypass the normal state economic regulatory institutions that guide economic development. Instead, Qadhafi and his small circle of close political allies could decide on economic distribution without the accountability that state agencies might provide (Sorenson, 2008, p. 390).

Rentier politics in Libya became even more meaningful to the regime's observers when Colonel Qadhafi coined the *Jamahiriyya* concept of giving governance to the people. This means that the Libyan government would become anthropomorphic, a father figure that provides for the people and in turn buys their silence in politics. Yet in the 1990s, the opposition to the regime increased. Many of Libya's middle class, revolutionaries who have lost faith in the socio-economic programs of the regime, Islamists, praetorians, and the new generation of Libyans, were questioning Qadhafi's policies (Takeyh,

2000). Furthermore, the sanctions imposed on Libya by the United States and the United Nations for the Pam Am flight 103 bombing in Lockerbie, Scotland interfered with the ability of the rentier state of Libya to provide adequate support for the general populace until the sanctions were lifted in 2004. Since then, the United States has re-established relations with Libya and a full American Embassy was re-established in 2006.

Libyan authorities in the previous regime and the security establishment had utilized rentierism quite successfully in that the opposition to Qadhafi's regime did not do serious damage, even when the government was confronted with external restrictions and economic sanctions. To soften the external opposition to Qadhafi's rule, he invited some 200 African kings in 2008, and convinced them sufficiently to crown him as "King of Kings" of Africa. Yet with all the wealth and rentier politics, Qadhafi was unable to buy the silence of those who rose against him (with Western assistance) during the Arab Spring of 2011. Forty-two years of rentier politics and hegemonic power submerged Qadhafi in a pool of arrogance and complacency until his demise. The post-Qadhafi Libya is very volatile, with terrorists attacking United States interest and the attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi on September 11, 2012. The lingering question is: Do rentier nation-states such as Libya thwart progress in democratic reforms? While some Western observers, including Seabrooke, would suggest that rentierism is sheer interference with the democratic process, Mufti nevertheless affirms that rentierism harms the prospects for democracy less than Islamic resistance and other factors such as economic downturns (Mufti, 1999). It is my observation that in the developing world, and in these cases in particular, rentierism serves as a catalyst for nation-building and limited democracy. In Islamic African nation-states and in Middle Eastern countries with petroleum products, rentierism could nurture the prospects for democracy.

Conclusion

Islam is not a violent religion. A very simple faith, Islam has over 2 billion adherents with diverging viewpoints and interpretation of the Koran. In this essay, I have attempted to draw on Islamic beliefs and conceptions that impact the process of nation-building both negatively and positively. The "new" concept of revivalism, which advocates Islamic autonomy within and without the nation, has been misassigned by many Westerners as undemocratic and backward. The West runs the risk of neglecting to see the possibility that Islamic

states in Africa may have many qualified democratic elements and a large number of supporters universally, if Westerners only consider isolated negative events as the only criterion for measuring Islamization in the society.

Islam may not be compatible with democracy because the Sharia, which is a body of regulations from the Koran, and tradition facilitate the governing of the nation-state and not the people. Islam, for this matter, fails the test of popular participation and legitimacy of governance in a democracy. Nonetheless, the emergence of rentier politics and the dynamics of international political economy depending on petroleum resources, the nation-state and political reality have placed certain limitations on many of the old belief systems. As can be readily seen, Islam is a complete system providing spiritual, sociopolitical, and moral guidelines for its adherents, but as an international religio-political force, ideological conflicts, power struggles, questions concerning equality, social justice, political participation, and autonomy will continue to threaten the nature of Islamic nation-states, as dialectical forces of Islamic revivalism and rentier politics continue to challenge the process of democracy in Islamic nation-states in Africa.

What is new in this study is that perhaps the political culture of Islam as a peaceful religion, and one that advocates submission, tend to create a nurturing ground for African nation-states with ample petroleum resources to engage in rentier politics. The deeper the Islamic affinity with the state and the more the petroleum products the state has, the greater the marginal propensity to engage in rentier politics with limited democracy. Yet, I do not intend to perform a premature autopsy on democracy in Islamic African countries that practice rentier politics, nor do I believe that all countries and groups need democracy to survive. In the end, I believe the pressures of the twenty-first century and the global political economy that depends on petrodollars will inevitably push both Islam and democracy to recognize the utility of a symbiotic relationship.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

African Relational Democracy

*Reframing Diversity, Economic Development, and Society-Centered Governance for the Twenty-First Century**

SETH N. ASUMAH

Introduction

Major sociopolitical changes have taken place in Africa in the aftermath of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and the new emergence of globalization. The decolonization period and the postcolonial discourse are submerged in the politics of uncertainty. Forces from within and without have remained inevitable in shaping the nation-states of Africa and their relationships with the people of the continent. Decolonization, quasi-colonialism, coups d'état, praetorianism, transnational agencies, international terrorism, poverty, environmental issues, predatory regimes, and vampire governments have all brought demanding questions and challenges to the assumed authority of the nation-state, the nature of African diversity, and the process of democratization. The euphoric prognosis about the benefit of self-governance, African socialism and democracy subsided during the immediate decolonization period in the 1960s and 1970s. The postindependence period has witnessed the pendulum of a political power swing back and forth from civilians to soldiers in politics, and from authoritarians to totalitarians, who sometime refuse to leave power even after they have been voted out by the general populace. What are the meanings of these forces to the essence of democracy in Africa?

Procedural and Relational Democracy

In the balance of this chapter, I argue that the democracy project in Africa is confronted with irrepressible challenges because Western procedural democracy, as a measure, is socioculturally different from African indigenous political cultures; unless the African people are willing to reframe new relational democratic models that will combine diversity and indigenous political cultures of Africans with the best democratic values and practices from the West to promote and sustain democracy, develop new economic measures in order to improve the human condition, and promote the efficacy of their own polities, the democracy project in Africa will succumb to failure-prone policies and actions of predatory regimes to the detriment of democracy itself—which could be lethal for the continent in the twenty-first century.

