

Mapinduzi Journal

4 Civil society in Africa





Mapinduzi Journal 4

Civil society in Africa

Mapinduzi Unit Editors:

Flaubert Djateng and Christiane Kayser

Articles by:

Uta Bracken, Frederik Golooba-Mutebi, Mamou Daffé,
Ambroise Dakouo, Abdoulaye Diallo, Flaubert Djateng,
Pierre Kahenga, Christiane Kayser, Kä Mana, Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou,
Djellarar Miankeol, J. P. Olivier Sardan, Kamdem Souop,
Laura Anyola Tufon and Gilles Olakounle Yabi.



A Publication by Zenü Network,
a civil society network
based in Bafoussam, Cameroon

Brot für die Welt

Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (BfdW) –
(Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service)

Financed by the BMZ (Bundesministerium für
Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit – German Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation)

All rights reserved for all countries

English edition, June 2015

Copyright © 2015 by Zenü Network/ Mapinduzi Unit
Bafoussam

Cover Design:

Abdoulaye Konaté: “Génération Biométrique, série 1, 2008”.

Translation from the French: Linda Herbertson

Production and design: Eberhard Delius, Berlin

Layout: Reih's Satzstudio, Lohmar

Printing: CPI, Leck

Printed in Germany

Contact:

Flaubert Djateng: fdjateng9@gmail.com

Table of Contents

Flaubert Djateng and Christiane Kayser	
Introduction	7
Summary of exchanges at the Ségou meeting in March 2015	10
Gilles Olakounlé Yabi	
Changing the future in West Africa – <i>Wathi's Wager</i>	13
Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan	
Thoughts on the situation in West Africa	41
Abdoulaye Diallo	
The situation in Casamance: challenges and opportunities for civil society	43
Kä Mana	
Civil Society in the Democratic Republic of Congo <i>Between fatal pathologies and building smart power</i>	48
Kamdem Souop	
Death of the original tribe and rebuilding of the African state	58
Christiane Kayser	
Civil societies: initiatives, movements, NGOs <i>Where is the leverage for social transformation?</i>	68
Uta Bracken	
Contributing to social change? <i>Potentials and limits of development projects</i>	74

Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou	
Different perspectives on African civil societies	
<i>Based on the cases of Cameroon, Burundi, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Conakry and Chad</i>	88
Flaubert Djateng	
Is Civil Society in Cameroon not usefull, harmful or engendering hope?	99
Laura Anyola Tufon	
Women in participatory governance	
<i>How do civil society organizations address the specific needs of women?</i>	107
Mamou Daffé	
Civil society in Mali: Opportunities and questions	116
Ambroise Dakouo	
Youth and reinventing governance in post-crisis Mali	123
Frederick Golooba-Mutebi	
Partnership? Emasculation?	
<i>Government – Civil Society Relations in Rwanda</i>	131
Djeralar Miankeol	
The grabbing of land from the poor in the Municipality of Moundou, Southern Chad	144
Pierre Kahenga	
Land resources in Katanga	
<i>International implications and spontaneous resistance movements . . .</i>	147

Introduction

For some time now, civil society has been perceived by the international stakeholders as a new peace and development partner guaranteeing more quality in actions that affect local communities, as well as better governance in public policy. But what are these multi-faceted civil societies, which are often reduced to instances of coordination of non-governmental organisations? What are their links with the population, their goals, strengths and weaknesses?

At the same time, in many African countries, the population is experiencing a widening of the gap between rich and poor, as well as episodic, cyclical or structural violence to which the reactions vary from impotent or destructive despair, fleeing to Europe at the risk of their lives, to the emergence of non-violent citizen movements. The Mapinduzi think tank could not remain indifferent to this situation and decided to take a closer look at the range of these phenomena, analyse the specifics of the changes that arouse hope or fear in the population and the players in power, with the goal of better defining the potentials for long-term social transformation.

Our Mapinduzi meeting on civil societies and citizen movements in Ségou in March 2015 was mutually enriching for everyone. The discussions were frank, sometimes controversial but always supportive and fruitful. Our thanks go to everyone present.

We would like to thank once more our Malian hosts, Mamou Daffe, Attaher Maiga and all the staff at the Koré centre for their warm welcome. We were able to take a peek at their extraordinary work and the hope they represent in their dear Mali that is torn and in danger of being plunged back into violent conflict.

Our visit to Bamako University and the exchanges with professors and students on the challenges facing African youth today was a final event worthy of the activities of the week. Warm thanks to Ambroise Dakouo of ARGA for having organised it.

Lastly, we are grateful to Bread for the World, Germany, for supporting this initiative of an Afro-European think tank.

As usual, we are sharing the individual contributions with you.

First you will read a brief summary of our discussions and questions by the facilitators, enhanced and validated by the group. Then we will enter into the contributions:

In the first part we will present to you the analyses of certain participants of the challenges currently faced in West and Central Africa.

Gilles Yabi of the Wathi Network proposes a programmatic article on the key elements for change.

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan discusses the situation of Islamic fundamentalism in Niger and the underlying reasons for its establishment.

Abdoulaye Diallo explains the situation in Casamance and the challenges for civil society there.

Godefroid Kä Mana considers the pathologies of his country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and their impact on civil society.

Kamdem Souop from Cameroon writes of the death of the original tribe and the rebuilding of the African state.

In the second part we take a look at the concept and the various manifestations of what we call civil society.

Christiane Kayser evokes the recent history in Africa and the Near East in relation to the initiatives and movements that have led to social transformation.

Uta Bracken gives us a donor's point of view of the potential and limits of development projects in relation to long-term social change.

Jeanot Minla Mfou'ò shares his experiences of African civil societies in Cameroon, Burundi, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Conakry and Chad.

In the third part, our authors analyse civil society and the citizen movements in their respective countries.

Flaubert Djateng shares a critical perspective from the inside of civil society in Cameroon.

Laura Anyola Tufon focuses on the place of women in participatory governance, taking the example of Cameroon.

Mamou Daffe considers the opportunities and issues surrounding civil society in Mali.

Ambroise Dakouo examines the situation of youth in Mali and the reinvention of governance in Mali today.

Frederick Golooba-Mutebi gives an analysis of the relations between civil society and the Rwandan State.

Djeralar Miankeol looks at the question of land ownership in southern Chad.

Lastly, Pierre Kahenga shares his experience with the desperate struggles of the farmers and miners displaced to Katanga in DRC.

Once again, any feedback from you will be most welcome.

We hope you enjoy reading this publication.

Yaoundé and Goma, May 2015
Flaubert Djateng, Christiane Kayser



Summary of exchanges at the Ségou meeting in March 2015*

After three days of intense, fruitful discussions the participants of the Ségou meeting drafted and validated a summary to be used to orient the work of the members and subsequently push forward with the work of Mapinduzi.

What is "civil society"?

- ◆ Diverse and piecemeal?
- ◆ Do we focus on a particular type of organisation or not?
- ◆ We focus on players with a certain amount of credibility, or even legitimacy.

But we should remember that civil society as we understand it means those who are working for social transformation, who support constructive rebellion, who are the players we see, hear and read and who rally people together and act.

Which values should we embody?

- ◆ Inclusion as opposed to exclusion
- ◆ Vision extended in space and time
- ◆ Bold, attentive leadership and not isolated, deified, populist leadership "We make our own leaders" (accountable and not idolised).

* By the facilitators Christiane Kayser and Flaubert Djabateng

Our weaknesses:

- ◆ Working in isolation and on the short term. We should be working for the long term, preparing the grassroots human resources.
- ◆ Replacing or demonising the State. We should take part in the building of the State by challenging, proposing, participating.
- ◆ We forget history. And yet we should be analysing and interpreting history/our different histories, but also contextualising what we do because there are no models that can be transposed verbatim.
- ◆ We often build capacity in a schematic way (as in a mass producing factory). However, we should start from concrete experiences, value opportunities and combat imitation and alienation.
- ◆ We are dependent (finance, ideas, etc.) on the North. But we must identify how to produce and find our funding and how to develop and value our own ideas.

Capacity building

in terms of analysis and strategy development

- ◆ Define and analyse the internal fracture lines of the societies: ethnic group, religion, money
- ◆ Take into account the different levels/scales
- ◆ Develop strategies
- ◆ Replace blind or self-serving allegiances by strategic alliances
- ◆ Define synergies and complementarities → concrete objectives
- ◆ Release the common good without neglecting survival
- ◆ Create South-North alliances on an equal footing
- ◆ Boost the players who embody change
- ◆ Protect them on the basis of a collective conscience
- ◆ Contribute to the emergence of sustainable, effective movements

NEW QUESTIONS, IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS:

Who embodies the change?

- ◆ What are the levers of change?
- ◆ What is the role of the middle classes?
- ◆ What is the new citizenship in a global world?
- ◆ Ethnic groups are not dead, but globalised; what does this mean for our work?
- ◆ How do we react and act in relation to interdisciplinary phenomena?
- ◆ War economy, drug trafficking, rise in extremisms, and land grabbing are becoming heavy factors. Consequences?
- ◆ What is the role of the different social movements?
- ◆ What is the role of social media?
- ◆ What are the kinds of mobilising and organisation that will allow us to make progress given that it has become easier to mobilise or rally but not to organise?
- ◆ Citizen alliances at African and global level are becoming a priority
- ◆ Identify the new players who can change things

What resources should be explored?

- ◆ Literature and art
- ◆ Laughter
- ◆ Making use of solutions found locally and intermittently
- ◆ Boosting each other mutually in relation to innovations from all sides
- ◆ Focusing on opportunities not problems
- ◆ Using spaces of reflection for actions/analysis in synergy
- ◆ Creating links between researchers and players on the ground
- ◆ Promoting knowledge and using research to feed action
- ◆ Citizen identity at the heart of the process

Changing the future in West Africa

Wathi's Wager

Gilles Olakounlé Yabi*



*"We can change the world and make it a better place.
It is in your hands to make a difference."*

Nelson Mandela (1918–2013)

Foreword

A year comes to an end. The feeling that the years are going by faster and faster. The feeling that the time that passes is an enemy, trying to stop us from realising our dreams, achieving our goals, from feeling complete. A year that is ending and another beginning in a West Africa split between fear and hope. Fear, because of the new viruses, new forms of violence and a series of stressful electoral meetings. Hope aroused by the energy, creativity, combativity and *joie de vivre* of millions of young men and women who are not counting on anyone other than themselves for a brighter future. And who are beginning to give clear signals to their governors, to their elites, to all the powerful, that they will no longer be dominated.

The pages that follow offer a personal perspective on this West Africa that is inseparable from the other regions of the continent and open to the wider world. A personal, and therefore necessarily partial perspective, or even stunted, biased, criticisable. But this diagnostic of the region is above all an invitation to transform the multiplicity of our individual perspectives on the state of our countries and our societies, to transform the sum total of our frustrations, disappointments, desires, expectations and ambitions into a new col-

* Coordinator of Wathi

lective adventure. We shall never tame time. But in believing once more in the possibility of changing the world by collective reflection and action, we can give ourselves the reassuring feeling of leaving a mark, however light it may be, on our time. That of each of our lives.

1 This is what Ebola teaches us

Bad luck would have it that I'm writing these words at a time when West Africa is the darling of the merchants of bleach, chlorine and antimicrobial gels for hands, real products and no doubt many fake ones. West Africa is in the throes of the Ebola virus, the most serious health crisis ever caused by this virus which up till now had struck in the forests of central Africa, far from the towns and cities. As if this region of the continent needed a health crisis that will inevitably turn into a grave socio-economic crisis. The media circus amplified by globalisation created a psychosis as devastating as the virus itself.

The epidemic is a monstrous human drama. There is no doubt about that whatsoever. If I were Liberian or Sierra Leonean and had a friend or relation who had caught the virus or had been exposed to it, I would no doubt have neither the heart nor the state of mind to speak of the psychosis and lack of media constraint that bring the real cost of Ebola to bear on the whole of the West African sub-region or even sub-Saharan Africa. More than ever, Africa, the whole of Africa, is associated in many minds with disease, suffering, despair and death. Associated also with extreme dependence.

In Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, it is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO), *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF), which has been the spearhead in the fight against the virus for several months. It was this organisation we heard most on the air and that we listened to a lot during the crisis summits that became ever more numerous once the outbreak of the epidemic had been established. This is the organisation that is effectively on the ground with the vital risks that implies for its employees. MSF is a powerful NGO, very well organised, competent, committed, efficient, but it is still an NGO. It was not set up to manage a major health crisis on both a strategic and an operational level in countries which supposedly have both a government and a health system.

And yet this is the spectacle we have witnessed in West Africa in this second half of the year 2014. The United States, France, China, Cuba, the European Union, the famous “international community” finally rallied to give money, and to send medical supplies, protective equipment and trained health staff to the worst hit countries. The United States even sent hundreds of soldiers to Liberia to combat the insidious terrorist that is the Ebola virus, and built specialist hospitals. It is in the interests of everyone that the war be won as quickly as possible by everybody who comes to help the region, whoever they may be. This should not stop us from asking ourselves questions about what this Ebola tragedy tells us about the state of our region. It tells us at least two things.

It reveals to us, or reminds us in the event that we are still in doubt, that a certain number of countries and States in the region are not simply weak and fragile but extremely weak and dangerously fragile. What is most precious about them can be destroyed, the life of the men, women and children who live there, in a few months, by a virus that may well be terrifying but is definitely not new. What killed massively and is still killing in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, is first of all the extreme weakness of the national health systems, and behind that is the extreme weakness of the governments and the way they actually operate. It is not only the meagre material and human resources that are in question. There are also so many things, political vision, ethics in public action, the organisation of the health systems, the organisation of the entire state apparatus and their credibility in the eyes of the population they are supposed to serve.

The war against this Ebola epidemic will be won. But if nothing changes in the running of these countries so that poverty no longer rhymes with the total incapacity of the government to act and react, then any other nasty, lethal infectious microbe that presents itself in these countries will sow the same desolation as the enemy Ebola. The international community will come and stamp out the fire and go away again. It will not confront, and this is not its role, the daily human practices that have kept these West African countries in practically the same state of fragility as at the end of the civil wars in the 1990–2003 period.

Ebola also shows us, in case we only theoretically half believed it up till now, that the fates of the people in all the countries of West Africa are linked. Fate in the most concrete sense of the word, that of human physical survival. We

knew, of course, that the men and the women of the region moved around a lot from one country to another, that mobility, especially by road, for the great majority of the poor and by air for a minority of upper classes, was a deeply-entrenched reality in the long history of West Africa and the surrounding regions. We knew it but we had not realised the extent to which this mobility exposed each country to the diseases of the others. Political disease, socio-economic disease, and disease in the primary sense of the word.

Closure of borders, reopening of borders, suspending of international flights, quarantining of a country, of entire regions of a country, neighbourhoods of a town, Ebola has sown panic and disoriented everyone up to the highest level of all the states of West Africa and even beyond. Should we shut our neighbours in with their diseases and lock all the entrances? Would that even be possible? For how long? What are the economic consequences for our neighbours and for ourselves? Ditto the solidarity within highly institutionalised regional spaces such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)? What is the reality underneath this proclaimed regional solidarity if the unilateral measures of the various parties are dictated by an “every man for himself” attitude when a health crisis strikes?

The day the authorities in Dakar announced the arrival of a patient infected with the Ebola virus in Senegal, a Guinean student who caught the virus in Guinea before travelling to neighbouring Senegal, I read some of the reactions of anonymous web surfers on the country’s most popular news sites. Most of them called the Guinean patient, who had wittingly hidden his Ebola infection, a criminal. Some deemed that the Senegalese authorities should let the patient die, or even help him, to discourage all Guineans who have caught the disease from coming for treatment to Senegal, where there is a better chance of survival than in Conakry. Reactions that make your blood run cold, but reactions that are so very predictable. When faced with the fear of death, are we always able to keep our most basic moral principles, or even our reason? Who would like to see an Ebola outbreak in their country? Who isn’t afraid of Ebola?

A few days before the episode in Senegal, I was on holiday with my family in Cotonou, Benin. The virus had just appeared in Lagos, the Nigerian metropolis very close to the economic capital of Benin. Two suspected cases had been found in Benin. A doctor friend who was starting back at work the day the

announcement was made told me he found few health staff colleagues at the teaching hospital in Cotonou when he arrived: the white coats had fled from the shadow of Ebola. The suspected cases were not confirmed. Who wants to die of Ebola?

The young Guinean was successfully cared for at Dakar teaching hospital. He survived Ebola. He might not have survived if he had stayed in Guinea at a time when care services were still shaky, with the number of infected patients steadily increasing and the appropriate health care centres overwhelmed. He might never have reached Dakar alive had he not concealed his condition until he was admitted to hospital. His decision was detestable from the point of view of the public interest and the interests of Senegal which, due to this case alone, was added to the blacklist of affected countries. But this decision may well have saved his life. Are we all absolutely certain we would have behaved differently? Life may not be easy and pleasant every single day, but who wants to die of Ebola, and who wants to die at all?

