

# REVOLUTIONS

GLOBAL TRENDS & REGIONAL ISSUES

New and social

## MEDIA

instruments of utopian  
desires or enhanced  
empowerment?



Regional integration in

## AFRICA

internal and external  
actors



ADAM MICKIEWICZ  
UNIVERSITY  
IN POZNAŃ

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global

regional

New and social

AFRICA  
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Melody Party  
Agnieszka Pokrywka

# foreword

# R/EVOLUTIONS

## GLOBAL TRENDS AND REGIONAL ISSUES

WE PROUDLY PRESENT THE SECOND EDITION OF OUR JOURNAL, ABOUT WHICH WE CAN SAY IT NO LONGER CARRIES THE STATUS OF 'AN EXPERIMENT'. THE RECOMMENDATIONS, CRITICAL REFLECTIONS AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK OF MANY EXPERTS, REVIEWERS, AUTHORS AND CONSULTANTS HAVE ENABLED OUR EDITORIAL TEAM TO OIL THE MECHANISMS OF THE WORKFLOW, SMOOTHEN OUT PEER-REVIEW PROCEDURES AND ENHANCE PROMOTION EFFORTS.

The results of these changes you can read and assess on the following pages, consolidated in our analyses of the global trend: "New and Social Media: Instruments of Utopian Desires or Enhanced Empowerment," and the regional issue: "Regional Integration in Africa: Internal and External Actors." This edition contains articles, interviews and essays from over 20 authors from 11 countries all over the world. At this point, the editorial team would already like to thank all of those authors for the energy they've put in conceiving, updating and editing their texts; and likewise express our gratitude to those anonymous scholars who took their time to review them.

All of this would not have been possible, if the R/evolutions team had not significantly expended in the summer of 2013: With two new editors to strengthen the topic teams in order to speed up editing work; and a whole list of volunteers that took on many aspects of networking, promotion and corrections. We would like to thank Tatiana Andrusevich, Aleksandra Galus, Natalia Kusa, Romana Mikhel and Karolina Olejniczak for their support in managing day-to-day affairs and with the various R/evolutions projects that we have launched this year.

Moreover we would like to present Richard Hornik, a veteran journalist and former editor from *Time Magazine* currently teaching at Stony Brook University, New York. Mr. Hornik accepted our request to share his work experience on a permanent basis and will act as consulting editor for R/evolutions. We would like to thank him for his recommendations on how to improve promotion methods and the framing of new topics.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of Adam Mickiewicz University for their cooperation and support, which was indispensable to realize our various projects. Finally we would like to honor our editorial board, both those scholars that were with us from the start and those that have agreed to assist us in the future.

We hope our readers enjoy our open access, interactive format, the quality of its texts written both by young and experienced researchers, and the visual content by different artists. Please acquaint yourselves with next year's topics, described in detail at the end of this edition and on our website: [r-evolutions.amu.edu.pl](http://r-evolutions.amu.edu.pl). You can follow our activities and latest updates there and on facebook as well. If you are interested in contributing in the form of an article or with a review, do not hesitate to contact us at [rev@amu.edu.pl](mailto:rev@amu.edu.pl). Likewise, all forms of remarks and recommendations can be redirected to this address as well.

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global  
TRENDS

# New and social MEDIA

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by A. Pokrywka



## Resistance

**AGNIESZKA POKRYWKA** (BORN IN 1984, POZNAN, POLAND, CURRENTLY LIVES IN HELSINKI, FINLAND) IS A MULTI-EDUCATED HYBRID AND VARIOUSLY EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL IN THE FIELD OF VISUAL ARTS, FILM, CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, GRAPHIC/INTERACTION DESIGN, COMPUTER SIMULATION AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE RESEARCH. HER VARIOUS PASSIONS PUT HER IN THE CONSTANT FLUX BETWEEN DIFFERENT PLACES, OCCUPATIONS, MINDSETS, AND VARIOUS UNIQUE INTERACTIONS. HER ONLY PERMANENT INTEREST OF IS THAT OF A CONSTANT STATE OF BECOMING WHILE ACTING OVER RIGIDLY ESTABLISHED DISCIPLINES, VALUING MOST THAT WHAT IS POTENTIALLY NEW, INSPIRING, REFRESHING AND INNOVATIVE.

# NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA

## INSTRUMENTS OF UTOPIAN DESIRES OR ENHANCED

"THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION IS NOW AT THE POINT AT WHICH THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION WAS IN THE EARLY 1820S" CLAIMS PETER DRUCKER.<sup>1</sup> ALTHOUGH HE SUGGESTS THAT IT IS NOT UNAMBIGUOUS "INFORMATION THAT FUELS THIS IMPACT" WE DECIDED TO MEASURE THE CONNECTIONS ON THE LINE: NEW MEDIA - NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS - MODES OF CONSCIOUSNESS THAT IT SIMULATED. RECENT MONTHS HAVE GONE DOWN IN HISTORY AS A SERIES OF UPRISINGS AND STRUGGLES FOR SUBJECTIVITY OF VERY VARIOUS GROUPS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND MINORITIES. IF WE TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE HEADLINES, RECENTLY WE ARE FACING UKRAINIAN UNRESTS AND TRAGEDIES, WE CAN STILL NOTICE SOME REPORTS ON VENEZUELAN PROTESTS AND THE LEGACY OF "ARAB SPRING." THUS WE HAVE CHOSEN A FEW DIMENSIONS OF RECENT EVENTS AND CONFRONTED THEM WITH SOME ZOOMINGS IN ON THE MOST POPULAR THEORIES COPING WITH NEW MEDIA AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS. WE ARE AWARE AND AT THE SAME TIME WE HOPE THAT THIS TOPIC WILL DEVELOP WIDELY AFTER THIS ISSUE'S RELEASE.

1 The Atlantic 1999.

The digitalization, the convergence of different media and their double location in the set of private and public communication are main determinants of innovation introduced by new media according to Denis McQuail. Importantly, the functioning of the new media is not structured and organized in such a manner as in the case of the mass media, which in turn leads to uncertainty as to their future use. Likewise, the redefinition of the roles of authors, publishers and consumers would increase their independence and dynamic.<sup>2</sup> Characteristics proposed by McQuail imply defining new media through their functions as well as in opposition to the old media or mass media, which makes them a capacious and quite ambiguous term.

Lev Manovich, the remarkable researcher in new media material, points out that the popular understanding of new media as a tool for exhibition and distribution is restrictive and incomplete.<sup>3</sup> Between his concepts of the new media it is especially worth to highlight three definitions: 1) New Media as Computer Technology used as a Distribution Platform, 2) New Media as Digital Data Controlled by Software, 3) New Media as the Encoding of Modernist Avant-Garde; New Media as Metamedia.<sup>4</sup>

First of all, new media understood as a synonym of distribution platform are limited to the function of cultural, digitalized objects used to spread and exhibit. As a consequence, the assumption presented by Manovich situates other cultural objects (books, films, television programs, etc.) outside this definition, because they are designed for production and storage, not for final distribution. It has been stressed that this concept is not precise, because due to the technological development it should be revised every few years to state and specify which of the entities are new media.

Secondly, new media can be perceived as digital data "controlled by particular cultural software."<sup>5</sup> This seemingly technical definition leads us to the clear conclusion: the data may be freely and repeatedly transformed, for example by creation of

2 McQuail 2006.

3 Manovich 2002.

4 Manovich 2003.

5 Manovich 2003: 13-25.

several versions of the same object. Parallel is the concept of new media as Metamedia, affiliated with postmodernism at the level of reworking old work rather than creating a new one. As emphasized by Manovich: “In this respect new media is post-media or meta-media, as it uses old media as its primary material.”<sup>6</sup> New media avant-garde is related with new manners of accessing and manipulating information (its techniques are search engines, databases, visualization, simulation, etc.). All three dimensions of new media conceptualized by Manovich and resumed above, indicate modality of data, its multilevel distribution and specific forms of reworking information. By that means new media are presented as a tool in constant flux and marked by its ability to be employed in many ways, according to the social, political, economic and cultural context.

Bearing in mind the complex nature of new media and their potential relations with social and political reality we present the most significant issues of the subject reflected in ‘Global Trends’ part of the journal:

- Which characteristics of redefined journalistic model (networking, interactivity, new forms of civic journalism, etc.) lead to high quality of information?
- How authoritarian regimes react facing the omnipresence and common use of new media?
- Are new and social media a real “tool for societal change” or just another “opiate for the masses?”
- What will be the consequences of increasing speed of social and political changes caused by digital tools’ use?
- How digital communication can be exploited in terms of social innovation and policy-making processes?

Attempting to describe the tension between the new and social media and societal/political transformations we invited multidisciplinary researchers and representatives of arts and journalism for cooperation. An interview with **Paolo Mancini** (Professor of Sociology, University of Perugia), highlights the several aspects of social and political polarization in the age marked by a hybrid media system. The essay by **Mario Diani** and **Elena Pavan** (sociologists, Trento University in Italy) focuses on

<sup>6</sup> Manovich 2003: 26.

the possible use of social media in terms of social innovation. The journalistic perspective by **Richard Hornik** (correspondent and journalist, Stony Brook University) provides a look at how social media can affect authoritarian regimes on the example of China. The future-oriented essay by **Agnieszka Rothert** (Professor of Political Science, Warsaw University) deals with the potential difficulties that may arise in the context of fluid, networked political systems.

What is more, the R/evolutions’ ‘Global Trends’ part offers a scientific article by **Agnieszka Filipiak** and **Eliza Kania** who present insights into social changes influenced by new and social media in the second decade of the XXI century in the light of the latest theories of social movements in digitalized environments followed by commentary by **Dorota Piontek** (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań) which defines the theoretical difficulties associated with new media. The case study by **Veronika Lapina** (European University at Saint Petersburg) highlights the issue of LGBT activism in Russia and **Nahed Eltantawy** (Professor of Journalism, High Point University, North Carolina) in her article analyzes the case studies of Egyptian women’s empowerment via nonviolent means of struggle during Arab Spring. The final part is devoted to the case of Ukraine reflected in the article by **Natalya Ryabinska** (sociologist, Polish Academy of Sciences) and in the journalistic, interactive insight by **Joanna Nowosad** (Eastern Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University). Finally, the interviews with **Kirsten Johnson** (documentary filmmaker and cinematographer) and **Paul Hansen** (photojournalist, awarded at the World Press Photo 2012 contest) will provide an apparently different – proven in practice – perspective on position and use of documentary film, photography and online new media.

Our insight wouldn’t be complete without the contribution of visual arts makers, as new media is largely known by juggling images. We invite you to interact with graphics based on social media brands’ layout by **Agnieszka Pokrywka** (freelance multi-artist) to know the look from the heart of the demonstrations in Egypt through photographs by **Melody Patry** (freelance journalist) and **Sarach Carr** (blogger, Egypt). One of the objectives of R/evolutions is a multi-faceted use of multimedia forms, therefore we pay attention to the documentary video material included in the work of **Joanna Nowosad** (#Babylon ‘13 project).

Proposing both theoretical analysis and case studies we hope to open a discussion, indicate different levels of functioning in the social and political environment influenced by and combined with new media. Above all, however, it is especially important for us to stress the question of a future-oriented reception and scientific analysis of new media and social media in terms of technological and societal perspectives.

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Agnieszka Filipiak  
Eliza Kania

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# Smugggle+ Uncensored

by A. Pokrywka

SOCIAL MEDIA IS VERY OFTEN CONSIDERED AS STRAIGHTFORWARD WAY TO WEAKEN PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS, DECREASE PRODUCTIVITY OR LIMIT PRIVACY. THE SAME WAY A KNIFE CAN BE AN EASY INSTRUMENT TO MAIM, HURT AND KILL. NEVERTHELESS, THE DECISION TO CONSCIOUSLY USE A TOOL, WHETHER IT IS SOCIAL MEDIA OR A KNIFE, DEPENDS ON A PERSONAL WILL IN COMBINATION WITH A COMPLEX SET OF EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES: AFTER ALL A KNIFE CAN BE USED FOR CARVING WOOD, PREPARING FOOD, SHARPENING PENCILS OR STRIPPING WIRES. LIKewise SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE USED FOR MUCH MORE CREATIVE PURPOSES THAN ONLY THOSE PASSIVELY ACCEPTED BY CUSTOMARY PRACTICES. IT'S ALL NOT ABOUT MISUSING THOUGH. "MISUSE" IS WHAT THE CULTURE TELLS IT IS, AFTER IT HAS SET THE "PROPER" CONVENTIONS, WHICH ARE BOTH USEFUL (BY EASING UP THE INTERACTION) AND RESTRICTING (BY BEING PREDICTABLE AND BLIND TO THE POTENTIAL PURPOSES). IT'S MORE ABOUT DISCOVERING SOMETHING THAT WOULD FIT THE SITUATION WITHOUT SENSELESS MIMICKING OF ACTIONS KNOWN FROM ESTABLISHED SOCIAL INTERACTIONS. THIS APPROACH CONNECTED TO THE DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF TOOLS USED CAN HELP TO GOVERN PEOPLE'S LIVES BY THEIR CREATIONS IN ORDER TO REGAIN CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. THAT'S WHY IN THE CASE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ONE SHOULD WORRY MOST ABOUT UBIQUITOUS LACK OF CREATIVITY ENHANCED BY NON-REFLECTIVE SUBORDINATION AND PASSIVITY, CONVENIENT IGNORANCE AND SUPERFICIALITY. CREATIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CAN'T BE PROVEN BY ANY FACEBOOK QUIZ OR EVEN THE GUILFORD'S ALTERNATIVE USES TASK TEST. EVERYDAY LIFE IS THE BEST CREATIVITY CHECK HERE.

~ AGNIESZKA POKRYWKA

# VOLATILITY, NICHES AND HYBRIDS: THE NEW MEDIA, IN ACTION

“

WHAT IS THE REVOLUTION? THE DIGITALIZATION!” – CLAIMS PROFESSOR PAOLO MANCINI. AND, YES: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE ROLE OF NEW MEDIA, THAT HAS BEEN ANALYZED BY MANY SCHOLARS AND PUBLISHERS, CHANGED OUR PERCEPTION OF INFORMATION IN THE MODERN WORLD. THIS SHIFT HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY HIGHLIGHTED DURING RESEARCH ON MASS SOCIAL PROTESTS WHICH OCCURRED IN RECENT YEARS. BUT – AS MANCINI ALSO POINTS OUT – IT IS CRUCIAL NOT TO DRIFT ON THE WAVE OF ENTHUSIASM REGARDING NEW MEDIA IN ORDER TO NOT OVERESTIMATE ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIETAL CHANGE.

INTERVIEW WITH **PAOLO MANCINI**  
BY AGNIESZKA FILIPIAK & ELIZA KANIA

Some time ago the cover of “The Economist” (July, 2013) presented an image of a woman holding a smartphone with the caption EVERYWHERE linked to other groundbreaking moments in the history of Europe such as the Spring of Nations. Do you think that this visualization could be considered a symbol of a real change in the use and role of media and new media?

Also “Time” magazine, a few years ago, named the computer “Man of a year.” So it is clear that New Media – in general frames – are deeply changing our society, so of course it is a revolution. But, more precisely, what is the revolution? The digitalization! Of course the use of new media, for example during the activity of new social movements, is important but at the same time overestimated by scholars and public opinion. Probably without new media the revolutions of Arab Spring and other global events could not have taken place. I consider new media as an instrument for potential change, as a vehicle, which must be seen and used in certain context. Basically, the Arab Spring started in Tunisia due to the rising prices of bread. After that, new media became the instrument that transformed the situation. What is more specific, the Arab Spring teaches us that new media are important, but they also increase the volatility of ideas, society and activity. New media increase the speed of social and political change. I see a problem societies becoming more unstable, because of the speed of the media environment.

In the context of societal change you’ve mentioned, to what measure new media could turn into the instruments of fanaticism, totalitarianism and massive manipulation? The tools, the instruments are always available as a double-edged sword.

There are two aspects of the problem: one is manipulation, pointed out by Evgeny Morozov and called cyber-utopianism. The other aspect is social and political polarization. Most of the time new media are the space of allocation of the polarized discourse. Related with niche audiences, they reinforce the existing opinions. This process is not the way to open the public debate; on the contrary, it leads to the restriction of public debate over certain issues, as they are addressed to a very specific audience.

Is “videocracy” still a current issue? Do you still consider the television as a main source of power?

Yes, of course. But don’t forget that we live in a hybrid system in which mainstream media, such as newspapers or television, live

and work together with new media. The coverage of the television, broadcasting regularly refers to new media. More than videocracy we experience the era of the abundance, with many different – old and new – sources of information. This is the new frontier.

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WE'RE MOVING FROM MASS AUDIENCE TO NICHE AUDIENCE, BUT AT THE SAME TIME NEW MEDIA MAY ALLOW OTHER FIGURES TO TAKE THE STAGE

You wrote once that the liberal model dominated the media space. Is it valid nowadays?

I wouldn't say that anymore. If we're referring to the Western World it is still valid, but if we look beyond Western World we face a couple of different models of professional journalism. The liberal model is mixed with other routines, procedures and demands. And again a sort of hybridization comes out. Mostly, because the new media are changing the landscape. In 2004, when I wrote about the liberal model, new media were a marginal curiosity. Now, in 2014, we are strongly linked to the trends of communication indicated by this sort of media. Speaking about the liberal model we should analyze the case of the USA, the homeland of this model. The neutral journalism in USA is in danger now. For instance FOX News is performing strongly as an advocacy model of journalism. So even there the liberal model is being replaced by something else, which is impossible to name at the moment, but for sure the neutrality and fairness of media coverage is changing. It is strongly related to media abundance, many sources of information provoke the segmentation of the audience and the market. News media are addressed to niche audiences nowadays, which modify the structure of the audience.

The great era of the journalists who were able to visibly and significantly influence the political and social system has passed. Should we consider that journalism based on new media is leaderless and anonymous?

Walter Cronkite's phenomenon was possible, because there was mass audience, and because CBS was addressed to a mass audience. Nowadays it is not achievable anymore. On the other side, you can't say that new media are anonymous; they allow the development of other important, symbolic figures, but not necessary journalists. We're moving from mass audience to niche audience, but at the same time new media may allow other figures to take the stage. The new media are not anonymous by definition, for example in Italy the

figure and authority of the new political leader, Beppe Grillo,<sup>1</sup> was created on the basis of the web.

When it comes to the aspect of interactivity supported by social networks and Web 2.0. – is it real empowerment or only the substitute of influence?

I suppose, that on-line and off-line interactions go together, it is not replacement or substitution, we're dealing with a new, hybrid model.

Inside this hybrid model, do you consider the case of Wikileaks and its impact relevant and reflecting the positive potential of New Media?

Definitely yes! But at the same time such secrets are necessary for society. I'm against the idea that everything must be public. We need integration and some forms of control, but a reasonable measure of secrets is crucial and inevitable for society's structure and dynamism.

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**Paolo Mancini** is a professor at the Facoltà di Scienze Politiche at the Università degli Studi di Perugia. His research interests focus on the relationship between mass communication systems and the political system, and on the study of electoral campaigns, on which he has considerable comparative research experience. His principal publications include: *Between Commodification and Lifestyle Politics. Does Silvio Berlusconi Provide a New Model of Politics for the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford, 2011), *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* (with Daniel Hallin) (Cambridge, 2011), *Politics, Media and Modern Democracy* (with David Swanson) (London, 1996) and many others.

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<sup>1</sup> Beppe Grillo is an Italian comedian, actor, blogger and political activist. He has been involved in political activity since 2009 as founder of the Five Star Movement. He is known as the organizer of a "V-Day Celebration" which was, according to the scholars, the first case in Italian history of a demonstration promoted via blogosphere and social networking web pages and gathered more than 2 million participants. (Editor's note – AF)

THE ARTIST USED THE LAYOUT OF GLOBALLY RECOGNIZABLE LOGOS OF SOCIAL MEDIA SUCH AS YOUTUBE, TUMBLR OR FACEBOOK, ADDING TO THEM IDEALISTIC SLOGANS. SHE ALSO COMBINED THE SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSES IN THE MEDIA WITH THE ACTIVITY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND RESISTANCE INITIATIVES. BY CONFRONTING NEUTRALLY FUNCTIONING COMMERCIAL HALLMARK SYMBOLS OF THESE BRANDS WITH EXTREMELY UTOPIAN CONCEPTS - TRUE, INSUBORDINATION OR TRUCE – AGNIESZKA POKRYWKA PROVOKES REFLECTION NOT ONLY ON MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA, BUT ALSO ON THE ROLE THAT WE - THE USERS – ASSIGN TO THEM, AND WHICH WE MOLD TO OUR NEEDS: POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PERSONAL. HER WORKS ARE NEITHER PRAISE NOR CRITICISM OF SOCIAL MEDIA. THEY MAY BE RECOGNIZED AS AN ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE SIMPLE THOUGHT: SOCIAL MEDIA IS A TOOL (OF CHANGE OR PRESERVATION) AND THE HOW-TO-USE-THIS LIST IS CERTAINLY LONGER THAN ANY EXTENDED MANUAL.

~ AGNIESZKA FILIPIAK



# SOCIAL

## MEDIA AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

### A COMPLEX ECOLOGY

MARIO DIANI  
ELENA PAVAN

#### essay

IN THESE LAST YEARS, A GROWING AMOUNT OF ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO THE USE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AS A TOOL FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT. RESEARCH EFFORTS HAVE MULTIPLIED TO UNCOVER HOW ONLINE COMMUNICATION IS BECOMING THE ORGANIZATIONAL BACKBONE OF PARTICIPATION FROM BELOW. IN THIS CONTEXT, LESS ATTENTION HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO EXPLORE HOW DIGITAL COMMUNICATION, IN PARTICULAR VIA SOCIAL MEDIA, CAN BE STRATEGICALLY EXPLOITED IN TERMS OF SOCIAL INNOVATION, I.E., FOR THE DEFINITION AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF NORMS GUIDING DEMOCRATIC AND PARTICIPATORY POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES.

In fact, if social media seem to provide new channels for fostering and revamping political participation (although the debate on the importance of online political engagement is very lively and polarized around radically opposite views), collective action from below remains tightly intertwined with the persistence of state-centered governance activities deployed at the local and at the supranational level.

It is very evident that states have not been replaced as the ultimate authorities in the conduct of public affairs. However, it is equally evident that they continue to suffer from a multifaceted deficit, in terms of legitimacy, knowledge and access.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, states depend on an increased extent from external material and symbolic resources, owned by a myriad of individuals, citizens, public and private organizations to elaborate policies that can face the challenges in terms of increased levels of diversity, dynamics and complexity characterizing our societies. That can be widely accepted as the normative foundations of our daily lives.

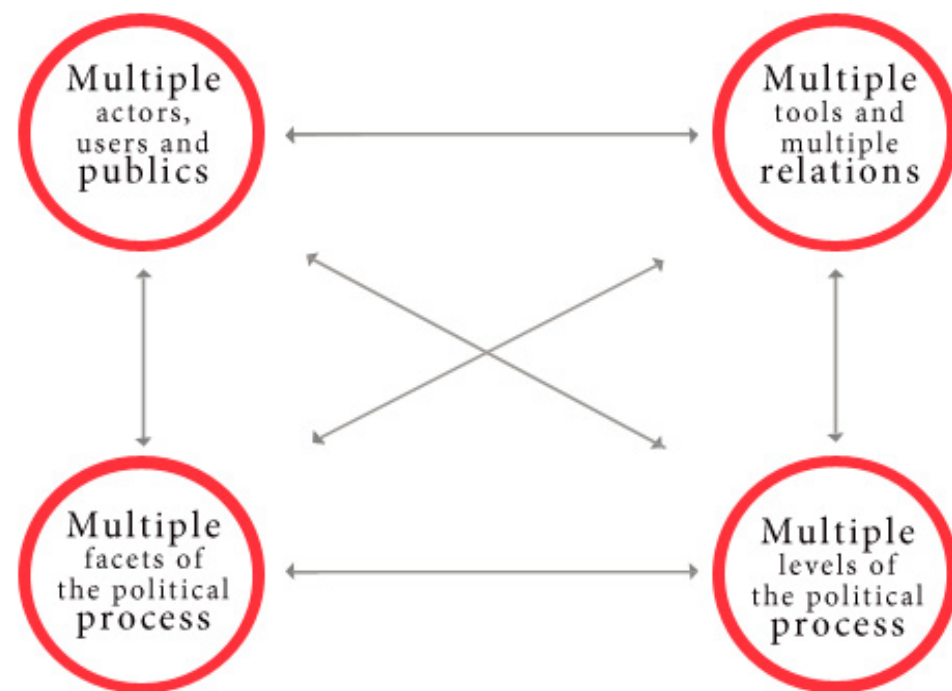
The space of flows generated by internet communication enables the wider and easier circulation of ideas that state actors need to accomplish their tasks today. In this sense, internet provides the technical infrastructure upon which virtuous collaborations can be constructed amongst governmental and non-governmental actors, collaborations that can translate into, reinforce or imbue multi-actor direct collaborations – such as those in multi-stakeholder forums (let's think of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society or the Internet Governance Forum) or multi-actor tables and task forces (as the Multi-Stakeholder Joint Programme on Violence Against Women promoted again by the United Nations).

“ THE PEOPLE CONSTITUTE A GROUPING WRITTEN INTO THE LOGIC OF PARLIAMENTARISM, THEREFORE: INTO THE LOGIC OF REPRESENTATION; THE MULTITUDE HOWEVER REMAINS A COLLECTIVE SUBJECT OF DEMOCRACY THAT REJECTS THE IDEA OF REPRESENTATION

<sup>1</sup> Hockings 2006: 13-32.



# Social innovation



Despite attempts to promote public-private partnerships that can lead to innovative, democratic and participatory political arrangements, two major obstacles seem to be jeopardizing a fuller exploitation of Internet's connective potential to produce social innovation. First, there are structural constraints to the use of the Internet itself. Digital divides and the unequal distribution of resources end up excluding those who are more likely to be already external to the deployment of governance processes from online exchanges. Second, and perhaps more important, the connective potential that is proper of digital technologies has vanished by an overall lack of that "mentality change"<sup>2</sup> that would be needed to rethink the roles and competences of institutional and non-institutional actors in relation one another, rather than as alternative or, more often, opposite.

More broadly, many of the multi-actor experiments realized so far, especially those substantially supported by the employment of digital communications, have suffered from a monolithic conceptualization of both the policy process and of the Internet, as if all digital communication tools could benefit in any case from the complex intertwining of processes that

<sup>2</sup> Padovani 2005: 264-272.

go under the "governance" label. In other words, while these experiments were trying to cope with increased levels of diversity, dynamics and complexity, they actually did not translate these challenges into constitutive features of a framework where social media and digital communications can be strategically exploited to create genuine multi-actor collaborations.

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IN FACT, IN THE ONLINE WORLD, THE CONCEPT OF "PUBLIC" IS BROADENED AND REDEFINED: IT STANDS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF THIRD PARTIES IN GENERAL TO ACCESS INFORMATION AND ELABORATE A JUDGMENT, AN OPINION

In fact, using social media for social innovations requires us to consider and act within a complex ecology of elements, which not only should be evaluated on their own but, more importantly, in connection with one another. We try to summarize this ecology in the figure below.

Social innovation is a process that involves a plurality of actors, both of a governmental and non-governmental nature. When digital media are employed as tools to foster connections amongst these two broad groups we should be aware that Internet access is far from being universal, that competences are differently distributed and so are motivations, agendas and perceptions. In this sense, there is a problem of representativeness: not all interested parties can be actually engaged in online relationships and, amongst those who are involved, there can be a lot of heterogeneity. It therefore becomes important to analyze who these contributors are, their characteristics, their claims and their demands. Moreover, when reaching out to non-governmental entities that possess the knowledge and the resources they need, governmental actors should be aware that their "audience" is not made exclusively by those citizens who are subjected to their formal authority. In fact, in the online world, the concept of "public" is broadened and redefined: it stands for the possibility of third parties in general to access information and elaborate a judgment, an opinion. In this sense, governments' attempts to regain legitimacy should be pursued keeping into consideration the multiplicity of heterogeneous audiences that form online and to whom they must become accountable.

Employing digital communications for creating social innovation requires us also to acknowledge that different tools have different affordances and potentialities. Hence, communication tools should be adopted when they actually allow us to reach out to targeted audiences in the most efficient



way. Opting to inform citizens through a static website is much different than hosting an open confrontation within an online group on a social networking site. In the first case, a modern version of the “one to many” model of communication will be supported; while in the latter, discourses will be created collectively and in participatory ways. Choosing between websites, social media and, amongst the latter, between group-oriented or content-oriented services, determines the type of communicative interaction that will be established amongst participants. It then becomes fundamental to choose the tools that will create the type of community that is needed to complete a task and not, simply, to provide a fake sense of publicity.

Using social media for generating social innovation entails more than accounting for multiple users and multiple tools. It also requires us to adopt a wider vision of political processes beyond policy-making activities to encompass the production of “public purpose” which is “an expression of vision, values, plans, policies and regulations that are valid for and directed towards the general public.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, collaborations amongst governments and non-governmental actors should not be understood solely in reference to the actual steering of policies, as it might be, for example, in a direct democracy environment. Enhanced public-private cooperation can serve different political aims, such as the construction of trust relationships, the exchange of relevant information, brainstorming and problem solving and, more importantly, consensus building.<sup>4</sup> All these actions must be considered as inherently political and necessary preconditions for the formulation of shared policies. Thus, social media and digital communications can provide arenas where trust and common visions can be shaped. The more they will be employed to foster the convergence of orientations on goals, strategies and agendas, the higher their impact on the production of social innovation.

Finally, in the global context in which governments operate today, traditional categorizations of policy domains are progressively dissolved and it is becoming increasingly difficult to bond political action to a neat distinction between domestic and foreign affairs. As recent frictions in the context of European Union prove: the management of national issues reverberates at the supra-national level and vice versa. Scale-shift dynamics, whether they move upwards or downwards, require a flexible organization model, one that allows governments to recognize and adapt to the changes of structural and social conditions in which they operate and to establish trusting and valuable collaborations at all levels. In this regard, Internet and social media provide tools to connect local and supra-national domains of action and

their protagonists, thus sustaining multilevel networks of cooperation, which efficiently adapt to the dynamics of policy evolutions.

Social media can be strategically appropriated for the production of social innovation. Governments and institutions can, at all levels and in all domains, try to overcome the structural constraints to their action and exploit the connective potential of Internet and digital communication to promote inclusive and participatory dynamics. Approaching the nexus between social media and social innovation from an ecology perspective might help in outlining more complex action strategies where actors, tools, political dynamics and action levels are considered and evaluated in relation to one another. It certainly requires an additional effort on the side of institutional actors, which often remain skeptical about the possibility to establish genuine collaborations with actors traditionally excluded from governance processes. Yet, the adoption of an inclusive *modus operandi*, which benefits from the inherent connectivity of new technologies, is full of potential for enhancing democracy and fostering virtuous collaboration between public and private constituencies in our societies.

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# **subordination**

by A. Pokrywka

# THE **END** OF ATOMIZATION

## EFFORTS BY AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES TO CONTROL SOCIAL MEDIA FALL SHORT OF THEIR DESIRED **ENDS**

RICHARD HORNİK

essay

THE RISE OF FACEBOOK AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS HAS LED TO SPIRITED DEBATES AS TO THEIR IMPACT ON THE ABILITY OF POLITICAL AUTHORITIES TO CONTROL POLITICAL SPEECH AND TO SUPPRESS PUBLIC UNREST. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENT NEW CHALLENGES TO AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES, WHICH HAVE HISTORICALLY SOUGHT TO CONTROL THEIR PUBLICS BY GIVING THEM A SHARED SENSE OF DESTINY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ATOMIZING THE PEOPLE AS INDIVIDUALS. THE GOAL HAS BEEN TO SUPPRESS DISSENT BY MAKING ANYONE WHO HAS CRITICAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE STATE TO KEEP THEM TO THEMSELVES.

This can work on several levels. At its most basic, this strategy makes individuals wary of sharing negative thoughts with other citizens – even friends or relatives – for fear that they would be exposed to the authorities. The extreme example of this was the Stalinist people's hero Pavlik Morozov, the son who supposedly informed on his father in 1932. Since everyone is afraid to say negative things about the state, it becomes impossible to tell if other people share your doubts.

A more insidious deterrent to dissent is to make critics question their own judgment. After all, if all the media and all your friends and colleagues say things are fine, then maybe there's something wrong with you. The Soviets elevated this particular approach by declaring critics of the state schizophrenics. After all, since the Soviet Union was the worker's paradise, anyone who was alienated from it had to be crazy.

The result of these stratagems is that once an uprising against an authoritarian or totalitarian regime begins, the realization among the populace that their ideas and feelings are shared by many others unleashes a passionate outpouring of civic discontent and an all-consuming appetite for information of any form as long as it does not come from the regime. I remember first seeing this in Lisbon in 1974 shortly after the Carnation Revolution which brought down Portugal's fascist government. Practically every blank wall in the city was plastered with posters representing the positions of every imaginable opposition faction. Similarly, Beijing's Democracy Wall in 1979, the opposition press of pre-martial law Poland, and perhaps most tragically, the marches and speeches that preceded June 4, 1989 in Beijing, all tapped into an enormous well-spring created by decades of suppression of free expression.

When the authorities regain control, one of the first priorities is to cauterize dissent: to remind people of the costs of speaking out. In Poland in December 1981 the regime arrested thousands and stationed tanks and heavily armed soldiers on every major intersection of every major city, albeit with little bloodshed. The massacre of hundreds of innocent civilians on the western approaches to Tiananmen Square on the night of June 3-4, was not needed to remove the remaining students in the square. It was intended to destroy any notion that the regime could be criticized with impunity.

The Massacre in Beijing did work much better than Poland's martial law in ending open opposition to the authorities, at least for a time. In fact,

in shortly before the massacre I was told by a Polish journalist that when Deng Xiaoping had met with a delegation from the Polish United Workers Party in April, following the historic Roundtable Agreement, he told them that the PUWP would never have had to surrender power if they had simply shot more people in 1981. At the time, I discounted his account as hyperbole, but after the June 4, I began to believe that there was probably a germ of truth in it. That said, by the late 1990s even the Communist Party of China found it increasingly difficult to keep a complete lid on public discontent. To a large degree this is simply the result of the passage of time. Unless an authoritarian regime is willing to shed the blood of its people with ruthless regularity, say every decade or so, those wellsprings of dissent will begin to seep to the surface. The number of violent social demonstrations in China has risen steadily in the past two decades, and is now estimated at around 200,000 per year.

Nevertheless, the regime maintained strict control over all media channels until 2009 when Chinese Internet firms began to offer the opportunity for citizens to share their views with the rest of the public through social media sites called Weibo. These microblog sites soared in popularity and quickly challenged the CPC's ability to atomize the public. Although often compared to Twitter, Weibo can be a far more powerful way to share information. While both channels limit messages to 140 characters, in Chinese that equates to words rather than letters. As is the case with Twitter, the vast majority of messages contain personal news or refer to popular culture, but a significant minority were used to spread word of government malfeasance or neglect. Perhaps the first such significant cause was the crash of two high-speed trains in July 2011, in the suburbs of Wenzhou, China, killing 40 people. China's newly empowered Netizens demanded a fuller accounting of how such a tragic accident could occur and eventually created sufficient pressure to force the firing of three senior officials. In fact, that incident eventually helped topple the once indomitable Ministry of Railways that has now been broken into more manageable parts.

Over the past few years campaigns aimed at food safety and environmental problems have swept the Chinese blogosphere, drawing millions of followers and comments. In many cases, the government has been forced to redress grievances, which previously would have been ignored and, importantly, left to fester until they led to public demonstrations. In addition to raising complaints about China's manifest pollution and food safety, China's Netizens have used their newfound power to target corrupt local officials, particularly those who have been abusing their positions for personal gain for years by selling agricultural land to developers. These transactions

raise much-needed funds for local governments but often include kickbacks that enrich the officials, while displacing farming families who have worked that land for years. Much of the growth in public disturbances referenced above has been attributed to the increased impunity with which these land grabs have been executed.



OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS CAMPAIGNS AIMED AT FOOD SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS HAVE SWEEPED THE CHINESE BLOGOSPHERE, DRAWING MILLIONS OF FOLLOWERS AND COMMENTS

As is the case with social media everywhere, these campaigns often turn into vigilantism. Chinese Netizens use the power of the Web to research and take down officials deemed to be corrupt. These so-called 'flesheaters' create virtual teams to scour the Web for evidence of malfeasance. One of the earliest examples was the fall of Brother Watch. Yang Dacai was the head of the Shaanxi Provincial work safety administration in 2012 when he was photographed smiling broadly at the scene of a traffic accident that left 36 people dead. Netizens were outraged at his callousness and some noticed he was wearing a watch no one in his position could afford. Eventually, the public uncovered a dozen photos of Yang wearing equally expensive watches. A year later he had not only lost his job but had also been sentenced to 14 years in prison for corruption.

From the CPC's point of view this flowering of citizen involvement is fraught with danger, since it effectively short circuits the Party's control over the flow of information to and most importantly among its subjects. On the other hand, as has been demonstrated over the past year, China's new leadership team headed by CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping has realized that official corruption has become an existential threat to the regime. Social media can both help identify the worst offenders at the local level and provide a safety valve to relieve the public discontent that has been festering for the past two decades. In theory, the regime understands the positive role the Internet and social media can play. As a white paper from the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China concluded in 2010:

"The Internet provides unprecedented convenience and a direct channel for the people to exercise their right to know, to participate, to be heard and to oversee, and is playing an increasingly important role in helping the government to get to know the people's wishes, meet their needs and safeguard their interest."<sup>1</sup>



Needless to say, however, the people's wishes don't always conform to those of their leaders, and over the past year or so China's leadership has increasingly adopted what Asian academics like Singapore's Cherian George have dubbed a neo-authoritarian approach to controlling information flows. Rather than total censorship, regimes can adopt a flexible strategy designed to discourage the worst attacks on their rule while allowing even official outlets a modicum of freedom to criticize government policies and practices.

In China, over the past few years the central authorities have spent billions of dollars to create a "Great Firewall of China." An estimated 2 million censors scour the Web employing sophisticated algorithms to uncover postings viewed as subversive and block them as well as any key terms associated with the issue. In addition, government employees respond to rumors with postings designed to disprove or discredit them. This often leads to a cyberspace game of cat and mouse with Netizens quickly inventing workarounds. For example, the regime still suppresses all references to the Beijing Massacre and blocks terms such as June 4, so in 2013 wily Weibo posters used the term May 35 (i.e., 4 days added to May) instead. The censors rapidly blocked that term as well, but not before thousands or even millions received the message.



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In the past few months, however, it has become clear that as he consolidates his authority Xi Jinping has decided that the cat should stop toying with the mouse. As of September, individuals can face defamation charges if their online postings are deemed to be rumors and if they get 5000 views or are reposted over 500 times. A series of high-profile prosecutions has apparently produced the desired chilling effect, as social networking sites like Sina Weibo have seen a sharp drop in traffic. Instead, China's netizens have retreated to newer mobile messaging services such as WeChat in which it is easier for users to control the people who join their networks, hence attracting less attention from the authorities. The regime, however, can and does monitor accounts of people it deems potentially disruptive.

Many commentators have pronounced this as at least a partial victory of the forces of control over those of public expression, and indeed it does seem that the halcyon days of social media as a counterweight to power of the state are over. Then again, it may be that not every revolution needs to result in a regime change that removes the ruling elite. In many ways, the Chinese political scene has been transformed in just a few years:

- The official media make a much greater effort to report accurately, at least on non-controversial issues.
- Local officials are much more likely to face corruption charges based on public complaints.
- Arbitrary confiscation of farmland has abated
- The first reaction of the regime to criticism is not always to lash out at the critics but to check to see if there is some merit in their opinions.

Perhaps most importantly, the traditional authoritarian strategy of atomizing the public has been destroyed. Regardless of how much the regime controls Internet postings and social media interactions, hundreds of millions of Chinese have learned in the past few years that they share a China Dream that can be quite different than the one their leaders have for them. None of that would have happened without the initial flowering of social media, and it is impossible to overestimate the impact the resulting changes will have on China, its people and its leaders in the coming years.

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protest.

by A. Pokrywka

# CONNECTING **WITH** COMPLEXITY

AGNIESZKA ROTHERT

essay

WE LIVE IN AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD. EVERYTHING IS SHIFTING, CONNECTING AND DISCONNECTING AND INTERCONNECTING. THE WORLD IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE COMPLEX. THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE BEING FELT BY OUR SOCIETIES AND OUR ENVIRONMENT STEMS FROM A CASCADING NETWORKED COMPLEXITY – DEEP, DENSE, NONLINEAR AND UNPREDICTABLE. THE ACCELERATION OF INTERCONNECTION AND COMMUNICATION HELPED DRIVE A VAST INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY, WHICH COMBINED WITH THE MORE RECENT SHIFT FROM INDUSTRY TO INFORMATION AND SERVICE, MEANS THAT ECONOMIES GROW EXPONENTIALLY.<sup>1</sup>

Mutated viruses (i.e. bird flu) the revolutions (i.e. Arab Spring), the financial crisis, terrorists networks, the manias, the fashion, the latest loves and hates, the spreading of cyber-crime are all manifestations of our ever more connected world. The current pace of technological change, particularly in ICT (Information and Communications Technology, eds.), is getting a “hockey stick” curve – it starts slowly and then very quickly

<sup>1</sup> Exponential growth is easy to understand in theory but almost impossible to comprehend in practice – this is a fundamentally different type of progression: the larger something is, the faster it grows even larger. (Scott-Morgan 2012: 12-14)

speeds up. Sometimes we might feel as if we're stuck in the middle of chaos, that high technology is outstripping our capacity to manage it. The interconnectedness of global phenomena, and in particular the interactions (and communication linkages) between individuals, groups and institutions, give a new perspective on events and structures. Unfortunately, we also live in a state of misjudgments or big misconceptions. Most of us think that global order can be understood in simple and linear terms, “that all international crises had beginnings, and if managed well, ends (...) [that] the spread of capitalism is good and inevitable, in which democracy and technology produce an increase in general stability,”<sup>1</sup> but now everything has changed, and it is not going to change back.<sup>2</sup>

We are living in a kind of live labyrinthine system – interactive and instantaneous transmissions of information through social, economic and political networks. This is a world, which is data rich, but with much important information highly dispersed so that it can only be gathered by a smart process of sifting and aggregating. Intelligence (individual and collective) increasingly needs to rely (like amoebas) on diffuse “sensing” of moods and opinions, on tracking patterns. This knack for pattern detection allows meta-information to circulate through networks. It is self-organizing when distributing intelligence via the process of emergence or – in other terms – “simply” complex system. If it is so, we can explain social phenomena employing useful concepts developed in Complexity Theory. It explains how some immensely complicated behavior – such as evolution, human consciousness, AI (Artificial Intelligence), market crashes, epidemics, human conflicts, environmental change and traffic jams – can in fact arise from very simple rules.

This kind of self organization is a marked feature of life in an “information age,” when e-mails, telephone calls and text messages, Skype, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and so on, have diminished the effect of geography, put people in closer direct contact, and, in the process, removed the need for much central command and control. This unplanned mix is fed by explosive components of High Tech trends, Capitalism, Population growth and Industrialization. But the dynamics of the system have shifted: users stop being consumers and become participants. This pushes opportunities for innovation to the edges of the network, where users reside.

Now stop here! This kind of thinking is obviously absurd (so say traditional economists and political scientists). Diverse groups are often

<sup>2</sup> Ramo 2009: 9.

<sup>3</sup> I hope you remember the second law of thermodynamics.

tossed together, without any selection pressures, so how can they be efficient at all? And social systems and human beings are the most complex systems we know, so it is a “no go” area. Well, certain shapes and patterns hover over different moments in life; baffling, haunting and inspiring – they are cognitive building blocks, tools for thought.<sup>3</sup> For me it is a “moving” glider in John Conway’s “Game of Life.”<sup>4</sup> In this game, the world moves in lockstep and is arrayed on a two-dimensional grid, of which each cell can either be dead or alive. To be short, in this system a positive feedback (intermediate amount of life) begets life, while too much or too little life leads to death. Ultimately, this results in a remarkable set of global patterns that can emerge from this simple set of microlevel rules.<sup>5</sup>

“

HOW DEMOCRATIC IS THEIR ATTEMPT AT  
RE-CREATING DEMOCRACY OUT  
OF THEIR OWN ACTION?

For complex social and/or political systems this consideration carries an important message for governance. It does not imply that political interventions are doomed to fail, but just that they must sometimes take other forms from those often advanced today: networked, self-organized, bottom up. Spread power instead of hoarding it and maybe you’ll discover benefits you couldn’t imagine before (and sometimes go against what is expected) such as the bewildering efficiency of swarm behavior. Probably the sophistication of collective actions is set to grow. The distributed intelligence is set to grow. This is not primarily a social phenomenon; it is also (or mostly) a high technology phenomenon. And that means it is set to get power exponentially. The concept of emergence can be sometimes seen as naive or, more “dangerously,” as belonging to liberal camp. Certainly emphasis on decentralized networked structures seemingly lacks the potential to identify a “true command center,” and disregard “real relations of power.” But this is displaced criticism; there is no reason why progressive movements shouldn’t embrace decentralized, swarming strategies. In fact, those doing exactly that are uniquely suited to adaptive self-organizing systems. And there is a growing number of such global, fluid and open movements, bringing new ways of visualizing democracy in the realm of possibility that “no one rules” and pushing forth the question: “How do we rule?” In the discussions and practices of the alterglobalization movement “the process occupies a central place as a goal in itself and is about creating an alternative world in which the how is fixed, but the who is fluid.”<sup>6</sup>

4 Johnson 2001: 22.

5 Game of Life.

6 Miller, Page 2007: 52.

7 Maeckelbergh 2009: 227.

It could be that differentiated, fluid and networked systems are more robust, more resilient, more efficient and more innovative. But that notwithstanding, there is a caveat: too much diversity and complexity may produce failure cascades. Everything depends on various attributes of the system – connectedness, interdependencies, and the rates of adaptation – and these may change over time.<sup>7</sup> What we can “simply” do is to try to understand, predict and maybe control the complexity of our world.

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by A. Pokrywka



# NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE'S EMPOWERMENT

AGNIESZKA FILIPIAK  
ELIZA KANIA

article  
abstract

THEORISTS' VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF NEW MEDIA IN STEPPING TOWARDS SOCIETAL CHANGE ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DIVIDED. STARTING FROM THE OPTIMISTS' UNMARKED DELIGHT AND HOPES PINNED ON NEW MEDIAS' IMPORTANCE, THROUGH RELATIVE SKEPTICS, AND FINALLY DECLARED CRITICS. AS WE BELIEVE THAT THEORIES ARE USELESS WITHOUT COMPARING THEM TO THE REALITY, THE MAIN AIMS OF THIS TEXT ARE TO MEASURE AND HIGHLIGHT THE MOST MEANINGFUL FEATURES OF LAST DECADE'S NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS (LIKE OCUPPY WALL STREET, INDIGNADOS AND THE ARAB SPRING) AND ATTEMPT AT PLACING THEM IN THE FRAMES OF THE MOST CRUCIAL THEORIES ON NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA. WITHIN THE CONCEPT OF MEDIA DETERMINISM, WE JUXTAPOSE CONCEPTS BY MANUEL CASTELLS AND EVGENY MOROZOV. THIS ALLOWED US TO PREPARE OUTLINES OF SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE FATE OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW MEDIAS' USE.

keywords

NEW MEDIA, ACTIVISM; PROTESTS, MANUEL CASTELLS, EVGENY MOROZOV, PAUL MASON, ALAIN TOURAINE, NOAM CHOMSKY, OCCUPY WALL STREET, INDIGNADOS

“A wave of anger is sweeping the cities of the world. Politicians beware” – “The Economist’s” editors claimed in June 2013.<sup>1</sup> In recent three years we have witnessed several outbursts of social protests, which put forward different sets of demands. Starting from countries affected by the gloomy legacy of economic crisis in which movements like Occupy Wall Street and Indignados appeared in urban spaces. Then we faced Arab Spring protests, the roar of Ukrainian and Venezuelan citizens and many other protests. Our aim is to answer the questions: how far new media affected ways of operation and organization of new social movements and should politicians really beware of their demands?

## THE EDGE OF SOCIETIES?

“Over and above dramatic events and long-term economic changes, we are living through the end of a type of society - most importantly, of a representation of society in which the Western world has lived for several centuries”<sup>2</sup> – claims Alain Touraine. The main assumption of Touraine is that European societies and (in this particular moment of history) societies of the most industrialized countries all over the world have changed very profoundly. He writes: “Our central claim is precisely that we are living through the end of the ‘social’ representation of our experience. This break is as significant as the one that put an end to the religious representation and organization of social life several centuries ago.”<sup>3</sup> And further: “Certainly, we must see how the individual is manipulated by propaganda and advertising. But we must also discover the social actor present in this individual and even the subject who lies within her and fights against mass society, the impersonality of markets and the violence war.”<sup>4</sup> One of the most profound shifts is that modern societies have transformed the model of communication into one in which the fast circulation of information plays a very significant role. As we are all facing the results of communication occurrence’s new forms and develop innovative nets of virtual coexistence, the most crucial is to try to

1 The Economist 2013.

2 Touraine 2007: 44.

3 Touraine 2007: 44.

4 Touraine 2007: 70.



measure how strong are the bonds between new media and a prospects of societal change with a new approach. “Invoked for any old purpose, the notion of social movement loses any content and becomes useless. As we leave behind the long phase dominated by the idea of society, our first move is to abandon an analytical tool that has seemingly lost all its force”<sup>5</sup> – to refer to Touraine’s legacy once again.

“ THE VERY UPPER LAYER OF THE SOCIETY IS THE SPECIALIZED CLASS WHICH SHOULD “TAKE SOME ACTIVE ROLE IN RUNNING GENERAL AFFAIRS.

“The Information Revolution is now at the point at which the Industrial Revolution was in the early 1820s”<sup>6</sup> – that sentence is an attempt to summarize this shift. In his analysis Peter F. Drucker does not put so much attention to information circulation. But the fact is that we can point out many narratives on what the most industrialized societies have become in the context of information’s role. We have heard about the dawn of the Knowledge Society,<sup>7</sup> the Network Society,<sup>8</sup> the Information Society<sup>9</sup> or even about the new mode of capitalism – widely discussed concept of the cognitive capitalism<sup>10</sup> or cognitive biocapitalism.<sup>11</sup> What these theories have in common is balancing between emphasizing the liberating potential of new technologies and communication tools and the new methods of control imposed on societies. It is also the increasing value of knowledge, know-how or plain information what is highlighted. The major question in reference to the change of paradigms mentioned above is: has the emergence of new and social media (as part of new social movements’ models of communication) exerted a democratizing and emancipatory influence or is it a new tool of manipulation and disinformation?

5 Touraine 2007: 69.

6 Drucker 1999.

7 Drucker 2002.

8 Castells 2004: 3-49.

9 Castells 2004: 3-49.

10 Boutang 2011. The concept of cognitive capitalism has its roots in the debate on immaterial labour, and it has been elaborated by P. Virno, M. Hardt and A. Negri. Then developed by Y. M. Boutang and many others. It is based on the assumption, that the digitalization and technological revolution brought new modes of production, new models of labour organization, and new forms of value, which in result has reshaped the occupational landscape of most industrialized societies. According to the cognitive capitalism theories, starting from the post-fordist shift the value of knowledge has become the main pillar of modern capitalism (Editors’ note - EK).

11 “Independently of the dominant convention, contemporary capitalism is always in search of new social and vital circles to absorb and commodify, involving more and more the bare vital faculties of human beings. It is for this reason that in the last few years we have been hearing about bioeconomy and biocapitalism;” (Fumagalli 2011).

## SUBJECTIFYING THE “BEWILDERED HERD”?

In the book *Media Control. The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* Noam Chomsky invokes Walter Lippman’s concept of the elite’s role in shaping public opinion in democratic countries. Lippman’s theory is a very classical approach, in which he assumed, that the properly functioning society should be based on the very strict division of citizens. The very upper layer of the society is the specialized class which should “take some active role in running general affairs.”<sup>12</sup> According to that theory, they are a small group of people who “analyze, execute, make decisions, and run things in the political, economic, and ideological systems.”<sup>13</sup> And what about “those others” which are actually the majority of the population? Lippman provided quite simple answer to that question: not only he called them “the bewildered herd” but also claimed, that we should protect ourselves from “the trampling and roar” of that group of people.<sup>14</sup> This classical and simultaneously elitist approach is based on the assumption which is summarized by Chomsky as follows:

“The specialized class, the responsible men, carry out the executive function, which means they do the thinking and planning and understand the common interests. Then, there is the bewildered herd, and they have a function in democracy too. Their function in a democracy, he said, is to be >>>spectators,<<< not participants in action. But they have more of a function than that, because it’s a democracy. Occasionally they are allowed to lend their weight to one or another member of the specialized class. In other words, they’re allowed to say, >>>We want you to be our leader<<< or >>>We want you to be our leader.<<<”<sup>15</sup>

That was before the technological revolution started and preceded the liberation of many excluded and discriminated groups of “bewildered herd.” But we can assume that some elements in this approach remain on the table. So can we state that the massive protests and rise of new social movements, which emerged in recent years, are linked to the opportunities brought by new media tools? Or is this just another incarnation of the propaganda model described also by E. S. Herman and N. Chomsky.<sup>16</sup>

12 Chomsky 1997: 13.

13 Chomsky 1997: 13.

14 Chomsky 1997: 13.

15 Chomsky 1997: 13-14.

16 Propaganda model, created by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman measures how state propaganda works in mass media, mainly in pro-democratic states in which there is no official



## A SMARTPHONE WEAPON

The front pages of two widely known magazines can serve as reference points to help us to understand the scale and impact of mass protests, which have taken place in recent years. If we analyze the cover of the “The Time” magazine from December 2011, which illustrates the selection of the so-called “persons of the year,” we will find anonymous “protester” among them. It is difficult to indicate both gender and nation of this person. The second picture titled “The march of protest” is the cover of “The Economist” from the turn of June and July 2013. It presents the series of significant social uprisings from the Spring of Nations, through 1968, the Soviet Union Collapse and latest protest. Every wave of riots is illustrated by different symbolic character. Thus we have Delacroix’s Liberty Leading the People with a flag in her hand,<sup>17</sup> the hippie protester with a Molotov cocktail, Lech Walesa with a candle, and a female holding a smartphone in her hand.<sup>18</sup> As “The Economist’s” editors claim: “nobody can know how 2013 will change the world—if at all,” but “the rhythm of protests has been accelerated by technology (...) Protests are no longer organized by unions or other lobbies, as they once were.”<sup>19</sup> That means that they can be organized by “small groups of purposeful people,” with a usage of new communication technologies.

Another crucial topic taken under consideration by “The Economist’s” editors is a question of future outcomes of these protests (“this ready supply of broad, fair-weather activism may vanish as fast as it appeared.”<sup>20</sup>) To answer that question it is necessary to follow the general trajectory of protests which started in 2011. The protests took two tracks. On the one hand, attention was paid to the protesters associated with the intensifying economic crisis, in most industrialized countries like USA or EU states (Occupy Wall Street Movement and Indignados). On the other hand, we faced a lot of comments connected with Arab Spring. Currently, a lot of media attention is attracted

consent for state propaganda. This model is about to measure how populations (mainly based on the US example) are manipulated and how consent for various policies is “manufactured” in the public mind due to this form of propaganda. Herman and Chomsky point out five main mass media “filters” which influence information’s shape: (1) ownership of the medium, (2) medium’s funding sources, (3) sourcing, (4) flak, (5) anti-communism (during the Cold War Era) and fear ideology; (Herman, Chomsky 1988).

<sup>17</sup> It is important to notice that Delacroix’s painting was a tribute to the July Revolution of 1830, but on “The Economist’s” cover it is symbolically associated with the year 1848 (Editors’ note - EK).

<sup>18</sup> Bendyk 2013: 7-18. The reference to these visualizations has been found in Edwin Bendyk’s introduction to Polish edition of Paul Mason’s book *Why it’s kicking off so hard* (*Skąd ten Bunt*, Warszawa 2013).

<sup>19</sup> The Economist 2013.

<sup>20</sup> The Economist 2013.

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BUT THE MAIN ASSUMPTION IS THAT IF THE POWER IS EXERCISED BY NETWORK PROGRAMMING, IF WE WANT TO GIVE SOME RESISTANCE – WE NEED TO RE-PROGRAMME ITS BASIS

by Ukraine or Venezuela, but those cases will not be analyzed in this article. If we were to find the cause of protests we should also highlight two trajectories. In the case of EU and United States we could surely point out such influential factors like: (1) the economic crisis (which caused the increasing level of unemployment); (2) precarization process which is the hybrid of few notions, including: (a) sense of relative deprivation: new generations feel that their position on the labor market is less stable than the position of their parents (“Some would call that envy, but to be surrounded and constantly bombarded with the trappings of material success and the celebrity culture is bound to induce seething resentment”<sup>21</sup>), (b) alienation (which “arises from knowing that what one is doing is not for one’s own purpose or for what one could respect or appreciate; it is simply done for others, at their behest”<sup>22</sup>) and (c) status discord (“people with a relatively high level of formal education, who have to accept jobs that have a status or income beneath what they believe accord with their qualifications, are likely to suffer from status frustration”<sup>23</sup>), that, as Guy Standing concludes results with “anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation.”<sup>24</sup> We can also mention such factors like (3) lack of trust in traditional government institutions, (4) belief in modern democracy’s superficiality. However, compared with the Arab countries, social and economic inequalities are smaller. The causes of protests among the Arab Spring Muslim countries could be: poverty and bad economic situation of a large part of citizens, social disparities - between those “in power” and “the people,” undemocratic regime, sense of “objective”<sup>25</sup> deprivation - due to globalization and the Internet they can reach the information on the conditions of living abroad easier.

## CAUGHT UP IN THE NETWORK – A VARIABLES’ SELECTION

In order to analyze the features of recent social movements more comprehensively we decided to specify a few dimensions which both describe

<sup>21</sup> Standing 2011: 19.

<sup>22</sup> Standing 2011: 20.

<sup>23</sup> Standing 2011: 10.

<sup>24</sup> Standing 2011: 19-24.

<sup>25</sup> To contrast it with Guy Standing’s term relative deprivation. This concept will be developed in the next parts of the article (Editors’ note - EK).

its uniqueness and point out some differences between these two waves of protest.

(1) According to Manuel Castells view on The Network Societies, the network form of society organization will be a basic one. Contemporary communities differently organize their life and relations. Development of modern telecommunication technology is considered an important factor of that change. It can influence the breakdown of traditional forms of human interaction. What is more, we can assume that power is now more multidimensional and tends to be organized around networks, which are programmed into every area of human life, naturally representing the agenda of the actors with a strong position. But the main assumption is that if the power is exercised by network programming, then when we want to give some resistance we need to re-programme its basis.<sup>26</sup>

(2) The polarization of social divisions: in countries of the Arab Spring, there is a significant difference between urban and rural residents (generally between relatively young, well-educated people and poorest classes of society). The first are longing for ideas and freedom, the second – symbolically – for bread. While the first are very literate on new technologies and social media, the second can be even completely illiterate.<sup>27</sup> In the Indignados or Occupy Wall Street case, the protesters also emphasized the difference between the symbolic 99% percent of the population and 1% of the owners of capital, affecting and influencing the power.

(3) We can perform a theoretical experiment, in which we can compare and develop the term popularized by Guy Standing – the relative deprivation, mentioned previously, with a state we can call an “objective deprivation.” The first one is associated with the countries of the rich North. This term coined by Guy Standing, refers to the sense of danger associated with the growing precariousness of work relations, and certainly functioning in less stable system of employment than one enjoyed by protesters’ parents.<sup>28</sup> Obviously, we have to mention that stability was then based on various exclusions, but that does not change the fact that the sense of relative deprivation enhances the sense of frustration in young generations. What is more, free-

market capitalism discourses were feeding the educated youth with the key-word which is “success.” Today, many of them are doomed to unemployment. They also observe a mismatch in the labor market stemming from the fact that work put in skill and knowledge building is not matched by actual position on the labor market. The “objective deprivation”<sup>29</sup> can then be associated with the legacy of globalization and new media, which fell into the hands of Arab Spring protesters that have access to the Internet and new technologies (from a few to several percent). By becoming acquainted with the conditions of life in highly developed countries they have also met frustration, but due to the slightly different reasons.

(4) Egalitarianism vs elitism – access to new technology tools - in the case of highly developed countries it is easier to talk about democratizing role of new media. With an access to new social platforms the people have the opportunity to express their views. The main threat is that in non-democratic countries the government can learn how to control the net quite quickly. According to Paul Mason it can take them about two years.<sup>30</sup> New media can also be a platform for social groups which have been oppressed or discriminated against.<sup>31</sup>

(5) Horizontalism – according to Paul Mason, the lack of “leaders of the revolutions” resulted with the situation in which media were looking for people who could provide them with information or legitimize the protests. So they have been contacting popular bloggers like: Wael Ghonim, Slim Amamou, or Ceyda Sungu (Turkish girl “in the red dress” presented on a numerous photographs, who has become the symbol of Istanbul protests.”<sup>32</sup>). Moreover, that horizontalism can lead to the “tyranny” of consensus, which can be the cause for some of the movements to remain “unproductive” and not able to articulate their demands.

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## BETWEEN FUNCTIONALISM AND DETERMINISM

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The above-mentioned variables, based primarily on empirical examples, should be considered in the context of future-oriented concepts, in which new media are the main axis. Therefore, we decided to confront

26 Castells 2013: 13-31.

27 Mason 2013: 254-293.

28 This comparison was made to highlight basically different roots of the protests in US and UE and these connected with the “Arab Spring.” (Editors’ note - EK)

29 Mason 2013: 254-293.

30 Mason 2013: 254-293.

31 The theories on optimistic/pessimistic vision of new media will be developed in next section of the article.

32 Hudson 2013.

the concept which arises from the media determinism (particularly, hybrid society by Manuel Castells) with a critical look at the concept of cyber-utopianism (according to Evgeny Morozov assumptions explained in his famous book *The Net Delusion. The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*). Both frames will be useful when creating an outline of scenarios. According to Denis McQuail's functionalist theory of media, specific media features constitute the basis for: (1) integration and cooperation, (2) mobilization, (3) adaptation to change, (4) maintenance of order, control and stability, (5) control of social tension (6) the continuity of culture and values.<sup>33</sup> It is worth noting that both the potential for mobilization and for integration/cooperation have been reflected in numerous recent expressions of social protests and manifestations. Example of Twitter Revolution, which was the common name of Iranian election protests (2009-2010) or Egyptian Revolution of 2011, can be recalled in this context. These features together with the ability to adapt to changes may locate the media in the position of accelerator in the democratization processes.

