REFORMING AFRICA: CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES

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Since colonial rulers transferred power to their African successors, institutions of rule have been recast, by force or negotiation. Political, social and economic arrangements, often of colonial origin, have continued to be reproduced in new guises through periods of dramatic change. States and public institutions defend the jurisdictions within which their agents exercise authority. Claims to self-determination have followed colonial boundaries and some governments have disputed, even by force of arms, the lines drawn by colonial cartographers. Old and new governments have to find ways to establish their authority and carry out their activities with much the same organizational resources and under comparable constraints. The forms of institutions govern the ways policies are implemented. Institutions and their agents tend to confirm the validity of their established practices. Therefore, they continue to do many of the same things, even if these are articulated in line with different policy discourses. The outcomes of their actions result from dynamic interactions among processes that may not have been foreseen, or even foreseeable. Changes are more likely to take place because existing arrangements are unsustainable than they are to conform to the plans of governments, or of international agencies.

STATES, DEVELOPMENT AND CLASS FORMATION

African nationalists sought state power as a means to transfer control political office and economic resources from foreigners to Africans. The state would take responsibility for bringing 'development' to Africa. Nationalists mobilized political support to establish their claims to be the authentic representatives of the people. Control of the state conferred authority to rule its subjects, to exact taxes and rents from imports and exports, to receive aid and contract 'sovereign' debts, and to decide to whom to allocate public resources. The state was central to achieving the goals of nationalism and development. It was the object of the struggle for power. It became the key instrument in the continuing battle to maintain power.

Conquest and trade, in people and commodities, incorporated Africans into a wider global economy. Colonial powers mapped out their territories and subordinated diverse African polities to their rule. Colonial rule redefined state forms, social identities, gender relations, religious beliefs and class relations. Colonial transport networks reoriented the relations of African producers and economies to changing global economic networks. Colonialism subordinated African producers to the requirements of new, and often coercive, labour regimes and patterns of cultivation to meet the requirements of railways, mines, plantations, and revenues. It also opened new economic opportunities through urban employment, commercial activities and Western education. Colonial administrators incorporated African rulers as intermediaries within a hierarchy of chiefs. Multiple, and contested, forms of legal administration—civil, Shari'a, and customary—sought to define relations of gender and generation and rules governing access and succession to land and property. African governments inherited the institutions through which and the boundaries within which, they exercised state authority. They took over or re-established the forms of territorial administration, the 'decentralized despotism' through which their predecessors had exercised power.

The 'imagining' of African nations and ethnicities has generally taken place within and along colonial boundaries. Prior to colonial rule, people defined their identities primarily by their allegiance to a ruler or their status within a political community. Polities had interests in incorporating settlers and slaves to strengthen their productive and military capacities. Under colonial and post-colonial states, political communities were defined and defined themselves according to administrative, religious and linguistic demarcations. Their interest now lay in excluding outsiders from access to 'their' resources.

In contemporary African usage, 'tribes' or 'ethnic groups' usually refer to people speaking a common language. Some have historical links to a pre-colonial polity. They do not usually share a single pre-colonial identity. Their dialects were standardized into written forms of only in the 20th century. African and Afrikaner élites fashioned new cultural identities from disparate cultural and historical materials. Ethnicities arose from people's varied experiences of migration and urbanization, subordination and competition, religious belief and conversion. These brought African people into new relations and differentiated them in new ways. What the multiple forms of ethnicity share is the ways in which identities define people's access to public resources.

Christianity and Islam were established in Africa soon after their foundations. By the end of the colonial period, most Africans adhered to one of these world religions. Mission churches and Muslim foundations funded schools and hospitals. Religious beliefs and practices provided ways to make sense and dealing with the problems of a wider and uncertain world. *Mahdist* and millennial movements offered collective deliverance from oppression. Post-colonial regimes have been confronted by the stubborn resistance of believers who reject the claims of state authorities and by sects inspired by prophetic leaders. Many people have turned to charismatic religious movements to seek solutions to their private problems within a new moral and social order. Others look to indigenous healers and beliefs to solve their problems. Evangelists bless the prosperity of the rich, offer hope of rewards to the many, and give solace to the poor. Successful preachers attract far greater followings than any political movements and expand their enterprises across continents.

Independent African governments spread the benefits of 'development' in the form of industrial growth, formal education, hospitals and clinics, state employment and rural development. Rises in population growth and the expansion of the cities increased demand for public services. Governments established institutional structures to bring government closer to its subjects and to draw its subjects more effectively under its control. Following colonial precedent, several governments made rural people live in villages to bring development to them, to compel them to grow cotton or to 'protect' them from insurrectionary forces. Governments have found it difficult to persuade rural people to conform to plans for their betterment, and have often been confronted by organized local resistance. Rural people and the urban self-employed are poorly placed to act collectively to affect the policies of national governments.

Governments expanded their activities beyond their fiscal and administrative capacities, and found themselves unable to sustain the provision of services. School enrolments have fallen in many countries over the last two decades; gender, class and rural-urban inequalities have tended to increase. Families are required to pay for poor standards of state schooling. Health charges raise little in revenue but reduce demand from poor people.

Africans, and their livestock, are vulnerable to infection from endemic and epidemic diseases. Most Africans lack access to clean water. Mining and occupational diseases are widespread and generally uncompensated. Immunization has achieved successes, such as small pox and yellow fever, but levels of immunization have declined and vaccines have yet no answer to trypanosomiasis or the capacity of malaria to resist successive drugs. The incidence of tuberculosis is high, particularly in South Africa, because of poor living conditions and the problems of getting patients to complete treatment regimes.

HIV/AIDS is particularly virulent in east and southern Africa. The transmission of HIV is facilitated by prior infection by sexually transmitted diseases. It spread rapidly along trucking routes and, secondarily, among migrant workers and through them to rural areas. The incidence of infection is greater among women than men and affects girls and women at younger ages than men. In some places, a majority of commercial sex workers are HIV-positive. The disease has made great inroads among the economically active, including teachers and nurses. Many children have been orphaned or even been born with the disease and young girls have had to assume responsibility for the care of younger siblings and elderly relatives. The spread of the disease undermines the public institutions and kinship networks *needed* to cope with its consequences.