What the macabre saga of the Ebola virus in West Africa showed us most clearly is that it is illusory to think we can protect ourselves against our neighbours' diseases by barricading ourselves. By isolating the sick countries. It doesn't work. We can all be ill. We are all potential victims of illness. Ebola or another sneaky virus could have appeared somewhere other than in a forest region of Guinea on the border with Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is not by blacklisting and crushing the most fragile countries in the region, and the list does not stop at the three major victims of the Ebola epidemic, that the countries that are slightly better off, or think they are, will guarantee good health, peace and security to their population.

Regional solidarity is not merely a moral demand. It is first of all dictated by the clearly perceived interests of each and every one of us, that of survival and the resilience of the West African countries. Our understanding of citizenship should change as a consequence. The Ghanaian should not only be concerned by the problems in their own country, but also of those of all the neighbouring countries, whether close or distant. The Ivoirian should be concerned about the outlook for stability in Côte d'Ivoire, but should also feel concerned by the problems of Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Liberia and even Nigeria, which may seem to be rather far away. The Malian has very good reasons for wondering about the situation in the North of the country, but should

also follow with interest the developments in Mauritania, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea Bissau...

The collapse of the State in any West African country, or in one of the countries on the borders of these regions, such as Cameroon, Mauritania or Chad, would be a serious threat to the health, security and stability of all the others. This is what the cursed virus reminded us all. We had better not forget that our fates are inextricably linked.

2 What Boko Haram tells us between two bombs

As luck, this time also bad, would have it, when I was writing these lines a large part of the world had finally heard of the existence of a group called Boko Haram in a country called Nigeria, the most populous country on the African continent. Thanks to those infamous social networks, Twitter in particular, the world discovered a deadly tragedy that has been taking place in northern Nigeria for several years. “Bring Back Our Girls” is the slogan tweeted and retweeted by pop stars and thousands of anonymous people all over the world drawing attention to a nebulous armed Islamist group which has been perpetrating acts of terrorism in several states in the north-east of the Nigerian federation, killing thousands of innocent civilians.

The first ladies, starting with the American First Lady Michelle Obama, Hollywood stars, ex-President’s spouses and many other international, African and Nigerian opinion leaders have called out “bring back our girls”, more than 200 girls abducted by Boko Haram in April 2014. The “international community”, that is to say the dominant powers on the planet, and the federal Government of Nigeria had no choice but to react to this sudden virtual mobilisation. Summit meetings were held in Paris and London to find concrete ways of helping Nigeria to find the abducted girls and put an end to Boko Haram’s deadly campaign.

Several months later, those poor girls who had been abducted in Chibok, and according to Boko Haram’s leader, destined for forced conversion to authentic Islam and marriage, had still not been found. The media which had abundantly relayed the mobilisation to Bring Back Our Girls on the social networks moved onto other things. In the mean time, the most active

players on the social networks, and the international media, turned to the dramatic events in Syria and Iraq. The events in the Middle East and the conflict in Ukraine showed the extent to which the propensity to violence of human societies has no difficulty cohabiting with unprecedented technological progress and material wealth. And with this false sentiment of conscience and universal empathy procured by access to an avalanche of international information served up daily by the “global” television channels and radio stations.

The fact remains that Twitter and Facebook did not bring back the abducted Nigerian girls and did not weaken Boko Haram. The group has increased the number of attacks it makes and tried to gain control of an ever vaster territory from north-eastern Nigeria to the borders of the North of Cameroon. Long focused on Nigeria, Boko Haram and its probable outgrowths have since become a serious and immediate threat to the stability of Cameroon. The international citizen mobilisation stimulated by the social networks on the web no doubt incited some new promises of concrete military and security aid from the western partners of Nigeria to combat Boko Haram on the ground. Decisions were taken in this regard in Paris, London and Washington DC, in the presence of high authorities from the Nigerian Government. Several months later, there are few signs of an improvement in the humanitarian security situation in north-eastern Nigeria.

In reality, in the run up to the presidential and general elections in a country where hundreds of people were killed after the previous elections in 2011, that were nonetheless deemed less rigged than the ones before them, a new wave of violence is expected in the first quarter 2015, and not only in the north-east. Whether or not Boko Haram is finally weakened by the Nigerian and Cameroonian armies will probably not make much difference to the foreseeable toll in human life from the political battles ahead in a country where access to a portion of the immense oil revenue is a question of life and death.

What the tragedy in Northern Nigeria tells us is that no new technology, no noisy mobilisation on the social networks and the media, no military or logistics aid, could constitute an effective response to a catastrophic situation created by decades of indifference to a rise in all forms of extremism or, worse, encouragement of extremism, violence and nihilism by the local,

regional and national elites exclusively concentrated on pursuing their own personal agendas.

To reduce the explanation of the security crisis in northern Nigeria to the scourge of corruption would be to over-simplify. Those who have lived in this part of the country and, for example, who taught in the 1980s in the universities in the North, which were prestigious then, such as Zaria, testify to the seniority of the movements that gradually imposed themselves through violence in the student milieus and chased out the free spirits that did not want to make all knowledge subject to religious dogma. The seeds of religious intolerance are not necessarily a product of corruption and the failure of the State.

But without the abyssal amplitude reached by corruption, and without the total ignorance, or at least the deep scorn of the common good that characterises the political, economic and social practices of the players who have dominated the country for decades, the most dangerous sectarian ideologies could never have caught hold so solidly. And without the corruption and cynicism of the rich and powerful, we can't explain the disastrous spectacle of the armed forces of the major African power, overwhelmed by the criminals of Boko Haram, feared for their recurrent exactions by the civilian population they are supposed to protect and publicly accused of incompetence and corruption by international partners such as the United States.

The situation in north-eastern Nigeria in 2014, like those, equally marked by the trivialisation of violence and crime, from the Niger Delta or the Middle Belt where massacres with an ethnic dimension but which are profoundly political cause hundreds of deaths each year, are the result of decades of collective renunciation by the elites of the country to try to give meaning to belonging to an extremely diverse nation by uniting behind some shared values. The fabulous oil manna has constituted the cement of this work of destruction or more precisely of non construction of a Nigerian federation of which West Africa and the whole of Africa could have and should have been proud.

But how many of us are there in West Africa to be wondering anxiously about the political and security outlook for Nigeria and its 170 million inhabitants? Even keeping to the circles of the political leaders and those who advise and influence them, how many in the region follow with real attention and try to understand the dynamics of the Nigerian situation? The immediate neighbours follow somewhat and worry in particular about the dimen-

sion taken on by the terrorism of Boko Haram after years of indifference. Nigeria frightens them — this is generally not new-, but the fear neither helps to face up to imminent threats nor to plan for the future by devising long term strategies.

And yet the reality is quite simple: the day Nigeria's internal tensions exceed a certain threshold, which no-one knows in advance, massive population movements across the borders will be inevitable and the consequences will be incalculable for its neighbours and for the whole of West Africa. Whether or not we like Nigeria, or are afraid of it, is of no importance. When we live in West Africa and want to continue to live there in peace over the decades to come, we should take an interest in how Nigeria is changing and work together to bring the country back onto a more reassuring trajectory than the one it is currently following.

Furthermore, in the same way that there is no point accusing countries struck in the heart by Ebola and hoping to isolate them totally to protect ourselves, there is no point considering Nigeria, the country which is home to the headquarters and constitutes the foundation of ECOWAS, as a deviant, frightening country we should protect ourselves against. For the challenges facing Nigeria, and the principal faults that feed the violence and the fragmentation of its society, are no different from those of the other countries in the region. Are we sure, for example, that the level of corruption in lots of small countries in West Africa would be very different from that of Nigeria if they had also benefited from equivalent oil revenue from the first years of their constitution as independent states?

3 What the blue berets and the white land cruisers remind us

As chance would have it — a blow for our pretention to dignity and independence, — we'll see why further on —, I wrote these lines a few weeks after a short visit to Bamako, the second after the end of the post-*coup d'Etat* transition. I was delighted to find many friends, long term residents of Bamako and some others who had arrived in the past few months to take up positions at the United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Many of the civil servants in this new UN mission believe profoundly and sincerely in the mandate and re-

sponsibilities assigned to them and are not only there for the United Nations' per diems. They want to work hard, and take risks, to help Mali escape the multiple crises in which it has been engulfed since January 2012.

In Bamako, we are a far cry from the prevailing uncertainty about security that continues to float above the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal in the North of this vast country. In the capital, no attacks, no exploding mines, no rocket fire by presumed jihadists. We hope this will last. At first sight, Bamako at the end of 2014 is a lot like the Bamako I lived in from 2009–2010. In reality, it has changed. The most visible change is the appearance of the fleet of white Toyota land cruisers with “UN” initials painted on them which crowd together around the perimeter of the Hotel Amitié in the centre of Bamako, opposite the Malian Radio and Television Broadcasting Office (ORTM).

Privileged and aware of it in a city where the majority of the population are struggling to meet their basic needs, I used to frequent the Hotel Amitié at the hottest time of the year for its fine swimming pool. To see the biggest hotel in Bamako which used to host conferences and regional workshops every week transformed into the headquarters of a United Nations peace keeping mission produces an unpleasant twinge of sadness. I have nothing against the United Nations peace missions who do what they can to help the countries they are in but “what they can” is rarely decisive for sustainable peace building.

Everyone knows in Mali that a mission of this scope does not settle in for one or two years but for more like a decade. Or more. Everyone also knows, including within the MINUSMA, that no-one knows what such a mission can achieve in a context that is a fairly complex set of interlocking terrorist threats, sectarian claims, crossing of antagonistic and opportunist interests of a multitude of local and foreign players and of persistence on the modes of political governance that maintain Mali in a serious state of generalised weakness.

If a UN peace keeping mission, with its land cruisers and the inevitable collateral effects associated with the arrival of hundreds of international civil servants with high spending power, is installed in a new West-African capital, after Monrovia, Freetown and Abidjan, it is because the region seems to be doing all it can to create the conditions for a deepening of its vulnerability and dependence on the “international community”. The crisis in Mali has not only exposed the bankruptcy of one of the nations in the region. It has exposed the

collective vulnerability of a West Africa whose political and military leaders are petrified at the amplitude of the security threats.

West Africa is certainly not responsible for the disaster in Libya, with the devastating, long-lasting consequences on the security of the Sahel-Saharan area and beyond. We know the principal protagonists of the disintegration of Libya, the regime of Gadhafi himself and his old friends in the West, business partners and arms dealers who decided to eliminate him brutally without a care for the disastrous security consequences that were perfectly predictable for Libya, all the neighbouring countries and a large part of the continent. But this does not alter the crushing realisation of the collective incapacity of West Africa, and of the continent, to face up to adversity.

The crisis in Mali and its evident prolongations in the Sahel, West Africa and North Africa, has created a boulevard for a new external military interventionism on the continent, incarnated by the French Barkhane system in the Sahel, successor of the operation Serval limited to Mali. In the neighbourhood of the West-African Sahel, the Central African Republic has also become, in 2014, the host country of a new UN peace-keeping mission in Africa ... and a new French military operation. Sangaris. What can we say? How could we be offended? How can we regret it? Can we be resentful towards France and cry imperialism and neo-colonialism after its military interventions in Mali and in the Central African Republic (CAR)?

In CAR, national players, opportunistic neighbours, regional powers and international criminal networks joined hands to plunge a barely constructed country into a terrible unleashing of violence. In three years, the results are there: a large strip of Africa, from the West to the Horn, has witnessed new forms of armed violence and insecurity leading it to welcome an increase in external military presence on its land and in its airs. Perhaps I am wrong. But I am not sure that the increasingly common sight of the presence of large French and American military aircraft in the civil airports of the region is a good sign for the future. I am not entirely sure that the installation of American and French drone bases in West Africa is excellent news for the population of the region. I am not convinced. But perhaps I am wrong. I very much hope I am wrong.

4 What the "men and women of integrity" gave us

Another piece of luck, this time good luck, and about time, too, has meant that I wrote these lines a few weeks after the uprising in Ouagadougou. The popular democratic uprising. The one that brought down the eldest active statesman in West Africa, Blaise Compaoré, after 27 years in power. Victim of his determination to remain in control of Burkina Faso by yet another manipulation of the Constitution of his country, isolated and cut off from reality in his green marble palace at Kosyam, the coldly calculating tactician had to leave the country like a rich robber. In a convoy of around thirty off-road vehicles and large German sedans. Protected by the presidential security regiment, exfiltrated by the French forces then transferred to Yamoussoukro, in Côte d'Ivoire. Thus came to an end the long reign of President Compaoré, unavoidable mediator, and actor, of all the West African crises or almost over the past fifteen years.

Is it not too early to delight in the "Burkinabé revolution", when a delicate transition has only just begun, and it is not sheltered from the influence of the military who served the fallen President to the very end, and that former key men in the Compaoré system, who abandoned ship before it sunk, are capable of recuperating power at the end of the transition? Should we already be delighting in the uprising when the fall of Compaoré and the possible dismantling of his efficient territorial surveillance system and network of alliances all over West Africa and the Sahel, could effectively weaken the country and the region in a period of great vulnerability?

Yes, the forced departure of Compaoré is good news. He could have peacefully ended his term of office in November 2015 and left in a dignified manner. Encouraged by the family, the clan and all the other opportunists more interested in keeping their accumulated fortunes than in the President's personal future, he attempted to force a passage that was as formally legal as it was profoundly immoral. He played and he lost. He did not lose because of a simple set of circumstances that were in favour of the popular masses who invaded the streets of Ouagadougou.

He did not lose out of lack of opportunity, this time. He lost because the Burkinabé demonstrators reached the critical mass that makes it possible to surprise regimes too sure of their capacity to frighten anonymous citizens,

to buy off any opinion leaders and ridicule their most irreducible opponents. The Burkinabé demonstrators would never have reached this critical mass if a wide variety of influential players from political society and from civil society had not been able to come to an agreement on one thing: the refusal of the power manoeuvres aimed at removing the constitutional mechanisms for restricting presidential terms of office. But it was not enough to agree on a goal. The active mobilisation of a considerable part of the urban population, largely composed of young people, also had to be organised. Such a mobilisation requires strategy, tactics, plans, means, a capacity to respond quickly and adapt, and a determination to see things through. Suffice it to say that this mobilisation was the result of an effort sustained over time. The success of the uprising is that of a call for change certainly, but it's also that of a collective action and work. This is why we should be delighted about it. This is why the signal given by the actors of change in Burkina is positive and strong for all the other countries in the region and the continent where the leaders go too far in their condescending and scornful attitude towards their fellow citizens.

Fortunately, there are not so many of them now, the African countries in this category. In reality, Burkina Faso was one of those rare West African countries which had not experienced a democratic change in government since the beginning of the 1990s. It was one of those countries whose presidents were able to accept political liberalisation while at the same time making sure it would not affect the essential: their staying in power. Burkina Faso will only join the majority group of African countries where a change of government, following elections of undoubtedly varied credibility, has become a reality for many years. This is precisely why the success of the Burkinabé popular uprising should not be judged by what Burkina Faso will be after the transition.

Nothing guarantees that the future democratically elected leaders will match the expectations of the population in terms of security and improvement of their economic conditions. It is not so easy to obtain a change in regime. But a radical and sustainable change in the governance of a country is even more difficult to bring about. The players of the "clean sweep" of Ouagadougou know it: while their aim is to build a new Burkina, much less corrupt, fairer and more pleasant to live in, the work has only just begun. This does not take away from the absolutely salutary and refreshing nature of the popular democratic uprising of 30 October 2014.

5 What does not emerge from emergence

Another happy coincidence meant that I wrote these lines at a time when “emergence” is everywhere. It’s what we hear in all the speeches of heads of State or government. So many West and Central African countries proclaim that they are on the way to economic emergence. They endow themselves with plans to achieve the famous emergence by five or ten years, rarely beyond. The goals are ambitious, the details of the plans presented to the forums of international investors are appealing and the mock-ups of the future infrastructure supposed to symbolise the entry of these African countries into the club of the emerging alongside many Asian and Latin American countries are magnificent. They present sky scrapers, airports, American-style shopping malls, motorways with crossovers and flyovers, university centres of excellence, ultra-equipped hospitals, etc.