To understand the process of democratization and the institutions that sustain democratic entities, one has to know what democracy is and what it is not. The term *democracy* is a neologism, which is derived from the Greek word *demokratia*. Its roots are *demos*—for people, and *kratos*—for the rule of. So, literary democracy means rule of the people and by the people. Direct democracy would therefore require participation from the totality of the general populace. Such an idea is workable in small organizations, villages, and small group settings, but it is nearly impossible to exercise direct participatory democracy in modern complex societies. Why? The size of the modern nation-state and the population that should have full participation in elections and decision making that affect the lives of the people would not function properly in participatory democracy. Most nation-states are therefore left with representative democracy, which is quite a deviation from the ancient Greek-style democracy.

It is neither epiphenomenal nor anachronistic to discuss multicultural democracy in Africa in the twenty-first century. The colonial period did not prepare Africans sufficiently for democracy, and it emasculated and bastardized the indigenous political institutions of Africans. Decolonization itself left Africans with new powerless nation-states that were disorganized by cultures, ethnicities, traditions, precepts, and norms. Political communities with weak democratic foundations were the results of the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 that carved out artificial entities to satisfy the greed of European colonial powers (Davidson, 1983, p. 3). It is ironic, one may argue, that a byproduct of European cultural imperialism—representative democracy—has gained universal coinage in the postcolonial era, which is now indispensable to governing multicultural, multieth-

nic, and multiperspectival nation-states of Africa. For that matter, multicultural, multiethnic, or relational democracy is an idea whose time has come. Relational democracy transcends the levels of the “procedural” concept of democracy, which places emphasis on process. Relational democracy refers to the idea that all humans share equal value, deserve equality in opportunity, respect, and participation in the life and direction of the society in which they reside. In this perspective, representation is genuine and reflective of the diversity of the populace, their culture, and the institutions that are embedded within the culture. The people’s engagement and connection with their representatives are primordial, constant, and continuing. The political arrangements in relational democracy are not limited to the process of elections and party politics; rather, it is premised on the notion that the people’s representatives are an extension of the people in a servant-leadership position. This idea encompasses a new politics of emanation, where leaders and followers are connected by the common good.

Nonetheless, these ideas are not on the lips of many African leaders. However, the same could be said of Black rule in South Africa, when the White minority Afrikaners held the seats of power for many years or even during the formation and sustenance of the United Nations. We need not be reminded that the coming into being of nation-states, organizations, and sociopolitical concepts, processes, and ideas are mostly dictated by history. In the past, the creation of organizations and ideas has been considered desirable when it originated from Europe and spearheaded by cerebral exercises of European philosophers. In the twenty-first century, such ideas and organizations may succumb to an ennobling and logical vestige in the sociopolitical evolution of the totality of the populace in a defined territorial area and other entities outside the boundaries of the nation-state. Multiethnic and relational democracy will therefore continue to be a *sine qua non* in sustaining the body politic in Africa and the world. The recent revolutions in Egypt, Algeria, Libya, and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are wake-up calls that the people are demanding participation in the affairs of their own countries and that they cannot leave the governance of these nation-states to the hands and pleasures of a few elites and predatory regimes.

Diversity and multicultural democracy are compatible in that diversity refers to the variety created in the society by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning by different participants in the polity because of differences in race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and the differences in the socialization of men and

women. These differences also emerge from socioeconomic status, age, and developed ability (Asumah and Johnston-Anumonwo, 2002, p. 5). Multicultural democracy, in its relations with diversity, espouses the idea that all humans have equal natural rights, sociopolitical rights, equal values, deserve equal respect, must be treated with equal deference before the law, and should be given equal opportunity to participate fully in the life and direction of society (Asumah and Johnston-Anumonwo, 2002). Nevertheless, despite the continent's diversity, the differences in culture, ethnicity, race, gender, class, and learned ability have not been used as a viable platform for the institutions and processes of democracy. Rather, differences have been regarded as deficiencies. When differences are equated with deficiencies, they become counterproductive in remaking democratic institutions and processes. At this juncture, it is important to ask if Africa's diversity undermines democracy. Is it a truism that the more diverse an entity is, the more difficult for it to acquire democracy? Do affinity groups with linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and religious differences make the process of compromise and consensus-building difficult in Africa, therefore making democracy unattainable? Do poor nation-states in Africa have a chance to build democracy if the process involves reasonable resource acquisition and institutional development? These questions would help structure the balance of the discussion in this essay.

Rethinking the Democratic Project in Africa

Africans have continued to toy with both the concept of diversity and multicultural democracy since the decolonization period without any tangible results. The strongest argument against a relational multicultural democracy in Africa is a bleak one: without it, Africans and their cultures will continue to be submerged in the dynamics of irrepressible forces of oppression, dysfunctional governments, kleptocracies, and vampire regimes. Internecine warfare, terrorism, ethnonationalism, religio-ethnic conflicts, and disregard for human dignity will top the chart for diabolical human interaction. Ayittey asserts, "The inviolate ethic of the vampire elites is self-perpetuation in power. To achieve those objectives, they subvert every key institution of government: the civil service, judiciary, military, media, and banking. As a result, these institutions become paralyzed (Ayittey, 1999, p. 153). The cry for relational multicultural democracy is evident in recent affairs of many African nation-states, as the people begin to gather courage to tell their rulers that oppression is unacceptable.

African multicultural and relational democracy should be designed with the idea that all Africans and their allies have equal value, deserve equal respect, and should be given equal opportunity to fully participate in the life and direction of the society in which they belong. In this perspective, democracy should be considered an important element and a condition to attain social justice. Furthermore, a “just society” is one that makes democracy indispensable. African relational democracy provides a real challenge to Western traditional forms of democracy based on procedures and formal institutions of government. Traditional democratic entities, such as the United States, have experiences laden with unresolved social and political problems whose histories travel as far back as the inception of the nation-state itself. These traditional democracies, for instance, share an unfortunate legacy of slavery, racism, classism, elitism, sexism, homophobia, Afrophobia, Islamophobia, and androphobia.