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BY ISOLATING THE MEDIA FROM THEIR ENVIRONMENT OR BY COMBINING MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES EXCLUSIVELY WITH SELECTED ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, PROPONENTS OF MEDIA DETERMINISM PROVIDE UNVERIFIABLE HYPOTHESES AND PREDICTIONS

While analyzing the social and political functions of new media, it is essential to have in mind the assumptions and conclusions situated in the framework of technological determinism. Media determinism<sup>34</sup> is usually considered as its component. It has been developed, as a concept, by Marshall McLuhan and contained in his recognizable aphorism: “the medium is also the message.”<sup>35</sup> This perspective leads to the simplistic conclusion that majority of social and political transformations is influenced directly by media processes and by empowered positions reached by citizens/participants in their course.

33 McQuail 2006.

34 Media determinism, according to Oxford Reference is: “A synonym for technological determinism as applied to claims about the ‘impact’ of new media technologies on society, institutions, groups, and/or individuals.” (Editors’ note - AF)

35 Arendholz 2013.

McLuhan recognizes media as isolated, independent of the social, political and economic background, denominations, leaving aside the question of political control and influence on the structures of media. As a consequence, media determinism admits the role of total medium and absolute primacy not only at the level of the structure, but also at the level of the content and method of its formation. By isolating the media from their environment (including the cultural codes and common access to technology) or by combining media technologies exclusively with selected elements of the environment, proponents of media determinism provide unverifiable hypotheses and predictions. These contradictions have become the subject of criticism submitted by Mentor Cana, who shows where to look for the main center of impact: “(...) these distinctive properties and functions are manifestations of attributes, properties and functions that have been imbedded (via mediation processes) within themselves as a result of the complex construction process where context and socio-economic and political force play decisive role alongside technological innovations.”<sup>36</sup>

It is worth noting that the current assumptions (including Manuel Castells’ analysis), developed on the basis of media determinism, are often referred to as soft determinism or critical media determinism. They are not isolating the media from the processes of social/political physiology. On the contrary they include selected elements of media milieu in the examination and ascribe them an influential role.

#### — NETWORKS OF OUTRAGE AND HOPE AS A CYBER-SOCIAL CONCEPT BY MANUEL CASTELLS

When it comes to the critical, but also supporting, insight into the new media and technology involved in social structure, it is worth to highlight Manuel Castell’s observations and research from the mid-1990s: “Technology does not determine society. Nor does society script the course of technological change (...) the final outcome depends on a complex pattern of interaction. Indeed the dilemma of technological determinism is probably a false problem, since technology is society and society cannot be understood without its technological tools.”<sup>37</sup>

Although initially considered “soft determinist,” in his latest book *Networks of Outrage and Hope. Social Movements in the Internet Age*, the Catalan researcher claims, that social media platforms became the space of autonomy, beyond the control of states or corporations. One of his original

36 Cana 2003.

37 Castells 1996: 5.

models, called individualized mass communication, covers the use of the Internet and its platforms as a space of digital communication. In that model the communication is massive on the level of transmission of messages from many to many with the possibility of inclusion of an infinite number of network connections. At the same time it is individualized, because the message is created independently and the research process occurs by personal selection. These characteristics allow to achieve autonomy of the social actors and, in consequence, the autonomy of communication, which is considered by Castells as the essence of democratic social movements' activity.<sup>38</sup>

The next level of this concept is the hybrid public space constructed among the internet social media services and occupied urban spaces, connected by intense interactions between its users. Castells points out that modern multimodal, digital, horizontal networks became the most efficient, independent and interactive medium in history. Thanks to networking the risk of repression for social movement's activists is reduced, the movement passes from the local level to the global dimension and the self-reflexivity of its members is improved.

According to Castells, information and communication is the nucleus in the construction of social movements. Higher level of interaction and the efficient dissemination of information, as well as experiences would ensure the accomplishment of utopian model of uniquely democratic and equity based group. How information (understood as experience, political postulate, etc.) is constructed, distributed and then modified determines the shape of movement's power and identity. It is worth considering whether a hybrid public space would lead to the creation of hybrid democracy with the privileged position of social movements or would it rather provoke the fragmentation of social activity.

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#### THE CRITIQUE OF CYBER-UTOPIANISM OR SKEPTICAL APPROACH BY EVGENY MOROZOV

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Deeply emancipatory properties of online communication and the statement that social development, supported and stimulated by Internet tools, would enable the expression of whole range of attitudes and (what is more peculiar) would favor minorities and persecuted forms the basic structure of cyber-utopianism. The excitement about the liberating potential of the Internet and Internet-centrism in political dimension were examined by Evgeny Morozov in his renowned book *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (2011).

<sup>38</sup> Castells 2011.

A particular form of media ecosystem in which traditional media, such as newspapers or radio, draw from new media sources and vice versa, may generate (according to Morozov) redundancy, information chaos and loss of original message content.<sup>39</sup> It also leads to the game of context which is the result of information's brevity and transfer rate. When speaking about Twitter Revolutions it is essential to stress that Twitter, as a platform, is a tool of quite limited impact. First of all, it enables users to send and read "tweets" limited to 140-characters, putting the message out of context. Secondly, Twitter users – often young, educated citizens interested in new technologies – do not represent the full cross-section of the society. Moreover, Morozov emphasizes that we should consider – parallel to Maslow's hierarchy of needs – the hierarchy of cyber needs.<sup>40</sup> It would situate entertainment and communication at its bottom and the political and social commitment at its top as a luxury need. The Internet is a neutral tool the use of which is dependent on many factors and cannot be reduced to obvious liberating employment.

Another critical aspect, related to the democratization role of online communication, is the concept of authoritarian discussion. In authoritarian regimes the online discussion may strengthen the regime and its legitimacy. The encouragement for discussion and blogging reveals the sort of information, which may be crucial for the regime (personal data of organization's members, networks, etc.) while the online referenda allow to shift the responsibility to the citizens.<sup>41</sup> For example, the Thai authorities used "crowdsourcing" model of authoritarian discussion by encouraging local Internet users to gather and submit for review URLs of sites which are offensive for the king.<sup>42</sup> This statement introduces the last crucial point which associates online content's high susceptibility to manipulation with new opportunities for regime's propaganda.<sup>43</sup> The possible use of Internet tools' political potential may lead to the creation of various versions of the Internet, including national and local models of Internet or Spinternet.<sup>44</sup> It may also affect the differences in information stratification and conflicts.

<sup>39</sup> Morozov 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Morozov 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Morozov 2011: 103-105.

<sup>42</sup> The site named ProtectTheKing.net is a primary point for the collection of offensive URLs.

<sup>43</sup> Morozov 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Spinternet is, according to Morozov, a Web with little censorship but lots of spin and propaganda which reinforces the ideological supremacy of the government. (Morozov 2011: 117).



## THE THREAT OF SLACKTIVISM? – SEVERAL SCENARIOS

“This ready supply of broad, fair-weather activism may vanish as fast as it appeared. That was the fate of the Occupy protesters, who pitched camp in Western cities in 2011. This time, however, the protests are fed by deep discontent. Egypt is suffering from the disastrous failure of government at every level. Protest there has become a substitute for opposition. In Europe the fight is over how to shrink the state. Each time the cuts reach a new target—most recently, Greece’s national broadcaster—they trigger another protest.”<sup>45</sup>

The final question which we would like to ask concerns the future fate of new social movements. Are they a new path towards wider societal change or just plain sparks which disappear as fast as they have appeared? One of the most crucial points is the threat of slacktivism or armchair activism – the form of activism in which “activists and advocacy groups trying to get attention for particular causes increasingly rely on social media as a means of building support for their causes.”<sup>46</sup> Although social media mobilization can be a good starting point for protest movements or increase awareness, “these activities pose a minimal cost to participants.”<sup>47</sup> Stepping towards a big societal change would demand more engagement. What is more, on the one hand – as some theoreticians claim – we are heading towards new societal paradigm. The fragmentation of information and its diversity can result in rejection of hermetic ideology, such as conservatism, communism etc. But unrestricted access to many sources of information in times of crisis can also be a fertile ground for radical and populist movements. There is also a question of relations between the state and protest movements, or rather, to be more precise, of the scope of information control performed by various governments.

Beyond doubt, the Internet content – created and received by many participants – is not and will not be an universal transmitter due to the limitations imposed by cultural, social or lingual codes. Therefore, there is a possibility of fragmentation of the network and the emergence of highly specialized sub-networks or the increase of the level of information proletariat and, as a consequence, social and – in the longer term – political polarization.<sup>48</sup>

45 The Economist 2013.

46 Seay 2014.

47 Seay 2014.

48 Prior 2013.

The potential emergence of hybrid democracy (proven at some level during Iceland’s consultations on constitution), based on Castell’s hybrid public space concept, may encounter the same difficulties as the earliest mechanisms of direct democracy: participants’ lack of competence, potential for populism or low efficiency *inter alia*.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, analyzes and forecasts applied to social movements in the context of online communication environment require incorporation of the model of deliberative democracy. This vision of democracy has been practiced and discussed by Indignados movement and is specifically based on the discursive, open, active exchange of ideas and solutions in common spaces, real and virtual.<sup>50</sup> The use of new media greatly expands this double space and facilitates access to the forum. Probably, in this approach we are dealing with double use of media: as a transmitter, but also as a potential platform for generating ideas.

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The emergence of new media certainly broadened access to information. Knowledge ceased to be a priceless commodity. Interaction models have changed, forms of social interactions and approach to the hierarchy have been reshaped. Recent protests have, without a doubt, been based on a new communication models. However, a lot of researchers – both those less and more skeptical of the role of new media – assume, that they have also revolutionized the ways of human interactions. While reaching for a substantial change and reconstruction of social order new organizations need also to profoundly reprogram their communication model.

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# NEW MEDIA OLD THEORIES

## DOROTA PIONTEK

### commentary

NEW MEDIA, WHICH IS THE NAME THAT REFERS NOT ONLY TO THE INTERNET, GENERATE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS RELATED TO STUDYING THEM. FOR ALMOST 100 YEARS OF RESEARCH, STARTING WITH PRINTED NEWSPAPER, THEN CINEMA, RADIO AND ESPECIALLY TELEVISION, A NUMBER OF THEORIES HAVE BEEN ELABORATED IN THE FIELD OF MEDIA AND MASS COMMUNICATION STUDIES, ONLY A FEW OF WHICH HAVE A UNIVERSAL DIMENSION, THAT IS, THEY ARE NOT RELATED TO A SPECIFIC STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION. THEORIES OF MEDIA OMNIPOTENCE, POPULAR IN THE 1930'S, DID NOT PASS THE TEST OF TIME MAINLY DUE TO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES' DEVELOPMENT. THIS HAS LED TO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BROADCASTERS AND AUDIENCE.

These changes are well illustrated by a comparison of Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. As well as traditional media, Web 1.0 allows for static viewing of the content offered by the media. The content consisted mostly of irregularly updated information, which resembled a booklet. A typical page contained text, images, icons for navigation, menu. Texts created by professionals were written in impersonal, professional, descriptive language. The parties were not related to each other, communication between the entities took place via e-mail.

Defining Web 2.0, Tim O'Reilly wrote: "Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web2.0 application are those that make the most intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it; consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others; creating Network effects through an "architecture of participation" and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences."<sup>1</sup> According to the above we can name the most distinguishing features of Web 2.0 that are also applicable to some extent to other new media: folksonomy and ludic character of usage, user as a contributor, dispersion, multiplicity of media, mass participation, interactivity, autonomy, feeling of social presence and personal contact with others, content personalization and privatization. What is an advantage of the new media in human communication process can be at the same time disadvantage from research perspective. Two questions shall be asked: what to examine and how to do it.

### WHAT TO EXAMINE?

Each survey starts with the definition of the object of research. In mass communication, according to the model of Harald Lasswell, usually these are the sender - the institution of the media, the recipient - a mass audience or its part, the content of messages generated by the media, and the reaction to customers, channel of communication and variously defined effects of the process. Difficulties generated by the new media appear already at this stage. In the case of traditional media, the media institutions have been broadcasters in mass communication. In new media there are three types of them: institutional (similar to the traditional model), social - the different social actors that through access to new media have become independent

<sup>1</sup> O'Reilly 2005.

from institutional media agency, and individuals - each user of new media, who has the need to actively co-create them.

The old mass media audience has been replaced by the fragmented groups, individually and in convenient time involved in the process of communication, very fluid and unstable. Its members interact without the participation of institutional sender. Due to the richness of the content it is difficult to make and justify the choice of investigating content. New media, especially the Internet, can be defined as a channel of communication in terms of technology or as a platform of resources, co-created by all users. The question therefore arises – what is the object of research: the communication channel as a technology and its properties or the social constructs created by these new technologies?

It is also necessary to define precisely the effects of the operation of the new media, as the same effect is a broad concept and needs to be clarified. Similarly, as in the case of other media, these effects may be in apparent contradiction. For example, exploring new media in the context of social change can be achieved and prove that media may contribute to fragmentation and individualization of society. Equally it can be proved that the new media promote a new kind of integration which can be portrayed, as D. McQuail argued, in a more positive light as interdependency, or more negatively as a mass society.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, even if the theory of mass society, linked to the belief in the omnipotence of the media, does not seem to be useful, the concept of social mass itself is still interesting. Thanks to the Internet, immediate „communities” are created, that may have a significant impact on the various sectors of society. However, they consist of more or less anonymous participants pursuing their goals, thus constituting groups, but their durability, interactions and relationships are limited. Such groups have a lot of features that resemble a crowd (if you apply the criteria proposed by Herbert Blumer) or at least they are characterized by „collective behavior.” It means, that individuals work together in a certain way and their action is based on a common understanding of the situation (common expectations) or on the tradition dealing with how to behave properly in given circumstances. Interactions on the Internet, which can be accessed through various channels, can be well described by a special form of interaction – concept of circular reaction. One can define it as a type of cross-stimulation, in which the response of one individual reproduces the stimulation that comes from another individual and referring back to this individual enhanced stimulation.<sup>3</sup> Starting from the spontaneous behavior of individuals it stimulates and strengthens them,

<sup>2</sup> McQuail 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Park, Burgess 1970.

and may ultimately take the institutional form. The institutionalization of spontaneously forming standards may consequently lead to a new social order. This is the basis of the power of the internet – an ability to cause such institutionalization. But the question arise, how it will continue real world.

## HOW TO EXAMINE?

In researching new media, all methods and techniques developed for examining old media, are useful, especially the quantitative and qualitative content analysis. New media, due to its technical characteristics make it easy to organize experiments and anthropological surveys.

## OLD THEORIES

As already mentioned, significant number of theories developed, so far, by studies of the media has a historical importance, as the social and technological changes have led to the transformation of the media environment and their relationship with other elements of the social system. If we assume that in the process of elaborating social science theories on the effects of media on various social actors three stages can be distinguish – the theories of the first two: the omnipotence of the media (with the exception of the concept of mass) and the limited impact of the media have no application ability. Theories formulated since the 1970's, which can be described collectively as the theories of indirect and moderate impact of the media, seem to be more promising. Among them it is worth to point concepts talking about the cognitive effects (framing, priming, agenda setting/agenda building), defining the social reality (the spiral of silence hypothesis, cultivation theory), or models of behavioral effects. Their underlying assumptions still retain the qualities of actuality, though, obviously, must be reformulated in such a way as to take into account the social and technological changes, the effect of which is the emergence of new media.

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# CONNECTING PERIPHERIES

## -NEW MEDIA IN RUSSIA'S REGIONAL LGBT ACTIVISM

### article intro

EVERY NOW AND THEN WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH VARIOUS NEGATIVE INFORMATION CONNECTED WITH SITUATION OF LGBT (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER) PEOPLE IN RUSSIA. NOT ONLY SOCIETY, BUT ALSO POLITICIANS AND THEIR AGENDAS ARE NOT FAVORABLE FOR NON-HETERONORMATIVE PEOPLE IN RUSSIAN FEDERATION. AS VERONIKA LAPINA CLAIMS THE "POST-SOVIET LGBT MOVEMENT EMERGED IN THE 1990s, BUT BY THE BEGINNING OF 2000s LGBT ACTIVISM IN RUSSIA (AS WELL AS THE LGBT COMMUNITY) WAS HIDDEN IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE AND WAS ALMOST INVISIBLE." EVEN NOW, IN RUSSIA TRADITIONAL MEDIA ARE NOT A PROPER FIELD FOR DISCUSSING PROBLEMS OF NON-HETERONORMATIVE PART OF RUSSIAN SOCIETY. IF THEY CONFRONT THESE ISSUES, THEY ARE OFTEN PRESENTED TO SPREAD HATE-SPEECH AND PREJUDICES. THUS, SUCH ORGANIZATIONS LIKE RUSSIAN LGBT NETWORK OR GENDER IPRAVO ARE PRIMARILY DESIGNED TO INFORM THE SOCIETY, BY PREPARING DIGITAL MATERIALS AND SPREADING THEM THROUGH THE SOCIAL NETWORKS. ALTHOUGH DIGITAL REVOLUTION GAVE SOME OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE COMMUNITIES IN THE VIRTUAL SPHERE, RUSSIAN EXAMPLE SHOWS THAT NEW MEDIA CAN BE CONSIDERED ONLY AS A TOOL, NOT AS A GENUINE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. THIS TEXT IS EVIDENCE OF THE FACT THAT MEDIA ARE STILL STRONGLY CONDITIONED BY EXTERNAL ISSUES (PARTICULARLY BY POLITICAL FACTORS). IN THIS CONTEXT EVEN NEW MEDIA CAN BE A FACTOR, WHICH

IS ADMITTEDLY IMPORTANT IN THE CASE OF BUILDING ACTIVISTS' STRUCTURES AND SPHERES OF SUPPORT, BUT CONFRONTED WITH THE PUBLIC OPINION IT USUALLY REMAINS JUST A TRADITIONAL FORM FOR ACTIVISM. THE USE OF NEW MEDIA CAN, IN THE LONG RUN, HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ACTIVISM OF MINORITY GROUPS IN RUSSIA. CURRENTLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT IS TO INFORM, EDUCATE AND ATTEMPT TO ELICIT A RESPONSE.

INTRODUCTION: AGNIESZKA FILIPIAK, ELIZA KANIA

# IMPACT OF ANTI- PROPAGANDA LEGISLATION ON LGBT ACTIVISM IN RUSSIA'S REGIONS

VERONIKA LAPINA

THIS ARTICLE IS LOOKING AT THE WAYS IN WHICH LGBT (LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER) ACTIVISM WAS RESHAPED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATIONS, WHICH PROHIBITED PROPAGANDA ON NON-NORMATIVE SEXUALITIES AMONG MINORS. EVEN THOUGH RESEARCHERS COMMONLY INVESTIGATE LGBT INITIATIVES, WHICH ARE LOCATED IN THE CAPITAL CITIES, THIS ARTICLE FOCUSES ON ACTIVISM IN RUSSIAN RE-

### article abstract



GIONS. THE TEXT INVESTIGATES CHANGES, WHICH OCCURRED IN LGBT ORGANIZATIONS IN KOSTROMA, NOVOSIBIRSK, ARKHANGELSK AND SAINT PETERSBURG AND SHOWS HOW REGIONAL ACTIVISM RESPONDS TO THE ANTI-PROPAGANDA LAWS. IT ALSO TOUCHES UPON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW MEDIA/MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND HOW IT ACTUALLY ENSURES THE AGENCY OF SOME REGIONAL LGBT INITIATIVES. CAREFULLY UNRAVELING THE WEB OF MAJOR AND MINOR CHANGES, WHICH EACH ORGANIZATION UNDERWENT, AUTHOR AIMS TO SHOW THE PRESENCE OF AGENCY AMONG REGIONAL LGBT ORGANIZATIONS IN RUSSIA.

## keywords

RUSSIA, LGBT, ACTIVISM, GAY-PROPAGANDA, RUSSIA'S REGIONS, RESISTANCE, REGIONAL ACTIVISM.

## INTRODUCTION

Russian and Soviet history suggests that non-normative sexualities have an ambiguous and at times problematic position within the nation. With almost 60 years of criminalization and pathologization of homosexuality, the fall of the “iron closet”<sup>1</sup> in 1993 and the emergence of LGBT activism in post-soviet Russia could be perceived as a first step towards the emergence of a solid LGBT movement. Yet, as Laurie Essig<sup>2</sup> notes, it was not the birth of the movement, but rather a miscarriage: after the abrupt emergence of the LGBT movement in the 1990s, it was almost invisible by the beginning of the 2000s.<sup>3</sup> However, from the beginning of 2000s along with the rise of new nationalism,

1 This is a reference to the decriminalization of homosexuality in Russia, which happened in 1993 as a result of the revision of Russian Penal Code. It also refers to the heading of David Tuller’s book (1996) *Cracks in the Iron Closet: Travels in Gay and Lesbian Russia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2 Essig 1999: 67.

3 Essig 1999; Nemtsev 2008.

homosexuals again appeared to be in the focal point of the nationalist policies of exclusion. In May 2006 the first policy against the propaganda of non-normative sexuality among the underage population<sup>4</sup> was implemented in the region of Ryazan (Ryazanskaya oblast’). Since September 2011, such policies were adopted in the areas of Arkhangelsk, Kostroma, Novosibirsk, Magadan, Samara, Krasnodar, Kaliningrad, the Republic of Bashkortostan and in the city of Saint Petersburg. The legislation states that “public actions, which aim to propagandize homosexuality (muzhelozhstvo & lesbianstvo) among minors,”<sup>5</sup> must be fined. It was justified by the resolution of the Supreme Court, which claimed that minors are not able to evaluate critically the information about same-sex relationships, thus “homosexual dispositions” can easily be imposed on them.<sup>6</sup> The vagueness of this legislation opened up the possibility for regional governors to eliminate almost all actions related to LGBT community/LGBT rights – not only prides and other public marches, but also festivals, seminars, conferences, publishing, even self-organizations can be closed. Potentially, these legislative changes aim to erase all non-normative sexualities from the public sphere to sustain the Russian nation as purely heterosexual.

As some authors note,<sup>7</sup> a visible post-Soviet LGBT movement emerged of in the 1990s, but by the beginning of 2000s LGBT activism in Russia (as well as the LGBT community) was hidden in the private sphere and was almost invisible. Regional LGBT initiatives were mostly community-based and community-oriented, with almost no involvement in public politics. Reluctance towards visibility and participation in politics was caused by severe homophobia in Russian society along with the fear of triggering repression from the state in case, when homosexuality made an attempt to cross the boundary between the private and public spheres. Since the middle of the 2000s (2006-2008) capital cities in the western part of Russia (Moscow and St. Petersburg) established LGBT organizations, that worked on the promotion of equality. Brian Baer<sup>8</sup> even points out that in 2005-2006 in Moscow some groups of activists made an attempt to organize a gay pride. Although, all political actions usually happened in the capital city of Russia, it was, and still is, extremely complicated for regional activists to take part in such activities, as reaching the capital city is challenging, both in terms of distance and possible expenses. Thus, activism in the regions, even though it existed, was almost invisible in terms of state/regional politics, before

4 Hereafter I will refer to them as anti-propaganda policies/laws/legislations.

5 Ryazan.news-city.info: 2006.

6 Vsr.ru: 15-12-2012.

7 Essig 1999; Nemtsev 2007; Baer 2009.

8 Baer 2009.



recent times, when the anti-propaganda legislation was implemented. The re-emergence of a political LGBT movement in Russia coincided with the emergence of political opposition to the toughening regime. Brian Baer in his book called it a “consolidation of a new authoritarianism under Vladimir Putin.”<sup>9</sup> However, any resistance towards the dominant regime provoked an immediate and aggressive response from the government. For example, after the parliamentary elections in 2011 and presidential elections in 2012, the opposition organized demonstrations in Moscow and Saint Petersburg<sup>10</sup> (probably the first one in the recent history of Russia). In response the government dramatically increased the penalties for violating the “law on public rallies.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, one might note that currently in Russia any form of public protest is followed by amplification and centralization of power.

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THE RE-EMERGENCE OF A POLITICAL LGBT  
MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA COINCIDED WITH THE  
EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION  
TO THE TOUGHENING OF THE REGIME

Commonly, the situation in Russia differs from what is happening in the capital cities. However “the national picture masks enormous regional variation.”<sup>12</sup> One interesting fact about the public rallies in 2011-2013 is that they occurred not only in Moscow but also in regional centers.<sup>13</sup> Although people in the capitals were most active in showing the dissatisfaction with the election results, people in regions also joined the movement. People in the opposition displayed their discontent with the results of elections all over Russia. This information argues for the overall heightening of political consciousness, even in the regions. Exploration of LGBT activism through a Foucauldian lens suggests that articulation of power in such a radical way (in a form of oppressive, heterosexist legislation) enacts immediate resistance on the part of LGBT activists. Michel Foucault argued that “where there is power, there is resistance”<sup>14</sup> and this perfectly explains the current situation with the LGBT ambitious and political movement in Russia, which emerged in a number of regions after the implementation of the anti-propaganda

9 Baer 2009: 13.

10 For example: General report from demonstrations in Moscow and St. Petersburg: Rallies after Putin wins Russia election. (BBC.co.uk: 03-02-2012)

11 Lent.ru: 2012.

12 Robertson 2011: 69.

13 For example: the anti-election protest in Nizhnii Novgorod. (Ria.ru: 04-02-2012a; Ria.ru: 04-02-2012b; BBC.co.uk: 03-02-2012)

14 Foucault 1988: 95.

legislation. This power can also be seen as a result of homosexuals attempt to cross the boundary between the private and public spheres, because, as I pointed out, homosexuality in Russian society can only be “tolerated” while it is invisible.

The following article explores LGBT initiatives/groups/regions in four regions in Russia (where propaganda of homosexuality was banned on the regional level before the federal law was implemented) seeking to reveal the overall strategy of their activism along with the changes which regional activism underwent after the implementation of legislation. I will reveal the shift, which regional LGBT activism experienced as a result of the implemented laws. First, I will touch upon the issue of geographical location of the regions. I introduce this section to map out the geopolitical specificities of the regions I researched. I will commence the analysis of the activism in the regions with “Vihod,” which is located in Saint Petersburg, because of being the strongest and the best known organization in Russia<sup>15</sup> and being located in the capital city. All other regional initiatives and groups, I present in accordance with year of their establishment – thus Rakurs in Arkhangelsk is the oldest organization, groups and initiatives in Novosibirsk and the next and recently emerged activist in Kostroma comes up last in the article.

## VIHOD AND ITS VOLUNTEERS: LGBT ACTIVISM IN SAINT PETERSBURG

Saint Petersburg is a tremendously valuable region to research in terms of LGBT activism as it is historically considered a gay-capital of Russian Federation.<sup>16</sup> Since the beginning of the 1990s Saint Petersburg had an extensive structure of LGBT organizations. Saint Petersburg is the second biggest city in Russia and is considered the second capital of Russia. Thus, in this text I’m talking only about Saint Petersburg and not about the region of Saint Petersburg (Leningradskaia oblast), where the anti-propaganda legislation is not enacted. This city is located in the north-western part of Russia, and because of its status it is connected with many other regions by train and by air.

This part presents an elaborate description of the activities of a regional organization, which bases itself in Saint Petersburg. Vihod (Coming Out) is the biggest and best known organization not only in Saint Petersburg,

15 BBC.co.uk: 29-03-2012.

16 Kon 1997.

but also in Russia. The data shows how Vihod is dealing with oppressive legislative change. Since 2008 Vihod has been working with the state and in society for the improvement of LGBT people's position. Vihod, which is officially registered as an NGO, employs nine people, who work as project coordinators; all the other people are volunteers. M., one of the project managers in Vihod, stressed that it encompasses numerous projects.<sup>17</sup> Currently the organization has three major areas of activity. The first area aims at the LGBT community itself. It includes psychological and juridical services for homosexuals, bisexuals and transgender people. This "branch" mostly aims to resolve issues with self-identification, internalized homophobia, coming out. Experienced psychologists, who work in this organization, create training programs and seminars and are able to provide individual consultations for LGBT people. It also includes programs for specific groups, like "Transgender in Action" and "LGBT parents," which aim to clarify issues and resolve the problems of a particular group of people. For instance, the "LGBT parents" project provides information on IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation, eds.), adoption and legal issues related to these procedures. These projects also commonly address a crucial question of "parents-to-children" coming out. Regular discussions and seminars are conducted to cover this topic. Within the framework of the "community-aimed" project, Vihod also designed a unique program to work with parents of LGBT people, to enhance understanding and acceptance of their children. Parents are able to meet every month and address different issues they are concerned about, regarding their children's sexuality. Activists from Vihod mentioned that this project is very popular; they also pointed out that some members of this group also became participants of the public demonstration<sup>18</sup> which Vihod organized to protest the legislation. One claimed that this is an unusual situation for the "traditional" LGBT activism in Russia, because parents commonly do not know about their children's sexual orientation. Thus, working with parents, their debates might become beneficial not only for the community, but for public activism as well.

The other two groups of issues, which Vihod addresses, are oriented towards non-community issues. One project they called "working with public opinion." It is aimed at the professional groups, which have powerful impact on society and public opinion about sexual minorities: journalists, doctors, teachers at schools. Vihod organizes educational seminars, which cover the questions of sexuality and gender identity. Activists said that these projects aim to shift the stereotypical and homophobic perception: "We want to

educate and enlighten these groups so they can spread the right information about the LGBT people" (informer B, Vihod). In another project, oriented outside the community, Vihod works with the government (legislative and executive authorities), with the commissioner for Human Rights in Saint Petersburg. M, an activist who is responsible for the advocacy and lobby for LGBT rights in Vihod, confessed that they have a long history of working with the administration even before the non-propaganda legislation was implemented. He revealed that they consider themselves as being a compromise-oriented organization, and they want to resolve problems in a dialogue with the government; Vihod does not want to be engaged in radical activism, which he perceives as "asking for the immediate abolition of the laws without any negotiations" (informer M, Vihod). Members of Vihod also stressed that they would like activists in Saint Petersburg to unite and work together. They have argued that in such circumstances their unity and one strategy can lead to greater achievements than discrepancy in goals and strategies of activists.

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BUT THE ONLY CHANGE THAT OCCURRED IS THAT WE STARTED PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO CERTAIN ISSUES, LIKE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Thus, one can see that LGBT activism in Saint Petersburg is well-established and developed. Activists from Vihod pointed out that there were not many changes in the organization's politics after the legislation was implemented. M explained that Vihod currently places a greater emphasis on working with society on the whole to prevent the outburst of homophobia, however activists do not leave aside community needs as they understand that LGBT community, as a result of this legislation, is getting more and more vulnerable. "We did not establish any new tracks for Vihod, and currently we are not planning to do so. The only change that occurred is that we started paying more attention to certain issues, like negotiations with governmental authorities." (informer G, Vihod). Activists in Vihod do not need to restructure the organization and its agenda; they have no need in developing new branches. The structure of the organization enables its members to respond immediately to the articulated oppression. The major change, which members of Vihod acknowledged is that the number of people, who would like to volunteer, increased drastically. Most of the volunteers never took part in any Vihod's activities before, although it has been functioning since 2008. I managed to meet with several of them to ask, why they have decided to volunteer for an LGBT organization now. One of the volunteers told me:

17 All the information, which is presented in this text comes from the interviews, I conducted during my fieldwork. Information about the previous, current and prospective projects can be found on the organization's web-page <http://www.comingoutspb.ru/ru/home>.

18 BBC.co.uk: 29-03-2012.

“I am a teacher (pause) a kindergarten teacher. If someone among the parents will find out that I am a lesbian I’m going to be fired (...) because no one can find out I’m a lesbian, if I want to work with kids. And I think this is unfair. And I want to change it. I have friend, who works with kids too and we are thinking that we could establish some project together (...). Something like ‘LGBT Teachers’ (...)” (Informer A, Vihod)

Another volunteer said that she joined Vihod, because anti-propaganda legislation made the homophobia legitimate and that made her extremely nervous about the position of LGBT people in society:

“I feel less safe now, you know. Some of my friends told me they think the law did not change much (...) But I have this inner feeling that I am in danger now (pause), that all gays and lesbians are. Now I can be beaten up in the street, if I hold hands with my partner. And the government allows that. I never felt this unsafe before.” (Informer J, Vihod)

Interviews with volunteers showed that although anti-propaganda legislation did not change much in the structure of the Vihod, it forced various people and groups of people (like LGBT people, who work with children) to volunteer. This change in the number of LGBT people, who are eager to join the movement, illustrates, how heterosexist legislative change galvanized a resistive spirit of LGBT people in Saint Petersburg. Another important thing is activists’ opinion that it is not the laws, which are crucial for LGBT community, but homophobia, which gets discursively legitimized through the legislation. The political heterosexism of the anti-propaganda legislation is not homophobic per se,<sup>19</sup> although they are based on homophobia in Russian society, yet it provokes homophobia in society and legitimizes it. Prohibition of propaganda of homosexuality narrates homosexuality as being not allowed in the public sphere, thus an attempt to cross the boundary between the private and public sphere might provoke homophobic aggression.

“ THIS CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF LGBT PEOPLE, WHO ARE EAGER TO JOIN THE MOVEMENT, ILLUSTRATES, HOW HETEROSEXIST LEGISLATIVE CHANGE GALVANIZED A RESISTIVE SPIRIT OF LGBT PEOPLE IN SAINT PETERSBURG

<sup>19</sup> Boellstorff 2005; 2009.

## NORTHERN ACTIVISM: ARKHANGELSK AND OOO “RAKURS”

The region of Arkhangelsk is located in the north-western part of the country. It is the biggest region in the European part of Russia. The city of Arkhangelsk is located in the northern part of the region, close to the northern border of the Russian Federation. Despite its geographical location it is quite easy to reach: Arkhangelsk has its own airport and it is connected with other cities (like St. Petersburg) through the railway.

Arkhangelsk is a small city in the northwestern part of Russia which has quite a long history of LGBT activism in comparison with other cities studied. Rakurs, the only LGBT organization there, was established in 2006 by six lesbian women. Lead by T, who works as a professor of Russian Language and Literature at the local university, this organization successfully deals with a number of issues. Rakurs represents a unique case among other regional revealed that at first they registered Rakurs as an NGO and after, in court, they have managed to add the abbreviation LGBT to their official status. During its years of existence, Rakurs developed certain programs to help LGBT people. The most prioritized during all the years was psychological help for homosexuals. They have arranged seminars and training programs in order to facilitate self-acceptance and to resolve problems with internalized homophobia. Rakurs also organizes a large-scale project, which works with religious LGBT people. T pointed out that in their city many people are religious; consequently these projects have become tremendously important. When I asked about the frequency of these events, activists told me that it depends on the needs of the people – they plan an event once a month, but usually it results in two or even three, due to popular demand. Rakurs also has a separate group of activists, who work with transgender people in order to assist not only psychologically, but also with doctors’ appointments. Activists from Rakurs mentioned that they started this project because one transgender person addressed the organization directly, seeking assistance in communication with the medical personnel. They also have affiliation of the Federation of LGBT-Sport and two programs, aimed at HIV/AIDS prevention and assistance for HIV positive people.

When I met T and other members in the summer of 2012 it had been a year since the legislation was implemented. Since then they were trying to understand the attitude of the government to the LGBT community and their activism by organizing a number of demonstrations and public events. For example, during the week against homophobia they were tying rainbow-colored ribbons on the tree in the city center to express their support to



homosexuals; moreover activists from Rakurs were protesting the law next to the city hall. However, neither of these public demonstrations was ever acknowledged by the authorities or by the local media. T told me:

“We had couple of actions, which we planned as our attempt to see the reaction of the government. They were very simple – some of our activists were standing with posters asking for the abolition of the legislation and arguing for equality. The reaction was null. It seems like our deputies do not really understand what they implemented.”

“LGBT activists in Arkhangelsk were coping with the prohibitive laws for a year; this gave me an opportunity to grasp not only the short-term consequences, but also a long-term ones,” told T. She explained that right after the legislation was enacted, she felt an immediate reaction from the LGBT-community in Arkhangelsk. The LGBT community, she said, started to ask about the new legislation. They were nervous and thought that homosexuality was criminalized again, like in Soviet times.

“They started to ask questions like – which kind of actions are considered to be ‘propaganda’? Holding hands in public – is it propaganda or not? The implementation of the legislation raised drastically the level of nervousness within the Community! People were writing e-mails, they called us (pause) for some time – about three month – LGBT community was ‘feverish.’”

Consequently first step for Rakurs in these new circumstances was to create a series of seminars, which aimed to explain the meaning of the legislation to the public. There was an urgent need to calm the local LGBT community down, to say that they should not be scared and that no one can be imprisoned according to this law. The implementation of the non-propaganda law also resulted in an immediate consolidation of people. For instance, T noted that heterosexual people volunteered to help Rakurs with projects and seminars, which never happened before. This shows that Rakurs actually partially benefited from the implemented legislation. Heterosexist legislation galvanized resistance not only within the community of activists, but also triggered resistance in people, who were not engaged in LGBT activism previously. For example, a lawyer, who is currently working in Rakurs, also joined the organization after the legislation was implemented. He said that he would like to volunteer and to help in this fight with the severe injustice: “before the implementation of the anti-propaganda law I would not even think about going and helping Rakurs. But now I realized that my knowledge and my skills can help” (informer F, Rakurs).

During 2012, Rakurs’s policies had undergone a number of changes. The organization devoted attention towards the new range of problems. Activists revealed that they have started working with a broader group of people. T said that before the LGBT-propaganda was banned, Rakurs was a community-oriented organization (all their events were mostly aimed at a small number of people with non-normative sexualities). Now they endeavor to work with society and enlighten people about homosexuality, thus trying to prevent the emergence of public homophobia. They mentioned that currently, the main goal of Rakurs is to “introduce homosexuality to the public.” Activists are trying to work with politicians and journalists. T pointed out that during the year they attempted “to go beyond their usual performance” by joining other organizations and groups (Human Rights organizations and initiatives/ politically active youth) in their activities, events and discussions. “We do want to “insert” homosexuality in various areas of life,” activists argued, “we’ve already established the community, but we do not want to be distanced from the others. By inserting questions, related to LGBT people into the agenda of other activists they want to show their presence in society; they want to show their presence in every sphere of life. T and other members mentioned that they did not encounter any violent homophobic reactions during the events they attended, yet she stated that people commonly wanted to silence all the issues related to the LGBT community: “We want to break the silence. Sometimes it seems that invisibility is our only way to be tolerated. We do not want things to be as they are. We want people understand that we are here, we are present.” (Informer T, Rakurs)

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THEY WERE NERVOUS AND THOUGHT THAT  
HOMOSEXUALITY WAS CRIMINALIZED  
AGAIN, LIKE IN SOVIET TIMES.

Rakurs is an organization with a strong legal component. In terms of struggles in the court, they are an experienced entity. By now Rakurs has done a lot for the abolition of the laws: the organization filed a lawsuit against the regional administration, claiming that this law violates human rights, which are guaranteed by the constitution. Activists pointed out that they do understand that a decision is not going to be made in their favor, but they are ready to file an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights, if the Russian courts of various instances reject their suits.

However, activists from Arkhangelsk noted that the most radical change occurred within the population of the region – those changes

had a twofold impact on the organization. People, both homosexual and heterosexual, started joining the organization, coming to the events and to offer their assistance in projects. However, some spaces, where activists conducted their events were no longer available for them. For example, in the space, where Rakurs organized screenings and discussions, they were no longer welcome after the law was implemented. “People (the ones, who provided places for the events Rakurs organized ) are afraid to help us now,” said one member of Rakurs, “they are afraid that the administration is going to fine them for so-called propaganda of homosexuality.” Activists said that it is hard to understand and to balance what counts as propaganda and what does not, mostly because the term “propaganda” is extremely vague.

As I pointed out earlier in the text, the city of Arkhangelsk, where Rakurs is situated is located on the north of the European part of Russia. T, leader of Rakurs argued that due to their distant location they have a hard time managing the communication with organizations in other regions. Activists from this region pointed out that their remoteness from the center of the western part makes it extremely hard for them to directly interact with other organizations. Their desire of networking gets mediated through the internet and social networks. “It takes quite a long time to get from Arkhangelsk to... anywhere!” – T said. It was impossible for her and other activists from this region to imagine their work without these new means of communication. Internet, social networks, blogs and on-line zines really enhance the communication between activists in Russia and beyond and, what becomes even more important for them is that it allows the transnational flows of information about LGBT activism and its trends in different parts of the world.

Analyses show that case of Arkhangelsk represents a surprisingly well-established regional group that cardinally changes its policies in response to heterosexist legislation in the region. Activists perceive the legislation not as an obstacle for them to overcome, but as an amplifier of homophobia in society. It suggests that activists from Rakurs, similar to volunteers from Vihod, see the laws as enhancing homophobia that was already present in society, rather than as a radically new issue. Thus the focus of Rakurs’s activism shifted from community to society. Similarly to the situation in St. Petersburg, members of Rakurs pointed out that they experienced increasing number of cases, when people volunteered for the organization. The data I have gathered suggests that after homophobia gained prominence in legislation, LGBT activism in Arkhangelsk attracted more members: both homosexual and heterosexual citizens. This again implies that oppression facilitates amalgamation of different people in triggering resistance.

## ACTIVISM TO THE EAST OF THE URALS: CASE OF NOVOSIBIRSK

The region of Novosibirsk is the only one in this research, which is located in the east-central part of the country. The city of Novosibirsk is the third biggest city in Russia (after Moscow and Saint Petersburg), thus it is the biggest city in eastern Russia. It is quite complicated to reach, not logistically (it is a big industrial center, thus it is connected with other places by air and by railway) but in terms of it being geographically distant from other regions. For example it takes 4 hours to reach it by plane from Moscow and 2 days – by train.

At the time I was doing my research in the region of Novosibirsk as it was the only area in the eastern part of Russia where the anti-propaganda legislation was implemented; actually the law was implemented right before I have started my research. Thus, it gave me an ability to grasp the starting point of the change in LGBT activism in Novosibirsk – activists were mostly talking about the anticipated modifications. Novosibirsk represents an almost unique situation in terms of its LGBT activism in Russian regions. While not being a capital city it has a number of activist initiatives, which appear to be in a certain disagreement with each other – project “Pulsar,” “Gender iPravo” and “GORD.” This part aims to outline agendas of existing organizations/ initiatives and to indicate the change they presume to undergo in response to the implemented law.

## PROJECT “PULSAR”

Project Pulsar emerged from the series of psychological training events for LGBT activists, which were held in 2002 in Tomsk (a city, which is close to Novosibirsk, also in the eastern part of Russia). The leader of this ongoing project, O, said that he went there, as an activist of the NGO “Humanitarian Project.” This training event was covering various topics, yet the major one was HIV/AIDS prevention.<sup>20</sup> Since 2002 group of people in Novosibirsk started working on a project aimed at HIV/AIDS prevention. After receiving a financial grant, project “Pulsar” was launched in 2008. Until 2010 it was functioning as a HIV/AIDS prevention communicatory project, oriented towards young men (18-27 years old), who practice sex

<sup>20</sup> The information about this training is unavailable now, however it would be interesting to see, where the financial support and the agenda of this event came from. Thus I could see the ways in which LGBT politics/community were addressed – was it from a western perspective or from the perspective of Russian experience of doing activism.

with other men (MSM). As an activist group they developed a number of events, which included movie screenings, discussions, lectures etc. The grant money was distributed between payments to rent the community space and to print certain useful literature. Yet, O notes, project “Pulsar” did not only function as it was first thought. It became much more than just an HIV/AIDS prevention project. It started building a community of LGBT people, which went beyond the declared target group. Although after two years the funding ended, “Pulsar” continued working, mostly because it turned out to be a community-based and community-building project, even though it does not have any external financial support to rely on. Currently, as O pointed out, project “Pulsar” is an educational and recreational space for the LGBT community and friends:

“For me it (activism) turned out to be a good pastime... (pause) ... an opportunity to communicate, to gather. For me activism comes down to the following: if there are people, who are really in need for help and companionship, there must be a space, where these people could receive help and companionship.”

O’s attitude towards legislation is controversial. On the one hand he agrees that the law is an impulse to bring activists together, at least in one city. It is a “good” starting point for activism to reclaim its presence in Russia; yet, LGBT-activism suffers more from the homophobia, which is present in society. One of the members of Pulsar pointed out that he thinks it is necessary to “transfer activism from its fixation on community needs and community building activities to a broader audience” (informant K, Pulsar). Educating people about homosexuality might help reduce homophobia within Russian society. O suggested that legislation is not the center of everything. It is an iteration of an old problem of homophobia and gay-hating. Thus, regardless of the legislation – homophobia is an overall structural problem in Russian society. The legislation, he argues, does not have its enforcement practices. Homophobia has simply found its expression therein.

However, O pointed out that the legislation forced activists from different groups in this city to work together more closely. He mentioned that they had some joint projects with Gender iPravo. Space, where Pulsar hosts meetings, is used by Gender iPravo to organize seminars and lectures. “Seminars on LGBT rights, which K (leader of Gender iPravo) does,” said one of the informants (informant M), who often visits Pulsar’s events, “are important for us. I am glad someone can tell me about the rights I have as a gay in Russia.” O said that after the legislation was implemented, he wants to dedicate his time and effort to create a series of seminars, which

addresses the implications of the anti-propaganda legislation for the LGBT community. This, he argues, is why he is open for cooperation with Gender iPravo, because they, as an organization, which works on LGBT rights, can help Pulsar to develop a coherent series of events.

The leader of Pulsar argued that people are fighting for the LGBT-rights because this problem is currently in the spotlight. However, he emphasized that project Pulsar is not ready to become something more than a community center. O feels that this organization has a very specific agenda, which does not coincide with political activism. He claimed:

“Currently we do not plan any major, global changes. There are still lots of problems within the LGBT community in Novosibirsk. Pulsar is a safe space for people to come and speak up openly. (...) Many young people come to our meetings. We understand that Pulsar helps gays and lesbians in various ways. We want to be there if or when someone seeks assistance.”

However, O said that he himself participated in a demonstration next to the city hall, to protest against the implementation of anti-propaganda legislation in Novosibirsk. Others, who participate in Pulsar’s activities, said that they also participated in this protest. However, they made clear that it was their individual initiative, which had nothing to do with the organization itself.

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## GENDER IPRAVO (GENDER AND RIGHTS)

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Gender iPravo was established as an initiative dealing with legal issues related to the LGBT community. It currently represents the Russian LGBT Network in Novosibirsk. Lead by an experienced young lawyer, K, it aims to offer legal support to various sexual minority groups. This organization does not seek to organize public demonstrations on the streets, but to work with society and with the state/regional government. They also monitor cases of discrimination against LGBT people, and inform members of sexual minorities about their rights. As a part of the organization’s “educational” strategy, which aims to inform and educate gays and lesbians about their rights, the leader of the Gender iPravo records info-videos about LGBT and human rights, posts them on YouTube and posts links to the videos in social media, thus trying to make such essential information in public and accessible. It seems obvious that this organization wants to work closely with the non-heterosexual community. Members claimed that it is important



to take into account the needs of the community, because all the activism must be actually intended to improve the status (both legal and social) of the people.

Talking about the current situation in relation to the legislative changes in Novosibirsk region, activists of the Gender iPravo note that after the laws were passed, they felt unity with other LGBT activists/groups:

“Undoubtedly, it is important for LGBT activists in Novosibirsk to coordinate our efforts and to act together (...) And this law (pause) it affects all of us, it is our shared problem and we must deal with it all together. (Informer K, Gender iPravo).”

They argue that it is important to coordinate efforts and work in conjunction towards their mutual goal. Yet they argue that despite this political aim, their goals, methods and target groups are different from other activists in Novosibirsk. They are contrasting themselves to Pulsar, which is primarily a community-building organization. Activism in Novosibirsk is now shaped by the emerged legislation, thus volunteers of the Gender iPravo argue that all the LGBT groups in Novosibirsk should work in conjunction with each other to resolve this problem. Yet, all organizations in this struggle should address particular issues. Volunteer S told me: “We understand that all organizations in Novosibirsk differ from each other (...) in our methods, in our target groups. We just feel that we are (different from others)!” (Informer S, Gender iPravo). For example, Gender iPravo’s strategy to fight the problematic anti-propaganda laws is based on their main specialization, which is juridical: they plan to intentionally violate the non-propaganda law by these means creating a legal precedent and then appeal with it to the courts of various instances and try to abolish the law. One of the volunteers said: “As no one defines, what propaganda means, we want to host some public demonstrations and see, for which kind of actions the government is going to fine us” (informer W, Gender iPravo). This follows the logic of division between strategies and tactics, introduced by Certeau.<sup>21</sup> Anti-propaganda legislation in these circumstances is a strategy of the powerful actor (regional administration) and prospective action, which violates this law, is tactical. They plan to make use of the existing anti-propaganda law to repeal the law and the legal structure.

They also argued that it is extremely important to establish and maintain connections with LGBT organizations in other “problematic”

regions, because of the shared experience in dealing with such obnoxious legislative change (communicating methods and strategies). Gender iPravo represents Russian LGBT Network in Novosibirsk. Thus being a part of this major organization it gives them the opportunity to share experience and communicate with other organizations-members of the Network.

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## GORD – GOMOSEXUALI, RODNIE I DRUZIA (HOMO SEXUALS, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS)

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GORD and its leader B is a group of the most public LGBT-activists in Novosibirsk. Their aim is to talk about homosexuality in public; to disrupt the silence. B, who considers himself a political activist, is trying to create resonance in the media. He, in comparison with other groups does not want to engage in a constructive debate with the government – he wants to act directly and to provoke. According to B, GORD does not accept the most common pattern of doing activism, which in his opinion is funded and closeted and, according to his opinion, can change a lot. During the interview B commonly called it “professionalized” activism, arguing that such form is not going to bring any results. Moreover, he said that it is not activism in his understanding “because activism is a struggle, a real fight.”

GORD’s peculiarity is in its public actions – they are open, provocative and impudent. They are not doing any continuous work with community and/or government. Their aim is to shock and provoke. Since summer 2011 (the time when GORD was established) they had two major actions, which were criticized by moderate activists. During the first one they hung a poster in a central square near the City Hall, which said: “What choice do you leave your kid, if he/she realizes he/she is homosexual?” At the day they exhibited the poster, four activists from GORD were giving out fliers, which contained information on homosexuality and suicide rates for homosexual adolescents. According to B, this aimed to increase parents’ tolerance towards their children. The second event was organized on the bank of the river Ob, and was framed as an exhibition. It was called “Every Type of Sexuality is a Natural One” and the posters depicted species among which homosexuality can be found and contained some basic information about same-sex sexuality. These two projects aimed to educate people about homosexuality and disrupt the ignorance towards these issues. “We wanted to show that our society has some issues, which are important yet disregarded by the majority. (...) People just do not want to know that gays exist!” (informer Q, GORD). However, public reaction to these actions was strictly negative. In the first case, a number

<sup>21</sup> Certeau 1984.

of Parental Committees in Novosibirsk submitted complaints to the City Hall administration. Some individuals started addressing B personally with various threats:

“We were publicly accused of encouraging children to have sex (... ) Some time after this event some Parental Committee tried to sue the administration, because it was the administration who allowed this event to happen. (... ) I was called on the phone by some pensioners, who said that they want me to die. Others, mostly women, attacked me via Skype and claimed that I am a pedophile.”

B noted that when he came to the City Hall to get official permission to host the second demonstration, on his way out of the building he was attacked by three people and beaten up. Also, some of the members of GORD pointed out that during the second event, they were pelted with eggs. They said that “although the police were somewhere around, they did not do much. These people came and started throwing eggs at us. They were wearing masks, so we could not see their faces” (informant P, GORD). This last event was held in September 2011, and since then there were no actions on the part of GORD.

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THEY NEED TO CREATE A LEGAL PRECEDENT, WHICH VIOLATES ANTI-PROPAGANDA LAW, TO GET FINED AND THEN TO APPEAL AGAINST THE VERDICT TO THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I interviewed activists from Novosibirsk right after the legislation was enacted in this region, in June 2012. All three organizations/groups/initiatives referred to themselves as either “moderate” or “radical.” “Moderate” activism in Novosibirsk is represented by two groups: Gender iPravo and Project “Pulsar.” Activists in these groups in their interviews described themselves as non-radical (and constantly opposing themselves to, what they called “radical activist group” GORD). They were making an attempt to show that their ways of doing activism are more “compromised-oriented”<sup>22</sup> than disruptive. Contemporary narratives of LGBT activists in Novosibirsk recall past conflicts between radical and compromise-oriented activists in the 90s, when “(c)mpromise-oriented activists (did) not trust in the integrity of their

more radical counterparts”<sup>23</sup> and radical activists claimed that others were afraid to act directly because of their high social status. The case of Novosibirsk shows that two groups – Gender iPravo and Pulsar – are starting to work together while also trying to distance themselves from GORD. Members of Gender iPravo and Pulsar told me that they already had some joint projects (seminars, public discussions etc.) and they would like to develop a closer cooperation with each other. Constant reiteration of the division between moderate and radical discursively distanced them from GORD.

Their strategy to question the unjust legislation is to work together with government. As members told me during their interviews, they want to create working groups and to revise the legislation. O from Pulsar talked about his involvement and participation in such meetings before the law was implemented in an attempt to change the situation. He said that in his opinion it is important not to be too radical with the activism, because it might aggravate the situation for the LGBT-community in the region. On the other hand, activists from GORD and Gender iPravo, while discussing the legislative change, are narrating their strategy, which differs from the one Pulsar has. They claimed that they need to create a legal precedent, which violates anti-propaganda law, to get fined and then to appeal against the verdict to the European Court of Human Rights. K, leader of Gender iPravo even pointed out that there is no exact boundary between radical and moderate activism for her:

“In Novosibirsk we have both radical and moderate activists. Currently, as a result of this legislation, we have more common issues (... ) probably more methods, which both of us use. Before this law was enacted, moderate activists were skeptical about public actions (... ) and if we had such actions they were covert – for example we had a “Rainbow Flashmob”, when a group of people came together and released rainbow-colored balloons. This was an activity for the community (pause) it was not (pause) political enough. However, now we are ready to address the government directly and to say that we do not agree with this situation, not anymore!”

However, even though activists of Gender iPravo plan to act in a similar way as GORD, they do classify themselves as “moderate” and thus try to show that there is a distance between them and GORD’s actions. One activist from Pulsar argued that it happens as a result of GORD having political ambitions; and B himself claimed that he is a political activist

22 Essig 1999.

23 Essig 1999: 64.

and his interests are broader than just LGBT rights. Some other activists I interviewed, told me that leader of GORD wants to have career in politics and LGBT-rights for him are just the way to be acknowledged as a political figure. As I pointed out earlier in the text, activists from GORD claimed that their projects were intended to attract the attention of the general public to particular problems. They did not want to work for the community – they wanted to address a larger audience. They called themselves a group of ‘radical activists’ and critiqued other groups for being not radical enough. For GORD activism “is a war, not a seminar.”<sup>24</sup>

Activists from project “Pulsar” and Gender i Pravo were arguing in their interviews that they do not know what the aim of B’s actions was and they were wondering if there is anything beyond just the disruption of public space. They also argued that members of GORD did not think about the consequences and possible outcomes of their actions. As all the public events GORD conducted were right before the law was implemented, he and his public LGBT-related events are commonly blamed for provoking the appearance of the “non-propaganda” legislation. B pointed this out in the interview:

“It is possible that anti-propaganda legislation in Novosibirsk was implemented as a result of our activism. (...) Our events were provocative enough, thus people share this opinion, that legislation was implemented as result of the growing publicity of homosexuality.”

It becomes clear that Gender iPravo and Pulsar’s strategy to be called “moderate activists” is an attempt to distance from the negative image of activism which they think GORD created. They do not want to be associated with all the provocative actions GORD generates. K (the leader of Gender iPravo) claimed during the interview that the LGBT community needs to be public, but does not have to be provocative or aggressive. However B says that between activists in Novosibirsk there is misunderstanding and even jealousy on the side of the “moderate” activists towards his ideas and actions. In the interview he narrated himself as the only activist in Novosibirsk who is actually doing something.

Unlike the movement during the 90s<sup>25</sup> moderate activism is a dominant narrative in Novosibirsk and radical activism emerged as a form of resistance towards it. It was tremendously interesting to see how this

24 Essig 1999: 63.

25 Essig 1999; Nemtsev 2008.

opposition between moderate and radical activists was constantly coming up in the interviews. “They warn the speaker and the listener not to trust “those” people”<sup>26</sup> – the ones, who “lack consistency in their activism” (informer from Gender iPravo about radicals) or the one, for whom activism became a profession (informer from GORD about moderates). This research shows how activists in Novosibirsk actually see the significance of labels such as “radical” and “moderate” and how each group uses these terms to add value to their work. The usage of such categories to distance one group of activists from another can be perceived as homonationalism within the community of LGBT activists in Novosibirsk. Bringing Jasbir Puar’s<sup>27</sup> idea from the level of nation to the level of LGBT movement suggests that moderate activists from Gender iPravo and Pulsar address moderate activism as a norm in contemporary Russia. Thus, through the usage of these categories, they discursively produce a homonormativity among activists. A normative activist is a moderate activist and radical GORD is being excluded from this notion.

Thus, the case of Novosibirsk shows, how anti-propaganda legislation provoked unity between two groups and exacerbated the conflict of these two groups with the third one. The unity of Pulsar and Gender Pravo is beneficial for both organizations: for Pulsar, as a community-building initiative, becomes not only a platform for various discussions, but also as a source of public opinion for an organization, which is willing to take some direct actions – for Gender iPravo. Although, the conflict between GORD and other groups of activists does not allow them to work on the legislation directly, it seems like this inner conflict leads to the lack of not only joint action but to the lack of any actions. Oppression, which gets articulated through heterosexist law, provokes not only resistance and cooperation in resistance: it also might trigger the major backlash towards activities that do not fit into the moderate way of doing activism, thus exacerbating the conflict between activists.

## KOSTROMA: A DEVELOPING REGION IN THE RUSSIAN LGBT MOVEMENT

The region of Kostroma is relatively small and is located in the center of the European part of Russia. The city of Kostroma is close to the western border of the region. Despite its central position, it is much more complicated to reach Kostroma than to reach Arkhangelsk. The region of Kostroma does not

26 Essig 1999: 65.

27 Puar 2005.



have many connections with other cities. It has only suburban electric trains that connect them with bigger cities. The case of Kostroma is very interesting, mostly because there was no LGBT activism before the implementation of the legislation, which aimed to ban propaganda of homosexuality. Thus it is a perfect example of the newly established LGBT organization. M, my informer, is currently the only person who is engaged in activism in Kostroma.

The first question I asked my informer, M, who is single-handedly trying to establish the very first LGBT initiative in the city, was: “what did the authorities ban, if there was never any LGBT-related event in Kostroma?” M laughed and acknowledged that this is the question she kept asking herself since she found out about this case, and decided to respond to the legislation. She told me that she found out about the law while browsing the website of the regional administration. She also pointed out that, as there was no local organization to address the issue, she decided that something needs to be done about that.

First action, in which she participated, was in conjunction with the Russian LGBT Network. Members of the Network came to protest the legislation even before it was implemented. She said that about eight people participated in a demonstration against the implementation of the law in front of the City Hall. Only three of them were people from Kostroma. All of them were arrested, yet the administration did not press any charges.

Currently, M said, there is a number of projects she is trying to address. For example, she and some of her friends are trying to monitor public opinion on the issues related to the LGBT community and the new no-propaganda policies. She pointed out that the results of the surveys (which her friends and she conducted) showed that more than 60% of their sample never even heard about the legislation, which, in her opinion shows that people in Kostroma are quite indifferent towards issues related to homosexuality. M revealed she has no idea why the law was implemented. The only explanation she could give was that the government in Kostroma followed the example of other regions:

“I have no idea, why legislation “happened” in our region. It could be because our (regional) government decided to follow the overall trend. Laws were implemented in other regions and our regional administration decided that we should have a similar one. Yet we are a small region, we do not have many gays and lesbians here. We have not had any activism (pause) before me! Not even a gay-club! The

community is small; it is a “kitchen community.”<sup>28</sup> It looks like there are no gays and lesbians in Kostroma.”

Her other aim as an activist is to attract the attention of the media: to find a journalist who would be able to write about the actions and LGBT related issues. Activist said that only one protest that they held received media attention and coverage, yet no one wants to write about LGBT, “especially in a contemporary situation, when everything can be perceived as propaganda.” M also made an attempt to meet with the deputies who were involved in the adoption of this law. She noted she wanted them to elaborate on what propaganda is, as the law does not give any explanation. However, even though she managed to schedule the meeting with some deputies, none of them actually showed up to talk to her. In the six months of her work, M’s biggest achievement is that she managed to file the case to the court. She said that although the judge rejected her request to abolish the law, she is planning to appeal to the courts of higher instances, hoping that it will help to improve the situation with LGBT rights in Kostroma.

M pointed out that, although her surveys showed that the majority (73%) of people in Kostroma displayed negative attitude towards homosexuality and consider it immoral, there is no publicly displayed homophobia or homophobic violence towards the gay community. Interestingly enough, she pointed out that people in Kostroma think there are no gay people in their city: “They say that Kostroma is too poor for gay life.” People in her city are still perpetuating stereotypes about homosexuals being always rich, having fancy cars, living luxurious lives. M claimed that people do not have any other perception of homosexuality because it is hidden in private.



HER OTHER AIM AS AN ACTIVIST IS TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THE MEDIA: TO FIND A JOURNALIST WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO WRITE ABOUT THE ACTIONS AND LGBT RELATED ISSUES

M also drew attention to the fact that without networking with other regions (which is possible only through internet) she would not even know both how to respond to the anti-propaganda legislation and how to become an activist. All the useful information about LGBT activism that she currently has come from various independent sources like activist blogs or from other

<sup>28</sup> “Kitchen community” here means a closeted community, which can only be open about their sexuality in a small number of safe spaces.