Research into HIV vaccines and anti-retroviral drugs both confront the capacity of the viruses to assume new forms. Governments are claiming the right to produce generic substitutes or import from lowest cost suppliers. This has brought them into conflict with pharmaceutical companies who defend their international patent rights. They offer to supply anti-retrovirals to governments at discounted prices. Their primary interest is to secure the market monopolies conferred by patents and exclude potential competitors. Anti-retroviral therapies can reduce HIV transmission from mothers to children. The resources required to administer a rigorous regime of anti-retroviral therapies for the majority of sufferers are beyond the capacities of African governments. Governments, doctors and the market will decide which HIV-positive people can be helped. *The proposed global AIDS fund may intensify competition among pharmaceutical companies, governments, NGOs, and researchers without promoting the complex combination of actions required to address the multiple sources of the crisis.*

Attempts to change individual behaviour must change modern forms of male sexuality and overcome the fatalism, of individuals and institutions, in the face of the spread of the disease, the lack of any cure, and the prohibitive costs of treating its symptoms. Political leadership, or the lack of it, has influenced people's attitudes and actions. Failures to act to reduce the rate of infection at the time when infections first began to rise made it exponentially more difficult to check the further spread of the disease.

Colonialism and the post-colonial state have been engines of class formation. The colonial economy drew Africans into new class relations: as wage labourers, on docks, railways, mines and farms; as peasants or artisans producing for local or distant markets; as clerks and teachers; as traders, business people and professionals. Individuals, families and wider kin overlap the divisions between town and country, commercial and bureaucratic activities and wage- and self-employment. Post-colonial states structured people's relations to markets, legal and illegal, in land, commodities, labour and money. Most Africans find most or all of their livelihood outside formal institutions.

In many African states, a distinctive 'political class' can be recognized. This consists of those people, from professional, administrative, commercial or military backgrounds, who control or aspire to control access to state offices and public resources. Public offices and state favours have allowed the avaricious to acquire money and enabled others to accumulate capital. Many successful African capitalists owe their wealth to their ability to identify entrepreneurial opportunities. They may need access to the state to pursue their business activities. Dependence on government decisions limits their capacity to pursue their collective interests.

The expansion of education, jobs and commercial opportunities after independence augmented the middle classes. Their modest prosperity was drastically undermined by the economic crises of the 1980s. They created a rich associational life, through which they pursue public activities and claim status and respect from their peers and communities. These associations tend to be focused around people's communities of origin, their churches and mosques, or their commercial or professional peer groups. Some are open to a wide range of members; others are exclusive or even secret.

Industrial development and state employment expanded the working class. The gender composition of the *work force* varies by country, region and industry. In the textile industry, women are employed in Uganda whereas young men dominate in Nigeria. Access to alternative livelihoods in the local economy strengthens the bargaining power of individual workers. Aspirations to accumulate enough money to leave waged work may accentuate rather than discourage labour militancy. Workers have generally embarked on strikes for economic reasons, to demand higher wages or reductions in the prices of food or petrol. The wages of industrial workers and government employees increased in the period preceding or immediately following independence. Since then, trade unions and workers have been unable to prevent their incomes falling as others claimed the lion's share of society's resources.

Governments in several countries strengthened the funding and organization of trade unions and extended the rights of workers and unions, often incorporating the latter into the ruling party, so that they could better manage industrial unrest. These reforms helped unions to protect their members from unemployment. When trade unions proved unable to prevent strikes, governments promoted divisions among them and arrested their leaders. Workers actions have provided a focus for popular discontent with corrupt governments and, sometimes, prompted their removal. After independence, unions in Zambia and in Ghana, struggled to maintain their autonomy from government control. Trade unions subsequently assumed leadership of political coalitions opposed to authoritarian governments in Zambia and, more recently, in Zimbabwe. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) took a leading role in the struggle against apartheid. Since 1994 COSATU secured legislative reform through its alliance with the ruling African National Congress (ANC), while organizing strikes in protest at unwelcome economic policy measures. Trade unions have generally been most effective in protecting workers interests when they have retained their autonomy from political parties and governments.

In recent years, old and new organizations have acquired the ambiguous label of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In the 1980s, external funders promoted NGOs as an alternative provider of services and as independent of and opposed to the state. This allowed them to offer attractive salaries, but made them dependent on foreign patronage and changing fashions among development agencies. NGOs are *ill suited* to take over responsibilities for public services. Most NGOs seek to work with government agencies, on whose co-operation they depend for the realization of their goals and often for their access to funds. Governments have organized their own NGOs and have sought to co-opt NGOs and to regulate them under new laws.

Governments in Africa, and their citizens and subjects, have re-formed the political institutions and social arrangements that they inherited from the colonial period and adapted them to their own purposes. These have tended to serve the immediate interests of those in power and exacerbated inequalities in access to power and material resources. They have been unable to realise or sustain the delivery of 'development'. Inherited and reformed institutions have proved ineffective in achieving many of the objectives for which they were created or providing the means by which people may agree on public goals and work together to bring them about.

DEBTS AND DEPENDENCE

During the 1970s, governments in Africa, as in Eastern Europe and Latin America, borrowed money beyond their capacity to repay from commercial banks, foreign governments and the World Bank. During the 1980s, they were confronted with declining prices for their primary exports and high real interest rates for their long- and short-term debts. The ensuing debt crisis both created the need, and provided the opportunity, for the introduction of structural adjustment policies (SAP) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Nkrumah borrowed heavily in the early 1960s to pay for the Volta Dam scheme and for his plans to industrialize Ghana. Zambia and Zaïre (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC) mortgaged their prospective earnings from *the copper* boom of the early 1970s. Nigerian governments, state and federal, paid for spending from anticipated petroleum sales. Companies, state industries and government in South Africa raised loans on the prospects of gold exports. Following the sharp rise in the world petroleum price in 1973, most African governments borrowed from commercial banks at variable interest rates to meet their import bills. Many had recourse to foreign governments to provide loans and to guarantee payments for contracts.

The strategy of import-substituting industrialization, pursued by most African governments, increased rather than reduced dependence on export markets. Import protection secured a market for local industries and monopolistic advantages to local and foreign investors. Industries import more in the way of machinery and other inputs than they export. The expansion of industrial production thus imposes strains on the balance of payments. South Africa met the import costs of industrial growth in South *Africa by* mineral exports, foreign loans and net foreign investments until the 1980s. In 1985 the fall in the gold price, exports of capital and the need to repay loans at high interest rates forced the government to devalue the rand, declare a moratorium on debt repayments and reintroduce the 'financial rand' which subsidized inward capital investments.

Some African countries were able to expand their agricultural exports rapidly after independence, thereby increasing their import capacity, government revenues and demand for industrial production. Availability of forest land and cheap migrant labour (from Burkina Faso) allowed Côte d'Ivoire to duplicate the expansion of cocoa production which had taken place in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria earlier in the century. In Kenya, smallholders gained access to land and the opportunity to grow coffee and tea, which had largely been reserved to settlers before independence. By the 1980s, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya could not expand the markets for their exports much further and prices were falling so that they could not sustain the level of their imports and service the debts contracted during the late 1970s.