Ronald Takaki cautions that nation-states that have these unfortunate legacies—and yet are regarded by many as champions of democracy—must overcome internal squabbles, and the people must be made aware of historical contradictions. Inner changes and such awareness “must come from re-visioned history” (Takaki, 1993, p. 426). The history of participatory and procedural democracy bears witness to the nature of a society that is racialized and filled with oppression and domination. Iris Young echoes Takaki’s characterization of traditional democracies in her observation that, “critical theory and participatory democratic theory share with the liberal theory they challenge a tendency to suppress differences by conceiving the polity as universal and unified. This . . . has operated to effectively exclude from citizenship persons identified with the body and feeling—women, Jews, Blacks, American Indians, and so on” (Young, 1990, p. 10). This is the case in America, and in order for Africans to learn lessons from the ills of democratic exclusivities, they must make deliberate efforts to correct the inadequacy of traditional participatory democracy by ensuring that representation is genuine and reflective of the diversity of the general populace through devising a system that would reorganize the disenfranchised and the oppressed.

At this juncture the democratic experiment in Africa has created a pyramid of countries in four different levels. At the top of this pyramid are a few nation-states with elements of political economy and governments that are strong in the process of democratic experimentation. Benin, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Sao Tomé, and Principe and South Africa could be counted for their efforts at the top, but they have not yet transcended the “take-off” stage to be considered consolidated democracies. The

“take-off” phase is a state of prematurity for all the democratic and development pieces to be put in place. The second group of countries, according to Yohannes Woldemariam, are “those that have shown modest promise by reforming their economies and have carried out multiparty elections” (Woldemariam, 2008, p. 144). Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda are in this second tier. The third category of nation-states in this experimentation are those that are following the perestroika of the economy but have asked democracy to wait while they work on bringing the economic sector into repair. Burundi, the Gambia, Ethiopia, and Rwanda are in this camp. The last group of African countries is struggling with its political economies and has a modicum of democratic reforms. Within that group, some have vampire regimes and others are on the verge of becoming failed states. Many African countries fit this category: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Somalia (Freedom House, 2010).

The democracy project has become the dominant theme in African politics and society since the demise of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. The popularity of the democracy project is a result not just outside agents making such a demand, but of the general populace as we have observed recently in North Africa, demanding that vampire regimes and predatory governments vacate the seats of power. Yet, the bizarre case of the presidential elections in Côte D’Ivoire and the standoff in April 2011 left a sour taste in the mouths of those who have been advocating the remaking of democracy in Africa. It was an unusual case because both contestants declared themselves winners, even though there was only one election and one winner. Through procedural democracy, elections are designed to produce winners and losers; yet, even without a tie in this presidential race and electoral runoff, both candidates, former Prime Minister Alassane Quattara and incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo, declared themselves winners. Such a political behavior is not new to Ivoirians because it happened before in the 2000 presidential election, and it was settled by force or the threat of force. In recent times, the people are beginning to redefine public space and power and are gathering the courage to challenge totalitarians, authoritarians, and depots of Africa. Democratic elections seem to be working in Mali, Ghana, Benin, and South Africa. Yet, according to Freedom House, only 9 out of the 48 sub-Saharan African nation-states in 2010 could be called free consolidated democracies (Freedom House, 2011). Since the voice of the people is the voice of reason or the voice of God—*Vox populi, vox Dei* (Latin)—the people in the countries in Figure 20.1 have spoken about their experiences with democracy.