LGBT organizations in Russia, which she also managed to contact through the Internet.

“When you decide to engage yourself in civil activism (pause) you barely know what to do. So I contacted some activists from Saint Petersburg and we exchanged e-mails and then they came and sorted out everything for me. They told me what I needed to do and it all became clear!”

However, even though M has been trying to establish an LGBT organization for 6 months, she said that it is still not functioning and she is really confused and does not know what to do. One issue which bothers her is that there are no people who would like to fight for gay rights in Kostroma – it is only her. “If there were more people,” she told me during the interview, “we could share the tasks but currently it is very hard for me to deal with everything almost by myself.” The main problem for current activism in Kostroma is the lack of human resources. M told me that she was hoping that people would join the organization. She was trying to attract members through various social networks, however, homosexuals in Kostroma are not eager become activists:

“People say they didnot feel humiliated or offended by these laws (pause) they told me that activism seems pointless for them; that Russian government would never support gays (pause) maybe in 150 years (pause) it seemed like they expected it to happen. They said they want to keep private things private.”

Gays and lesbians from Kostroma, whom M knows, told her, that they are quite comfortable with their position that nothing has changed for them as a result of the no-propaganda law, as they were a closeted group of people. “Activism implies publicity, but gays in Kostroma do not want to display their sexual orientation publicly – they would rather keep it in private, as they were doing all these years.” Roman Kuhar<sup>29</sup> is talking about this issue when he presents the post-socialist phenomenon of transparent closet. He argues that LGBT people have an understanding that intimate citizenship should be a private matter; and this understanding gets perpetuated by homophobic attitudes. Consequently, M is struggling with establishment of an LGBT community in Kostroma and with her LGBT rights/anti-legislation project. She is currently trying to address these issues with the help of the Russian LGBT Network.

As research shows, the case of Kostroma perfectly exemplifies how the

direct use of power generates resistance. Even though there was no LGBT-related initiative prior to the legislative change, the implementation of the anti-propaganda law forced the activism to emerge. Although the initiative in Kostroma is currently underdeveloped, its appearance was encouraged by the oppressive power directed towards homosexuality. LGBT activism in this region illustrates perfectly how power is inextricably linked with resistance. However, the number of activists remains quite small compared to the number of potentially affected people. This results from the invisibility of homosexuality. As I pointed out earlier in the text, homosexuality is tolerated until it becomes visible. Thus, I argue that this strategy of “not engaging” with the LGBT activism is caused by this threat of stimulated homophobia. This issue refers back to the anxiety, which many activists from various regions share that anti-propaganda legislation will perpetuate homophobia in society. Kostroma as a developing region of LGBT activism, dealing with the lack of human resources in the movement, reveals how legislation is working in a dual way – as provoking resistance and as aggravating the closet. The latter happens as a result of potential amplification of homophobia after the implementation of the anti-propaganda legislation.

## CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates the various ways, in which LGBT activism in the regions changed after the anti-propaganda legislation was implemented. It is important to understand that LGBT activism in Russia extends beyond the borders of capital cities and this research shows that activism is present in Russia’s regions and has its own specificities. Data suggests that after anti-propaganda legislation was implemented in Kostroma, Saint Petersburg, Arkhangelsk and Novosibirsk, activism in these regions encountered changes; however these changes differed from one organization to another. More established organizations, like Vihod and Rakurs experienced an increase in the number of volunteers. Rakurs also had some minor structural changes within the organization as they had to prioritize the work with society. The Region of Kostroma experienced drastic changes as the first organization was established. This research also argues that legislation has different impacts on LGBT people. Some of the cases make it clear that the cardinal shift occurs in people themselves as they start to unite with each other – whether it is volunteers who join the LGBT organization, or LGBT organizations which combine their efforts. However, example of Kostroma clearly suggests that anti-propaganda laws both drag people out of the closet and push them in.

Moreover, these findings also argue that anti-propaganda legislation

is not the only problem that should be addressed – it is a part of a bigger issue, which is homophobia in Russian society. Many activists explicitly argued for a specific perception of the legislation. This understanding was shared by a number of my informers. They noted that the legislation itself is not a problem, but what it entails is. Activists from Rakurs and Pulsar and volunteers from Vihod suggested that anti-propaganda legislation makes homophobia legitimate; that any public display of homosexuality after the implementation of legislation can receive verbal or physical violence. The anti-propaganda legislation is an exhibition of state heterosexism and desire to preserve public sphere as purely heterosexual.<sup>30</sup> Yet the consequences of these laws are much more problematic for LGBT community and activists, as prohibition of propaganda of homosexuality easily works as an amplifier of overall homophobia in society. Anti-propaganda laws discursively legitimize homophobia and this is what poses a major threat to the community.

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photo by M. Party

# WAGING **NONVIOLENT** ACTIVISM

## POST JAN 25: CASE STUDIES OF EGYPTIAN **WOMEN**

NAHED ELTANTAWY

*“The beauty of nonviolence is that,  
in its own way and in its own time,  
it seeks to break the chain reaction  
of evil”*

(King 1967: 62-63)

### article abstract

THE ARAB SPRING REVOLUTIONS THAT SWEEPED THE MIDDLE EAST IN EARLY 2011 ESTABLISHED THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN FACILITATING SPEEDY AND FAR REACHING MEANS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTIVISM. YET THE VERY SAME REVOLUTIONS ALSO DEMONSTRATED THAT THE REAL POWER IS HUMAN POWER. DURING THESE REVOLUTIONS, THE WORLD WITNESSED COURAGEOUS ARAB WOMEN AND MEN, WHO STOOD SIDE BY SIDE, PROTESTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS. I ARGUE THAT THE ARAB SPRING BROUGHT WORLD RECOGNITION AND RESPECT TO THE WOMEN OF THE REGION AND INFUSED THEM WITH COURAGE AND EMPOWERMENT TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS.

THE REVOLUTIONS EMPOWERED WOMEN'S CREATIVITY, ENABLING THEM TO FASHION INNOVATIVE NON-VIOLENT ACTIVISM CAMPAIGNS IN THEIR CONTINUED STRUGGLE AND RESISTANCE AGAINST TRADITIONAL FORMS OF PATRIARCHY, UNFAIRNESS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. THIS ESSAY EXPLORES CASE STUDIES OF EGYPTIAN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT VIA NONVIOLENT MEANS OF STRUGGLE. THE THREE CASE STUDIES I EXAMINE ARE: WOMEN'S REACTION TO THE MILITARY ATTACK ON A FEMALE WHO WAS LATER DUBBED TAHRIR GIRL; WORDS OF WOMEN DOCUMENTARY SERIES, AND A FEMALE-LED GRAFFITI GROUP CALLED FEMININE GRAFFITI. THESE THREE CASE STUDIES EXHIBIT HOW WOMEN EMPLOY PEACEFUL MEANS TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS AND STRUGGLE TO GAIN THE FRUITS OF DEMOCRACY SOUGHT AFTER IN THE ARAB SPRING.

EGYPT; WOMEN; ACTIVISM; SEXUAL HARASSMENT; VIOLENCE; EMPOWERMENT; SOCIAL MEDIA; ARAB SPRING; NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE; GRAFFITI

keywords

The Arab spring revolutions that swept the Middle East in early 2011 established the power of social media in facilitating speedy and far reaching means for collective activism.<sup>1</sup> Yet the very same revolutions also demonstrated that the real power is human power. What is imperative is the ability of millions of people to unite and resist violence and corruption with whatever means possible, be it online, through various social media or off-line, through protests, marches and diverse forms of art.

During these revolutions, the world witnessed courageous Arab women and men, who stood side by side, chanting and protesting for their rights. While some might say the Arab spring empowered women of the region and allowed them to make their voices heard. I argue that the Arab Spring brought world recognition and respect to the women of the region and infused them with courage and empowerment to claim their rights. The revolutions empowered women's creativity, enabling them to fashion innovative nonviolent activism campaigns in their continued struggle and

1 Eltantawy, Wiest 2011.



resistance against traditional forms of patriarchy, unfairness and violence against women.

This essay explores case studies of Egyptian women's empowerment via nonviolent means of struggle. The aim is to analyze how women employ peaceful means to fight for their rights and struggle to gain the fruits of democracy sought after in the Arab Spring. The three case studies I examine are: Women's reaction to the military attack on a female who was later dubbed Tahrir girl; Words of Women documentary series, and a female-led graffiti group called Feminine Graffiti. Together, these three cases studies exhibit women's empowerment, courage and creativity, which enable them to utilize peaceful means to resist patriarchy, violence and dictatorship.

## EGYPTIAN WOMEN & ACTIVISM

While some in the west might assume that the Arab Spring brought voice to the women of the region, analysts believe otherwise. Al-Ali asserts, "In light of western media representations and widespread perceptions among the public in western countries that women in the region did not just appear on the scene in 2011, we should clarify: for decades they had been active members in trade unions, political opposition parties and more informal networks and organizations that were all instrumental in the recent political developments."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, Egyptian women have a long history of activism. The 1919 revolution is one of the prominent events where women participated in political activism during nationwide protests against British colonizers.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, for years, Egyptian women have been engaged in diverse activism that includes advocacy, research and scholarship, offering services, and working via nongovernmental organizations on various women's issues.<sup>4</sup>

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THE REVOLUTIONS EMPOWERED WOMEN'S CREATIVITY, ENABLING THEM TO FASHION INNOVATIVE NONVIOLENT ACTIVISM CAMPAIGNS

<sup>2</sup> Al-Ali 2012: 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed 1992; Baron 1994; Badran 1995; Al-Ali 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Guenena, Wassef 1999.

Hence, it comes as no surprise that Egyptian women were at the forefront of the Jan25 2011 revolution. For 18 days, they stood side by side with men, chanting, carrying posters, leading marches and utilizing social media tools to help bring down a 30-year dictatorship. "The prolific online and offline political activities of Arab women over the last several months have contributed a new chapter to the history of both Arab feminism and the region," argues S. Khamis.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, despite their great efforts, Egyptian women have yet to reap the fruits of their activism. History demonstrates that it is not uncommon to see women sidelined in the aftermath of a revolution, as the men reap the gains and women, along with their rights and demands, are ignored or outright violated<sup>6</sup> This was the case following the Jan25 revolution in Egypt, where women were not involved in many of the negotiations following the revolution; women's demands were ignored, and no women were invited to join the Revolutionary Council that was formed after the revolution. Additionally, many women who joined protests after the downfall of Mubarak, claimed that they were sexually harassed, ridiculed and, in some cases, the women were violently attacked in public.<sup>7</sup> Despite their significant absence from post-revolution democratic negotiations, I argue that women did indeed gain from their experience in Jan25. The women gained confidence, empowerment as well as knowledge on nonviolent activism.

## METHODOLOGY

This essay examines how forms of nonviolent resistance, as described by researchers and analysts, are applied in the digital age. I specifically examine resistance by Egyptian women, through an in-depth analysis of three case studies. The essay surveys the women's use of social media, traditional media as well as rallies to communicate their anger and to shame the Egyptian army by sending a clear message that "The women of Egypt are a red line." I apply Baxter & Jack's multiple-case study methodology<sup>8</sup> to analyze and explain the various forms of online and offline resistance adopted by female activists in the three case studies. The aim is evaluate the creative forms of communication employed by these women in their efforts to shame the Egyptian army and create online and offline communities of resistance to the post-revolution military rule.

<sup>5</sup> Khamis 2011: 748.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ali 2012; Esfandiari 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Ali 2012; Esfandiari 2012; Moghadam 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Baxter & Jack 2008.



Additionally, I apply prominent theories on non-violent resistance to identify the methods of nonviolent activism employed by these women and their effectiveness. Nonviolence has been practiced and promoted over the years in various parts of the world. For Gandhi, nonviolence is the absence of destruction and of “the desire to destroy.”<sup>9</sup> In his efforts to turn the Indian masses against British rule in India, Gandhi encouraged nonviolence, which for him was a commitment and a way of life based on his religious beliefs.<sup>10</sup> Gandhi, therefore, viewed violence and coercion as acts of destruction, be it physical or mental.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Martin Luther King was also committed to nonviolence, based on his Christian beliefs. In his struggle to win more rights for blacks, King believed nonviolent means would reap more political and economic gains than the use of violence.<sup>12</sup> In his 1967 speech, *Where Do We Go From Here?* King says:

“Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can’t establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can’t murder hate through violence. Darkness cannot put out darkness; only light can do that.”<sup>13</sup>

For Gene Sharp “Nonviolent struggle is a much more complex and varied means of struggle than is violence.”<sup>14</sup> It is a struggle that involves psychological, political, economic and social resistance. Sharp outlines 198 tools of nonviolent resistance that all fall under three broad categories: protest & persuasion, noncooperation and intervention. The three case studies I analyze in this study fall under Sharp’s first category of nonviolent protest and persuasion. Out of 54 tools that Sharp lists as various tools of protest and persuasion, I find that Egyptian women apply tools of communicating with a wider audience (using slogans, banners, posters and other forms of displayed communication); they employ symbolic public acts (displaying flags, wearing symbols like the stickers on their forehead or arm with slogans or anti-military messages; or using paint as a protest), and they employ processional tools, such as parades and marches.

Thus, for each case study examined, I ask: What is the purpose of the women’s activism in each case? What are the nonviolent resistance tools applied? How effective are these nonviolent campaigns?

9 Juergensmeyer 2005: 27.

10 Nojeim 2004.

11 Juergensmeyer 2005.

12 Nojeim 2004.

13 King 1967.

14 Sharp 2011: 30.

## CASE 1: FATAT EL TAHRIR – TAHRIR GIRL

“Many political groups and virtually all governments operate on the unexamined assumption that the means of last resort and greatest effectiveness is violence, especially in a military capacity” argues Sharp.<sup>15</sup> This was the case in Egypt when the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took over in February 2011 after the fall of Mubarak’s 30-year dictatorial rule. Between February 2011 and June 2012, which is the period of SCAF rule, Egypt witnessed multiple incidents of brutal violence by military officers against civilians, and more recently, specifically targeting female activists.<sup>16</sup>

Yet one precise incident stunned millions of women across Egypt. This was a scene from Tahrir Square on Sunday, December 18, 2011, where a woman, clad in a black robe and matching black veil, was dragged to the ground by Egyptian military officers. The semiconscious woman lay on the ground, as two soldiers pull her limp arms above her head. Her black abaya was pushed above her head, revealing a bare stomach and a blue bra, as a third soldier stomped his foot into her ribs and bare stomach.

Millions of viewers worldwide have watched the YouTube video of the brutal beating of this young woman, who quickly became a symbol for female revolutionaries across Egypt. The woman in the blue bra was hailed a heroine and dubbed on Twitter and Facebook as *Set el banat* (the best of all girls) and *Fatat el Tahrir* (Tahrir girl). The blue bra attack was a “turning point in our history as women in Egypt” argues Morayef.<sup>17</sup> The attack confirmed how women continued to be a target for the authorities, even after the fall of Mubarak’s dictatorship.<sup>18</sup> The incident was not the last, as many other women were later beaten and mistreated by military personnel.

Angered by the attack and by public reaction, where the blame was mostly on the woman and not the soldiers who attacked her, on December 20, thousands of women led rallies in various cities across Egypt to send a loud and clear message to SCAF – “The women of Egypt are a red line.”<sup>19</sup> The rally in Cairo alone included between 6,000 to 10,000 Egyptian women and at least 2,000 men.<sup>20</sup> The men formed a human shield around the women to protect them as they marched the streets of Cairo. During this

15 Sharp 2005: 1.

16 Amnesty International 2012.

17 Morayef 2013.

18 In 2005, Mubarak’s thugs sexually harassed and beat up women who took part in anti-Mubarak protests (Morayef 2013).

19 Johnson, Harding 2011.

20 El Deeb 2011.

countrywide rally, women from all walks of life were seen holding posters and symbols. Examples include two posters of torn female clothing, symbolizing the stripping of Tahrir girl's black garment. These female protesters also employed symbolic colors; many women held the same red poster that read "Soldiers: Egypt's girls are the red line."<sup>21</sup> These female-led parades marched throughout Cairo, Alexandria as well as other major cities, calling on other women and men to join them. Some of these women had yellow stickers on their foreheads or arms that read "down down with the military." Many women carried the Egyptian flags, while others carried newspaper clippings or hand drawn portraits of Tahrir girl. The women also used social media to plan the demonstrations and to document and disseminate information, pictures and videos of this event.



A PERFORMANCE BY THE FEMALE MINORITY,  
THAT IS ABLE TO MAKE VIOLENT INCIDENT  
MORE PUBLIC AND ENFORCE CHANGE

This case highlights the diverse tools of protest and persuasion cleverly utilized by Egyptian women to voice anger at SCAF's violence against women. One could argue that the combined use of marches, chants, posters, symbols as well as colors, works to create a nonviolent performance; a performance by the female minority, that is able to make this violent incident more public and enforce change. It is not uncommon for resistance to take the form of "community-based, identity-based, and minoritarian performances," where such performances are able to transform "the personal into the political (...)."<sup>22</sup> This nonviolent performance was effective in publicly shaming the military. Whereas the military was previously viewed as a respectful power with the sole purpose of protecting the public, these female activists succeeded in shaming the military for violently attacking and humiliating members of the public.

Not only did these women succeed in shaming SCAF, but their nonviolent activism forced the army into issuing an apology, on the same day the protests took place. In SCAF's 91st communiqué, the officials said: "The army council deeply apologizes to the great Egyptian women (...)" and "We would like to stress on our full respect

for Egyptian women and their rights to demonstrate and participate in the political life."<sup>23</sup>

## CASE 2: WORDS OF WOMEN

Women's activism comes in many shapes and forms. The use of documentary is one form of nonviolent resistance utilized by Egyptian activists post Jan25. Words of Women is a web-based documentary series that aims to both empower women and document their stories through individual interviews with diverse Egyptian women. The series offer a number of 12-minute-long profiles on Egyptian women from all walks of life. "The women talk about their personal lives and work before January 25 and their participation in the events and where she stands today."<sup>24</sup> The aim is to highlight these diverse women's roles in the revolution, their struggles and the impact of the Jan25 revolution on their lives. The series are directed by Leil-Zahra Mortada, who began the project in 2011.<sup>25</sup>

The series focuses on women from diverse religious, educational, social and political backgrounds. In one episode, audiences are introduced to a housewife and mother, who says that she joined the revolution following the undemocratic arrest and imprisonment of her son during the revolution. She explains how she went from having no interest in politics to now being fully engaged and that she is not afraid to join any revolution and make demands. Another documentary in the series focuses on a young lawyer and political activist, whereas another introduces audiences to a student who had no relation or interest in politics until she attended her very first demonstration and then she could not give it up. The series also presents a Christian 64-year-old retired museum manager in Upper Egypt. She tells the audience that she was an activist in the 1970s and that she joined the Jan 25 revolution after her children informed her of the Facebook call for a revolution. She was very skeptical at first, but said joining the revolution brought her back to life. She tells viewers that, being surrounded by other protesters, injected her with courage and energy to try to create change. Another of these women is a conservative 20-year-old Muslim college student who became active in politics and demonstrations to fight the social, economic and political injustice. She cites the example of the brutal torture and death of Khaled Said at the hands of police officers and the extreme poverty that many Egyptians are forced into as two main forces that drove her to activism.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Maher 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Elsayed 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Words of Women Facebook Page.

<sup>26</sup> Khaled Said was a young Egyptian man from Alexandria who was brutally beaten to

<sup>21</sup> Abd El-Latef 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Schechner 2002: 261-265.

The documentary series is promoted by the creators through the group's Facebook page, as well as through other social media tools such as Twitter. These female activists, therefore, employ social media to voice women's resistance and the diverse struggles that brought them all together in the Jan 25 revolution. They also utilize social media to share updates on new additions to the documentary series. Not only are these activists utilizing digital forms of activism to tell the stories of Egypt's diverse women and how Jan25 impacted their lives, but they also document the women's contribution to the Arab Spring. The activist's poster for the series reads "Herstory... to remind history," thus confirming this idea that they are documenting in history the women's contributions to the 18 days of nonviolent protests that brought down the Mubarak regime. According to the Facebook page for Words of Women:

"It is history that tends in most cases to ostracize the participation of women and keep them in the shadow while highlighting the participation of men and attributing leading roles exclusively to them. This is why we are documenting Herstory."<sup>27</sup>

In one interview, one of the creators of the documentary series explains that the project aims to offer accurate historical documentation of women's role in the revolution. The activist also explains that the project aims to empower all women.<sup>28</sup> Thus, by offering honest and diverse stories on how different women contributed to the revolution, the documentary series records in history that women were a major power in the revolution, illustrating women's diverse roles (protester, reporter, citizen journalist, graffiti artist, first-aid volunteer). Through women's voices and social media, the creators of Words of Women are able to resist male dominance and ensure that no one can deny their significant contribution to the revolution.

Activists around the globe increasingly utilize the Internet to mobilize people and also to produce and disseminate media content.<sup>29</sup> With the absence of mainstream media coverage of women's central role in the revolution, these activists introduced a new media alternative. According to the informational documentary 10 Tactics for Turning Information into Action, one central tactic is amplifying personal stories.<sup>30</sup> "This tactic is

death by police officers in public. Many Egyptians believe his brutal murder was the last straw that led to Jan25.

27 Words of Women Facebook Page.

28 El Sayed 2012.

29 Lievrouw 2011.

30 10 Tactics for Turning Information into Action website.

useful when people affected by the issue are not being consulted, and as a way to give an issue depth that resonates with the target audience."<sup>31</sup> In this case, female activists are utilizing video, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter to create and distribute videos that spread Egyptian women's untold stories on the revolution, given the absence of such stories in mainstream media.

### CASE 3: GRAFFITI HARIMI

The last case I examine is that of Graffiti Harimi (Female Graffiti), a campaign launched by a majority-female activist group called NooNeswa who stencil graffiti of prominent Egyptian women as a form of resistance. These activists say they want to "reclaim" women's public space.<sup>32</sup> They use the public sphere to create empowering images and messages for women, and they rely on social media to spread the word on their campaign. According to NooNeswa's Facebook Page, "Through graffiti, the campaign will tackle and invert negative social ideas/stereotypes, and instead, build images that are positive and powerful to honor the women of our society."<sup>33</sup> In an Associated Press interview, one of the campaign artists said the idea came about as these activists realized that their public space was shrinking following Jan25. She specifically mentioned how female activists had been violated by military and police during and after the 18-day revolution. Violations included virginity tests of female revolutionists, imprisonment as well as beatings. These abuses inspired these graffiti artists to resist such political and social injustices and voice their demands through their public wall stencils. The artists hope their graffiti will encourage other Egyptian women to find their voice and will bring public attention to their social and political problems. "We are not here to ask for our rights, we are here to take them ourselves," declared Graffiti Harimi activist Merna Thomas in the Associated Press interview.<sup>34</sup>

Graffiti Harimi images are mostly images of women, including images of legendary Egyptian artists, with each image accompanied by a powerful quote. For example, one graffiti image displays the face of legendary Egyptian singer, Umm Kulthum, and it includes a verse from one of her songs "give me my freedom, set my hands free." Below the verse, the artist adds, "There's no such thing as 'Men Only.'" Another graffiti shows a renowned deceased actress and performer, Soad Hosni, with a verse from one of her songs that reads, "A girl is like a boy" to confirm the idea that there's no difference

31 10 Tactics for Turning Information into Action website.

32 Khalil 2012.

33 NooNeswa Facebook Page.

34 AP Making their mark in Egypt 2012.



between men and women. Other images include a stencil of three female faces: one completely covered, one with a headscarf and one uncovered. The caption reads, “Don’t categorize me.” Another example is a stencil of one of the pre-revolution female activists, Wedad al-Demerdash, who was the first activist to organize a workers strike in Mahala in 2006. The caption with al-Demerdash’s stencil reads “Egypt gave birth to women” as in Egypt gave birth to great women such as al-Demerdash.<sup>35</sup>



THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT JAN25 EMPOWERED  
WOMEN IN THEIR YEARS OF STRUGGLE  
AGAINST PATRIARCHY AND INJUSTICE

Sharp includes paint as a form of nonviolent protest, among the nonviolent activism forms of protest and persuasion.<sup>36</sup> Thus, through this nonviolent art of graffiti, Egyptian female activists are able to reclaim their public space and impose their messages across the walls of Egypt. They are able to simplify their demands with images and quotes that are easily comprehended by their target public audience. In his analysis of street art in Hispanic countries, Chaffee argues that street art is characterized by its universal reach and is a significant medium of communication, given its ability to inform and persuade publics. He defines street art to include diverse forms of political communication, including graffiti, murals, wall paintings as well as posters. Chaffee further contends that such art gives voice to the voiceless, appeals to the public’s emotions and political beliefs and “breaks the conspiracy of silence.”<sup>37</sup> Truman extends this argument, saying that the essential purpose of graffiti is to “disrupt public visual sphere and draw our attention to the ways in which public space is constructed and controlled (...).”<sup>38</sup> This is what NooNeswa activists are able to do with their art; they are able to give voice to all Egyptian women; they are able to appeal to the public’s emotion and impact their political beliefs, and they are also able to disrupt the public sphere to impose their messages.

Another form of nonviolent activism that further aids the activists is *détournement*. According to McGaw, *détournement* is the “turning around” of images or ideas from the dominant culture through appropriation and superimposition of revolutionary ideas or slogans.<sup>39</sup> This includes rewording

35 All images are available on NooNeswa’s Facebook Page.

36 Sharp 2011.

37 Chaffee 1993: 4.

38 Truman 2010: 3.

39 McGaw 2008: 222.

conversations by comic strip characters, modifying a store sign or creating rebellious collages from recognizable government or commercial images.<sup>40</sup> NooNeswa activists take images of famous Egyptian females and turn them around by adding messages of empowerment. They also rework verses from songs, such as the quote “There’s no such thing as ‘Men Only,’” which they added at the end of the verse from Umm Kulthum’s song.

## CONCLUSIONS

Sharp asserts that in the past, political campaigns relied mostly on protests and strikes as methods of resistance, which he argues is an error. He contends that a more effective tactic is to use diverse tools of activism to disperse resistance.<sup>41</sup> Research confirms that diverse nonviolence campaigns are, in fact, powerful and effective tools of resistance. Through nonviolent action, activists are able to enhance their legitimacy; recruit more participants; make it more difficult for a dictatorial regime to respond to peaceful resistance with violence and inhibit the control over social media content.<sup>42</sup>

This essay demonstrates how Egyptian women are utilizing diverse nonviolent means of resistance to voice opinion, contribute to political activism and enforce change. The three case studies analyzed exhibit how women, whose opinions and concerns are traditionally viewed as private, are able to make the private more public. They use everything from rallies, posters, protests, symbols, art and media to bring their private concerns to the public sphere.

There is no doubt that Jan25 empowered women in their years of struggle against patriarchy and injustice. The revolution infused women with courage and voice. Women are no longer afraid to make concerns or demands more public. Whether it is their uncensored exposing of shameful military transgressions, or recording women’s revolutionary history, or their outspoken graffiti demands of freedom and equality, women can no longer be silenced. “Women have grown aware of the power they can wield; they can no longer be relegated to their homes and to traditional roles.”<sup>43</sup> In sum, women have realized their potential as empowered nonviolent activists and will continue to amp up their long-muted voices via innovative peaceful activism to reclaim social and political gains reaped during Jan25.

40 Harold 2007

41 Sharp 2011

42 Sharp 2011; Stephan, Chenoweth 2008.

43 Esfandiari 2013: 4.

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photo by S. Carr

# UKRAINIAN EUROMAIDAN PROTESTS AND THE NEW MEDIA

NATALYA RYABINSKA

## article abstract

IN LATE 2013, EIGHT YEARS AFTER THE ORANGE REVOLUTION UKRAINE HAS AGAIN BECOME THE SITE OF MASS PROTESTS, THIS TIME AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON NOVEMBER 21 TO STOP THE EUROPEAN UNION INTEGRATION AND END THE PURSUIT OF AN ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT. THE NEW MEDIA PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE PROTESTS FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. THIS PAPER IS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION ON HOW THESE NEW MEDIA WERE USED DURING THE SO-CALLED EUROMAIDAN PROTESTS IN UKRAINE IN NOVEMBER 2013 – FEBRUARY 2014 AND HOW THE PROTESTS, IN THEIR TURN, CONTRIBUTED TO THE POPULARITY OF THE NEW MEDIA IN THE COUNTRY.

## keywords

INTERNET, UKRAINE, SOCIAL MEDIA, DEMOCRATISATION, EUROMAIDAN, PROTESTS

In late 2013, eight years after the Orange Revolution Ukraine again became the site of mass protests, this time against the government's decision on November 21 to stop European Union integration and end the pursuit of an association agreement. The new media played a key role in the protests from the very beginning: the Facebook post of a popular journalist Mustafa Nayem gave rise to the first rally on the night of November 21. In this post the journalist, known for his sharp criticism of the authorities, was somewhat doubtful whether the Facebook users who were so active in expressing their anger about the government's depriving the nation of a European future were ready to protest against these actions also offline. He proposed to go to the Kyiv's Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in case at least 1000 of his Facebook friends and followers support this idea by commenting or sharing it online. When in just one hour more than 700 commentaries confirming the people's readiness to protest appeared under his post, Mustafa posted on his timeline: "near the monument of Independence at 22h.30. In the result, more than 2000 Ukrainians gathered for the first protest action on the night of November 21, starting thus the so-called EuroMaidan protests, which still continue at the moment of writing this paper in January 2014.

The paper is a contribution to the discussion on how the new media influenced the so-called EuroMaidan protests in Ukraine and how the protests, in their turn, contributed to the popularity of the new media in the country.

It should be noted that the political development of the new media in Ukraine has a comparatively long history for a country where new communication and information technologies started to develop intensely only in the last decade and where Internet penetration was less than 1% only 13 years ago.<sup>1</sup> This history began already in 2000 when the journalist Georgiy Gongadze founded an opposition online paper called "Ukrainska Pravda" criticizing the regime of the President Leonid Kuchma. A particular boost to the political Internet's development was given by the dramatic events around the journalist: his mysterious murder in September 2000 and public accusations of the President's involvement in the affair, which started a 'Kuchmagate' scandal (also known as a 'Cassette scandal') and provoked a political crisis, with mass protests in Kiev from 15 December 2000 to 9 March 2001. The lack of coverage of these events in Ukraine's traditional media gave the first opportunity for the new media (mainly the Internet) to develop as an authoritative alternative source of information in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing this paper the Internet penetration in Ukraine was 34% (FOTN 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Krasnoboka, Semetko 2006.

In 2010 its average daily readership was already around 100 000 visitors daily,<sup>3</sup> which was comparable to the circulation of the most popular dailies in Ukraine.

It is remarkable that *Ukrainska Pravda* again abruptly grew in popularity on November 21, 2013 when the Ukrainians learned that their government decided to cease preparations to sign the association agreement with the European Union: according to digital marketing expert Maksym Savanevskyi, the number of its visitors nearly doubled that day, reaching 550,000 readers per day.<sup>4</sup> This increase was in part conditioned by the splash of activity in social networks: Savanevskyi noted that *Ukrainska Pravda* experienced, among others, a ten-fold increase in traffic from both Twitter and Facebook. Generally, on November 21 and 22 Ukrainian online news media registered a record traffic in their whole history.<sup>5</sup>

Importantly, unlike the Kuchmagate political crisis, the EuroMaidan events were widely reported not only on the online news websites but also in social media. The latter have played an enormous role in providing urgent news about the ongoing protests. Immediately on the day of the first pro-European rally on 21 November the official EuroMaidan Facebook page was created, and garnered more than 76,000 subscribers just in the first eight days and in such a way set a new record in Ukrainian Internet.<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, during the first days of the demonstrations the page appeared in the top 20 of Ukrainian Facebook pages and became the most “talked about,” with almost 110,000 people who commented, liked or shared the page’s content.<sup>7</sup> The significant sources of the news about EuroMaidan were also the Facebook accounts of the Ukraine’s famous journalists, public activists as well as some of oppositional politicians. People who actively engaged in the protests posted pictures, video or text messages directly from the Kyiv’s Independence Square as well as from other locations of the protests, and this was an important factor in mobilizing the rest of the society.

A significant role in informing various audiences about the EuroMaidan protests was also played by Twitter. Pablo Barberá and Megan Metzger from the New York University who conducted a research of the use of social media in the first two weeks of Ukrainian EuroMaidan rallies pointed out that though Twitter usage related to the protests was much lower

than that of Facebook (which can be generally explained by relative low popularity of Twitter in Ukraine), many people joined Twitter in the first days of the protests to communicate about EuroMaidan.<sup>8</sup> The highest spike on the Figure 1 corresponds to extraordinary big amount of Twitter accounts created in the first days of the protests, especially on Sunday, December 1, the day of the largest rally in the initial stage of EuroMaidan events.

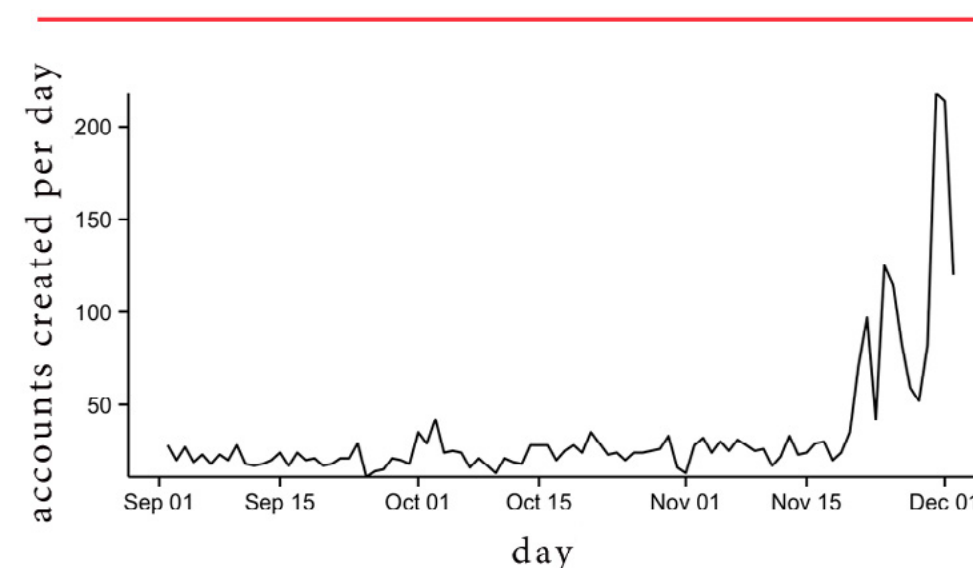


Figure 1. Ukrainian protests and the creation of new twitter accounts (Data: NYU Social Media and Political Participation (smapp.nyu.edu) lab; Figure: Pablo Barberá and Megan Metzger)

From the very beginning EuroMaidan became one of the most popular topics on Twitter. For example, in the first days of December 2013, 1 in 1000 twits in the world was with a hashtag ‘EuroMaidan,’ whereas on December 1 even one in 200 twits was about the Ukrainian protests. The Barberá&Metzger’s observations showed that many of Twitter users posting about the protests in Ukraine were writing in English. The researchers assumed that this is because unlike Facebook, which was used mainly for protests-related communications inside Ukraine, Twitter was utilized as a tool to convey information about the protest to the rest of the world and to draw the attention of the international community.

3 Dutsyk 2010.

4 Savanevskyi 2014.

5 Savanevskyi 2014.

6 Savanevskyi 2014.

7 Kapliuk 2013.

8 Barberá, Metzger 2013.



## NOT ONLY INFORMATION

However the role of social media in the EuroMaidan protests was not constrained to information sharing. They were also widely used for organization and coordination of protesters' actions. For example, the official page of EuroMaidan on Facebook was the site where protesters discussed plans of future actions, warned against using violence, shared advice on how to deal with police forces and avoid being provoked by government agents. There were also different posts with flyers to print and distribute around the city, maps of places with free tea and open access to Wi-fi, information about time and place of various protest actions such as pickets or marches, and much more.

Additionally, a number of Facebook pages was created for coordinating various activities to help EuroMaidan. A special Facebook page (EuroMaidan SOS) was created to provide legal assistance to protesters who were detained and/or accused of breaking Ukrainian laws. It gathered information about victims of police beatings, government pressure and detentions, and served for organization of various protest actions near the courts and police offices where the detained protesters were brought to or prosecuted. The next web-based initiative was the site galas.com.ua where, on the one hand, the protesters could place information about their urgent needs (such as warm clothes, food, medicines or housing for demonstrators from outside Kyiv), and on the other, the people ready to help announced which kind of assistance were they ready to grant. The authors of galas.com.ua created an interactive map of Kyiv making it possible for protesters to find the kinds of help they need in different districts of the capital city. A separate Facebook page was created for the needs of medical volunteers who came to the Independent Square almost from the very start of EuroMaidan and organized free medical aid to EuroMaidan participants. There also appeared a special page on Facebook called 'Get to Maidan' serving for people's self-organization around reaching the Maidan: on that page the car owners from different districts of Kyiv driving to Maidan offered their help in bringing people to the protest locations. This was especially useful in the moments when the Maidan was attacked by riot police in the middle of the night. In Twitter the same function was served by communications under the hashtag #gettomaidan.

People at regional EuroMaidans also coordinated their actions via social media. For example, when after the start of clashes between demonstrators and police officers on Kyiv's Hrushevskoho Street the activists in Lviv blocked the local Interior Ministry troops and riot police from exiting

their bases and going to Kyiv, Facebook was used by them for mobilizing and repositioning their resources (people and vehicles) dependent on where they were most needed.

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WHAT IS PARTICULAR ABOUT SOME ONLINE TV CHANNELS IS THAT THEY GATHERED RATHER STRONG TEAMS OF JOURNALISTS READY TO WORK FOR LITTLE MONEY OR EVEN FREE OF CHARGE

The Ukrainian protests in late 2013 - early 2014 significantly contributed to the development and popularity of a new phenomena in the Ukrainian Internet and online television. Live streams of the protests by several online TV channels, which have recently appeared in Ukraine, became a significant alternative to the news of traditional television channels extensively controlled by the government or the oligarchs loyal to the authorities. What is particular about some online TV channels is that they gathered rather strong teams of journalists ready to work for little money or even free of charge. This is because many Ukrainian journalists who used to work for the country's largest TV channels had to leave because of patronizing censorship (by the government and the stations' owners, the powerful oligarchs), which intensified in the years of Victor Yanukovich's Presidency. One of the bright success stories of the online TV in Ukraine is the project Hromadske.TV ("Public TV"), which started in June 2013 and planned to go on air in late November with one show per week. The EuroMaidan protests changed these plans and the channel had to start broadcasting on November 22 for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Professional journalists who were soon joined by numerous volunteers reported live from the site of the protests with the help of a few iPhones which, thanks to an app, they used to film events themselves and send recordings directly to the studio. They also debated current Ukrainian events in the studio with the invited guests, whose selection was aimed at representing the views of different social and political groups in Ukraine.

All of this has brought Hromadske rather great popularity. For example, already in the first days of the protests the number of the viewers simultaneously watching the channel reached 100 thousands.<sup>9</sup> The general amount of people who watched Hromadske on November 24, when tens of thousands Ukrainians went to manifestations in Kyiv, was as much as 761 380.<sup>10</sup> A recent survey of EuroMaidan protest participants by Olga Onuch

9 Minchenko 2013.

10 Teleprostir 2013.



and Tamara Martsenyuk funded by British Academy showed that 51 percent of them got information about protests from Internet news sites, such as Spilno TV and Hromadske TV.<sup>11</sup> The use of new technologies and voluntary work of many specialists helps the channel to exist without a support from Ukrainian politicians and oligarchs. The station is financed by donations from inside and outside of the country.<sup>12</sup>

## WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA CAN AND CANNOT DO ABOUT THE PROTESTS

As one can assume basing on the above, the role of the new media in the Ukrainian rallies in November 2013 - February 2014 was essential. Does it mean that the development of information and communication technologies is itself a factor enhancing democratization? A number of researchers participating in the debate about the role of new communication and information technologies in general and social networks in particular in democratization of the countries with authoritarian and hybrid regimes outline that the new technologies themselves cannot impact the politics and the societies in these countries. For example, Denis Volkov from Levada Center in Russia demonstrates that the young, well-educated, and well-off Russian urbanites regularly use the whole variety of Internet resources (forums, blogs, networks) but they go on the Internet for entertainment and interaction and not for participating in political life, engaging in public protests or even reading political news.<sup>13</sup> He explains this partly by an inability of opposition political parties and the so-called non-system opposition to offer ideas, proposals and values, which would be attractive for the Russian Internet community. A similar conclusion, though with regard to a different context and obstacles, was made by Marc Lynch from George Washington University, who studied the effects of social media in the Arab spring. He pointed out that social media cannot substitute the hard and patient party work or grassroots organizing.<sup>14</sup> His findings correspond to the ideas of other scholars who state that while the Internet can amplify political involvement, it is the underlying cause or organization that remains central to the activism.<sup>15</sup>

11 Onuch 2014.

12 In 2013 the US Embassy and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands provided the start-up funds of about 1 mln UAH (around 142 thousands USD) for the station. They were spent to purchase the station's basic equipment and getting the website running.

13 Volkov 2012.

14 Lynch 2013.

15 See for example:: Jensen 2006, Lusoli, Ward 2006.

If we analyze Ukrainian protests of late 2013 early 2014 in the frameworks of these ideas we will see first, that oppositional politicians in Ukraine, similar to their Russian counterparts appeared to be generally unable to motivate people (including the Internet community) to engage in political activities, neither via online nor offline methods. What is representative is that the MPs from Udar, one of the major opposition parties in the Ukrainian Parliament, instead of intensifying their activity in social networks during the EuroMaidan declared that they close their accounts because of the threat of their hacking. Indeed, the e-mail and social networks accounts of several oppositional politicians were attacked by hackers in the early days of the protests. However, a mere closure of Internet accounts was not an adequate reaction for these events on the part of the politicians, because it limited their communications with potential followers. Importantly, the leaders and prominent members of other main opposition parties, Batkyvshchina and Svoboda, were not especially active online during the protests as well, except of very rare instances.<sup>16</sup>



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES WERE USED NOT ONLY BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF EUROMAIDAN RALLIES, BUT ALSO BY THEIR OPPONENTS FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES

In contrast to them, the representatives of Ukrainian civil society-journalists, editors of Internet-based opposition media, activists from non-governmental organizations, artists, cultural figures and scholars appeared to have the ideas to mobilize wide circles of the society for the protests and hold up the confidence among people. They were also active in the social media for quite a long period preceding the EuroMaidan events, and had thousands of friends and followers on Facebook and on other Internet platforms. Therefore, when these known and trusted people wrote in their online accounts "I am going to Maidan," this worked as a catalytic agent for people's mobilization for the demonstrations.

However, if it wasn't for the reversal of pro-European course by the Ukrainian government, the protests would never have erupted. And yet, a big part of Ukrainian society got furious about this decision and thus had significant reasons for going to the protests on Maidan on November 21, 2013. The idea of a pro-European foreign policy course defined by the Ukrainian Government's decision this day was supported by at least 42% of

16 Savanevskyi 2014.

Ukrainians, and according to Irina Bekeshkina from Democratic Initiatives Foundation, their amount steadily outnumbered the share of the supporters of integration with the Russia-led Customs Union since 2012.<sup>17</sup> This was a strong motivating force for demonstrators to engage in the rallies in first days of EuroMaidan. As for the chief reasons, which mobilized Ukrainians for the protests at their second stage, initiated by the brutal beating of students by the police on the night of November 30, they were even more ponderable. This time people were moved by an outrage at the police's violence as well as by the desire to change life in Ukraine. The opinion polls conducted by the Democratic Initiative on the Kyiv's EuroMaidan on December, 7-8 showed that as much as 70% of people went to the EuroMaidan because of the brutal beating of demonstrators, and 50% of protesters explained their engagement with the protests by their willingness to change life in Ukraine.<sup>18</sup> To this we can add that opinion polls conducted in Ukraine in the weeks preceding the protests showed that more than 60% of Ukrainians believed that the developments in Ukraine were heading in the wrong direction.<sup>19</sup> Besides, around 80% of Ukrainians believed that their state authorities were corrupt and that corruption was widespread in the judiciary and law enforcement.<sup>20</sup> We can assume that this dissatisfaction with the authorities was the underlying cause for people's protests, which were triggered by the government's actions (initially – the decision to cease preparations to sign the association agreement with the EU, then – the unwarranted use of force against peaceful demonstrators, and after January 16 – the adoption of a package of undemocratic legislation by the Ukrainian Parliament). The Internet and social media only significantly facilitated the process of people's self-organization around these protests and helped them activate and develop the already existing social networks as well as create new ones. Here we can agree with Pablo Barberá and Megan Metzger's conclusion that social media served as an important strategic tool for the EuroMaidan protests in Ukraine.<sup>21</sup>

It is worth mentioning that digital technologies were used not only by the participants of EuroMaidan rallies, but also by their opponents for their own purposes. The latter used them chiefly for discrediting the protest actions as well as for intimidating the protesters. In particular, social media were applied for sharing the rumors that people participating in the rallies were paid. For example, according to Savanevskyi, some Twitter users used

the #EuroMaidan hashtag on Twitter to promote the message "I was invited to EuroMaidan. Was offered Hr 100 (for participation). But I won't go. I'd better go with my wife to the theatre." Funny enough, some of the people who twitted this message were women.<sup>22</sup>

Besides, social media were also used to discredit the EuroMaidan leaders and supporters. For instance, in December 2013 the social networking platforms became the tools of a smear campaign targeting a popular journalist, prominent public speaker and a member of the public committee of EuroMaidan Vitaliy Portnikov. The campaign was based on a video containing intimate and illegally obtained images of the journalist. The video was distributed via the Internet.

Digital technologies were also used for intimidation of EuroMaidan participants. For example, soon after December 16 when the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the law foreseeing prison terms of up to 15 years for "mass violation" of public order, the protesters started receiving SMS-warnings 'Dear subscriber, you are registered as a participant of riots.'

## CONCLUSION

The analyses of EuroMaidan protests in the press often outline that their characteristic feature is a peculiar self-organization. Nadia Diuk, a vice president of the National Endowment for Democracy, has already called them "Ukraine's Self-Organizing Revolution." Indeed, the EuroMaidan, which in fact consists of a wide spectrum of activities from mass demonstrations, blockage of government buildings, picketing luxury residences of the Ukraine's chief office holders and ensuring security of participants of the rallies to public lectures at Free University of the Maidan is well organized and coordinated. This organization and coordination, as well as the people's mobilization for the above diverse activities (not only in Kyiv but also in a number of Ukrainian cities and towns) is much indebted to social media as a tool of social networking and community building. Besides, the social media together with online news media significantly contributed to the spread of information about the EuroMaidan rallies. In their turn, the protests stimulated the rise of popularity of Internet-based news media as well as attracted thousands of new users to social media in Ukraine.

17 UNIAN 2013.

18 DIF 2013.

19 Razumkov Center, March 2013, October 2013.

20 Razumkov Center, October 2013.

21 Barberá, Metzger 2013.

22 Kapliuk 2013.

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by #Babylon'13



## NEW FORMS OF CIVIC JOURNALISM

IF WE WERE SUPPOSED TO CHOOSE WHICH POLITICAL EVENT OF 2013 WE FIND THE MOST INFLUENTIAL, A LOT OF EUROPEANS WOULD PROBABLY INDICATE THE SERIES OF PROTESTS IN UKRAINE, WHICH RESULTS STILL REMAIN UNKNOWN AT THE TIME OF WRITING. MAIDAN ENDED, BRICKS FROM THE GRUSHEVSKY STREET RETURNED TO THEIR PLACES. BUT RIOTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN UKRAINE ARE LASTING - CLAIMS JOANNA NOWOSAD IN HER DETAILED ANALYSIS OF # BABYLON '13, THE NEW MEDIA PROJECT FROM UKRAINE, WHICH EXTENSIVELY DESCRIBED VERY DIVERSE DIMENSIONS OF THE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE ON THE UKRAINIAN MAIDAN.

IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER, THAT BABYLON DID NOT END ITS MISSION AS UKRAINIANS STILL FIGHT FOR PEACE AND CHANGES FOR THE BETTER FOR THEIR MOTHERLAND. OUTCOMES OF THIS STRUGGLE ARE STILL A MATTER OF THE NEAREST FUTURE, BUT PROJECT # BABYLON '13 WILL PROBABLY PROVIDE A LOT OF HISTORICAL SOURCES – WITHOUT JUDGING, OR STIGMATIZING WITNESSES OF THESE DRAMATIC EVENTS. THESE SHORT MOVIES ARE COPING WITH THE LEGACY OF THE UKRAINIAN ATTEMPT AT REACHING DEMOCRACY: SOMETIMES WITH A VERY RAW, JOURNALISTIC PRECISION AND SOMETIMES USING ARTISTIC MEANS OF EXPRESSION.

ONE THING IS COMMON – THERE IS NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY THEN THE IMAGES OF REALITY AND ALL THESE FILMS ARE AN OPEN FIELD FOR THE VIEWERS' OWN INTERPRETATIONS. HERE WE PRESENT THE CASE STUDY WITH INTERACTIVE REFERENCES, DESCRIBED BY JOANNA NOWOSAD. THE VIEWS OF THE AUTHOR ARE HER OWN AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE JOURNAL. THE EDITORIAL TEAM DECIDED TO PRESENT THIS UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF CIVIC JOURNALISM BECAUSE OF ITS INTERACTIVE PROFILE. AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF SUCH NEW MEDIA DURING THE MAIDAN PROTESTS IS PROVIDED BY THE ARTICLE OF NATALYA RYABINSKA.

# # BABYLON '13

## CINEMA OF A CIVIL PROTEST

JOANNA NOWOSAD

THIS TEXT CONTAINS A CASE STUDY OF NEW COLLECTIVE MEDIA PROJECT #BABYLON '13, WHICH PRESENTS UKRAINIAN MAIDAN EVENTS BY PROVIDING SHORT DOCUMENTARY MOVIES. THE MAIN CONCEPTUAL AIM OF #BABYLON'13 PROJECT IS TO CREATE A BASE OF DOCUMENTARY SOURCES, WITHOUT ANY COMMENTARY – JUST RAW SHOTS – OPEN FOR THE VIEWERS' OWN INTERPRETATIONS. IN THIS ESSAY THE AUTHOR ALSO PROVIDED A SERIES OF INTERNET SOURCES TO PRESENT THE MOST INTERESTING MOVIES. THE TEXT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A GUIDE TO THE MOVIES.

KYIV, MAIDAN, NEW MEDIA PROJECTS, UKRAINIAN PROTESTS, UKRAINE, DOCUMENTARIES

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### MANIFESTO

*It is a notable fact, that the driving power of the civil protest is the generation formed within the timeframe of independence; The generation*



*that may be called the one of immediate action, and which deems basic European values as determinant and hence is ready to protect them. The new civil society generates meaningful ideas. But at the moment there are too little of those, who are ready to fulfill these ideas. This circle has to grow and then we'll get a chance to persuade the whole Ukraine that time has come to begin vast social reforms. And, strictly speaking, a documentary is a tool that is able to change people's perception of reality.<sup>1</sup>*

A group of Ukrainian directors and cameramen decided to do something to join the protest. They created their own project, expressed by cinemaprotest – BABYLON '13. The first film prepared by this group appeared on 30th November 2013 (title: Babylon – Prologue). For the end of the March 2014 they made around one hundred short documentary films, which you can easily find on YouTube. “The idea to do something was noticeable and we decided to engaged in this. I started call to Volodia Tihi, to Marina Vrody and other my friends and suggest a meeting on St. Michael Square to everyone. That was how it started.”<sup>2</sup> – explains young producer Denis Voroncov from Lugansk.

## GENERAL IDEA

Why the name of the project is Babylon? Firstly, there are some associations with film “Babylon XX” by Ivan Mykolaychuk<sup>3</sup> in which people are speaking many languages (on Maidan you can hear Ukrainian, Russian and other), on the other hand this brings an association with the Christmas tree from Maidan. Some claim that it looked like the Babylon tower. Babylon'13 films did not only have an influence on Ukrainian society but also through the Internet users all over the world, so they can follow the affairs in the Ukraine directly.

“

SOME CLAIM THAT IT LOOKED LIKE THE BABYLON TOWER. BABYLON'13 FILMS DID NOT ONLY HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON UKRAINIAN SOCIETY BUT ALSO THROUGH THE INTERNET USERS ALL OVER THE WORLD

1 # Babylon '13.

2 Ukrainska Pravda 2014a.

3 Kinomusorka

In February 2014 in Poznan, Poland, there was the first show of Babylon '13 movies organized with Kinoprotest. Its organizers did not expect that this show will be met with such a huge interest. One of the Polish participants said: “I find Babylon much more “human,” the cameramen are so close to protesters. It seems to be more authentic. When I watch the news on traditional media I feel like a passive witness because their news is out of touch with the reality. But when I watch Babylon I feel involved and deeply moved by this short films.” A participant from Ukraine said: “Babylon is quiet similar to the Euronews – no comment! They show what is going on but without any commentary. When we watch news from the usual media they always present it with an interpretation and we take this information quite different. You watch Babylon '13 and make up your own mind, when at the same time media tries to show affairs with “corrections” and add their comments.”



by #Babylon'13

by #Babylon'13



*Warriors of light*

—> see  
movie



## THE MAIDAN VILLAGE

We can divide all Babylon films into some categories. The first group is showing the everyday life and people on Maidan. Directors made films about “village” Maidan, which was built in the center of Kyiv. The main “actors” are ordinary people who decided to dedicate their money, time and abilities to the protests. There are not politicians; they stand for some changes in their state. Someone said that every generation of Ukrainians waited very patiently for changes in order to obtain them “for their children,” but now they do no longer have any patience for waiting. They want far-reaching changes right here, right now. These people believed that Maidan could be the place of beginning for a transformation of their country – to the democratic state. Babylon ‘13 tried to record this struggle for a new reality.

by #Babylon'13



*Liberty or death* —→ see movie

As shown in the “Under the siege” movie, where we can see lot of bags with food products for protesters. Maidan was well organized as we can see in other films as well: there were kitchens where every day cook-volunteers prepared meals for plenty of people, there was also a medical point and even bookcrossing in the metro station (film: “Honor bright”). Every night some of the volunteers had a night watch and during the day they practiced self-defense (as we can see in the film “A prayer”). They even organized a tent for prayer. Many people said that if the organization of Maidan had spread to the whole country it might have been the ideal state.

One of the most interesting aspects is music, as Ukrainians are a nation that is very keen on this kind of art. Already a month in the revolution many versions of the national anthem were recorded. Babylon also added their version named “Personal Anthem” – every line sang by different person. What is more, they decided to use two melodies – the original and the one taken from European Union anthem. Other sounds of Maidan are hits performed by local musicians in Russian and Ukrainian. Passers-by joined them. One of them is a pianist-extremist who played with Radiohead and Yann Tiersen.

*National anthem* —→ see movie

*Underground* —→ see movie

*Honor bright* —→ see movie

*A prayer* —→ see movie

*Under the siege* —→ see movie

## SMILES THAT ARE MISLEADING

After watching films from December 2013 (where children are presented and everyone is smiling) viewers may think that the Ukrainians protest was kind of a family fest. However, we have to remember that there is a group of films which illustrates other aspects of Maidan reality. For instance movies dedicated to Berkut, the riot police. One of the best reviewed short films is “Shame.” With only one shot cameraman shows the faces of “boys from Berkut.” They are young, some in balaclava, none of them is staring straight into the camera. During this one minute of illustration of shame it comes to mind: “why they decided to stay on this side?” After that it is hard to unquestioningly divide Ukrainians between “good and bad” because the side of the barricade on which they were standing, made them dependent not only on their official political beliefs but also on this other issue: the place of work (it is hard to protest against the government, when you work in the public sector).





by # Babylon'13



“Culture Action” shows the attitude of the Party Regionov (Party of the Regions). One man encouraged another to treat party T-shirt as a doormat and wipe shoes into it. Everyone is doing that with uncovered satisfaction. In this way they could express their frustration about the current situation in the country.

*Shame*

→ see  
movie

*Culture Action*

→ see  
movie

Following group of the films links up with the riots in January and February. The cameraman chases after current affairs. We can be observers of the struggle between protesters and Berkut, see the burning tires. We can very easy start to watch this like a movie with a made up plot but we must remember all the time while we are watching - this is a real life. Babylon gives us opportunity to see Maydan with first hand information and the viewer should respect this historical record. There are also films about cooperative actions of Ukrainians (“Brick to brick”) who fight together and create long chains of people who pass street cobbles and bricks to each other, during this work they are singing.

*To the heroes’ glory*

→ see  
movie

*Brick to brick*

→ see  
movie

After the 20<sup>th</sup> of February films showing national mourning appeared. Plenty of flowers and candles for killed protesters, considered heroes. Quickly their got name as Nebesna sotnya (Heavenly hundred) because they were the symbol of fighting for changes in Ukraine to the end of their life. One lady gives a passer-by on Maidan a blue-yellow ribbon. She is smiling and joking

but when she comes closer to the victims’ memorial her face and mood changes quickly.

A special film is The Testament. Observing the riots in the heart of Kyiv; we can hear a poem of Taras Shevchenko, which words seemed very up-to-date at the time:

“Bury me and arise, break your chains  
And sprinkle your freedom  
With the enemy’s evil blood.  
And don’t forget to remember me  
In the great family,  
In a family new and free,  
With a kind and quiet word.”<sup>4</sup>



photo by Babylon'13

4 Ukrainian Literature... 2004.



by # Babylon'13

*The Testament*

→ see  
movie

*The Need*

→ see  
movie



They also came up with a film from the Crimea where we can see the breakfast of Russian soldiers and a demonstration in support for Russia. There is also a story about some members of the Babylon group. Yaroslav Pilunskyi and Yurii Hruzinov were kidnapped on 16th of March in Simferopol on 22nd they were released. During this period no one knew where they were and if they were still alive.<sup>5</sup>

Babylon '13, 1+1 production and TCH created series of documentary films: "The Winter, which changed us."<sup>6</sup> The first film "Nebesna sotnya" was showed on the 3rd of April on the channel 1+1 production. The main goal of the project is to show these heroes of the revolution and the history of the social movement on Maidan.

## BRICKS ON THEIR PLACE

Maidan ended, bricks from the Grushevsky Street returned to their place. But riots and demonstrations in Ukraine are still going on at the time of writing. Babylon did not end its mission as Ukrainians still fight for peace and changes for the better for their motherland. Babylon '13 films were presented in Oslo, Amsterdam and Edinburgh. In May the films are going to be showed in New York at Kinofest NYC<sup>7</sup> and in Poznan on the Festival "Ukrainian Spring."<sup>8</sup>

Shoots from Babylon's films have also been an inspiration for some musicians. Haydamaky used fragments for their video clip "Wooden Shields." There is also an unofficial video for the song "War of the Worlds" by the Belarusian group Lapis Trubetskoy.

More references can be found on You Tube and Facebook, and by following these links:

- # Babylon '13 website
- # Babylon '13 facebook fanpage
- # Babylon '13 YouTube channel

<sup>5</sup> Ukrainska Pravda 2014b.

<sup>6</sup> [1plus1 2014](#).

<sup>7</sup> Kinofest NYC 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Ukrainian Spring 2014.

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by # Babylon'13

*The returner*

—> | see  
movie

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*The breakfast*

*Balaklava 1 March*

—> | see  
movie

—> | see  
movie

*40<sup>th</sup> Day*

—> | see  
movie

Sunday, March 30th 2014, Ukrainians commemorate victims of Maidan. 40 days earlier, which they call the heroes from Nebesna sotnya (Heavenly hundred) that have died in the protests. Babylon made a film where one man related these dramatic events from February (without subtitles)



# A STORY WILL ALWAYS MATTER

TO BEGIN WITH, WE CAN TRY TO CONNECT SOME FACTS: IN 2011 LEYMAH GEBWEE IS AWARDED WITH THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. THREE YEARS EARLIER FILM "PRAY THE DEVIL BACK TO HELL" BROUGHT THE LIBERIAN WOMEN'S STRUGGLE FOR PEACE (LED BY GEBWEE) TO LIGHT. IN 2011 DOCUMENTARY "I CAME TO TESTIFY" WHICH SHOWED STORIES OF 16 BOSNIAN WOMEN CHANGED THE IMAGE OF BALKAN WAR. A YEAR LATER THE DISCUSSION ON FEMALE RAPES IN US MILITARY IS OPENED BY THE RELEASE OF "THE INVISIBLE WAR" DOCUMENTARY. THE FILM WAS NOMINATED FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AT THE 85TH ACADEMY AWARDS. WHAT LINKS THESE ISSUES? THAT WAS KIRSTEN JOHNSON, WHO WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CAMERA LENS OF ALL THESE AND MANY OTHER GROUND-BREAKING DOCUMENTARIES. THESE AND MANY OTHER FILMS, ON WHICH SHE WORKED BROKE MANY TABOOS. NOW SHE SPEAKS ON HER WORK, HER IDEAS AND HER VISION OF NEW MEDIA AND DOCUMENTARY MOVIES MISSION. DESPITE THIS SHE SUMS UP HER WORK QUITE ASTONISHINGLY: "PEOPLE ALWAYS TALK ABOUT THIS SOCIAL IMPACT, AND >>> HAVE YOU CHANGED THE WORLD?<<< ALL I CAN SAY IS: I HAVE BEEN CHANGED."

INTERVIEW WITH **KIRSTEN JOHNSON**  
BY ELIZA KANIA

You are travelling a lot, through different continents, different countries, often in war or unrest. Many of films that you make present stories of people who experienced trauma, violence and various sorts of other extreme situations. What do you find the most precious dimension of what you are doing?

I've always thought of a job as a form of privilege. In a lot of cases it feels like it is a great honor, to share some time and space with people who are willing to talk about what they have experienced. Sometimes it is just incredibly painful for everybody involved. I'm working on a film that I shoot in Afghanistan and it's sort of causing me look back at my work and to think about why so much that I have done has been connected with post-conflict or post-genocide or post war. I have felt as if I'm just thinking about these things and I don't really understand it by myself. In a lot of cases I feel like people have been through the period of powerlessness in their lives. That may be the war causes, discrimination causes or the different causes of their powerlessness, but in a certain moment in time the presence of the camera gives them back some power and gives them some agency. So they can tell what they want to tell, in the way they want tell to it.