During and after World War II, the British colonial government used state export monopolies to purchase agricultural produce well below the price on world markets, thereby requiring African farmers to contribute to post-war reconstruction in Britain. African politicians drew on marketing board revenues to finance development spending, political campaigns and their own business investments. When world prices fell, they maintained their revenues rather than producer prices. In the 1970s cocoa production in Ghana declined and was diverted to neighbouring countries to evade the low prices paid for crops by the state marketing board.

Governments attempted to limit inflation by maintaining the exchange rate of their currencies at unrealistic levels, and by regulating access to foreign exchange and imported goods. These policies penalized exporters and encouraged demand for imports, and consequently led to the collapse of export earnings, scarcity of imports, and a pervasive resort to smuggling and corruption. Political competition turned on the ability to dispose of government revenues and of imported goods and foreign currency, thereby intensifying contests to control state office and its perquisites.

In the 1970s the World Bank sought to repeat in Africa the seed-water-fertilizer ('green') revolution which, in a very different context, had transformed irrigated production of grain in Asia and also to reduce Africa's high rates of population growth. These projects, which started not from market demand but from the supply of biochemical technologies, made little contribution to agricultural output, and resulted in increased government debt. They showed little respect for the knowledge of African farmers and for their proven capacities to expand and adapt production to meet changing market conditions—or for the varied ecologies of African countries.

By 1975 the exposure of commercial banks to 'sovereign' debts from African governments attracted the attention of the World Bank. Although the IMF provided short-term balance of payments relief and the World Bank funded long-term project loans, there was no provision for loans from public institutions to refinance debts and respond to the long-term balance of payments problems faced by African governments. This gap was filled in the 1980s by the introduction of 'structural adjustment' loans. The IMF, with the World Bank, extended long-term programme loans to governments, arranged the rescheduling of their debts, and secured their access to commercial credit. In return, governments agreed to devalue their currencies, liberalize imports, foreign exchange and agricultural markets, and reduce of government spending and subsidies to parastatals. International agencies have not found it easy to enforce all the complex conditions they have laid down in their negotiations. Loans are part of continuing negotiations over the adoption and implementation of economic reforms. Governments may meet some conditions, in part or full, but not others. The measures required to satisfy some conditions may obstruct the realization of others.

Currency devaluation is the key to the successful implementation of SAP. It raises the local price of exports and is designed to encourage exports and reduce the demand for imports and is necessary to liberalize foreign exchange, imports and agricultural markets. If government spending, and the supply of money and credit are not kept firmly in check, there will be a rising demand to exchange local for foreign currency, leading to further devaluations or to a widening gap between official and parallel exchange rates. The heaviest burden of SAPs falls on wage- and salary-earners and on the poor, who cannot pass on the effects of rising prices. As long as governments are reluctant to reduce arms imports and military salaries, spending on health, education, water and other services will suffer.

Successful SAPs depend on a sustained net inflow of foreign exchange, which may require future transfers of profits or debt payments. SAPs have failed to stimulate direct foreign investment. Without protected markets, firms do not need to invest in production to secure access to markets. Declining currency values and political uncertainty discourage long-term commitments. Oil companies invest in production and pipelines to secure access to oilfields. Others prefer to secure contracts for arms supplies or infrastructural projects. Transnational firms rely on credit guarantees from their own governments or project funding from the World Bank. They have competed for contracts by bribing politicians in Africa and also in Europe.

The effects of SAPs depend on the mechanisms adopted to implement them and on the extent to which they can be followed through. In Ghana and Nigeria, fixed exchange rates were replaced by foreign exchange auctions open to banks. Banks proliferated to recycled their foreign exchange allocations on parallel markets. Sales of government assets and allocation of mineral concessions provide lucrative opportunities for favoured beneficiaries, local or foreign. The falling exchange rate of the naira widened the differences between petrol prices in Nigeria and in neighbouring countries. Unpopular increases in the petrol price did not remove the discrepancy. The result was extensive smuggling, hoarding in anticipation of further price rises, and severe fuel shortages. In Ghana and Uganda a sharp increase in official prices for cocoa and coffee, respectively, attracted export trade into official channels rather than across borders. Consequently, the share of government revenue in national income and official figures for exports and national income rose dramatically. Where few opportunities exist to grow high-value crops, SAPs cannot generate such rapid increases.

SAPs improved access to consumer goods and the use of industrial capacity. Manufacturers were hit by competition from imports, including *second hand* clothes, in the face of reduced trade protection, high interest rates and stagnant consumer demand. Small-scale Nigerian manufacturers sell informally branded products cheaply across the continent. Economic crisis in East Asia in the late 1990s depreciated the value of Asian currencies and made their exports more competitive. Currency devaluations by one African country create difficulties for producers in another, leading to demands to maintain or extend intra-African trade protection.

African governments allocate a substantial proportion of their budgets and foreign exchange earnings to service debts, without making any significant impact on the principal owed. Export guarantees transfer commercial debts to governments. Several governments have converted unpaid loans to grants, and investors and international agencies have bought back some commercial debt at a discount. Refinancing and rescheduling of the debts of African governments allowed payments to decline as a proportion of exports in the 1990s but the total amounts owed continued to rise.

The Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative launched by the World Bank and IMF Development Committee in 1996 aimed to reduce debts to the level at which their repayments could be sustained. Debtor countries were required to meet strict macro-economic targets to qualify. In 1999 the major industrial countries proposed ‘faster, deeper and broader debt relief for the poorest countries that demonstrate a commitment to poverty reduction’. Access to the programme has been made quicker and broader, extending its reach beyond the initial beneficiaries, Uganda and Mozambique. The IMF’s macro-economic targets will be complemented by World

Bank monitoring of poverty reduction programmes. These dual aims may not be easy to reconcile.

The debt crisis arose out of the statist and protectionist strategies of development pursued by post-independence government, supported by funding from international aid agencies, profligate spending by governments and lending by banks, and international economic crises. It created the need and the opportunities for international financial agencies to try to impose structural adjustment policies on African governments. They are difficult to impose in full and contradictory in their objectives. They define the conditions under which governments are allowed not to repay their debts.

THE POLITICS OF MULTI-PARTY ELECTIONS

Governments throughout Africa increasingly have to claim the legitimacy of democratic elections. During the 1980s, those in power appropriated an increasing share of contracting resources. This narrowed their capacity to co-opt élites and maintain of public acceptance. They usually lacked the credibility to persuade workers and others to accept the imposition of SAP. Civilian and military governments, whether capitalist or of 'socialist orientation', found their authority under threat. During the 1990s, most governments, willingly or reluctantly, assented to multi-party elections. The state forms and political systems of different countries shaped the scope for alternation of rulers and for instituting their legal and political accountability.