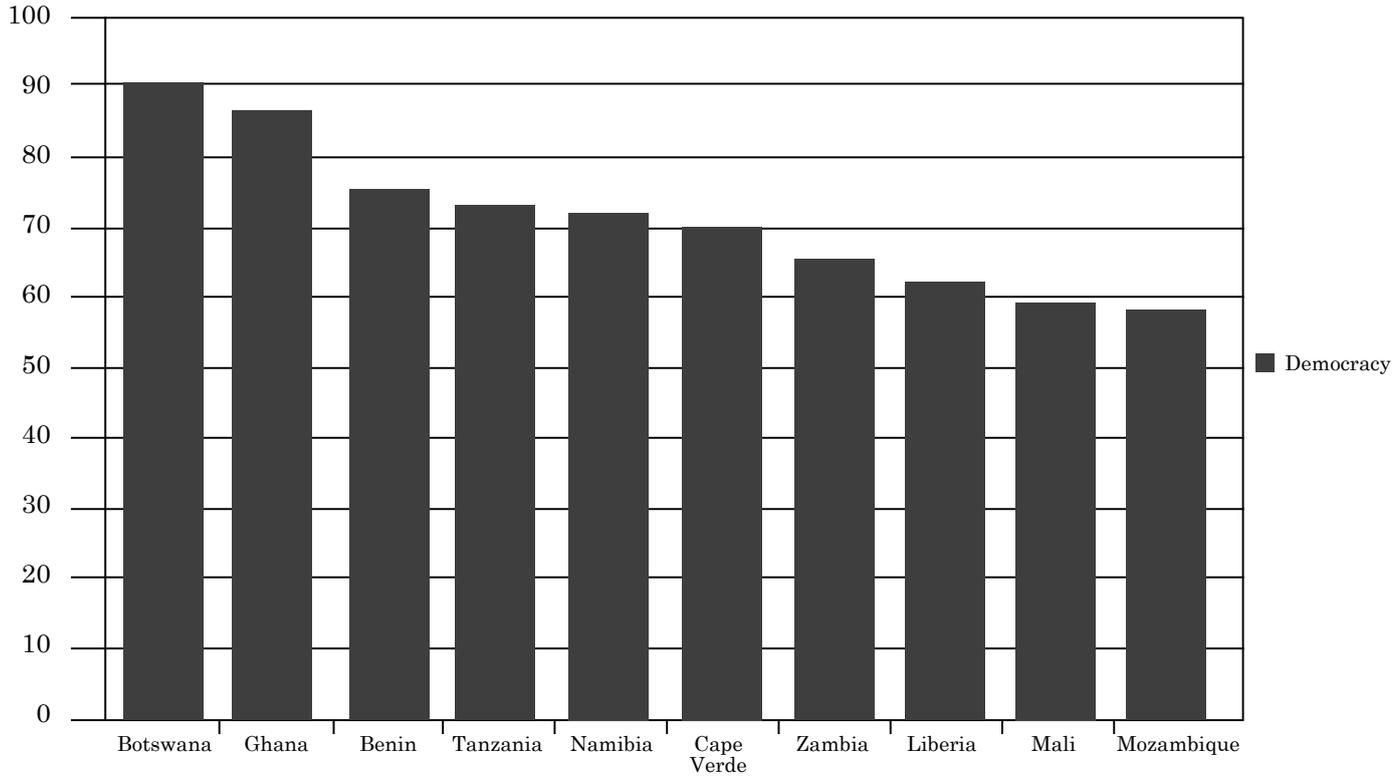


Figure 20.1. Percentage of People in the Top Ten Nation-States Living in a Democracy in Africa. *Source:* Adapted from Afrobarometer, 2009, “Neither Consolidating Nor Fully Democratic: The Evolution of African Political Regimes, 1999–2008.” Briefing paper, number 67.

To tackle the issues of lack of democratic engagement in African countries, the following questions should be raised. Do all nation-states need democracy to survive? Is the Western-style democracy indispensable for governance in African?

Some Perspectives on Western Democracy and Its Implications for the Democracy Project of Africa

In order to appreciate the process and meaning of democracy in the countries of Africa, it is essential to have a clear understanding of democracy itself. According to Stephenson, democracy from a Western perspective requires a system of government based on four objectives:

1. majority rule expressed in free, periodic elections
2. full protection of minority rights against an irrational or tyrannical majority
3. protection of individual rights to freedom of speech, press, religion, petition, and assembly
4. equality before the law for all citizens, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, or national origin (Stephenson, 1992, p. 15).

Stephenson maintains that the four objectives for democracy are “to a degree, in conflict with one another” (p. 29). For democracy to work, therefore, there must be compromise in little bits, persuasion, and deliberation until a specific goal is attained. Yet Stephenson’s characterization of democracy affirms procedural more than relational democracy. While procedural democracy is more concerned with the process of governing fairly, relational democracy emphasizes freedom and justice where “the individual and society are inextricably linked in a range of possibilities and limitations . . . An aspirational idea—dignity and equality of all human beings and their rights to freedom, justice, opportunity and self determination” (AAC&U, 1995, p. 17).

The African democracy project is more complex when one considers the essence of economic development as an inevitable element in restructuring a strong democratic system. It is believed that democracy and development have symbiotic relationships. However, this position is derived from the work of advocates of the modernization school, mostly from the United States, who believe that economic growth and development could lead the way to democracy. Larry

Diamond, an Africologist, argues that social pluralism and economics are the key ingredients for planting democracy in Africa. Diamond asserts, “the most widespread diffusion of democratic forms of governance since the inception of the nation state” is when “a society [is] energized and transformed by liberal economic growth demands and requires liberal politics as well” (Diamond, 1993, pp. 31–36). Again, most modernization theorists believe there is a strong connection between economic development and democracy. Nevertheless, one cannot be certain about an unambiguous causative relationship between the two. Cornel West cautions democracy observers and proponents of the modernization theory about the dogmatic effects of free market fundamentalism and corporatism that dominate the political economy of many nation-states, including the emerging democracies in Africa. Free-market fundamentalism, militarism, authoritarianism and unaccountable corporate tycoons, according to West, “bastardize and pulverize the precious word democracy” (West, 2004, p. 3), as power holders in many countries and predatory governments in Africa succumb to dynamics that belittle the ideals of democracy.

So, it is not epiphenomenal that in recent times it is the Chinese that are leading the way to African development and not the West and the modernization school. The Chinese model has little to say about democracy, it has more to say about using “soft power” in penetrating Africa—democracy must wait. Stefan Halper correctly notes that the Chinese model “stands as the world’s largest billboard for market authoritarianism” (Halper, 2010, p. 2). Since the Chinese influence in Africa now surpasses that of the West, how would this Chinese authoritarianism shape African relational democracy? Some Sino-African observers may argue that the Chinese model is very similar to that of the modernization theory without canvassing for democracy at the end. The people in both China and Africa may demand change during the process of development, but the nature of change may not be similar to democratic change. It is rather a form of liberalization and an end to oppressive governments in China and Africa.

From this perspective, Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl recognize that democracy may take different forms and processes in different regions and entities. So, African relational democracies may not resemble Western European-style democracies. Schmitter and Karl note that in emerging countries, “A bewildering array of parties, interests, and movements will simultaneously seek political influence in them, creating challenges to the polity that did not exist in the earlier processes of democratization” (Schmitter and Karl, 1991, p. 6). These two scholars agree with Dahl about procedural democracy,

but they add two other elements: popularly elected officials must not succumb to praetorian politics so that coups are not tools for change of government, and the polity must maintain the ability to govern itself (Karl, 1991, p. 6). All the same, African governments have irrepressible conditions and circumstances for the above-mentioned elements in their democratic endeavors, and reaching a “take-off” stage for democracy has become a challenge.

Dahl (2000) argues that “Democracy cannot guarantee that its citizens will be happy, prosperous, healthy, wise, peaceful or just” (p. 60). This means that both the general populace and the nation-state (the largest, self-sustaining, political configuration) make concerted efforts to secure the success of democracy. Needless to mention, in countries where democracy has been successful, there is sufficient evidence that it evolved rather than being forced on or juxtaposed with indigenous structures or other forms of governmental systems. Regardless of the inadequacies and flaws of democracy though, most Western observers believe that the benefits outweigh the costs of establishing it. If many of the benefits for democracy are true, then why are most African countries not subscribing fully to the ideals of democracy? To tackle this question, one can make reference to Dahl (2002) in his assessment of the knowledge base of the Framers of the American Constitution and their ideas about democracy by stating that, “Wise as the framers were, they were necessarily limited by their profound ignorance” (Dahl, 2002, p. 8). His assertion is based on the account that the Framers did not foresee the future, “nor could they draw on the knowledge that might be gained from later experiences with democracy in America and elsewhere” (Dahl, 2002, p. 8). Are African leaders in recent times suffering the same setback as their American counterparts? Is ignorance inevitable in institutionalizing democracy?