What are your most vivid impressions from that kind of situation?

Sometimes this really surprises everyone involved, to find out how powerful a person can become through the act of telling. And sometimes it's almost like re-traumatizing experience and you don't really know when you're going into it, as a filmmaker, what an impact of your presence is going to be.

Can you recall some details of such emotionally complex circumstances?

I certainly have been a part of films where an overtimed impact has been very empowering for the people who participated. And then I've been involved in things when it's reminding people of their ongoing powerlessness. But I do think of myself as being in a relationship with the person in the moment of their sharing. That is a very peculiar and special moment and over time I've been interested in making it as a safer place for the person to be able to explore their own emotion as possible.

But I wonder if it's possible for you to keep some emotional distance from the people you are listening to. Theoretically you are behind your camera lens, is it possible not to stay emotionally involved?

I'm not interested in being distant or in not to be emotionally involved. I am actually interested in being emotionally connected. But I don't want to stop where someone is going emotionally. So a lot of times I think and I don't really know. But what I think what I'm doing is making it appear that it is OK for someone to continue.

What is the most complicated dilemma of such kind of situations?

I'm both a professional and a cameraperson, but I'm also a human being trying to gauge what is fair to the other person.

And what about you, have you yourself been put in some dangerous situations during filmmaking?

I would say definitely my life has been in danger several times. Sometimes you don't know it. When I was in Afghanistan I was filming in downtown Kabul outside of a building and I knew I shouldn't stay there long by myself, but I wanted to get a shot, and my translator was inside the building. He was busy, so we didn't have much time. So I filmed like literally for a 60 seconds. When I came home my translator was listening to the footage and she said: I hear someone talking, they must've been very close to you. I said: "Yes, they were standing next to the camera". She said: "Oh that's not good". There is that guy, who is standing next to you, talking in pastho<sup>1</sup> by the cellphone, and he says: "Oh my goodness, there's American woman here by herself, run across the road and we can take her and kill her together!" I had no idea. Things like that happen and other times you are actually directly threatened. I'm not the combat cameraperson. I don't try to go into warzones. But sometimes you are at the edge of warzone. You feel like you're facing a temporary threat, whereas people who live there are facing threat all the time.

I assume that such a feeling of adrenaline rush can be somehow addictive...

I don't like it. I felt very uncomfortable in Afghanistan. I felt very afraid most of the time. I went back twice in 2009,

<sup>1</sup> One of official Afghan languages (Editors' note - EK)

and once in 2010. And then I was like: I'm done. I don't want to spend any more time this close to this much fear.

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. HONESTLY I THINK THAT YOU ARE OFTEN IGNORANT ABOUT THE IMPACT THAT YOU'RE MAKING

So what about the case of such states in which violence towards citizens is some kind of a routine: is it possible that by showing their stories you can put these people in danger? Do you feel some kind of responsibility?

Absolutely, I mean one thing you always have to think about is the fact that you can leave. So that your position is fundamentally different from the people who live there. They have to live with the impact of what they reveal. There's a category of people, who know they're living with their lives being threatened all the time and more exposure is going to mean more danger, but they understand the danger. For example in Liberia, where we were working on "Pray the devil back to hell"<sup>2</sup> we went home with a woman and filmed with her. That very same night she was robbed by man at gunpoint, because they assumed that white Americans who had come with their cameras had given money to her. So they came to get the money that we had supposedly given to her, which of course we hadn't. But she was terrified and threatened. Honestly I think that you are often ignorant about the impact that you're making. Even when people tell you that it's OK and they're willing to take the risk. There are times when you inadvertently put someone in an even more risky situation than you understood.

Did it happen to you?

I certainly did that in Afghanistan, accidentally asking people to do

<sup>2</sup> *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* is a documentary film directed by Gini Reticker and produced by Abigail Disney. The film premiered at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival, where it won the award for Best Documentary. The film documents a peace movement called Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, organized by social worker Leymah Gbowee (awarded with Nobel Peace Prize in 2011). The Liberian peace movement led to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the president of Liberia. Thus Liberia become the first African nation with a female president. *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* is the part of a groundbreaking special series *Women, War & Peace*. The film won many prestigious awards, including One World International Human Rights Festival award, Women's Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, Cinema for Peace and many Rother. More: <http://praythediabacktohell.com/> (Editors' note - EK)

things that I didn't realize how much risk that put them in. But then there are other times where I choose very deliberately – I realized “Oh, OK, I'm gonna be risky in the lives of all these school girls, and this teacher, and myself”. And is it worth it to get a shoot of little girls reading in the room? And I said: “no, it's not worth it”. So I didn't go and film that underground school. Even though it exists and people think: “oh, there are no underground schools.” But in fact there are.

So you decided not to publish this footage?

I didn't even go there although the teacher invited me.

But was she aware of this risk?

Yes, but for me I decided I could not handle the responsibility. I was not confident that I would use the footage in a powerful enough way for it to balance the risk being taken. Does it make sense?

Yes, definitely. In that point I wonder what is the key of your choice of film subject choices. Isn't it like that you often choose films that include feminist or gender perspective or they are connected with violence or war subjects?

What is interesting, from my point of view, when I came out to film school I was really interested in post-colonial history. When 9/11 happened I was pulled into more stories that dealt with the US military, with the Middle East. I really felt like history changed the places I was looking. It changed my point of view. In a lot of ways I have, as a person, been more interested in race and class, than I have in gender and feminism. But the fact is I ended up working with a lot of women directors, who have in some ways educated me about the fundamentalism of the different experience of being a woman in a world. So someone like Gini<sup>3</sup> sees the world very much through the lens of how women experience it. Over time, and working on all these different themes, you started to see patterns around the world. And the more pattern you see, the more you want to verify it or question it.

<sup>3</sup> Gini Reticker is an American director and producer. She is one of the world's leading documentary filmmakers. In her works she focuses on individuals, particularly women, engaged in struggles for social justice and human rights. Her films cover subjects often overlooked by mainstream media, such as women in war zones whose stories have largely gone untold. More: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/about/about-the-producers/> (Editors' note - EK)

Maybe we can speak a little bit more about “The Invisible War”,<sup>4</sup> because it was quite controversial film, even in Europe because it destroyed some taboo. Are you able to measure the social impact of releasing this documentary?

I think its impact is still being felt. And we don't completely understand what its ultimate impact is going to be. Certainly, all of the military people who spoke in the film who were still like the spokesperson for the military were fired even before the film came out. Because “you've done such a poor job, right?” And there was legislative change that has happened. There is some indication that numbers of military sexual trauma have gone up since the film has been released. There are some people who say that is because more people are reporting. And other people say the film has introduced the idea in the people's consciousness and the people are acting what they weren't acting before. So there's a case while you're like “wow, who knows what kind of impact you've had, right?” I was sort of disappointed that the film didn't go more into male-on-male rapes in the military. I think that's a huge taboo. Like man on woman rape in the military was a big taboo, now we're talking about a very big taboo. It means that this is happening in every army in the world. Rape. And it's not being talked about at all by anybody who has been in military. But in fact now people are starting to talk more about the male-on-male rape in the military. So that's the tiny opening of a discussion.



SOMETIMES YOU BETRAY THE SUBJECT OF YOUR FILMS WHEN YOU TRY TO MAKE THEM SERVE THE GOAL OF MAKING SOCIAL CHANGE

So was this impact predictable?

I think that it is fantastic, that films are getting to have the intention of making social change. But I don't think you can necessarily predict what social change will be made. Nor do I think you should make a

<sup>4</sup> *The Invisible war* is a 2012 documentary film written and directed by Kirby Dick. It copes with the subject of sexual assault in the United States military. It premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, where it received the U.S. Documentary Audience Award. The film was nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the 85th Academy Awards. *The Invisible War* presents interviews with veterans from multiple branches of the United States Armed Forces who reconstruct their trauma. The film opened the discussion on sexual violence towards woman in the US military (Editors' note - EK).

film necessarily to make a certain kind of change. I don't think it's such a simple relationship. Sometimes you betray the subject of your films when you try to make them serve the goal of making social change.

Yes, maybe that's the point. But can we assume that this film reshaped the perception of these issues among some conservative circles in US?

Absolutely! No question. Because it wasn't even been talked about at all at the highest levels of the Congress, in the US Government, in the military. I think it made it impossible not to talk about it. So I think that, in fact, it had a very significant impact. I think that, the most important is that they are changing within the military. It used to be like you had to report a rape to your commanding officer. So even in the case where it's your commanding officer who raped you, you were supposed to report it to that person. So that structure of accountability had changed. That's fundamental I would say.

And what about the female soldiers who decided to speak. Did you try to create some special atmosphere to make their confessions easier?

We went to a kind of a group meeting, and I honestly had rarely seen such traumatized people. A lot of them had dogs that they kept with them. They didn't like having doors closed. It was very extreme version of trauma. In general I'm someone who is pretty casual and relaxed and I found that I had to be more careful around these women. I felt that it has to do less with gender, than it had to do with just the level of trauma that they have experienced and how mistrustful people they have become as people. So in that case in particular I just had to slow down. I'm kind of physical person and I often touch the person that I'm filming and in this case it was really clear I shouldn't even like touch someone's arm. I do think it takes extraordinary amount of discretion and a quiet presence to work with people who don't trust you, for whatever reason. Sometimes their mistrust of you is well-founded. You have to earn their trust.

The film I came to testify<sup>5</sup>, devoted to Bosnian women has also broke some taboo.

<sup>5</sup> *I came to testify* (2011) „is the moving story of how a group of 16 women who had been imprisoned by Serb-led forces in the Bosnian town of Foca broke history's great silence – and stepped forward to take the witness stand in an international court of law,” More: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/full-episodes/i-came-to-testify/> (Editors' note - EK).

Actually what I experienced more was the struggle that we had with making it. And realizing that we were pushing up against the conflict that still exists there. I was shocked by how much conflict is still there. We saw graffiti on the walls that said: Srebrenica let's do it again. Like it's crazy. It's cool that you said, that the film made some impact, because what I felt was like pushing against some kind of barriers. And it's hard. So it encourages me to say like when we are in a place where there is resistance and difficulty in making a film perhaps there is a value.

But the most difficult aspect of this film was the sexual violence towards women, because many other aspects of violence have been discussed somewhere.

This film was very emotionally challenging for me. When we were filming the land of woman whose family have been murdered, filming ruins of her home, visiting all those horrible places like rape-camps... There is one place where all these women had been raped that had been turned into a sports hall and a group of little girls was playing ping-pong there. And I filmed forever, filming these little girls paying ping pong. It was just one of the scenes, it didn't make into the film at all. It's a different film. This moment I found very significant. I didn't know how alive the conflict still was. So we faced a lot of hostility. You can feel it there and it feels bad. Yes, it feels very present. And also to film with women who are so afraid to show their faces. Who feel like their lives are in risk if they show their faces. This is terrible.

Are you able to point out one film that was the most important for you?

It's too hard, but I think making a film about Derrida<sup>6</sup> changed me. In one point in making the film he was destructed by having a crew there, and he really needed to think, and he needed to work, and he wanted us to leave. The director was begging him saying: we have to stay and film. Finally he said: all right, if Kirsten just stays with the camera and she doesn't say anything, then she can stay. At that time of life I always was trying to talk a lot, talk to the subjects, I wanted them to know me as a person. In this case I really wanted Derrida to know that I was smart. I really cared about him. And

<sup>6</sup> *Derrida* (2002) is a documentary film directed by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering. It is devoted to French philosopher Jacques Derrida. It premiered at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival (Editors' note - EK).



then I ended up spending entire day with him in his house and I didn't say a word. I realized what I could communicate through the camera and through the scene. I realized I didn't have to prove anything through talking. The evidence of my presence would be in the way that I filmed. I feel it was the lesson at the beginning of my career that has carried me through many of films that I have shot.

On another topic: what is your opinion on open-source access?

It's work to make a film. And when it's treated as work and not dilettantism then you value the work and you value the collaboration. Throughout my career I've worked for free on projects that I understood that would never get any funding because of what rave projects they were. But this is the way I earn my living. And it's hard work, I work long hours, I don't want to do it all by myself. Often a lot of people making a film make it so much better. I think that people's work needs to be understood and valued. I think when films are simply free, people won't understand the value of work that has gone into them.

Recently media have changed profoundly, so what is your idealistic vision on what you are doing or what should be the documentary filmmakers' mission?

I want more people to be able to see the highest quality of work. I want them to be able to see it in conditions where they can appreciate it. I'm oldschool in that, I love to go into movie theater and get sink into the reality of a film, in the dark, with the shared audience. But I understand that that's a luxury that does not exist everywhere in the world. I would much rather that more people have access to work that moves them and helps to understand the world better. To some extent I just want people to have the chance to be changed by what they see. And I think the new media is making this happen in ways that I don't even understand. I think a story will always matter. Sort of human emotion, the connection of peoples' emotion to each other is what's going to matter the most. People always talk about this social impact, and "have you changed the world?" and whatever. All I can say is: I have been changed. Me. Kirsten. By the films that I worked on and I know that to be the case. I know that I behave differently, that I've grown in ways that are impossible and strange. I appreciate this. And this

is what I hope for anyone Involved in filmmaking or film watching.

Are you able to point out the most important issue of new media now and the most important challenge of this.

There's no question, that quality work can get lost in world in which the more powerful, cheaply made, less interesting work has more advertising power or reaches more people. I always have felt everywhere I've gone I find family. I find people who care about the world in the way I do and they have a kind of sensibility, that means they are interested in incredible quality of filmmaking and they find the way to find it. And as I'm traveling more and more – I'm going to Saudi Arabia, I've been recently to Cairo, to Damascus - in a last 5 years certainly all those people have seen documentaries that I worked on. That would not have been true 20 years ago. At all. Something is changing for the better in terms of a certain group of people. I think it's still an elite group of people, who are figuring out how to find these movies. And it's thrilling that more people is seeing more great work from all over the world. But I'm an optimist.

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**Kirsten Johnson** is a director and camera person, one of the most acclaimed filmmakers working on documentaries today. She crossed the world many times bringing to light very crucial, politically important topics, often connected with human rights and the struggle for people's dignity. She worked on widely recognized films including controversial and groundbreaking Academy Award nominee *Invisible war*. She co-created the 5 part PBS series *Woman War* presenting women stories in very dangerous zones, and the times of extreme violence. A part of this series *Peace Pray the devil back to hell* approached the Liberian women peace movement, with Leymah Gbowee and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the forefront, I came to testify highlighted the traumatic experiences of Bosnian women. She also worked on *The Oath*, *Darfur Now*, *Election Day*, *Virgin Now* and many other docs, with such directors like Raoul Peck, Gini Reticker, Barbara Kopple, Michael Moore and Kirby Dick. She won many awards including 2010 Sundance Documentary Competition Cinematography Award for *The Oath*, in which she was the winner of 2008 Tribeca Film Festival Best Documentary. She started her film career from the trip to Senegal. After which she attended La Fémis, the French national film school, receiving a degree from the Cinematography Department.



by #Babylon'13

# COUNTERFORCE TOWARD SIMPLIFICATIONS

“

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY IS AMONG THE HARDEST, AND MOST REWARDING PROFESSIONS THERE IS” – CLAIMS PHOTOJOURNALIST PAUL HANSEN. ALTHOUGH HIS LABOUR HAS BEEN REWARDED MANY TIMES, INCLUDING WINNING THE WORLD PRESS PHOTO 2012 CONTEST, HE DID NOT AVOID SOME CONTROVERSY – CONNECTED NOT ONLY WITH EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING SITUATIONS WHICH HE DOCUMENTS, BUT ALSO WITH SOME DETAILS OF THE ART OF REPORTING.

INTERVIEW WITH **PAUL HANSEN**  
BY ELIZA KANIA

You started to work as a photojournalist/reporter a few decades ago. If you could compare this situation to recent digital media world what was the most significant shift from the pre-digital era?

Speed and global impact – which sometimes affect the credibility and relevance of the reported news negatively.

If we consider that the technological revolution gave us an access to unlimited number of information and sources, what is more important for a photojournalist/reporter nowadays – to present a more realistic vision of reality, or to transfer a filtered vision of the situation described?

However big your information gathering capabilities are or how many sources you have - the information you present is in a sense always filtered by yourself and the media you work for. For example, the news that 5 Swedes are killed in Afghanistan would not have the same impact if they were for example German or British. However, to report as realistically and truthful as possible should always be the ambition.

After your picture, which shows a group of men carrying the bodies of two dead children through a street in Gaza City, won World Press Photo contest (World Press Photo of The Year 2012), you’ve met some controversy over postproduction of the photo. The problem was connected with the fact that some areas have been made lighter and others darker. Why did using popular photo postproduction tools lead to such a discussion?

The camera’s digital sensibility and capacity to record light is set by a technician and does not reflect the situation - as the eye sees it. Today most photographers use the age-old “darkroom-technique,” but of course nowadays with a computer – to expand the loss of dynamic range. The credibility and integrity of the picture you mention have been examined by four different groups of world experts in the field of photography. The World Press Photo jury, NPPA jury, POYi jury and the Swedish Picture of the Year jury. It has also been forensically examined, pixel by pixel, by two independent computer experts in the United States and The Netherlands. They have all found the integrity of the picture intact and that the post-processing (dark-room work) is within acceptable limits. The photograph was subsequently awarded seven different awards if memory serves me correctly. I can’t think of many photographs that have been through a more thorough process.



In 2010 you published the photo of dead Haitian girl, Fabienne Cherisma. Fabienne's photo proved to be quite controversial and a lot of photo reporters were interested in photographing this situation. We could even watch the photo of the group of photographers, taking pictures of the dead girl...

I had a choice, to tell Fabienne's story or tell another story. I chose to tell her story. You write that "we could even watch a photo of the group of photographers, taking pictures of the dead girl." I also took photographs of the group of photographers. But I made the choice to transmit Fabienne's story, not a photo of the group – just like I would not have sent home a picture of a group of reporters working. I think it was a good thing, that the eyes of the world (the photojournalists) recorded what happened in Haiti. If the photojournalists from the Sunday Times, Dagens Nyheter, AP, Reuters and others would not have been working – Fabienne's death would have not been recorded. Since her death I have, together with the reporter Michael Winiarski, been back to see Fabienne's family to do follow up stories seven times.



MEDIA SHOULD ALWAYS BE AWARE OF WHAT THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE IS LIKE – IT SHOULD NEVER LOOSE TRACK OF ITS PRIMARY MISSION. TO INFORM THE PUBLIC AND TO BE A COUNTERFORCE TOWARDS INTELLECTUALISM AND SIMPLIFICATION. THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF EVIL.

Your photos strike with the poetical sensibility, it seems that it is possible to understand all the drama of situation presented in frame. How to choose this particular moment?

To answer that question I would like to make a comparison with written text. Just like when I write a story I interpret the world. The event, what I see, what I hear with the filter-construction that is a part of me. Or rather, is me. After the interpretation I choose words, I string them together to sentences to interpret and describe what I see. The same thing is true with visual storytelling. To describe what I mean I would like to use the words that Luc Sante used to describe James Nachtwey's work:

"It is disquieting to notice, though, that Nachtwey's pictures are always compositions. Maybe we expect that the photographer faced

with grief, trauma or starvation will be rendered incompetent by the sight just as we would be incapable of finding appropriate words to describe such a scene. Maybe it seems that the only moral option, short of capping the lens, would be to take haphazard, ill-focused snapshots – perhaps we think so because of the latent horror that seems to reside in bad snapshots as a result of their association with courtroom evidence and other raw documentation. But maybe we are just projecting, wanting the camera to fall away just as we would. Nachtwey's photographs are always clear and striking compositions in part because he is honest and clear in his stance. There might be an axiom lurking here, by analogy with Flaubert's contention that the greatest compression of thought always results in a line of poetry – that the clearest vision is always balanced."<sup>1</sup>

Is it possible to provide high quality journalism to a wider range of readers, in the times of the "terror of immediacy?"

Yes, if you prioritize correctly.

Which statement is more connected with reality: that the public is influencing the quality of journalism more than the journalists the demands and tastes of the public, or quite the opposite?

I think it goes both ways. I also think that even if the media should always be aware of what the public discourse is like – it should never loose track of its primary mission. To inform the public and to be a counterforce towards intellectualism and simplification. The building blocks of evil.

How to combine high-quality and responsible content with the demands of the journalism of new era?

To be aware of the dangers of the constant updating cycle's pitfalls as well as prioritize.

Do you think the level of trust in the media from a public standpoint has dropped lately? Or due to the wider variety of sources and that we can choose and make our own claims it makes the trust towards media more

No. I don't think that the level of trust has gone down. To the contrary,

<sup>1</sup> Sante 2003.



the media that has a credible track record are more trusted and in demand than ever – due to the global flow of rumors, half-truths and irrelevant “news.”

What kind of relations you want to highlight in your works from Ukraine?

As always, if possible, the impact of the violence and uncertainty toward normal people.

What is your opinion on international media dispatches from Ukraine lately? Are there some lacks of oversight in these materials?

No opinion, I do not have the overview to have an opinion. The Swedish media that I follow closely are very good though. Like I wrote earlier, in a situation/area like this the conflict is not only fought on the ground. It is very much fought with disinformation. We try to counterbalance that.

How would you define journalistic responsibility in the world of new, digitalized media?

To inform people of what is going on in the world, to shine a light in the dark corners of the human existence as well as being credible, accurate and fair in the reporting of news.

So, finally I would like to ask, what is – in your opinion - the most difficult in such profession like photo reporting? And why have you decided to choose it?

I write as well as take pictures. The most difficult thing is always to try to convey and interpret an often complex situation into a one dimensional image. When I write the challenge looks different. I think documentary photography is among the hardest, and most rewarding professions there is. I get to meet people all over the world and tell their story – whether it is around the corner in Stockholm or in an alley in Slavyansk doesn't matter.

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**Paul Hansen** is a photojournalist based in Stockholm, Sweden. He is a staff photographer for the daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter. He covered many events all over the world (Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Ukraine and many others) He won many awards, including “Photographer of the year Newspaper” in POYi 2010 and 2013, and “World Press Photo, 2012 for the famous and widely discussed picture of “Gaza Funeral”.



by #Babylon'13

regional  
ISSUES

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Regional  
integration in  
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Internal and External  
Actors

texts

Adetula  
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Regional integration in  
**AFRICA**  
internal and external actors

regional  
ISSUES

artworks&



# REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTORS

ALMOST FIFTEEN YEARS INTO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY, WE WITNESS A CHANGE OF AFRICA'S IMAGE FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE. ONCE REGARDED AS HOTBED OF INSTABILITY, CONFLICT AND WRENCHING POVERTY, IT IS NOW REGARDED AS THE NEWEST FRONTIER AMONG THE "EMERGING MARKETS." THE ECONOMIST OBSERVES THAT: "OVER THE PAST DECADE SIX OF THE WORLD'S TEN FASTEST-GROWING COUNTRIES WERE AFRICAN. IN EIGHT OF THE PAST TEN YEARS, AFRICA HAS GROWN FASTER THAN EAST ASIA, INCLUDING JAPAN." IT IS ALSO PREDICTED THAT, IN 2050 THE CONTINENT'S WORKFORCE WILL BE THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD. THOSE TRENDS POINT TOWARDS THE FUTURE IN WHICH AFRICA COULD BECOME THE NEW FOCUS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY REGARDING EVER NEEDED NATURAL RESOURCES OR AS AN EXPANDING MARKET. ALL THIS GOOD NEWS NOTWITHSTANDING, THE CONTINENT IS STILL FACING IMMENSE CHALLENGES CONCERNING SUCH ISSUES LIKE, POVERTY, HEALTH DEFICIENCIES, CORRUPTION AND STATE INEFFICIENCY. WHETHER THESE CURRENT INTERNAL DYNAMICS WILL IMPROVE OR AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES, NEED TO BE SEEN.

Anyhow, the challenges and opportunities accompanying Africa's imminent rise put a spotlight on the processes of regional integration, which are playing out on the continent. It can be argued that – since the end of the Cold War – the development of the international political and economic order has been driven, to a large degree, by the twin forces of globalization and regionalization. As finding "global solutions to global problems" proved (unsurprisingly) to be extremely complicated, regional initiatives have flourished when like-minded states decided to tackle similar challenges. As the year 2013 marked 50 years of Pan-Africanism, incarnated since 2002 in the African Union (the successor to the Organization of African Unity), our editorial team saw a good opportunity to reflect on the growing role played by regional institutions in Africa's development.

The continent's wide spectrum of regional and subregional organizations has been providing the necessary contribution to both economic development (through facilitation of trade and investment) and security building (by peacemaking and peacekeeping initiatives). On the other hand, new external players have arrived, while old ones are struggling to reframe their role and interests in light of their historic legacy. In addition – for first time in history – African agency is crucial in steering the political and economic dynamics on the continent.

In this *R/evolutions: Regional Issue*, we wanted to analyze the potential of African regional organizations from both sides: How do African actors connect, interlink and decide on which direction their organizations should take? And how do external actors frame their interests vis-à-vis African states? The combined dynamic is very much in flux, with various players vying for influence, and tough choices to make for African leaders as the wrong ones might plunge the weaker countries in a spiral of instability instead of prosperity.

In this issue our authors have taken a closer look at various aspects of African regional integration. Professor **Victor Adetula** (University of Jos, Nigeria) gives an extensive overview of various African regional organizations and their attempts to tackle security issues, which are paramount for stimulating development. Professor **Ian Taylor** (St. Andrews, Scotland) reflects on the modes of governance we can find in such organizations, as many of them are not democratic and put forward their members' regime interests before the needs of their people. **Eric Irungu** (Mount Kenya University), in his essay, presents an overview of the successes and failures of the African Union regarding regional integration.

The next set of texts zooms in from north to south on the three most important regions of the continent. **Dr Beata Przybylska-Maszner** (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland) highlights the interactions between the EU and ECOWAS in West Africa, analyzing the changing dynamics of these relations due to new players such as the People’s Republic of China. **Dr Konrad Czernichowski** (University of Wrocław, Poland) in his turn analyzes the potential for monetary integration in Eastern Africa, focusing on the potential of organizations such as COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), EAC (East African Community) and SADC (Southern African Development Community). Finally **Professor Sehlare Makgetlaneng** (Africa Institute of South Africa in Pretoria) compares the future of SACU (Southern African Customs Union) and SADC in southern Africa.

Following such in-depth analyzes, we return to the important challenges African states still face in the form of two interviews. The first interview with professor **Rolf Langhammer** (former vice-president of the Kiel Institute, Germany) dealing with issues a financial assistance and the AU; the second interview with professor **Daniel Bach** (University of Bordeaux, France) focuses on the historic legacies of colonialism and dependency and new models of integration.

The last part of this Regional Issue analyzes the behavior of the two most active external actors. **Professor Ivan Krivoushin** (High School of Economics, Moscow) offers great insights on the changing role of France and its struggle to reframe the role it wishes and can play in Africa. **Dr Niall Duggan** (Georg-August Universität, Göttingen, Germany) then exposes the triangular EU-Africa-China relations, identifying the dimensions and level of future cooperation. Photographic contributions were provided by Sylwia Pecio, a young artist from Warsaw.

Jeroen Van den Bosch  
Rafał Wiśniewski

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photo by S. Pecio

**SYLWIA PECIO** IS AN ART DIRECTOR WITH 11 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN ADVERTISING. THE PAST 5 YEARS SHE WAS WORKING FOR OGILVY & MATHER AFRICA AS A PHOTOGRAPHER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. SHE STUDIED AT THE JAN MATEJKO ACADEMY OF FINE ART IN CRACOW, BEFORE SHE STARTED WORKING AS A FREELANCER. AMONG MANY OTHERS SHE HAS DONE WORK FOR THE WORLDBANK, SC MAGAZINE UK, DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UK, VALKEA MEDIA (WARSAW).



# REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND THE QUEST FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN AFRICA

VICTOR A.O. ADETULA

article  
abstract

THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR IMPOSES MORE RESPONSIBILITIES ON REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. CONSEQUENTLY IN AFRICA THE MOTIVES FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION IN THE REGION HAVE BEEN BROADENED TO INCLUDE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE-BUILDING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT. THIS ADDS CREDENCE TO THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION AS A DIALECTICAL UNITY OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL PROCESSES. THIS PAPER UNDERTAKES A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL REVIEW OF THE CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSES ON THE RELEVANCE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION TO DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND OTHER REGIONS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH. IT POINTS OUT THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACE-BUILDING PROCESS, REVIEWS THE PERFORMANCE OF AFRICA REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE QUEST FOR PEACE AND STABILITY ON THE CONTINENT, AND ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THE INFLUENCE OF THE GLOBAL FORCES ON REGIONAL APPROACH TO PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA. DESPITE THEIR OBVIOUS SHORTCOMINGS, REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS STILL LARGELY

REPRESENT PRIMARY UNITS OF SECURITY AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR AFRICA. THE PAPER SUGGESTS FURTHER RESEARCH IS REQUIRED TO IDENTIFY AND DEFINE ISSUES MORE PRECISELY IN THE LINK BETWEEN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY.

REGIONAL INTEGRATION, AFRICAN UNION, SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, COLLECTIVE SECURITY, PEACE-BUILDING, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT

keywords

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The management of international violence since the end of the Cold War imposes more responsibilities on regional organizations in Africa. Consequently the motives for economic cooperation and integration in the region have been broadened to include political interests and regional collective security in addition to the need for greater international bargaining power. The broadening of the role and functions of cooperation and integration schemes to include responsibility for peace-building and conflict management efforts generally adds credence to the conceptualization of regional integration as a dialectical unity of social, economic and political processes. This re-conceptualization is at the core of the current discourses about the link between regionalism and collective security. More than ever, peace and development are now intimately linked in the discourses on the role of integration schemes and regional collective security. There is indeed a growing global awareness that the pursuit of economic development by regional integration schemes is only possible under a peaceful atmosphere. The idea of collective security is rooted in the concerns about how to prevent the abuse of power by powerful states in the international system. The classical work by Inis Claude (1971) on the development of international organizations in the twentieth century illuminates this path. His study reveals the evident preoccupation with the idea of collective security and the



“antiwar orientations” that informed the efforts to construct international organizations.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the League of Nations was established with the expectation that it would transcend ‘politics’ in its operations, and that its establishment would mark the birth of the new world order. The League however failed to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War. But that in itself could not end the obsession of many statesmen with collective security. In 1945 the United Nations Organization was formed, still around the concept of collective security, with deference to the position of the realist on power politics. As Mark Zacher has put it, “statesmen now recognised that without the inclusion of the Great Powers-whose partial exclusion had, of course, contributed to the League’s demise - the new organization would likely share the fate of its predecessor.”<sup>2</sup>

“ MORE THAN EVER, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT ARE NOW INTIMATELY LINKED IN THE DISCOURSES ON THE ROLE OF INTEGRATION SCHEMES AND REGIONAL COLLECTIVE SECURITY

During the discussions preceding the formation of the United Nations, there was the question on whether the new security system should be oriented toward regionalism as advocated by Moscow and London, or toward universalism as Washington favoured. A proposal was made by the Great Powers for the San Francisco Conference in June 1945 to create an international collective security organization. However, changes were made to allow regional organizations to manage conflicts between their members. This was prompted by three considerations: (1) regional approach to interstate conflicts held more promise of eliciting collaboration; (2) global rivalries and divisions might inhibit the United Nations from dealing with some types of conflicts; and (3) some countries were just not too enthusiastic about the interventions of the Great Powers in their regions.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the strength of these concerns, they provided, in some sense, the justification for the UN provisions in Article 51-54. It was partly in response to this provision that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created in 1963 as the collective regional security apparatus for Africa. In 2002 the African Union (AU) replaced the OAU. Between the OAU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) many sub-regional integration schemes were ‘midwived’ into existence but initially for economic purposes.

1 Claude 1971: 216.

2 Zacher 1979: 2.

3 Zacher 1979: 2.

This paper briefly undertakes a conceptual and theoretical review of the classical and contemporary discourses on the relevance of regional integration to development in Africa and other regions in the global South. Also, it points out the growing importance of a regional approach to conflict management and peace-building process in Africa. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section introduces the main issues, while the second section presents an overview of conceptual and theoretical issues of regional integration, and looks at the re-conceptualization of African regional integration process to accommodate concerns for peace and development, and the appreciation of a regional approach to conflict prevention and peace processes. In the third section the paper highlights the influence of the global forces in terms of pressures on and opportunities for the development of regional approach to peace and development in Africa. The fourth section concludes the paper with suggestions and recommendations for further research on regional approaches to the promotion of peace and stability in Africa.

## CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Integration simply means bringing parts or units together to form a whole or creating interdependence. Integration can be said to exist when units join together in order to satisfy objectives which they cannot meet autonomously. In this way, integration can be a process that hastens up the achievement of certain objectives in the interest of a larger body. This process involves the shifting of loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new and larger centre whose institutions and processes demand some jurisdiction over those of the national states. The extent of such transfer of loyalties and jurisdiction enjoyed by the new centre depends on the level and goals of integration schemes as well as the socio-economic and political ramifications, which the implementation of integrative policies generate within and between the integrating units. Regarding regional integration the debate among scholars continues about the meaning of ‘integration’ to this day. However, there seems to be an agreement on the fact that regional integration can be regarded as a process or as a state of affairs reached by that process. According to Fritz Machlup, the question as to whether that state has to be a terminal point or intermediate point in the process can be taken care of by distinguishing between ‘complete’ and ‘incomplete’ integration. The more difficult question is what is to be integrated – people, areas, markets, production, goods, resources, policies, or something else?<sup>4</sup>

4 Machlup 1976: 63.

Although both have often been used interchangeably, the difference between ‘integration’ and ‘cooperation’ can be observed in both qualitative and quantitative contexts. While ‘cooperation’ may be employed to identify loose forms of interstate activity designed to meet some commonly experienced needs, ‘integration’ refers to a much more formal arrangement that involves some political and economic sacrifices as well as commitments, concessions, processes and political will to redefine participation in the international economy.<sup>5</sup> In this regard regional cooperation may be a phase in the process of regional integration. The efficiency and effectiveness of supranational structures have become key yardsticks for measuring the performance of integrative schemes. The assumption is that where the supranational structure wields adequate powers and commands respect and loyalty of member-states, conditions for qualitative integration exist. Since the evolution of modern European integration in the 1950s there has been significant improvement in the application of the principle of supranationality. However, both in Europe and elsewhere there have been varied experiences with different levels of success. For instance, the evolution of the European Community inspired some scholars and diplomats to nurse hopes that the nation-state would wither. But even within the European Union (EU) there are developments and events that suggest that “the nation state retains a unique capacity to inspire loyalty and obedience,<sup>6</sup> and that states are still sentimentally attached to national sovereignty.

David Mitrany is easily acknowledged as the father of functionalism in international relations. With his early work on *A Working Peace System* of 1943 he pioneered modern integrative theory. The central argument in David Mitrany’s theory is that international cooperation is the best way for softening antagonisms in the international environment. He therefore put forth a strong case in support of functional cooperation as the solution to the global peace problem. Mitrany saw the federalist approach, especially its European model, as a possible hindrance to peace. According to him, “The ‘European’ federalists have been so fascinated by a readily convenient formula that they have asked how it works where it exists, nor whether its origins bear any relation to the problem of uniting a group of states in the present social ambience.”<sup>7</sup> Instead of federation projects Mitrany recommended the establishment of functional agencies for the execution of international cooperation on all issue-related, mainly technical and economic sectors. He said this approach could eventually enmesh national governments in a dense network of

interlocking cooperative ventures. According to Mitrany, function, form and role can be determined by their organizational framework, and that when economic goals are realized, citizens will lose their loyalties to their respective primordial sovereign countries as “super-ordinate cooperative goals” are stressed. Mitrany’s thesis suggests that the development of collaboration in one sector will lead to collaboration in another; that is, functional cooperation in one section, resulting from felt need, will generate the need for functional collaboration in another sector. According to Robert Lieber (1973), “peaceful change would come not through a shift of national boundaries but by means of action taken across them.”<sup>8</sup> Some states would not readily compromise their sovereignties except to transfer executive authority for specific ends, functional cooperation in areas of need among states therefore seemed the only workable alternative for promoting world peace. The neo-functionalists successfully improved on the functionalist strategy based essentially on the European integration process. The works of Ernst Haas, Leon Lindberg, Phillip Schmitter and Stuart Scheingold are quite illuminating in this regard. Some neofunctionalists have likened the behaviour of an actor in a regional setting to that in a modern pluralist nation-states motivated by self-interest, and concluded that there is a continuum between economic integration and political union made possible through an automatic politicization. They argued that actors involved in an incremental process of decision-making, beginning with economic and social matters (welfare maximization) and gradually moving to the political sphere. They also prescribed “supranational agency” as a condition for “effective problem-solving,” which slowly extends its authority so as “to progressively undermine the independence of the nation-states.”<sup>9</sup> That political actors would “shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess on demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states” is central assumption of the neo-factionalists.<sup>10</sup>

As a theory of regional integration, neofunctionalism identifies three causal factors that interact with one another. These are: (1) growing economic interdependence between nations, (2) organizational capacity to resolve disputes and build international legal regimes, and (3) supranational market rules that replace national regulatory regimes.<sup>11</sup> There is the sense in which early neofunctionalist theory reflects the idealist assumption that nations-states would pursue welfarist objectives through their commitment to political and market integration at a higher, supranational level. In his

5 Axline 1977; Ihonvbere 1983.

6 Tugendhart 1985: 421.

7 Mitrany 1968: 52.

8 Lieber 1973: 42.

9 Lindberg, Scheingold 1970: 6.

10 Haas 2004: 16.

11 Haas 1961; Sandholtz, Sweet 1997.

work, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*, Ernst Haas pointed at three mechanisms as the driving forces behind regional integration. These include positive spillover, the transfer of domestic allegiances and technocratic automaticity.<sup>12</sup>

There are two fundamental fallacies in the assumptions and prescriptions of the functionalists and neo-functionalists – the separability of ‘Grosspolitik’ from welfare issues and the potential of international organizations. That peace can be automatically achieved through economic and social internationalization raises the question whether states can be made to join in a functional sector before setting their outstanding political and security issues which divide them. Apart from the “priority fallacy,” there is also the problem of ultimate transfer of loyalty and sovereignty from states to international organizations. One of the key justifications for the transfer of loyalty from the state to international organizations is the assumption that supranational agencies are better equipped to effectively and efficiently promote the interests of the people and states. However, judging from the operations of the universal and functionally specific international agencies, there are, to date, very few of such agencies that have moved very far in the direction of the neo-functionalist assumption that people are willing and capable of pressing their governments to transfer powers to international bodies.<sup>13</sup>

Although the theory of neofunctionalism has been modified and updated in a couple of recent studies which address some of the limitations of classical neo-functionalism.<sup>14</sup> These efforts have however focused essentially on European integration processes. The universalistic aspiration that the functionalist strategy could be implemented on a world-wide basis with no regard for the differences in the various regions of the world has been found to be deficient. Similarly, the failure to treat the world setting in which the regional integration takes place, and also recognizes the importance of exogenous factors as contributing variables constitute contradiction. In addition, the Europe-centeredness of the functionalist and neo-functionalist approaches make them almost irrelevant to integration process in the South. It was ironical however that in the early 1960s the majority of African leaders opted for gradualist functional cooperation based on the European model of regional integration. The quest for African unity was largely influenced by functionalist assumptions and propositions. Thus in May 1963 at Addis Ababa the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was signed.

12 Haas 2004.

13 Deutsch 1978: 210.

14 See for example: Sandholtz, Sweet 1998; Sweet, Sandholtz, Fligstein 2001.

Under the umbrella of the OAU independent African states declared their allegiance to the United Nations and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the African states and mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs. They also affirmed the need for solidarity and cooperation among African states. The signing of the OAU Charter can be seen as a demonstration of the preference of many African leaders for the gradualist strategy regarding regional integration.



THE EUROPE-CENTEREDNESS OF THE FUNCTIONALIST AND NEO-FUNCTIONALIST APPROACHES MAKE THEM ALMOST IRRELEVANT TO INTEGRATION PROCESS IN THE SOUTH

Federalism is a political and legal philosophy which adapts itself to all political contexts on both the municipal and the international level. Functionalism and federalism are two different strategies. However, their ultimate objectives are the same. Both seek to supersede the sovereign nation-state by peaceful means through an international organization that is better equipped to promote peace among nation-states.<sup>15</sup> The federalist approach seeks integration through a process of harnessing power whereby independent political units transfer certain powers to transnational bodies by treaty. In this way integration becomes a treaty-based linkage of sovereign or independent states for purpose of promoting economic or security interests. As an international integration theory federalism stresses the necessity for formally abolishing the sovereignty of a politically deficient nation-state by means of a dramatic constitutional act geared to eliminating the existing dispensation. In this way federalism recognizes and accepts nation-states as the basic unit in international system but seeks to overpower them by subordinating them to a supranational authority. This approach argues “that while common markets may flourish because of some men’s grubby and greedy minds, such mundane arrangements will never lead to political union because that status demands that the pride and fury associated with nationalism be eliminated first.”<sup>16</sup> Thus beyond functionalism and neo-functionalism, the federalist approach has potential capacity to overcome the contradictions associated with territorial nationalism that can hinder regional integration. For both the pluralists and federalists the question of integration “is not in the first instance an economic question but rather a question of politics, of power, and of responsiveness and control.”<sup>17</sup>

15 Malley 1973.

16 Haas 1970: 629.

17 Chime 1977: 50.





Among the basic prerequisites central to the process and outcome of the federalist approach are the search for unity, and genuine respect for the autonomy and the legitimate interests of the participant entities. According to Carl Friedrich, an international federal order is an arrangement that “is sufficiently loose for its members to have separate and autonomous relations with other states and at the same time develop or maintain joint relations.”<sup>18</sup> Thought of in this context, Carl Friedrich characterized the European Economic Community (now EU) as a model of international federalism; its members were able to conduct some aspects of their relations with the outside world as a single entity while still having the capacity to relate to the outside world in separate and individual capacity.<sup>19</sup> The federalist approach accords importance to supranational agencies as the vehicle through which a pattern of international cooperation is to be induced with the prospect of evolving into a political union.<sup>20</sup> Indeed the success of a federal arrangement depends to a large extent on the extent of power the bureaucracy wields.

The federalist approach to regional integration has been tested in Africa at different times. For instance in the 1940s, Kwame Nkrumah defined the concept of ‘West African unity’ as the means towards achieving a United States of Africa. However, Nkrumah’s idea could not record much success because of the egocentric attitude of African leaders to their newly won independence. Besides, legacies of colonialism such as the reality of division along metropolitan linguistic lines (Anglophone and Francophone) constituted impediments in some respects. The influence of external pressures was very great on most of the new African states that no matter how hard Nkrumah tried to spread the gospel of pan-Africanism the responses were not encouraging. The experiments with international integration through federalism in other parts of Africa were also not so much of a success. The East African Federation never took off as a federation while the Central African Federation existed only for very brief but turbulent period.

In all the above cases and other instances in Africa, it was not so much the challenges of colonial heritage, dependency, lack of complementarity or a host of other secondary factors but the absence of political commitment to the goal of federalism itself that worked against federalist form of regional integration in Africa. Where short terms goals were the main motivations for inaugurating the union, once the short term goals were achieved, disintegration set in. The study by Claude Welch on unification attempts in West Africa points to an obvious relationship between the transition to

independence and the likelihood of unification. The common interest in political independence brought the people closer and also encouraged them to link the goals of unification with that of independence. However, at the attainment of the goal of independence it became more and more difficult for the people and their leaders to make the commitments and sacrifices that go with unification.<sup>21</sup>

It has been said the “the dream of a federal Africa was sacrificed on the altar of pluralism”<sup>22</sup> at Addis Ababa in 1963 when the OAU Charter was signed and the majority of African leaders settled for the gradualist strategy for the promotion of African integration. As shown above other attempts at international federalism in Africa never resulted in any significant success. However, recent global developments and also events within the African continent suggest the need to revisit the discourse on the approaches to African integration and the strength and limitations of the federalist approach.

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## COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND QUEST FOR PEACE

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The AU is the latest of Africa’s broad regional integration schemes. By the close of the 1970s it had become evident that the OAU Charter needed some amendments to enable the Organization cope accurately with the challenges and the realities of the changing world. Consequently, in 1979 the Committee on the Review of the Charter was established, but the Committee was not able to formulate substantial amendments. However, for the OAU to continue to be relevant, the Charter was “amended” and augmented essentially through some ad hoc decisions of the Summit. Such include the Cairo Declaration Establishing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, etc. Even at that, it was increasingly necessary for the Organization to work towards greater efficiency. Considering some provisions of the AEC, there was urgent need to integrate the political activities of the OAU with the provisions of the AEC Treaty on economic and development issues to avoid duplications. Thus the Extraordinary Summit of the OAU held in Sirte, Libya on 9 September 1999 called for the establishment of an African Union in conformity with the ultimate objectives of the OAU Charter and the provisions of the AEC Treaty. Following this, the Consultative Act of the African Union was adopted during the Lomé Summit of the OAU on 11 July 2000. At the 5th Extraordinary OAU/AEC Summit held in Sirte, Libya on 1-2 March 2001, a decision declaring the establishment of the

18 Friedrich 1968: 84-85.

19 Friedrich 1968: 85.

20 Carnell 1961: 17.

21 Claude 1966.

22 Chime 1977: 49.



African Union, based on the unanimous will of members States was adopted. According to the immediate timetable agreed at the 5th Extraordinary OAU Summit in Sirte, Libya in March, the African Union came to into being at the 2002 OAU Summit, which took place in South Africa. Significant was what President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda said to justify the need for African Union: “What we actually need is to amalgamate the present 53 states of Africa into either one African Union or, at least, seven or so more viable states: West African Union, Congo, the East African Union, the Southern African Union, the Horn of Africa Union, the Maghreb Union with Egypt and Sudan.”<sup>23</sup>

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AU MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A QUALITATIVE CHANGE IN AFRICAN INTEGRATION; ONE THAT SEEKS TO PROMOTE PAN-AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION OVER AND ABOVE PSEUDO- NATIONALIST AND STATE-CENTRIC NOTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

The objectives of the African Union strengthen the founding principles of the OAU Charter, but are more comprehensive in acknowledging the multi-faceted challenges confronting the continent, especially in the areas of peace and security, and socio-economic development and integration. The Union is intended to, among other things: accelerate political and socio-economic integration; promote common Africa positions; promote democratic institutions, popular participation and good governance; protect human rights; promote sustainable development and the integration of African economies; work to eradicate preventable diseases and promote good health. The Constitutive Act provides for a number of institutions to carry out the operations and activities of the AU. The main organs of the AU include the Assembly, the Executive Council, the PAP,<sup>24</sup> the African Court of Justice, the Commission, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Specialized Technical Committees, and the Economic Social and Cultural Council. Also, in Article 19 of the Act of the AU a number of financial institutions are provided for. These include the African Central bank, the African Monetary Fund and the African Investment Bank. The AU has a number of special programmes to help facilitate its vision and quicken the realization of its goals. Such include the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the Conference on Security Stability Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA).

23 Museveni 2001: 12.

24 Pan-African Parliament (Editor's note – JvDb)

The various organs and institutions of the AU have developed separately, and mostly in unhealthy competition with each other rather than working in collaboration in pursuit of the big picture of political and economic integration of Africa. The global setting for the renewed commitment to Pan-Africanism and also the inclination towards federalist approach to regional integration is one that is characterized by the demise of the territorial state in international relations, and also the growing desire for deeper integration in Africa. Also at the continental level, there is growing awareness about the effectiveness of regional integrative and cooperative schemes in the prevention and management of conflicts which has defeated the idea of 'non-interference clause' that almost crippled the OAU (the AU's predecessor). On the danger of 'non-interference' in the internal affairs of African states, Former President Mandela once said: “we (African leaders) must accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene, when, behind those boundaries, people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny.”<sup>25</sup> Also, Eboe Hutchful lends credence to Mandela's notion of “sovereignty as responsibility” noting that the “defence of democracy and proper governance” is indeed “appropriate grounds for intervention” in the “internal affairs of other states.”<sup>26</sup> Indeed the establishment of the AU marked the beginning of a qualitative change in African integration; one that seeks to promote Pan-African regional integration over and above pseudo- nationalist and state-centric notion of sovereignty.

More than ever, the world today is experiencing a re-awakening of supranationalism. In response to the tension between these rising tides and nationalism, the EU came up with a workable hybrid model that balances 'inter-governmentalism' and 'supranationalism.' Inter-governmentalism represents platforms for interstate cooperation which puts less demands on states. In reality most international organizations exhibit the features of both supranationalism and inter-governmentalism. For example, the Council of the European Union, the primary decision-making organ of the EU consists of national ministers who primarily champion the agenda of their governments while they still remain part of the Council. On the other hand, the United Nations which is a model of intergovernmental organisation sometimes exercises supranational powers through its Security Council. It is this hybrid model that seems to be gaining prominence in the operations of most international and regional organizations as the states push for greater cooperation among themselves. African states that hitherto “held on to the idea of nation-state and national sovereignty appear to be on the path

25 Mandela 1998: 2.

26 Hutchful 1998: 1.

towards rejecting both.” With “the resurgence of ‘African consciousness’ they are demonstrating renewed commitment to regional and continental institutions through numerous treaties in pursuit of regional integration.<sup>27</sup> Arguably the transformation of the Organization of African Union (OAU) to the African Union (AU) in some respects benefited from the paradigm shift in regional integration that favours the cohabitation of supranationalism and inter-governmentalism.

The Constitutive Act of the AU (CAAU), in its objectives, places premium on the promotion of peace, security, and stability in Africa (Article 3 (f)). Also, enshrined in its principles are peaceful resolution of conflicts, the prohibition of the use of force or threats to use force, rights of intervention in the affairs of member states in case of “grave circumstances” related to war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity (Articles 4 (c ), (f), and (h) respectively ). The Acts provides that “the Mechanism shall maintain close working relations with the PAP in furtherance of peace, security and stability in Africa.” The Protocol highlights specific areas of collaboration and cooperation between the PAP and the Peace and Security Council. One important area of cooperation is ensuring the PAP’s access to important reports notably the annual report on the state of peace and security in the continent, and the report of the Peace and Security Council in order for the former to discharge its responsibilities relating to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa. Also, the Chairperson of the Commission is required to take all steps to facilitate the exercise powers by the PAP as it relates to the objective of promoting peace, security and stability. The language of the Protocol that frames the relationship between the Peace and Security Council and the PAP is affirmative and obligatory. The former has no discretion on whether or not to relate with the Parliament. The Peace and Security Council has to relate with the PAP in very specific ways. The Protocol, in not so many words, puts the PAP in an oversight position on peace and security on the Continent. Whenever the PAP requests for report from the Council, the latter is under obligation to provide it. Even if the PAP does not request reports, the Chairperson of the Commission is under obligation to present annual reports to the Parliament on the state of peace and security on the continent.<sup>28</sup>

The existing legal and political relationships among the key AU institutions are not well-defined which seems to pose some challenges. Whereas the African leaders fast tracked the process that culminated in the

birth of AU, there was no evidence that the African peoples in their different social categories were involved. Only “few African leaders chose to open the subject of a new union for public discussion within their countries.”<sup>29</sup> A survey conducted in 15 African countries between 2002 and 2003 shows that only 49 per cent of the respondents have heard of continental bodies like the African Union (even when referred to in the questionnaire by its former name, the OAU or even the regional economic community in their region namely SADC, EAC and ECOWAS).<sup>30</sup>

The world is witnessing continued movement toward broader and deeper integration among nation-states in various regions of the world, and also that non-states and sub-national actors are increasingly relevant in areas that were previous the domain of the nation-state, including the security and economic realms. At the continental level, historical and contemporary developments seem to support increased African integration. Recent trends and developments show many African countries to be on the side of increased commitment to regional cooperation and integration. We note in particular the untiring efforts of these countries as well as the renewed interest of the political elites in Pan-Africanism, which culminated first in the establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC) and lately the inauguration of AU. The central question however is how African states, working with the African Union (AU) with supranational powers, are likely to adapt to these new realities that characterized the Third Millennium. Also, what are the prospects for success given that African states have been generally portrayed as being emotionally attached to sovereignty and therefore less disposed towards supporting a supranational body?

Contrary to the view that Africans are emotionally attached to sovereignty and that this may work against supranationalism, the new conception of African integration tends to accord much to the AU Authority. The situation has changed since the period after the independence when it was fashionable to emphasize sovereignty and territorial nationalism. As indicated above the incorporation of the concept of supranationality into the AEC encouraged other integrative arrangements to buy into the concept and practice of supranationalism. Arguably the establishment of the African Union in 2002 and some of the follow-up activities (including the recent transformation of the AU Commission into African Authority) have further consolidated the institutionalization of supranationalism in the African integration process.

<sup>27</sup> Oppong 2011: 1.

<sup>28</sup> See Article 18 (1-3) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

<sup>29</sup> Packer, Rukare 2002: 365.

<sup>30</sup> Afrobarometer 2003.

At the continental level, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) dominated the scene for over three decades with a mandate to resolve conflicts. While the “regionalist” approach of the OAU was quite appreciated, it lacked the political courage and institutional capacity for managing conflicts. Although the OAU Charter provided for the organization to settle African disputes and conflicts, its performance in this area was hardly impressive. The regionalist approach of the OAU found easy accommodation within the assumptions of the idealist school. Apart from lacking the political courage, the institutional capacity of the OAU for managing conflicts was largely inadequate. Indeed, its role was later appropriated by sub-regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Clearly, by the end of the Cold War the OAU had still not emerged as a regional organization with sufficient clout to manage African conflicts. This, coupled with other developments in the post-Cold-War period, necessitated a rethinking among scholars and policy makers on what should be the role of regional organizations in the promotion of peace and development in Africa. The sub-regional schemes quickly responded as was demonstrated in the case of the intervention of ECOWAS in the Liberian crisis.

After operating the Treaty Establishing the ECOWAS (1975) for almost a period of two decades, the Treaty was found to be inadequate in some critical areas such as political cooperation, and regional peace and security. Other areas of inadequacy include the weak binding effect of the decisions of the Authority and the Council, and the near absence of supranational power within ECOWAS as a regional organization. Consequently, the Committee of Eminent Persons to Review the ECOWAS Treaty was set up to consider the legislative powers of the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the financing of the budgets of the Community institutions; and the decision making procedures of the Authority and the Council of Ministers. The Committee in its deliberations identified four issues: institutional matters; political cooperation, regional peace and security, financing of regional integration efforts, and available options for cooperation and regional economic integration. The Revised Treaty of ECOWAS was adopted by the Heads of State in July 1993. Today ECOWAS is more associated with regional security in West Africa, and it has done considerably very well in the areas of ensuring regional peace and security as well as promoting democracy and good governance in the sub-region. Interestingly this has earned ECOWAS a measure of international recognition. Since its intervention in the Liberia crisis, ECOWAS has successfully intervened in Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and most recently Mali.

The development of a supranational security mechanism for conflict management and peace-keeping has progressed far more in West Africa under the Revised Treaty. ECOWAS has scaled up its normative instruments and institutional arrangements to anticipate and confront challenges to peace and security in the region, particularly with regard to conflicts and political governance. The security mechanism of ECOWAS consists of a Mediation and Security Council, a Defence and Security Commission, and a Council of Elders. The Mediation and Security Council is made up of ten members, and decisions are made by a two-thirds majority of six members. It is important to note that the security mechanism of ECOWAS recognises the role of the civil society in peace process and accords it the opportunity to contribute to the organisation’s early warning system mechanism. In 2008 an ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was adopted to guide the organisation’s preventive diplomacy, which has further been strengthened by the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, with the provision on zero-tolerance for ascension to power through unconstitutional means. There is an ECOWAS peace keeping mission in Guinea Bissau, ECOMIB. Also, ECOWAS is implementing a multi-million dollar defence and security sector reform programme in the country as part of the efforts to restore peace and democracy in the country. The recent intervention of ECOWAS in the Malian crisis benefitted from the efficiency of the ECOWAS institutions that came with the on-going reforms. The success of the intervention by ECOWAS paved the way for the transformation of the African-led International Support Mission into the UN mission.

Arguably, the success story in the area of conflict management and peace keeping can be linked to the commitment of the ECOWAS to good governance and democratization. It suffices to say that ECOWAS worked closely with the African Union and the United Nations to restore order and legality in the member states Guinea, Niger and Ivory Coast. Similarly, the same principles of ECOWAS with respect to democracy and good governance guided the stand it took on the presidential elections in Guinea, Niger, Benin, and Nigeria. The concern about the implications of the ‘Boko Haram’ for regional security in West Africa has been expressed by ECOWAS at different levels. The ECOWAS parliament discussed the issue in one of its plenary sessions, noting that the ECOWAS and other countries within the region were already finding ways of assisting Nigeria.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has a model of regional collective security that is almost similar to that of ECOWAS. Since the end of the apartheid era, SADC has undergone a radical realignment, with South Africa becoming its de facto leader rather than its primary



target. SADC's 1992 Treaty states clearly that the consolidation, defence, and maintenance of democracy, peace, security and stability is one of the main objectives of the organization. As in the case of Nigeria in ECOWAS/ECOMOG, having South Africa on board has contributed to the effectiveness of SADC's security and economic functions. SADC's conflict management strategy is based on the mandate of the Organ on Politics Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDS), the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO), SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and other relevant UN and AU protocols and guidelines.

The OPDS and the SADC Troika are required to, among others, prevent, manage and resolve "inter and intra-state conflicts, by peaceful means employing inter alia, preventive diplomacy, negotiations, conciliation, and mediation." But the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation stresses the principles of strict respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aggression while the SIPO refers to mediation as a strategic activity not open to International Cooperation Partners (ICPs) funding. Expectedly these restrictions have implications for SADC's performance in conflict management as in the cases of Zimbabwe and Madagascar. The SADC Organ was established in 1996 and it was envisaged that it would become the institutional framework within which SADC countries would coordinate their policies and activities in the areas of politics, defence and security. However, disagreement among members over different interpretations of certain sections of the charter has inhibited the operations of the Organ. Somehow the SADC has been able to record some success in political mediation in the Comoros, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The organization is set to establish Mediation Unit to enhance its capacity for mediation, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy within the SADC region.

These accomplishments notwithstanding, the dream of regional security community is still far from being realised in the SADC region. There are other issues that make cooperation among the member states of SADC more difficult. One of such is the border dispute between Malawi and Tanzania. The SADC Treaty (Article 9) empowers the SADC Tribunal to adjudicate on inter-state disputes. The Tribunal is however suspended, and in its absence a SADC mediation process was instituted through the Forum for Former African Heads of State and Government whose performance has not come through as very impressive. These seemingly poor performance indicators of SADC's ability to manage its internal affairs effectively have not inspired confidence in many as to its ability to ensure peace and stability in the southern Africa. The perception of SADC as being biased regarding

Zimbabwe, following the election, which SADC endorsed as 'credible' and 'peaceful.' Also, SADC faces some constraints which include: the absence of an effective Regional Early Warning System (REWS), poor political will and courage, weakness of the main institutions (especially the Organ's secretariat which is subordinate to the Organ Troika and cannot exercise control over member states), and lack of a strong financial base for mediation efforts. Also, while the SADC Standby Force is sufficiently adequate for military operations, it's generally lacking in capacities for managing humanitarian crises. Similarly, SADC does not have a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction programme that is necessary for sustainable peace in the region.



THE DREAM OF REGIONAL SECURITY COMMUNITY  
IS STILL FAR FROM BEING REALISED  
IN THE SADC REGION

The Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has begun to assert a role for itself in the resolution of sub-regional conflicts in the Horn of Africa. IGAD is a sub-regional organization that has the primary task of coordinating some regional resource issues. It was formed in 1986 and initially known as Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). Its membership now consists of six countries that include Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. It was in March 1996 that the Heads of IGAD amended the organization's charter to cover political and economic issues, including conflict resolution. With respect to conflict management, the periodic summits of IGAD have provided the necessary forum for heads of state to meet and discuss conflict issues among other things. For example at the 1986 IGAD summit the leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia had the opportunity to initiate talks that eventually led to détente and the demilitarization of their borders<sup>31</sup>. Because of perceived threats from conflicts in Somalia and Sudan security issues received prompt attention in the agenda of IGAD, especially in the early 1990s. Although its efforts were not quite successful, IGAD mediated in the civil war in Sudan in September 1993, and made some headway in 1994. IGAD resumed its role in 1997 but not very much has been accomplished beyond keeping the process going. Recently, IGAD pressurized the two armed factions in South Sudan to begin talks towards peaceful resolution of the recent outbreak of violent conflicts.

The Horn of Africa is bedevilled by serious inter- and intra-state conflicts. All the countries in IGAD have had significant internal security

31 Deng 1996: 137



problems. For example, Sudan has been engulfed in conflict for more than three decades. The newly independent South Sudan is almost torn apart due to inter-ethnic conflicts. With pressures from the international community IGAD is according priority to the issue of peace and security. IGAD operates its mandate on the prevention, management and resolution of inter and intra-state conflicts essentially through the means of political dialogue and cooperation with the AU. In this regard it has made some efforts to deal with the pro-long conflict in Somalia. For example, member states were ready to amend the mandate of IGAD which did not permit sending troops to remember states in order to be able to organized peace keeping missions. One of the challenges is the sensitivity of members about the issue of sovereignty and internal affairs. There is also the problem of unhealthy rivalry and competition between members state of IGAD. Neither Sudan nor Ethiopia has demonstrated the actual or potential attributes of a “core state” to assume leadership responsibility within IGAD. In addition, IGAD is confronted with the problem of lack of funds. None of the member state is rich enough to provide support in the sense that Nigeria supported ECOMOG operations in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. Hence, the accomplishments of IGAD have remained quite marginal compared with either ECOWAS or even SADC.