In the years after independence, African rulers tended to repress their opponents or co-opt them into a single ruling party or both. Presidents declared themselves rulers for Life. In Sudan, Congo (now DRC), Dahomey, Nigeria, and Uganda, rival parties proved unable to settle regional conflicts and resolve their own rivalries within an agreed constitutional framework. Wars of secession took place in Southern Sudan, which still continue, in Eastern Nigeria (Biafra), and in Katanga (now Shaba, DRC) and by Uganda went through two wars of liberation from repressive regimes. In the Sahel countries, governments had to deal with armed insurrections by nomadic peoples, as French military administrators had done before them.

In Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia, single-party governments, usually led by nationalist leaders of advancing age, maintained themselves in power for three decades. They combined authoritarian rule with centralized, bureaucratic direction of policy, decentralized administration and distribution of patronage. The Botswana Democratic Party retained power in competitive elections under successive presidents. In Namibia, SWAPO has been able to rely on its support in Ovamboland to ensure electoral majorities against parties who have been limited to their core ethnic support. In 1998, President Sam Nujoma secured an exceptional constitutional amendment enabling him to contest, and win, a third term of office in 1999.

Elsewhere, military coups overthrew one-party and multi-party governments, as well as military regimes themselves. Coups divided armies along lines of rank and generation, and/or political and regional affiliations. Military rulers proved susceptible to the temptations of office and *ill equipped* to address the problems that their predecessors failed to solve. In several countries, radical officers took power with a populist platform. Museveni in Uganda and Rawlings, in Ghana, soon accepted the economic guidance of the IMF but retained a distrust of representative politics and created the same forms of decentralized rule as successful one-party states.

Military rulers often went further than politicians to reduce politics to the unconstrained pursuit of spoils. State and private resources were plundered, public services collapsed, civic organization was undermined and ethnic conflicts fuelled. States surrendered their monopoly of the legitimate use of violence to warlords, vigilantes and their own soldiers. The implosion of 'spoils politics' is difficult to reverse, especially where spoils are as valuable as diamonds or hardwoods.

President Léopold Senghor of Sénégal initiated the move away from one-party politics when he licensed two opposition parties in 1974. His successor, Abdou Diouf opened elections to multi-party participation in 1981. The governing Parti socialiste, retained control of political patronage, the electoral machinery and the security services. In early 2000 divisions among its leadership and loss of support from Muslim religious leaders allowed Abdoulaye Wade to defeat Diouf in the second presidential ballot and win a legislative majority in 2001.

In 1989 strikes in Benin against the discredited military government of President Matthieu Kérékou led in 1990 to the convening of a national conference, which elected its own prime minister, Nicéphore Soglo, who defeated Kérékou in presidential elections held in 1991. The pattern of national conferences, representing a multiplicity of parties and personalities, was repeated in other francophone countries. The Benin example persuaded a number of single-party and military governments in other countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon in 1990,and Burkina Faso in 1991 to hold, and win, multi-party elections, while resisting the idea of a national conference.

In several countries, a broad tripolar division emerged among the main parties, with no faction commanding a majority of seats. Where a ruling party establishes itself, unsuccessful parties and factions excluded from the ruling party tend to fragment making it easier for new, or old, incumbents to hold on to their positions. The Benin legislature was dispersed among 12 parties after the 1991 elections, making it difficult for President Soglo to secure a stable parliamentary majority. Fiscal stringency and the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994 undermined Soglo's efforts to strengthen his political base. Opposition parties gained a clear majority in the 1995 legislative elections and, in 1996, Kérékou won the presidential election on the second ballot. In Niger, President Mahamane Ousmane was elected with the support of a multi-party alliance in 1993, but could not command a majority in the national assembly, which he dissolved in the following year, as he was unwilling to accept its choice of prime minister. This created an opportunity for Col Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara to seize power in a military coup in January 1996, and subsequently to contrive his own election to the presidency. Maïnassara was himself assassinated in 1999 and succeeded by a military junta which transferred power to an elected government in 2000.

Houphouët-Boigny's successor, Henri Konan Bédié retained power in Côte d'Ivoire from 1993 to 2000. Of his two main rivals, Allasane Ouattara was excluded from the 1995 election under new nationality rules and Laurent Gbagbo withdrew. Gen. Robert Gueï removed Bédié in 2000, arguing that he was attempting unfairly to prevent Ouattara from contending for the presidency. Gueï then used a constitutional court decision to invalidate Ouattara's candidacy. Finally, he refused to accept the election of Gbagbo until he was forced out by popular protest. The continued exclusion of Ouattara indicates how electoral politics has opened divisions along religious, regional and national lines.

In Zambia, Kenya and Malawi the rulers of one-party states were reluctant to concede to popular demands for multi-party elections. Fiscal crises and political uncertainty led governments to narrow the range of political cliques and ethnic groups among which they dispensed patronage. This brought a broad range of overlapping groups into opposition: former members of the ruling party and government; businessmen; regional interests; trade unionists and workers; students; church leaders, human rights activists and political radicals. Each of these could look to multi-party elections as a means of gaining, or regaining, access to government. Similar dynamics are evident, without formal one-party rule, in Zimbabwe.

In Zambia the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) maintained its unity, and its candidate, trade union leader Frederick Chiluba, won the 1991 presidential election. In Kenya the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy split into two factions, FORD–Asili and FORD–Kenya, following the announcement by President Daniel arap Moi that multi-party elections would take place at the end of 1991. Mwai Kabaki, a former vice-president, left the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) to found the Democratic Party. In Malawi regional divisions between the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) continued after the referendum in 1993 endorsed proposals for multi-party elections.

In power in Zambia, the MMD began to repeat many practices of Dr Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) government. Like UNIP prior to independence in 1964, the MMD achieved national support and restricted the previously dominant party to a single province. UNIP declared a single-party state in 1972 to counter defections by prominent party leaders with support from their home provinces, notably the vice-president, Simon Kapwepwe. Chiluba was accused of concentrating power in the executive, failing to ensure adequate representation in government for all ethnic groups, and of tolerating corruption. Chiluba's vice-president and other senior ministers resigned to join other parties or form their own. Political opponents were accused of involvement in coup plots. The MMD, while not proscribing opposition parties, disqualified Kaunda from standing for the presidency in the 1996 election, on the grounds that he was not a Zambian citizen. The 2001 election prompted new divisions and expulsions within MMD over Chiluba's initial plan, later retracted, to change the constitution to seek a third term, raising issues of constitutional principle and thwarted ambition.