According to Dahl, among several elements that the American Framers failed to confront in detail were the question of slavery, the right of suffrage, the process of electing the president and senators, the effects of the Connecticut Compromise, which awarded each state equal number of senators without regard to the size of the population, the limitation of Congress in controlling the economy, and the unlimited power of the judiciary (Dahl, 2002, pp. 16–20). Even though the amendments that came after the creation of the Constitution attempted to rectify most of these inadequacies, they do not provide an unshakable scaffold for the people to continue to build democracy as intended by the Framers. With this complication in mind, and noting that democracy evolves with programmatic endeavors and cannot be dictated, forced on, or transplanted very easily, one can argue

that the implications for the Western perspective of democracy on Africa are immense.

Looking for Reasons to Fill Up the Democracy Lacuna in Africa: Economics, Oil, and Rentier Politics

Democracy observers and the interlocutors of liberal democracy have argued that the necessary prerequisites of democratic structures for a sustainable polity are absent in most African countries to enable the leaders to implement initiatives that would lead to democratic societies on the continent. These prerequisites are not limited to a solid constitutional framework with checks and balances, majority rule and minority rights, the protection of individual rights to freedom, and equality before the law, but the reduction of abject poverty, economic growth, equity, and development cannot be left out of the equation. Accepting the premise of modernization theory that economic variables are indispensable in creating a sustainable democratic society for the moment, it is indubitable that Africa is the poorest continent on the planet, with more than half of the population residing in poverty according to the World Bank. The employment structures for countries are one of the best predictors of economic development. Africa has about 40% of its labor force in the agriculture sector and over three quarters of the continent has between a 15.1% and over 20% proportion of the labor force unemployed (Allen and Sutton, 2011, pp. 110–111). The low levels of purchasing power, percentage of the populace living on less than a dollar a day, the nature of economic output per country, and the general rate of poverty in Africa create a discrepancy between the marginal propensity to convert economic resources into democratic realities and the actual established democratic institutions. Arguably, there is no direct and concrete corelationship between abundance of economic resources and successful consolidated democracies. Yet, the debate by the modernization school that since the 1950s, there is evidence that an educated middle-class and increases in wealth in most countries cause corresponding increases in political freedoms and better chances to remove oppressive regimes from power has not subsided. Similarly, the Chinese case of rapid economic development stands the modernization theory on its head.

Oil and rentier politics, Asumah argues, could improve liberalization and may lead to limited democratic reforms (see Asumah, 2010). Yet, African countries with resources have not been successful in rentier politics. “Rentier nation states obtain most or a substantial

portion of their national revenue from the rent and profit acquired from local primary resources such as oil sold to foreign clients and investors. These states therefore live off rent or income of oil . . . and purchase support from their populace by buying legitimacy through distribution of goods and services via the process of de-politicization and cooptation” (Asumah, 2010, p. 403). A number of African countries—Libya, Algeria, Angola, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea—have toyed with the idea of rentier politics, but their efforts toward liberalization and democratization have not come to fruition. As noted by Freedom House, seven out of the eight countries that produce large quantities of oil in Africa are not free. The one country that comes anything near to “free” is Nigeria, but then again, it is only “partly free” (Freedom House, 2011). Steven Kretzmann, a director of a Washington-based organization that monitors the activities of the oil industry, globally sums the oil/democracy argument this way: “Unfortunately, you can’t just drill your way to democracy and prosperity” (Kretzmann, 2005, p. 2).

In nation-states where the foundations for democracy and development are weak, oil can be both a blessing and a curse. As noted above in rentier politics, leaders in oil-rich nation-states have used revenue from petroleum trade to provide some social programs for the general populace in return for their acquiescence and quiescence in the political process. Other leaders have used oil revenue to buffer their security forces by purchasing expensive ammunition and rewarding the elite military officer corps in return for protection. Either way, it is still rentier politics. Ironically, the champion of democracy, the United States, continues to do business with oil-rich countries like Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, where democracy has failed or is failing. It is unpardonable that the Obama administration’s ambassador to Equatorial Guinea would characterize the Teodoro Obiang Ngume’s regime as an “ally” to the United States; neither is it acceptable for the African Union (AU) to elect Obiang Ngume president of the AU after Amnesty International has found evidence of torture, execution, and detention of the president’s opponents (McLure, 2012). Yet, without a legal proceeding or a trial one cannot determine if President Obiang Nguma is guilty of any the charges brought forth by Amnesty International. Nigeria is partially free according to Freedom House; however, one must not forget how the Nigerian government has been using force against the Oguni people in the Niger Delta, who are “sitting” on oil and petroleum resources but are submerged in pollution and poverty in Nigeria. Nigeria and Angola are prime examples of nation-states where oil has become a curse and a fuel for ethnic conflict.

Currently, Ghana is a test case for the oil/democracy and blessing/curse discourse. Ghanaians have been quite successful in the past 20 years with the democracy project in Africa. The 2008 Ghanaian presidential election and the race between Nana Akufo Addo of the ruling party and John Atta Mills, the opposition's candidate, was tight. In a runoff election three weeks later, John Atta Mill was elected president by 50.2% to 49.8%. This result was sufficient to fuel ethnic conflicts in most African countries since the contestants were from different ethnic groups in Ghana. John Atta Mills, the would-be president, is a Fanti from Ekumfi Otuam in the Central Region of Ghana, and his opponent is an Akan, born in the Greater Accra Region. Furthermore, the Ghanaian presidential election is praise-worthy for the democratic process in Africa. Mali, Benin, and Ghana appear to be gathering strength in the democratic process in one election after the other. Yet, elections are only one part of procedural democracy, and Ghana presents another test case with the discovery and drilling of oil from the Jubilee Fields. Would the oil wealth destroy the process of democracy in Ghana or create ethnic conflicts like other oil-rich African countries? Oil wealth contributes to economic growth, but does economic growth necessarily help the process of democratization? It is sound to tackle this question by noting that economic growth and development will facilitate the process of democracy only if they strongly support structural and socio-economic status changes in the general populace. This phenomenon means that the nation-state must undergo changes in class structure. In Africa though, a middle class that would serve as a conceptual bridge between the rich and the poor is almost nonexistent. Absent this influential middle-class, the process of democratization is stifled and ethnic and kinship groups have to engage in the participatory process for some semblance of liberalization to ensue.