Apart from ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD, there are a handful of less-known sub-regional initiatives on conflict prevention and management operating in Africa. These include the ECCAS, Arab Maghreb Union and the little-known community of Sahelian-Saharan states that once mooted the idea of creating an intervention force to help settle the border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. It is interesting to note that the recently revived East African Community (EAC) has bounced back to life giving due consideration to matters of regional security and peace. In June 1998, the three EAC member states - Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda - together with the US undertook their first joint peacekeeping exercise. In Central Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), under the guardian of the AU and the support of the EU, is promoting political and security cooperation in the sub-region. Although its members have signed some relevant treaties and protocols such as the protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council for Central Africa (Conseil de paix et de sécurité de l'Afrique Centrale, COPAX), however, ECCAS still has no comprehensive policy framework for ensuring regional peace and security. The problem of poor internal governance is very much associated with ECCAS coupled with its weak financial based that makes it to be excessively dependent on external assistance and support. For example, recently responsibility for the African peacekeeping force in the Central African Republic (MISCA) was officially transferred from the ECCAS to the AU primarily because under ECCAS the

force lacked both the capacity and credibility required to mediate effectively in conflicts.

In West Africa the Accord de Non-Agression et d'Assistance en Matière de Défense (ANAD) was signed in June 1977 by Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo. Benin and Guinea Conakry were granted observer status at the meetings of the organization. ANAD's main objective at its creation was to promote security and stability in order to enhance economic development. It was not a supranational body, and neither did it develop any military policy. It stated quite clearly that it was a defensive alliance, and that any attack on any member would be interpreted as an attack on the entire alliance.<sup>32</sup> Its mode of operation includes dialogue and negotiation to resolve conflict among members, and the use of a peace intervention force should the former fail. Also, it stipulated that an external attack against a member state from outside would entail the following courses of action: firstly, a search for a diplomatic solution, to be followed by an imposition of sanctions short of the use of force, and finally, as a last resort, the use of armed force to counter and reverse the aggression. Although it was originally conceived as a non-aggression and mutual defence pact, but ANAD has today transcended the initial status of sub-regional security to include areas of high level integration such as common policy formulation and co-operation on broader issues of human security.

Noticeably where sub-regional mechanisms for conflict management have recorded appreciable success like in the case of ECOWAS/ECOMOG in West Africa, it is arguably the results of paying regard to issues of good governance and democratization. Amadu Sesay argues that the sub-regional groupings that have enjoyed relative success stress the central role of democratization and good governance in their programmes of conflict management and resolution.<sup>33</sup> Some of the principles espoused the Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States and other major declarations on the various conflicts in West Africa underline the notion that democratization coupled with responsive and responsible governance are the most effective conflict management tools. In contrast, where it has been difficult to get members of sub-regional schemes to agree to operate sub-regional conflict management mechanisms with due consideration to issues of good governance and democracy, the returns on investment on collective security have been rather low. The SADC in some respects illustrates a case of lack of consensus among member states on how to deal with the issues of human rights, democratization and good governance.

<sup>32</sup> Alao 2000.

<sup>33</sup> Sesay 2002.

While sub-regional groupings in Africa continue to make contributions towards peace and development through a regional security approach, the AU has also scaled up its interventions towards the promotion of regional peace and stability on the continent. Its main mechanism for this is the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), that includes the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), a Continental Early Warning System, an enhanced mediation capacity, an African Stand-by Force (ASF), and a Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework. At the inaugural AU summit in 2002, it was agreed that a Peace and Security Council (PSC) be established with the responsibility of preventing, managing, and revolving conflicts in Africa. The PSC has been established and efforts are being made by African leaders to ensure that the PSC is structured in a way that guarantees its effectiveness. Unlike the OAU mechanism, the AU has the “right to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the PSC in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.” Since 2004 when it was established the PSC has made significant progress leveraging benefits from the evolving cooperation between the AU and UN especially in the area of information sharing. This has contributed towards the success of the mission in Somalia, particularly the joint assessment on the African Union’s Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). It has not been a success all the way, though. Cooperation between the UN and AU has not worked as well in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR). Other problems confronting the PSC include lack of funds, and the absence of definite status in relation to sub-regional organizations.

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## GLOBAL PRESSURES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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External actors have always played a prominent role in both the economy and politics of Africa because of the importance of the region to the geostrategic interests of the major international actors, which include the access to resources, oil and other strategic minerals. In the recent times anti-terrorism has been added to the motives for the growing interests in Africa, especially in the West. This logic provides the general context for the interests of some members of the international community providing support in order to manage African conflicts. However, it is of importance to note seeming inconsistencies in the reactions and responses of some of the external actors. For example, how does one reconcile the prompt reactions to revolts and uprising in Libya with the silence of Washington and Brussels over the revolt against Ben Ali of Tunisia?

Arguably, the United States broadly has remained committed to its strategic interests in Middle East and North Africa. Thus its responses have been based largely on its assessment of individual events vis-à-vis its national interests. However, in the case of Libya it would appear that Washington was committed to an agenda for regime change given the extent of support it gave to the Transitional National Council.<sup>34</sup> Also, the United States initially supported the Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party of Egypt possibly in order to advance one of its strategic interests – the ‘war on terror’, which the Brotherhood was perceived to be willing to help prosecute in the Arab world. Similarly, the response of France to the conflicts in Ivory Coast, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and most recently the Central African Republic need to be properly studied. Could it be that France is now more concerned about the need to regain its lost status and influence in Africa?

Recently the United States announced that it has budgeted up to \$101 million to help the African forces and France to re-establish security in the Central African Republic. The announcement came after the initial promise to set aside \$40 million for the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) in November 2013. Other forms of US assistance consist of military aid for foreign troops stationed in the CAR and \$15 million in humanitarian aid. Why this investment to support regional peace initiatives in CAR? Also, China’s participation in peacekeeping and peace building operations in the continent is provoking concerns in some circles where China is seen as a mere opportunist. Some may argue that China’s economic activities in Africa are contributing to favourable conditions for violent conflicts. For example, the same China that provided a large contingent of peacekeeping troops to Liberia was also perpetuating and sustaining the rule of Charles Taylor by its involvement in their illicit buying of timber. Also, China’s increasing involvement as a supplier of arms to Africa remains a source of concern.

Examples of EU assistance towards peace and security in Africa include the support of the AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur, the CEMAC mission in the Central African Republic, and the institutional capacity building programme for the AU. In addition to building the capacity of African institutions, the EU is supporting direct international intervention within the framework the EU Africa strategy. Other areas of EU security

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<sup>34</sup> Libya’s Transitional National Council has a sizeable number of its members from the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamists such as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. The Brotherhood was comfortably set to play a significant role in the new government in Libya. The Brotherhood received substantial support from the US allies in the Arab world.

engagements in Africa within the context of the EU Africa Strategy include the police mission (EUPOL) and security sector reform programme. As it is generally with external support and assistance, recipient's choice and preference come after the donor's priorities and considerations. Most of the funding of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) under the AU-EU partnership has been carried out selectively under the African Peace Facility (APF) with concentration on military activities of PSOs through the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Faced with the challenge of inadequate resources, selective funding makes it difficult for other components of the assistance programme (like the institutional development of the APSA); so they suffer neglect. Also, there are the challenges of delay and late response, in part due to over-bureaucratization of processes and procedures. While the EU's assistance demonstrates commitment to the promotion of peace and security on the continent, in a sense it can be said that this is a response to the challenge of global insecurity, of which African peace and security challenges constitute a significant part.

On the whole there is a new global consensus on the relevance of regional integration to African peace and development. The dominant idea, which is rooted in contemporary political economy thought, is that regional integration is still a very effective means of promoting the goals of self-reliance, peace and development. The most recent African plan for economic development is the NEPAD, and a regional approach to development is the key element through which many of the expected results are to be accomplished. NEPAD among other things is seeking to define regional integration in a way that it will transcend the economic sphere to include other aspects of development. It is interesting to note that many regional and sub-regional schemes are buying fast into this new conceptualization of regional integration. However, as this goes on, African development is increasingly susceptible to global pressures; especially those associated with neo-liberalism such as the new global trade regimes (notably the US's African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), EU-sponsored Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and other elements of economic globalization).

There is also a new global crusade around the themes of 'democratization,' 'good governance,' and 'human rights,' and the global North has emerged as the undisputed vanguard of this crusade since the end of the Cold War. The consequences for the countries from the global South, especially those that depend on external assistance and trade concessions is 'aid fatigue' in the face of tough 'conditionalities,' which in most cases require aid seekers to compulsorily adhere to liberal democratic principles in the least. The EU, since the late 1980s, has become prominently associated with the

promotion of human rights and liberal democratic values, and this in many respects has affected the orientation of its relationship with its partners in the South. For example: the political dimension of development cooperation has gained much prominence in its partnership relationships. This has been demonstrated with the European Union-Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (EU-ACP) Conventions, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA), and lately the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership under which the EU is supporting some African development initiatives.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The foregone discussion has demonstrated the strong link between conflict and development, and its centrality to the discourses on regional approaches to peace in Africa. African leaders themselves have come to see peace and development as going hand in hand. This was forcefully stated by the founders of NEPAD in 2001, which identify peace as one of the two prerequisites for development. Also, international partners in Africa are fast placing their resources at the disposal of African regional and sub-regional organizations to promote a regionalist approach to development and collective security in Africa. The G8 Africa Action Plan was adopted in Kananaskis, Canada in 2002. It set out comprehensive G8 commitments with focus on peace support operations in Africa. The international community has a key-role to play in supporting these African-led efforts. Also, within the framework of the EU Strategy for Africa, the EU members are committed to helping with the development of the ASF through training, by providing advisory, technical, planning, financial and logistic support and, among other things, by continuing to implement the European Security and Defence Action Plan in support of peace and security in Africa. The EU has also set up a Peace Facility for Africa.

There is a growing support for the pursuit of peace and development in Africa through regional approaches. However, despite some success stories, conflict management mechanisms of regional organizations in Africa are still developing. While at the continental level, efforts are present to ensure adequate institutional frameworks for some of the new initiatives; at the sub-regional levels established institutional frameworks and structures are absent. Because of the absence of institutionalized structures for conflict management, conflict resolution initiatives have mostly taken ad hoc forms. The SADC best illustrates this limitation. It lacks integrated systems, processes and methods to deal with issues such as human rights and the advancement of democracy and good governance. The lack of consensus among SADC



member states on “how the Organ should relate to the SADC Summit,” coupled with the lack of “the requisite political will and institutional capacity” has not helped SADC to evolve into regional security community.<sup>35</sup> Also, the ideological division among member states has continued to hamper the work of the Organ.<sup>36</sup> For example: While the group comprising of Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia are disposed towards military solutions to conflict, another group made up of South Africa, Mozambique and to some extent Zambia are in support of the principles and objectives of the SADC Organ. Also, the absence of effective early warning systems and risk assessment capacities in many of the sub-regional and regional security arrangements in Africa in turn makes them considerably weak in conflict prevention.

Despite their obvious shortcomings, regional organizations still largely represent primary units of security and conflict management for the African continent. Both the United Nations and other major actors in the international community have given explicit approval to the increased engagement of regional organizations in conflict management. Also, it is now clear to African states themselves that they have to rely less on the generosity of the North to manage African conflicts. Both the United Nations and other major actors in the international community have given explicit approval to increase engagement of sub-regional organization with conflict management. And AU members have gone ahead to establish the African Standby Force (ASF) in response to developments and changes in the peacekeeping environment.

Finally, further research, to identify and define issues in the link between African development and collective security more precisely is required. Therefore in-depth studies of the political economy of African conflicts should be encouraged and supported by critical stakeholders within and outside continental Africa. Such initiatives should necessarily consider the importance of scientific research, which entails data and information gathering, analyses and re-analyses. For example, while the impacts of civil wars in Africa are becoming common research subjects, the role of the business community, organized private sectors, and other components of the civil society are frequently un-documented. Also, there is need to generate a lot of information to determine the logics and interests of the external actors and their suitability for interventions in African conflicts. Other issues for in-depth research include the influence of the external environment on African conflicts.

35 Dieter, Lamb, Melber 2001: 65.

36 Dieter, Lamb, Melber 2001: 65.

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# REGIONAL GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

IAN TAYLOR

article  
abstract

DIVERSE TYPOLOGIES OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (SSA) MAY BE IDENTIFIED, CURRENTLY SHAPING THE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX SCALES AND SPACE ASSOCIATED WITH REGIONALISM ON THE CONTINENT. THREE MAIN TYPES CAN BE ILLUSTRATED THAT, THOUGH NOT FITTING THE NARROW INSTITUTIONALISM OF MOST WORKS ON REGIONALISM, EXPLAIN AND DESCRIBE THE DAY-TO-DAY CONDITIONS ENCOUNTERED BY MOST AFRICAN CITIZENS. THESE ARE: NEO-LIBERAL REGIONAL GOVERNANCE; SOVEREIGNTY-BOOSTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE; AND REGIONAL SHADOW GOVERNANCE. THIS ARTICLE SEEKS TO HELP EXPLAIN THE ORIGINS, THE MAIN ACTORS, AND THE PURPOSES OF THESE THREE VARIETIES OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE. IT IS ASSERTED THAT REGIONALISM IN SSA IS MORE COMPLEX (AND SOMETIMES ALSO MORE DETRIMENTAL) THAN SIMPLY BEING AN INSTRUMENT TO

ENHANCE AN AMBIGUOUS "NATIONAL INTEREST" (THE REALIST VIEW) OR THE PROCUREMENT OF THE "PUBLIC GOOD" OR "TRADE" (WHICH UNDERPINS LIBERAL EXPLANATIONS). POTENTIALLY, STATE ACTORS CREATE REGIONALIZATION IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE PRIVATE GOALS AND PROMOTE PARTICULAR (VESTED) INTERESTS RATHER THAN BROADER SOCIETAL INTERESTS. AS A RESULT, REGIONALIZATION WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE HARMONIOUS OR BENEFICIAL TO ALL PARTICIPANTS, CONTRADICTING THE LIBERAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE INHERENT WORTHINESS OF COMMERCE. ON THE CONTRARY, REGIONALIZATION MAY BE EXCLUSIONARY, EXPLOITATIVE, AND ALSO REINFORCE ASYMMETRIES AND IMBALANCES WITHIN SOCIETY AND WITHIN AND ACROSS GEOGRAPHIC SPACES.

REGIONALIZATION, NEOLIBERAL REGIONAL GOVERNANCE, SOVEREIGNTY-BOOSTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE, REGIONAL SHADOW GOVERNANCE, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

keywords

This article is an attempt to provide an overview of the diverse typologies of regional governance in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which are currently shaping the increasingly complex scales and space associated with regionalism on the continent. Three main types can be identified that, though not fitting the narrow institutionalism of most work on regionalism, explains and describes the day-to-day conditions encountered by most African citizens. These are: neoliberal regional governance; sovereignty-boosting regional governance; and regional shadow governance. This article seeks to help explain the origins, the main actors, and the purposes of these three varieties of regional economic governance.



It is asserted that regionalism in SSA is more complex (and sometimes also more detrimental) than simply being an instrument to enhance an ambiguous “national interest” (the realist view) or the procurement of the “public good” or “trade” (which underpins liberal explanations). Potentially, state actors create regionalization in order to achieve private goals and promote particular (vested) interests rather than broader societal interests. As a result, regionalization will not necessarily be harmonious or beneficial to all participants, contradicting the liberal assumptions about the inherent worthiness of commerce. On the contrary, regionalization may well be exclusionary, exploitative, and also reinforce asymmetries and imbalances within society and within and across geographic spaces.

### NEOLIBERAL REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

The great majority of formal present-day regionalist schemes in Africa are founded on the notion that the regional economic integration project should be market-driven, outward-looking, and remove obstacles to the “free” movement of goods, services, capital and investment within the regions as well as to the rest of the world. The overall intention is to ensure a closer integration into the world economy. The main justification of this strategy is that it contributes more to the process of (global) liberalization than it detracts from it. According to this line of thinking, which is often labelled “open regionalism” or “adjustment-adapted market integration,”<sup>1</sup> there is no contradiction in the great number of co-existing regional trading and economic integration schemes in Africa since they are all perceived to contribute to the same goal of liberalization, reduced protectionism, and downsizing of the role of the state in the economy. In Southern and Eastern Africa there is a number of co-existing regional interstate frameworks, such as the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Cross-Border Initiative/Regional Integration Facilitation Forum (CBI/RIFF), and the Indian Ocean Rim Trade Bloc (IORTB). A similar pattern exists in most other macro-regions in Africa, West Africa being particularly apposite in this regard. Although each regional project can be seen as a mode of governance in its own right, it is striking how the various projects conform to the same overall neoliberal belief system and broader “system of rule.”

The external and “global” dimension is crucial. The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and American and European donor agencies

strongly promote, enforce, and support neoliberal regional governance. However, although the African regional organizations and African states often claim to be supportive of neoliberal regional governance, there is also resistance. In this sense it is sometimes more of a model than the real existing mode of regional governance on the African continent.

Hand in hand with neoliberal governance at the macro-regional level, there is a simultaneous and perhaps even stronger logic at play on the micro-regional level. Southern Africa is a good illustration of such trends. The Southern African region is reconfigured by the implementation of a number of spatial development initiatives (SDIs).<sup>2</sup> These are targeted, short-term interventions with the main purpose to crowd-in private investment in order to unlock economic potential, to enhance regional economic integration, and to become integrated into the global economy. It is a bold neoliberal market paradigm that rules investment decisions. As stated by one of the main architects: “In order to be selected for inclusion in the SDI process, a project must offer a commercially viable return on investment, ie it must be a bankable project — a project which a commercial financial institution would be willing to back.”<sup>3</sup> The SDIs are governance mechanisms designed to quickly change legislation, change the role of the public/state, broaden the ownership base of the economy, and enhance market “competition.” As such they are designed to be part of a broader pattern of neoliberal regional governance in Southern Africa.

Considering the size of the SDI projects, they are weakly institutionalized. All are supposed to have “Corridor Planning Committees,” yet rarely meet and in fact are mostly moribund. This is unsurprising, given that these Planning Committees are supposed to be composed of representatives of all stakeholders along the entire corridor, who are supposed to plan coordinated land allocation and use. Yet this approach naively assumes that the different stakeholders have compatible interests or motives when in fact the profit motive which drives the entire SDI approach often clashes with common civil usage, often communal in nature. It is true that there is an intention to be informal and nonbureaucratic, as this allows for flexibility and adjustability to private and contextual demands, but this has often come at the expense of coherency.

However, such a mode of regional governance represents a radical shift from “older” formal and ambitious public modes of governance in favour of a notion that conforms to neoliberal globalization, whereby “too

<sup>1</sup> Cross-Border Initiative 1995; World Bank 1989; Haarløv 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Africansdi.com; Söderbaum, Taylor 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Jourdan 1998: 20.

much government” is considered a systemic fault. According to the official view, there is only a need for minimal formal organizations and institutions since these are seen as rent seeking and bureaucratic anyway. The result is a narrow and exclusivist governance mechanism, geared only or primarily towards enhancing privatization and private investment projects and public-private partnerships (PPPs). This implies a loss of public participation and democratic control in the decision-making and implementation process. Again informality serves the interests of the powerful and wealthy, especially a small ruling political elite and transnational capitalist interests.<sup>4</sup>



THE PRINCIPLE OF FORMAL SOVEREIGNTY HAS CLEARLY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN AFRICA. WHILE MANY AFRICAN STATES ARE EXTREMELY “WEAK”

Through the two-track model of open regionalism and SDIs, an informal but nevertheless strong coalition of economic and political elite interests, led by South African actors create and sustain neoliberal regional governance in Southern Africa, which also draws in (outward-oriented) economic and political elites in the neighbouring countries. As indicated above, to a significant extent this mode of governance is also actively promoted from the outside through external actors, such as the IFIs and the European and American donor community.

According to neoliberal regional governance, “good governance” is thus defined as “less government” and “getting the prices right,” rather than providing public goods and intervening in the economy and ensuring poverty reduction.<sup>5</sup> It indicates the commodification of basic material needs and everyday life, which only results in a retreat of the conventional welfare and development ambitions of the state. Poverty reduction is reduced to economic growth, and development projects must be “bankable” and “profitable.” The public is needed mainly to ensure an enabling environment for the private. In other words, the public has been subsumed under the private. It is a systemic fault in this type of governance to accommodate the interests of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the unemployed who lack the means to participate, much less “compete” on a global market.<sup>6</sup>

4 Söderbaum, Taylor 2003.

5 Thompson 2000: 41-58.

6 Mittelman 2000; Niemann 2000.

In accepting this ideology, the government/ state becomes the disciplining spokesperson of global economic forces — a “transmission belt for transnational capital”— rather than the protector against these forces, which is the classical task of mercantilist nation building and public governance.<sup>7</sup> Although all strategies are surrounded by rhetoric of people-centred development, the role of public institutions has been reduced to implement trade and investment liberalization or boost new bankable and commercially viable investment projects, often of gigantic proportions. Even public roads are commercialized. In this process the main function of the state has been reduced to a gigantic investment promotion agency. Although neo-patrimonialism is obviously not absent in Southern Africa, it remains true that the region is home to most of Africa’s “functioning” (to use a Western understanding of the term) states. Thus their ability, capacity and willingness to yield to private actors are perhaps stronger than in any part of the continent.

## SOVEREIGNTY-BOOSTING GOVERNANCE

It should be noted that it is a widespread belief in the research field that “regional integration” requires a ceding of state sovereignty and national decision-making authority to supranational institutions.<sup>8</sup> Although this dichotomy between sovereignty and functioning regional integration is first and foremost a remnant from neofunctional theory, it continues to plague the debate. The notion that sovereignty constitutes an “obstacle” is to misunderstand ways through which state actors and political leaders are able to use regionalism and regional governance to bolster their regimes and governments. There is widespread evidence in Africa how state elites pool or rather boost their sovereignty through various types of regional cooperation and regional governance structures. This may or may not promote the “interests” of the citizenry and the broader public.

According to intergovernmentalist and neorealist logic, such state-steered regional governance can possibly be portrayed as a means to promote the “national interest.” Indeed, regional governance in order to pool or boost sovereignty equals the national interest. However, there are at least two main reasons why conventional state-centric and intergovernmental analysis is not enough, or is even misleading, and why it is necessary to make inquiries for whom and for what purposes such sovereignty-boosting emerges. First, due to their inherent “weakness,” most of the post-colonial states in Africa

7 See Cox 1996, Söderbaum, Taylor 2001: 675-695.

8 Haas 1964; Dieter, Lamb, Melber 2001: 63.

tend to be obsessed with absolute sovereignty and the formal status of their governments, rather than the promotion of “national” or “public” interest in a more comprehensive sense. Second, in many cases the so-called state is much less than what it pretends to be: the type of regional governance designed to boost the government is exclusivist and centralized, “reflecting the perceptions of government leaders, small groups of civil servants and perhaps also key bilateral and multilateral donors.”<sup>9</sup> In fact, as we have noted, often the “state” is not much more than an (neopatrimonial) interest group, and in the worst instances it has degenerated into a post-modern mafia syndicate (consider for instance Liberia under Charles Taylor or Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe).

To understand how certain governments use regional economic governance to boost the official status and sovereignty of their governments, one has to consider the nature of statehood in Africa. It is widely agreed that the states in Africa are “weak.” However, these states enjoy international recognition even though they often lack substantial and credible “statehood” by the criteria of international law. The result is that in their international relations weak states tend to place heavy emphasis on formal and absolute sovereignty — that is, the maintenance of existing borders and the principle of nonintervention in domestic affairs — because it enhances the power of the governing political elite and its ability to stay in power.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the institution of formal sovereignty is the justification for their continuation and survival as states. The principle of formal sovereignty has clearly been successful in Africa. While many African states are extremely “weak,” the state system and the old colonial boundaries have, with a few exceptions, remained intact — seemingly everlasting. The result is a somewhat paradoxical situation with “weak” states and rather “strong” or at least “stable” regimes.”<sup>11</sup>

The argument raised here is that there are many instances whereby political leaders and regimes are using regional governance to promote rather than to reduce absolute state sovereignty and its legitimacy. In many places around Africa ruling political leaders engage in a rather intense diplomatic game, whereby they praise regionalism and sign treaties, such as free trade agreements. West Africa is a fruitful example. Ever since the foundation of ECOWAS, an increasing number of members and sectors have been added. In this way ECOWAS’s political leaders have been able to create an image that the organization is constantly developing. This has enabled them to be perceived as promoters of the goals and values of regionalism, which in turn

has enabled them to raise the profile and status of their (often) authoritarian governments.

The problem is that this has not been to serve public interest but rather a more myopic objective to raise the formal status of their crumbling governments. To implement policies is not the first priority. Instead, ECOWAS decision-making is highly formalized, and to some extent even ritualized. This social practice is then repeated and institutionalized at a large number of ministerial and summit meetings, which in reality involves no real debate and no wider consultation within (or between) member states. Many other regional organizations in Africa function in a similar fashion, including SADC. For the political leaders, it is a matter of constructing an image of state building and of promoting important values. As Sidaway and Gibb note, discussing SADC:

“[F]ormal participation in SADC is another way whereby the states seek to confirm, fix and secure the appearance and power of “sovereignty.” Rather like the boundaries and colour schemes of political maps, participation in fora such as SADC is a way in which the state is actively represented as a real, solid, omnipresent authority. In doing so, the fact that it is a contested, socially constructed (not simply natural) object is obscured, and states would have us take them for granted as the natural objects of governance and politics.”<sup>12</sup>

From governments’ and political leaders’ point of view this type of regional diplomacy is often “successful.” The problem is that many post-colonial states in Africa are to an overwhelming extent ruled by personal leaders, who are often portrayed as embodying the idea of the state. The personal rulers often use the coercive instruments of the state to monopolize power and to further their own interests, including denial or restriction of political rights and opportunities of other groups.<sup>13</sup> Whether this type of regional governance also promotes broader public interests, such as democratization and human security, remains an open question. Its viability, strength, legitimacy, and desirability rests with how the ruling regime is interpreted.

9 Simon 2003: 71.

10 Clapham 1996.

11 Bøås, Dokken 2002: 138.

12 Sidaway, Gibb 1998: 179.

13 Clapham 1996.

## REGIONAL SHADOW GOVERNANCE

It is widely recognized that there are many vibrant and dynamic processes of de facto and informal market activities all over the African continent. Although these may sometimes be understood as “survival strategies” created by the poor, the excluded, and other non-state actors, it is important to recognize that many researchers draw attention to the fact that “state/regime” actors are deeply entrenched in informal market activities with the purpose to promote patronage networks and (hidden) private self-interests. For instance, it is widely agreed that the parallel economy in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which exceeds the official economy in size, has expanded as a consequence of the systematic corruption, the theft of state revenues, and the personal rule of successive presidents. In the case of Sierra Leone this type of state was referred to by William Reno as the “Shadow State;” a state where the formal façade of political power based upon informal markets sheltered corrupt politicians.<sup>14</sup>

It is often shown that these types of activities extend beyond the borders of the Shadow State. Stephen Ellis and Janet MacGaffey elucidate the crucial relationship between politics and economics and between the domestic and the international level:

“International trade in Africa, and inter-continental trade particularly, occupies a crucial strategic position chiefly because of the scarcity of foreign exchange which is necessary to import manufactured goods and which can play a vital role in the construction of a political power-base. Government ministers and officials regulate access to hard currency either by their control of the state, or by going into business themselves or through nominees including members of their own family, or indirectly, by forming alliances with traders. The interplay of the resulting trade and clientist networks is an ingredient in most successful political careers in Africa.”<sup>15</sup>

Although the international dimension is mentioned in the literature, the regional dimension seldom receives enough attention. The argument raised here is that we can increase our understanding of what is going on by analyzing shadow networks as a particular mode of regional governance, that is, as a particular (but) malign “system of rule” for goal achievement.

<sup>14</sup> Reno 1995.

<sup>15</sup> Ellis, MacGaffey 1996: 31.

The viability of informal shadow activities depends on states’ lack of transparency, declining financial capacities, and territorial control. It also depends on the exploitation of boundary disparities, and demands their preservation in order to prosper. For instance, dominant rentier-elite factions in the BLSN-countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia) were reluctant to renegotiate the Southern African Customs Union and were ‘dragging their feet because the old formula [was] advantageous to them.’<sup>16</sup> It is a feature of regional economic governance in many parts of SSA that certain state elites and rentier classes actively seek to preserve existing boundary disparities and also seek the continued failure of regional organizations and policy-frameworks in order to further their own private interests. Sometimes the strategy is less subtle. For instance, in Central Africa, ‘a number of state elites in the Great Lakes and southern African regimes have ceased to use the mantle of sovereignty to promote the collective good. Instead, they have used it to help bolster their own patronage networks and weaken those of potential challengers.’<sup>17</sup> This mode of regional shadow governance grows from below, and it is designed for personal accumulation and neither for the regulation of formal regional economic interaction, nor for the encouragement of formal-public modes of regional governance.

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THROUGH REGIONAL SHADOW GOVERNANCE  
STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS COME TOGETHER  
IN DIFFUSE AND VOLATILE ECONOMIC NETWORKS  
IN ORDER TO PROFIT FROM VIOLENCE AND FROM  
UNDERGROUND ECONOMIES

It needs to be recognized that these activities and networks are inherently inequitable and extremely uneven. They accumulate power and resources at the top, to the rich and powerful, and to those with jobs, including the urban poor and the rural producers. Small-scale cross-border traders have a disadvantage since the economies of scale are “only for those who can pay the necessary bribes.”<sup>18</sup> The only “popular” dimension of these networks can be found in their capacity to adjust to market demands and in the ruthless exploitation of populations that are confronted with a diminishing of alternatives to satisfy their needs.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Sidaway, Gibb 1998: 178.

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, Williams 2001: 281.

<sup>18</sup> Bach 1999: 162.

<sup>19</sup> Bach 1999: 62.



The attempts to restrict these activities have been counterproductive. In the new (neoliberal and post-Cold War) context where the state apparatus itself offers fewer opportunities for private accumulation and where formal barriers between countries have been reduced, shadow states have gone regional. In the process of going regional they have expanded to more criminal activities, such as new trades in illicit drugs (including heroin, mandrax, and cocaine), arms, light weapons, and other merchandise of war. In fact, these economic networks can even be actively involved in the creation and promotion of war, conflict, and destruction, as seen for instance in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zimbabwe.<sup>20</sup> The DRC is a prime example of this for here:

“Far from being a humanitarian and developmental disaster which sabotages the nascent [African] Renaissance, for well-placed elites and businessmen the wars in the Great Lakes region (...) offer potentially substantial resources for those able to exploit them. This explains much of the foreign interventions in the DRC: it is not only about preserving national security and defeating enemies, it is also about securing access to resource-rich areas and establishing privatised accumulation networks that can emerge and prosper under conditions of war and anarchy. In this sense, war assumes the characteristics of a business venture, the beneficiaries of which are unlikely to abandon the venture easily.”<sup>21</sup>

Through regional shadow governance state and non-state actors come together in diffuse and volatile economic networks in order to profit from violence and from underground economies. It is a devilishly well-calculated terror war and obviously has little to contribute to human development and security or for that matter the broader national interest.

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## CONCLUSION

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Three particular modes of regional economic governance are highlighted in this article: neoliberal regional governance; sovereignty-boosting governance; and regional shadow governance. The first is perhaps the dominating mode of regional governance in contemporary Africa. It emerges in many corners of Africa and in different guises. It is pushed under continental African frameworks, such as the New Partnership for

Africa's Development (NEPAD), various macro- and sub-regional economic integration schemes as well as cross-border micro-regional initiatives, such as the development corridors and SDIs in Southern Africa. Neoliberal regional governance is created by coalitions and networks of governments, big business, IFIs and donors, albeit with national governments formally determining policies. Moreover, although neoliberal regional governance is built on a certain degree of formality, its overarching strategy and direction is broader and more important than intergovernmental regional organizations, such as SADC, CBI and COMESA.

Neoliberal regional governance seeks to promote the public interest, so the official discourse goes. However, the fundamental problem is that the public interest is subsumed under the private one. Neoliberal regional governance reinforces a process of neoliberal globalization, which lacks ethical content and contains a drastically reduced role for public interests since this governance depends on global market demands and on access to international capital, and does not focus on poverty reduction and public goods. In its detrimental form neoliberal regional governance implies a diffuse and turbulent system of competing and changing authority structures, with the consequence of “exclusion” as well as a drastically reduced role for the state/government as we know it. Nevertheless, under the right conditions this mode of regional governance has the potential to be transformed into more inclusive, democratic, and just governance structures, primarily through the mobilization of local business and the involvement of civil society.

The second mode of regional governance highlighted is designed to boost sovereignty and national government. It represents a system of rule with the regime largely in control, assuming the privilege of intervention by reference to a value system focused on political order, state stability, and national sovereignty. It is created and promoted by those actors pushing such an agenda, mainly political leaders, governments, and securocrats. It is based on a certain degree of formality in order to obtain legitimacy, or to make informal competitors (including rebels and quite often political opposition) illegitimate. Sometimes it emerges as a direct result of neoliberal regional governance, since the latter may actually undermine both national sovereignty and a functioning government. The desirability of sovereignty-boosting regional governance depends to a large extent on the interpretation of whether the involved regime/government is considered to be ruling for or against the people and the public interest (that is what sovereignty is used for). For instance, when figures such as Robert Mugabe or Charles Taylor are in control, there are good reasons to be sceptical. Questionable political figures such as Charles Taylor and Robert Mugabe may at the same time be

<sup>20</sup> MacLean 2002: 513-528.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor, Williams 2001: 273.

actively involved in the third type of regional governance, that is, regional shadow governance.

In this article I suggest that sometimes the Shadow State has gone “regional,” which is partly a consequence of neoliberalism and the fact that there is not much left to plunder of state resources. In regional shadow governance, a small number of regime actors use the formal state apparatus as a façade and join forces with a limited number of informal or criminal private actors, private security companies, and/or military leaders to bolster their own private interests. This mode of regional governance occurs in many parts of Africa, first and foremost where the Shadow State exists. One of the most tragic examples is the regional intervention by ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in West Africa. Although often referred to as a success story in the literature, it is clear that ECOMOG became a part of the political economy of violence that kept the conflicts going in the West African war zone. Important sections of the ECOMOG troops actively took part in the crimes committed against civilians and became heavily involved in warlord politics and plunder. The questionable role of the ECOMOG force is perhaps best illustrated by how it came to be known in Liberia as “Every Commodity and Movable Object Gone.” A similar type of logic prevails in the wars in the Great Lakes region.

One general assertion I wish to emphasize is that there is a pluralism of modes of regional economic governance in Africa. Sometimes the three modes may be distinct and not closely related. Sometimes only one or two prevail within a given region. At other times they may co-exist without much interaction. Yet, at certain times the three different modes of regional governance overlap and stand in a rather complex (and sometimes dialectic) relationship with one another. As a result they may persist in spite of their sometimes detrimental and contradictory effects.

Neoliberal regional governance is perhaps the dominating mode of regional governance, at least as a discourse, in most regions of Africa. The fact that the regional dimensions are an integral part and fit the broader neoliberal strategy is what makes it rather pervasive. Sometimes it constitutes more of a model (promoted from the outside) rather than the reality of regional governance in Africa. Sovereignty-boosting regional governance may occur for many different reasons. As indicated previously, during the last decade it has often emerged in response to the challenge posed by neoliberalism and globalization to the sovereignty and legitimacy of the state/regime. Hence, sovereignty-boosting regional governance may emerge as a strategy to rescue what neoliberalism challenges. Regional shadow governance may

also be related to the two other forms of governance and may be explained as a consequence of neoliberalism and structural adjustments, which have left little to plunder of state assets. As a result certain corrupt regime actors (and certain businessmen) go regional. And since they need the state and formal regionalism as a façade to continue with their rent-seeking and plunder, they also need to pursue sovereignty-boosting regional governance as a shelter. Taken together, this picture of partly overlapping and often informal and private modes of governance is what makes Africa an intriguing and heterogeneous continent with more complexity compared to what can be detected through the dominating approaches in the research field. Since the cases of this study are taken from the current empirical scene in Africa, there is a possibility that this scene may look very different tomorrow. An optimistic viewpoint would argue that regionalism in Africa is a “work in progress” and that the end goal of neoliberal regional spaces with formalized institutions and a market-oriented framework ostensibly promoting growth and development will take time, but will emerge. In this reading, problems that may be identified are teething troubles that can—and will—be overcome. And indeed, as this occurs, good governance will progressively develop and eventually drive a virtuous circle of institutions (both national and regional) working hand in hand to promote development. It is certainly true that some of the regional bodies are relatively new. But equally, this rather optimistic reading tends to disembodify regional governance from the nature of the state and the states that are supposed to be integral to the regional project. As any organisation is only as strong as its members, it is hard to argue that “good” (i.e. neoliberal) regional governance will, or even can, emerge from the roots in which it finds itself in much of Africa.

Thus according to the more pessimistic view, it looks as if these modes of economic governance, perhaps in combination, give a good clue to the current political and economic system in Africa. In this reading, the more predatory nature of the state and the neopatrimonial political culture that dominates in most part of Africa asserts itself over and above the ideal-type model of neoliberal regional governance. In this reading, the economic rationality that supposedly underpins the formal regional model (itself often borrowed ad hoc from the European experience) is far more likely to slide into the (at best) sovereignty-boosting regional modes of governance and (at worst) into the regional shadow governance systems of clandestine networks, contraband trade, smuggling and corruption—all overseen by local Big Men at the apex of various elaborate regional complexes.

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photo by S. Pecio



# THE AFRICAN UNION AND AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

ERIC IRUNGU

essay

THIS ESSAY FOCUSES ON THE ROLE THAT REGIONAL INTEGRATION CAN PLAY IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. IN ASSESSING THE GREAT POTENTIAL OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA, THERE IS A GREAT NEED TO ASSESS THE EXTENT OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN FACTORS LIKE THE POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES, THE IMPACT OF THE FORCES OF GLOBALIZATION, THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF INTEGRATING THE AFRICAN ECONOMIES. THERE IS NEED TO FOCUS ON THE RELATIVE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF THE CURRENT REGIONAL INTEGRATION BLOCS EVEN AS THE CONTINENT ENVISAGES THE NEED FOR THE CREATION OF NEW REGIONAL INTEGRATION AREAS.

keywords

AFRICA, REGIONAL INTEGRATION, THE AFRICAN UNION

## INTRODUCTION

Regional integration has become a very popular concept in recent years, particularly with the onset of the force of globalization and the desire of most of the developing countries to attain economic growth and economic development. This is seen, particularly in Africa, as a way of enhancing the continent's development as well as the quality of life of its people. With this in mind, coupled of course with the changing dynamics of the structure of the global economy, the concept of regional integration has recently been viewed as a viable option for Africa's political and economic development. The African continent's leading regional body, the African Union (AU) has been a leading voice in the call to move towards regional integration in the African continent. This has been as a way of promoting greater political and economic cooperation within the continent. This does not by any means imply that this is the first time that regional integration is being pursued on the continent.

Regional integration efforts have been attempted in the recent decades, however, the form of integration carried out has not led to the realization of significant results that can uplift the continent from the pressing developmental challenges that it continues to face. The African continent continues to face a myriad of challenges including; high poverty levels, political instabilities, food insecurity and hunger, environmental degradation, health, educational, technological incapacities, capital deficiencies, poor governance, government corruption, mismanagement and inefficient public administration, technological deficiencies among others. Simply put, the continent faces a complexity of challenges that have made it to be collectively labelled as the "dark continent." It are these pressing challenges that the continent must endeavour to extricate itself from if any meaningful progress in terms of uplifting the people's quality of life is to be attained.

## THE AFRICAN UNION AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The AU is the African continent's regional body that comprises of a majority of African countries that was formed in 2002 following the disbandment of its predecessor the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that was formed in 1963. The OAU and the AU Constitutive Act place regional integration as an integral part of African unity.<sup>1</sup> Regional integration entails the closer inter-linkage and inter-connection of economies with the aim of

<sup>1</sup> Economic Commission of Africa Report 2004.

attaining larger markets, trade liberalization as well as political cohesion.<sup>2</sup> Prior efforts at regional integration have seen the creation of regional bodies in the various African sub-regions of Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. Currently, the main regional integration initiatives undertaken in the continent include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) as well as the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).<sup>3</sup>

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THE CHALLENGE OF SECURING POLITICAL WILL TO SUPPORT INTEGRATION AND SUPPORT REGIONAL POLICIES FROM SOVEREIGN AFRICAN STATES HAS BEEN A CONTINUOUS OBSTACLE TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF “FULL” INTEGRATION.

Regional integration efforts in Africa as indeed other developmental efforts have been plagued with a number of challenges. To begin with, African countries have pursued integration in earnest in recent years to maximize on the goals of trade creation, trade diversion, attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI), enhancing regional and global competitiveness in production, enhancing collective bargaining power and generally attaining high levels of economic growth and development.<sup>4</sup> These noble goals have been upset by the difficulties inherent in African countries mainly; the small sizes of the African economies, reliance on similar and primary products, existence of small and weak domestic markets in the various countries, poor production capacities and technologies as well as the perennial intra and inter-state conflicts.<sup>5</sup> These factors combined have set back the continent's efforts towards meaningful growth.

These challenges form the key areas that the AU seeks to work on with member countries to overcome and prepare the continent for development in all its dimensions. The AU is working towards the creation and enhancement of regional integration initiatives within the five sub-regions as a way of enhancing the eventual integration of the entire continent. The challenge of

securing political will to support integration and support regional policies from sovereign African states has been a continuous obstacle towards the attainment of “full” integration.<sup>6</sup> The African continent collectively must get into the phase of working towards undoing decades of relying on guarded integration that has not provided the full benefits that are associated with regional integration. The attainment of tangible results from regional integration is dependent on AU member countries promoting greater cooperation in all spheres of their political, economic and social life.<sup>7</sup> The challenge of harnessing collective synergies by African countries and moving beyond the concept of state sovereignty has been a major contributing factor in the lack of realization of tangible benefits from regional integration. This can however not be attained unless all member countries derive benefits from their participation in any regional integration arrangement. For many years, certain countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt and South Africa have been deemed by their partners to be benefitting more in their respective trading blocs. This cannot be a good perception to integration. The lifeline of any integration undertaking is hinged on greater equity in the distribution of benefits among all the member countries.

## WHAT WAY FORWARD FOR AFRICAN INTEGRATION?

There are some new realities that regional integration in Africa will out of necessity have to embrace since this will point to how African economies will be shaped in coming years. The need for deepening integration can not be understated. Countries must undertake to navigate around and overcome through mutual consensus the many points of disagreement that have slowed both the pace and depth of integration. In the EAC for instance, the progression from the various stages of the integration has been slow. Currently in the common market stage, many stakeholders, particularly the business community have decried the slow pace of implementation of key agreements by member countries. There is however need to ensure that all the negotiating parties maintain a common understanding and vision of the benefits that their countries stand to get.<sup>8</sup> In addition there exists the need to enhance greater cooperation in the areas of trade and commerce, investment, energy, agriculture and food security as well as peace and security. This greater cooperation will shape solutions to the problem of proliferation of regional integration initiatives by countries. This has usually been likened

<sup>2</sup> Irungu 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Economic Commission of Africa 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Capannelli 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Niekerk 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Anadi 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Katembo 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Keohane 1984.

to the fear of placing too many eggs in one basket by many countries. The need to eradicate duplication of efforts and a strain on the existing scarce resources will however play a pivotal role in shaping this thought.

The success of AU's plan to create five regional integration areas will depend on the effort and attention given to regionalism by the continental body. It must coalesce all nations to view economic growth and development from one lens whereas at the same time working closely with regional bodies to understand how individual countries stand to benefit from the integration schemes. Past studies on integration have proven that countries will be willing to stay in a regional integration initiative if they accrue more gains from it than losses.<sup>9</sup> The continent with the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) had appeared to adopt a new perspective to development, particularly with reference to its relationship with its former colonial masters in Europe. There was also the focus on massive investments that have a continental impact particularly touching on infrastructure. The AU for instance has plans towards this goal and negotiations are on-going towards the creation of a grand energy master plan for Africa in order to create cheap energy and consequently drive the cost of production and business operation in the continent down.<sup>10</sup>

Another key consideration that is an important factor in African regional integration is the desire to attain economic independence. This must of course be viewed from the context of how the continent positions itself to participate in the global economy. This cannot however be attained without considering the global economic reorganization. For instance, today, the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) or emerging economies have taken on a bigger share of global production and consumption. The African continent has also shown signs of robust growth with many multinational corporations (MNCs) being attracted to the African market.<sup>11</sup> These are new opportunities that the continent must position itself to benefit from particularly by harnessing the mass market potentials of the regional economic integration areas as envisaged. To this end the continent must enhance its competitiveness in production in order to effectively participate in global trade. Trade is of course an important component in enhancing economic independence, particularly at a time when the continent collectively continues to account for marginal figures in terms of share in global trade.<sup>12</sup> The myriad challenges pointed out earlier cannot be wished away and concrete

9 Irungu 2013.

10 Kawai, Wignaraja 2009.

11 Kawai, Wignaraja 2009.

12 Stiglitz 2007.

efforts must be made to effectively address them in a collective manner. This collective framework is the virtue of the AU by its capacity in creating dialogue and effort within the continent. It must seek to bring together all African stakeholders including but not limited to the private sector. The role of the private sector as a driver of growth and development in Africa needs to come to the forefront of regional integration discussions in the continent. Recent liberalization policies carried out in many of the African countries are a testament of the reality that the state in Africa continues to wield very minimal influence in the 21st Century. It is in this regard that the private sector commands a place as a key actor in regional integration. As countries move towards creating large pools of investment funds, the private sector's role in this resource generation is massive. This can be viewed from the perspective of recent trends in recent years.

A key aspect that has seen gross failure in Africa's integration efforts has been the economic pillar. Here, great problems abound mainly due to the nature of the economic systems of most if not all integrating nations. The broader economic argument is that Africa by the structure of its economy does not support regional integration due to its high dependence on a small number of export commodities. This leads to competition for third markets by integrating nations rather than complementing each other.<sup>13</sup> To further complicate this view, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) argues that in order to support the process of industrialization, regional integration should comprise the largest possible number of countries. This strategy has however not worked in groupings where it has been adopted, for instance in the COMESA region where diverse differences among integrating nations have slowed its effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

Regional integration in Africa must be understood from a background of the numerous challenges the continent faces now as well as the largely unsuccessful attempts made before at integrating the various economies. This is of course coupled with the emerging realities that have informed how nations should pursue integration efforts particularly with a number of success stories to learn from based on the experiences of European and Asian integration. Going forward, there will be the need to strengthen and facilitate the AU to respond better to the increasing demand and need for the continent to come together in a united manner to address the political economic aspirations for African economic growth and development.

13 Goldstein, Ndung'u 2001.

The emerging development is that other continents and regions that embraced the concept of integrating their regions have been reaping from this effort. Africa must learn from these regions and work towards ensuring that it seeks to redeem the time that has been lost when the continent was different and portraying disinterest regarding the integration agenda. The continent's leadership must therefore work towards making regional integration an urgent agenda. There is however a great need to ensure that the experiences from the integration efforts of the last five to six decades are taken into consideration in shaping the new concept of regionalism that the continent will need to embrace in order to continue being relevant in global economic and development discourse.

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# ECONOMIC RELATIONS

BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ECOWAS –  
AN ILLUSORY INTERDEPENDENCE,  
A DECLARED COOPERATION, AND  
A NECESSARY COMPETITION

BEATA PRZYBYLSKA - MASZNER

## article abstract

THE AIM OF THIS ARTICLE IS TO ANALYSE BOTH THE DETERMINING FACTORS FOR THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS AND THE FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EU AND THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS). ECOWAS HAS BEEN RECOGNISED AS ONE OF THE BEST EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA. THE THESIS OF THE ARTICLE WAS BASED ON AN ASSUMPTION THAT THE EU-ECOWAS RELATIONS ARE CHARACTERISED BY A VISIBLE DISCREPANCY IN POWER, STEMMING FROM THE EU'S CLEAR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. THE GROWING INTERDEPENDENCE COINCIDES WITH THE PROCESS OF CHANGE WITHIN BOTH ORGANISATIONS. THIS, IN TURN, HAS AN EFFECT ON

THE DYNAMICS OF COMMITMENT OF THE TWO PARTIES. WHILE POINTING TO THE DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING THE RELATION, ONE HAS TO NOTE THE DYSFUNCTIONALITY OF THE EU'S APPROACH, AND ECOWAS'S LIMITATIONS REGARDING ACTUAL POSSIBILITIES FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE REGION.

ECOWAS, EU-AFRICA RELATIONS, WESTERN AFRICA, EPA

## keywords

Since the EEC was established, cooperation with the African countries has been an important aspect of the external economic relations for the member countries. This fact has been grounded in politics of the former colonial countries, which became a separate level of the cooperation between the EU and the countries of the North and Sub-Saharan Africa. The cooperational framework with the ACP countries, created in the 1950s, has undergone some changes due to the restructuring of the EEC and, later, the EU. With time, a subregional approach in relations with the African countries has become more visible in the EU documents. This is the result of the strengthened position of the African regional organisations, which have been recognised as an important partner able to influence the economic and political order. The aim of this article is to analyse both the determining factors for the current state of affairs and the future prospects for the cooperation between the EU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – which has been recognised as one of the best examples of regional integration in Africa. The thesis of the article was based on an assumption that the EU-ECOWAS relations are characterised by a visible discrepancy in power, stemming from the EU's clear economic and political advantage. The growing interdependence coincides with the process of change within both organisations. This, in turn, has an effect on the dynamics of commitment of the two parties. While pointing to the determinants influencing the relation, one has to note the dysfunctionality of the EU's approach, and ECOWAS's limitations regarding actual possibilities for making a difference in the region. There is a clash between political declarations on partnership and more attention to particular interests of respective countries. The network of



economic, security, and development cooperation links, constructed mostly on the European initiative, was meant to guarantee to realise the interests of both parties. However, the existing mechanism, being a result of a difficult to accept compromise, does not satisfy either of the concerned sides. The EU-ECOWAS relations are increasingly under the influence of other actors, who declare beneficial and competitive terms and conditions of cooperation. The West African countries take their European partners into consideration selectively, and reluctantly make any economic commitments; this can be proved by the decade-long negotiations before any admission to the EPA took place, which in turn proved unsuccessful before the fourth EU-Africa summit in April 2014. Despite repeated bilateral declarations on partnership and the willingness to cooperate, the situation is stalled. Not only is there no progress, but also delaying tactics of the West African countries cause many negative implications for the European countries. The African side is wary of any mutual commitments; on the other hand, the European party is reluctant to introduce any positive changes affecting the position of the West African partners, Nigeria especially.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The two economically and politically opposing worlds are about 4000 kilometres apart. On the one side there is the EU, considered the major economic and in statu nascendi political power. The EU's aim, verbalised in the Lisbon Strategy and the Strategy 2020, is to transform itself into the most competitive economy of the world: such an economy, whose influence is based on the political power of the member countries and their experience in the international arena. On the other side, there is West Africa, comprising 16 countries<sup>1</sup> and considered the least developed region of the world with only one affluent country: Nigeria, whose natural deposits guarantee its development and the role of regional leader. Since the signing of the Treaty of Lagos in 1975, the influence over the region has been exerted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).<sup>2</sup> However, any attempts towards economic development are bound to fail due to an unstable political situation, which leads to numerous and prolonged conflicts. International security threats have been more and more visible in this region since the 1990s; these are the derivatives of the West African governments having

1 West Africa countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

2 ECOWAS is a regional group of 15 West African countries founded on Treaty of Lagos in 1975. Its mission is to promote economic integration. In 2002 Mauritania withdrew from ECOWAS, having announced its intention to do so in December 1999.

lost control over their own territories. This has an effect on the rise of local extremist and terrorist groups. Political instability not only promotes the illegal transfer of weapons, drugs, and capital, but also provides an impulse for migration. Given these threats, the West African region has become an object of a special attention of the international community, including the European Union.

Against the background of the evolutions of the EU and regional African organisations, what begins to reach the surface are the frames of economic and political interaction between the EU and respective African regions and countries. The EEC/EU's policy towards the West African countries, as expressed in the guidelines for the cooperation with the ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific) countries, was motivated by the shared interests of the member countries, yet visibly addressed the colonial past of some of them. France especially, and after the accession also Great Britain (1973) and Portugal (1986) have pressed for a more pronounced level of cooperation with the West African countries, whose development they still want to control.<sup>3</sup>

The group of the West African countries stands from the ACP countries on three basic issues. First, there are historic ties between the member countries. Second, the socio-economic situation is hard. Third, there are common threats for the EU, which have been regularly been highlighted. Fourteen out of sixteen countries in the region have been taken up in the list of 44 the least developed countries in the world in 2012.<sup>4</sup> This, to a large extent, has been a result of the never-ending internal conflicts.<sup>5</sup> Unrest in one of the countries tends to spill over the rest of the countries in the region. The majority of them have been plagued by riots, conflicts, and civil wars, the consequences of which can be observed in the levels of socio-economic development. Any desired changes, which can be noticed in the

3 The West African countries share a colonial past of being part of French West Africa and British West Africa. This fact has had an effect on the specificity of economic regulations and their approach to political standards. The territories colonised by France include Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Ivory Coast. The biggest country in the West Africa, Nigeria, used to be a British colony. Just like Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone. The Portuguese colonised Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau. (Liberia was under Anglo-Saxon influence, as it was internally colonised (mostly) by freed slaves from the US. The republic maintained good ties with the US and Britain – Editor's note – JvDB)

4 Human Development Index (HDI) rank: Niger – 186, Burkina Faso-183, Mali – 182, Guinea -178, Sierra Leone – 177, Guinea Bissau – 176, Liberia – 174, Ivory Coast. – 168, Benin – 166, Gambia -165, Togo – 159, Mauritania – 155, Senegal – 154, Nigeria – 153. (UNDP 2013: 146-147)

5 Over the past two decades, ten Western Africa's countries have experienced conflicts of high intensity, civil wars or violence during elections.



majority of the West African countries aiming at restoring political stability and rebuilding their economies, are transitional and often fragile in nature. Nigeria obviously stands out as the economic leader of the region, together with Ghana and the Republic of Cape Verde.

West Africa, due to its unstable political situation, has been posing a threat to the European countries. Illegal trade flows, drug trafficking, illegal fishing, and rising terrorist groups are major challenges for the EU. In consequence, a renewed interest in the region can be observed, which is visible in the EU policies and regulations, as well as in its strategic approach. At the meeting of the European Council composed of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held on 23 March 2012, the conclusions regarding the Union strategy for security and development in the Sahel Region were adopted. The strategy's main focus was to improve the consistency and effectiveness of the EU actions, given the lack of security in the region and the violent overthrow of the government in Mali. Severe poverty, the effects of climate change, unstable governments, corruption, unresolved internal conflicts, the risk of violent extremism and radicalisation, illegal trade, and the risk of terrorist attacks represent challenges for the region. It has been emphasised many times that this region displays a strong correlation between security and development.<sup>6</sup>

“ THE WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES ACCOUNT FOR 40% OF ALL TRADE BETWEEN THE EU AND THE AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC REGION

The economic dimension has been the most important field to foster mutual relations between the EU countries and the ECOWAS. The West African countries account for 40% of all trade between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific region. Of this region countries the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria account for 80% of the exports to the EU. According to Eurostat (2010), the trade with ECOWAS constitutes 1,5% of the overall EU trade.<sup>7</sup> The EU's share of African trade is roughly 17%. Its value is estimated at 21 billion Euros. A substantial part (more than two thirds) of the EU's imports from ECOWAS consists of mineral fuels, including crude oil

<sup>6</sup> During the initial phase of the strategy implementation the emphasis was placed mainly on the three West African countries: Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Four fields were attended: development, good government, and solving of the internal conflicts; political and diplomatic aspects; security and the rule of law; counteracting violent extremism.

<sup>7</sup> Mavraganis 2012.

from Nigeria. This trade component constitutes two thirds of the ECOWAS's turnover and one third of the EU-27's export. The other trade component is food products, especially cocoa beans. The exporting countries are the Republic of the Ivory Coast and Ghana.<sup>8</sup> EU exports mostly machines and transport equipment. Overall export of the ECOWAS countries to the EU has reached 18%, whereas import has reached 16% (Table 1). For the EU, the most important partner is Nigeria. From the data from the last decade, the overall value of imports and exports between the two blocks has risen considerably (Table 2).<sup>9</sup>

Table 1: EU-27 exports/imports of goods to ECOWAS countries (Euro million)<sup>10</sup>

	2000	2005	2009	2010	Growth rate 2009/2010	Annual average growth rate 2000/2010	In Total Extra EU-27 imports (2010)	Shares in EU-27 imports from Africa (2010)	In EU-27 imports from ECOWAS (2010)
<b>IMPORTS</b>									
ECOWAS	11 561	13 738	16 496	21 169	28,3%	6,2%	1,41%	15,83%	100,00%
Benin	81	33	31	31	0,5%	-9,1%	0,00%	0,02%	0,15%
Burkina Faso	70	30	82	99	20,5%	3,6%	0,01%	0,07%	0,47%
Cape Verde	13	19	27	36	35,00%	11,00%	0,00%	0,03%	0,17%
Gambia	32	6	11	18	61,4%	-5,6%	0,00%	0,01%	0,09%
Ghana	1 173	978	1 097	1 458	32,9%	2,2%	0,10%	1,09%	6,89%
Guinea	523	445	384	472	22,9%	-1,0%	0,03%	0,35%	2,23%
Guinea-Bissau	5	3	2	6	143,5%	1,2%	0,00%	0,00%	0,03%
Côte d'Ivoire	2 059	1 978	3 054	3 215	5,3%	4,6%	0,21%	2,40%	15,19%
Liberia	435	926	533	341	-35,9%	-2,4%	0,02%	0,26%	1,61%
Mali	76	42	20	27	34,5%	-9,8%	0,00%	0,02%	0,13%
Niger	95	130	219	196	-10,6%	7,5%	0,01%	0,15%	0,93%
Nigeria	6 419	8 389	10 417	14 592	40,1%	8,6%	0,97%	10,91%	68,93%
Senegal	410	521	261	297	13,6%	-3,2%	0,02%	0,22%	1,40%
Sierra Leone	105	121	100	159	59,5%	4,3%	0,01%	0,12%	0,75%
Togo	65	116	258	221	-14,4%	12,9%	0,01%	0,17%	1,04%

<sup>8</sup> EU exports to the Ivory Coast and Ghana are dominated by industrial goods, machinery, vehicles and transport equipment and chemicals. EU imports from the West African countries are dominated by a limited number of basic commodities. Nigeria is a major oil exporter, recently followed by Ghana. Ghana and Ivory Coast are the world's two largest cocoa exporters. They also export bananas and, together with Cape Verde and Senegal, processed fisheries products. Other exports from the region include a range of agricultural commodities (pineapple, groundnuts, cotton etc.) and to a far lesser extent metals (copper, gold) and diamonds. (Ec.europa.eu)

<sup>9</sup> The EU-27 has a surplus in trade with the ECOWAS countries. The surplus fell in 2007 mainly because of the situation in Sierra Leone.

<sup>10</sup> Eurostat 30-11-2011a.

EXPORTS	2000	2005	2009	2010	Growth rate 2009/2010	Annual average growth rate 2000/2010	In Total Extra EU-27 exports (2010)	Shares in EU-27 exports from Africa (2010)	In EU-27 exports from ECOWAS (2010)
ECOWAS	12 498	13 215	18 665	22 110	18,5%	5,9%	1,64%	17,78%	100,00%
Benin	563	420	912	1275	39,7%	8,5%	0,09%	1,03%	5,76%
Burkina Faso	225	304	390	427	9,5%	6,6%	0,03%	0,34%	1,93%
Cape Verde	247	274	397	493	24,0%	7,1%	0,04%	0,40%	2,23%
Gambia	100	104	107	113	5,2%	1,2%	0,01%	0,09%	0,51%
Ghana	1 281	1 251	1 752	2 182	24,5%	5,5%	0,16%	1,75%	9,87%
Guinea	340	372	571	583	2,1%	5,5%	0,04%	0,47%	2,64%
Guinea-Bissau	45	83	76	72	-6,2%	4,6%	0,01%	0,06%	0,32%
Côte d'Ivoire	1 443	1 127	1 503	1 744	16,0%	1,9%	0,13%	1,40%	7,89%
Liberia	2 158	441	565	714	26,4%	-10,5%	0,05%	0,57%	3,23%
Mali	335	393	508	607	19,5%	6,1%	0,05%	0,49%	2,75%
Niger	182	228	356	382	7,2%	7,7%	0,03%	0,31%	1,73%
Nigeria	4 011	5 972	9 197	10 661	15,9%	10,3%	0,79%	8,57%	48,22%
Senegal	1 032	1 486	1 628	2 167	33,0%	7,7%	0,16%	1,74%	9,80%
Sierra Leone	210	193	125	178	42,0%	-1,7%	0,01%	0,14%	0,81%
Togo	325	567	576	513	-10,9%	4,7%	0,04%	0,41%	2,32%

Table 2: EU-27 trade in goods with ECOWAS countries (Euro million)<sup>11</sup><sup>11</sup> Eurostat 30-11-2011b.

## THE EVOLUTION OF APPROACHES

For more than 50 years of its existence, the European Union has transformed from a regional organisation of an economic nature to a political body operating across all the continents, which role in the international political relations has become a high-profile one. The directions of the EU's engagement have been determined by particular strategic choices of its member states, whose aim is to strengthen their position by means of the EU mechanisms. Policies towards Africa, including its western part, have been at the centre of the European leaders' attention since the objectives of the Rome Treaty on the European Economic Community were drafted (the Treaty entered into force on 1 January 1958).<sup>12</sup> A collective dimension of the external trade relations with the region was established; directions for the EU's support under the instrument of the European Development Fund were also specified.<sup>13</sup> The preamble of the Treaty includes a provision for the founding EEC countries "to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and the overseas countries to ensure the development of their prosperity, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations." This reference pertains to the colonies or the former colonies of the member countries, which had previously been privileged in trade relations with their respective metropolises. Articles of the Treaty regarding the overseas countries and territories recognised these subjects as the areas having the status of the association and enjoying special relations with the EEC.