In Kenya President Moi warned that the restoration of a plural political system would exacerbate ethnic tensions and then based his political strategy on fostering just such conflicts. Initially, FORD appeared capable of recreating the consortium of social classes and diverse ethnic interests *that* had brought KANU to power under Jomo Kenyatta in 1962. In 1992, rivalries dividing two Kikuyu and one Luo candidates prevented a Kikuyu-Luo alliance, and encouraged voters from other ethnic groups to support KANU. Rather than uniting opposition, defeat encouraged new divisions. A new party, Safina, was established to work towards the creation of a national political consensus. It was refused official registration until shortly before the 1997 elections, when it became just another party. Moi defeated five rival candidates for the presidency with 41% of the vote. The 1992 and 1997 elections were followed by attacks on Kikuyu farmers in the Rift Valley and on Luo communities by Kalenjin and Maasai supporters of KANU. Opposition parties divided, before and after both elections, over leadership and how to relate to Moi's regime. After 1997, Moi left open the vice-presidency and thus the succession, and co-opted key opponents into government while bringing back his most discredited and corrupt associates.

In Malawi, Bakili Muluzi defeated President Banda in presidential elections in 1994, although Muluzi's UDF did not obtain a majority in the legislature. AFORD, the third largest party, held the balance between the ruling UDF and the Malawi Congress

Party (MCP), the former ruling party, and eventually gave its support to the MCP candidate, in the 1999 presidential elections. Muluzi was re-elected as president, but was again denied a legislative majority. Churches have vocally opposed proposals by Muluzi's associates that he be allowed to stand for a third term.

The Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) won elections from 1980 to 1996 with overwhelming support in the Shona-speaking areas. The army brutally repressed unarmed and armed opposition from the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in Matabeleland. Prime Minister Robert Mugabe incorporated ZAPU into the ruling party and became executive president in 1988. He bought off political discontent at corruption by spending money on war veterans, thus undermining the government's economic strategy. In 1998, Zimbabwe sent troops to support President Kabila in the DRC, to the profit of key military and political figures and their business associates and at great cost to Zimbabwean taxpayers and consumers.

An independent by-election victory in 1996 and the formation in 1997 of the National Constituent Assembly, initiated by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, opened new political space. In 1999 the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) launched the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), bringing together a disparate alliance of businesspeople, white farmers, trade unionists and academics. In February 2000, the government failed to win a majority in the referendum on its constitutional proposals. Mugabe promised to transfer white-owned farms to 'war veterans', whom he paid to intimidate, abduct, and sometimes kill MDC supporters, black farm workers and white farmers. ZANU-PF won enough rural seats in Mashonaland to win a narrow majority of elected seats. Mugabe has sought to remove the constraints to corrupt and authoritarian rule exercised by judicial decisions, independent newspapers and civic organizations.

In Ghana, political loyalties originating in the 1950s transcend numerous changes of regime and the reformation and renaming of parties. Rawlings drew on the gains of economic strategy, and his control of administration and patronage to win elections in 1992 and 1996 against a regionally-based opposition. The constitution did not allow Rawlings a third elected term and, in 2000, John Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party defeated John Atta Mills, of Rawlings' National Democratic Congress. Museveni similarly defeated his rivals in Ugandan elections in 1996 and 2000, in which non-party candidates revealed older party, regional and religious divisions.

In Nigeria military coups supplanted parliamentary government from 1954–1966 and again from 1979–83. The military centralized the control and allocation of mineral oil revenues, encouraging conflicts between politicians and communities for access to a share of state largesse. Generals Ibrahim Babangida (1985–93) and Sani Abacha (1993–98) personalized military rule and manipulated civilian politicians through extended transitional programmes. Babangida managed the election of June 1993 and then refused to recognize the victory of Moshood Abiola. The sudden deaths of Abacha and Abiola opened the way to a new round of elections. Gen. (retired) Olusegun Obasanjo, who had been military head of state from 1976–79, was elected president in 1999 with the support of the political and military establishments. Nigeria continues to be riven by conflicts over the allocation of state resources, constitutional arrangements, and the rival claims of religious and ethnic groups at federal, state and local levels. Demands that Muslim-majority states adopt Shari'a law, or for changes to local government boundaries are vehicles for asserting political and economic interests. Politicians pursue spoils by legislative and violent means. Legislators fail to establish forms of political accountability or to provide ways of reconciling the conflicts they inherited from the military.

The timing, politics and outcomes of calling multi-party elections have varied considerably among African countries. In Benin (1991 and 1996), Zambia, Mali and Congo-Brazzaville (1992), Central African Republic and Lesotho (1993), Malagasy (1993 and 1998), Malawi and South Africa (1994) Nigeria (1999) and Ghana (2000), voters took the opportunity to replace incumbent rulers. In many others, such as Senegal from 1978 to 2000, Côte d'Ivoire (1990, 1995), Cameroun and Kenya (1992, 1997), Gabon and Togo (1993, 1998) Mozambique (1994, 1999) Tanzania (1995, 2000) elections enabled rulers to perpetuate their political hegemony. Military rulers succeeded in getting themselves elected in Burkina Faso (1992, 1998), Chad (1996, 2001), Ghana (1992, 1996), Guinea (1993, 1998), Guinea-Bissau (1993), Gambia (1996), and Uganda (1996, 2000). Elected governments have not been immune from military coups, as in Gambia in 1994, Congo-Brazzaville, Sierra Leone and Niger in 1997, Guinea-Bissau in 1998 and, briefly, Côte d'Ivoire in 2000. Control of power in francophone Africa once depended on French intervention or the lack of it. Power now often depends on military interventions from neighbouring countries.

The most effective governments in Africa have tended to recreate the decentralized forms of territorial administration characteristic of colonial 'indirect rule'. They have incorporated regional and ethnic political interests within an unequal system of political patronage. The political and economic bankruptcy of authoritarian regimes has created openings for democratic politics and wider freedom of expression and limiting arbitrary action by governments. Presidents seeking to extend their tenure have sometimes, but not always, been to overcome constitutional restrictions to their terms of office. Economic strategies have generally been directed from without.

In a number of countries, the prospect and outcome of elections have led to political violence, often initiated by the incumbent government or the military. Elections have too often been marked by disputes over procedures, the eligibility and nationality of candidates and the legitimacy of outcomes. The 'political class', whether in opposition or in power, has been primarily concerned to retain or achieve political office and its perquisites. They have mobilized support from ethnic and regional constituencies without necessarily creating stable coalitions. They have rarely been much concerned with issues of public policy. New governments inherited the institutions and problems of the old and often repeat the political practices of their predecessors.

BEYOND APARTHEID

The election of Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa in 1994 marked the conclusion of the African struggle for national independence. As in other African states, the transfer of power to a *democratically* elected government was negotiated through national conferences.