In English-speaking east Africa, countries such as Kenya, Uganda or Tanzania seem to be more advanced on the road to economic emergence than those in West and Central Africa. Their infrastructure has already been vastly improved over the past fifteen years. Some of their major anchor projects for east-African regional integration have gone beyond the mock-up and speeches stage to that of the effective launch of the works. Their local economies appear less dependent on the activity of a few large foreign enterprises than that of the former French colonies. In the east and in the south of the continent, the foreign investors also seem to be more diversified. They come in great numbers from China, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Turkey, Brazil and many other countries to explore the opportunities for earning money, lots of money, in this “dynamic” part of Africa.

In 2011 the slogan “Africa Rising” replaced the desperate, scornful sentence of “Hopeless Continent” coined by the same global business magazine, *The Economist*, in 2000. For the past few years there has been no counting the business forums in different sectors, from telecommunications to mines via agro-industry, organised in the chic hotels of the capitals of the continent, but also in Geneva, London, New York or Paris.

The events designers that organise them, mostly firms foreign to the continent, have obviously sniffed out the opportunities of the market for the new African optimism. The proclamations of underway or imminent emergence

are also justified by the “discovery” of the existence of rising African middle classes, consumers of “modern” goods and services and incontrovertible drivers of economic change but also major social, cultural and political changes in their country.

No one really knows how many Africans belong to these middle classes, as we don't know which criteria to adopt to distinguish the category of the poor from that of the rich, in a context of evident incapacity of the national statistics systems to capture the economic realities of a country. For the African development bank (AfDB), 34% of Africans or 370 million souls apparently now belong to a middle class that takes into account as much the people whose incomes are just above the poverty threshold as those whose income flirts with the undeniably rich.

The statistical approach is disputable but we cannot contest the reality of the emergence of a class, much more abundant than only a decade ago, of women and men who have almost all of the material goods and services the middle classes of the other regions of the world have access to and who live a simple but pleasant life.

The realities, and even more so the current economic and social dynamics of the African countries, are too complex to make do with hopeless and desperate depressing clichés or, at the other extreme, the pathetic belief in a collective “emergence” reminiscent of the “development” path of the countries qualified as emergent in Asia and Latin America, whose current realities are themselves highly contrasted. Today's West Africa, like the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, cannot be summarised in an observation of a uniform failure of growth and human development, nor that of the certainty that this region is entering a new era of emergence and prosperity.

Drawing inspiration from the famous words of the Nigerian writer and Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka, “*A tiger does not proclaim his tigritude, he pounces*”, we could say that “*the emerging countries do not proclaim their emergence, we discover that they have emerged and that is all*”. Whether West Africa is emerging or not is of little interest if we do not define precisely the kind of emergence we are talking about and towards which the countries that make up the region wish to gravitate. Is it only a question of dreaming of an emergence made of economic growth, urbanisation and the escalation of the consumption of goods and services?

Or is it a question of an economic emergence as part of a political project that integrates all the essential components of what would be a better life for the population of the region? Before we wonder “where we want to go”, a question that is little posed and discussed even in the intellectual circles of the West-African capitals, let us try to see what the path looks like that was taken by the countries of the region over the past ten years and the directions they seem to have taken even more recently.

6 What is changing somewhat, what is changing slowly and what is not changing

What has changed over the past decade in almost all African countries which are not stuck in political crises and recurrent violent conflicts, is that old projects for the building of economic infrastructure are being put into execution. Like the transnational roads in each of the major sub-Saharan regions, railways abandoned for decades, electrical interconnection between neighbouring countries, installation of regional gas pipelines, the extension and modernisation of ports. What is changing in spite of it all, is the average level of qualification and skills in the major private and semi-public enterprises and in the ministerial cabinets where a handful of well-trained executives and workers have become indispensable for creating the link between the bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies and the failing public administrations and pushing forward the projects decreed priority by the Heads of State.

What is changing in spite of it all is that the combined development of the banking sector, the micro-finance institutions, the private vocational training establishments and the disparate initiatives of thousands of NGOs in favour of specific categories of the population and the economic reforms laboriously implemented by the governments have had the effect of breathing a minimum of vitality into the local economies that had long been stifled. Behind these positive tendencies is to be found the loosening of the constraints of the financing of economic growth in the major part of sub-Saharan Africa. This new financial impetus has itself been favoured by the significant lightening of the burden of external debt and by the consequences of the break-

neck growth of the so-called emergent powers, in the front line of whom is China, desperate for raw materials and new markets for its industry which is highly — Chinese — labour intensive.

What is changing, is the fascination of abundant youth, dynamic, irrepressibly attracted by the opening onto the world enabled by Internet and all the modern information technologies. What is changing is the staggering popular success of mobile phones in African towns and countryside, and the diversity of uses they are put to by all categories of society. What is changing is the coexistence of a desire to move, dreams of successful emigration within a mass of young people who are perfectly balanced and an increasingly sustained flux of returns of other privileged young people, educated abroad, informed of the functioning of the global economy and convinced of the possibility of combining the search for individual and familial well-being with their participation in the development of their respective countries.

What is changing is that in Bamako, Cotonou, Abidjan, Lomé, Accra, Lagos, Bobo-Dioulasso, Thiès, Douala, Agadez, Nouadhibou and Ségou, millions of women and men are creating “micro”, “mini” and small enterprises, the vast majority of which are informal, seeking means to increase their knowledge and knowhow and are not counting on anyone other than themselves to achieve the standard of living they aspire to. There is a considerable reservoir of human energy for going further and higher in a part of the continent, in countries and regions where the noise of the boots of rebels, the military, religious extremists of all genres and entrepreneurs of violence and hatred do not annihilate all ambition to aspire to a normal life.

What is not changing, or so little and so slowly, is the conception of politics as a zero sum game in which the clan who holds the power can use all the means without exception for conserving control of all the levers of the State and the economic resources of the country with the assent, or at least the tacit tolerance of a large part of the population which has often only ever known these political practices that run counter to the common good. What is not changing or so little, is the conception of the public administration exclusively as machines that produce political clientele, guarantees of social peace and stable jobs for which the low official wages go hand in hand with the absence of the slightest demand of performance and the trivialisation of all the corrupt practices providing consequential income supplements.

What is not changing or is changing so slowly, is the “moral” transfused by the elites which, in too many African countries, have built the postcolonial states on the foundation of violence, exploitation of the weak, condescendence towards the poor and from associating the holding of political power with an unlimited right to enjoy all the benefits. What is not changing and seems to be transmitted from generation to generation, within the elites, and between them and the other categories of the population, is the culture of the double language, of the systematic gap between speech and action, between rhetoric and reality, the cult of the permanent lie. What is not changing, or not fast enough, in most West African countries and beyond, is the coexistence of redundant speech on solidarity, fraternity, the African-style cousin system and political, economic, cultural and social practices that are clannish, discriminatory and deeply selfish.

What is not changing is the collective preference for social regulation through the intermittent arbitrary charity of the better endowed towards the poor and weak rather than permanently seeking the integration of all categories of the population in the production and distribution circuits of material and immaterial wealth. What never changes despite the slogans and eternal reforms defended and accompanied by the international donors, is a perverse structure of incentives that encourages the merciless combat for positions of income, — places where you can get rich quick without too much work or innovative effort —, and discourages effort, creativity and dynamics.

Lastly, what is not changing is the anguish of losing our African identity as soon as it is a question of changing anything significant in our way of doing, thinking or living. As if only Africans had to cultivate immutable and unassailable traditions because handed down by ancestors who lived in a world much different from the world of today. As if the children who are born every day in the countries of the region did not have the right to another life and to nourish dreams far removed from those of their parents, grand-parents and elders. As if the African values we want to hold onto today over and above everything were just as easy to define and quote today.

As if these never clearly defined values had already been largely used up by the anti-values injected into the societies by the governing elites in the course of the past three, four or five decades. As if each generation did not have a

legitimate right to an inventory of the traditional values after which it could eliminate some, amend others and create new ones corresponding to the ideal of society it wishes to tend towards.

7 What the state of a region tells us about its elites

The work schedule is beginning to take shape. It is vast and quite frightening. The current generations of Africans must make sure that what has already begun to change for the better over the past twenty years on the political, economic, cultural and social levels, continues to change and at an accelerated pace. They must especially push forward that which doesn't change or which changes so slowly the effects will only be felt a hundred years from now. Now has come the time to shake the trunk of the palm tree and, if necessary, to pull out the rotten roots rather than make do with shrivelled leaves and dried out fruit, an external sign of a slow death.

Only there we have it: in each of the West-African countries, who are the women and the men capable of collectively undertaking this gargantuan task today? Why would they take major individual risks, including physical, to revolutionise the unfair and perverse systems and functioning which constitute the daily happiness of thousands of politically and financially powerful families? In African countries like everywhere else, there is little chance that the people from the poorest categories will have the time, energy or mobilisation capacities indispensable to organising large-scale collective actions to obtain radical, long-lasting change. The intensity of the bonds between families, clans, ethnic groups, religions, coupled with the concentration of poverty and the marginalisation in the rural and peripheral zones, make this perspective particularly improbable in West Africa.

For there to be an opportunity to succeed, the dynamics of change demands the commitment of groups of men and women who can take the time to seek information, read, surf the Internet, communicate by telephone and by electronic mail, organise meetings, draw up action plans and budgets, mobilise funds, divide up tasks, draw up strategies, bypass obstacles and traps and make all these efforts as part of actions that are not individually lucrative. Only the people who eat well and whose dependents also eat their fill, those

who have the means to cope with unplanned health expenses and have no reason to think that this relative comfort can be taken away at any moment, are capable of the adventure of collective actions other than intermittent ones to “change the system” radically and sustainably in their country.

It is therefore people from relatively privileged social groups who can breathe new impetus for systemic change into African societies that go beyond uprisings and political upheavals with no lasting effect. Individually it is not in the interests of these Africans belonging to the privileged classes to do so because the existing systems favour them outrageously as long as they deign to be a part of them. And because they can always, thanks to their diplomas, real or supposed skills, address book, high level of awareness about the opportunities existing in their country and abroad, escape the system, its compromises and the moral discomfort it generates in the most scrupulous.

If you find in your country that partisan political commitment means membership of a club of the corrupt, if you feel access to an important position in the public administration or in a public enterprise equals an intrusion into a world of sharks obsessed by getting rich as quickly as possible and if you have a problem with that, if you have good reasons to believe that your skills, your hard work, your excitement at the idea of contributing something to your country will not even bring you the recognition and admiration of your colleagues and of the society, then your rational decision will consist in seeking a job within the local representations of the international governmental or non-governmental organisations, within the major private enterprises with foreign capital, or settle abroad, where you can earn a comfortable living without having to be involved in wrongdoing or observing daily with disgust the moral decay of your society.

What is at stake today for an investment in collective actions with a view to changing the way African countries work, are the political, economic, social and cultural conditions in which hundreds of millions of Africans will live in 2030, 2050 and 2060. In the same way as what was done, and especially what was not done, by the elites in each country between 1960 and 1980 largely determined the conditions in which Africans were living in 2010, what the current ageing elites have done since the 1990s and what the ones who are gradually replacing them will do or not do in the years to come will shape the sub-Saharan Africa of 2030 and 2050.

When I talk about elites here, I don't mean just the political, administrative, economic and intellectual elites but all the people in each of the countries of the region who are capable of exerting a particularly strong influence on the way the society they belong to changes in terms of politics, economics, culture and ideology, whatever the sources of this influence. I do not particularly like this categorisation of society that distinguishes "the elites" and "the others" but the fact is it exists, in Africa like everywhere else.

The elites being formed who are around thirty or forty years old in 2014 have three decades ahead of them to change the trajectory of their respective countries. They will be collectively accountants of the great leap ahead, the stagnation or the great leap backwards each country will have achieved between now and then. The question it seems to me to be necessary to pose is whether the simple natural renewal of the elites will suffice to ensure a better future for the hundreds of millions of children and teenagers in sub-Saharan Africa today. Almost everywhere, whatever those elites, who do all they can to hang onto their political, administrative, economic, traditional and even religious positions as long as possible, may think, the renewal will take place. We all eventually die. We will all eventually die. Even those who take themselves for demi-gods.

The new *élites* will have an average level of education and training higher than that of their predecessors. They will also be better informed on average and more open towards the rest of the world, having often studied partially abroad or at least having travelled and grown up with computers, Internet and the mobile phone. But what will their values be? Will they be more or less sensitive to the public interest than the previous generations? Will they be more preoccupied than the latter by the fact that millions of their compatriots, trapped far from the large dynamic cities or in the urban peripheries akin to slums, are being excluded in terms of the economy, education and even health?

The answer is not always clear. The vast majority of the young *élites* of today and those that are being formed are the children of retired or ageing elites. The children of the wealthiest *élites* have generally had a higher education in the universities and elite schools of Europe, America and more rarely Asia or the Middle East. A significant part of these Africans end up in a career in a foreign country where they studied or in another foreign country depending on

the opportunities that present themselves. This is an incommensurable loss of qualified human resources for all the African countries.

The movement is accelerating with globalisation and despite the immigration barriers that only moderately affect the children of the rich élites. Another proportion of these young people educated abroad come back to their home country to join the circle of local élites, generally in the private sector, the international intergovernmental or non governmental organisations, more rarely, much more rarely, in the public administration and enterprises and public agencies.

The children of the élites who have more limited financial means than those in the first circle generally study at the best institutions available in their country, in neighbouring countries, or slightly further away in North Africa, Morocco and Tunisia in particular. Because they keep regular contacts with their country and their networks, these young people, once they graduate, can easily join the circles of the new local political, administrative and economic élites. Whether they are from rich families or just wealthy families, they have in any case been moulded in the moral education received from their parents and in that of their social milieu.

There is no determinism on this subject. Not all the children of corrupt, selfish African elites are future corrupt, selfish elites. All the children of African elites with integrity are not future elites with integrity. Even if we may think the former have on average a relatively better chance of being corrupt than the second due to the values and principles handed down by their parents, or by the children's daily observation of the gap between the values professed by their parents and the behaviour of the latter. We may think it but we cannot assert it.

The real problem is to be found at the level of the values and behavioural norms conveyed by the social fabric. Any West-African observer of good faith will admit it: the values of work, empathy, honesty and the refusal of violence in public life have been seriously undermined by those who govern and gradually but surely replaced by the adoration of the "Money God" and its corollary, a moral that states that the end justifies the means. In the critical founding phase of formation of the African nation-states in their current borders, — the past six decades for many, the last four decades for the former Portuguese colonies —, it is the greediest élites who have all too often imposed themselves.

Unfortunately, there is no reason for the arrival of new élites to suffice to regenerate the values trampled by their predecessors, to clean up the practices that govern the political game, to cease to make certain circles of power in Africa places for the distribution of trunks full of banknotes for the courtesans and mafia involved in all sorts of smuggling rings, decentralise the decision-making mechanisms, refound the organisation and functioning of the administration and public enterprises to make them skills centres guided by the demand for results and the protection of the common good.

The system deliberately or accidentally implemented by the leading class of most of the African countries in the course of the past decades conveys negative incentives that will continue to automatically ensure the victory of the élites hungry for power and money over those who are not allergic to power and money but would also like to contribute to the economic and social development of their country and thereby allow the descendents of their less fortunately born compatriots to enjoy a better life.

These incentives create what could be called a negative selection mechanism. If the principal condition for hoping to join a governing political elite is to deploy astronomic financial means impossible to bring together legally in the context of barely productive savings, the most honest candidates will be systematically beaten by those who are ready to do whatever it takes. Once their victory has been acquired, it is logical for the winners to work first, otherwise exclusively, in rebuilding their personal fortune and in recompensing the forces that supported them in the shadows.

It is possible to be greedy, hard working and brilliant at the same time. Such a system can generate from time to time governing élites that make their country advance in some domains. But it seems to me incontestable that the current rules of political competition on the continent have a tendency to insidiously select from the top level of the States too great a proportion of elites with little concern for the public interest. The others, these people who believe that the most important qualities for entering the circle of the deciders are skills, hard work, a sense of public service, end up understanding that they only have a limited opportunity for survival in such a system. Then they have two options: throw their convictions away and do the necessary or give up and quit the merciless world of those who hold the reins of the State.

The force of such a system is to give sufficiently clear signs to discourage undesirables from entering the game. You cannot enter a competition if you are convinced from the outset that you will be beaten or even crushed. Many skilful and honest ageing and retired African elites have given up defying the systems in place, having been humiliated, rejected, marginalised in the course of their political or administrative careers. Nothing suggests that their children - and the children of those others — have not already made the rational choice of never trying to become involved in anything concerning politics or the management of the State. Or of burying the ethical values and principles that have done nothing but attract problems to those who have wanted to promote them.

The most probable scenario over the coming decades, in the absence of a profound and visible change in the incentives embedded in the current functioning of West African States, is that of the assiduous pursuit of a negative selection of human resources. The most promising young élites from all the countries in the region will increasingly have a tendency to prefer living and working abroad, where they can promote their skills and escape the pressures, solicitations, compromises and threats which characterise the political, economic, social and cultural milieu of their home country.