Policy mechanisms of the EEC/EU have been changing, together with the ability to engage in the international affairs, including African matters. The Cotonou Agreement, signed on 23 June 2000, came as a consequence of the previous conventions (Yaoundé I 1963, II 1969, Lomé I 1975, II 1979, III 1984, IV 1990, V 1995) and set a new comprehensive framework for relations between the EU and a group of 79 ACP countries. All the West African countries entered this convention. The abovementioned framework was strengthened by regional and state elements, as well as complemented by a financial component supported by the European Development Fund

<sup>12</sup> The provisions of the treaty had anticipated what happened later in Africa, especially if one considers the history of the so-called Year of Africa. It is important to note the two approaches to the African issues: the Western European one, used in the context of the integration actions under the EEC, and the British one, which keeps French propositions at a distance.

<sup>13</sup> According to the Convention Implementing the Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the Union, as annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, the aim of the fund was to promote economic and social development of the overseas countries and territories of Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Italy. After the conclusion of the Yaoundé Convention in 1963 another edition of this fund was constituted, renaming the fund as the European Development Fund II.

(EDF). In symbolic terms, a new approach towards the African problems was presented during the first EU-Africa summit in Cairo in April 2000. The pan-African dialogue launched there gave rise to the construction of the strategic partnership in such fields as economy, respect for human rights, principles of democracy, the rule of law, peace-building, conflict prevention in Africa, conflict management, and poverty eradication. The first summit between the EU and Africa opened a possibility for an institutionalised political dialogue between the two parties. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), established in 2001, and the African Union (AU) in 2002 had an effect on the EU-African dialogue. A transfer of regional African issues to the pan-African level was also visible in the subsequent years.

Current relations between the EU and West Africa are governed by the same rules as the cooperation with other Sub-Saharan countries, as determined by the 2000 Cotonou Agreement and the 2007 EU-Africa Strategic Partnership. Both documents focus on political and economic levels, and address the issue of development cooperation as well. The abovementioned Cotonou Agreement was concluded for a set period of 20 years and can be amended every 5 years. The Cotonou Agreement has been revised twice: in 2005 and 2010.<sup>14</sup> The term “partnership,” used in the agreement, aims at highlighting mutual commitment and responsibility in realisation of the jointly determined tasks. In practice, partnership is illusory in character due to a comparative advantage of the EU.

The Cotonou Agreement provides a possibility for signing regional agreements on economic partnership (EPA) in order to change the 30-year-old system of trade preferences. At the same time, it includes the improvement of the economic situation by aid of better integration of the ACP countries into the global economy. New, separate trade agreements, containing specific regulations regarding the terms and conditions of the trade flow, competition policies, protection of intellectual property, and a codification of the health and phytosanitary measures were meant to be signed between the EU and the ACP countries. The World Trade Organisation mediated in this, initiating dispute settlement proceedings concerning the import regime which provided preferential treatment to the ACP countries. The EU lost the case and was forced to abandon non-reciprocal trade preferences from the moment the fourth Lomé Convention expired. The new ACP agreement, signed in Cotonou, was constructed according to the rules and mechanisms of the WTO; the European Union proposed that the double derogation system be enacted, in order to establish free trade zones.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Revisions of the agreement did not introduce any substantial changes for none of the contracting parties.

<sup>15</sup> Kołodziejczyk 2009: 392-393.

After 2004, the EU combined the political dialogue framework with arrangements for the economic and development cooperation. In October 2005 the unilateral EU Strategy for Africa was adopted, in order to support the effort to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG).<sup>16</sup> This strategy aimed at strengthening a strategic partnership for security and development between the EU and Africa. In order to ensure the development, the partnership was to concentrate around the following topics: peace and security, good government, trade, infrastructure, social cohesion, and environment protection. On this foundation new levels of bilateral relations were constructed. A new opening in the European engagement was demonstrated by the multilevel formula, which proclaimed three dimensions of action: state, regional, and continental. On these three levels the EU and its member countries were to achieve their goals under the principle of subsidiarity, which assumes that only those issues which cannot be addressed at a lower level can be sent to the higher one. The continental dialogue was placed at the highest political level. What is more, the necessity to increase African solidarity was highlighted and accepted as a rule.

In December 2005 the participants of the EU-Africa ministerial meeting in Bamako agreed on the actions leading to the adoption of a common strategy.<sup>17</sup> Both parties accepted the Joint Africa-EU Strategy on 31 October 2007; this set the framework for a new strategic partnership.<sup>18</sup> The aim of the Joint Strategy was the cooperation between the EU and Africa, based on the promotion of sustainable development, human rights and dignity protection, as well as solidarity, peace, and security.<sup>19</sup> It was highlighted that bilateral cooperation must be compliant with the tenets contained in the strategy. Under the provisions of the Strategy and as a result of the second EU-Africa summit in December 2007, the EU Action Plan 2008-2010 was adopted. According to the Plan, eight detailed partnerships were to be fulfilled. One of them was “trade, regional integration, and infrastructure,” which enabled the EU to engage in the dialogue for regional economic integration. The EU-Africa Strategy’s provisions were as follow: looking beyond the cooperation for development with a simultaneous opening up of the EU-Africa relations

<sup>16</sup> The strategy was adopted at the joint meeting with the AU Commission. The European Commission adopted the Communication on the EU Strategy for Africa, which was formally authorised by the European Council in December the same year. The strategy was meant to improve the cohesion and coordination of the European Commission and the member countries’ policies regarding Africa.

<sup>17</sup> This stance was later confirmed by the European Council in December 2006 and at the AU summit in January 2007.

<sup>18</sup> The idea of strategic partnerships was foreseen in the European Security Strategy in 2003.

<sup>19</sup> More information on this topic can be found in: Mangaba 2013: 15-46, Przybylska-Maszner 2011: 183-200.



to the issues important for both sides, e.g. trade; looking beyond solely Africa-related issues, in order to face global challenges, such as migration, climate change, security. Implementation of the joint EU-Africa strategy and thematic was carried out under two action plans (2008-2010 and 2011-2013) during high-level sessions and inter-institutional meetings. After seven years since its adoption, it has been concluded that the strategy requires a revision and a renewal. This fact seems to have been confirmed already at the sixth European Commission meeting before the fourth EU-Africa summit in 2014.

## ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Economic partnership agreements are the major instrument for regulating trade between the EU and the African countries compliant with the WTO rules and announced in the Cotonou Agreement.<sup>20</sup> The agreements were meant to embrace comprehensively the economic cooperation between the AU and the ACP countries, including the issues concerning trade, services, and the rules of origin. The first phase of negotiations with the ACP countries took place in September 2002. Negotiations with the West African countries on the shape of relations at a regional level began in October 2003; they were expected to end in 2008. Both parties have been negotiating the agreement for ten years. The talks have come to a standstill due to the West African countries' anxiety about eliminating import duties which can possibly make harm to the developing branches. Negotiations were resumed two years ago, when the West African countries reached an agreement about the customs union. ECOWAS contributed to the harmonisation of the regulations, especially regarding such members as Ghana or the Republic of Ivory Coast.<sup>21</sup> Until today, only two of the ECOWAS countries, Ghana and the Republic of Ivory Coast, have signed bilateral interim agreements with the EU – interim EPAs, in 2007 and 2008.<sup>22</sup> Thanks to these, when the Cotonou Agreement expires, it will be possible to use the preferential export arrangements for such goods as cocoa or bananas. Although the agreements have not yet been ratified, their adoption may, according to the rest of the ECOWAS members, hamper the construction of future agreements. The

20 For an elaboration on the issue consult: Sicurelli 2010: 74-75; Babarinde, Faber 2004: 27-47; Frankowski, Słomczyńska: 2011: 202-210.

21 All the ECOWAS countries, apart from Nigeria, Ghana and the Republic of Ivory Coast, are classified as *Least Developed Countries* and can already export anything but weapons to Europe, without exposure to costly tariffs or quotas.

22 The Interim Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Ivory Coast covers duty and quota-free EU market access for Ivory Coast products. The interim agreement includes a gradual removal of duties and quotas over a period of 15 years. An important part of the agreement is EU support to help local companies become more competitive and meet EU import standards.

reason behind this is the reluctant EU's attitude towards granting higher preference levels than mentioned in the agreement.<sup>23</sup> Nigeria is the only country which has been using duty exemptions under the GSP<sup>24</sup> since 2008, and the Republic of Cape Verde was included in the GSP+ in 2011. Other countries regarded as least developed have been granted full access to the market under the EBA<sup>25</sup> initiative.

The West African countries of ECOWAS have become the most advanced group in the EPA negotiations process. Taking into consideration the implementation of EPA in West Africa, the main declarative assumption of the new regulations is a gradual and long-term transformation of the ECOWAS-EU relations from the current dependence into a partnership in trade. The agreements, at least in theory, are designed to contribute to regional integration and diversification of the economies. There are, however, problems stemming from a disproportional development of the two economic blocks. Despite the EU's approbation of the ECOWAS countries to employ some protective measures in order to protect the new branches of industry and sensitive products, such anxiety concerning the economic dependence prevented the countries from signing the agreements.

The EPA agreements put the principle of symmetry into focus. This means the complete opening of the EU market, as well as conditional and limited mutual obligations of the West African countries. These countries are, however, supported by the EPA Development Programme. ECOWAS is going to open 75% of its markets in 20 years. Initially, the EU put forward 80% of the markets in 15 years, while the ECOWAS states had asked for a 60% figure. Under the agreement, the EU agreed to give the ECOWAS a € 6,5 billion package in the next 5 years, in order to cover the expenses related to the integration with the global economy. ECOWAS demanded € 2 billion more. These assets are going to be transferred from the resources already allocated in the EDF.<sup>26</sup>

A new dimension (compliant with WTO rules) of the trade relations between the ECOWAS and the EU could contribute to a more dynamic development of West Africa; it would not only facilitate trade, but also strengthen the regional integration process.<sup>27</sup> However, it is worth noticing that under the adopted regulations, the EU grants preferential treatment to the ACP group (including the West African states) but excludes other

23 Bartels 2011.

24 "Generalised Scheme of Preferences" (Editor's note – JVdB)

25 "European Banking Authority" (Editor's note – JVdB)

26 Flint 2009: 79-92.

27 Sicurelli 2010: 84.



developing countries from this scheme.<sup>28</sup> The President of Ghana, John Mahama, who chaired the 2014 ECOWAS summit, has been persuading the countries to sign the EPA: “We have to negotiate EPA because it is beneficial for our subregion and will contribute to the development of individuals.”

“ THE EPA AGREEMENTS PUT THE PRINCIPLE OF SYMMETRY INTO FOCUS

One of the most important benefits resulting from the signing of EPA is the creation of a trade area for services, investments and goods. This helps maintain security of trade in the region, and clearly benefits manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and banks, which operate in the EU markets. EPAs may give an advantageous position to the whole region. Gradual liberalisation of customs tariffs in West Africa may also contribute to an increased movement of European goods in this region. When it comes to the origin of goods, there is no conflict of interest. In general, there are different goods in trade flow between the two regions; hence, there is no competition between them. The ECOWAS countries import mostly cars and chemicals, whereas the EU imports resources, especially crude oil and minerals, as well as agricultural products (coffee, cocoa, bananas). When it comes to competing goods, such as cereals, flour, olive oil, and vegetables, the agreements exclude the possibility to liberalise such customs tariffs (e.g. with Ghana and the Republic of the Ivory Coast). In a long run, reduced tariffs will have an effect on the import costs from Europe which, in turn, may be advantageous for local manufacturers and industry. This may stimulate economic growth, generate new jobs, and reduce poverty. Some analysts claim that the trade volume may also rise, the market for goods may expand, and foreign investment may increase.<sup>29</sup>

What is more, when it comes to taxation, EPAs force the ECOWAS countries to move away from a system that depends on collecting high import duties and turn to a system that depends on domestic tax. This may result in a changed plan of income and a more regular budget planning and implementation. Import tax reduction would be progressive in character and take up to several years. There are doubts, however, whether there is enough time for the modernisation of the West African countries' national tax administration. Certain efforts to regulate tax legislation have already been made by ECOWAS.

28 Kühnhardt 2010: 85.

29 Kołodziejczyk 2009: 394.

Under new agreements, the EU has agreed to remove trade barriers from all goods (including agricultural and sensitive ones) imported from the ACP countries. Thus, all the ACP countries would be granted full access to the EU market; until recently, this has been possible only for the least developed countries under the EBA (Everything But Arms) initiative. This offer, considered by the EU member countries as already quite a far-reaching, caused understandable anxiety among the West African countries. The LDC countries do not show themselves to be equal partners to the European Union – their economies are too weak to compete with strong global players. The West African countries would not be able to export their goods to European markets; instead, they would be forced to import cheaper goods from the EU. This may lead to a disappearance of production in the poorest countries and their growing dependence on the European Union. Countries that sign the new agreements would bear the costs of restructuring and modernisation of many sectors of their economy. The West African countries are not likely to create competition while exporting sensitive goods or those depending on subsidies. Despite safeguards clauses, it is doubtful whether they are ready for the market opening. Benefits resulting from the agreements are disproportionate. It is estimated that the full implementation of EPA may lead to a fourfold increase in the EU export, whereas the African export may see a significant slump.<sup>30</sup> A rapidly declining economic condition of the countries which are forced to import cheaper goods from the EU may put a halt to the regional integration process. The West African governments and non-governmental organisations protest against the signing of EPA.

It is worth noting that the majority of ECOWAS countries have already been benefitting from what EPAs would provide.<sup>31</sup> The best example is provided by Sierra Leone: the country benefits from the full access to the European markets, apart from the circulation of arms. Thus, such countries do not usually demonstrate a lively interest in signing the agreement. The negotiations accelerated after new laws governing the access to the EU markets had been adopted. The deadline for the implementation of the interim agreements has been determined on 1 October 2014. In case of a failure to comply with the time limit, the countries will lose their preferential access to the EU market guaranteed by the current framework. However, the majority of the West African countries, being the least developed ones, will have the opportunity to obtain the EBA status, which guarantees tariff-free and quota-free market access to the EU.<sup>32</sup>

30 Weller, Arsova, Aid 2007.

31 Mazur 2012: 242-243.

32 Ramdoo, Bilal: 2013.

## COMPETITION

The shape of the EU relations with ECOWAS is heavily influenced by the competition with other players for a strategic partner status. To achieve this status for the West African countries, the EU has been competing mainly with China and the USA.<sup>33</sup> The last ten years have put China in the most favourable position to strengthen its presence on the continent. This has been caused by the following reasons: a history devoid of colonial relations, and the hope that China will transplant their own model of growth into the African continent. China is becoming increasingly confident; the country has intensified its actions in West Africa, especially in Nigeria. In response to this, the EU has been stepping efforts that have already been made to consolidate the relations with the West African countries. The Former EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, in the publication *Africa – Europe: The indispensable alliance* ensures that “Europe is better placed than anyone to help Africa get exceptional added value from its immense natural resources through a economic and commercial dynamic profitable to both continents and support for the emergence of local processing companies.”<sup>34</sup> This stance seems to be at odds with the fact that there has been a considerable increase in Chinese investments in the region.

According to World Bank data, 85% of the African export to China comes from five countries – major producers of crude oil (e.g. Nigeria). The Chinese invest and the Chinese government supports these investments by special aid schemes, which provide both state-owned Chinese corporations and private investors with not only financial aid, but also with know-how about the African market.<sup>35</sup> Chinese diplomatic missions collaborate closely with their citizens that decided to move to Africa and set up their own business there. The Chinese engage in massive development investments, e.g. telecommunications networks. A special economic zone in machine construction industry has been operating in Nigeria since 2007. Apart from special economic zones, China can offer the West African countries two more important instruments: the China-African Development Fund, and a tariff-free and quota-free movement of products from the least developed countries. The former instrument was established in 2006 and has been

33 Olsen 2013: 43; Xu Yi-Chong 2008: 16-37.

34 Michel 2008: 33.

35 The companies from the PRC enjoy the best relations with military and political elites of the African countries. The PRC's expansion into the continent has been, however, criticised by the citizens of the countries due to the Chinese companies' practices to maximise profit without investing in either local workforce or infrastructure able to improve people's living conditions.

supporting Chinese investors and their African partners in such fields as agriculture, infrastructure, mining, and industry. Regarding the latter, a list of products entitled to zero payment was negotiated in 2004. The list was extended in the subsequent years.

While the China-Africa economic ties are growing stronger, European policies are getting heavily criticised by Africans. European offers are generally not quite well accepted by the African partners. The European offer is weaker in comparison to the Chinese one mainly because of the EU's negative attitude towards the autocratic and non-democratic local authorities, as well as the adopted policy concerning the training and arming of both local security forces and the army. The declared role of the EU in protecting human rights and combating corruption has influenced its ability to use trade relations. The USA has been intensifying its actions to increase the range of treaties concerning free trade and investments. There are also plans to negotiate the trade and investment framework agreement with the ECOWAS. It is also important to mention the American efforts to create a web of mutual dependence not only in economy, but also regarding combating piracy and terrorism.

## THE FOURTH EU-AFRICA SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS

The fourth EU-Africa summit in Brussels began on 2 April 2014. The main slogan of this two-day meeting of the EU and African Heads of State was “Investing in Peace, Prosperity and People.” The Brussels summit (taking place after the meetings held in Cairo – 2000, Lisbon – 2007, and Tripoli – 2010) did not bring any groundbreaking changes regarding the EU-African relations. It has confirmed ever deepening divisions and animosities between the two parties. Apart from the 23 EU and 40 African Heads of State, the meeting was attended by the representatives of the African integration organisations (the African Union), and regional ones: ECOWAS, UEMOA, IGAD and SADC. At the heart of the meeting were the issues of African security, economic cooperation, and the development of education. The summit sought to emphasise the EU's partnership relations with Africa at the political and practical levels, such as economic initiatives, educational exchange programmes, climate change, piracy, terrorism, and organised crime.

Over ten-year-long negotiations on signing the EPA were expected to terminate in 2014. A few weeks before the summit the EU Commissioner for Trade, Karel de Gucht, had expressed his optimism that a consensus

between the EU and the West African countries could be reached. Eastern and Southern Africa had put forward unacceptable conditions for the EU. The main axis of controversy pertained to the rules of origin.<sup>36</sup> Initially, it was expected that the EU-Africa summit on 2-3 April 2014<sup>37</sup> would lead to a formal signing of the agreement. However, the EU's expectations concerning the privileged access to the West African markets caused discontent among the African leaders.

Nigeria's reluctant position, caused by its unwillingness to forgo export taxes on minerals and energy-producing raw materials, was reason enough to protest against the agreement. Nigeria was anxious about the significant influence of the agreement on its key industry sectors. Nigeria's position was set out at the summit; it was claimed that, given Nigeria's current condition as an import-dependent economy, it would be counter-productive to completely open the door for imports without first developing the country's industrial sector to compete globally. The protest was joined by the Republic of Ivory Coast, Ghana and Senegal. But also internal divides can be observed within the ECOWAS. Economic diversity has influenced mutual relations and those with third parties. The EPA's negotiations have threatened to split West Africa between countries that need a free trade deal to keep their preferential access to the EU market (Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana), and those that do not.<sup>38</sup> Already during the forty-fourth ECOWAS summit (28-29 March) in Yamoussoukro in Ivory Coast, ECOWAS set a two-month deadline to sign the EPA. Although the countries reached a consensus, they have been aiming at postponing the formal signing of the EPA.



NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HISTORY  
IN THE EU-WEST AFRICAN RELATIONS

The Brussels summit is the second (after Lisbon in December 2007) gathering of the EU and African Heads of State. Despite the hope expressed in political declarations, it did not lead to a successful conclusion with the signing of the EPA. The majority of the African countries opposed the

<sup>36</sup> The rules of origin lay out the extent to which specific goods may be processed in one country without a formal change of the country of origin. It is also important to determine what duties affect those goods that were manufactured in the EPA country and later processed in another country, which are not covered by the EPA regulations.

<sup>37</sup> The fourth EU - Africa summit took place in Brussels, 2-3 April 2014. The EU and African Heads of State, as well as heads of the EU and the UA institutions attended the summit. The participants were gathered under the watchword "Investing in Peace, Prosperity and People" to discuss the issues of peace, security, investments, climate change, and migration.

<sup>38</sup> Bilal 2014:1.

commercial policy promoted by the EU. It was already during the previous Lisbon summit that the Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade claimed that: "We are not talking anymore about EPA. We will only meet to discuss the content of other agreements which will replace EPA. We have talked about this many times during plenary sessions and confirmed that definitively yesterday. Africa does not want Economic Partnership Agreements."<sup>39</sup> Seven years later the situation remains constant. EPA was meant to be a big step forward in the strategic cooperation between the EU and Africa. It was also meant to strengthen the EU's position in Africa against the competition of China and the USA. African countries oppose such a movement as they are not afraid that they will lose the ability to operate on the free trade market, as this would go against the EU's own interests. The situation has been slowly reversing: the EU has become dependent on mutual economic relations due to new political challenges and will have to make a decision, which countries should be granted preferential trade treatment.

## CONCLUSION

The EU's involvement in the West Africa has been subjected to changes since 1993. On the one hand, this has been a result of the transformations within the EU structures; on the other hand, there was a strategic reorientation by the EU member states' individual interests and shared threats connected with the region. This is a model of a classic multilevel management. The European Union has been taking action in the West Africa, which results shaped multilevel, multidimensional, and interdependent mechanism of cooperation.

The instruments employed under the EU policies in the West African region contribute to a construction of the web of mutual dependence between the EU and the West African countries, especially regarding the economy. Asymmetric relations are caused by still growing differences in the economic and political potential of both parties. Taking this into consideration, the EU employs policy mechanisms unilaterally and selectively. The West African party often plays the role not of a partner but of a beneficiary in the process of shaping a comprehensive EU regional strategic approach. The declared approach to the region is not quite adequate to the factual actions, and the declared aims are not compliant with the interest of the EU member countries.

<sup>39</sup> Deutsche Welle 2007.



The EU policy towards West Africa is determined by the actions of several countries. This condition was derivative upon the colonial past and translates into the shaping of strategic directions of the EU's engagement in the region. European engagement constitutes a controlled completion of the EU member countries' politics in the region. Nothing is more important than history in the EU-West African relations. Past experiences have shaped today's attitudes. The West African countries have used the historical experience as a political basis for the cooperation with the EU.

Despite the growing strength of African regional organisations, their role in the cooperation with the EU has been limited. On one hand, the EU restricts its engagement in the region and delegates the responsibility to regional organisations, especially when it comes to concerns maintaining stability or solving local conflicts. On the other hand, the EU aims at creating strong economic ties with the West African countries. Due to certain dysfunctional elements which occur in the relations between the EU and the regional organisations, the EU maintains cooperation with the member countries regarding economic issues. Three issues deserve special attention when analysing the economic relations between the EU and the ECOWAS:

- regional integration in West Africa has not provided enough possibilities to interact with the EU;
- growing interdependence in shaping inter-institutional relations (EU-ECOWAS) has no direct bearing on intergovernmental relations (between EU member states and ECOWAS countries);
- due to growing competition in the region, the party which cares the most about the realisation of its own interests becomes the most active one and willing to compromise.

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photo by S. Pecio



# PERSPECTIVES OF MONETARY INTEGRATION IN EASTERN AFRICA

KONRAD CZERNICHOWSKI

## article abstract

AT THE 21ST SUMMIT OF THE AFRICAN UNION IN ADDIS ABABA IN MAY 2013, A JOINING OF THREE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES WAS ANNOUNCED. THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC), COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA) AND SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), COMPRISING OF 46 STATES, ALTOGETHER, ARE TO BECOME THE LARGEST FREE TRADE AREA IN THE WORLD. INFORMATION ABOUT THE POSSIBLE JOINING OF THE THREE ORGANIZATIONS HAD BEEN SPREAD AS EARLY AS IN 2008 IN THE COMESA ANNUAL REPORT 2008, BUT THIS TIME THE DATE WAS GIVEN. ACCORDING TO FATIMA HAROUN ACIL, THE AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED IN 2014.

THIS ARTICLE WILL SHORTLY DESCRIBE THE THREE ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN AFRICA AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF INTRODUCING A COMMON CURRENCY IN ONE OF THEM. MAIN ASSUMPTIONS OF THE THEORY OF OPTIMAL CURRENCY AREAS AND THE THEORY OF CONVERGENCE WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED

EAC, COMESA, SADC, MONETARY INTEGRATION,  
OPTIMAL CURRENCY AREAS, CONVERGENCE

## CHARACTERISTICS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN AFRICA

**EAC** – The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC) was signed by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in 1999. 8 years later Burundi and Rwanda joined.<sup>1</sup> Kenya is the country with the biggest economy. South Sudan is expected to enter EAC in 2014.<sup>2</sup>

There has been the Common External Customs Tariff since 2005.<sup>3</sup> Free movement of goods, people and capital was introduced in 2010, thus the organization is a common market at present. In 2014 the EAC Payment and Settlement Systems Integration Project was established. It is aimed at boosting the harmonization of payment systems in Eastern Africa. The project was funded by the African Development Bank.<sup>4</sup> Not only does it enable the realization of the payments in real time, but also makes it possible for the EAC citizens to use their national currencies in each member state.<sup>5</sup> There are also plans to adopt a common currency as well as to transform EAC into the East African Federation, which would mean a political union.

The most important institutions are:<sup>6</sup>

- the Summit – it gives general directions and assesses the progress towards the political union; the heads of states meet once a year; one of them presides the Summit;
- the Council of Ministers – the most important executive organ; the ministers responsible for regional cooperation meet twice a year; it prepares reports for the Summits and realizes their decisions;
- the Coordinating Committee – its meetings take place twice a year, before the meetings of the Council of Ministers, to which it is responsible; it prepares reports assessing the implementation of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community;
- Sectoral Committees – they meet ad hoc and are responsible to the Coordinating Committee;
- the Secretariat – it is an executive organ, which ensures an accurate implementation of the regulations of the Council of Ministers; the current Secretary General (appointed for a 5-year term from 2011 to 2016) is Dr. Richard Sezibera from

1 Czernichowski 2010: 161-162.

2 Yamei Wang 2013.

3 Czernichowski 2010: 162.

4 EAC 2014.

5 Chmiel 2014.

6 Czernichowski 2010: 162-164.







- Rwanda; it monitors development programs, proposes the budget of EAC to the Council, informs the international community about the organization;
- the East African Court of Justice – it ensures that the community law is interpreted in line with the Treaty; its temporary headquarters are in Arusha (Tanzania);
  - the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) – it began its activities in 2001; its members are elected by members of parliaments of each country; it has real legislative competences; it is supported by the East African Court of Justice;
  - Autonomous Institutions – they are established by the Council of Ministers; they specialize in various areas: Lake Victoria Basin Commission, Lake Victoria Development Programme, Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization, the East African Development Bank, the Inter-University Council for East Africa.

**COMESA** – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is one of the largest regional economic communities in terms of the number of member states. It was created in 1994, but its origins date back to 1981, when the Preferential Trade Area was established. 19 countries form the organization: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In the past, Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Tanzania also belonged to COMESA, but they withdrew, choosing the economic integration within the South African Development Community (SADC). It would be problematic for these states to belong to the two customs unions with different external tariffs, which both COMESA and SADC planned to be. COMESA became one in 2009.<sup>7</sup> The member states had three years for the adjustment.<sup>8</sup> The three tariffs are now the same as in EAC, which makes possible the merging of these two customs unions in one. However, the communities prefer to establish a free trade area together with SADC first. Although trade integration is the most important task of COMESA,<sup>9</sup> in 2006 Regional Investment Agency was launched. Its task is to withdraw Foreign Direct Investments. The member states decided to liberalize successively the investment policy and to improve the investment climate.<sup>10</sup> The volume of intraregional trade is very low – 5.1 per cent.

The institutions are, as following:<sup>11</sup>

- the Authority – the chairman is one of the presidents of the member states;
- the Council – it is composed of ministers of the member states;
- the Secretariat – Sindiso Ndema Ngwenya has been the Secretary General since 2008; it is based in Lusaka, Zambia;
- the Intergovernmental Committee;

<sup>7</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 158-161.

<sup>8</sup> Czernichowski 2011: 387.

<sup>9</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 145-161.

<sup>10</sup> Czernichowski 2009: 149.

<sup>11</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 160-161.

- the Technical Committees;
- the Consultative Committees;
- the Committee of Governors of Central Banks;
- the Court of Justice – it was established in 1994; it guarantees that the community law is not interpreted differently in each member state;<sup>12</sup>
- the Federation on National Associations of Women and Business in COMESA (FEMCOM) – it was established in Zimbabwe in 1993; it is a link between the policy organs of the member states and the women organizations;<sup>13</sup>
- the COMESA Clearing House – it was created in 1984 to facilitate foreign transactions;<sup>14</sup>
- the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (Preferential Trade Area Bank or PTA Bank) – it was established in 1985; non-COMESA states can also be members of this institution; China joined the Bank in 2000;<sup>15</sup>
- the Leather and Leather Products Institute (LLPI) – it was created in 1990 to promote trade, regional integration, productivity and competitiveness in the leather sub-sectors;<sup>16</sup>
- the Regional Investment Agency (RIA) – it seeks to optimize trade and investment opportunities in Eastern and Southern Africa;<sup>17</sup>
- the PTA Re-Insurance Company (ZEP-RE) – it was founded in 1990; re-insurance business and trade of insurance are its main tasks.<sup>18</sup>



COMESA headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia  
(photo: Konrad Czernichowski)

<sup>12</sup> COMESA 2013b.

<sup>13</sup> COMESA 2013c.

<sup>14</sup> COMESA 2013a.

<sup>15</sup> COMESA 2013e.

<sup>16</sup> COMESA 2013d.

<sup>17</sup> COMESA 2013g.

<sup>18</sup> COMESA 2013f.



**SADC** – The South African Development Community (SADC) was created in 1992 and is the successor of Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), which was established in 1980. At that time apartheid ruled in the Republic of South Africa, so it was unimaginable for it to be a part of this Regional Economic Community. Only in 1994 did South Africa join SADC. The organization has been a free trade area since 2008 although a year earlier as much as 85 per cent of trade was liberalized. SADC consists of 15 member states: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. One of the biggest problems of many of these states is very high foreign debt. In case of Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia it reaches 150 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). The political, economic and military domination of the Republic of South Africa is characteristic for this bloc. It accounts for 90 per cent of the consumption of electric energy in the region, 80 per cent of GDP, 80 per cent of registered cars and telephones and 70 per cent of personal computers in the region. The most interesting is the case of Swaziland 96 per cent of its import comes from the Republic of South Africa.

“

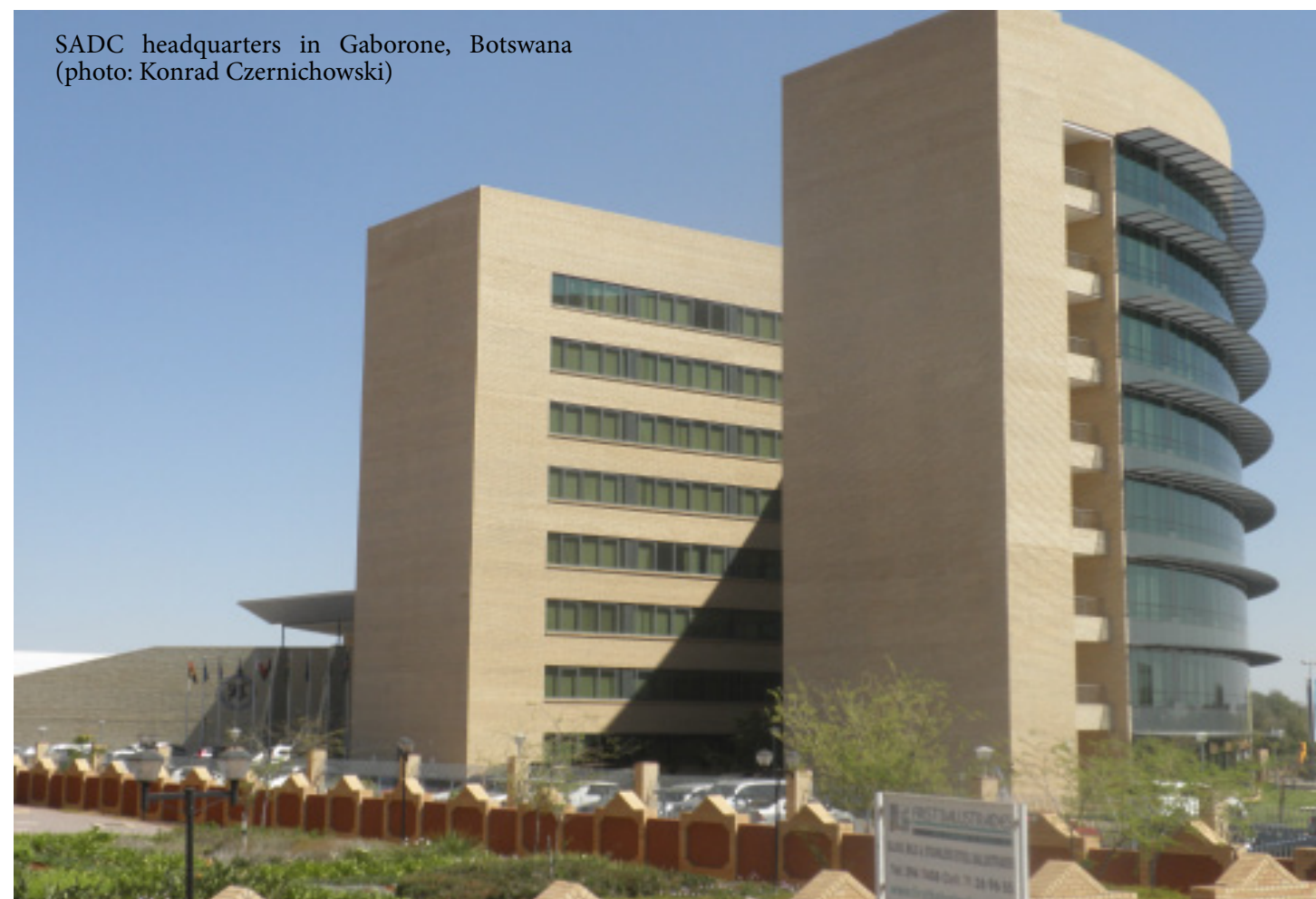
EAGERNESS TO FIGHT APARTHEID WAS THE  
MAIN MOTIVATION OF CREATING SADC.  
SUCCESSIVELY, ECONOMIC REASONS  
OVERCAME POLITICAL GOALS

The risk of the integration process within SADC is the domination of the latter. However, its government ensured that there would be no inequalities in profits between the biggest and small economies. The progress in the infrastructure development and in ensuring peace and security are the biggest success of the organization. What is characteristic for this region (Angola, Botswana, the Republic of South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia) is that the mining sector accounts for 40 per cent of GDP. Among these states South Africa is an exception of having diversified economy. SADC plays a significant role in the world in extracting gold, platinum, manganese and chromite. Nevertheless, there are also member states with the highest share of agriculture in GDP (Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi and Tanzania): 30-50 per cent. Eagerness to fight apartheid was the main motivation of creating SADC. Successively, economic reasons overcame political goals. However, political integration takes place as well: The Parliamentary Forum of SADC is one of the oldest regional parliaments in Africa. A number of institutions enable SADC to pursue an effective policy:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 141-146.

- the Summit – it is formed by heads of state and government who meet once a year;
- the Secretariat – it has been headed by the Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax from Tanzania since August 2013;
- the Council of Ministers – it is formed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states who meet twice a year;
- the Integrated Committee of Ministers – it is subject to the Council of Ministers; two ministers of each country are delegated and meet once a year; its areas of interest are: trade, investments, industry and finances;
- the Troika – it takes decisions when there are no meetings of the Summit, the Council of Ministers or the Integrated Committee of Ministers;
- the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security – it promotes peace in the region;
- the Standing Committee of Officials – it plays an advisory role for the Council of Ministers; its members meet four times per year;
- the National Committees – they are formed by representatives of different groups of interest in each member state;
- the Tribunal – it was launched in 2005; its headquarters are in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia;
- Parliamentary Forum – it has been working since 1996; there are 65 members – five members from each country but Madagascar and Seychelles; sessions take place twice a year in Gaborone, Botswana; for the time being it has no legislative competences, its role is to provide recommendations on the community budget, monitor elections in member states and to lead parliamentary diplomatic missions; it is not financially dependent on the SADC budget since member parliaments' contributions are its source of financing (each parliament pays 50,000 USD per year).

SADC headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana  
(photo: Konrad Czernichowski)





## ITS USE FOR EASTERN AFRICA

The most difficult stage in economic integration within Eastern Africa is its monetary integration. That is why the largest space will be consecrated to the theory of monetary integration, which is one of the youngest economic theories. Monetary policy in four countries in Southern Africa has already been harmonized. The currencies of Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland are fixed to rand (currency of the Republic of South Africa) in the relation 1:1.<sup>20</sup>

**Theory of optimal currency areas** – The symbolic date of birth of the theory of optimal currency areas is 1961, when Robert Mundell published the article under the title “A Theory of Optimum Currency Areas” in “American Economic Review.” A currency area is an area with one currency or more, which are fixed together with a constant relation. There are three currency areas in Africa:<sup>21</sup>

- the rand area: Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland;
- West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU; French: UEMOA – Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine): Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo;
- Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (French: CEMAC – Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale): Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Central Africa and Republic of Congo.

Bank of States of  
Central Africa  
in Yaoundé,  
Cameroon  
(photo: Konrad  
Czernichowski)



<sup>20</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 142.

<sup>21</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 165-169.

In 1999 Robert Mundell was awarded with the Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel for his research on optimal currency areas. According to him an optimal currency area assumes an ability to stabilize levels of prices and rates of employment. Unemployment and payment imbalances are automatically removed without any intervention of monetary or fiscal policy. The targets of the external floating exchange rate (which is a condition of an optimal currency area) are, as following:

- full employment;
- balance of payments equilibrium;
- stable level of prices.
- The realization of these objectives provides efficient allocation of factors of production and thus – maximizing welfare.

In case of balance of payments deficit, depreciation can replace unemployment, and in case of balance of payments surplus, appreciation can replace inflation.<sup>22</sup> When a currency area is created, exchange rate fluctuations are replaced by a collision-free movement of factors of production from the region where their costs are lower to the region where they are higher, causing factor price equalization, in accordance with the theory of Paul Anthony Samuelson, another Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel laureate from 1970.

In the case of a intraregional adjustment process (one state with multiple regions) there is only one central bank. If there is more than one currency, central banks must cooperate with each other.<sup>23</sup> The best solution in this case is to form one regional central bank, which would be responsible for monetary policy.

Robert Mundell explains what happens if an optimum currency area does not coincide with national borders. In his model the world consists of two states (USA and Canada) and two regions (the East and the West). The East produces cars and the West produces wood. If there is surplus demand for wood, for example as a result of productivity growth in the automotive industry, unemployment will appear in the East and inflation in the West. Whatever American or Canadian monetary policy is, it will negatively affect one of the regions. Expansionary monetary policy reduces the rate of unemployment and restrictive monetary policy reduces the rate of inflation. However, if Western and Eastern dollars replace American and Canadian dollars, and their relation is at ease, then the appreciation of Western dollar

<sup>22</sup> Mundell 1961: 657-665.

<sup>23</sup> Bukowski 2007: 17-18.



in relation to the Eastern dollar will eliminate both inflation in the West and unemployment in the East.<sup>24</sup>

Reorganization of currencies is not easy. National currencies are a sign of independence. When South Sudan gained its independence in 2011, it introduced its own currency: the South Sudanese pound. Forming a currency area requires political decisions. However, it seems easier in Africa than in Europe because African states are younger. They have been independent for about 50 years. Public opinion in Eastern Africa seems to be less reluctant for cooperation with other African states than public opinion in Europe at the end of the previous century (especially Germans did not want to lose their German mark).

When we talk about optimal currency area, we mean above all about its optimal size: whether it encompasses one state, one region (SADC, COMESA or EAC) or perhaps the whole continent. According to the theory of optimal currency areas it cannot be too large nor too small. There are some premises that it should be raised and some premises that it should be decreased. These factors will be analyzed now. The first group of arguments is in favour of large currency areas:

- the size of the foreign exchange market (forex – market for the trading of currencies) must not be too small; no one but central banks can affect the market rate (in the Austrian School of Economics even central banks should not have that impact);
- the smaller currency area is, the smaller influence on people the money illusion phenomenon has (money illusion refers to the human psyche that is willing to accept a decline in real wages as a result of the depreciation of the domestic currency in relation to foreign currencies, provided that nominal wages do not decrease; whereas it does not accept adjustment processes even if real wages remain constant and only nominal wages are falling);<sup>25</sup>
- in case of many small currency areas central banks bear the high cost of maintaining the value of the currency and its conversion.<sup>26</sup>

If the whole world was one currency area and there was only one currency all over the world, then conversion costs would be reduced to zero.<sup>27</sup> This possibility was considered already in the 19th century for instance by John Stuart Mill. Actually, the gold standard was very close to the global currency area. This system broke down after the departure of the US dollar from gold parity in 1971. Nevertheless, nowadays there are also economists who predict forming a global currency area in the future.

24 Mundell 1961: 657-665.

25 Bukowski 2007: 17-18.

26 Mundell 1961: 657-665.

27 Bukowski 2007: 18.

The other group of arguments is against enlarging currency areas: there is a need for internal stability;

- The more precise division of currency areas is, the easier it is to master unemployment.
- In the extreme case, the number of currencies would have to match the number of different goods. However, the money would lose its role as a medium of exchange. One might as well return to barter.<sup>28</sup>

If we want to answer the question whether it is possible for COMESA, SADC and EAC to form a currency union, it is extremely important to know the conditions of optimal currency area. There are two main conditions: internal mobility and no external mobility of the factors of production (labour, capital and raw materials).<sup>29</sup> The Legal framework is not sufficient to ensure full internal mobility. Mobility of labor does not only mean changing the place of residence, but also ability of changing the job or even profession.

Full mobility of persons is crucial in a monetary union because it replaces the regulatory role of the exchange rate. The factors of production flow from the countries where they are cheaper to the countries where they are more expensive, balancing the balance of payments. Unrestricted movement of labor would align wages on the same level, according to the Heckscher-Ohlin-Samuelson model. However, de facto internal mobility is not full. Psychological factors (e.g. reluctance to change children's school or spouse's job) and language barriers<sup>30</sup> are the reasons why some people give up the decision of taking up a better-paid job abroad (only when economic shocks are temporary, low mobility of labor is desired, so that employees could come back when social and economic situation gets better).<sup>31</sup> Some economists argue that common interests are another factor that increases the effectiveness of the introduction of a regional currency.<sup>32</sup>

According to Professor Ronald McKinnon (born in 1935 in Canada) economies should be relatively open. It is measured by the relation between tradeables and nontradeables. Tradeables can be either exportables or importables. Exportables are the goods that are produced home and can be both consumed and exported, whereas importables are the goods that are consumed home and can be both produced home and imported. Openness of economy makes also monetary and fiscal policy more efficient. Economy

28 Mundell 1961: 657-665.

29 Bukowski 2007: 16-19.

30 Żukrowska 2010: 453.

31 Borowiec 2001: 181-184.

32 Żukrowska 2010: 458.

in an optimal currency union should also be diversified, so that in case of an economic shock, there are no macroeconomic turbulences. It was underlined by professor Peter Kenen (1932-2012). Professional mobility of labor (readiness to change a job) has also its significance. Monetary and fiscal policy should be transferred to the international level. Peter Kenen did not exclude the possibility of providing financial aid from the central budget.<sup>33</sup>

**Theory of convergence** – theory of convergence emphasizes conditions of stabilization of exchange rates, which is a big challenge when creating a currency area. Capital movement has an impact on a change in exchange rate and interest rate. Coordination of monetary policy is necessary.<sup>34</sup> Politicians who would like to form a new currency area in Africa may use the European example. For instance the Treaty on the European Union introduced euro convergence criteria:

- inflation rate no more than 1.5 percentage points higher than an average of inflation rates in the 3 euro zone member states with the lowest inflation rate;
- long-term interest rate no more than 2 percentage points higher than an average of interest rates in the 3 euro zone member states with the lowest inflation rate;
- government budget deficit not exceeding 3 per cent of GDP (gross domestic product) – see Table 1 showing that 9 states (and all the three regional communities) exceed 3 per cent; these are: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia; however, 4 countries have experienced a budget surplus: Botswana, Lesotho, Seychelles and Zimbabwe;
- public debt not exceeding 60 per cent of GDP
- exchange rate ranging  $\pm 15$  percent from a central rate.

However, these criteria only indicate if a country is ready to join the currency area. They do not have to be a target of economic policy since real convergence as a consequence of forming a currency area or free trade area results itself in unifying inflation rates and interest rates. As for now, exchange rates in Eastern Africa are very unstable. Kenya's shilling weakened against American dollar, whereas The Ugandan shilling has experienced the growth of 14 per cent.<sup>35</sup>

33 Bukowski 2007: 19.

34 Borowiec 2001: 46-47.

35 IMF 2013: 8.

Table 1

Forecast of overall fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP (2014)<sup>36</sup>

STATE/ORGANIZATION	ORGANIZATION(S)	FISCAL BALANCE (2014)
ANGOLA	SADC	-0,8
BOTSWANA	SADC	1,5
BURUNDI	COMESA, EAC	-2,5
COMOROS	COMESA	-0,8
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	COMESA, SADC	-3,4
DJIBOUTI	COMESA	-
EGYPT	COMESA	-
ERITREA	COMESA	-11,6
ETHIOPIA	COMESA	-3,1
KENYA	COMESA, EAC	-4,2
LESOTHO	SADC	2,2
LIBYA	COMESA	-
MADAGASCAR	COMESA, SADC	-3,0
MALAWI	COMESA, SADC	-2,1
MAURITIUS	COMESA, SADC	-1,6
MOZAMBIQUE	SADC	-7,2
NAMIBIA	SADC	-1,6
RWANDA	COMESA, EAC	-2,9
SEYCHELLES	COMESA, SADC	3,0
SUDAN	COMESA	-
SWAZILAND	COMESA, SADC	-7,2
TANZANIA	EAC, SADC	-4,5
UGANDA	COMESA, EAC	-6,0
ZAMBIA	COMESA, SADC	-6,6
ZIMBABWE	COMESA, SADC	1,3
<b>EAC</b>		<b>-4,5</b>
<b>COMESA (SUB-SAHARAN PART)</b>		<b>-3,9</b>
<b>SADC</b>		<b>-3,6</b>

36 IMF 2013: 88.

Advantages and disadvantages of creating a currency area – monetary integration has both positive and negative sides. It is quite difficult to predict whether positive consequences dominate over negative ones after effectively forming the currency area. There are two sources of knowledge about effects of monetary integration:

- Theoretical concepts;
- experiences of existing currency unions (EU as the largest one, in particular).

General balance of advantages and disadvantages depends on a market and sort of products that are sold.<sup>37</sup> Three main short-term advantages are, as follows:

- elimination of transaction costs (Kenyan importer would not need to buy Tanzanian shillings if there was only one currency in Kenya and Tanzania);
- reduction of foreign exchange risk.<sup>38</sup>
- decline in interest rates.

Long-term advantages are even more important:

- accumulation of capital;
- transparency of prices;
- economic stability;
- social-economic growth;<sup>39</sup>
- regional security;
- integration of financial and capital markets;
- regional citizenship.<sup>40</sup>

Disadvantages can be divided into short-term costs and long-term costs, as well. There are three main short-term costs of creating a currency area:

- adjusting tickets, post stamps, cash machines, accounting information systems, and datasets;
- loss of income by banks and bureaux de change;
- no income from emission of domestic currency.

Long-term costs are, as following:

- overtaking the competence of leading monetary policy by a regional central bank (this is the biggest disadvantage);
- no possibility of using the policy of exchange course to stabilize the economy.<sup>41</sup>

**Possible scenarios** – As far as Eastern Africa in the years 2014-2050 is concerned, four scenarios may be distinguished:

- No regional currency area – this scenario is unlikely because of strong observed tendencies to integrate economies all over the world, including Africa.
- One African currency, which could be named ‘afro’ – The Treaty of Abuja signed in 1991 is the basis for this prognosis; according to article 6 of this treaty the African Monetary Union should be established before the end of 2025;<sup>42</sup> however, this is improbable because of large structural differences in various parts of the continent; according to what was written in this article, Africa cannot be considered as an optimal currency area – many economies are not diversified (it happens that one product accounts for more than 50 per cent of GDP).<sup>43</sup> Very few African economies are sufficiently open and there are restrictions in the movement of people and capital.
- Forming one joint monetary union by EAC, COMESA and SADC – the agreement that is yet to be signed in 2014 is the basis for this prognosis; the three regional economic communities belong to the most active ones in Africa; when they form one free trade area, it will comprise 550 million people, which is more than a half of Africa’s population; the next natural steps would be transforming this free trade area into a customs union, a common market and then a currency area.
- Forming monetary unions by EAC, COMESA and SADC separately – it is the most probable that before EAC, COMESA and SADC form a unified economic organism, at least some of these groupings will become currency unions: EAC is the closest to this target as the smallest organization, comprising of only 5 African states (at the time of writing). In December 2013 EAC signed an agreement about the intention of liberalizing the movement of people before the end of 2015 and introducing a common currency; and in 2014 it established the EAC Payment and Settlement Systems Integration Project with the partnership of the African Development Bank. It is very difficult to predict when exactly politicians will decide about forming currency areas, but it seems that it is a general tendency in the world, despite the current problems of the European currency union.

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<sup>37</sup> Barcz; Kawecka-Wyrzykowska; Michałowska-Gorywoda 2007: 279.

<sup>38</sup> Królak-Werwińska 2005: 32-33.

<sup>39</sup> Barcz; Kawecka-Wyrzykowska; Michałowska-Gorywoda 2007: 277.

<sup>40</sup> Królak-Werwińska 2005: 31-35.

<sup>41</sup> Barcz; Kawecka-Wyrzykowska; Michałowska-Gorywoda 2007: 277.

<sup>42</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 131.

<sup>43</sup> Czernichowski 2010: 22-23.



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photo by S. Pecio



# THE POSSIBILITY OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION IN INTEGRATING SOUTHERN AFRICA THE VIEW OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN, DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

SEHLARE MAKGETLANENG

## article abstract

THIS ARTICLE PROVIDES A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PLACE OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION WITHIN SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION AS VIEWED BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC). IT EXECUTES THIS TASK BY EXPLORING ITS POSITION ON SIX ISSUES. THESE ARE, FIRSTLY, WHETHER SACU AS A CUSTOMS UNION IS ADVANCING SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION. SECONDLY, WHETHER SACU CAN BE USED AS A MODEL FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION? TO WHAT EXTENT DOES IT PROVIDE A MODEL FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION? THIRDLY, WHETHER THERE ARE STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES IN USING SACU AS SUCH A MODEL? FOURTHLY, ARE THERE OBSTACLES TO SACU'S EXPANSION? FIFTHLY, ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO SACU TO ADMIT OTHER SADC COUNTRIES OR EVEN THE COMMON

MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA COUNTRIES AS NEW MEMBERS? SIXTHLY, WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION OF SACU HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT TO TURN SACU INTO AN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY ADVANCING SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION? ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS, THE PAPER CALLS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF SACU INTO SADC AS A MEANS OF DOING JUSTICE TO THE BEST AND EFFECTIVE WAY OF CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS REGIONAL INTEGRATION. THIS WILL SERVE THE PURPOSE OF STRENGTHENING SADC IN ITS MANDATE TO ACHIEVE BROADER LONG-TERM STRATEGIC REGIONAL INTERESTS.

SACU, SOUTHERN AFRICAN INTEGRATION,  
SADC, SACU INTEGRATION INTO SADC

## keywords

## INTRODUCTION

This article provides a critical analysis of the future and possibility of Southern African Customs Union (SACU) in integrating Southern Africa. Is the advancement of regional integration SACU's objective? Can SACU be used as a model for regional integration? What are structural challenges in using it as a model for regional integration? Are there obstacles for SACU to

expand or admit other Southern African countries as its members? Are there opportunities for it to expand? Our answers to these questions enable us to create scenarios presenting a possible reality of SACU's future. We create and discuss these scenarios upon answering these questions. We do this in our conclusion.

## AVOIDING SACU'S SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

Literature produced by some writers on Southern African Customs Union (SACU) is ignorant of its place within Southern African regional integration as viewed by Southern African Development Community (SADC) and SACU itself. Some of these writers do not use SACU's sources of information in analysing its place within regional integration. Mzukisi Qobo maintains that "while SADC could retain its function as a political and economic mechanism geared towards achieving balanced development, the specific task of deepening integration should be driven elsewhere" by SACU, which he argues has a "potential for managing and promoting deeper integration"<sup>1</sup> and that it is "SACU, rather than SADC, that offers the more realistic possibility for fast-tracking regional integration"<sup>2</sup> in Southern Africa. He concludes that countries "joining SACU are likely to do so bearing in mind their likely benefit by way of revenue transfers and security of access to the South African market."<sup>3</sup> The substantial restructuring of SACU's revenue sharing formula and its extension to possible members are against the needs and interests of the majority of its members whose development levels are different.

As this work demonstrates, these two issues are some of the key obstacles to SACU promoting regional integration and to its capability to absorb other SADC countries as its members. Qobo himself does not address one of the fundamental obstacles to SACU's expansion and what he regards as its potential to "manage and promote deeper integration." He states that one of these fundamental obstacles is the defence of their interests within SACU is one of the key reasons behind their opposition to its expansion.<sup>4</sup> SADC as "a political and economic" organisational "mechanism geared towards achieving balanced development," as Qobo correctly maintains, is the reflection that it has a broader mandate, vision and mission, which are appropriate to achieve regional integration. This is also supportive of the

1 Qobo 2005: 53.

2 Qobo 2005: 83.

3 Qobo 2005: 83.

4 Soko 2008: 63.

fact that regional integration is the political project. The efforts towards the achievement of "balanced development" are of strategic importance towards the realisation of regional integration. SACU's mandate, vision and mission are narrow and limited. They are not conducive means to achieve regional integration. They are appropriate in the facilitation of trade for the purpose of sharing the revenue, which is precisely what SACU is.

For Qobo, it is realistic to expect SACU to absorb SADC, not SADC to absorb SACU. He views SACU as the regional economic community which will absorb other SADC countries and even Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries. He maintains that the SACU 2002 Agreement "offers a chance to move towards a deeper level of integration that could go far towards resolving the present muddle of multiple regional integration schemes with overlapping memberships."<sup>5</sup> Contrary to this position, for SACU to become a regional economic community, it will contribute towards increasing and complicating the problem of multiple memberships to regional economic communities. He is hopeful of "an expanded SACU which could include COMESA members."<sup>6</sup> This is also the position of Robert Kirk and Matthew Stern. They maintain that "SACU could form the core of a new regional customs union that could gradually expand to include other members of SADC and possibly COMESA."<sup>7</sup>

Relying on the position maintained by Kirk and Stern, Qobo argues that "the democratisation of SACU" will offer its "current and prospective" or future members "greater security of access to the South African market." For South Africa, SACU's "strategic importance lies mainly with the leverage it provides for competitive liberalisation and the achievement of major foreign economic policy objectives."<sup>8</sup> This is basically the position of Andrew Hurrell upon which Qobo bases his argument. Hurrell justifies acceptance of the United States strategic interests by other North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) members in his discussion of "a rule-constrained hegemonic order" in the context of the balance of incentives within NAFTA where the acceptance of the United States objectives is traded for security of access to the United States national market.<sup>9</sup> Far from this theoretical constructed arrangement making for "a symbiotic relations within a rule-constrained, hegemonic order that over time is likely to generate further

5 Qobo 2005: 52.

6 Qobo 2005: 80-1.

7 Kirk, Stern 2003: 17.

8 Qobo 2005: 81.

9 Hurrell 1995: 51.



momentum for deeper regional integration,”<sup>10</sup> as Qobo argues, the United States in pursuit of its strategic objectives is either constrained or enabled by the balance of forces, not rules.

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CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT  
OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION, SOUTH AFRICA  
SHOULD SHOULD THE PRIMARY RESPON-  
SIBILITY IN BRINGING SACU TO AN END

Regional integration is a political project driven by political actors to achieve broader socio-political, economic, peace and security objectives. This view of regional integration as the political project goes against the position that regional integration is a mere economic project. The view that regional integration is economic project is formed by narrow imperatives of corporate economic and trade interests. It reduces the project to its economic and trade aspects. This position is maintained by Peter Draper. He argues that the “best vehicle” for South Africa as “indispensable to a viable economic integration project” is through SACU, not SADC.<sup>11</sup> Reducing regional integration to its trade aspect by viewing it as a means to facilitate trade or for “trade facilitation” or that “deepened regional integration is critical” for “trade facilitation,”<sup>12</sup> Draper and Nkulululeko Khumalo conclude by calling upon South Africa to play a leading role in expanding SACU.<sup>13</sup> Providing a reason behind this call Draper maintains: “An enlarged SACU could absorb SADC or even parts of COMESA if it works well.”<sup>14</sup>

Other writers maintain that SACU is advancing regional integration. This position is basically the attribution of the advancement of regional integration to SACU. This position is best articulated by Gavin Maasdorp when he maintains that “SACU offers an advanced form of economic integration hardly matched elsewhere in the world” and that it represents “a core around which economic integration in the wider region needs to be built.”<sup>15</sup>

10 Qobo 2005: 81-82.

11 Draper 2005: vi.

12 Draper, Khumalo 2005: 18.

13 Draper, Khumalo 2005: 28.

14 Draper 2005: 100.

15 Maasdorp 1993: 245.

The issue is not only that literature produced by some writers on SACU ignores its position within Southern African regional integration as it is viewed by SADC and SACU itself. Another issue is that some of these writers do not use SADC and SACU sources of information, particularly on the view of SACU’s place within regional integration. In other words, some of these writers do not use primary sources of information in their analysis of SACU’s place within regional integration. This is one of the profound weaknesses. The point is that one should use sources of information produced by SACU in providing a critical analysis of its place within regional integration.

## THE ROAD FROM SACU TO SADC: THE ROLE OF SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa established SACU in 1910. The formation of SADC is directly linked to key issues behind the establishment of SACU. The problem of SACU as an obstacle towards the achievement of regional integration should be resolved. This problem should have been resolved immediately in 1994 or in the late 1994 by South Africa acting together with SADC as a member of the organisation. This has not been done. This has been a failure of South Africa and its SADC partners regarding their regional integration agenda. Any obstacles towards the realisation of the objectives of this agenda should be resolved as SACU’s existence depends on South Africa. Contributing towards the achievement of regional integration, South Africa should shoulder the primary responsibility in bringing SACU to an end.

Upon colonising the whole of Southern Africa in 1910, Britain established SACU with Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland as members. Britain struggled for Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to become an integral part of South Africa politically and economically. Its efforts were reflected in the 1910 SACU Agreement. As all these countries were British colonies, Britain used South Africa in maintaining its political and economic domination over the others. When whites began to exercise state political power in South Africa in 1961, they tried to incorporate these three countries into South Africa. They failed. This failure was due to the anticolonial struggle by the people of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Botswana and Lesotho achieved political independence in 1966 and Swaziland in 1968. Their negotiation with South Africa as independent countries led to the 1969 SACU Agreement. South Africa’s economic and trade dominance of its SACU partners was reflected in this agreement. As a means of protecting and expanding its regional economic and trade dominance, South Africa



struggled for its SACU partners to support these processes against its own domestic interests and externally in the region and beyond.

When South Africa failed to politically incorporate Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland as the British High Commission territories into itself, it proposed to establish Southern African common market, a regional political and economic formation with itself as a dominant member in 1963. This basically became later what was known as the Constellation of Southern African States in 1979 as an integral part of its policy objective to maintain and expand its long-term strategic interests not only in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, but also throughout the Southern African region. Upon achieving political independence, these countries became members of the Rand Monetary Area from which Botswana subsequently withdrew its membership and continued as members of the Southern African Customs Union through which South Africa exercised enormous economic power and authority over them.

South Africa, as the settler colonial force, embarked upon an interlinked programme of actions. Among others, it firstly supported the colonial rule in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe politically, economically, financially, technologically, militarily and in terms of human resources development and trade. Secondly, it formulated and implemented a destabilisation policy against independent countries of Southern Africa. Thirdly, it consolidated its status as the strategic partner of Western powers in the region. Fourthly, it intensified its struggle to remain the colonial power in Namibia. While this programme of actions prolonged its settler colonial rule, it mobilised the regional, continental and global forces opposed to racism and colonialism against itself in the process. Relatively developed compared to other African countries, there was hope that in the post-apartheid era South Africa could use its political, economic, financial, trade, human resources development, technological and military resources in the service of completing the African decolonisation agenda and contribute towards regional and continental integration. Thanks to these factors, the Southern African region and the African continent invested enormously in the end of its colonial rule. It is for these reasons that the struggle against the colonial rule in South Africa became the most truly Pan-African cause after apartheid.

As a response to the socio-historical alliance between South Africa and the Western countries (particularly on socio-political, economic, financial, trade, human resources development, technological and military issues and support to the apartheid rule), the Front Line States formed the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Its aims, among



others, were to reduce dependence of Southern African independent countries, particularly but not only, on South Africa. When South Africa re-introduced its Constellation of Southern African States in 1979 as a regional policy objective with declaration for its members to share political, economic, security and defence benefits within the regional imperatives it determined, the Front Line States in the same year prepared plans to launch an alternative organisation for regional political and economic integration and cooperation. It was for this reason that SADCC, consisting of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia as members, was formed in April 1980 in Lusaka, Zambia to serve as organisational means for restructuring regional economic relations in order to reduce the dependency of its member countries, particularly but not only, on South Africa. SADCC was later transformed into SADC. As a result of the end of the settler colonial rule and the achievement of political independence in 1994, South Africa became a member of SADC on 30 August 1994.

SACU depends on South Africa for its institutional democratic governance achievement. This framework came into being as a result of South Africa's efforts. It materialised as a result of the 2002 SACU Agreement. It took SACU many years since 2002 to establish the Council of Ministers, the Customs Union Commission, the Technical Liaison Committees and the Secretariat. As these governance structures deal primarily with operational issues, it is only the Council of Ministers which deals with policy formulation. Its 2002 Agreement provides for the establishment of the seven structures. This means that the most important structures have not been established yet. These are the Tariff Board, the National Bodies and the Tribunal. So far only South Africa has established its national tariff board. Its International Trade Administration Commission executes the tasks of SACU's Tariff Board.