P. W. Botha's National Party (NP) regime sought to reform the apartheid system in a way that would retain white control of political power *DEL*, to the exclusion of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and its allies. The government persecuted its opponents within and outside South Africa and brought the military challenge of the ANC and the threat of popular insurrection under a degree of control. However, the NP was unable to find a solution to the country's worsening economic problems or its own lack of internal legitimacy and international acceptability. Afrikaner intellectuals and leading businessmen met exiled leaders of the ANC, implicitly recognizing it as the 'government-in-waiting'. The ANC realized that it could obtain through negotiation what it could not achieve by armed struggle. Political reform could only proceed when President F.W. de Klerk released Mandela from detention, on Mandela's terms, on 11 February 1990 and opened formal negotiations with the ANC.

During 1990–94, the NP government retained firm control of state institutions while negotiating the terms on which it would transfer power to an ANC-led administration. Internal violence escalated. The struggle between supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC for paramountcy in KwaZulu/Natal intensified and spread to the workers' hostels and black townships of the Transvaal (now Gauteng). Extremist factions, ranging from the Afrikaner right to the Pan-Africanist Congress, sought to enforce their demands by acts of sabotage and murder, while elements within the government security forces covertly supported urban terrorist outrages. The ANC was impelled to withdraw from political negotiation and resume a campaign of non-violent mass action in mid-1992 following killings in Boipatong by IFP activists, acting in collusion with the police. When negotiations were resumed, the ANC agreed to the formation of an interim government of national unity to follow democratic elections.

Parties other than the ANC sought *through constitutional negotiations to achieve* goals that would not be attainable through an ANC-dominated legislature. The lengthy 1993 interim constitution was amended and approved in 1996. It established independent commissions and public offices, a constitutional court and a land court. Voters cast their ballots for closed party lists. MPs who resign, or are expelled, from their parties lose their seats and are replaced by party nominees, thereby limiting the independence of MPs and of parliament itself.

The negotiation of a new South African constitution depended upon an agreement between the NP and the ANC. The closer such an accommodation appeared, the more unacceptable it became to Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the leader of the IFP, who demanded a federal, or even confederal, constitution that would ensure IFP control of KwaZulu/Natal. Buthelezi withdrew the IFP from the constitutional negotiations but when he was faced with the loss of access to elective political power in KwaZulu/Natal, the IFP consented at the last moment to take part in the 1994 elections. The NP's ambition to lead a conservative coalition, capable of offering a political alternative to the ANC, was thwarted by its alienation from the IFP and its lack of other black African support.

The ANC secured a decisive victory in the 1994 national elections, obtaining 62.7% of the vote for the national assembly and winning legislative majorities in seven of the nine newly-delineated provinces. Coloured and white voters enabled the NP to win the Western Cape. The IFP were accorded a majority of votes in KwaZulu/Natal. In 1996, the NP, but not the IFP, withdrew from the interim government of national unity, within which it had exercised hardly any influence. In 1999, the ANC received 66.4% of the vote. Each of the opposition parties remains confined to ethnic and regional bases of support, and does not challenge the ANC's dominant role in national politics. The Democratic Party (DP) won more votes than the New National Party. As in 1994, the ANC won seven provinces outright and won more votes in the Western Cape than the NP, which aligned with the DP to retain control of the provincial government. This opened the way to the formation by the DP and the NNP of the Democratic Alliance as official opposition, lead by Tony Leon from the former DP. Thabo Mbeki, the former vice-president, succeeded Nelson Mandela as president.

The ANC and its allies abandoned any idea of transforming the economy along socialist lines. Instead, the government is aiming to achieve the 'Africanization' of capitalism, protecting workers' rights and extending equal access to jobs and public services to the majority of the population. It has proved easier to build on a framework inherited from the past than to redirect policies. The redistributive ambitions of the Reconstruction and Development Programme gave way to fiscal orthodoxy. Government dismantled the complex import controls and liberalized agricultural markets. It lacks a coherent strategy for addressing poverty in all its forms or the means to implement one. It has increased people's access to electricity and piped water, built more houses, and extended access to hospitals. It has no coherent strategy for dealing with the spread of HIV infection and its far-reaching consequences. The economic opportunities offered by crime, together with the spread of privately held firearms in southern Africa during the 1980s, and the low morale and corruption within the police force have resulted in a serious escalation in the late 1990s of violent crime.

South Africa is at the centre of the economy of the southern Africa region. Regional economic integration requires that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) develops into a unified trading bloc with mutually convertible currencies. This would, in effect, bring about a northwards expansion of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Rand currency zone. South Africa's integration into a liberal international economy may be inconsistent with the gradual development of regional economic institutions. South Africa concluded a bilateral trade agreement with the European Union in 1999. Governments within the region are reluctant to subordinate their policies to convenience South Africa, which is concerned to protect its labour market from foreign immigrants and low-cost Zimbabwean textiles.

There is within South Africa an evident tension between the historic commitment of the ANC to non-racialism and the claims of the African majority for preferential access to the resources from which they were excluded under apartheid. The ANC has made appointments from all races to high-paid positions in government and promoted affirmative action in the private sector. Black investors have acquired a share in the control of major corporations in the financial, insurance and mining sectors. The ANC has itself become an extension of the patronage system of a centralized state, devolving resources to the provinces and deploying its nominees to positions in parliament, the civil service and national and provincial administrations. It distrusts independent commissioners, office-holders, MPs and journalists and has resisted probes into the details of arms and other contracts and their beneficiaries. NP governments were able to reward their political supporters and punish their opponents, while extending preferential access to education, jobs, and commercial opportunities to Afrikaners. The ANC is able to benefit its supporters among the new political, bureaucratic and commercial élites; it is far more difficult for them to distribute resources to the majority of the population than it was for the NP to do so for the white minority.

AFRICAN SOLUTIONS?

Political power depends ultimately on force. Political transitions increase uncertainty. This may be resolved by the election of new, or existing, rulers to political office. They may also open the way to civil conflict. Insurgencies have often been initiated from and supported by neighbouring countries and expanded conflicts across borders. In many African countries, rivalries among political élites have prevented them from uniting in opposition to the resort to arms to decide struggles for power and they have often aligned with armed factions or military rulers in pursuit of their sectional goals.

Wars have proved extremely costly to African people and to national economies. Wars are highly profitable for rebel forces, and their leaders, arms manufacturers and salesmen, foreign mercenaries, and traders in diamonds, timber and ivory. Exports of natural resources sustained rebel movements and their outside promoters in Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the DRC. These resources, or the promise of access to them, have enabled governments to recruit foreign mercenaries and defray the costs of troops provided by other countries. The interests of contending armies in maintaining control of resources and of the territory from which they are extracted has made it more difficult to reach peace agreements and less likely that belligerents will abide by them.