Ethnic Fragmentation, Diversity, and Civil Society

The human diversity in Africa is unrivaled in any continent on earth. This diversity is a blessing in several ways, including heterogeneous cultures, biological and sociological differences, adorned by the politics of difference, but this same diversity can also serve to undermine the process of democratization. There are many ethnic groups in Africa, with over 2 thousand languages, cultures, and norms. The 54 African nation-states (Southern Sudan seceded from the Arab/Muslim-controlled north and became an independent nation-state on July 9, 2011) are multilingual, except Somalia, Swaziland, Lesotho,

and Botswana. Nigeria, the most populous nation-state in Africa (population 148.1 million) for instance, has over 3 hundred different linguistic groups. Different languages are concomitant with different cultures. Khapoya carefully reminds students and scholars of Africa that: “‘Language’ and ‘culture’ are virtually the same. It is helpful when studying the similarities and differences between African people, to adopt such a perspective. . . . a group’s common elements of language and culture are seen as being most significant in identifying different ‘people’ or ethnic groups sharing common language and culture” (Khapoya, 2010, p. 12). Khapoya’s observation strengthens the case for diversity and kinship in Africa. Africans should therefore celebrate the diversity of their cultures to create strong democratic institutions. Nevertheless, one can be puzzled by this question: How can the diverse cultures and languages survive (ethnic) conflict when the freedoms associated with self and cultural expressions can also be divisive?

Africans and Americans were witnesses of the ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and the genocide that ended the lives of 800,000 Tutsis and Hutus who opposed the massacre (Glazer, 2004, pp. 685–700). Sudan’s 20-year-long civil war between the northern Arab/Muslims and the southern Black African Christians in western region of Darfur just ended with the creation of a newest nation-state in the world, the Republic of South Sudan, on July 9, 2011. Somalia, Kenya, and Nigeria, all have ethnic tensions. As McLure informs his readers:

In fact, many Africans—even in the continent’s most stable and democratic countries—consider their ethnic identity as equally or more important than their national identity. . . . Strong ethnic attachments can hamper the development of democracy if elections become mere ethnic headcounts, with winners dividing the spoils (McLure, 2012, pp. 7–8).

The ethnic conflicts are fueled by old colonial artificial boundaries that were drawn between brothers and sisters and kinship groups since the 1800s. Europeans created some of that obstacle to democracy that Africans are facing today. The Europeans created boundaries that bastardized ethnic identities for the benefit of natural resources, which has continued to render powerless national identity in the process of democratization. In addition to boundary problems, tribalism, nepotism, cronyism, and ethno-nationalism are culprits of ethnic

conflicts. With these ethnic conflicts on the continent, and the fact that the people have not yet transcended affinity politics, the road to democracy in Africa will continue to be undulating.

It behooves this writer to muddy the discourse over ethnic diversity and democracy in Africa by making reference to Fish and Brooks's 2004 study that debunked Freedom House president Adrian Karantnycky's position (and the prevailing position) that multiethnic and diverse societies have less of a chance of building democracy and that "democracy has been significantly more successful in monoethnic societies than in ethnically divided and multiethnic societies" (Karantnycky, 2002, p. 107). In their quantitative analysis, using a number of multiethnic and "fractionalized" societies, including Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Mali, and Rwanda in Africa, Fish and Brooks (2004) conclude that contrary to conventional wisdom and empirical evidence about how linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic difference could sabotage the process of democratization, "Our findings, which are based on analysis of some high-quality, highly differentiated new data, provide grounds for doubt about the idea that monoethnic societies have an edge when it comes to founding and preserving democratic rule" (Fish and Brooks, 2004, p. 164).

This is not to rehash the debate about how compatible or not diversity is to democracy. Nevertheless, the Fish and Brooks finding informs our observation of how Africologists can capitalize on Africa's diversity to improve democracy. It also enables us to remove predatory regimes that hide behind the facade of the difficulty for multiethnic societies in Africa to pursue democracy from their authoritarian domains. However, affinity politics is still very strong in Africa, and unless African countries transcend the "take-off" stage, a phase of strong prematurity, where all the structures of development are in position, civil society is strengthened, and linguistic/ethnic identity is transformed into national identity politics, the place of diversity in building democracy will remain questionable at best and lethal at worst.

Most African nation-states have maintained a state-centered state model in which the nation-states are independent actors that deal with diversity and turn their own preferences into public policy and programs in order to avoid multiethnic conflict. The state at this stage is anthropomorphic; it acts as a father figure without input from civil society. The quest for African nation-states for the twenty-first century is to utilize a society-centered state model that postulates a condition in which civil society within the polity has a symbiotic relationship with the nation-state. It is indubitable that

there is a strong relationship between democracy and autonomous community associations and institutions, where individuals make the state accountable. In a society-centered state model, the state serves as a viable platform on which different sociopolitical actors come together to iron out their difference and galvanize their interest to assist the state to remain above a “take-off” stage. Even though there is no nation-state that is exclusively state-centered or society-centered, these generalizations are helpful in examining state-civil society integration and interaction. Society-centeredness, as a deliberate socioeconomic arrangement, strengthens the society-state relationship, the autonomy of the state, and the productivity of civil society.