SACU depends also on South Africa's institutional and legal frameworks and technical capacity. Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (BLNS) are dependent on South Africa on these issues. According to the 2002 SACU Agreement, all SACU members have the right to set tariffs. The challenge BLNS face is that they have no institutional or legal frameworks and the technical capacity to create national tariff boards themselves in order to take decisions in setting tariffs. Briefly, they do not have tariff boards. The consequences are that the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa executes these tasks for SACU's organisational tariff board and national tariff boards of BLNS, which are still to be established. The key reason why Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland have no national tariff boards for them to take decisions in setting tariffs is their lack of technical capacity or commitment; the fact remains that countries which maintain that they do not possess the institutional and legal frameworks or

technical capacity to have such national tariff boards in order to set tariffs, have no right to claim that the organisation of which they are members is capable of integrating their region.

SACU's well-entrenched dependence on South Africa for its institutional democratic governance, institutional and legal frameworks, technical capacity, and financial resources supports the fact that it does not possess the means to pursue regional integration. This is one of its fundamental obstacles to integrate Southern Africa. This article provides an analysis of these obstacles, which South Africa should play a leading role in solving. The solution to this problem is to end the existence of SACU through its incorporation or integration into SADC. This will enable South Africa in using its resources to strengthen SADC as it is the best and most effective organisational driver of regional integration.

## NO ALTERNATIVE TO SACU'S INTEGRATION INTO SADC

SACU has structural obstacles to integrate Southern Africa. The reality is such that there is no alternative besides its integration into SADC. SADC is the regional economic community through which Southern African countries have a mandate from the African Union to integrate their region. Recognised by the African Union as the driver of the Southern African integration it is through SADC that the countries of the region contribute towards African continental integration.

The advancement of regional integration is not SACU's objective. While SACU can be used as a model for Southern African regional integration on the basis of being a customs union, this possibility is challenged by the fact that it has not integrated its five members. Any level of integration of its members has not been its own achievement. It has inherited this state of affairs from the developed countries that used South Africa to integrate SACU's members and other Southern African countries into the global capitalist social order.

These obstacles are structural challenges in using SACU as a model for regional integration. Central to these are the obstacles to SACU's expansion or admission of other countries as new members. This means that there are no opportunities for SACU to expand. This structural fundamental problem has been accompanied by the organisational problem of the failed efforts to promote integration as the regional objective.

## IS THE ADVANCEMENT OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION SACU'S OBJECTIVE?

The process of the advancement of Southern African regional integration has never been SACU's objective. SACU never provided for the advancement of regional integration beyond it being a customs union. The advancement of regional integration was not an objective in its 1910 and 1969 Agreements, and hasn't been provided for in its 2002 Agreement. SACU was not established to advance development and regional integration in Southern Africa. This opinion is supported by Richard Gibbs, a leading authority on SACU, who emphasises that in reality, SACU was never designed to promote development and regional integration in Southern Africa.<sup>16</sup> The institutional structures of its 1910 and 1969 Agreements "undermined democratisation and peripheralised Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland."<sup>17</sup> This was the programme of action embarked upon by the apartheid state, which was against democracy internally in South Africa. As the regime was also against national integration in South Africa it was opposed to democracy within Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland in particular, but likewise in the broader region and blocked Southern African regional integration in general. It struggled for Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland to become closer to South Africa and be far removed from the rest of the region, especially regarding the advancement of democracy and regional integration in Southern Africa. On the relationship between the 1910 and 1969 SACU Agreements and South Africa's interests in Southern Africa, Gibbs correctly maintains that:

"The 1910 Agreement reflected Britain's geostrategic desire to transfer HCTs [High Commission Territories] and create a 'Greater South Africa.' The 1969 Agreement was a pragmatic framework for managing trade and was used by Pretoria to preserve the geopolitical status quo of South African dominance. It was not in South Africa's interests for SACU to be a strong, democratic regional organisation."<sup>18</sup>

On the relationship between the 2002 SACU Agreement and Southern African regional integration, Gibbs correctly maintains that while its 2002 Agreement has "democratised many of the activities performed under the 1969 Agreement, it failed to expand the competence of SACU and promote deeper regional integration."<sup>19</sup> Briefly, the 2002 SACU Agreement does not

16 Gibbs 2006: 603.

17 Gibbs 2006: 603.

18 Gibbs 2006: 603.

19 Gibbs 2006: 603.

even provide SACU with the competence to promote Southern African regional integration.

## CAN SACU BE USED AS A MODEL FOR SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION?

SACU can be used a model for Southern African regional integration. It has been providing the means for integration among its members on the basis of it being the customs union. These means can best be understood if we come to grips with the reality that SACU members are highly integrated. They share similar historical, cultural, linguistic and colonial factors. They also share a similar legislative background and common legal frameworks. Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland were British colonies. Namibia used to be a German colony. The international balance of forces between Britain and Germany led to Namibia finally becoming a colony of South Africa before it could achieve political independence.

There exists a relative free movement of goods within SACU members. In addition there are other factors characterising the fact that they are highly integrated: Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa are in the Common Monetary Area. The South African rand is used in Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. Their currencies are pegged to the South African currency. They implement the South African monetary policy. Together with South Africa, they meet on a quarterly basis to coordinate monetary policy. This has resulted in more financial stability because they use the South African currency which is internationally tradable. Also there is a free flow of capital between these four countries. Botswana's monetary policy is still benchmarked on the model of the South African monetary policy.

The fact that SACU has been providing the means for integration among its members does not mean that it has integrated them. Its members are highly integrated not because of SACU's efforts. As mentioned above, the level of integration among its members is not its achievement, but the result of a socio-historical process whereby developed countries used South Africa to integrate its members and other Southern African countries into international capitalist social order. Such a version of the facts is articulated by the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) formed in April 1980 in Lusaka, Zambia in its official founding document providing its objectives not only in regional, but also in international terms:

"Southern Africa is dependent on the Republic of South Africa as a focus of transport and communications, an exporter of goods and services and as an importer of goods and cheap labour. This dependence is not a natural phenomenon, nor is it the result of a free market economy. The nine states and one occupied territory of southern Africa ... were, in varying degrees, deliberately incorporated - by metropolitan powers, colonial rulers, and large corporations - into the colonial and sub-colonial structures centering in general on the Republic of South Africa. The development of national economies as balanced units, let alone the welfare of the people of southern Africa, played no part in the economic integration strategy. Not surprisingly, therefore, southern Africa is fragmented, grossly exploited and subject to economic manipulation by outsiders. Future development must aim at the reduction of economic dependence not only on the Republic of South Africa, but also on any single external state or group of states."<sup>20</sup>

SADCC was transformed into SADC on 17 August 1992. It was formed to serve as organisational means for restructuring regional economic relations in the effort to reduce dependence of its member countries, particularly but not only, on South Africa. Now post-apartheid South Africa is working together with its SADC partners to reduce and end their dependency on the developed countries.

SADCC's objective of reducing its members' global dependence on developed countries and their regional dependence on South Africa was not difficult to understand. Their dependency relations on South Africa were more pronounced and tangible in the sectors of transport, migrant labour, energy, trade, as well as the customs union and currency areas. As a relatively developed country within Southern Africa (particularly on the economic, financial, trade and technological levels), South Africa is resolving the dependency of its SADC partners on itself in the above mentioned areas. It has shouldered political, economic and financial responsibility both individually and collectively with its SADC partners in contributing to resolve political and economic problems in some countries in the region. It has played this role on behalf of SADC, in facilitating dialogue between the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front and the two 'Movement for Democratic Change' political formations in Zimbabwe. It has enormously contributed and continues to do so towards the resolution of conflicts in

20 SADCC 1980.



the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is expected to play a leading role not only in Southern African regional integration, but in African continental integration in general.

## WHAT ARE THE STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES IN USING SACU AS A MODEL FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION?

There are structural challenges in using SACU as a model for regional integration. Some of these key challenges relate to its common external tariff. If some SADC members want to join SACU as members, they will have to address their tariffs schedules and their international obligations to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). SADC and SACU officials interviewed by the author in Gaborone, Botswana in February 2013 and in Windhoek, Namibia in October in 2011 use Mauritius as an example. Mauritius has declared its movement towards a zero tariffs system. It has binding commitments to the WTO in terms of tariffs systems. Therefore, if Mauritius is admitted into SACU, either SACU should go the route to move towards a zero tariff system or it should change its position and adopt and implement that of SACU. Their view is that Mauritius will not replace its position with that of SACU.

The second structural challenge in using SACU as a model for regional integration is SACU's revenue sharing formula. The way it is currently structured is not in favour of admitting new members into SACU. This is an obstacle to the admission of new members. This is particularly the case given the way how revenue is shared among its members, but also because of the dependence of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland on the revenue sharing formula, which contributes significantly towards their national budget. The way the revenue sharing formula is structured is not for a win-win situation for its members. And does not encourage any win-win solutions to problems linked to contributions to the common revenue pool and the way this pool is shared. It is a zero-sum game in terms of sharing, as the pool is definite: SACU members only receive a particular amount of the revenue pool to share. If one member gets more, another member gets less. However the issue is not of one country complaining for getting less from the pool to which it contributes significantly: If two SADC members that trade more with other SACU members are admitted into SACU, their membership will have a significant impact on the revenue change within SACU, given the fact that the revenue sharing formula is determined on the basis of SACU intra-trade. If two SADC members who trade more with other SACU

members are admitted into SACU the revenue pool gets smaller. It is not so much that the pool will shrink, but that the revenue pool remains the same while at the same time being shared by more countries.

## OBSTACLES TO SACU'S EXPANSION

This part will identify the obstacles to SACU's expansion of its admission of SADC or even COMESA countries as new members. For instance, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland partners are heavily dependent on the SACU revenue pool. They get enormous financial resources from SACU. It is difficult for them, like other countries throughout the world, to open a door to renegotiate a large amount of its revenue base, knowing very well that there is a high possibility for them to be negatively affected. It is difficult for them to contemplate changes negatively affecting their revenue base. SACU has been doing well in generating revenue for Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland to such an extent that pressure on them to improve their tax administration in order to raise revenue has been significantly reduced. When Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland's policy makers think about SACU they first and foremost think about the revenue from SACU.<sup>21</sup> This is their primary consideration. Trade issues are only their secondary consideration. They are working hard to ensure that what they are getting from SACU would not be reduced substantially. This reality poses structural challenges to the issue of the restructuring SACU. SADC and SACU officials maintain that it is not possible for SACU to absorb other SADC countries as its members. Their position is that Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland are structurally opposed to the admission of other countries as SACU members. The way the SACU revenue sharing formula is currently structured, they have no material interests to see other countries joining SACU as members. The more countries join SACU the more revenue will be reduced and the less they will receive from the common revenue pool.



IF SACU IS TO BE USED AS A BUILDING BLOCK FOR SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION ITS REVENUE SHARING FORMULA AND THE ORGANISATION ITSELF SHOULD BE CHANGED FUNDAMENTALLY

21 Mosisili 2010: 72.

The material interests by Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland are such that they are not only against the admission of new members into the organisation, but also that they are structurally opposed to SACU serving as an organisational means through which Southern African regional integration could be practically advanced. SACU's revenue sharing formula and the material interests of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland from SACU render the organisation structurally opposed to regional integration. Their position is explained by Hein Marais as follows:

"SACU members are keen to expand their power and leverage within the customs union rather than stake all on the possible advantages of a SADC-wide integration project. Non-SACU members of SADC have reacted petulantly to that stance, withholding major concessions in SADC negotiations with the argument that the restructuring of SACU might well upend their bargaining positions. The upshot has been a further factor contributing to the delays in regional integration."<sup>22</sup>

The position of SADC and SACU officials on the structural problem relating to SACU being used as a model for Southern African regional integration is important for various reasons. If SACU is to be used as a building block for Southern African regional integration its revenue sharing formula and the organisation itself should be changed fundamentally. There has to be a win-win solution to problems characterising its revenue sharing formula. A zero-sum game is not in the interest of SACU and its members. It goes against the continued existence of SACU.

There are tensions between South Africa and its SACU partners as a result of this revenue sharing formula. South Africa raised concerns about the continuous payment of the revenue without it being seriously used by Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland for their socio-economic and industrial development. It called for the review of the revenue sharing formula. Despite the fact that they were concerned with losing some of the revenue money through the restructuring of the revenue sharing formula, they agreed that the formula be reviewed. The Centre for International Economics of Australia commissioned by SACU recommended a reduction of the revenue payment in its report. Hoping that the report would have provided them with increased compensation for the dominance of the South African manufacturing industry in the region, they opposed and rejected its recommendations in June 2011 in Windhoek, Namibia.

<sup>22</sup> Marais 1998: 136.

South Africa has proposed that SACU should establish a SACU development fund. Its position is that part of customs and exercise revenue should be ring-fenced and be put aside to fund intra-SACU development projects. SACU members including Botswana and Namibia which are relatively developed compared to Lesotho and Swaziland are not receptive of this proposal. They think that they may lose what they share. And that this loss will lead to reduction in their national budget. The essence of their position is that as independent and sovereign social formations they have the right to spend these funds any way they want. They do not wish to reform the revenue sharing formula. Tensions between South Africa and its SACU partners constitute challenges to SACU and its 2002 Agreement. Its 2002 Agreement's main challenges are to address and solve three key problems:

"The first is the requirement to design institutional arrangement that will democratize decision-making in the management of SACU. The second is the need to protect the revenue of BLNS, for whose revenue distribution will remain a fundamental facet of SACU, while also addressing the fiscal concerns of South Africa. Finally, there is the objective of encouraging development through co-ordinated policy programmes that address the diverse needs of the SACU members."<sup>23</sup>

SACU as an organisation and its revenue sharing formula are not static. They are dynamic: Despite resistance to changes by some of SACU members, they are bound to change anyhow. As SACU officials do not anticipate fundamental changes within SACU and its revenue sharing formula, changes within SACU and its revenue sharing formula are going to be gradual and incremental. These changes are going to be based on consensus. But they will not be substantial to such an extent that the formula will no longer serve as the obstacle to the admission of new members into the organisation.

## ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SACU'S EXPANSION?

SADC and SACU officials did not point out opportunities available to SACU to expand or admit other SACU countries and even COMESA countries as members. They have provided structural challenges in using SACU as a model for Southern African regional integration. Some representatives of the Namibian state used the fact that SACU members are highly integrated and that some SADC are facing profound challenges internally and externally in

<sup>23</sup> McCarthy 2003: 621.

the region as implied opportunities available to SACU to serve as the driver of regional integration. This position is challenged by the fact that if these SADC countries are admitted into SACU as members, the organisation will inherit these challenges. This means, among others, that these are not real opportunities for SACU's expansion and admission of other SADC countries or even COMESA countries as members. Not a single any other SADC country has ever expressed an interest in joining SACU as a member. SACU has never expressed any interest in asking SADC countries to join it as its members.

While there are no opportunities for SACU's expansion or admission of other SADC countries and even COMESA countries as members, there are structural opportunities for SACU to be integrated into SADC. All of its five members are members of SADC.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: SACU'S FUTURE SCENARIOS

What are the scenarios presenting a possible reality of SACU's future? The first scenario is the possibility of SACU becoming an economic community advancing regional integration. This possibility is provided by the decision of SACU heads of state and government at their meeting on 22 April 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia that SACU should be an economic community advancing regional integration. They recognised the role that SACU "can play as a building block for deeper regional integration in Southern Africa."<sup>24</sup> Their vision is for SACU to be an "economic community with equitable and sustainable development, dedicated to the welfare of its people for a common future."<sup>25</sup> Among declared objectives of its mission is for SACU to "serve as an engine for regional integration and development, industrial and economic diversification, the expansion of intra-regional trade and investment, and global competitiveness" and to "serve as a building block of an ever closer community among the peoples of Southern Africa."<sup>26</sup> This declaration constitutes in essence the repetition of what SADC is doing in the area of regional integration. This raises the fundamental question why SACU heads of state and government are spending time, energy and resources to repeat what SADC is already doing by trying to transform the customs union into a regional economic community. Central to this issue is another question:

24 SACU 2010a: 1.

25 SACU 2010a: 2.

26 SACU 2010a: 2.

if they are committed to the advancement of regional integration in practice, why do they not demonstrate their commitment within SADC of which all their countries are members?

Declaring their intention to transform SACU into an economic community advancing regional integration, SACU heads of state and government at their meeting on 22 April 2010 "noted that in order to ensure that SACU (...) achieves its vision, it has to be transformed into a vehicle for regional economic integration capable of promoting equitable development."<sup>27</sup> They also declared their intention at their meeting on 16 July 2010 in Pretoria, South Africa when they "directed Ministers" or the Council of Ministers to "promote win-win solutions" to problems faced by SACU, to "conclude the establishment of institutions," to strengthen "the capacity" in the SACU "Secretariat."<sup>28</sup> SACU heads of state and government at this meeting also directed the Council of Ministers, among others, to:

- Ensuring that all work on industrial policy, competition policy, unfair trade practices and other priority commitments on the SACU Agreement are being implemented;
- Developing a SACU trade and tariff policy, and trade strategy that support industrialisation in SACU;
- Developing deliberate initiatives to promote intra-SACU trade
- Exploring the possibility of a review of the 2002 SACU Agreement
- Consideration of the sharing of SACU Revenue<sup>29</sup>

The SACU heads of state and government that met on 16 July 2010 also supported the fact that SACU is not already an economic community advancing Southern African regional integration when they also directed its Council of Ministers to define "a roadmap for moving towards an Economic Community and Monetary Union" and to position it "at the centre of the regional economic integration agenda."<sup>30</sup>

The second scenario is provided by the fact that the implementation of SACU heads of state and government's decision for SACU to be an economic community will have implications for SADC in its regional integration agenda. It is possible that some individuals including member countries of SADC which are not SACU members will regard this task as an attempt to supplant SADC. Adebayo Adedeji maintained that attempts by South Africa to "see" SACU "supplant SADC" will naturally raise "some doubts"

27 SACU 2010a: 2.

28 SACU 2010b: 2.

29 SACU 2010b: 2.

30 SACU 2010b: 2.



about South Africa's commitment to "pan-African economic cooperation and integration."<sup>31</sup> The apartheid South Africa attempted to expand SACU through admission of some regional countries as a policy objective to consolidate its domination in the region. According to Rob Davies, the post-apartheid South Africa did not regard SACU as an alternative to SADC in its contribution towards regional integration.<sup>32</sup>

A viable alternative is the position of viewing SACU as "an important subset" within a broader regional programme led by SADC complementing efforts to promote its equitable regional integration.<sup>33</sup> Central to this position is that SACU should not be expanded or enlarged by admitting other SADC countries as its members. This means that it should not challenge SADC by competing with it in advancing regional integration. This is the third scenario representing a possible reality of SACU's future.

Despite the position that SACU should not be expanded or enlarged to challenge SADC by admitting other Southern African countries as its members, the SACU heads of state and government's decision for SACU to be an economic community has implications for SADC in its regional integration agenda. If implemented, it will lead SACU challenging SADC by competing with it in advancing regional integration. The fourth scenario is the possibility of SACU challenging SADC by advancing regional integration. The fourth scenario representing a possible reality of SACU's future is that SACU heads of state and government articulate opposition to their declaration for SACU to become an economic community advancing regional integration. The evidence of this reality is provided by President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia who disputed this declaration on behalf of SACU heads of state and government and SACU in his SACU centenary address on 22 April 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia as follows:

"The integration within SACU is important for the wider regional integration under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community. In this context, the integration strategy for SACU will also have positive contribution to the broader economic integration in the SADC region. After all, every SACU member state also belongs to SADC.

Throughout our discussion this morning, we recognised the important role that SADC continues to play in the integration of our region. The

31 ANC 1996: 23.

32 Davies 1997: 118-119.

33 Davies 1997: 120.

strategies that we have discussed are complementary to the SACU plan of action in respect of regional integration.

We also recognised the important role that SACU, as a sub-group within SADC, can play in spearheading the integration process within the larger, Southern Africa region. In this respect, SACU maintains high levels of synergy with SADC in respect of the integration agenda."<sup>34</sup>

President Seretse Khama Ian Khama of Botswana in his SACU centenary celebration address on 22 April 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia emphasised the position articulated by Pohamba as follows:

"In exploring avenues for deeper regional integration, we should be cognisant of the need to consolidate and implement our commitments as per the SACU 2002 Agreement. However, as we implement the ideals of SACU we must also take into account our membership to and objectives of SADC as we move forward in our regional integration initiatives. This is because it is only through working together as a team in the wider SADC context that we can ensure smooth regional integration in Southern Africa."<sup>35</sup>

Central to the position articulated by Pohamba and emphasised by Khama is that SACU member countries contribute towards the achievement of regional integration through SADC not SACU. This position means not only that SACU is not an economic community advancing Southern African regional integration yet. It means also that as all SACU countries are members of SADC that SACU is "a sub-group within SADC" and that the integration of its members is complementary to Southern African regional integration led by SADC. It also means that the integration of SACU members is not Southern African regional integration; It is the process complementing or supporting Southern African regional integration. The issue of SACU as "a sub-group within SADC" goes against the position that SACU is the regional organisation. The contribution to regional integration by SACU on the basis of it being a customs union is highly appreciated. It cannot be seriously be rejected by those who are genuinely for integration.

The fifth scenario presents the possibility of SACU's integration into SADC. This is a more viable alternative scenario compared to the other

34 Pohamba 2010: 64.

35 Khama 2010: 68.

scenarios. It is viable for various reasons. Firstly, as its members are all SADC members, it would serve the interests of SADC as an organisation and its members by offering consolidation and not division. This would be in the best long-term strategic interests of Southern Africa, particularly for the regional integration agenda and as a project contributing to wider continental integration. SADC has declared its commitment to achieve the customs union objective in 2013.<sup>36</sup> It is clear and obvious that this objective was not achieved in 2013 and that the year for its achievement will be extended for the second time to enable its members to have more time to consolidate the implementation and gains of the Free Trade Area launched in 2008. The achievement of this objective was originally set for 2010.

Obtaining the customs union objective will have implications for SACU. According to the World Trade Organisation rules, a country which is its member cannot be a member of other customs unions at the same time. SACU as a customs union is an obstacle towards SADC achieving its customs union objective. The fact that some SADC members such as Malawi, Mauritius, Swaziland, Seychelles, Zambia and Zimbabwe are also members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and that Tanzania is also a member of the East African Community likewise constitute an obstacle for SADC to achieve this customs union objective. In addition, as discussed above, SACU is also an obstacle towards SADC achieving regional integration. The integration of SACU into SADC is made more difficult by the fact that Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland are getting more revenue from SACU than from their internal resources.

The fact that their increased dependence on SACU's revenue is not sustainable will structurally compel them to ensure that they depend more on their internal resources than on SACU. These four countries cannot defeat other SADC countries in the adoption and implementation of their decision to integrate SACU into SADC. It will be impossible for South Africa to either ignore or act against the call of other SADC members through their decision that SACU be integrated into SADC. Its long-term strategic interests in Southern Africa, Africa and the rest of the world lay with SADC not SACU. SACU which used to be South Africa's asset in the apartheid era has become its liability in the post-apartheid era. This liability is bound to substantially increase, particularly within the context of South Africa's long-term regional, continental and global strategic interests.

This can best be understood when one comes to grips with the reality of South Africa's status as Southern African regional power and the African

continental power in its efforts to achieve its global strategic objective to be an important international power. Central to these regional, continental and global objectives is its incentive to consolidate its regional and continental status and to become a major force within the G20 en par with Brazil, Russia, India, China as a member of BRICS, and one day within the United Nations Organisation as a permanent member of its Security Council. Therefore South Africa is reviewing its membership to SACU. Central to this review process is whether it should end its membership to a custom union or continue calling for the implementation of reforms of its operations and structures. If it decides to end its membership to the organisation, SACU will come to an end. Its existence and dependence have always been based on the decisions of South Africa in both the apartheid and post-apartheid era.

The integration of SACU into SADC is a reality that cannot be prevented. It can only be delayed. Reality supports the fact that there is a structural and fundamental need for Southern African countries to substantiate their declarations in practice and that they are committed to the regional integration project. Directly related to this need is for them to practise the principle of rationale utilisation of human and financial resources in their efforts to achieve regional integration. Central to this principle is first of all a concentrated focus; Secondly, to increase their efficient and effective operations in terms of implementation of decisions in their regional integration agenda. They need to get rid of different standards, competing interests and unnecessary costs in terms of human, financial and infrastructural resources to their officials and offices to SADC and COMESA regional economic communities and the SACU customs union. Further they need a practical commitment towards the elimination of losses and disadvantages and to increase benefits and advantages by strengthening the SADC regarding integration. In addition it is also of structural and fundamental importance for them to effectively contribute towards a solid regional identity and to streamline policies in their efforts towards the achievement of regional integration and continental integration. This calls for the integration of SACU into SADC as a means of doing justice to the best and effective way of contributing towards regional integration. This would be the task of SADC regarding SACU's place within regional integration.

36 Southern Africa Today 2013: 4.

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photo by S. Pecio

# THE END OF THE PAN-AFRICAN ILLUSIONS

“ (...) BUT WITHOUT MORE FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR TRADE FACILITATION COMING FROM OUTSIDE, NATURAL BARRIERS TO FREER TRADE WITHIN AFRICA WOULD BE STILL PARAMOUNT. AFRICA REGIONAL INTEGRATION MUST BE BASED ON SUB-REGIONAL INITIATIVES (WEST, CENTRAL EAST AFRICA). A PAN-AFRICAN AGREEMENT IS ILLUSORY” – CLAIMS PROFESSOR ROLF LANGHAMMER, A SPECIALIST ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA FROM THE KIEL INSTITUTE OF WORLD ECONOMY, INTERVIEWED BY MAGDALENA SZKUDLAREK FROM THE R/EVOLUTIONS EDITORIAL TEAM.

INTERVIEW WITH **ROLF LANGHAMMER**  
BY MAGDALENA SZKUDLAREK

What are, in your opinion, the greatest challenges for regional integration on the African continent? What are the continent's strong sides?

The strongest challenge for regional integration are the European Partnership Agreements (EPAs) of the EU, which submit integration schemes in Africa under pressure to accelerate their often dormant free trade strategies. Many of them are paper tigers, as the political economy of vested interest groups speaks against the willingness of national leaders to expose their industries to competition from neighboring countries.

The continent's strong sides are the emergence of a middle class and a slow but continuous move away from the “strong man” attitude of many political leaders in Africa. There is empowerment of many groups in Africa, also due to technological advancement of social networks and the Internet, which bring more transparency and participatory movements to Africa.

Do you think that African regional organizations need stronger institutions or stronger leadership?

The organizations need stronger commitment to what has been written down in the agreements. As institutions are still relatively weak, especially in the regional context, one needs a mélange of support from outside and domestic political individuals who try to overcome attitudes of “divide and rule.” Hegemons defined as countries strong enough to shoulder the costs of leadership and to compensate losers for losses would be very helpful. South Africa is such a sub-regional hegemon for Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, etc.

How did the failing of the Bretton Woods System change Africa to Western model in the 1970s, continue to be an obstacle to regional integration, or should we look at other economic factors on this issue?

Rising world market prices for commodities plus better governance than in the 1970s have been as instrumental to better performance as better economic policies in the countries and the opening of the IMF and the World Bank to distributional targets (Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility) and institution building. Better policies in the countries can be witnessed by less discrimination of the rural sector against the urban sectors today compared to the past.



To what extent do the UN and the EU coordinate their policies to promote development and regional integration in Africa?

Coordination still has room for improvement. Especially, EU agricultural policies still stand against progress in the agricultural sector of many African countries. The Bretton Woods institutions have no direct saying in African regional integration but the WTO induced the EU to substitute inefficient preferential trade agreements (Lomé and Cotonou agreements) for more balanced and equitable free trade agreements such as the EPAs.



WESTERN COUNTRIES MISSED TO HELP AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN DEVELOPING THEIR PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE. THAT IS WHAT CHINA DOES NOW

How do you assess China's rising influence on the continent?

Principally, I have no negative assessment on that influence seen from an African perspective. Western countries missed to help African countries in developing their physical infrastructure. That is what China does now. That is positive for Africa. Setting up infrastructure now against delivering commodities later based on long-term supply contract is a forward business on which African countries can win should commodity prices decline in future relative to today. This cannot be excluded. Furthermore, dependency always runs two-ways. China will become dependent on Africa too.

Most people can agree that in the long run integration has to come from within, possible by the AU. In the mean time, is pressure by external actors to integrate the region a good thing? And if so, is it sufficient?

Without pressure from outside (plus support), removing trade and factor flow barriers in Africa would be very difficult due to lobby groups and their rent-seeking. But without more financial resources for trade facilitation coming from outside, natural barriers to freer trade within Africa would be still paramount. Africa's regional integration must be based on sub-regional initiatives (West, Central East Africa). A pan-African agreement is illusory. But the syndromes

of complexity and red tape such as overlapping membership should be avoided. In general, Africa's integration is very much threatened by negative discrimination effects (trade diversion), which harms the welfare of African countries. Therefore links to the EU and the rest of the world offer much more economic gains than integration among the countries.

Which part of the region is bound to make the fastest progress regarding integration in the near future?

Clearly Southern Africa under the leadership of South Africa.

Is this development not doomed to deadlock Africa in its current position of dependency?

No, as in the Chinese case (see above), dependency runs two-ways. To link up to a "natural" trading partner (such as Europe is for Africa), can be only positive for Africa. Free trade agreements are second-best approaches compared to multilateral agreements but as the Doha Round is not concluded, these agreements help Africa to receive financial resources apart from market access.

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photo by S. Pecio

# REGIONAL INTEGRATION OR REGIONALIZATION IN AFRICA

“ONE OF THE FEATURES EXHIBITED BY CURRENT TREND IS THAT REGION BUILDING IS NOT NECESSARILY TAKING PLACE THROUGH THE ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS WE IMMEDIATELY THINK ABOUT, (...) WHICH BASICALLY HAVE BLUEPRINTS THAT SEEK TO EMULATE THE EUROPEAN UNION'S PATH TOWARDS CONSTITUTIONALISED INTEGRATION. (...) IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT WHAT WE ARE FINDING DIFFICULT TO DO IN EUROPE IS PROVING TO BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE IN AFRICA WHERE STATES JUST DON'T WANT TO TRANSFER THEIR SOVEREIGNTY TO SUPRANATIONAL BODIES.” – CLAIMS PROFESSOR DANIEL BACH, A RENOWNED SPECIALIST ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA FROM UNIVERSITY OF BORDEAUX, INTERVIEWED BY RAFAL WISNIEWSKI FROM THE R/EVOLUTIONS EDITORIAL TEAM.

INTERVIEW WITH **DANIEL BACH**  
BY RAFAL WIŚNIEWSKI

Considering that there is a growing interest in political and economic cooperation with the African states on the part of such rising powers as China, India, Japan or Brazil, could you confirm that there is a new “scramble for Africa” going on?

There is definitely an unprecedented interest in Africa since, I would say, the end of the Cold War. But I think the term “scramble” has to be used with great caution. That is because it refers to 19th century post-Berlin attempt by European powers to grab as much territorial control of Africa as possible and therefore it conveys the idea that African agency is now as was the case then, being marginalized in the process. I think that one of the key features of what is going on at the moment is that we see elements of the lure of Africa – as illustrated by global rush for African commodities and markets – goes along with the reappraisal of African agency due to initiatives that range from the real of business entrepreneurship to opportunities for African states to renegotiate their status and position in the international system. That is why the term “scramble” is confusing.

Do you see elements of rivalry between these new players and states which traditionally exerted strong influence on Africa, like France or the United Kingdom, concerning for example mining contracts?

There are elements of rivalry of course. This is not new as well. In the 1990s for instance there were acute rivalries between French and American companies over access to oil in Congo. But I would not qualify what is happening now as a new form of “great game” another 19th century phrase used to qualify rivalries, this time in Central Asia. The 21st century is about a global game, which means that the key players are not necessarily states. The states are still party to this “game” but they have to contend with other key players like multinational corporations. We see it very clearly in Africa that these are global operators which may compete with Chinese, French, German or Polish companies in some parts of the world, but at the same time collaborate in other regions. The outcome is a ‘landscape’ that is becoming increasingly complex to decipher.



Current manoeuvres to secure privileged access to Guinea Conakry's mining resources illustrate the volatility of alliances that, ultimately, appear primarily driven by business considerations.

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THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY IS ABOUT A GLOBAL GAME, WHICH MEANS THAT THE KEY PLAYERS ARE NOT NECESSARILY STATES.

You would claim then that there is less competition between states but rather one between multinational companies?

I would claim that just like “scramble” refers to situations that leave little room for African agency, what is at stake today is less a revival of “great game” rivalries than the ambivalent implications of a broadening of the range and ‘reach’ of participants- they are both a more diversified and globally connected group. Here we have not only states but also companies or diasporas which are extremely important in Africa. The Indian diaspora in East Africa is a good example. Its members that have Kenyan, Uganda or Tanzanian citizenship play a very important role regionally and globally as entrepreneurs. The same goes for the Chinese diaspora which is much more recent but extremely active in Africa. The “Chinatowns” are springing up all over the continent. All these players and their African business partners contribute to a new “flavor” so to speak in the interactions between the African and the global system.

What is the influence of this “global game,” as you called it, on regional integration in Africa? Does it support it, creates an impediment or doesn't it play that much of a role?

I think it does play a role but not in a conventional way. You may have noticed the underlying assumption according to which Africa is treated as a sort of a global entity by investors. The future of Africa, when it is discussed by emerging countries engaging with it, is seen as that of a unified continent. Perhaps this is because, after all, Chinese or Indian investors are used to dealing with political fragmentation – different provinces in the case of China, or different

states in the case of India can have very different economic policies. The colonial and post-colonial fragmentation of the continent is also confronted with the investors' pressure for what is being referred to as “defragmentation” of African markets. That is because, obviously, the markets of African states as individual markets, if you take aside Nigeria, South Africa and a couple of other countries, are not very attractive. What is attractive basically is the prospect of these markets becoming more closely tied to each other.

If this outside interest is actually encouraging economic integration of Africa, what factors could you name as the biggest obstacles towards closer regional integration on this continent?

First of all I would prefer to use the word “regionalism.” One of the features exhibited by current trends is that region-building is not necessarily taking place through the classic institutions we immediately think about, like the African Union or RECs (Regional Economic Communities) which basically have blueprints that seek to emulate the European Union. This is showing through ways that refer to what has been described, in the Asian context, as “lean integration.” There region-building has grown through sovereignty pooling but in close relation with a myriad of micro-regional initiatives, build around triangles of growth, harbours or common infrastructures. In Africa we already have Special Economic Zones, which are being promoted by (among others) the Chinese. Infrastructure rehabilitation is another key area. All this, in a way, contributes to a deepening of integration that is very much private-sector driven. Here it is not only extra-African players who matter but also the myriad of African entrepreneurs who are involved. So this is a process of region-building, but it is not really taking place through the institutions that are meant to perform such a function. The institutions – to answer your question – still try to emulate the EU model and promote transfers of sovereignty. It is not surprising that what we are finding difficult to do in Europe is proving to be even more difficult to achieve in Africa where states just don't want to transfer sovereign competencies to supranational bodies.

It can be claimed that in the times of European project's greatest crisis the EU is hardly considered a role model for other regions.

That is a very good point you are making. I think it is also contributing to shift in representations of what region-building may be about. If a model doesn't appear to be a model any more you are really not that much attracted by it.

Following on the subject of regional integration. Do Africa's colonial legacies and particularly experiences with different forms of colonial rule (like the British Commonwealth or French attempts to build a Communauté Française) influence integration processes?

It did for a long time and it still does to some extent. Regional integration in Africa until – I would say – the 1990s was very much about block building, constituting alliances around anchor states, dispensing patronage through aid, etc. It was also tied to the colonial legacy in a sense that French speaking countries belonged and still belong in fact (most of them at least) to the CFA Zone (Franc Zone) which is nowadays de facto pegged to the euro. The outcome is a very specific situation for the CFA zone, which still remains the only case of monetary integration in Africa, apart from the SACU (Southern African Customs Union) created around South Africa. For many years this legacy had a deep impact on region-building. But I think that today it is not the case any longer: primarily because, if you take France, its main markets are not in Francophone Africa but in Nigeria or South Africa. So there is a clear interest in relations which go beyond the historic Francophone path and it is just the same for the Portuguese. In fact in Portuguese case there is a situation of quasi-reversal in the relations with Angola and, to a lesser extent, Mozambique. It's now the Portuguese who are queuing in front of the Angolan embassy in Lisbon to apply for visas that will enable them to work in that country. Also Angolans are simultaneously investing in Lisbon and the Portuguese economy in general.

We talked about the ties between former colonial metropolises and post-colonial states. Do specific past forms of internal colonial governance (like for example, British indirect rule and French more direct approach) influence the present ability of African states to integrate with each other?

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IT'S NOW THE PORTUGUESE WHO ARE QUEUING IN FRONT OF THE ANGOLAN EMBASSY IN LISBON TO APPLY FOR VISAS THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO WORK IN THAT COUNTRY

'Yes, that's an important question. Of course direct rule did exist, but it concerned only a minority of people, the elites. Just like the indirect rule practiced by the British was not entirely indirect. In other words, when an emir in northern Nigeria was not considered to be obedient enough there was always a way of side-tracking him. The distinction between the ideal types of "direct rule" vs. "indirect rule" should not be overblown. At the same time it is true that in France Africans held a number of prominent positions under the Fourth and Fifth Republics: for instance, Diiori Hamani (later president of Niger) was the Vice-president of French National Assembly in the late 1950s. A number of African heads of state then served as full members of parliament. Houphouët-Boigny, who would become president of Côte d'Ivoire, was appointed as health minister in De Gaulle's first government in 1958. So these people had very close ties with French elites and held on to them. That is why for a long time regionalism in Africa was impossible to disentangle from the continuation of Franco-African relations. There are still some institutional linkages due, for instance, the CFA Zone. But I think it doesn't carry the political implications, which existed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when for instance Nigeria was seen as a threat to French influence in West Africa. This type of perception is long gone.

You have already mentioned that the inter-governmental institutions in Africa are trying to emulate the European Union. Could you identify other models that African regional organizations are following? Or rather they are following their own way?

For the time being, it is still the EU which is providing the overall model with some elements (when you discuss the African security and peacekeeping architecture) that are drawn from the UN (its Security Council and so on). But the EU still remains the overarching model for the stages which are supposed to be leading towards a single African market in the framework of the African Economic

Community by 2028 under the Abuja plan of action. So the overall blueprint is still pretty much drawn from the EU. But parallel to that I think that perhaps because it is driven by pragmatic considerations, entrepreneurs, investors (among them the influence of Asian investors, or the soft power that the experience of ASEAN can carry in terms of investment), we see this patterns of this mire in pragmatic cross-border interactions. The success of the Maputo Development Corridor initiative offers an emblematic illustration of this trend. It is being highly successful, although there was a lot of initial criticism of the highly asymmetrical relationship upon which it rests. Another case is the increasing emergence of Kenya as a hub, due to the attractiveness of Nairobi for global and local investors and companies who want to benefit from the East African Community's dynamism. So here we have a case where regional integration is explicitly computed in the picture because there is this long standing legacy of the past and there has been a rehabilitation of EAC's objectives. I think that at the moment we have a broadening range of initiatives which operate on parallel but converging tracks in many ways.

Following on our previous exchange on the attractiveness of the European model, could you see in Africa that, after three years of Euro zone crisis, this example is somewhat fading? Considering your remarks about Asia-Africa ties, is the so-called "ASEAN way" of integration enjoying some attention in Africa?

Recent years have shown that the political costs of emulating the European model cannot be underestimated. But there is also, as a result of what has been going on in Mali and now in Central African Republic, an awareness of the inadequacy of the African conflict resolution mechanisms. The consensus around capacity building or ways of finding African ways of resolving African problems is confronted to hard realities: African troops should be doing what French troops have been asked to do in Mali and the Central African Republic. That's one point. The second is that ASEAN as a model also carries its limits: its remarkable capacity to take advantage of diasporas or multinationals to basically build integration coexists with extremely poor political relations between member states. Border claims threaten to spill over into major conflicts in this part of the world, as we can see right now. ASEAN has used such innovative formulas such as ASEAN+3 or ASEAN+6 to keep at arm's length

countries like China, Korea and Japan that, besides their dominance, have complicated relations with each other. ASEAN can provide some lessons but as a model it has its limits as well.

How do you assess the future of the African Union on the continent and as a global actor.

The AU has unquestionably been gaining importance and relevance in recent years. First of all as a forum associated with the emergence of African consciousness. The "invention of Africa" (to use Mudimbe's famous phrase) as a community has progressed tremendously over the last 20-30 years. But the capacity of the AU to go forward is basically tied to the quality of the policies implemented within member states. In other words, there is no way the AU can offer an alternative to poor governance in some of its members. One would therefore argue that progress within the AU remains tied to improvement of governance within the member states. It's a paradox but I think that this is a central and key issue politically: the AU has been and is contributing to an improvement in state-society interactions, along with the entrenchment of such principles as the R2P (responsibility to protect). The AU has endorsed in its new Constitutional Act (CA) the principle of intervention in the internal affairs of members in case of gross violations of human rights or genocide, etc. Whether the AU has the capacity or the willingness to do so remains a pending issue. There may also be incentives for side-tracking this sort of agenda due to diversification of players – non intervention in the internal affairs of member-states is cherished by the BRICs in general. As we have seen recently in the case of International Criminal Court, the AU has been, recently, cautious in the implementation of its agenda. In many ways the African Union and its agenda are at a crossroads right now. The engagement of non-African troops in Africa highlights the challenges that confront AU and Africa-driven agendas.

Do you see a potential in the AU for this organization to become a global actor in the future?

Well, it has been a global actor already on the anti-apartheid struggle. The OAU (Organization of African Unity, precursor to the AU),



played quite an important role within the UN in pursuit of sanctions against South Africa and the push for isolation of regimes who wanted to maintain white minority rule. That has been the positive contribution of OAU. At the moment the AU gathers a very broad range of countries. You have the role models offered by Botswana, Ghana and Mauritius, but also the prototypes of state failure that the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic or Somalia represent. The capacity to craft public policies and define 'national interest' (as distinct from the interests of the ruler and his cronies) varies considerably. Also the interests of these states are very different. This affects the ability to craft agendas and pursue common goals in global negotiations. There is certainly much more happening now than twenty years ago, but much more needs to happen given the challenges that confront the continent.

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# FRANCE AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA

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## article abstract

THE ARTICLE EXAMINES THE HISTORY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND ITS FORMER COLONIES IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA AFTER INDEPENDENCE, AND THE FRANÇA-FRIQUE AS A NEO-COLONIAL PHENOMENON AND A SPECIFIC GAULLIST INSTRUMENT OF GREAT POWER POLITICS. THE AUTHOR STUDIES THE MAIN TRENDS IN FRANCE'S AFRICAN POLICY, ITS OBJECTIVES, POSTURES AND BOTTLENECKS, AND HE TRIES TO ANSWER WHY THESE LOST ITS EFFICACY IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA. THE ARTICLE SHOWS HOW FRANCE'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ROLE IN AFRICA GRADUALLY DIMINISHED IN THE 1990s - 2000s, AND PROPOSES A POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FRANCE AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES FOR THE NEAR AND MEDIUM TERM.

## keywords

FRENCH AFRICAN POLICY, COLD WAR, FRANÇA-FRIQUE, COOPERATION, MUTUAL DEFENSE PACTS, DEVELOPMENT AID, MILITARY INTERVENTION, RWANDAN GENOCIDE, IVORY COAST, FOREIGN TRADE

The attitudes and policies of the former colonial powers (Great Britain, France, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, and Spain) towards their former colonies in Africa were one of the most difficult issues in international affairs in the post-1960 period, and they stood out among the many other North-South relationships.<sup>1</sup> The primary difficulty lay in the enduring importance of the colonial legacy. On the one hand, there were historically close political, economic and cultural ties between former colonial centers and peripheries, which could become a solid basis for the positive development of their relationship and cooperation on new and more equitable principles. On the other, the African peoples' collective memory of colonial oppression and humiliation, as well as the vitality of the old principles of colonial policy and the desire of some political elites of the former metropolitan countries to reproduce them in slightly modified forms in the new international and regional conditions could pose a serious obstacle to this development.

To what extent have the former colonial powers managed to maintain their former influence on the African continent after the collapse of the colonial system? And did they have any chance of success? I'll try to answer this question, taking as an example (perhaps the most indicative) the history of France's policy towards its former dependencies in Africa in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras.

The vast majority of the French colonies in Africa was located in its western and equatorial parts; today there are fourteen independent states, which were often labeled as the French backyard. This label was not accidental. It reflected the general attitude towards the historical fate of the former French Africa, which, during the dissipation of the colonial system, turned out to be in a quite different position than the African areas that slipped out of the control of other colonial powers. In contrast to Britain, which after Harold Wilson's 'East of Suez' decision (1968) and the fall of the Ian Smith's regime in Southern Rhodesia (1980) virtually lost interest in the 'Dark continent,' and unlike Portugal, which withdrew from its African colonies in the wake

<sup>1</sup> Davidson 2006: 3-21; Rouvez 1994: 363-364; etc.



of the Carnation Revolution of April 1974, France tried to maintain a tight grip over the former area of its sway in the postcolonial period. In the context of the collapse of the old imperial-colonial political model and the failure of alternative projects in late 1950s to establish an institutionalized community led by France, French president Charles de Gaulle and his entourage came to the conclusion that it is necessary to build a new system of informal control and patronage over the former colonies through the strengthening of economic, political, military and cultural relations between them and the former metropolis. From the view of the Gaullist political and intellectual elites, France should continue its 'civilizing mission' in sub-Saharan Africa to stimulate change and progress in the young African states, that will guarantee adoption by them of French economic and political models and their orientation towards French political and cultural values; France and its former colonies were to form a kind of unified space, a commonwealth, advantageous for both. The implementation of this project resulted in the rise of the network of client states in Western and Central Africa.<sup>2</sup>

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Such a system responded on de Gaulle's main goal — to ensure national security and sovereignty of France and to maintain its great power status. The slogan France is nothing without Africa had economic and geopolitical implications. In economic terms, maintaining its spheres of influence in sub-Saharan Africa has provided France with access to strategic raw materials abundant in the region — primarily to oil (Cameroon, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville) and uranium (Gabon, Niger, CAR3) — that guaranteed its energy security; besides, French business obtained a privileged position to penetrate into its former colonies' economies and markets. In geopolitical terms, the existence of the group of vassal states increased France's great-power status in the international arena; in the UN Paris positioned itself as a leader of its own political camp. This gave France the opportunity to carry out an independent foreign policy, detached from global confrontation between two superpowers and their great blocs: it would seem that France offered its former colonies an alternative to dependency on one of the superpowers — a kind of “non-alignment” with a French slant. And finally, as the leader of the French-speaking African countries France continued to pose as a great cultural power that could resist the Anglo-Saxon cultural expansion. In this

2 Bourgi 1980.

3 The Central African Republic.

context, the relationship with Africa turned out to be the essential element of French grandeur. This system was built on the old imperial vertical model, on the basis of bilateral relations between France and African countries, rather than horizontal ones (multilateral or regional), that further consolidated.

## FRENCH INFLUENCE

This policy, of which the true architect was Jacques Foccart, de Gaulle's chief adviser on African affairs,<sup>4</sup> was called “policy of cooperation: “the zone of French influence in Africa was at the same time an aid zone. The Ministry of Cooperation became its organizing center. The cooperation was carried out in various fields.<sup>5</sup> Political cooperation aimed to ensure political stability in the countries of the backyard, primarily through promoting the formation of political and legal institutions on the French model and through the establishment of mechanisms to prevent internal and interstate conflicts. For all that in the 1960-1970s French policy makers were guided by the principle stability is more important than democracy — they justified their support for authoritarian regimes in Africa by the need to prevent leftist forces from coming to power. In interstate relations France urged the states of the backyard to adhere to the principle of the inviolability of post-colonial borders.

Military cooperation aimed to transform the backyard into a kind of rear base of France and a testing ground for its new weapons. This cooperation was based on a direct French military presence (in the 1960s — about 60,000 troops) and autonomous military infrastructure (various military installations); it was legalized by bilateral mutual defense pacts that provided not only military assistance in the event of external aggression, but also (according to secret articles) intervention to restore the internal political order — thereby military cooperation was closely related to the political one. Besides, bilateral technical military aid accords provided French assistance in establishing local military and police forces (French instructors, training of African military personnel in France, military supplies).

Economic cooperation aimed to promote the development of industrial, commercial and transport networks in African countries, generally through providing government loans and funding for special projects; French companies gained advantage in the process of awarding the lucrative contracts, which in turn stimulated the economy of the former metropolitan

4 Pean 1990.

5 Francophonie 1987; Chaigneau 1984; etc.

country. The economic cooperation was based on France's currency control over the states of the backyard, which have entered the Franc Zone.

Finally, cultural cooperation aimed to incorporate the Africans into the French cultural and linguistic space and to propagate European political and humanitarian values by creating numerous French schools and cultural centers in the backyard, training French-speaking African students in France, etc. Gaullist policy in Africa was developed first of all as 'domestic': its circulatory system consisted of personal contacts and ties between French and African leaders. Therein its main fault lurked, because the partnership between France and African countries very quickly turned into cooperation between their elites. In the states of the backyard the French financial aid and military presence were used primarily to consolidate the position of the authoritarian regimes and to enrich the ruling groups. France's development aid, particularly direct budget support, helped to maintain patron-client networks, on which the power structure in African countries is based; the military cooperation allowed to strengthen security forces. The secret articles in the mutual defense pacts and French military presence guaranteed rapid French intervention to save the regime. On the other hand, some groups ("Foccart's networks"), consisting of the members of political, military, business elites and special services, arose in the Hexagone itself; they were closely connected with French African policy and profited from it (contracts under the development aid, arms traffic, funding of French political parties, etc.). Moreover they strongly affected both France's policy and the governmental decisions in the countries of the backyard. The most glaring example — the state oil company "Elf" (now "Total"), which heavily influenced on French policy in Gabon, Cameroon, Nigeria, Congo-Brazzaville and was deeply involved in the Biafra conflict (1967–1969) and in the Congo-Brazzaville civil war (1997–1998).<sup>6</sup>

However, such a model of relationship between France and its former African colonies, which was often called *Françafrique*,<sup>7</sup> a substitute of the French colonial empire, was doomed to collapse like any system tending towards self-isolation. It didn't consolidate, but gradually eroded the connections between France and client states. Striving to assist 'friendly African leaders' to stay in power, French policy in the region contributed to the conservation of authoritarian regimes, hampered democratic development, increased alienation between the state and its ruling elite and the masses and intensified hostility of the latter to France: many Africans believed that the independence of their countries was 'fictitious' and the former colonial power

continued to oppress them, using its native political henchmen; in their eyes, it was France that became the main obstacle both to democratization and economic progress in Africa.

At the same time the *Françafrique* system contributed to putting the bulk of French entrepreneurs out of African economies, because in their relations with the local officials they were generally devoid of political support, having no influential patrons in Paris. Small and medium-sized businesses that were the framework of the French economic presence in Africa turned out to be the most vulnerable. An important factor in their decline were nationalizations and excessive étatization of many sectors of the economy, especially in West Africa. As a result, the total number of French expatriates in the former African colonies of France dropped from 150,000 in 1960 to 120,000 in 1986 (including 100,000 in West and Central Africa). In 1958 there were over 15,000 expatriates from France living in Guinea, but under Sékou Touré (1958–1984) they almost completely disappeared from this country. In Senegal their number decreased in the 1960s and 1970s from 60,000 to 20,000. In these decades only two countries in the backyard saw a growth of the French population — Gabon (from less than 10,000 to 30,000) and Ivory Coast (from 15,000 to about 50,000) — thanks to more favorable business conditions the local authorities created for French entrepreneurs. The geography of French business activity in Francophone Africa also changed significantly. The French mostly have left the African hinterland, small provincial towns and old trading posts and since then lived concentrated in the capitals, large port cities or some mining centers.<sup>8</sup>

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THE NEED FOR A GEOPOLITICAL NICHE IN A BIPOLAR WORLD, WHICH BOTH FRENCH AND AFRICAN ELITES FELT IN THE 1960S – 1980S, PROVED OUT TO BE AN ANACHRONISM IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

Nevertheless, in terms of the Cold War the *Françafrique* as a Gaullist way to preserve the French empire in the post-colonial era proved to be very tenacious. Both African elites and France were interested in doing so: The former because this system guaranteed them a certain degree of material prosperity and political security, the latter because it provided some international advantages. After all, the backyard was an important element of the post-WW2 global politics, a geopolitical niche to be reckoned with.

<sup>6</sup> Vallée 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Verschave 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Biarnès 1987: 424-425.

Of course, the obvious defects of the *Françafrique* periodically induced Paris to undertake some attempts to reform it. Under the first non-gaulliste president of the Fifth Republic — Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974–1981) — the rise of tiermondist ideas encouraged French elites to rethink France-African relations in the context of the North-South problem: the belief spread that the rich nations of the North, the former colonial powers, ought to help to uplift the 'backward' nations of the South, as it was the colonialism that became the main cause of their 'backwardness' (the concept of 'France's guilt').<sup>9</sup> That is why France during Giscard's tenure sought to play the role of mediator between the North and the South, making financial and technical assistance to developing countries the core of its African strategy.

On the other hand, the Soviet expansion on the Black continent, particularly in Angola and the Horn (after the collapses of the Portuguese colonial empire and the Ethiopian monarchy in 1974) and Libya's intervention in Chad made Paris to increase its political and military activities in Africa (for instance Operation Tacaud in Chad in 1978–1980). Maintaining the orientation on the backyard in its African policy, France at the same time began to pay more attention to its relations with some of the former Portuguese colonies — not only with Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, whose elites were rather French-speaking, but also with São Tomé, Mozambique and oil-rich Angola. This new intention of Paris to expand its sphere of influence in Africa into the non-Francophone parts of the continent was meant however to pursue the old aim — to secure its status of a great power, as opposed to both superpowers, and to increase the geopolitical niche beyond the field of their rivalry.<sup>10</sup>

The goals of the African policy of socialist François Mitterrand, who became president in 1981, were similar to those of Giscard's. Under him France's great power strategy acquired increasingly 'progressive' overtones without changing its nature: France's mission is to lead the developing nations in their movement towards economic and political modernization; as for Africa, its aim is to spread French influence across the continent, seeking to bring in its orbit the leftist regimes, from which the Fifth Republic tended to stay away before. Such an ambitious project quickly encountered many challenges, especially the lack of sufficient financial resources, that is why the Socialists were forced soon to revert to the old emphasis on the backyard.<sup>11</sup>

9 Blanchard, Monnet, Schlesinger 2003.

10 Biarnès 1987 : 374-391.

11 Under Giscard d'Estaing the countries of the *backyard* have received 85% of French *development aid*, in 1986 they've got almost the same share (83%), while Mozambique, Angola and Nigeria — only 2% (Biarnès 1987 : 406).

In Francophone Africa Paris strengthened relations with the 'progressive' regimes like those of Mathieu Kérékou in Benin, Denis Sassou Nguesso in Congo-Brazzaville and Didier Ratsiraka in Madagascar, but this couldn't stop the close cooperation of France with its traditional 'friends' — Abdou Diouf (Senegal), Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Ivory Coast), Ahmadou Ahidjo and his successor Paul Biya (Cameroon), Omar Bongo (Gabon), Gnassingbé Eyadéma (Togo) and Mobutu (Zaire). Mitterrand's administration partly changed the model of the assistance to the backyard — it significantly reduced the number of French advisers in Africa (*coopérants*) and concentrated its resources on supporting targeted short-term projects. However Paris maintained development aid as the basis of cooperation, which proved out to be a specific way to bribe the local elites and bureaucracy and to provide political stability; adjustment loans to support structural reforms (in fact, to sustain inefficient and largely unprofitable state-owned enterprises) played an important role in the mechanisms of corruption.<sup>12</sup>

So, despite some modifications, the traditional Gaullist approach continued to dominate the African policy of France under Gaullists, liberals and socialists until the late 1980s. This approach conformed to the Cold War logic. For French policy-makers the feeling that France remained a great power, whose opinion was taken into account by the other nations, which enjoyed broad international support and respect and which provided its own military and economic security, compensated for all the defects of the *Françafrique* — and the crimes of 'friendly' African regimes, and the omnipresence of corruption, and the squeezing of French companies out of the 'Dark continent,' and the growth of anti-French sentiment among the Africans.

On the other hand, the existence of the *Françafrique* was possible only in the context of the uncertainty that dominated the African countries in the first three decades after independence, when the modern political and economic institutions were not yet fully formed, the social-class structure remained largely undifferentiated and ethnic identity played a notable role rather than social class or civic one. Patrimonialism and patron-client relationships, closely connected with French 'family policy' and 'Foccart's networks,' were eating away like a cancer the very fabric of weak African economic and political systems.

However, the situation began to change after the end of the Cold War. Africa has ceased to be an area of confrontation between the two superpowers,

12 Biarnès 1987: 374-425.



and France's role as a champion of a 'third way' for African nations lost its meaning. The survival of the *Françafrique* as a pseudo-imperial project was caused by a number of external threats — from Soviet or leftist to American or Anglophone; when some of them disappeared and others became weaker, this project was increasingly delegitimized.<sup>13</sup> The need for a geopolitical niche in a bipolar world, which both French and African elites felt in the 1960s – 1980s, proved out to be an anachronism in a globalizing world.

The economic difficulties encountered by African countries in the 1980s contributed to the disappointment in the *Françafrique*, especially as its defects in the new context became more evident. That is why more and more Africans interpreted France's policy toward their continent as 'neocolonialist,' as motivated by the desire to maintain existing inequality between the North and the South and perpetuate the domination over its former African colonies. Many people even in the most prosperous countries of the backyard — Ivory Coast and Gabon — thought that the real independence had never been achieved. Wherever in Africa the French forces were located, they were viewed by native population as colonial garrisons of the early 20th century.

The real economic relationships between France and the backyard increasingly weakened and the low effectiveness of development aid became more obvious. Africa's share in world trade continued to decline,<sup>14</sup> while in Eastern Europe the collapse of Communism opened up new markets and provided new investment opportunities for French capital. In such circumstances an important part of the Hexagon's political and business elites began to doubt about the validity of the old Gaullist axiom that "the fate of France is inextricably linked to that of Africa." From their point of view, Paris has to make a choice in favor of European integration. In other words, France can't maintain its position in world politics, trying to sustain a modified version of its former colonial empire; instead France should coalesce with other European countries into strong community able to compete effectively with the key centers of economic power in the new globalizing world.

Mitterrand seemed to have made the decisive choice in favor of new African policy in June 1990 at a Franco-African summit at La Baule, where he declared to the leaders of the backyard that "from now on France will link its aid to the efforts of those heading toward more freedom."<sup>15</sup> Thus, keeping 'friendly' regimes in power, whatever they were, as a way to maintain France's geopolitical influence, was no longer a suitable foreign policy instrument for Paris.

13 Smith 1997 : 57.

14 From 10% to 2% over the last 20 years.

15 Emmanuel 2008: 23.

The devaluation of the franc CFA<sup>16</sup> by 50% in January 1994 became the landmark event; it was interpreted by many observers as a true "withdrawal of France from Africa" — Paris ipso facto acknowledged that France had no longer the desire or resources to maintain 'special relationships' with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In fact this decision meant also that France left the Franc zone which French diplomacy so actively formed in the previous decades and exchanged the close financial and economic ties with the backyard for European integration, because 'unbounding' the French franc from its African counterpart facilitated the establishment of monetary union and a single currency in Europe. On the other hand, this decision further weakened the French economic presence in its former African colonies, undermining the basis of French expatriates' business activity, especially in the small scale industry sector.<sup>17</sup>

France, however, departed from this trend during the Rwandan civil war of 1990–1994. Paris provided direct military and diplomatic support to the Hutu dominated regime of Juvenal Habyarimana (1973–1994) and indirect to Jean Kambanda's interim government (April–June 1994), driven by fear of the takeover of Rwanda by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front, seen by Paris as an instrument of Anglo-Saxon expansion in the Great Lakes region. That diplomacy contributed much to the outbreak of the large-scale genocide against Tutsis. Despite urging from human rights groups, the French privately continued to supply arms to the genocidal regime until the end of May 1994, and then tried by diplomatic means to compel the RPF to stop its march towards Kigali. It led to the biggest political and moral defeat of France in Africa after 1960.<sup>18</sup> Paris couldn't prevent the PRF victory, completely lost its influence in Rwanda and appeared as an accomplice to genocide in the eyes of the entire world.

The failure in Rwanda hastened the fundamental African policy change that was initiated by Mitterrand at La Baule. Even neo-Gaullist Jacques Chirac's victory in the 1995 presidential election couldn't stop that. The old African strategy was finally discredited by the futile attempts of Paris to save the crumbling regime of Mobutu in Zaire in 1997. According to the influential newspaper *Le Monde* France suffered there the "triple failure — of an ambition, of a method and of a morality."<sup>19</sup> That is why Chirac's

16 "Franc des Colonies françaises d'Afrique" — "Franc of the African French Colonies," special currency introduced in Western and Central French Africa after 1945 to spare those countries a stark devaluation. The acronym has received various other meanings over time. By 1994 it was translated as "African Financial Community." (Editor's note – JvdB)

17 Dembélé 2004.

18 Marchesin 1998: 93.

19 *Le Monde* 1997.

administration was forced to continue the «strategy of abandoning.» Already in 1996, he told his ministers that the era of unilateral intervention of France in Africa has ended.<sup>20</sup> France's development aid fell from 42.1 billion francs in 1995 to 34.7 billion in 1998; government spending on cooperation was reduced from 8 billion in 1993 to 6.4 billion in 1998.<sup>21</sup> After the Socialist party's victory in the 1997 parliamentary elections, the new government, headed by Lionel Jospin, took further steps to reform the mechanisms of cooperation with Africa and to put an end to the *Françafrique*. The Ministry of Cooperation was abolished; France reduced the number of its troops in Africa from 8,000 to 5,000 and of its military bases to only five. Ivorian and Senegalese leaders had to exert considerable diplomatic efforts to persuade Paris to maintain French military presence in their countries. In 2001 during his visit to South Africa Jospin declared: "Africa of zones of influence and inappropriate intervention is a thing of the past."<sup>22</sup> France renounced its previous bilateral approach to Africa and began to promote regional integration, especially in the field of defense and security (the Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities program). Officially Paris observed strict neutrality during the 1997 civil war in Congo-Brazzaville. The share of credits to African countries in France's external government credits fell from 56% in 1997 to 52% in 1999. Financial aid to sub-Saharan Africa decreased by 3.5 billion francs, especially to Cameroon, Gabon and Madagascar. Credit policy was gradually reoriented from Francophone countries toward Southern and Eastern Africa. On the other hand, Paris increasingly tended to provide assistance through international mechanisms, especially through UN and EU channels.<sup>23</sup>

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By the 21st century, Africa — with its strategic position in the international military balance, with its raw materials, with its influence in

20 French 1996.

21 Marchesin 1998: 98.

22 Champin 2001.

23 Marchesin 1998 : 91–106; Alibert 1999; Raafat 2001; Adjovi 2002 : 426–437; Leymarie 2002: 18–19.

the UN — has lost much of its former importance to France. French ruling circles concluded that huge sums destined to promote the development of Africa have been embezzled or wasted and so there was no further need to spend French money on this. The description of Africa as a “hopeless continent” and a “bottomless pit” of violence and catastrophe, “impossible to get under control,” became increasingly popular. The Whites — the military, business people, missionaries and even charitable aid groups — were leaving Africa. François Soudan wrote in January 2002: “the divorce between what was a metropolis with a universal vocation and scattered confetti of its former empire seems have already happened.”<sup>24</sup> Since then the backyard ceased to be the most crucial element of the French-speaking world for France.