Throughout the Cold War period, the policies of the contending powers were shaped by their perceptions of strategic alignments, their commitments to their client states, and the scope for arms exports offered by African armies and conflicts. By the mid-1980s, the Soviet government had come to the view that it had nothing to gain from its commitments in Africa, which had become a costly impediment to *détente*. Soviet and Cuban withdrawal from Africa paved the way to negotiations for an Angolan settlement, the independence of Namibia, the fall of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia and the independence of Eritrea.

At the close of 1992 President George Bush committed US forces to lead a UN military intervention to restore civil order in Somalia. The USA withdrew ignominiously in 1994, followed a year later by the remaining UN contingents, having failed to disarm the warlords or broker an agreement among them. The Somali experience undermined the enthusiasm of the US government to extend the 'new world order' and ensured that it would rely on others to resolve the civil war in Liberia, which the USA itself had brought into existence as a state in 1847.

Britain's relationship with its former colonies has tended to be one of doing business as usual with the government in power. The British government tolerated breaches of sanctions against the illegal government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia, which obtained petroleum supplies from British firms. It also resisted demands to implement economic sanctions against South Africa during the apartheid period. In 1995, following the executions of Ogoni activists by the Nigerian military regime, Britain reimposed a ban on arms exports that had supposedly been in operation since 1993.

France retained close political, economic and military links with its African ex-colonies and extended its sphere of interest to include the former Belgian possessions. France supplied arms to Biafra, provided troops to protect favoured governments, and secured arms contracts and oil concessions for French companies. French military and economic policies in Africa was directed by presidential appointees and the security services, whose activities were often at variance with the wishes of the French foreign ministry. France provided the tropical agricultural exports of its former colonies with privileged access to its markets. After Britain joined the European Economic Community (now the European Union - EU) in 1973, these relations became multilateral and were extended to former British colonies and to countries in the Caribbean and the Pacific under successive Lomé agreements. Most former French colonies continued to use the CFA franc, with its benefits as a *convertible* currency. The devaluation of the CFA franc by 50% in 1994 led to sharply increased prices and hardship throughout francophone Africa and a loss of trust in France by African leaders who had not been consulted.

The World Bank shifted their emphasis from funding projects to freeing markets in the early 1980s. At the end of the decade, they recognised the need to rebuild states and adopted the neutral language of governance, under which they extended economic conditions to political demands. Once governments in Benin, Kenya or Malawi no longer appeared able to ensure political stability and fiscal discipline, The Bank joined with creditor governments to demand improvements in human rights and multi-party democracy.

External powers continue to intervene politically when necessary to protect their interests in African countries. The outcomes have frequently accorded neither with their intentions nor their interests. International peace-keeping activities did not always succeeded in protecting civilians from harm, whether by armed militias, government troops or, indeed, the 'peace-keepers' themselves.

The end of the Cold War, and the failures of UN peace-keeping missions in Somalia and Rwanda, created a need for African governments to resolve conflicts in Africa. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) lacks the political, financial and logistic capacity to act collectively. States directly affected by the flow of refugees, trafficking of arms and armed incursions across their borders are more likely to support regional initiatives to deal with the conflicts. The most visible examples were the interventions by ECOMOG, the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau. The financial and logistical difficulties experienced by the peacekeepers, divisions among African states and the fragility of governments, dependent on outside forces, including foreign mercenaries, exposed the limitations of regional approaches to security in post-Cold War Africa.

The ANC government has been reluctant to commit the South African army outside the country but has sought to play a mediating role in Burundi and the DRC. In 1998, troops from South Africa and Botswana were sent to Lesotho, following conflicts between security forces and contending political factions. This initially led to looting and killings but eventually opened the way to political dialogue in Lesotho.

President Mobutu's government in the Congo was noted for its extreme profligacy and its lack of fiscal discipline; the appropriation of the country's wealth by the president, his family and associates and its investment abroad; and for the indiscipline of its army. However, Mobutu facilitated US and South African support for the insurgent União Nacional para a Independência Total (UNITA) in its conflict with the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) government in Angola, which relied on Cuban forces and Soviet-bloc arms and advisors. Mobutu was able to call on Western military support and, until 1991, enjoy access to funds from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, despite his government's blatant failure to abide by their conditions. In 1990 Mobutu announced plans for a transition to a multi-party government. For the next six years, he succeeded in retaining plenary powers while manipulating opposition politicians and exacerbating tensions among ethnic groups.

In May 1997 Laurent-Désiré Kabila arrived in Kinshasa at the head of a rebel army and declared himself president of the DRC, replacing Mobutu and the name, Zaïre, which Mobutu had given the country. A year later, Kabila was in conflict with his former allies, and seven African countries had committed troops to one or other of the contending armies. Kabila's original army was drawn from opponents of the central government in the Shaba (Katanga), Kasaï and Kivu regions. At its core were Tutsi militias and troops drawn from the Banyamulenge (from the DRC) and Banyarwanda (from Rwanda), with support from Burundi and Uganda, as well as from Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Zimbabwe. They were provoked to take up arms by an order to the Banyamulenge to leave the country of which they claimed citizenship. This presented the Rwandan government with an opportunity to proceed against Hutu militia groups, operating among refugees in the eastern DRC and to install a sympathetic government in Kinshasa. As the rebels advanced towards the capital, Western mining interests scrambled to negotiate mineral concessions from the future government.

Kabila's accession to power followed the examples set by his principal sponsors, Uganda and Rwanda. The Front patriotique rwandais (FPR), drawn largely from exiled Tutsi, took power in Rwanda in 1994 and set up a coalition government in Kigali in the aftermath of the genocidal massacres of Tutsi and of moderate Hutu by the extremist Hutu Interahamwe militia. The presence of Belgian troops, under UN auspices, failed to halt the killings. The French government, which had supported the previous Hutu-controlled Rwandan regimes, intervened to create a 'neutral zone' in western Rwanda, protecting some Tutsi communities and facilitating the flight of Hutu refugees, and also of *genocidaires*, into the DRC. Paul Kagame, minister of defence and vice-president of the new Rwandan government, had served in the National Resistance Army, which Museveni had led to power in Uganda in 1986.