Those who choose to remain will tend increasingly to avoid the business sectors in which skills, the desire to do well, work, creativity and the respect of minimal ethics are more factors of marginalisation and stagnation than guarantees of professional success. Many will continue to take refuge in the materially comfortable niches of the international organisations, the management agencies of development projects directly funded by the foreign partners and the few major enterprises with foreign private capital. A small part of these young Africans will succeed in entering the circle of the economic élites of their country by developing innovative business activities in the private sector, in the rare domains which are not fully controlled by clans solidly ensconced and protected from the competition of new entrants by their political connections and their mastery of corrupt practices.

Should we really be concerned about these perspectives? Is it a problem if an ever-growing proportion of the potential new and future élites of the African countries finds salvation in a career and a life outside the continent? Is it a problem if those who remain or who return home and intend to count on

their skills alone to earn a living have a strong tendency to turn away from a possible career in the public sector, to shun the political sphere decreed so irremediably corrupt and dangerous? Yes, this does in fact pose a serious problem. This means abandoning a little more each day the control of the political and administrative field, that is to say the reins of the State, to the élites who come for the wrong reasons: to make use of their membership of the circle of decision-makers to make a considerable amount of money very fast and avail themselves of extravagant privileges.

It is a serious problem for West African countries and African countries in general, and more specifically for the poorest categories of the population, because they are the ones who have a critical need for operational public services and well thought-out, effective public policies. If we abandon the political and economic control of the states to the most individualistic and greedy elites, even to the most brilliant among them, they will perhaps experience phases of remarkable economic growth but they will have no chance of seeing shared human development or of expecting a marked reduction in the social injustice that already poisons and will poison even more the daily lives of each and every one of us in the countries of Africa in the course of the years and decades to come.

It would be a serious mistake for the residents of those West African towns that are still peaceful and relatively pleasant to live in, to think that it will always be like this in the absence of policies aimed precisely at maintaining this peace. The urban Africa we love is the one where we exchange warm morning greetings when we pass our neighbours in the street, where we can walk around without fear of being attacked in our neighbourhoods and even kilometres outside them. It is the one where you don't feel obliged to triple lock the door behind you when you get home from work, protected by private guards in uniforms, armed with bludgeons, or worse, with guns. It is where you don't have the impression that your neighbours with a fifth, a tenth or a twentieth of your income wish you harm, whereas they would have every reason to feel bitter and aggressive.

This Africa is threatened, where it still exists. Nothing allows us to believe that the continuous and accelerated deepening of the material and intellectual divide between the minority of the élites and the mass of those who stagnate and whose eyes shine at the sight of the accumulation of the external signs of

opulence will not be accompanied, sooner than we think, by a radicalisation of social relations, a permanent tension between the social classes and a level of daily violence that will poison the existence of everyone. Project the security consequences of a deepening of the inequalities, and add in all the factors that already feed the insecurity and instability in West Africa, from the terrorism of Boko Haram to the preoccupying inheritance of years of violent crisis and impunity in several countries of the region, via the activities of the powerful networks of organised crime, and you will agree with me that the worst is perhaps yet to come.

8 What we can do together

The time has come to break down the walls we erected inside our societies creating groups of fellow citizens who no longer speak to each other, no longer know each other, no longer understand each other, bump into each other, speak the same language, share common values or believe in the possibility of a present and a future built together. The time to break with our elitist reflexes. The time to call ourselves into question, we who have been fortunate enough to be born into families where we eat our fill, where we speak the official language of the country, which is also the language of the élites, where parents have the means to send their children to school then university. We who have the possibility of travelling, discovering the rest of the world, when a large majority of our fellow citizens can only imagine it from the pictures they see on television and the Internet, and project some thousands of their number onto the roads and maritime routes of fatal migrations.

The time has come to call our certainties into question by assuming and defending the values of liberty, solidarity, justice, moderation and respect for diversity, which are the property of no continent, of no civilisation. The time to clearly choose the side of those who are not content to dream about another West Africa and another Africa, but who propose to work at it in concrete ways, patiently and resolutely. Choosing the side of those who do not only see problems, flaws, drama, all real and serious that assail their country and their societies but who appreciate with the same exactness the amplitude of the efforts accomplished every day by women and men of exceptional cour-

age and determination, as well as the formidable creative energy of the current generations and the even more immense potential of the a future generations.

Dreaming again, in West Africa and in Africa as a whole, of great collective achievements. Dreaming of another present, and above all, of future other than the one we can glimpse. Dreaming by night but waking up in the day time, and staying awake as long as possible, to look at West-African societies as they are today. Waking up to decipher the political, security, economic and societal trends, as they sketch themselves as prolongations of the realities of the present and summon all the knowledge ceaselessly renewed by the universal efforts of the human spirit, more accessible today than ever. Looking at the actual realities of our countries, to concentrate our energy, time, creativity, collective intelligence on the most crucial questions for the future, the future of the tens of millions of young people who are already here and of the even more numerous cohorts who will join them over the coming years.

Thinking and acting together to change the present and the future. This is the outlandish ambition of the WATHI, a free variation on the theme of waati which, in the bamanakan or bambara language, evokes time. The time of urgency which procures the adrenaline necessary for action and the time of the long lasting that makes it possible to change the world by giving a depth and scope to collective actions which transcend our insignificant individual ambitions. Laboratory of ideas and toolbox open to contributions from all the women and men concerned by the current state and the future of a West Africa which knows its fate is linked to that of all the other regions of the continent, the WATHI is first and foremost a state of mind. A state of mind comprising realism, idealism, confidence and impetus. The state of mind that will allow us to change Africa without being afraid of losing our multi-faceted identities.

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

(Nelson Mandela, 1918–2013)

Dakar, 23 December 2014.

The author

Political analyst and economist, Dr Yabi spent seven years as senior political analyst and then director for the West Africa Project of the International Crisis Group, a think-tank dedicated to conflict prevention and resolution. He led the research, policy, advocacy and media work of the organization in West Africa during three particularly difficult years for the region (2011–2013), with a deadly post-electoral conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, uncertain political transitions in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, outburst of violence in northern Nigeria and a brutal collapse of Mali threatening the wider Sahel region.

Holding a Ph.D in economics from the university of Clermont-Ferrand in France, Gilles also worked as a journalist for the weekly magazine *Jeune Afrique*. After leaving Crisis Group in November 2013, Gilles is now independent consultant in the fields of conflict analysis, security and political governance in West Africa. As an observer and a citizen of the region, he also publishes articles and editorials on his blog: *Le Blog de Gilles Yabi* (<http://gillesyabi.blogspot.com>).

Gilles Yabi is the founder of WATHI, a participatory and multidisciplinary citizen think tank on the dynamics of West African countries which began in 2015. Run by dozens of women and men profoundly attached to West Africa in particular and Africa in general, the WATHI aims to stimulate reflexion and collective action of an increasingly broad network of citizens aware of the exceptional challenges facing the region and the continent.

Thoughts on the situation in West Africa

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan*

The Jihad-terrorist fires smouldering in Africa (MOJWA, Ansar Dine, AQMI, Daesh and Boko Haram), much more dangerous than the “lone wolves” of Europe which attract more attention from the media, are stoked with four types of fuel:

- ◆ **Local factors:** presence in particularly deteriorated areas where the State is practically absent, public services weak, power and the army are particularly corrupt, with antecedents of uprisings, rebellions or irredentisms (Northern Mali, North-eastern Nigeria, Libya)
- ◆ **General socio-political factors:** the failure of development policies and education, the bankruptcy of the African political elites, the lack of an outlook and a future for a majority of young people out of school (a very different consequence of this same cause is Lampedusa: the dramatic massive migrations towards Europe)
- ◆ **Religious factors:** the rise, over at least the past two decades, of a Wahabi and Salafist-type Islamic ideology that is obscurantist, exclusivist, intolerant, aggressively proselytist, that comes from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, whose priority is to reject the “infidels” and denounce bad Muslims, infiltrates public space, wants to impose its law on society and on the State, and serves as a foundation for increasingly violent preaching.
- ◆ **Diplomatico-military factors:** the devastating impact in Africa of the western wars that are as absurd as they are unjustifiable against Iraq (Bush) then

* Researcher based in Niamey, Niger, director of LASDEL

against Libya (Sarkozy), with their procession of “collateral victims”, destruction, and killing; but it is also the impact of Israeli policy, its eye for eye law, anti-Arab racism, the massacres it orders regularly and the daily humiliation it imposes: and this policy appears to be fully backed by the United States (despite a few reservations that are imperceptible from a distance), and behind them, by the West (their timid, ineffectual protests are inaudible). In the Muslim world, the interventions in Iraq and Libya, added to Israeli policy, ultimately create the deplorable, reiterated image of “Christian” and “Jewish” soldiers armed to the teeth, bombing all over the place innocent, bare handed Muslims: this is easily exploited by the extremists: all they have to do is call for vengeance and invoke, in their turn, an eye for an eye.

It is the interweaving of the four factors which is particularly explosive. Certainly, when dealing with the Jihadists, a military response is necessary. But unless the above factors are truly taken into consideration, we may well fear that the Hydra will just keep growing new heads.

The first factor implies considerable boosting of the State, priority delivery of public services and radical reforms of the army in the zones concerned.

The second is the most difficult to express in terms of public policy; it presupposes that development aid is totally re-thought out and that credible and innovative reform movements appear in the African countries.

The third factor relates to a necessary effort on the part of the Muslims, and, in the first instance, Muslim intellectuals, to block regressive Salafism and escalations of intolerance.

As for the fourth factor, it refers to indispensable radical political decisions. Give up military intervention against unpleasant dictators (who were once pampered)... Give up support to the extreme right in power in Israel (whether unconditionally or cursing) and twist the arm of the Israeli leaders to impose the creation of a Palestinian state... Which political leaders will have the courage to make these decisions?

February 2015

The situation in Casamance: challenges and opportunities for civil society

Abdoulaye Diallo*

Casamance is a former administrative region of Senegal, which has been divided into three regions: Ziguinchor, Sédhiou and Kolda. It is situated in southern Senegal, and is a traditional and social entity covering 28,350 km², or almost 15% of the country. The population is estimated at 1,500,000.

The Casamance conflict, which began on 26 December 1982, has been described as a “low-intensity conflict”¹ because there are long periods of calm followed by short periods of violence.

When President Macky Sall came to power in 2012, the conflict entered a phase of appeasement that has generated a level of security never before experienced.

A compartmentalised process

This situation is the result of several factors, including the political will to accept the internationalisation of the conflict, with the involvement of the Community of Sant’Egidio as mediator. Sant’Egidio facilitates the negotiation process between the Government, represented by a group of negotiators reporting to Admiral Farba Sarr, and the armed faction of radical separatist leader Salif Sadio’s MFDC.

¹ Marut, Jean-Claude, 1992, “Casamance : du particularisme au séparatisme”, *Hérodote*, No. 65–66 (Afrique noires, Afrique blanches), 2nd–3rd qrt. 1992. pp. 207–234

* Consultant à Ziguinchor, Sénégal. Longue expérience du travail de paix en Casamance.

The Community of Sant'Egidio is mandated by the President of the Republic, with the backing of Salif Sadio, to accompany and facilitate the negotiation process, and is much criticised for the lack of transparency and the fact that not all factions of the MFDC or of the local or national civil society are involved in the process.

The internationalisation of the peace process can be described as controlled or compartmentalised due to the exclusion of actors (particularly national but also, in part, international) from the process which is reduced to a tripartite negotiation: Sant'Egidio—government representatives—the representatives of Salif Sadio. All the players who intervene, such as the United States or the European Union, focus on designing and supporting 'Peace Building' projects from a variety of different approaches, to develop and target the capacity building of civil society organisations so that they can have an impact on the peace process with the aim of finally resolving the conflict.

Peace work within a market rationale

Even with the second change of government in Senegal, there is a certain continuity in civil society interventions, with action organised around the peace process, that is to say, essentially focused on restoring 'peace' to the villages with the re-instatement of basic social services, the revitalising of agriculture, restoration of housing, etc. According to certain players, this situation has favoured the development of a *peace market* with a considerable number of projects and programmes initiated by civil society organisations. This makes some players say, moreover, that a good number of interventions actually exploit the conflict and the peace process instead of being of service to a population which has been aspiring to peace for over three decades.

Civil society has thus been distanced from the political process and this appears to be found acceptable for there are very few voices raised to demand that the 'peace process' be brought out into the open. With the exception of the Platform of Women for Peace in Casamance, no organised civil society framework has had access to the President of the Republic to advocate more involvement on the part of civil society in the 'peace process'. The intervention of the Platform of Women for Peace in Casamance should be considered

relatively, for the answers obtained have not defined a timeframe for their involvement in a tripartite process.

What are the challenges?

The aforementioned distancing is the principal challenge to be met by civil society with, as a prerequisite, the defining of a general integration framework for civil society interventions, one of the main shortcomings of the peace process in Casamance.

The peace process in Casamance suffers from the absence of a clearly-defined general framework as described by Christian Fusillier², resulting in interventions that are often initiated from the outside, start from isolated diagnostics from which projects and strategies spring into existence in equal numbers to the sponsors and civil society organisations. This rationale is apparently one explanation for the endlessly repetitive cycle of implementing coordination frameworks for civil society such as the Coalition for Peace in Casamance, the research and action for peace group in Casamance, the alliance for peace in Casamance, the stakeholders roundtable, etc.

The peace process is a “secret” process which, even if it is understandable in the cultural context of Casamance, is instrumentalised to exclude other players from the negotiation table, in particular civil society. For such a culture, Marut³ poses the debate of the democratisation of the peace process, recalling that “the future of the region cannot be left solely in the hands of those who pretend to represent the Senegalese government and MFDC—and who have failed for thirty years to respond to the aspirations of the people; no solution can be found without a broad public debate on the future of Casamance”.

And so, *the challenge of implementing the peace process and making it democratic is an acute one for the players of civil society*. For any civil society organisation wishing to intervene in the peace process, this challenge

² Claire Pirotte and Bernard Husson, – *Entre Urgence et Développement* – KARTHALA – 231 pages – October 1997

³ Cahiers d’outre-mer – conflits en Afrique – no. 255 vol. 64 – July–September 2011 – presses universitaires de bordeaux

is also a condition for having a vision, a strategy and playing a role that will lend it credibility.

Lastly, the local civil society is coupled with the American strategy for accompanying the conflict resolution process in Casamance; it is a civil society of projects. A civil society that finds itself faced with the challenge of *drawing up a strategy in the margins of the channels traced by outside agents*.

The appointment of a US ambassador to Casamance is one of the manifestations of this conflict resolution support strategy, the current representative of which traces the line of conduct in these terms: *'he undertakes to help the State and the MFDC to find their bearings without becoming involved in the proposed solution which will be the exclusive domain of the two protagonists'*.

What are the assets? The young people and women

Faced with these challenges, there are opportunities for civil society to have a greater influence on the peace process and the reconstruction of Casamance.

The first opportunity to be seized for renewal would be to feed off the two engines that are the vitality of young people in exercising a new kind of citizenship and the procedures of women in their approach to claiming peace by becoming involved in the peace process.

From 2000 onwards, in the main municipalities (Ziguinchor, Kolda, Bignona, Vélingara and Sedhiou) youth movements began to emerge, starting from the demand for basic social services and gradually spreading to include demands for better management of local affairs. These movements of rebellion led to the deaths of men at Kolda and a town hall was burnt to the ground at Vélingara.

From 2012, the women of Casamance started to set up a platform for peace in Casamance, which now has 25,000 members spread over three regions.

All these women's associations are primarily invested in improving the standard of living of women in rural and urban zones, to help them to cope better with the consequences of the conflict. They cover almost the whole of natural Casamance, and have a long and relevant experience in devising and implementing initiatives to accompany peace and women's socio-economic development in Casamance.

For instance, the platform invited the candidates in the 2012 election to sign a memorandum for peace in Casamance, which allowed the two candidates in the second round of the voting, Macky Sall and Abdoulaye Wade, to speak about their projects for restoring peace and rebuilding Casamance. Thanks to this initiative, the platform was able to make its voice heard and become a key player, one that develops a vision, a position and an independent strategy as an active stakeholder in the peace process.

The Platform of Women for Peace in Casamance is a potential that any local or national civil society can promote, to develop a common strategy that can lead the two parties, Government and MFDC, to implement a peace process that is transparent, inclusive and pertinent in the sense of a definitive resolution of the peace process.