In the very beginning of the XXI century the policy of “abandoning Africa” seemed to be all but irreversible. However, the outbreak of the civil war in Ivory Coast in September 2002 woke up old demons.<sup>25</sup> The rapid advance of the rebel New Forces toward Abidjan, the economic capital of the country, forced President Laurent Gbagbo to appeal for French military assistance, and the officials in Paris — Chirac and the new center-right government of Jean-Pierre Raffarin — made the fateful decision to intervene. This departure from a “new African policy” seems to have been motivated by “the unique status of Ivory Coast... that still maintained strong economic, cultural and military links with France after independence in 1960, including allowing a permanent French military presence.”<sup>26</sup>

French troops arrived in Ivory Coast, stopped the rebel advance and saved Gbagbo's regime. But when Paris tried to find a political solution to the conflict, inviting Gbagbo to share power with the rebels (Linass-Marcoussis Agreement), the regime began to incite anti-French sentiment. Pro-government media led an ultranationalistic campaign against France, which they accuse of backing the rebellion and of preventing the nation to achieve real political and economic independence.

In early November 2004 Gbagbo launched an offensive against the rebels, and when it failed, he arranged a large-scale provocation. On November 6 government planes bombed a French military base in Bouaké, killing nine French soldiers and an American citizen. In retaliation, the French destroyed the entire Ivorian air force and took control of Abidjan airport. This provided Gbagbo's partisans an opportunity to portray France

24 Soudan 2002: 1.

25 Rueff 2004.

26 Richburg 2003.

as a direct participant in the civil war.<sup>27</sup> The ‘young patriots’ (pro-government youth group), assisted by the military and policemen, organized in Abidjan and others towns a «hunt for Whites,» especially for the French, beating them, looting their homes and shops, raping women, burning down French schools and cultural centers. France was forced to introduce its troops in Abidjan and to conduct on November 10–17 a mass evacuation of about 14,000 foreign (mostly French) citizens. Dozens of Ivorians were killed or injured in clashes with French soldiers.

The position of France in Ivorian economy was hit hard by these events, which dealt a heavy blow mainly to French small and medium-sized enterprises (over 600), about 150 of which were completely destroyed.<sup>28</sup> But they also further harmed the relationship of France with Africa, especially with the countries of the backyard. In the eyes of many Africans, France — the only former colonial power that continued to maintain its military presence on the continent — has played in November 2004 a role of an imperialist predator, whose military action very much resembled an expedition of the colonial epoch.<sup>29</sup>

It became evident that the *Françafrique* was completely outdated and the attempts to revive the old Gaullist policy were doomed to failure. Official Paris could not find a common language with neither African public opinion, nor the new generation of African leaders like Gbagbo and Paul Kagame who combined authoritarian tendencies with nationalist hostility toward the West. That is why after 2004 Chirac and his successor Nicolas Sarkozy (2007–2012) played it safe and tended to avoid direct intervention in internal affairs of African countries; in 2008 Sarkozy launched the process of closing some of French military bases in Africa (Senegal etc.).

At the same time the Hexagon’s positions in the region’s economies and foreign trade continued to deteriorate. Already in 2001–2004 French export volumes for Africa have fallen by almost 40% and the import volumes by roughly 30%. France’s share of overall imports into Africa fell to 8.9% in 2010 from 16.2% in 2000, while China’s rose to 12.5% from 3.4%. Now France is only Africa’s sixth largest trading partner (in 2005 the second). In 2012 French exports to sub-Saharan Africa fell by 4%. Sub-Saharan Africa account for only a tiny share of the French market — 2.75% of exports and 2.36% of imports (2012).

27 Notre voie 1994.

28 Bazler 2004.

29 Diop 2005: 9; Krivoushin 2007: 15-16.

France’s economic ties with the backyard weakened particularly markedly. If previously its economic and commercial relations with sub-Saharan Africa were almost entirely limited to its former colonies, in 2012 its main trading partners in the region were Nigeria, South Africa, Equatorial Guinea and Angola. In 2011 2/3 of French imports from sub-Saharan Africa was provided by Nigeria (36%), Ghana (11%), Angola (11%) and South Africa (8%); more than 30% of exports went to South Africa (18.5%) and Nigeria (12%). In 2012 the key suppliers of oil — the main product imported by France from sub-Saharan Africa — were Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Angola. In that year France’s exports to French-speaking Benin declined more than 3 times; on the contrary, its imports from Spanish-speaking Equatorial Guinea rose 4.5 times.

In the 1960s France completely dominated the foreign trade of its former sub-Saharan colonies, but now the situation has changed. The imports from these states lost its importance for the Hexagon, except of some raw materials, especially hydrocarbons and uranium. For none of the countries of the backyard France is the number one client. France yielded that place to China, India, USA, Turkey, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Nigeria. French imports from Benin, Togo, Mali, Chad and CAR are very trifling. In 2012 oil accounted for 95% of France’s imports from Congo-Brazzaville and uranium for 99.1% of its imports from Chad.

The Hexagon rather more interests in the backyard as a market for its products. However France continues to remain a main supplier only to its five former sub-Saharan dependencies — Senegal, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Niger and Mali. And even in these countries France’s role as a trading partner is reducing. In 2000–2012 the share of imports from France to Senegal dropped from 37% to 15%. In Congo-Brazzaville, France’s position is threatened by the growth of imports from China and especially from Brazil. Sub-Saharan Africa’s share of all France’s bilateral aid is further decreasing. In 2010 it fell to 45%. In 2012 total aid to sub-Saharan countries declined by 17.15%, below its 2004 level.

The results of France’s African policy were so deplorable that François Hollande, elected president in May 2012, has tried to overcome the trend. France again became the main investor in Africa (17.9% of all foreign direct investments). In early December 2013 the president announced his goal to double trade with Africa. But the ‘new’ approach Hollande vows to push through proved to be the old one. In 2013 France launched two military interventions — in Mali (Operation Serval) and the CAR. Now more than 5,300 French soldiers deployed in the continent, in nine states of the backyard



— CAR, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Djibouti, Senegal, and Chad. The ghost of empire comes back.

This shows how difficult it is for France to depart from its long-standing military and political role in Africa. And this also demonstrates how hard it is to build and maintain constructive relationships between the former colonial center and its periphery, between the metropolis and dominated countries after an empire has fallen. Any attempt to maintain some forms of economic, political or cultural control over former dependencies that could be successful in the early independence period, when young nations have not yet chosen the models of their economic and political development, in the long term was doomed to failure, primarily because such an attempt inevitably came into conflict with these nations' historical memory, the memory of colonial rule. This memory continues to influence the political attitudes and values of various segments of the African society who are inclined to treat any action of a former metropolitan country as a sign of the rebirth of its old policy of oppression and exploitation. That is why the desire of the French to "preserve their Africa" inescapably led to a "loss of Africa", especially under globalization, which gradually destroyed all the geopolitical niches that existed inside the bipolar-structured world system, where economically, politically or psychologically marginalized nations could find shelter and survive. "Any other, but not France" — such is the current state of the public mood in the backyard.

At the same time the United Kingdom which refused to play by the rules of imperial logic in the relations with its former African colonies, has achieved much greater success in maintaining its influence on the 'Dark continent', by using the mechanisms of the Commonwealth or Commission for Africa set up in early 2004 by the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair<sup>30</sup>. But it is the countries which in the eyes of the local population are not associated with colonialism, the white race or the Western world as a whole — South Korea, India and especially China — that have the most favorable opportunities for economic and political penetration in Africa. The Africans, having failed to find their place in the new globalizing world, turn away from the West seen as the culprit who caused all their misfortunes and prefer to seek other partners. Future importance of France in Africa depends on the ability to radically revise its political priorities and renounce its old imperial illusions. It is obvious that France will not be able to reduce or reverse the negative trend in its trade and economic relations with Africa, to restore its leading position, to challenge China's domination and to effectively resist the expansion of its other rivals; French role will continue to diminish. As regards

the political and military dimensions of bilateral relationships, it should be expected that the pursuance of the old policy of direct military intervention will lead to new failures, particularly in such unruly African states as the CAR. The most likely scenario through the near and medium terms is the further weakening of the position of France as a crucial and independent actor on the regional scene and probably the ultimate rejection of the policy of direct intervention. In its relationship with the 'Dark continent' Paris will increasingly not be acting alone, but in conjunction with other members of the European team, choosing African sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS (CEDEAO) rather than individual states as its main partners. France will progressively use the mechanisms of the EU to provide financial and economic assistance to Africa and to build common policies and political initiatives, especially in the event of a major regional crisis. As for the backyard, Paris will inevitably continue to change its regional priorities and to expand cooperation (both economic and cultural) not only with its former colonies, but with all the Francophone countries in Africa: the relations with the backyard will completely lose their previous importance and strategic value for France.

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photo by S. Pecio



# THE AFRICA POLICIES OF THE EU AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

NIALL DUGGAN

## article abstract

EUROPE AND CHINA BOTH HAVE STRONG STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN AFRICA. HOWEVER, IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT, THE ACTIONS OF ONE CAN OFTEN BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO THE ACTIONS OF THE OTHER, WHICH CAN OFTEN LEAD TO A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON AFRICA ITSELF. BOTH THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAVE ISSUED A POLICY ON AFRICA. THESE DOCUMENTS OUTLINE HOW EACH ACTOR INTENDS TO UNDERTAKE ITS ACTIONS IN AFRICA. THE POLICIES OUTLINE EACH ACTOR'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN AFRICA, AS WELL AS THE ROLE IT INTENDS TO PLAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION. THE POLICIES DIFFER

WIDELY, MOST NOTABLY IN TERMS OF HOW TO DEAL WITH STATES THAT HAVE POOR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS OR A HISTORY OF MISUSING FUNDS INTENDED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. YET THE TWO POLICIES SHARE SOME SIMILARITIES, SUCH AS THEIR COMMITMENT TO AFRICA DEVELOPMENT. THIS PAPER EXAMINES THE CALL FOR TRILATERAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EU, CHINA AND AFRICA AND LOOKS AT HOW SUCH A DIALOGUE WOULD OPERATE, WHO WOULD BENEFIT MOST AND WHETHER IT COULD REPLACE THE EU'S AND CHINA'S CURRENT POLICIES ON AFRICA.

EUROPEAN UNION, CHINA, AFRICA, TRI-LATERAL COOPERATION AND DIALOGUE, CHINA AFRICA POLICY, EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY FOR AFRICA

## keywords

## INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the 21st century Africa has return as a foreign policy focus for a number of states including the United States, Russia, India, Japan and a number of Persian Gulf states. However as Africa's two largest trading partners the European Union (EU) and the People's Republic of

China<sup>1</sup> are main external actors on the continent. Both the EU and China have each issued policies on Africa in recent years; the “European Union Strategy for Africa 2005”<sup>2</sup> and “China’s African Policy 2006,”<sup>3</sup> respectively, and each actor has individually held major summits with African nations, such as the Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon 2007 and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit 2006. This evidence clearly proves that Africa, a continent often ignored or undervalued throughout history by both the Occident and the Orient, is emerging as a respected actor on the global stage. Currently, both the EU and China have major economic and political interests in Africa. Often these interests clash, thus creating competitors of the two global powerhouses. Irrespective of this, both the EU and China have declared that their main intention in Africa is to be a beneficial actor in African development. To this end, cooperation between China and the EU on African development would be a positive progression. In February 2007, Javier Solana, the EU’s High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, issued an article in China Daily in which he stated:

“Africa is an important focus for the EU’s comprehensive strategic partnership with China. The EU and China are both committed to helping deliver peace, stability, development, prosperity and good governance in Africa. I look forward to working ever more closely with my Chinese colleagues in helping to address these important challenges, in partnership with Africa.”<sup>4</sup>

At the 10th China-EU Summit, the two actors issued the following joint statement:

“Leaders welcome more practical cooperation by the two sides through respective existing cooperation mechanisms with Africa, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the EU-Africa Summit, so as to contribute to Africa’s peace stability and sustainable development on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.”<sup>5</sup>

It seems that the EU and China are intent on combining their efforts to achieve development in Africa. From an African perspective, neither cooperation nor competition between China and the EU is necessarily a

good development. Cooperation could lead to the next Berlin Conference;<sup>6</sup> competition could regress developments in Africa, creating Cold War-like conditions, whereby different foreign actors support despots and proxy wars. As the African proverb says, “When elephants fight, the grass gets trampled. When elephants make love it also gets trampled.”<sup>7</sup> To benefit from cooperation between China and the EU while keeping in line with the EU’s “European Consensus on Development,” Africa needs to become a more significant stakeholder in the process. To this end, the EU has initiated a trilateral dialogue and cooperation between the EU, Africa and China.<sup>8</sup> “The improvement of cooperation in Africa is essentially important because it is part of setting up a credible cornerstone for the EU-China strategic partnership in global affairs.”<sup>9</sup> This paper will look at the context of EU-Africa relations and the context of Sino-African relations, and it will explain why China’s growing involvement in Africa is shifting the focus of EU-China relations. It will examine whether the European and Chinese approaches to involvement in Africa converge or diverge. It will also explore the extent of the dialogue between the EU and China and the implications for their wider “global” policies toward Africa. Are there prospects for expanding such dialogue?

## EU-AFRICA RELATIONS

Although many members of the European Union – including the UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy – have a long colonial history with African nations, the EU’s relationship with Africa is relatively new, and it focuses on three areas: trade, aid and security. Historically, EU-Africa relations have been a focus of each of the previous incarnations of the European Union, dating back to the Treaty of Rome in 1957, which granted special treatment to the French and Belgian colonies from Africa through association status. This special dispensation later became known as *Etats africains et malgache associés*. A similar status was granted to former colonies of the UK after they joined the European Community in 1973. These two agreements were later incorporated into the Lomé Convention, signed in 1975, which extended the special treatment afforded to the former British, French and Belgian colonies to all 48 states of Sub-Saharan Africa. As Martin Holland highlighted, the Lomé Convention was traditionally the

1 Referred to as China through this text.

2 EU Strategy 2005.

3 China Africa Policy 2006.

4 Solana 2007.

5 EC 2007.

6 The conference of Berlin in 1885 divided the African continent between European powers, leading to an institutionalization of the Scramble for Africa. (Editor’s note – JvDB)

7 Berger, Wissenbach 2007.

8 European Communities 2008.

9 Berger, Wissenbach 2007: 2

major development framework: the rationale was largely historical rather than rational.”<sup>10</sup> For this reason, the Lomé VI Convention was replaced in 2000 with the Cotonou Agreement, which came into force in 2003. Professor Daniel Bach of Comparative Political Studies and Sociology, University of Bordeaux outlines that the Cotonou Agreement was a fundamental reshaping of EU-Africa relations:

“Cotonou purports to provide the roadmap towards (...) inter-hemispheric ‘partnership,’ based on subscription to common political norms, trade reciprocity and the conclusion of EPAs between the common EU and six regional groupings formed by ACP states, four of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.”<sup>11</sup>

Since its inception, the Cotonou Agreement has shaped trade between the EU and Africa. “In 2010, the overall trade in goods (...) between the EU and the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) was valued at EUR133 billion. This was a rise of 20% compared with 2009.”<sup>12</sup> The European Union does have an overall trade deficit with ACP countries. “The African countries accounted for over 90% of the total EU-27 trade with ACP countries.”<sup>13</sup> The EU has a trade deficit with Africa in agricultural goods, textiles and energy products. It has a surplus in trade in machinery, chemicals and transport equipment. In terms of trade, however, two major difficulties in EU-Africa relations prevail: the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). “The ability of the EU to promote ‘sustainable development’ in Africa has arguably been constrained by domestic pressures within the EU itself (...) most graphically with the EU’s systems of subsidies and the Common Agricultural policy.”<sup>14</sup> “The EU is a major player in global agricultural trade as the biggest importer and second largest exporter of foodstuffs.”<sup>15</sup> However, this system is heavily subsidised under the CAP. Farmers in the EU are guaranteed prices for their products, which are higher than the global food prices, and restrictions on foreign imports of competing products from outside the bloc are in place. Export subsidies, also a feature of CAP, allow the dumping of surplus EU products at bargain prices in African countries. In 2002, Oxfam highlighted the case of Mozambique, which Oxfam describes as “one of the world’s most efficient

producers”<sup>16</sup> of sugar. The EU heavily subsidises its sugar sector, resulting in Europe – one of the world’s highest-cost sugar producers – being the world’s second-largest sugar exporter. The surpluses of sugar produced by the CAP system in the EU results in a 17% fall in sugar prices, meaning that Mozambique sugar products are unable to compete in third markets against cheap, subsidised EU sugar.<sup>17</sup> This, in turn, prevents Mozambique’s sugar sector from growing and slows the nation’s overall development. This story is replicated across different African states in different agricultural sectors, and as agriculture constitutes the biggest sector in most African economies, this slows their overall development. EPAs require the markets of partner nations to be opened up to EU products and all barriers to trade to be removed. As Ian Taylor Professor in International Relations and African Politics St Andrew University explains:

“This [EPA] necessarily introduces high levels of unfair competition into African economies as European producers are granted access to overseas markets while benefiting immensely from price competitive exports due to high levels of direct income support from the EU to enhance EU international competitiveness.”<sup>18</sup>

The result is that Africa’s infant industries are unable to develop or are forced out of the market because they can’t compete; they are no longer protected by trade barriers or government subsidies, which the EU industries that are competing in African markets enjoy. Throughout their historical development trade relations between the EU and Africa have created an environment where EU products gain access to African markets while benefitting from protection within their domestic markets through unfair trade barriers. Taylor highlights that this creates “negative images of the EU as a collective unit that gives with one hand but takes back with the other.”<sup>19</sup> In terms of aid, the EU is a major actor. “In 2009, the EU (...) was once again the largest provider of development aid in the world with more than half of global Official Development Assistance – €48.2 billion.”<sup>20</sup> Most of this aid was distributed directly by member states, but “€10 billion were disbursed by the European Commission, and 39% of those €10 billion were dedicated to Africa.”<sup>21</sup> Despite being the world’s largest provider of development aid, some doubt surrounds the effectiveness of such aid. According to Pontus Hansson,

10 Holland 2002: 51.

11 Bach 2008: 282.

12 Xenellis 2011: 1.

13 Xenellis 2011: 1.

14 Taylor 2010: 104.

15 EC 2011.

16 Oxfam Briefing 2002: 3.

17 Oxfam Briefing 2002: 3.

18 Taylor 2010: 106.

19 Taylor 2010: 111.

20 AUC/EC 2011a.

21 AUC/EC 2011a.



Department of economics Lund University: “European Union aid does not appear to affect economic growth in recipient countries.”<sup>22</sup> Questions have also been raised regarding the misuse of EU funding, with the suggestion that some of the aid has been “handed over without public scrutiny to banks and private equity companies and funnelled into tax havens.”<sup>23</sup>

Despite failed actions in a number of African conflicts, most notably Rwanda, the EU has started to play a more effective role in world security. As Rikard Bengtsson, Deputy Director of the Centre for European Studies Lund University highlighted, “institutional developments in the EU in the last ten years have increased the potential for effective EU foreign-policy making.”<sup>24</sup> This has led the EU to become more involved in global security, particular regarding conflict prevention in Africa. The Africa-EU Partnership on Peace and Security guides the EU’s involvement in African conflicts. This partnership has three major goals:

- to reach common positions and implement common approaches on challenges to peace and security in Africa, Europe and the world;
- to achieve the effective functioning of the African Peace and Security Architecture to address peace and security challenges in Africa;
- to financially enable the African Union (AU) and regional mechanisms to plan and conduct Peace Support Operations;<sup>25</sup>
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The EU has played a role with some success in a number of conflicts in Africa – most notably in Darfur, where it contributed funding to the AU’s peacekeeping mission; in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where EU forces were sent for a peacekeeping mission; and in the Central African Republic (CAR), where the EU provided support to the peacekeeping operation led by the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC). Despite such successes, some critics believe that the EU’s security policy in Africa is based on rhetoric and is overshadowed by the pursuit of the EU member states’ own security and economic interests<sup>26</sup> – that is, that the EU only involves itself in African conflicts when it suits the EU’s security interests.

In terms of trade, aid and security, EU-Africa relations can, at best, be described as complex. Often the EU’s efforts to help African development are ineffective and can, in fact, have a negative effect on the development of African states. However, as Taylor affirms, “The EU is (...) a most important

factor in Africa’s international relations and will remain so for at least the short- to medium-term.”<sup>27</sup>

## SINO-AFRICAN RELATIONS

Africa has experienced firsthand the impact of China’s economic, social and political development and its impact on the wider world. Sino-African relations date back to antiquity. Famous examples of ancient bilateral relations include the “cultural exchange between China and Egypt as early as the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E. – C.E. 220)”<sup>28</sup> and the voyages of Zheng He in the early 15th century, who undertook a number of trade missions to Africa. However, China did not engage with Africa in a systematic way until the 1950s. In a search for allies, and in a bid to break its diplomatic isolation, the fledgling PRC found a cause commune in anticolonialism with African countries fighting for their independence. The colonial question, which concerned the African and Asian peoples that convened in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955, accelerated China’s involvement with Africa. The Bandung Conference laid the ideological and philosophical foundation for South-South cooperation;<sup>29</sup> A spirit and logic that Chinese and Africans still invoke in their common dealings today. In double opposition to the United States and the USSR, China tried to claim leadership of the nonaligned movement and supported liberation movements throughout the African continent more or less successfully.<sup>30</sup> The result of that support is illustrated by China’s demise in Angola, where the PRC lent its support, first of all to UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), and later to the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola). China’s engagement on the continent also had technical and economic dimensions, albeit limited or symbolic. The PRC shipped large numbers of technicians and doctors to Africa since the foundation of the PRC. The improvement to the lives of the people of the poorest countries in the world as a direct result of this aid was palpable.<sup>31</sup> One of those symbols is the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA). This 1,870 km railway line, a turnkey project wholly financed and built by the PRC in the early 1970s, provided Zambia with a railway line that bypassed Rhodesia and South Africa. Although the benefits China attained from Sino-African relations did not match the volume of resources pumped into individual projects,<sup>32</sup> it did not prevent

22 Hansson 2007: 210.

23 Hencke 2010.

24 Bengtsson 2010: 44.

25 AUC/EC 2011b.

26 Pirozzi 2009.

27 Taylor 2010: 98.

28 Li Anshan 2005: 60.

29 Choucri 1969: 1-17.

30 Van Ness 1971.

31 Snow 1988: 159.

32 Yu 1966: 461-8.

China from increasing its involvement in Africa, a strategy that would yield political gains, including the establishment of diplomatic relations with African states. Most independent African countries had officially recognised the PRC as a nation by the 1960s. This diplomatic harvest culminated in the PRC's admission to the United Nations and to the UN Security Council as a permanent member in lieu of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in no small measure thanks to the leverage of African states.<sup>33</sup> China's involvement in Africa stagnated in the 1980s. Preoccupied with the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution and absorbed by the modernisation process undertaken by Deng Xiaoping, China's attention was diverted from Africa. When Gerald Segal wrote that Africa: "will remain the least important area for Chinese foreign policy"<sup>34</sup> in 1992, he seemed to have good grounds to believe so. However, the PRC had not abandoned Africa; instead, Sino-African relations had entered a phase that Li Anshan – Professor of the School of International Studies at Peking University – later classified as a "transitional period" (1978-1994).<sup>35</sup> China returned to Africa – if indeed it had ever left – with force in the early 1990s.

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CONSIDERING THAT AFRICAN OIL HAS  
TRADITIONALLY BEEN THE DOMAIN OF A FEW  
WESTERN COMPANIES, CHINA'S SIGNIFICANT  
PENETRATION OF THE FIELD IN SUCH A SHORT  
TIME SPAN IS PHENOMENAL

Two factors brought about a change in China's attitude toward African states: First was the relative diplomatic isolation that ensued after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Unlike Western countries, most African governments displayed a certain level of understanding toward the Chinese Communist Party's handling of the Tiananmen Square massacre.<sup>36</sup> A convergence of views as to the relativity or non-universality of the liberal democratic model revived the spirit of Bandung between China and Africa. The second factor is related to economic concerns. China's phenomenal economic growth resulted in an increasing need for energy and raw materials to fuel the economy, and a subsequent need for markets in which to sell the products of that economy. China looked to Africa to fulfil these needs. The Roman emperor Tiberius described governing Rome as "holding a wolf by

the ears."<sup>37</sup> Tiberius meant that, however terrifying it is to clutch on to the wolf's ears, you hold on, because the real terror lies in letting it go. When the CCP introduced reforms in the late 1970s, creating a market economy in a socialist state, it grabbed the proverbial wolf by the ears. The abandonment of the centrally planned market structure led to a loss of control over Chinese society, and, by deviating from the Marxist-Leninist system, the party lost some of its legitimacy. To remain in power, the CCP began to promote nationalism among the Chinese population, intertwining the party's identity with China's overall national identity. The CCP was also expected to deliver sustainable economic growth, resulting in an increase in the general standard of living of the Chinese people, and to return China to its former "great power" status. The Chinese government introduced a number of reforms that have resulted in substantial growth of the Chinese economy, with an average GDP growth rate of 10.06% over the ten years leading up to 2007.<sup>38</sup>

However, the pace of this growth has burdened China with a number of practical problems: Enhanced prosperity has led to an increase in the use of motor vehicles. The number of motorways has doubled since the beginning of the reform era. The use of rail and air transport has also increased.<sup>39</sup> This has escalated the demand for oil, resulting in China's emergence as a net importer of oil. China is now the second largest net importer of crude oil.<sup>40</sup> The colossal growth in the manufacturing sector has created a demand for other natural resources: cotton for the textile industry, cobalt and copper for the IT and telecommunication sectors, iron ore for the steel and shipbuilding industries, and so on. As a result, China is no longer able to meet many of its demands from internal sources. China has also undergone a massive urbanisation as a consequence of its impressive growth rate. This has not only increased demand for building materials but has also increased demand for land, as urbanisation removes scarce arable land from the agricultural sector. In the late 1990s, the Chinese government launched its "Go-Global Strategy," which encouraged Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and privately owned companies (POEs) to expand into foreign markets, allowing these companies to strengthen and develop into multinational companies (MNCs), with Africa becoming the destination for a number of these companies. China is now Africa's largest trading partner. From 2000 to 2012, the proportion of China-Africa trade volume as a part of China's total foreign trade volume increased from 2.23% to 5.13%.<sup>41</sup> Of this the proportion

33 Taylor 2006: 40.

34 Segal 1992: 126.

35 Li Anshan 2006.

36 Taylor 2006: 62.

37 "auribus teneo lupum"

38 World Bank Beijing Office 2007.

39 Skeer, Yanjia Wang 2007: 1.

40 Energy Information Administration 2014:1.

41 State Council 2014.

consisting of China's imports from Africa was up from 2.47% to 6.23%, and that of China's exports to Africa from 2.02% to 4.16%.<sup>42</sup> During the same timeframe, the proportion of China-Africa trade volume as a part of Africa's total foreign trade volume increased from 3.82% to 16.13%: the proportion contributed by Africa's exports to China up from 3.76% to 18.07%, and that by Africa's imports from China from 3.88% to 14.11%.<sup>43</sup> However this trading relationship goes beyond the export of African raw materials and the import of cheap Chinese consumer goods. Chinese economic engagement in Africa is all encompassing with Chinese economic activity being found at all levels of African economies. From 2009 to 2012, China's FDI into Africa increased from US\$1.44 billion to US\$2.52 billion. China's accumulative FDI in Africa during this period increased from US\$9.33 billion to US\$21.23 billion, 2.3 times the 2009 figure.<sup>44</sup> China is now Africa's sixth largest FDI representing 4% of all FDI.<sup>45</sup> Over 2000 Chinese enterprises (both state and private) are now active Africa in almost every sector of the economy.<sup>46</sup>

China's participation in the oil industry in Africa has gained much notoriety in the media and features prominently in the "Report on China's Policy and its Effects on Africa," created by the European Parliament's Committee on Development.<sup>47</sup> China's energy security problem lies in its growing oil deficit. Between 1993 and 2002, China's oil consumption surged from 2.9 million barrels per day (b/d) to 5.4 million b/d, while oil production only grew from 2.9 million b/d to 3.4 million b/d over the same period.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, China has become more reliant on foreign imported oil. It is estimated that 19.62% of Chinese total oil imports originate from just three Africa countries Angola, Congo-Brazzaville and Sudan.<sup>49</sup> Since 9/11, African oil has become relatively safer to access than that of its Middle Eastern counterparts. China is now a major customer of the oil industries of Nigeria, Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, to name but a few. A number of Chinese state-owned oil companies are active in Africa, including China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China National Petrochemical Corporation (SINOPEC) and PetroChina. In terms of the oil trade, the PRC is most active in Angola, Sudan and Congo-Brazzaville.<sup>50</sup> In absolute terms,

42 State Council 2014.

43 State Council 2014.

44 State Council 2014.

45 UNCTAD 2013: 43.

46 State Council 2014.

47 Gomes 2008.

48 British Petroleum 2003: 6-9.

49 Energy Information Administration 2014: 12.

50 Hanson, Martin 2006: 47.

however, Chinese companies' presence in the African oil sector is modest compared to major players such as Shell, Exxon, Chevron, Total and Agip.<sup>51</sup> "The commercial value of the oil investments in Africa of China's NOCs [national oil companies] is just 8% of the combined commercial value of the IOCs [international oil companies] investments in African oil and 3% of all companies invested in African oil."<sup>52</sup> But considering that African oil has traditionally been the domain of a few Western companies, China's significant penetration of the field in such a short time span is phenomenal. African governments and the traditional major oil companies now perceive China to be a credible player.

The growing volume of trade between China and Africa tends to eclipse aid. However, aid also features prominently in the "Report on China's Policy and Its Effects on Africa," created by the European Parliament's Committee on Development.<sup>53</sup> It is, therefore, worth recalling some of China's actions in the field of aid and cooperation. Although we know very little about the quality and impact of Chinese projects and assistance activities in Africa<sup>54</sup> a few projects have been made public. At the 2006 China-Africa Forum, the PRC launched the Beijing Action Plan (BAP). The BAP involves cooperation in agriculture, investment, trade, finance and infrastructure. More specifically, the BAP has been designed to improve Africa's agricultural sector and prevention, as well as treatment, of epidemic diseases.<sup>55</sup> By the end of 2005, China had helped to establish more than 720 projects for Africa, dispatched more than 15,000 medical personnel and treated some 170 million patients in Africa.<sup>56</sup> Further commitments included the building of 10 hospitals and 30 antimalarial clinics. China provided approximately €27.19 million for the purchase of antimalarial drugs. In the agricultural sector, China sent 100 senior Chinese agricultural experts to Africa, where it set up 10 agricultural demonstration sites. Under the "Chinese Young Volunteers Serving Africa Program," 300 youths were sent to Africa on field missions to support education, agriculture, sports and health-related programs.<sup>57</sup> Underpinning Chinese cooperation is Beijing's professed belief that African states should "find their own path," a doctrine that echoes the "African solutions to African problems" motto. An important part of China's aid program is "trade and aid." This is a combination of aid projects, as well

51 Downs 2007: 43.

52 Downs 2007: 44.

53 Gomes 2008.

54 Tjønneland et al. 2006: 9.

55 Bates et al. 2007: 9.

56 Xinhua News Agency 2006.

57 Forum on China Cooperation 2006.



as state and private investments in local African economics – for example, a €6.5 billion project in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which included investments in infrastructure projects and cobalt mining.<sup>58</sup> These projects mainly involve “dual-use infrastructure, such as roads, railways and ports, all of which are needed to extract the minerals but are further utilized by the host country to increase its trade.”<sup>59</sup> The aim of this combination of trade and aid is to generate sustainable domestic-led growth by stimulating domestic demand and ending the reliance on traditional aid.

Undisputedly, China’s policies in relation to Africa will bring opportunities and challenges for African development. “The failure to consider the direct and indirect political implications of aid and investment strategies has led to international concern.”<sup>60</sup> Western donors, African governments and civil society have raised alarms about what this will portend for issues such as poverty reduction, democracy, good governance, peace and security, sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, agriculture, and human rights. “There is a risk that China’s assistance and cooperation with Africa will leave governments, institutions and organisations [that are trying to deal with such problems] by the wayside.”<sup>61</sup> This means that China will have a greater influence on the development of Africa, which many fear will allow governments in Africa who have been accused of neglecting their own people to continue doing so. From a Chinese perspective, many of these expressed concerns mask the vested interests of the EU and other Western governments in Africa, making the Chinese suspicious of any efforts made by these governments to integrate China into the international donor community.

However, Chinese investment in the oil industry and China’s aid programs “need to be seen in relation to China’s economic engagement with the African continent as a whole and in comparison to the size of the aid programs of the West.”<sup>62</sup> They also need to be observed in light of China’s overall African policy and in comparison to the West’s policies – in particular, to the European Union’s “Strategy for Africa.”

58 Whewell 2008.

59 Feingold et al. 2007.

60 Berger, Wissenbach 2007: 14.

61 Davies 2007: 96.

62 Davies 2007: 96.

## CHINESE AND EUROPEAN POLICIES ON AFRICA: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

China’s former president, Hu Jintao, made the following statement at a meeting of the UN Security Council in 2005:

“We should pay closer attention to African concerns and ...This meeting should renew our commitments to Africa (...) listen more attentively to the concerns and positions of African countries and take into full account their fervent desires for peace, development and cooperation.”<sup>63</sup>

Within a year of this statement, both the EU and the PRC had published papers, the European Union’s “Strategy for Africa 2005” and “China’s African Policy 2006,” respectively, which outlined their adjusted role in African development and the aims and goals of their involvement on the African continent. This section of the paper will look at the European Union’s “Strategy for Africa 2005” and “China’s African Policy 2006,” and discuss their similarities and differences. It will then look at how the EU’s proposed trilateral dialogue and cooperation between the EU, Africa and China intends to build upon the common ground in the EU’s and China’s policies on Africa and, in doing so, bridge the gaps that exist.

China’s African Policy 2006 – “At the beginning of 2006, the Chinese government published ‘China’s African Policy,’ which represents a milestone in Sino-African relations, symbolising a period of comprehensive development of relations between China and Africa.”<sup>64</sup> China’s African policy defines the politico-economic bilateral goals and relations of China and Africa. The document presents China’s goal of creating “a new type of strategic partnership with Africa”<sup>65</sup> based on the long-standing principles of Chinese foreign policy – for example, the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” and the “Five Principles for Engagement with African and Arab Countries” laid out by Zhou Enlai in 1963–1964. This new type of strategic partnership will establish and develop a Sino-African cooperation built on political equality and mutual trust, win-win economic cooperation and reciprocal cultural cooperation. The document pledges China’s support for African development, particularly in agriculture. It raises the prospect of the cancellation of debt owed to China by some African countries, as well as strengthening the argument for international debt relief and “economic

63 China.org 2006.

64 Xu Weizhong 2008: 67.

65 Gov.cn 2006.

assistance (...) with no political strings attached”<sup>66</sup> for Africa. The document also commits China to increasing science and technology, cultural, and environmental cooperation, and it offers increased human resources training, health sector assistance and education support, such as Chinese scholarships for African students. In economic terms, the policy seeks to boost Sino-African trade, and through the potential negotiation of free trade agreements, it proposes that China increases its duty-free treatment for some African exports. The policy calls for the provision of export credits for Chinese companies looking to invest in Africa, with infrastructure and utilities contracting high on the list of priorities. In the political sphere, the document looks to increase political interaction through international forums, staff exchanges and training programs, and a high level of reciprocal leadership visits. The document outlines officially that bilateral relations between China and African states can only take place if those states agree to adhere to the PRC’s “one-China principle.”

European Union Strategy for Africa 2005 – The “European Union Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa’s development” was adopted by the European Commission in 2005. The EU shifted its priorities to include development in Africa at the top of its international agenda and saw the creation of this strategy as a window of opportunity to push Africa toward sustainable development. The document points out that, as a long-standing partner and a close neighbour of Africa, the EU is well placed to assume a leading role in this process. Together, Africa and the EU should reinforce their efforts to tackle the scourge of HIV/AIDS, poverty, environmental degradation, violent conflicts and the lack of basic social services and essential investment. The basis of the strategy is to build an integrated, comprehensive and long-term structure for the EU’s relations with Africa. The strategy outlines a framework for action to support Africa’s efforts to achieve its UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The “European Union Strategy for Africa” promotes peace, security and good governance, encourages economic growth, trade and interconnection, and supports social cohesion and environmental sustainability, all of which are prerequisites for achieving the MDGs in Africa. The EU’s Africa strategy aims to provide a coordinated and coherent European response to the challenges Africa faces, and, therefore, it constitutes the first practical example of the implementation of the European Consensus. The strategy proposes a tactical partnership for security and development between the EU and Africa in order to facilitate quicker implementation of improved development aid. The document also aims to make aid effectiveness and donor coordination central priorities. On this basis, the EU should pursue a three-pronged strategy:

66 Gov.cn 2006.

### 1. Strengthened EU support in priority areas

Priority areas of EU support include:

- Reinforcement and respect for human rights and democracy;
- Delivery of adequate health care;
- Expansion of access to water supply and sanitation;
- Sustainability and promotion of cultural diversity;
- Transformation of migration into a positive force in the development process;
- Offsetting the effects of climate change;

### 2. Increased EU financing for Africa

In line with the strategy, the EU’s commitment should result in an additional €23 billion per year for Africa by 2015. This will be attained through the implementation of the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) multiannual financial framework for the ACP (Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific), and the European Neighbourhood Policy. A new financial instrument, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which will replace other instruments currently in operation in neighbouring countries, should support the implementation of new action plans.

### 3. A more effective EU approach

In order to improve the quality of its aid, the EU should adopt an action plan on aid effectiveness and apply it to Sub-Saharan Africa as a priority. The plan was presented in 2006 and was built on the following initiatives:

- the establishment of national roadmaps for coordination
- the adoption of joint programming documents
- the development of common procedures

**Similarities** – despite differences in principles, the EU and China have much in common when it comes to the groundwork. Both China and the EU have implemented projects in areas such as education, training, culture, health, agricultural productivity, and police and judicial reforms, as well as the environment (water, anti-desertification, and so on). As outlined by the Council of The European Union: “Both are interested in combating terrorism and organised crime. Both sides expressed the need to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.”<sup>67</sup> In terms of security cooperation the EU and China have a particular joint interest in combating piracy off the coast of Africa. This led to China-EU anti-piracy joint drill held March 19, 2014 as well outlining plans for future cooperation in future escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Guinea.<sup>68</sup> The EU and China could certainly try to cooperate in these fields by implementing common or complementary projects. Another area of common interest is economic development. Cooperation in this area will be unquestionably difficult to accomplish,

67 Council of The European Union 2007.

68 PLA Daily 2014.

as the EU and China often target the same common interests in Africa. However, there might be some space for collaboration in the development of infrastructure, where the challenge lies in ensuring competition benefits Africa's peoples and leads to sustainable economic growth.

**Differences** – Although the policies differ in their use of rhetoric, the core differences between the Chinese and European policies are their views on the role of the sovereign state. China's policy places the sovereign state at the centre of its exchange with Africa. Sino-African relations concentrate mainly on bilateral relations, treating each country as an equal. China pursues a policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of other sovereign nations. In terms of human rights and peace and security matters, which both China's and the EU's policies seek to promote, China believes the protection of human rights and the development of good governance needs to be developed within the framework of the sovereign state, and that intervention should only take place under the guidance of the United Nations (UN) or at the invitation of the state in question. In terms of development assistance, China places the sovereign state at the centre of its dialogue with African nations. Chinese aid projects allocate funding based on the requests made by African nations and, unlike the EU projects, which call for the reform of government structures, China donates aid without any political strings attached.

The EU sees an individual African state as one of many actors in African development. Under the EU's policy, regional organisations, such as the African Union, are important partners and coordinators of development cooperation in Africa. The EU demonstrates a strong interest in human rights protection and governance reforms based on the African agenda through micro-, maestro- and macro-levels of African society. The EU does not rule out interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations. This means that the EU is prepared to engage at all stages of a conflict's cycle, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction. It also means that, in terms of development assistance, the EU seems to pay more attention to ensuring more predictable and structured aid flows, often making this a condition of aid programs.

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## THE EU, AFRICA AND CHINA: TOWARDS TRI LATERAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

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Both China and Africa are fully aware that their commercial and political interests may not be incompatible. Berger and Wissenbach highlighted this, stating: "Europeans and Chinese have in common the

problem of combining their commercial and political interests with short- and long-term developmental needs of the African continent."<sup>69</sup> Trilateral dialogue and cooperation between the EU, Africa and China is designed to remedy this problem.

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CHINA HAS IMMERSSED ITSELF IN SINO-AFRICAN RELATIONS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE 1990s. CHINA'S TRADE WITH AND INVESTMENT IN AFRICA HAVE RISEN SHARPLY SINCE 2000.

On October 27, 2008, the European Commission published a communication entitled "The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation." This document notes that a shift has taken place in geopolitics in recent years, creating the opportunity for African development. The foundation of a network of institutions, which includes such associations as the AU, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism, has redoubled efforts to assert Africa's position on the global stage and has worked to find "African solutions to African problems." This network is becoming increasingly active regarding international issues such as "food security, energy and climate change, and changing economic environments."<sup>70</sup> Coupled with a coinciding revival of international interest in the African continent for various political and economic reasons in recent years, this network "provides a genuine and welcome opportunity for Africa's development and its fight against poverty."<sup>71</sup> "The EU and China are respectively the first and the third commercial partners of, and investors in, Africa."<sup>72</sup> The EU is the single largest provider of aid to Africa. In 2007, the EU signed an accord with Africa, agreeing to help eradicate poverty, to reach Africa's MDGs, and to promote "security, human rights, democratic governance, sustainable development, regional integration and integration into the world economy."<sup>73</sup> China has immersed itself in Sino-African relations since the beginning of the 1990s. China's trade with and investment in Africa have risen sharply since 2000. As a result of the deepening relationship, China has offered many development programs and poverty reduction schemes to African nations. China's commitment to Africa was cemented with the 2006 white paper, which outlined China's

<sup>69</sup> Berger, Wissenbach 2007: 9.

<sup>70</sup> European Communities 2008: 3.

<sup>71</sup> European Communities 2008: 3.

<sup>72</sup> European Communities 2008: 3.

<sup>73</sup> European Communities 2008: 3.



promotion of peace, stability and growth in Africa, and the use of a policy of noninterference in the domestic affairs of sovereign nations.

“The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation” demonstrates that China and the EU share many of the same objectives regarding Africa. Indeed, China and the EU acknowledged the obvious similarities in their African policies at the tenth China-EU Summit held in Beijing on November 28, 2007, and agreed to continue and deepen joint dialogue on cooperation in Africa. The joint Africa-EU Strategy invites contributions from external third nations regarding the development of the strategy and relations. As such, this creates an “explicit opportunity to strategically link and mutually strengthen the EU’s partnerships with both Africa and China.”<sup>74</sup>

Can more be done to strengthen EU-China-African trilateral dialogue on cooperation and development? How can this be achieved without obstructing bilateral relations between each of the three parties, yet maximizing benefits for all three parties?

The European Commission has published some best-practice guidelines for trilateral cooperation:

- Parties should take a “pragmatic and progressive” approach to the relationship, which focuses on tangible projects and sectors. This result-oriented strategy will help to formulate common objectives of all the parties involved.
- China, the EU and Africa should each take a shared approach to the relationship. Cooperation should be conducted with all parties present, and agreement must be met at each stage with interested African partners.
- Aid should be effective and should avoid duplication. This requires a high-level of coordination between the EU and China, and the development of strong partnerships between EU and Chinese aid providers. These measures will facilitate the “exchange of experience”<sup>75</sup> and will increase dialogue on FDI and aid.

These measures are expected to reap the greatest rewards in the development of peace and security on the African continent, the growth of a vast network of new infrastructure in Africa, and the sustainable development and management of the environment, agriculture, food supply and natural resources. In order to achieve these rewards, an ubiquitous “culture of exchange and consultation” between China, the EU and Africa needs to be fostered to inform one another how each side carries out development

<sup>74</sup> European Communities 2008: 4.

<sup>75</sup> European Communities 2008: 6.

policies. Only in this way can best practices be discovered and cultivated. “The International Poverty Reduction Centre in China aims to become a platform for such exchanges and has reached out to the OECD-Development Assistance Committee and traditional donors (...) The EU should support such endeavours.”<sup>76</sup> Trilateral think tanks should be established to support policy makers, to continue dialogue and to identify and research opportunities on the horizon. Dialogue needs to be strengthened and improved at continental, regional and country levels within Africa. EU-China bilateral dialogues on Africa should also be conducted on a regular basis and should involve the relevant African party, where possible.

It is clear that trilateral relations can be progressive and beneficial to all parties involved, as dialogue allows problems to be discussed and addressed multilaterally. The three parties can jointly develop common interests and discuss crucial global challenges while pursuing their bilateral relations.

## THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF TRILATERAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

A number of problems and challenges are associated with trilateral cooperation and dialogue between the EU, Africa and China. Bernt Berger, Senior Research Fellow and the Head of Asia Program at the Institute for Security and Development Policy and Uwe Wissenbach, Coordinator for Africa-China Relations in the European Commission have identified some of these issues:

“Challenges in the field of development cooperation between China, Africa and the EU, such as finding a common approach and concepts which do not only serve narrow and short-term national interests; harmonise implementation strategies, developing common intent; define practical initiatives, while not harming respective interests and maintaining a competitive economic environment; organise the so-called trilateral-cooperation or even a strategic forum between the EU, China and Africa/African regional organisations including consultation, dialogue and common initiatives.”<sup>77</sup>

There are, however, a number of wider problems with trilateral dialogue and cooperation. The first problem is that “The EU, Africa and China:

<sup>76</sup> European Communities 2008: 7.

<sup>77</sup> Berger, Wissenbach 2007: 2.

Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation” does not take into account the lack of a coordinated African position on the EU, China or a trilateral cooperation. A coordinated African position will be required if Africa is to set the agenda, as outlined by the document. It would be unrealistic to expect Africa to develop and sustain a coherent approach solely to meet the needs of this trilateral cooperation. It would be more beneficial if a number of common frameworks could be developed regarding the involvement of non-African actors’ involvement in trade and investment in Africa. Fantu Cheru, Research Director of the Nordic Africa Institute, outlined a number of common regional frameworks to help organize Sino-African trade relations:

“Common regional framework on industrialization: directing Chinese expansion into areas of national/sub-regional interest; technology and management skills transfer, etc. Common framework on natural resource exploration: and social and environmental responsibilities. Common framework on trade as opposed to bilateral EPAs that can only help fragment the continent and weaken the capacity of individual African countries to negotiate with China from a strong platform.”<sup>78</sup>

These frameworks could easily be applied to other players in Africa and could become a basis for Africa’s interaction with the global market.

The second main problem is that there is no reference to the fact that each of the 28 member states of the EU<sup>79</sup> has its own agenda and policies in Africa, as well as its own bilateral relations with China and the 54 African states. The EU member states with strong commercial and geopolitical interests in Africa – such as France, Portugal and the UK – will often have former state-owned or state-backed multinationals acting as major players in Africa, particularly in the transportation sector, the telecommunications infrastructure and the energy market. Although these companies are no longer under the direct control of their respective governments, often they are still major providers of employment and tax revenues and feed spin-off industries in their countries of origin. Therefore, the success of these companies is frequently of strategic importance to the government of the country where they were founded, and this is often reflected in the African policy of individual member states. Other member states, such as Italy and Spain, who have weaker commercial and geopolitical interests in Africa than for instance the UK or France, do have a vested interest in the economic development of Africa because it would help reduce illegal immigration

78 Cheru 2007: 12.

79 Total EU membership at the time of writing.

from the continent. Other EU states with no colonial history in Africa – for example, Finland, Ireland, and Poland – have more progressive humanitarian development strategies in Africa.

The varying policies of the EU member states often overlap or are counterproductive. Clashes of interests are regular occurrences. Different decision-making processes created at the EU level, such as the “EU policies toward Africa,” have gone some way in creating a common position on how the EU sees its role in promoting development in countries that have not benefited from the global market and find themselves on the periphery of the international community. Similarly, EU member states often vary in their approaches, policies and interests in China, frequently differing from the overall spirit of the EU-China policy. Any trilateral cooperation will have to take into account that, in particular sectors of strategic interest to member states, those member states may act outside the spirit held within a common EU position. This would be circumvented by introducing these states as subactors in the dialogue pertinent to particular sectors.

The third major problem with the trilateral dialogue and cooperation is an overestimation in the power that the Chinese government has over some of the Chinese actors in Africa. One prevalent perception, particularly in Western media, states that China’s involvement in Africa is part of a coherent strategic plan for China to regain its place as a world power. However, China “is not a monolithic political structure with all power emanating from Beijing.”<sup>80</sup> A number of constraints limit the control the Chinese government has over different actors in the economy. This is not to say that Chinese businesses are as free of government control as their Western counterparts, but they have developed a level of independence from state control, restricting how much the Chinese government can direct them. As Wenran Jiang, Director of the Canada-China Energy and Environment Forum has pointed out:

“Constraints and limitations primarily come from the current stage in China’s own domestic development, which is characterized by (...) severe exploitation of labour forces (...) widespread corruption in both political and economic areas, the worsening of environmental and ecological conditions, (...) These market driven developments will not just stay within Chinese borders; they will move to the rest of the world as China expands into Africa and other parts of the globe.”<sup>81</sup>

The intensive competition in the Chinese marketplace between private companies, ministries, bureaucracies, SOEs and provincial governments

80 Breslin 2007: 61.

81 Jiang Wenran 2009: 61.

for state funding and investment opportunities has created an atmosphere where actors undercut and bend the rules of the game. This is due to the fact that, although China has grown in wealth in recent years, limits to funding and investment opportunities still exist in a country of 1.3 billion inhabitants, which can still be considered a part of the developing world. The large numbers of actors in the Chinese economy and foreign economic policies means a growing number of vested interests. Take, for example, the case of Guinea, where the Chinese government promised €3.6 billion in aid, comprised of direct aid and investment packages. Due to the global financial crisis, many Chinese investors can no longer afford to invest. The Chinese investors are acting in a very rational fashion by choosing not to invest during indecisive times in an area without a proven record of return. As Ibrahima Sory Diallo, a senior economist in Guinea's Ministry of Finance highlighted, "They [the Chinese] are not going to inject USD5 billion into an unstable country in an uncertain market climate."<sup>82</sup> This case highlights the fact that nongovernmental Chinese actors have enough independence to undermine official foreign economic policies. The growing diverse nature of China's foreign economic policies means that Sino-African relations are much more complex than they might first appear. A trilateral dialogue that does not take this into consideration is doomed to become, at best, a talking shop.

"The improvement of cooperation in Africa is especially important because it is part of setting up a credible cornerstone for the EU-China Strategic Partnership in global affairs. If cooperation on Africa does not succeed, it may signal that cooperation on global challenges more generally will become more difficult, while positive cooperation may spill over to other policy fields. Thus cooperation on Africa will be seen as a litmus test for the EU and China as strategic global partners."<sup>83</sup>

However, the core problem with this proposed trilateral cooperation between the EU, China and Africa is that each of the actors involved in the dialogue has a number of stakeholders with an array of interests that often conflict with each other – for example, the conflict of interests between EU member states and the EU as an institution. Identifying stakeholders who share common interests and finding a practical form of collaboration is the key to creating a successful trilateral cooperation. If cooperation can be created and maintained on a practical level, such as agriculture, it might spill over into areas that are seen as more difficult, such as the energy sector.

82 Polgreen 2009.

83 Berger, Wissenbach 2007: 2.

The implications of trilateral dialogue and cooperation between China, the EU and Africa will have different effects for each player, as well as other important global parties with interests in Africa, such as the United States, Brazil and India. The success of such practical cooperation could easily encompass other major actors in Africa, allowing them to play an influential and positive role in African development and preventing conflict over access to resources, for instance. If successful, Africa will develop more rapidly, conflict on the continent will abate, and Africa's share of global trade will increase, augmenting the overall size of global trade. This will have a positive effect on the wider world. However, if successful, it will strengthen the EU-China partnership, as well as giving greater influence to China and the EU in Africa without considering other international players. This could leave many other actors who desire influence in Africa, such as the US, Brazil and India, as mere bystanders in Africa's development.

## POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

Three possible scenarios could transpire for China-EU-Africa trilateral cooperation in Africa. First, the current status quo could continue. In this scenario, both China and the EU would continue to have overlapping and counterproductive policy, which would likely damage the Africa's development. Within this scenario, the EU's lack of internal coherence would continue to hamper the development of an affective EU-Africa policy. Large states such as the UK and France would continue to determine the overall direction of interaction between Africa and Europe. As the EU states compete against each other in Africa, a lack of a coherent policy would prevent the EU from become an effective counterweight to China's increasing influence on the continent. The result would be a dramatic reduction in the EU's overall influence in Africa.



IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT CHINA AND THE EU WOULD ADOPT AN OPENLY HOSTILE RELATIONSHIP IN AFRICA

A second possible scenario could be an increased level of competition between China and the EU. It is highly unlikely that China and the EU would adopt an openly hostile relationship in Africa, such as aggressively fighting for influence through proxy wars, as was the case between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War. However, if China and the EU fail to cooperate in Africa, and the EU develops a coherent Africa



policy, competition between China and the EU would increase. In financial diplomacy and support in international bodies such as the IMF and the UN, African states would be able seek support from either China or the EU. Not only would this raise the cost of increasing both actors' involvement in Africa, it would also create a situation whereby different groups within African states would seek support from either China or the EU. This would make it difficult for both China and Africa to develop long-term plans, because the alliances of African states would shift with each new government. Increased levels of competition between China and the EU in Africa is unlikely to unfold, because the EU faces internal financial difficulties brought on by the euro sovereign debt crisis, which means it lacks the resources and focus to compete with China in the short term.

The final scenario is that China and the EU will cooperate more in their actions in Africa. It is unlikely that this scenario would transpire to the degree that is outlined by the "The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation." Moreover, it is unlikely that there would be extensive involvement of the Africa Union. However, given the extensive economic interdependence between China and the EU, some level of cooperation in Africa would be of benefit to both actors. Cooperation between China and the EU would most likely take the form of complementary development rather than direct cooperation. This would mean that, rather than direct coordination of actions while projects are being designed and implemented by both sides, each actor would simply build on each other's projects with complementary rather than counterproductive projects. However, this kind of cooperation would be limited to areas that would not be considered strategically important. Given the connections between the Chinese state and Chinese state-owned enterprises, it is difficult to see which areas would not be considered strategically important. Therefore the area of complementary cooperation would be limited.

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photo by S. Pecio

# BEYOND BRICKS RISING AND DECLINING GLOBAL POWERS

## 1. THE GENERAL FRAMES

- The **future trajectory** of BRICS countries' international standing in different spheres - economic, diplomatic, military, and soft power.
- What are the reasons for their **success/failure** to uphold their status?
- Can we **identify** new countries with potential to become rising global powers along BRICS' line?
- Can we discern **new acronyms**? Should we? Or are the potential new rising powers so different that heaping them together has no scientific base and is nothing more than a marketing strategy?
- **Factors** driving the rapid growth of emerging economic and political powers - traditional resources (commodities, manufacturing prowess) and new sources of growth (creativity, new technologies, openness, smart diplomacy).

## 2. HOW IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE?

- More than ten years have passed since the term BRIC has been first coined, later updated to BRICS. What is the current state of those high performers? Where do they stand now in the global arena and where are they heading next? Have they used their potential wisely?
- What countries are poised to follow the BRICS example of rapid economic and political ascent on the global scene?
- How will all of that shape the world order in 5-10 years?

## GLOBAL LEADING INDICATORS RICHARD HORNİK R/EVOLUTIONS CONSULTING EDITOR

Investment analysts, political pundits, journalists and even some economists and political scientists try from time to time to predict the global economy's next set of winners. Especially since 2001, when Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs came up with his serendipitous acronym, picking the next set of BRICs has become something of an intellectual sport. O'Neill himself has recently come up with MINT (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) in an effort that seems more based on spelling an interesting word than rigorous analysis. At last count, pundits had come up with MIST, PINE, CIVETS and EAGLES.<sup>1</sup>

Even O'Neill admits that currently the only member of his BRIC that is still performing well is China. The problem, of course, is that a country's short-term success has more to do with having the right resources – natural and human – at the right time. For example, a decade ago Russia's energy

# forthcoming: global trends

supplies and India's outsourcing prowess vaulted them into the league of the world's fastest growing economies after decades of stagnation or worse. But energy prices fluctuate, and comparative advantage in static industries like call centers is fleeting. Easy success based on ephemeral circumstances can lead to civic, political and economic complacency. Today's BRIC can all too quickly become the heart of tomorrow's financial crisis.

Perhaps it's time for a more rigorous approach to predicting the economic winners of the coming decades. For years now, analysts have predicted that the rise of the global knowledge economy would eventually mean that societies with nimble minds would outstrip those with nimble fingers. If that day is now set to dawn, how can we spot the nations most likely to succeed?

I have long thought that for enduring success – i.e., more than a decade or two – the race tends to go to the most open societies: Tang Dynasty China, Moorish Spain, Frederick the Great's Prussia. Today, open flow of information and ideas is more important than ever, but it requires a new infrastructure – fiber optic networks, a well-educated and creative populace, a predictable judicial system and appropriate government regulation. The challenge lies not in trying to predict which countries will succeed but to discuss the attributes nations should try to develop and reinforce.

- What will be the key ingredients of success – political, physical, intellectual, social, intangible – in the next 15 years?
- What will be the optimal mix of those factors? Are any of them optional?
- Which countries show the strongest signs of possessing those traits or at least demonstrate a political consensus to acquire or develop them?
- Which countries that had been among the winners will slip down the ranks? (No extra points for coming up with a list that spells out a catchy word.)
- What are the wild cards that could derail even the most promising entrant? Will resiliency itself be a key ingredient?

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## BIOGRAPHY

**Richard Hornik** is Director of Overseas Partnership Programs for the Center for News Literacy at Stony Brook University, where he has lectured on journalism since 2007. In the fall of 2012, he was a visiting lecturer at the University of Hong Kong. Besides a journalist and news executive with over 30 years of global experience, he is also an editorial consultant, who has designed and implemented editorial reorganizations at Reuters and the Harvard Business Review. In 2011 he served as the Harvard Business Review's Interim Editor.

<sup>1</sup> For a rundown of each, check out the article by Jackie Northam. (Northam 13-05-2014)

## EUROPE IN FLUX MIGRATION TO EU

### 1. THE GENERAL FRAMES

- The **current status and future** of human trafficking, asylum or forced migration, or integration and citizenship in EU.
- What are the consequences of the **processes of incorporation** (integration, assimilation, multiculturalism) and the different aspects of citizenship/inclusion?
- How should we understand the concept of **transnationalism** and its new/forthcoming frames?
- The insight on **legal aspects of migration** to EU: perspectives and difficulties beyond EU directives.
- Special role and position of **minorities and diasporas** in EU (cultural, economic, political insight)
- **New sources/causes of migration: modern nomads** (workers: scientific, seasonal, etc.) and (self)exiles as a part of social and political landscape of Europe.
- **Factors** that are the basis of migration as a **post-colonial legacy**.

### 2. HOW IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE?

- How will the migration flux shape the European order (social, political, cultural, legal) in 5-10 years?
- Which factors are the most relevant when we try to predict forthcoming consequences?
- What kind of reaction should be expected when we consider Europe as a non-molitical entity?
- Probably it would be necessary to deal with different dynamics of Europe's development: the migration dynamic would be situated far away from legal and political dynamic of integration and citizenship, what are the potential solutions?

## VALUES AND DIFFICULTIES BEYOND THE TOPIC

The topic was consulted with Professor Larry Ray (Professor of Sociology, University of Kent) who claimed that:

*“There is the issue of within EU migration that is becoming central in the context of rising hostility towards migration in several countries. It is being suggested here that if an independent Scotland joined Schengen then border controls would have to be placed along the England-Scotland border, which is absurd but reflects a climate of panic.”*

Professor Ray also stressed the multifaceted consequences and possible scenarios related to the topic of migration - including repercussions such as gender violence and highlighted that this multidimensionality makes predictions difficult. “I wonder whether there will be a single European reaction rather than different reactions in different places?” Professor Ray pointed out.

**Larry Ray** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Kent, UK. His publications and research include the areas of sociological theory, globalization, post-communism, memory and collective and interpersonal violence. He has published on music and memory of the Holocaust in the USA and Poland. Recent books include *Violence and Society* (Sage, 2011) and *Globalization and Everyday Life* (Routledge, 2009) and (with William Outhwaite) *Social Theory and Postcommunism* (Blackwell, 2005). He continues to research on violence and is currently working on photography and representations of violence.

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