All the same, in Africa civil society is mostly locally based. These local groups have limited penetration into national politics. Ethnic associations, kinship groups, market women’s organizations, religious groups, age groups and farmers associations are examples of these locally based groups. More recently, student organizations and labor unions are beginning to form coalitions at the national levels, but their effect on politics is limited because they do not have the economic and organizational power to balance the hegemony of the state. Civil society itself derives from Western democratic theory so there is some difficulty in precisely adopting the concept in African politics and culture. Where does one place African primordial groups? Does the idea of civil society provide a clear dichotomy between affinity groups and affiliation groups or the communal vis-à-vis the societal? In attempting to answer similar questions about restructuring democracy in the African context, Woldemarian (2008) notes that:

Nowhere in Africa is there a clear line of demarcation between state and society. The notion of civil society providing instruments of countervailing power that would force the African state to become accountable to the governed is either poorly developed or nonexistent in Africa. In such circumstances it makes little sense to look for definitions of civil society grounded in social, economic, and ethical arrangements considered as separate from the state (Woldemarian, 2008, p. 149).

In order for sociopolitical transformation to take place in Africa, civil society and the intelligentsia must galvanize their force to tame the current turbulent voyage of the premature nation-states of Africa to effectively engage the democracy project.

Reframing African Relational Democracy

Many components, institutions, processes, and procedural standards can assist political scientists and observers of democracy to identify whether a polity is democratic or not. One cannot overemphasize that these measures and processes are predominantly that of the global north or Western. Nonetheless, institutions and procedures alone are not sufficient or adequate variables in determining the nature of democracy in a particular state. The most effective approach in determining the state of democracy in a nation-state is by the approval of the ruled and not the rulers per se. Yet, the people's consent may vary from one country to another because of cultural differences and the nature of "civic culture" present in a polity. What becomes of an entity that lacks civil society, civic culture, or something different from what Western democracies identify as democracy? The African project on democracy is vulnerable to the question above. But Schmitter and Karl (1991) suggest a model that "rest(s) on the rule of prudence, not deeply ingrained habits of tolerance, moderation, mutual respect, fair play, readiness to compromise, or trust in public authorities. Waiting for such habits to sink deep and lasting roots implies a very slow process of regime consolidation—one that takes generations . . ." (Schmitter & Karl, 1991, p. 7). This statement encapsulates the nature and challenges confronted by the African democracy project. Africans have not reached a stage where the Western forms and elements of democracy are deeply ingrained in the people and the nation-states. At best, the countries that are advanced in the democratic project are those that are engaged in a democratic transition—a stage of movement from authoritarianism to democracy. If the aim for African countries is to reach democratic consolidation, then there should be a sense of urgency about reaching a stage of democratic development where the general populace and the key political actors, groups, and institutions accept the pre-eminence of democratic institutions and practice as their *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*—way of doing business and way of life.

Democratic consolidation could be relatively easy if African countries could develop a hybrid of African sociocultural practices, such as traditional institutions and social norms and what had been borrowed from Western democracies, and then shape them into African relational democracy. This type of democracy transcends procedural democracy, which places emphasis on the *process* of elections and the protection of individual rights. A system of government in a nonconsolidated democratic entity that is process oriented tends to dislocate

its function when those who benefit from the process of, say, elections, can get into positions of power and forget about the electorate or exploit the very people who elected them—hence, the magnitude and scope of bloodsucking, vampire and predatory regimes. African relational democracy will combine effective indigenous institutions, cultural practices, workable Western practices and institutions, and social freedoms as foundation of democracy to a point where society-state relationships are inextricably connected in what is attainable or unattainable. Relational democracy would encompass a condition that facilitates the politics of emanation, where the governors and the governed are connected by similar faith, purpose, and vision. The leaders, in this perspective, are an extension of the led and they (leaders) are not in power for self-aggrandizement but they assume their position to genuinely “relate” to the people in all aspects of their sociopolitical endeavors.

At this juncture, it is not unthinkable to revisit African indigenous political institutions and practices and examine how they could be merged with the uncompleted European models and processes that were left in the aftermath of colonialism. Even though some of the decolonization discourses have argued for a synthesis between African and European norms and conceptual decolonization, the debate is only seen in philosophical terms and has not been translated into effective democracy in Africa. Some African countries experimented with the juxtaposition of traditional institutions with Anglo-American ones, only to abandon them later for Western models. What this writer is proposing is a deliberate integration of African cultures and practices into the exclusively European colonial models that have proven to be ineffective in Africa. This integrative approach may enable African leaders to produce political systems built on the amalgamation of the African “self” and the European “other” for good governance and the preservation of African dignity because democracy tends to evolve by restructuring indigenous forms and norms into universal standards. Why? The European project in Africa during colonialism included denying Africans their culture through the process of assimilation and cultural imperialism. In order for democracy to flourish, however, its development must include indigenous systems and at the same time have sufficient room to challenge aspects of the system that are not democratic. After trial and error with the Western systems of democracy, the time has come to retrieve some of what was denied to Africans during colonialism in terms of precepts, norms, and culture—*sankofa*, the Akan term for retrieving the historical and cultural past. Nonetheless, some casual observers of African cultures and political systems are quick to invoke the nondemocratic qualities

of indigenous African institutions and processes. Kwame Gyekye, an African philosopher, challenging such a position notes,

V. G. Simiyu, a Kenyan historian, argues that the traditional African political system was undemocratic. Simiyu's denial that the traditional African political practices was democratic is premised, as I understand it, on some basic assumptions. First, he assumes that the African society was hierarchical and stratified, allowing the political and economic domination of the lower classes by the royal and aristocratic groups: "The first general principle which seemed to lie at the base of nearly all African political systems was the concept of hierarchy." Furthermore, he adds, "In some societies, the class structure prevented the development of democratic tendencies . . . Simiyu's denial of democracy to traditional African political practice is not unqualified; it is sometimes even inconsistent (Gyekye, 1997, pp. 118–119).