April 2015



Civil Society in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Between fatal pathologies and building smart power

Kä Mana*

The idea of civil society today

We would like to discuss civil society in Congo-Kinshasa starting from an idea presented by Hilary Clinton around what she calls, in her book *Hard Choices*, ‘smart power’¹. Her starting point is the definition of a “firm foundation for society” being like a three-legged stool with: “a responsive, effective, accountable government, a dynamic, job-creating, free market economic sector and a strong civil society”. In her eyes, it is in the fruitful interaction between these three major realities that smart power reveals itself: dynamics to which she devoted her work as American Secretary of State to reorient foreign policy under the presidency of Barack Obama. About this policy, she wrote:

“To succeed in the 21st century, we need to integrate the traditional tools of foreign policy-diplomacy, development assistance, and military force-while also tapping the energy and ideas of the private sector and empowering citizens, especially the activists, organizers, and problem solvers we call civil society, to meet their own challenges and shape their own futures.”

Here, the idea of civil society is that of developing social intelligence through the training of human resources that take questions of society into account in

¹ Hilary Clinton, *Hard Choices*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2014.

* Lecturer at the Université Evangélique du Cameroun and member of Pole Institute, Goma, DRC

initiatives and action projects founded on the strength to meet the expectations of the population with concrete and fruitful responses. This is the power of each citizen and of all citizens when they become aware of their capacity to make a real difference to their own fate.

To take on its full dynamism within what civil society represents, this power needs to be fed by a grand utopia and powerful dreams. These powerful dreams and this grand utopia, Hillary Clinton had them in abundance, in her own opinion, for her country, the United States of America.

“We have to use all of America’s strengths to build a world with more partners and fewer adversaries, more shared responsibility and fewer conflicts, more good jobs and less poverty, more broadly based prosperity with less damage to our environment.”

“Smart power” is part of this blossoming dream of the future, this splendid horizon of sense.² We cannot conceive of and organise civil society without making it a project for action and social transformation.

We chose the ideas of the former American Secretary of State to open our discussion, not only because it allows us to understand civil society as a power, a dynamic of action specific to “the activists, organizers, and problem solvers” with a view to “meeting their own challenges” and “shaping their own future” thanks to the human resources that are the citizens as creative, acting subjects. But also and especially because it incorporates civil society into an overview where “smart power” links its dynamics to the traditional political tools and the world of private initiative, or more globally to the sphere of economic management.

This link is in my opinion crucial. It situates the role and action of civil society not against political governance and economic management, but in the search for concrete solutions whose concern is to develop a critical dynamism. And at the same time a force for useful proposals in a power that fertilises the political field and the economic field for the benefit of the population in the problems that crush them. Problems which must be resolved in the most concrete manner possible.

² See, on this subject “Le monde dans lequel nous vivons et l’éducation de nouveaux citoyens”, in *Villes et Communes*, number 148, Yaoundé, March 2015.

Without placing itself at the service of these political and economic powers nor serving as their backup or support, civil society should “help to confront the government with its own responsibilities and breathe impetus into social change”. This is its own order of existence about which we can say it differs from that of the economic sphere and the politico-diplomatic and military sphere from the point of view of its structure, values, interests and meaning.

Civil society: structures, values, interests and meaning

Structures. While the traditional tools of power impose an order and an organisation the legitimate violence of which demands centralisation of the decision-making power and a fertile force of economic vision to build a unit of action around a certain idea of the State, civil society is articulated around multiple organisations whose links are the problems to be solved in the multiplicity of their substance and form, at the heart of the concrete life of the citizens. In particular: “*activists and volunteers within the local communities; journalists; students and teachers; business leaders and union leaders, religious dignitaries*”³. While the private economic sphere or the economic sphere quite simply turns around the market and enterprises as the modes of production of wealth in a competitive field where profit and wealth are the law; while it demands specific governance mechanisms that are often authoritarian, the field of civil society gives each of the entities that compose it the power of reflection, debate and proposition at the service of the community, without being understood as a power to be defended or a prey to be won against other powers and other preys. In this, it is not like a military order or a diplomatic State structure, which are at the service of the political and economic powers in place. In its multiplicity, its consistency principle is the capacity to be sensitive to all the problems facing the other fields of society and mobilise the citizens so that they lead the powers in place to better understand and better confront, in a practical way, that is to say at the service of the population.

³ Hillary Clinton, op. cit., p.77.

Values. This posture of articulation and consistency confers an essentially ethical vision on civil society, an anchorage in service values stronger and more fertile than the political power and private economic power or even public power can promote as being a part of their very substance. The multiplicity and diversity of its fields of intervention are only unified by the sensitivity to the values of humanity to defend when they are ignored and develop and promote as forces of the public good and shared interests when they do not exist. In the name of such fundamental values as liberty, democracy, human dignity, the respect of the person, the concern for public property, the refusal of torture, development in solidarity and social cohesion, we expect civil society to rally and to rally the energies of social creativity, in order to orient policy and the economy towards a lofty vision of Man and humanity. In this way it looks after, if we may say, the ethics of politics and economics, by fertilising their spirit. We can then say that its action consists in acting in accordance with the ideals and utopias.

Interests. But these ideals and these utopias are not abstract entities or pious dreams. They are anchored in concrete and precise interests which mean that each civil society organisation takes care of the specific issues to ensure their respect, in the name of humanity. It fights for this and makes sure its combat is part of a visible and profound social transformation process. It is to the extent that there is the largest possible number of organisations oriented in this way which are aware of their capacity to be together in a plural unity of reflexion, debate and action we can talk about a civil society that is coherent and efficient, around the interests of the whole social community. Here again, we should insist on the fact that these interests, even if they have clear political and economic dimensions, do not make the civil society organisations subservient towards government and business. They are taken into consideration in a practical, critical and ethical order to enrich the sense of collective well-being, an authentic task for civil society.

Meaning. This concept of meaning as a quest for community well-being is essential. If Hillary Clinton seems to designate civil society as a sphere in which problems are identified and concrete solutions sought by citizens on the scale of local action and in the reciprocal fertilisation of inventive and creative dy-

namics, she is pointing towards a meaning horizon that civil society entities should never forget: a certain quality of life and a certain substance of promises to live in a happy, fulfilled society. Whenever we have the feeling that this quality of fulfilment and well-being is missing, civil society becomes a mere critical instance: it becomes a pointer, a torpedo for social change, with a view to another policy and another economy, without replacing the powers in place at all nor grabbing their sovereign prerogatives. It is, at all times, a question of indicating the meaning and pushing the powers in place to turn their gaze towards this meaning when exercising their functions. All this to prevent these powers from becoming idiotic in the sense of the Chinese proverb that says: “when the finger points to the moon, the idiot looks at the finger.” The distinction between civil society and the other social instances, is that civil society points to the moon all the other powers must look at to enrich their governance and management function: the need for values and well-being.

When the idea of civil society becomes blurred and falls to pieces

In DRC today, if we apply the schema of intelligibility of civil society as presented by Hillary Clinton, certain pathologies of this society become immediately apparent.

They are related to the very idea that the Congo as a community with a shared fate has of the civil society in its midst. We have the feeling that this idea is essentially political in construction, as if the function of the players of civil society was to be the double of the political organisations, or at least, a sort of access chamber, to the governing bodies as to the opposition. Similarly, it works like a society whose interests are highly economic and financial, as of the civil society organisations were small and medium sized companies, or even large trusts at the service of foreign conglomerates. The intertwining of this political and economic vision empties the commitment of the activists of all the strength that would allow it to concentrate on the specific problems to be solved and to solve them effectively.

A well-known example: DRC is no doubt the country with the largest number of civil society peace work organisations per square kilometre. At the same

time it is the country where these organisations are subject to intense power conflicts and grab onto external funding with impressive force, without any Congolese path for building a peaceful society having been really opened by these organisations to date. Why is this the case? Because for these organisations peace is not globally a problem to be solved but an opportunity for access to the political jump seats or quick wealth thanks to outside aid for certain personalities who know how to take advantage of the chaos of Congo and the poverty of our compatriots. Even if there are men and women of good faith who take part whole-heartedly in the building of a peaceful society and take laudable initiatives in this sense, the global peace line that predominates in Congolese civil society is not theirs. Hence the enormous difficulty today to find real solutions proposed by this civil society. The solutions for peace are proposed by the governing, diplomatic and geostrategic bodies, but always in terms of war. Hence the disastrous impression *that the Congo gives that we are more interested in war than peace, that we have been thinking of peace in terms of war*, for many a long decade.

Another well-known example: the profusion of what the Congolese novelist Baenge Bolya calls the “profanation of the vaginas” or the massive and cruel rape of women in eastern DRC. In this country, considered today to be the “world rape capital” by the international community, there is a proliferation of organisations who combat the phenomenon. If you are trying to find out which of these organisations has a veritable strategy for changing the order of things, you will be astonished to note that the most efficient one is a hospital where a great Congolese doctor, Doctor Denis Mukwege, “repairs” women who have been raped, to borrow the expression of Belgian journalist Colette Braeckman. That is to say: acts downstream of the problem. The other places of combat against the massive rape of women are in majority drums to tell the whole world of all the torments and suffering of Congolese women, without there being really a sustainable Congolese solution to this problem, on the level of collective psychology, nor on the level of legal decisions, nor on the scale of the search for human education strategies. Why is this the case? Because “the profanation of the vaginas” is *instrumentalised by the small combat power-mongering systems* for accessing the political field or by the desire to channel international financial aid towards certain organisations.

A third example: the struggle for Human Rights. The Congo invests a lot of energy in this struggle through the major organisations such as *La Voix des sans voix* or *Christian action for the abolition of torture*, with remarkable results in terms of marshalling the forces of resistance, rebellion and social transformation. Strangely, it is in this domain that the “ego” struggles of chiefs is the most ferocious, to acquire a national dimension of a major political figure. This proves that the essential in the struggle for Human rights is the ***political positioning*** and not the Human rights as such. Besides, the number of former Human rights activists who are now part of the country’s political cogs adequately proves that the heads of the civic movements were targeting entry into the circle of power or opposition all along.

In several other domains, there is no lack of examples. But we must not take this as a pessimistic vision of the action of civil society in the Congo. Here we have tried to present only the pathologies that prevent this civil society from giving its best in a country crushed by gigantic challenges. When, in such a country, the idea of civil society is gangrened by politicking ambitions and a rabid desire for personal enrichment, we may fear that the national imagination be disturbed and perturbed by the people’s negative perceptions of civil society activists. Today, this perception is effectively very negative and nothing indicates that it will really change in the short term, especially when we see that certain crucial problems such as the condition of country people, urban poverty, the disarray of the education system and so many others that must rally the players of social transformation are not taken into account according to the spirit of a civil society aware of its identity and authenticity.

A fundamental change therefore needs to be made in the idea of civil society and in the image given of it by the activists who defend its work in the Republic of Congo. We are thinking here not only of the practical, critical, creative and utopic functions on which the schema of Hillary Rodham Clinton insists, but of another schema which would make it possible to think in another way about the structures, values, interests and meaning of social transformation by the players of civil society.

When structures, values, interests and meaning collapse

This schema, we find it in the idea of three constructions for social transformation proposed by French thinker Michel Séguier in his analyses of the works of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and American activist Saul Alinski. It is a question of “*the construction of an awareness, of the construction of an alternative and the construction of a force for change.*”⁴

The awareness is that of “*situations and discriminations deemed unbearable, with no real perception of possible outcomes; flagrant and permanent injustice; threats to our lives and survival; total dispossession of power; of all things that have been or are still suffered in the Congo with variable frequencies and intensities but always strong and prejudicial.*”⁵

The alternatives are the concrete solutions we forge as responses to unbearable situations and that we implement so that society can really change through civic activism.

The power is the energy to build these solutions of change in everyday life, in accordance with the idea we have of what civil society should be.

The structures of this civil society, the values it defends, the interests it promotes and the meaning it gives to its actions depend on the triple construction of the awareness, the alternatives and the power, the orientation of which is different from what the other fields of smart power do, to wit: the political power and economic power in their own substance.

In the Congo, *civil society organisations copy the governing bodies* and use their titles and methods to the point of caricature. They have within them the majorities and the oppositions, the legitimate governments and the illegitimate wings, the recognised presidents and those who are contested, all in an atmosphere of uproar that removes them from their true legitimacy: the real challenges to be met. They contain the ethnic cleavages and tribal dynamics that agitate the political sphere. They work with politicising allegiances and ostentatiously defend the interests of the men of power, never wondering whether these allegiances still have anything to do with the authenticity

⁴ Michel Séguier, “*Les trois constructions : d’une conscience – d’une alternative – d’un pouvoir à partir des révoltes*”, in Bustani ya Mabadiliko, *Des révoltes constructrices pour le Congo, Expériences des accompagnateurs des dynamiques de paix dans des contextes de crises*, Pole Institute, 2013.

⁵ Ibidem

of civil society or not. Today for example, there is a civil society that is clearly close to the government in power, a new civil society that is positioning itself in opposition, another civil society which considers itself authentic and yet others that define themselves according to their own criteria. Real havoc, with no unity of vision nor firm ambition. In such a context, it is difficult to expect a social transformation worthy of an intelligent society.

The same can be said in the field of the values to be defended and promoted. By its insertion into the rationale of politics and its financial forces, civil society has lost the consistency of the faith in the human that defines its identity. It does not give the image of an ethical force capable of enriching the political and economic order of the nation with the norms it respects itself. It is more closely related to the sterile clash of cymbals than to the yeast that raises the dough of a happy society.

This can be seen in its lack of firm concern for the common interests to be defended and methods of concerted action to marshal the society around what the population needs to live a dignified life. Only subjects which have a political content such as the revision of the constitution and the renewal of the President of the Republic's term of office makes it rally a little, as if causes such as the endemic insecurity and the chronic poverty of the people did not also deserve a visible and clear commitment.

There is something akin to a lack of meaning in the way this civil society operates and is managed: something in the order of a lack of lofty vision of man and his destiny, of the country and its fate, to boost the energies of social transformation.

What can we do?

The question that comes to us now in this landscape is: What should be done? *Rethink and refound Congolese civil society from top to bottom.*

Rethinking the idea of civil society in the Congo according to the norms of the smart power Hillary Clinton talks about, is a work that the activists should do to integrate their projects, initiatives and actions into a fertile relation with the State in its responsibilities, the economy in its productivity and the national community as a whole as an intelligent society.

Refounding civil society means integrating its organisations into the dynamics of the values and vital interests of the population whose problems should be at the heart of all the preoccupations of the activists.

It is to the extent that civil society will become a part of the dynamics of the construction of a healthy society and smart power that it will be really on a par with the hopes the people of the Congo have in it.

If our current world understands this now, it will become capable of orienting the action of social transformation in the sense that is the most fruitful for all the nations. The Congo must know it. Africa must understand it. They must draw all the conclusions from it. In particular the idea of assuming responsibility for oneself and taking responsibility for the destiny of the world, carrying the world and being carried by the world in a spirit of liberty, responsibility and solidarity.



Death of the original tribe and rebuilding of the African state

Kamdem Souop*

Summary

The “tribe” as perceived through sociology and ethnology is dead. The advent of new tribes in the cities of Africa causes the emergence of individuals who are to be discovered with new identities, under perpetual construction, that the public authorities must take into consideration, if they wish to propose policies adapted to the new configuration, while at the same time obtain the participation of a new type of citizen which makes it necessary to do politics a different way.

The end of the traditional tribe

Anthropologists were no doubt helped by and helped the colonisers and those who currently govern Cameroon in cutting up the country into ethnic groups and tribes. Arguments that may have been acceptable fifty years ago helped to build a nation without completely isolating certain regions due to nature, public policy at the time or gaps in the memory—deliberate or not—of the people from these regions. But such arguments would not be deemed acceptable today. Equalisation and discrimination in favour of regions that had little chance of building an elite of quality and in quantity have done their time. There are no free lunches in the times we live in, whether or not there ever were. Only the competent—on condition that they live in an environment that is favourable in this respect from all points of view—have a chance in

* Editor of “Villes et Communes” based in Yaoundé, Cameroon

a million to succeed. This assertion is valid for individuals, enterprises and even governments.

Béti, Bamiléké, Bassa, Duala, Fula, etc., all these tribes are living, relatively speaking, their final hour. With good reason. These identities, while complex to analyse in terms of rites, rituals, chants, hymns, dance, arts, languages, writing systems, heritage, pharmacopeia, religions, etc. were gradually devalued in the minds of the Cameroonians by those governing and are today reduced to playing folk roles and at best a few annual “entertainment” events, where once again an elite succeeds politically and financially while the grassroots have the wool pulled over their eyes. Faced with this type of expression, hypocritical indignations are spouted forth that ill conceal the problem of our ancestral cultures: their ineluctable disappearance, for the choices we have made and that we make daily for ourselves and our descendents are definitely moving closer to the dominant western model.