A military government, and massacres of Hutu in 1972, consolidated Tutsi political supremacy in Burundi. Pierre Buyoya relinquished the country's presidency in 1993 when he was defeated in an election by Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi's first Hutu president. In 1996, after a period of intense ethnic conflict, and the violent deaths of both Ndadaye and his successor, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, Buyoya resumed power in a *coup d'état*. Tutsi-dominated armed forces to achieve effectively controlled power in both Rwanda and Burundi and had to suppress armed opposition from Hutu militias. *In July 2001, political leaders agreed to proposals to alternate the presidency for two eighteen month terms between a Tutsi (Buyoya) and Hutu but Hutu militias did not lay down their arms.*

In the DRC, Kabila assumed full executive, legislative, fiscal and military authority. He came into confrontation with politicians who had opposed Mobutu and appointed people to office from his own ethnic group or who would depend on him for their position. He multiplied security agencies and suspended the national reconstruction conference. Kabila thus emulatedaspects Mobutu's mode of operation, while inheriting the problems of a bankrupt government. He granted concessions to foreign mining and construction interests and to business associates of certain of his allies political and military leaders.

When Kabila's erstwhile Banyamulenge allies sought to remove him with Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian support, the governments of Angola, Zimbabwe, Chad and Namibia sent troops to support him. Divisions emerged among the rebel forces and between their sponsors in the Ugandan and Rwandan governments, whose forces came into armed conflict in Kisangani in late 1999. Subsequent attempts to secure peace agreements within the DRC have not resolved the struggle for control of territory, trade and mineral resources. Congolese armies depend on their unpopular foreign patrons for support. African governments find it difficult to withdraw their armies until they can ensure protection of their security interests and access to the economic resources which they have acquired.

A prolonged civil war in Liberia began in December 1989 when Charles Taylor led an invasion force, under the name of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), from Côte d'Ivoire. Taylor was initially supported by the governments of Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Libya. The instability that followed the withdrawal of US support for the former Liberian head of state, Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe, who was deposed and murdered in 1990, facilitated Taylor's advance. Conflicts between the NPFL, the Armed Forces of Liberia, and other armed factions assumed an ethnic cast. In 1990 troops from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Guinea, were sent to Liberia under the auspices of ECOMOG. They established uneasy military control over Monrovia, but left Taylor in control of most of the interior.

Nigeria assumed the direction of ECOMOG and provided most of its arms and troops. Successive attempts to negotiate peace agreements and establish a national government failed in the face of the tensions between the Nigerian government and the NPFL, conflicts between political factions, and the determination of Liberia's rival warlords to control territories and the natural resources which paid for their arms and their armies. The Nigerian government eventually reached an accommodation with Taylor after spending most of the previous decade trying to keep him out of power. This opened the way to Taylor's election as president in 1997. ECOMOG withdrew from Liberia in 1998. Taylor's government has repeated the autocratic practices and abuses of human rights of the Doe regime and the NPFL and itself confronts armed opposition.

The Liberian civil war impacted on Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, dispersing over 750,000 refugees into these neighbouring states. In 1991 the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), Sierra Leonean rebels allied with Taylor's NPFL, launched attacks into Sierra Leone, whose government had committed troops and airport facilities to ECOMOG's offensive against the NPFL.

The arrangements to establish a multi-party government in Sierra Leone at the end of 1991 were cut short by a military coup in April 1992. Elections were finally held in 1996, when voters defied the RUF to cast their ballots. Kabbah's government depended for its security on the assistance of Guinean troops, hired Gurkhas, and mercenaries. Local Kamajoi militia resisted RUF attacks but attracted the resentment of the army. The withdrawal of mercenary troops from Sierra Leone in 1997 in accordance with the 1996 Abidjan peace agreement with the RUF, and because the government could no longer afford their services, opened the way to a new coup. The new government set up an armed forces revolutionary council and allied itself with the RUF.

On 1O March 1998, President Kabbah of Sierra Leone returned from exile in Guinea to a hero's welcome in Freetown. The return of the democratically elected president of Sierra Leone by the Nigerian military regime with assistance from a British mercenary company was not an unqualified instance of the victory of democratic principles or of an African solution to African problems. Nor did it prove to be very secure. On 6 January 1999, the combined forces of the AFRC and the RUF invaded Freetown, looted the city, abducted young men and women, and maimed and killed people. Kabbah's government had failed to secure effective control of the country's diamond diggings. It was unable to reconstitute an effective army of its own, distrusted the Kamajoi militia and had to rely on ECOMOG to restore it to power again. Under international pressure, the government negotiated a power-sharing agreement with the RUF in July 1999, which gave Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader, ministerial control over the diamond fields. The RUF renewed its military activities in 2000 with support from Charles Taylor in exchange for control of smuggled diamonds. UN peacekeepers were taken hostage and only the deployment of British and Nigerian troops prevented another RUF attack on Freetown. Civilians captured Sankoh in Freetown. State power, and control of the diamond fields, still depends on the ability to deploy foreign arms and arm young men and women, and children.

No regions, and few countries, in Africa have been free of the ravages of civil wars, conflicts between African countries, dictatorial governments, and the intervention of outside powers and other African governments. Political compromises—as in Zimbabwe in 1988, Mozambique in 1992, or South Africa in 1994, and armed insurgencies—as in Uganda in 1986 or Rwanda in 1994, have brought civil conflicts under some sort of control without direct intervention by powers from outside Africa. External intervention protected an elected government in the Central African Republic from its former military ruler, but in the Republic of the Congo, Angolan troops restored the former military ruler, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, in 1997 to the presidency he had lost in an election in 1992. In Angola, UNITA has persistently evaded complying with successive peace agreements. Civil war continues in Sudan, as do factional and regional conflicts in Somalia and Sénégal. Insurgents continue to attack civilians and governments in northern Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. In mid-2000, hostilities finally ceased in the border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

A new African Union has replaced the Organization of African Unity. Its ambitions, especially for economic integration, are more far reaching. Presidents Mbeki of South Africa and Wade of Sénégal have launched ambitions visions for a 'renaissance' of Africa. Wade's Omega plan envisages co-ordinated regional investment in health, education, international roads and infrastructure, in co-operation with the World Bank. Mbeki's Millenium African Recovery Plan (MARP) focus on the resolution of the debt problem and conditions for direct foreign investment. Wade's ideas go back to the development strategies of the 1950s and 1960s; Mbeki's are more in tune with current policy discourses. Neither can make headway unless stable political order can be established within countries and across regions.

Wars may be politics by another means. The converse may also be true: negotiations are a means to secure military gains. External powers have colluded with oppressive regimes and profited from arms sales and diamond purchases. They have been reluctant to act effectively or to take responsibility for outcomes when they have intervened. The United Nations has lacked the funds and arms to maintain peace, and protect civilians or even its own soldiers. Divergent aims and conflicts of interests among governments and economic interests within and outside Africa make international co-operation to bring peace to war-torn countries difficult to achieve.