Gyekye's objection to Simiyu's observation is not unusual because scholars such as Marina Ottaway, continue to hold a similar position (Ottaway, 2005, pp. 30–33). One can argue that the traditional African practices as far as politics and democracy were concerned were not about popular sovereignty, they were somewhat hierarchical, class-based and sexist. Ultimately, such qualities are present in Euro-American democracies, but they do not preclude them from becoming consolidated democratic nation-states. It is one thing to debate about democratic prerequisites and another to discuss consolidated democracy.

The sustenance of consolidated democracy in Africa may begin with reassessing the institutions of chieftaincy, the council of chiefs, paramount chiefs and how they can revive their roles in the postcolonial African nation-state. Chiefs serve as linchpins between their people and the polity, and once their roles are institutionalized, their political authority may not be questionable. If we understand the position of a chief as one that is hereditary, but the chief is enstooled (attain chieftaincy through the symbolic stool of the people, such as the Ashanti nation of Ghana) by the people and he or she serves at the will and consent of the people, then the level of legitimacy could be high. The root of relational democracy begins with the people and their chiefs who can represent them without questions. Two prominent British anthropologists, Fortes and Evans-Pritchards, once affirmed this observation by remarking that, "The structure of the African state implies that kings and chiefs rule by consent. A ruler's

subjects are fully aware of the duties they owe to him, and are able to exert pressure to make him discharge these duties” (Fortes and Evans-Pritchards, 1940, p. 12). It is not only the aspect of authority that is so important but the process of consultation with the people and elders and consensus building cannot be overemphasized. In fact, human rights abuses, the establishment of authoritarianism, and vampire regimes in Africa are not precolonial ideas; they are practices that were absent in African indigenous politics. Jack Donnelly asserts, “authentic traditional cultural practices and values can be an important check on the abuse of arbitrary power. Traditional African cultures . . . usually were strongly constitutional, with major customary limits on rulers” (Donnelly, 1984, pp. 413–414).

Sociopolitical leadership in indigenous African societies thus contains some democratic qualities. However, these qualities are not ingrained in the total structures of the nation-states in Africa. Aside from chieftaincy, autonomous sociopolitical participation by affinity groups has played a role in patterns of political interaction in Africa. Like most sociocentric societies, the collective ethos is ubiquitous in Africa. The society is not egocentric, but neither is it individualistic. The survival of the group and the people is very important. John Mbiti articulates this concept best, “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1969, p. 141). Affinity and kinship groups do well in the participatory process. Here, again, the structures are limited to the local ethnic and linguistic group level. These groups do not penetrate the national political apparatus sufficiently to affect the body politic. A case can be made that the democratic institutions and qualities in indigenous African societies that have not been tried in the postcolonial era should be tried and tested, rather than performing a premature autopsy on indigenous African institutions and their ability to inform the development of consolidated democracy in Africa.

Conclusion

In sum, the development of consolidated relational democracy in Africa must transcend the take-off stage on socioeconomic development, petro-politics, ethnic restructuring, reframing of diversity, revisiting indigenous African institutions to search for workable elements for democratic governance, and rethinking the utilization of Western democratic value systems that are productive for African cultures. Since more than 60% of Africans reside in the rural areas, the work to engage the farming and fishing communities in political

participation must be deliberate. Traditional institutions that were downgraded during the process of decolonization must be resuscitated to augment their capacity for political participation. Patron-client relationships that were pronounced in the immediate decolonization period need restructuring to empower clients to be able to galvanize forces to remove patrons who are not providing adequate services to their clientele. National-local patronage has survived many Western failed structures. What is needed at this point in clientelist politics in Africa is the expansion of national-local clientele relationships so that the intricate networks of communication can enhance political participation.

In reframing African relational democracy, referencing the premise that some indigenous political systems have qualities of democracy, culturally effective Western democratic institutions and processes could be juxtaposed or redesigned to work with the indigenous systems. As Schmitter and Karl note, “since no single set of actual institutions, practices, or values embodies democracy, the politics of moving away from authoritarian rule can mix different components to produce different democracies” (Schmitter and Karl, 1991, pp. 7–8). Among the Western institutions and values that have a better chance in working well with African traditional political institutions to sustain democracy, a developed political-economy, majority rule, transparency, accountability, parliamentary sovereignty, party government, consensus, checks and balances, autonomous participation, and pluralism will serve Africa well for what they are worth.

A developed political economy will support the people and provide revenue for building democratic institutions. Majority rule puts the power of governance in the hands of the people, protects their freedoms of assembly and exercise of universal adult suffrage, and provides the people with the moral authority to protect minority groups. Majority rule also legitimizes party governance as both affinity and affiliation groups can galvanize their interests for aggregation and articulation purposes. Autonomous political participation and pluralism will ensure that hierarchical associations and monopolistic tycoons do not dominate the political process. Transparency invokes openness in conducting government business. Political transparency would be ensured through a new vision and practice that the nation-state is society centered and relational democracy seeks responsibility not just for one’s self but for the sustenance of the state. This transformational process would require changes in cognitive structures, as well as behavioral and institutional modification. Transparency will expedite the eradication of the entitlement behavioral syndrome of many Africans. It will counteract the forces

of bribery and corruption, cronyism and nepotism for government to function effectively. Accountability and transparency have symbiotic relationships. They involve responsibility and ethics in governance. Checks and balances provide a framework for maintaining accountability to the citizenry and keeping the indigenous and Western systems in harmony. The essence of parliamentary sovereignty enables law-governing nations to thrive. It includes both institutions and practices that put the supremacy of the law and rule of law in a centripetal arena of the nation-state. It is not only the legislature that is taken to task in this endeavor, it is the active involvement of the executive and judiciary branches of government that uphold the supremacy of the law. African nation-states are beginning to accept the concept of law-governance as an irrefutable quality of democracy, but the road to making this concept part of the fabric of society still remains undulating.

The genesis of true African relational democracies that are able to modify their institutions, processes, and rules despite the diversity and cultural difference of the continent will bear witness to the time of redefining the African “self” and the European “other” in terms of the democracy project. At that time, such a dichotomy will not be quite necessary because Africans will be able to utilize the best qualities of both worlds to make consolidated relational democracy a continental project for the twenty-first century.

Note

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