From my point of view, there is no harm in this, for the history of humanity is strewn with abandoned cultures, vanquished insidiously or overtly, in favour of a dominant culture, conquering and especially merciless which imposes the victorious conqueror’s way of seeing. On the scale of families, clans and tribes, as well as nations and continents. There is no state of mind here that is valid.

The only perspective open to us is to envisage the ancestral cultures as a heritage with the trimmings that will disappear and elements to be perpetuated, in particular on the level of culture and human values. Perhaps also on that of government models, but without too many illusions, for current affairs remind us cruelly that the model of government called “democracy” and defended by the so-called international community has somewhat strange facets that this group of buddy-countries, the “global policeman” supports, finances and arms to the detriment of the idealists we are.

My postulate for the future of Cameroon — but it is valid for all the African countries — is that in-depth work must be carried out to re-constitute the tribal heritages, to “audit” them to extract everything that really deserves to be kept before they disappear completely, so that the common foundations, the distillate we have made is promoted not as an end in itself and even less as a series of millstones, but more like a fabric to be worn, gems that we sport proudly, unguents to make our bodies shine before we set out to conquer the

Others we could learn to understand by comparing the complexity of their identity to our own. In this case, tribal, ethnic, national and regional borders will be perceived as they should be in the 21st century: as passages, “star gates”, towards those who are not us but who are our future.

Emergence of new tribes

My family can serve as guinea pigs to test the new identities continuously being built which require regular updating of studies to allow them to be understood. My parents are Bandjoun and have almost always lived in Yaoundé. They don't particularly like living anywhere else other than in this city. They speak both French and Ghomala at home. I was born in Yaoundé, I grew up there and am currently living there after a 7-year stay in Bandjoun. My spouse was born in Bangem in the South-West and grew up in Bahouan until her teens, before spending around ten years in Yaoundé, then another 7 years in the West, and is now living in Yaoundé. Our children were born in Yaoundé, and despite the fact they spent 7 years in Bandjoun, they do not speak fluent Ghomala. Their first language is French and they also speak English, their second language.

My younger brothers and sisters have never lived in Bandjoun and, like me, are from Yaoundé. The third is even a mixture of Yaoundé and Douala. He married a young Bansoa woman whose language is very different from Ghomala. He has just moved to Yaoundé with his wife and children after having lived the past few years in Douala. He is planning to emigrate to Canada.

The second married a Batié girl whose language has some similarities with Ghomala. She is from Yaoundé and has been living in France for almost 7 years. They are now living there and hope their children will have nationality rights.

The 4th is engaged to a Ntoumou¹ from the Centre, a soldier who has worked in several regions of the country. Her first daughter was adopted by her fiancé, and was born of a relation with a young man from Mbam-et-Inoubou.

The 5th did in fact marry a young man from Bandjoun, but she joined him 2 years ago, for he has been living in Italy for almost 8 years. They speak

¹ The Ntoumou usually live in the South of the country, but the fiancé's family have lived around Nsimalen (Yaoundé) for several generations.

Italian in their daily lives and their daughter who has just been born has little chance of speaking Ghomala. They also plan to emigrate to Canada in a few years.

The 6th one is preparing to join her husband in China in the next few months. She has a degree in modern languages, and speaks fluent English. In one year, she gained such a command of Chinese that she is quoted as an example in that community. While she awaits her departure for China, her baby spends time with its maternal grandparents and its paternal grandparents who are both Sawa and Bulu.

We can therefore imagine what a family reunion would look like in ten years' time. Which language will be spoken at these get-togethers? How will the cousins communicate? With signs? In broken English, Italian, Chinese, French, Bulu, Duala or Ghomala? What tribe does my current extended family belong to?

I am forced to wonder about this mixity which started when my parents decided to move to Yaoundé after their marriage and which continues to be woven as their children grow up and study, marry and travel and prepare trips for the future, not to mention the plans to settle ever further from Bandjoun, the origin the State fixes on the forms that we all have to fill in to obtain ID cards (and passports, etc.) or for exams or other activities organised by the government.

My brothers and I, and our children, are far from knowing where our construction of *metissage* will end. More than ever, we are from “here” and “elsewhere”, and the geographic references of our children are even more dispersed. Following the pace of travel and migrations, will we still be a nation in the sense of Stoicea-Deram: “A community whose members, united by material (land, government) and spiritual (history, culture) bonds are aware of forming an entity”?

Are we not currently witnessing the birth of new entities-identities? New nations, new bonds, new tribes? I am well on my way to having nephews who are Chinese, French, Italian or even Canadian. Given that Cameroon has not yet revised its Nationality Code—which stipulates that you lose your Cameroonian nationality if you obtain another—, just how Cameroonian are/will be my nephews? Through their parents who live outside Cameroon?

And can we place the same level of requirement on young urban dwellers and young rural dwellers? The first with their prolonged contact with western culture identify with young people on YouTube, TraceTv, while American films inoculate them with new behaviours and habits, but also with the venom of violence by dint of box office successes. The second, in conditions where sometimes hospital, secondary school, electricity, drinking water, aeroplane or 10,000 CFA Franc banknote seem complex notions are ready to accept weapons and war positions from rebel leaders just to experience a feeling of power and grandeur for once in their lives. At best we have urban tribes that still vary considerably according to whether we speak of young people from the posh neighbourhoods or those from the popular neighbourhoods and the tribe — not two! — from the most abject poverty. Apart from being aged between 7 and 35, to stick to this age group, and at best the same tribal origin for some of them, what do they have in common these two categories of young people from the same country?

Never have clichés been so abused. The countries and cities in which my extended family live or are planning to live struggle to not recognise having the same problems as Cameroon experiences even more seriously: the question of identities, seen as majorities and minorities. Are the tribes presented officially or unofficially as being in the majority still in the majority? Will this still be the case in 20–30 years?

Another way of doing politics

Recent news in Cameroon leads us to pose numerous questions. Officially, Boko Haram threatens the peace of the country with multiple atrocities: kidnapping for ransom, deadly incursions, heavily-armed night-time attacks, etc. However, the modus operandi of the Cameroonian Boko Haram has little in common with that of the Nigerian Islamic sect. What feeds the lively discussions on the airwaves of the urban radio stations and some television channels, including Africa Media which positions itself as Panafrican with guests who state loud and clear what many Cameroonians whisper in the privacy of their own homes after making sure no-one is listening behind the door. To wit, and this is the unofficial version: a rebellion began in the Head of State's

“elder daughter”² region and aims to descend gradually towards the South of the country to take the headquarters of the institutions and put an end to 32 years of Renewal.

The questions we may ask ourselves relate to the place of religion in our country, the quality and contents of the discourse produced for the young people who constitute more than 60% of the population, jobs and access to the production factors of a country that is aiming for emergence by 2035.

For the question of religion, it is fashionable to come to the conclusion that today it is a global problem. Religion is at the heart of the future of humanity. It doesn't matter what people believe, they believe in something or someone, or they believe they don't believe, they believe in nothing. Definitively confirmed as a religious animal, man forces his peers to take his faith into consideration, quietly or not, peacefully or not. Those who govern are obliged to take religion into account.

Religious conflicts abound in global current affairs. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a religious basis, whether we look back to Ismail and Isaac or make do with the current snapshot: Muslim against Jew. Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Mali, Iraq, like other countries stage Muslim against Christian. The combat of the USA against Al-Qaida since September 11, 2001 throws light on the strong clichés about religion — we can still see the candidate with a Muslim father obliged to prove he is a Christian in a country where the White House is not likely to be home to a Muslim anytime soon. Still in front of us is France, which finds it hard to swallow that the rebellious suburbs are in the hands of Islamic and other groups. The major monotheistic religions make life difficult for secularism and decidedly have trouble cohabiting. But in the midst of all this, Islam is looked at in a certain way, forcing the most famous members of the faith and “moderate” religious leaders to prove that it is a peaceful, tolerant religion.

We can argue that if we read the three books of these religions they all preach the exclusive nature of faith, the salvation of the soul and the path to eternity.

² The Far North originated from a division, on 22 August 1983, of what was formerly the Northern province and included the provinces of Adamawa, North and Far North. This administrative and territorial division took Cameroon from 7 to 10, if we count the fact that the provinces of Centre and South emerged from the ex-province of Centre-South. The “provinces” of the Republic of Cameroon were renamed “regions” by decree no. 2008/376 of 12 November 2008 on the administrative organisation.

The problem is situated at the level of what they preach in the management of diversity, alterity and difference. Maybe those who govern should take a closer look at these questions, even if there are no guarantees of the effect this would have on the management of the extremists from the three sides.

In Cameroon, the revived churches are not the only ones who recruit from among the young generation. There is also radical Islam — an increasing number of young people sport the outside appearance of radical Islam in our towns and villages — and the “pernicious” sects. What do these religions propose to the young people? What counter proposals can the government make and for what cost in terms of finance, society, infrastructure?

Regarding political discourse, it concerns us on two levels: those making the discourse and the content of the discourse. It is very difficult for the politicians in Cameroon who are determined not to be renewed and are convinced they are the future the people should get used to, to be appropriate for drafting and embodying the discourse, bringing “the good news” to the people who, in 50 years, they have succeeded in cutting themselves off from. There is necessarily a need for new men and women. It is a question of national survival. The average age of the Cameroonian makes a necessity of this revolution that we prefer gentle and accepted by everyone. Similarly, the quality and contents of the discourse should correspond to the world of today: a world where rumour can destabilise institutions, obliging those who govern to be accountable for their mandate in an absolutely transparent way practically hour by hour; a world where communication is no longer a luxury and forced to align itself with the new media demonstrating regular, continuous activity; a world where distancing yourself from the people is one of the seven deadly sins alongside weak institutions, weak civil society, poor governance, the lack of a democratic change in government, the lack of a project for society, and the lack of communication. In an environment where the political “game” is padlocked generally by the political parties looking for strategic reference points, their reform is indispensable to the success of this discursive approach.

As for jobs and access to the factors of production, in particular credit and land, up till now the real people concerned, who are the young people, have received only smoke and mirrors: figures far from the realities they live are served up in the public bodies and official speeches, while the promises made remain wishful thinking years later. In concrete terms, Cameroon boasted

in 2013 that it had created 250,000 jobs in a year. An exploit which would have gained it pride of place in the Guinness book of records had there been any facts to backup such a ridiculous assertion. Interviews of the ministers in charge of youth and employment have definitively exhausted the credit of the government vis à vis the grassroots. They should simply have acknowledged their miscalculation. But instead we were treated to forecasts that were even more astounding for the following year, before building the presidential speech to youth on ... the “benskineurs”, motorcycle taxi drivers.

To date, Cameroon suffers from a lack of a consistent message on youth employment, despite the existence of three ministries concerned to a greater or lesser degree by the question of young people and employment: the ministry for Youth and Civic Education (MINJEC), the ministry for Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP) and the ministry for Labour and Social Security (MINTSS), deliberately not mentioning the ministries of secondary education (MINESEC) and higher education (MINESUP). A real policy, ambitions, targeted sectors, new occupations, figures, the school and academic streams created as a consequence: nada. We are playing it by ear, and no-one has really cared for a long time.

When, tired of waiting for the government to create the conditions for employment, young people jump on the self-employed bandwagon, they are forced to invent solutions to the difficulties inherent in this type of choice as they go along. The only support received from the State is fiscal. Consequence: they choose to live marginally, operate in the informal economy, challenge the State which for them is only a predator and feed the chain of corruption when they are caught by tax and customs authorities. Even the bank for SMEs that they were promised, to compensate for the refusal of the conventional banks, with their excess liquidity, to grant them loans, all that has been done is the appointment of a very expensive chairman of the board and director general.

We ask young people for land ownership documents to give them access to the formal loan system, in an environment where the only policy encouraged by the State is land ownership to the detriment of land access, with an overt inclination to give tens of thousands of hectares to multinationals for a symbolic franc, rather than offering the tens of hectares at market prices to nationals wishing to invest in farming.

Building the modern State from the taming of the local

Decentralisation is an opportunity for Cameroon and African countries who had not yet taken the measure of the intrinsic power of local governments in building the future of their States and the wider continent. But this presupposes that the faults of the central State are not only repeated, amplified and perpetuated at local level. It is imperative in an environment where the African State is not the emanation of the African, but a western construct imposed by colonisation and because of this has never gelled with the base, the first rulers perpetuating the relation the colons had with the masses: crush rather than serve.

It is consequently a question of building the modern — or, rather, postcolonial — African State, overtaking the West and the East on the length of this revolution, while at the same time drawing all the lessons learnt to avoid making the same mistakes. This can be facilitated by three factors: the demand for social justice of a population better informed of its rights — without a doubt not as much as its duties, but the successful demonstration of the respect of its rights can raise the hope that the duties will consequently be fulfilled —; then an increasingly professional civil society, ready to accompany the project and which only wants to be taken seriously; lastly a population in the majority young — therefore apt to be trained in the new issues and new occupations.

The success of this construction resides, in my opinion, in gaining command of the local. Meeting the needs of the grassroots population can no longer be ordered from elsewhere and cannot be hung up like a searing iron on wood. They have to take into account the environment the needs are expressed in, the people in presence and the potential on which to build solutions. Populations want to be able to identify with their rulers, whether elected or not. The effort to be made is simply human and presupposes that the people governing want to identify with the people they are governing. Remote government and government by proxy have done their time. We are now in the era of empathy and sympathy. Governments had better behave if they don't want to generate more tension, crises and their share of deaths and desolations.

In these conditions, it is in the interests of the State to encourage the emergence of a strong, competitive, professional civil society. I am referring here to a civil society in the broadest sense with all the stakeholders: writers, opinion

leaders, grassroots communities, civil society organisations, the private sector and the media. Villes & Communes (<http://www.villesetcommunes.info>) is a publication which, since it started, provides information on the decentralisation process as it is taking place in Cameroon, and gives voice to the stakeholders in the discussions on local development themes. *It is also a vehicle for education of the elites first of all—of the masses perhaps tomorrow if the first wager is won—on living together, the co-building of public policies and action.* This newspaper awaits the arrival of other instruments of debate, negotiation and political literacy, so that the theoreticians and players of local governance in Cameroon can have material for drawing up public policies adapted to the youth of today and tomorrow.

Civil societies: initiatives, movements, NGOs

Where is the leverage for social transformation?

Christiane Kayser*

After disappointing experiences with the cooperation between state structures in Africa, civil society is often considered the new player to be backed. But there is no single “civil society” being coordinated and directed by someone. There is a plethora of initiatives, movements, unions, associations, religious bodies, networks, societies (secret or not) and non-governmental organisations with a claim to the title.

First of all, we can say that the NGOs and associations created, inspired and maintained by the donors do not seem to have a real impact in terms of social transformation. In the best cases, like Zaire/DR Congo in the 1980s and '90s, they take over the roles not played by the failing State to meet the population's basic needs. Often these are self-promotion initiatives by executives to create their own jobs. In any case, there is no local rationale, these organisms are “donor-driven”, controlled and directed by the donors.

What we are interested in here are the types of organisations or movements that favour a transformation strategy developed by the first people concerned with an opportunity to create sustainable impacts.

* CPS mobile team for Africa for BfdW, one of the initiators of Mapinduzi Unit

Which social transformations have been initiated by the people, from the "bottom up"?

First we must distinguish between the destructive rebellions that are rife, where oppressed people become indignant and rise up against their situation, but in so doing destroy the heritage around them. An old example was the "swing riots" and other destructions of machines in 19th century Europe where workers and peasants attacked the machines which seemed to be the cause of their oppression. In DRC pupils smashed the windows of their schools, furious because they were not given an adequate education, etc.

Within the framework of the "*Bustani ya Mabadiliko*" with Pole Institute in Goma we started to develop the notion of "constructive rebellion" as opposed to an indignation that served the aspirations of those concerned.

Let us take a look at some cases of rebellion which could be considered constructive and the movements that carried them.

- ◆ The Black American emancipation movement of the 1960s carried by various currents and once again topical today in view of the strong racial discrimination that persists in the United States despite an Afro-American president. The non-violent movement led by Martin Luther King brought decisive progress to this struggle and in particular winning the right to vote against the resistance of the racists in the Southern States. People like Rosa Parks who sat in a bus reserved for white people, but also Malcolm X and the more violent movement of the Black Panthers contributed to this. It was therefore a mixture of people and groups mobilised for a cause they were experiencing in the flesh. One of the strong points was the clairvoyance of Luther King who also invited white Americans to join the struggle. The new film "Selma" shows a stage in this combat with all the contradictions between headstrong young people and as charismatic a leader as Luther King, and has already had a strong effect on Afro-Americans of the 21st century who are looking for leadership and an appropriate strategy to escape the spiral of violence.
- ◆ The victorious anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa was characterised by a strong alliance between various groups — even at international level — under the authority of the ANC and the extraordinary leadership of Nelson

Mandela, a figure respected all over the world. The combat for greater equality is not over, especially because the vast majority of the black population are still suffering economically.

This being said, it is tempting to dream: if Mandela were still at the helm, what would he have made of the situation of the African Great Lakes? Would he have accepted that South Africa play the role of dividing up the African countries, seeking exclusively and not very strategically its own economic and financial advantages, and militarily pushing—under the diplomatic authority of a France ardently renewing with its post-colonial approach in Mali and CAR—for a combat against a kind of rebel (M23) while failing to build sustainable peace in the region and organizing the guardianship by the International Community of a large country in the heart of Africa (DRC)? Yes, sometimes we have to take up weapons for a just peace, but this is always accompanied by a strategy of negotiations and integration of the different population groups concerned.

Mandela himself insisted he was not a saint, he made mistakes like everyone else, but he was a skilful strategist and had a vision for his country, South Africa, and for the whole of the African continent. The dream was not built on dependency on the major Western countries or the communist block. The dream was not based on exclusion and hatred, but on inclusion, respect for others, tolerance and solidarity. The dream was not fed by humiliation, triumphalism or arrogance but by deep reflection and individuals taking responsibility for their acts.

- ◆ The Arab spring which started in Tunisia and in Egypt was characterised by protests sparked by the self-immolation of a young Tunisian who was a victim of corruption, scorned by society and tormented by the police. This youth with no future rose up like a single voice. Mass mobilisation took place through the social networks and was astonishingly effective in Tunisia as in Egypt in Tahrir Square. This being said, the Islamists, who were neither active nor present in the protests were able to profit from the situation of change for they were one of the only forces organised alongside the army, which retains control in Egypt. The lack of organisation, despite the extraordinary mobilisation, therefore slowed down or even deviated the desired social transformation.

Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun¹ analysed the situation thus:

“Tunisia, hope.

In Tunisia the Ennahda Islamists and the lay opposition succeeded in appointing a new Prime minister, the current minister of Industry, Mehdi Jomaâ. (The elections in 2014 went smoothly).

Two visions of the world and of society continue to oppose each other: secular versus traditionalist. The problem is there are too many political parties and we are at a far remove from a system of democratic changes in government. However, on 14 December 2013, a law on “Transitional Justice” was voted. Inspired by the experiences of countries such as Morocco and South Africa, which opted for justice and reconciliation after decades of repression, this law promoted by the “Commission on truth and dignity” was deemed positive by several political circles in Tunisia. Thus the official spokesperson for the Ministry of Human Rights, Chekib Darwich, specified that this law was drawn up on the basis “of a participatory approach that associates all the parties concerned”. Which is progress for the future and the political streamlining of the country.

It is against this background and these expectations that the tree of the Arab spring will bear its first fruit in Tunisia. This is the first time an Arab and Muslim country has included gender equality in its new constitution (“male and female citizens are equal before the law without discrimination”), at the same time as it has succeeded in putting aside sharia law by introducing freedom of faith (“The State is the guardian of religion. It ensures liberty of conscience and faith and the free exercise of worship”). The State also ensures freedom of expression and prohibits physical and moral torture (“torture is a crime to which no statutory limitations apply”).

Not only did Tunisia, thanks to the commitment of civil society and in particular thanks to the struggle of women, succeed in sending the Ennahda Islamist party back to the Mosque but at the same time it opened the country up to a modernity that is cruelly lacking in the rest of the Arab world. Equal rights means no more polygamy or repudiation; it also means that the inheritance laws will no longer follow Islamic law.

¹ Tahar Ben Jelloun: *Arab Spring: mixed results*, published in Spanish in the daily newspaper *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona) 17 December 2013.

Egypt, the return of the army.

2013 was marked by the failure of the Islamists who took power. Before they were sent back to their Mosques or to prison, as was the case for some of them, it was the people in its majority who rejected them by frequent and determined demonstrations. In Egypt, things happened violently.”

The situation in Syria and in Libya is disastrous partly because of the intervention and non-intervention of the western countries. The situation in those countries where initially the people or a part of the people rose up against the dictators is worse than before and has started to destabilise other countries, including a part of West Africa. Tunisia disturbs the Islamic fundamentalists. The recent attacks in Tunis are proof of this. The sensitive reaction of the Tunisian people who took to the streets to shout their refusal of the terrorist blackmail is a source of hope.

What lessons can be drawn?

- ◆ The experience of the constructive rebellion in Burkina Faso is extremely precious, even if the story has just begun. The popular democratic uprising succeeded in ousting Blaise Compaoré, the darling of *Françafrique* and skilful strategist of regional alliances and counter-alliances, after 27 years in power. There was strong indignation (against the attempt to change the constitution to remain in power), the emergence on this basis of a common goal, strong and—even more essential- long-lasting mobilisation, which continues in this period of transition to watch over a process which is threatened from all sides. The question of the fracture between various tendencies of civil society and related to that the bases of the legitimacy of the individual groups is posed by Bala Sanou.

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the history of Burkina, the wounds inflicted by the assassinations of Thomas Sankara, and of Norbert Zongo have influenced an attitude of maturity in resistance. I also suspect that participatory processes such as decentralisation provided experiences of participatory governance.

In any case, we may presume that the local experiences of direct democracy and of participation in decisions as in Burkina, the existence of a trained and qualified youth as in Tunisia, the emergence of leaders who are charismatic but respectful of all the population they accompany as in the United States and South Africa help to strengthen social transformation processes.

In the past we may have imagined that you first have to be organised to become mobilised, we observe today that it is possible to create strong **mobilisation** through the social networks if there is a common cause, but that the problem of an **organisation** that is structured without being bureaucratic, efficient and well-conducted without being manipulated, carried by the majority of those concerned without being chaotic, capable of developing medium and long-term strategies, without forgetting the tactical aspects, remains a major challenge.

Lisbon, March 2015



Contributing to social change?

Potentials and limits of development projects

Uta Bracken*

This article focuses on development work aimed at supporting social change and discusses the relation between local actors and mainly international donors in development work. It looks at prevailing assumptions regarding Civil Society, in order to underline potentials and to point out risks from a practitioner's point of view. Finally, it proposes a way forward in order to provide improved support for civil society actors involved in social change.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are major actors in development work, both in the global South and the global North. CSOs in the South work with and often receive support from CSOs in the North. Additionally, in recent years CSOs have been integrated into bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, as well as governmental development efforts. The continuing debate on participation and the use of participative approaches, which began in the 1980s and 1990s, has transformed the involvement of CSOs in development cooperation.

"Civil society is a good thing"

Across a range of development actors, there appears to be an unspoken consensus that Civil Society represents the counterpoint to a potentially repressive government, as outlined in a study on space for Civil Society: "The presence of a vibrant, strong and free civil society is essential in order to guarantee

* Western and Central Africa Desk at Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) Berlin, Germany

sustainable development and to provide incentives for social and democratic change”¹.

However, are these high expectations a reflection of experience, or are they rather rooted in a normative assumption that civil movements in all their forms are elements of an emancipated society?

In many countries, this consensus has led to widespread demands for the inclusion of CSOs in developmental and decision-making processes, whilst little attention has been given to understanding the objectives and interests of particular groups, or to their ability to participate in these processes with regard to their capacities, knowledge, access to information etc. At times it seems that the label “Civil Society Organisation” requires no further qualitative explanation, and governments, donors and other actors are happy to consider and work with a section of “Civil Society” that best reflects their own position and expectations. For example:

- ◆ Organisations that are interested in supporting the advocacy role of civil stakeholders mainly consider civil society actors to be human rights defenders and other organisation with the potential to play a government-critical role;
- ◆ In bilateral cooperation, CSOs are often seen as a more efficient alternative to governmental structures for project implementation and are considered in terms of their service provision capacity;
- ◆ Governments in the global south tend to see Civil Society either in one of three ways; (i) as a threat to social calm (or political power²), (ii) as providing a nominal “non-party political” validation of a particular political or social path, or; (iii) as actors who can provide basic services to marginal populations, ideally as outlined by governmental political frameworks.

In the discourse of international organisations, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, the participation of Civil Society is considered crucial to ensuring

¹ Howard et al, “Space for Civil Society”, Geneva 2013

² A recent example from the Democratic Republic of Congo: “Several Congolese pro-democracy organizations had organized a workshop to introduce Filimbi (“whistle” in Swahili), a new Congolese youth movement. The workshop’s objectives were to promote civic engagement and youth mobilization, and to discuss how Congolese youth can organize in a peaceful and responsible manner to fulfill their duties as citizens” [<http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/18/dr-congo-mass-arrests-activists>]

that policy making of poor countries is more just, transparent and effective, particularly for poverty reduction. However, taking the development process of national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as an example, *Falk/Eberlei* show that involving Civil Society in the process does not necessarily have any impact on the effectiveness of poverty reduction in a country. They argue that participation can only work if the framework conditions are favourable and actors are capable and legitimate³. Governments that promote CSO participation in such processes are responsible for ensuring an adequate selection process for the legitimate Civil Society Actors to be associated in the activity. They also have to ensure that those CSOs have access to the relevant information and have sufficient capacity to analyse and work with that information in order to make valuable contributions.

Certainly, there are critical actors among CSOs working on the defence of human rights, environmental issues, corruption etc. However, this is by no means representative of all CSOs. There are other Civil Society organisations without a specific agenda for social change and even other organisations that simply benefit from access to funds. There is a great deal of debate on the moral implication of organisations and individuals who are seen as representing Civil Society. In some countries, for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali or Cameroon, different umbrella organisations have tried to define their idea of “true” Civil Society, and there have been various attempts to come up with charters and codes of conduct for CSOs. However, these efforts have not directly led to higher standards or a consensus on basic values, but rather to more competition and conflict between CSOs. In Mali, it is not uncommon to meet socially engaged organisations who explicitly distance themselves from the term “Civil Society”, as they understand “civil society” to be a synonym for well-established Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), actively engaged in the acquisition of funds, rather than standing for a particular cause.

³ Falk, Gertrud / Walter Eberlei 2015: Beteiligung der Zivilgesellschaft an PRS-Prozessen: Anspruch und Wirklichkeit klaffen auseinander. In PRSP – Chancen und Grenzen zivilgesellschaftlicher Beteiligung. VENRO, Bonn, Berlin.

Civil society – a sum of disparate parts

The general, broadly consensual, view of a good Civil Society as described above uses “Civil Society” as an umbrella term for a plethora of organisations as if they are members of a club, where membership is granted based on morally defined criteria and withdrawn if actors do not comply. Social scientists, however, offer an alternative description of Civil Society as an arena and social space in which different interpretation of what is right and wrong are negotiated or even where a battle over these interpretations takes place⁴. This more comprehensive view on Civil Society has great potential for development practitioners⁵. It opens perspectives, enabling a change of focus away from “good” CSOs as drivers for justice and development, and towards a more general “debate on diversity of interests” as a motor for social change. The validity of adopting this broader description for CSOs can be seen by considering just one example of a recent civil society organisation in Germany, the islamophobic PEGIDA movement (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Western World), which would clearly not be accepted into the club of “good” CSOs. In the global South, homophobic and ethnically exclusive civil society movements also illustrate that being a CSOs does not automatically imply a liberal, progressive or inclusive worldview. *Maina Kiai*⁶, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association argues that governments should have an interest in enabling this “debate on diversity of interests” on values and social standards in order to prevent extreme radicalization, which may then find violent forms of expression. The added value of Civil Society is that it represents a space for groups of interest, individuals or otherwise organised people to negotiate with each other and with other stakeholders such as governments or the economic sector.

CSOs thus represent the interests of particular groups and contribute to the public discussion on ideas and interpretations of values and rules in vari-

4 Gramsci, Antonio 1947: Gefängnishefte. Herausgegeben von Klaus Bochmann und Wolfgang Fritz Haug, 10 Bände. Argument-Verlag, Hamburg 1991ff (Neuaufgabe 2012). Band 8, Heft 19 § 24, Habermas, Jürgen 1991: The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

5 See also: <http://forschungsjournal.de/jahrgaenge/2014heft3> : African Social Movements vs. Civil Societies in Africa?

6 <http://freeassembly.net/>

ous ways. At the same time, they are an integral part of society, as much as the government and parliament, the military or the economic sector. In countries where governments are highly corrupt, this is often also the case for CSOs. Where power struggle have an ethnic or religious element, ethnic or religious affiliation will also play an important role in Civil Society's positions and actions. In this respect, CSOs are mirrors of their own societies.

Commodification of the cause

The shift in project implementation strategy in bilateral cooperation, away from partnering with poorly performing governmental bodies, to supporting national CSOs and/or NGOs that have proven more efficient project implementers, has resulted in the commodification of "Civil Society". International non-governmental donor organisations have adopted a similar approach, as a result of strategic planning exercises trying to improve the focus of their own thematic or regional work. This has often led to preconceived programmes being carried out by local actors, CSOs or NGOs. (An exception to this is of course in cases where the donor organisation is locally present and self-implementing, which is another trend that has been seen in the last few years, and not without impact on local Civil Society.)

Through a range of different mechanisms and for different purpose as outlined above, CSOs are the recipients of significant sums of money for specific development actions, either pre-defined by the financing cooperation partner or heavily influenced by them. To secure these funds, they are thus obliged to comply with the agenda of the financing partner, not only thematically, but also with regard to prescribed reporting standards. In this way, the boundary conditions to securing financing are clearly defined.

Some hold that all forms of Civil Society participation, even as a service provider working to an external agenda adds quality to development actions in the sense of "strengthening Civil Society". They argue that through the integration of Civil Society, programmes and projects automatically correspond better to grassroots needs, consider marginalised people and are locally and culturally more sensitive. In many cases, these claims do translate into reality. However, there is a flip side to this argument:

Through their *participation*, civil society actors can be used to legitimise governmental action. There are numerous councils, committees and conferences around policymaking (e.g. transparency initiatives on extractive resources, poverty reduction schemes, anti-corruption bodies, negotiations on peace and reconciliation) that strive to ensure the participation of “Civil Society”. However, the participation of “Civil Society” in these fora does not address the question of: (i) Who are these organisations or individuals speaking for? And (ii) how do they account for what they have agreed upon? In the worst case, the government or organisation seeking legitimisation deliberately selects suitable civil society actors. In Chad, for example, the controversial selection of civil society actors to participate in monitoring governmental action in the oil sector resulted in a split between the different groups that had provided a critical accompaniment of the process for years. Rumours circulated of favourable transactions offered by the government to previously critical actors that had agreed to participate in these official platforms. Eventually the critical movement ended, with serious disagreements between the civil society actors on the legitimacy of individuals or organisations to take a position or to negotiate with the government or the oil companies⁷. Other less dramatic examples exist. In Burkina Faso and Niger hundreds of organisations were invited to participate on the formulation of the poverty reduction strategy process (PRSP). However the conditions for an effective participation were not given. The conference hall did not have enough seats, the presentations were not visible, and no information was made available beforehand. Many of the participants were not capable of following the discussion, were poorly informed, and were often not even interested in the discussions. At best, their intentions were good but they lacked the resources and capacity to participate constructively in the debate.

In some particular thematic areas, where social change is explicitly on the agenda such as in the fields of peace and reconciliation, gender issues, and human rights and especially in a post-war or post-crisis situation, when large amounts of funding are available, the number of CSOs grows according to market logic, following the service provider approach. This represents an additional risk to the credibility of CSOs, with those founded explicitly to

⁷ See <http://www.erdoel-tschad.de/contao/publikationen-agt.html>

respond to legitimate needs having the most to lose. In a post-war context, where rumours and competition for financing can be a great source of new conflict, such massive support for externally determined projects derived from the international discourse for a certain region can prolong conflicts and prove counterproductive. Market mechanisms do not serve to increase the impact or efficiency of civil society action, but may serve to increase the efficiency of spending. Service provider approaches should thus be seen as an economic activity, just like any other consultancy service. However, in terms of structural development for social change, market mechanisms disadvantage organisations with an authentic cause but with a poor marketing capacity. Competition among CSOs for access to funding deforms the relation between groups of interest. If only those with the best marketing strategies are heard in public, it will unlikely be to the benefit of the poor and marginalised.

Funds are rarely available for CSOs to carry out their own actions and programs, based on their own agenda. Financing is most usually secured either by responding to a call for proposals within a preconceived donor programme (as part of a service provider approach) or by submitting a project proposal that corresponds to the specific requirements of a financing partner, including satisfying administrative standards, and addressing predefined fields of intervention or core regions. When reduced to the role of an *implementing agency*, CSOs work according to a result orientation that not only puts them under pressure to meet their “clients/donors” demands, but also reduces their possibility to react flexibly to address the population’s needs. The client may define the methodology, the PM&E system etc. Many NGOs have drifted away from their initial field of activity, as they gradually became a market-oriented service provider, responding to the paying customer’s needs rather than those of the population. This approach allows them to attract and maintain personnel, who in turn acquire more competence in donor demands. In the course of specialising in implementing programmes according to these external demands and standards, organisations can become increasingly distant from the population they claim to represent and work for. If they encounter social problems, they are less likely to address them openly, if they are not explicitly part of their financed project work. The dilemma of summarising their complex reality into a short report is on their shoulders. Many exam-

ples of such “distorted” NGOs can be found. Some of them die, when they are no longer able to win new markets or to position themselves as service providers, some move to work openly as a consultancy and some are successful NGO partners who professionally carry out projects that correspond to the donor community preference.

Strengthening “Civil Society” to support social change?

A number of organisations, particularly international NGOs but increasingly also governmental and multilateral organisations explicitly undertake programs to strengthen Civil Society. In the German context, agencies of the churches (such as Misereor and Bread for the World) have concentrated their work around civil society actors in order to support structural change and encourage participation for the poor and marginalised: *“On the basis of a Christian responsibility for the world, churches cannot exclude themselves from supporting structural change and the political and economic participation of the disadvantaged”*⁸. In so doing, they have developed specific support policies for their cooperation with CSOs working in the fields of empowerment, political participation, human rights, democratisation, decentralisation, peace and conflict transformation, gender justice etc. A study showed that in 90% of cooperations in this field organisations are strengthened through capacity development, and around 70% of the support in the said field goes to organisational development and networks in order to concentrate civil power on a special area of interest⁹. Networking from local to international level is a key instrument in the work of those “political actors”.

Working in partnership with CSOs that receive direct support is another basic approach of the two major faith-based development organisations in Germany, Bread for the World and Misereor. Partner organisations define development issues for which they propose solutions in the form of projects. These two German organisations neither ask them to carry out specific projects corresponding to strategies developed by the support system, nor are

8 Märke, Erika 2012: Zivilgesellschaft – Ein starkes Stück Demokratie, Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, Bonn, p5

9 Märke, Erika IDEM, p3

they given a specific regional or thematic orientation, as is often the case with many international organisations¹⁰. A key element of this partner approach is dialogue. The strategic orientations of the financing partner are developed in dialogue and based on the experience and capacities of the individual partners. The projects that the national partners propose are discussed and recommendations often including “issues of global interest” such as climate change, gender equality etc. are fed into this dialogue. Another key to this approach is the careful choice of those partners, often leading to long-standing partnerships. With church related organisations and faith-based organisations taking up a key role among partners, the sharing of common values is a priority when deciding on who will be a cooperation partner. However other CSOs can also undergo an in depth examination by the financing partner, which includes looking at their various capacities and their value base and mission.

Drawing on experiences of working with different types of organisations involved in, or affecting upon social or structural change, recommendations to improve this cooperation can be summarised by the following statements:

- ◆ Concentrating on programs and CSOs that work in an explicit field of “Civil Society” is not enough and;
- ◆ Supporting civil society actors does not automatically lead to social change and an overall betterment of society.

Concentrating on programs and CSOs that work in an explicit field of “Civil Society” is not enough

In order to contribute to structural/social change in the global South faith-based non-governmental organisations such as Bread for the World in Germany have developed a number of criteria and instruments that guide their

¹⁰ Many organisations carry out studies to determine a particular region hit by a problem they have decided to address eg hunger, climate change etc. Often this is linked to the legitimate need to use limited funds most effectively. However, partner organisations might not work in that particular region or field of intervention. “Contracting” new partners or encouraging partner organisations to engage in a region or field that does not correspond to their mission and competence can have negative impact on Civil Society as a whole.

support to Civil Society, which primarily includes empowerment, political participation etc. Outside the focus of what Bread for the World considers “support to Civil Society” development activities in apparently non-political fields such as agricultural development, professional education, literacy or other more traditional field of development are supported, but not explicitly treated as contribution to a vibrant Civil Society impacting on social change. In so doing, there is a risk that the partner’s full potential may not be considered. Cooperation often focuses on the implementation of a single project that might only be one of many activities that the organisation is capable of. However, all development work and projects contain, by their very nature, a political element. Therefore, all CSOs, whose work is supported by development actors in the North who wish to strengthen structural change, should be seen as potentially politically active and encouraged to take part in public/political debate.

Often the more professional and stable NGOs are found in the traditional fields of development work. They are more prone to the commodification of their work, as they often perceive development as involving technical solutions to problems. Their professionalism includes specialised technical knowledge and a good capacity to master donor relations (including their administrative demands). Compared to often less stable and less experienced organisations founded or working on a single cause, they have a clear advantage when it comes to accessing funds. They are more likely to act as service providers in order to stabilise the economic base of their organisation. They will often resist open opposition of governmental structures for fear of losing their own financial and organisational stability and regular staff. In order to avoid conflict at national level, such NGOs often adopt an explicit policy to stay out of political work and to remain politically neutral.

To avoid this problem of de-politicisation, it is important to show the partner that along with the administrative demands, his role within society and the contribution he has to offer towards social change is of major interest to the financing organisations. Partners should be encouraged to actively question donors’ demands or preconceived implementation strategies. Maintaining the freedom of CSOs to develop and follow their own agenda is therefore necessary in all areas of development work. Partner orientation should be a main strategic goal for financing organisations.

Particular support strategies often associated with the work of the above-mentioned “political” civil society actors must also be applied to NGOs involved in “technical work” such as agriculture or education. They too need to be included in political exchange, and their capacity to take up critical issues (such as access to land or transparency of a countries budget allocated to education) should be strengthened. Through literacy classes, trainings, education and capacity building in general they actively increase the opportunities for the population they work with to become involved in political processes. It is highly recommended to treat these NGOs also as civil society actors and to include these expectations into the dialogue. When necessary, CSOs in the North should lobby for partners continued ownership over their work towards bi- and multilateral cooperation or other donor structures, because even if one’s own support serves to implement partners projects, a large portion of funds go into preconceived projects and programmes.

Thus, one section of organised Civil Society is instrumentalised for the implementation of an external agenda whilst the other is considered an emancipatory motor for change in society. In reality, however, individual NGOs and CSOs are often engaged in both these “sectors”, often without the knowledge of their donor organisations. When transformed into economic entrepreneurs, these organisations lose their legitimacy as civil society actors. While concentrating on organisations, too little attention is given to this civic space that complements the economic and the governmental space or sector, in which different types of actors with different agendas intervene. In order to provide a more effective support to Civil Society, a holistic understanding of the role of CSOs within society is needed, and donors need to cultivate a dialogue around the cause and motivation of the organisation they support, going beyond the content of the individual project that is funded.

Supporting civil society actors does not automatically lead to social change and an overall betterment of society.

Achieving positive change (towards equal opportunities for all, for justice and non violent conflict resolution) within a society is the objective of most development work. As shown above, classic development NGOs are not necessarily

best placed to recognise and address social problems. Also their capacity to mobilise is often limited. However, in many cases they are the first choice as partners in development cooperation. Whilst they may appear apolitical, they do actually play an important role in preparing the field for social change (intentionally or not), contributing, for example, to the literacy of marginalised people, often women. People with little or no education and little or no capacity to read or write rarely get involved in political debates and they can easily be bought over by an interest group. Presidential elections often use the lack of education and information of rural populations to attract support through presents and promises. Classic development programmes also often contribute to increased food security and thus relieve the existential fear of many people who are unlikely to get involved in any kind of debate when worrying about most basic needs. Similarly health services, income generating projects etc. contribute to a situation where poor people can defend their own interests.

Other types of partner organisations include churches and their umbrella organisations, as well as other membership organisations such as human rights groups, unions or collectives of self-help groups. In contrast to NGOs, these must first account for their actions to their members who stand for a cause and have expectations. At the same time, many of these organisations exist in a global context. They have a shared value base that in part have been defined globally. They have “natural” partners, brought together by common interests and goals that supersede the pursuit of money transfers. When carrying out development projects funded externally, they find it hard at times to reconcile the needs and expectations of their members or the cause that they are working for with a project logic as demanded by the support system. When funds for particular activities are provided, these resources can cause internal conflicts and governance problems in the membership organisation, particularly when members were previously working in an honorary and voluntary capacity. However, these organisations have great potential for driving structural change and addressing social inequality and through their members, they can mobilise important sections of the population. Their leaders often have access to influential circles. As they are based on shared values, they are often recognised as moral instances. Working with those kinds of organisations implies that particular attention is given to governance issues. It is crucial not to force an NGO logic upon such membership

organisations and to help maintain or even stimulate the engagement of the members.

When considering providing support to non violent social change, another group of civil society actors often take centre-stage. These are social movements. Social movements are currently the subject of many analyses and debates¹¹. They are usually spontaneous initiatives that are founded around a common goal but on a low organisational level, with little funding and little to no administrative capacity. Depending on the underlying issue (or frame, as explained by Engels et al) their capacity to mobilise a population can be enormous, and, through by the power of the street, they can contribute to the fall of dictators, they can protect the constitution of their countries or successfully protest against economic adjustment measures. They live from their courage, and often draw young people, who may have otherwise been completely marginalised, into political debate and political life. Whilst these movements can have a completely transformative impact on their society, it is very complicated to provide them with direct support. Indirect support, however, remains a possibility and can include facilitating trainings, communication platforms and spaces, exchanges and networking, and grant funding for individuals. In the light of the need to integrate young people in particular into political life, it would be worthwhile to continue looking for new innovative approaches to capture this energy.

Social change is thus driven and affected by a broad range of actors (including government and private economic actors) who contribute and ideally complement each others actions. For example, a successful campaign for a more just use of oil revenues could include: an NGO or a Think Tank specialised on extractive resources, providing data on revenues and legislation, membership organisations providing evidence from members that are concerned. Churches and other value based organisations contributing to a morally based and acceptable frame of the demand and mobilising their members, individuals and spontaneous movements helping to mobilise populations accompanied by more structured groups who make sure that rules such as non violence are observed and can serve as speakers for a movement. Once governments show that they are ready for dialogue, a specialised and competent

¹¹ See for example: Stephan, Maria et al 2015; Aid to Civil Society. A Movement Mindset. Special report 361, United States Institute of Peace.

organisation or person is needed, once again this can be the role of an NGO. Documentation of the process, training in non-violence resistance and effective mass communication and the use of media are also among NGOs possible contributions.

Supporting such processes takes a certain flexibility of instruments and support, a continuous dialogue and mutual trust, and a good knowledge of the challenges in a particular context/country. Common values and a corresponding vision between partners in the South and in the North remain crucial.

Different perspectives on African civil societies

Based on the cases of Cameroon, Burundi,
Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo,
Guinea Conakry and Chad

Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou*

This paper was produced on the basis of 8 years of activism and responsibilities in an International youth movement, the Young Christian Students (1979–1987), in the former YCS network of Cameroon and Africa (RAJEC and RAJA from 1988 till today), 26 years of working in development NGOs, various networks of civil society organisations in Africa and the world, as a Consultant for the support and boosting of civil society in several African countries and as a Consultant in Organisational Development specialising in change within civil society.

Civil society in Africa is a concept that encompasses multiple, variable realities

According to the authors, a scientist's definition and conception of civil society differs depending on whether or not they are African, and their field of expertise — anthropology, sociology, law or politics. For Abéga, a fondly missed Cameroonian author, it is *“that fraction of global society that lies outside the structures of the State and acts through these structures that may be clubs, cooperatives or rights and interest groups outside the framework of political parties”*. *“An instance of intermediation between the base and a summit which may be the State”* for a legal specialist in civil/private law, it is every-

*Development Expert, Senior Consultant, Promoter and General Manager of MINADEV Consulting – jeanminla@gmail.com

thing that is not in the public sphere, for him, therefore, political parties are not part of civil society.

Following the member states of the European Union and those of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries who signed the Cotonou agreements, they speak of Non State Actors (NSA) including civil society, which they distinguish from the partners; depending on these Agreements, the unions are not part of civil society. In certain countries, business organisations, groupings of the traditional authorities, the liberal professions (Lawyers, Doctors, etc.) are fully-fledged members of civil society; in others it is up for discussion and is not accepted; the same goes for small producers' organisations (farmers, livestock breeders, fishermen, etc.), and local authority associations...

Lastly, some distinguish the public sector (the government and its various bodies, the public institutions in general, including the local authorities, etc.) from the lucrative private sector, political parties and other political organisations and civil society (the other social organisations). *And the more time passes, the more I think very sincerely that civil society is not just a question of organisations or legal entities, but also of private individuals and physical persons, men and women who share and embody certain values.*

Different perspectives and perceptions of the different players of civil society

Depending on the different players, the perception they have of civil society is different.

For certain leaders *civil society is those who oppose the government, a sounding board for the organisations of the North, particularly when working on public policy, human rights, governance, etc.). These same players consider them to be organisations that complete the action of the government when they implement development projects in the communities and are service operators for the implementation of major projects financed by international cooperation, poverty mongers who exploit their situation to gain work and money, those who become rich selling the misery of others, opportunists.*

For the political parties, *the civil society organisations are their allies when they criticise the government and other public players (those who govern), and adversaries when they criticise or support the action of the government or of the parties in power.*

African civil society organisations sometimes consider themselves to be a *stopgap for the inadequacies of the government, activists, political organisations, sub-contractors of the international NGOs, players in the country's development, players on the ground and in proximity, organisations who influence policies, defend the interests of the population, carry out citizen watch, etc.*

The grassroots citizens, basic population or citizens in general consider the civil society organisations as *the voice of the voiceless, the hope of those disappointed by public players and political parties, local players who are attentive to their needs and provide solutions to their problems when the government and the other institutions have failed in their public service role, organisations that handle large amounts of money...*

International cooperation considers civil society organisations to be *development agents who sometimes do better than the public players, agents working on behalf of their interests to harm the regimes in place and criticise them, who embody ideas for change and sometimes a democratic change in government, the policeman of the governing regimes, relays for the organisations in their respective countries.*

Northern civil society (in the developed countries) considers African civil society as *a relay, a sub-contractor or service provider, a rival for access to financial resources and because it has lower overheads and in certain cases as a partner, etc.*

For us (the authors of this article), *African civil society is all that at once—the question is which African civil society Africa needs to help rise to the numerous challenges for its development, for a social transformation and long-term change? To this question, we answer simply that Africa needs a multi-faceted civil society that plays roles that are different and complementary, professional, that knows what it wants and where it is going, that is able to capitalise on its legitimacies.*

Civil societies and multiple legitimacies

The legitimacy of civil society is diverse and plural. When well exploited, it constitutes a strength and an asset; otherwise it may become a threat and a risk.

Civil society that initiates and plays an active part in development with projects it conceives itself – Civil society organisations are development professionals with expertise and proven and recognised experience with concrete results in the field. Civil society knows how to do better than the public entities with very few resources by initiating its own projects and projects for which it obtains specific funding from various sources. These past few years, it has no longer operated only in the field of concrete projects on the ground, a part of this civil society works to contribute to the drafting of public policy by sitting on various public bodies in the same respect as government experts, using advocacy and lobbying to influence these policies and make sure they are drafted optimally, by participating in the implementation of these policies, and controlling public action. (Case of the Public investment budget monitoring committees in Cameroon where representatives of civil society have seats alongside the elected representatives from the ministries—some are even chaired by these civil society representatives), developing their expertise for better implementation of the programmes financed by the government.

Civil society as an operator of the implementation of other projects (service provider) – this is a practice that has become common, to see civil society organisations selected to implement the activities of major projects or programmes of the government, the private sector (new sponsors gaining momentum) and of certain international NGOs who ask for them because of their expertise and their perfect command of the ground. When this is done in the domains initially chosen by these organisations, it is not necessarily a bad thing. These civil society organisations have recourse to this practice because they can always find their own financing to implement the projects they initiate themselves. On the other hand, it becomes a problem when certain civil society organisations commit to being sub-contractors or service providers for just any type of project or programme merely to make some money. In this case they become “catch all”.

Civil society, actor in the democratisation process underway in African countries – Faced with the bankruptcy of the political systems based in the majority on representative democracy, which requires the people to delegate powers through elections to several types of elected representatives (municipal, members of parliament, President of the Republic or others), who act during a term of office on their behalf. Unfortunately, not only are elections not always the reflection of the will of the population (elections fixed in certain places, large numbers of people who don't vote, etc.), but even in advanced democracies, it is not easy for voters to control the actions of the people to whom they have delegated powers, and especially to sanction them and withdraw their trust immediately. Very often they are obliged to suffer them without being able to act. And it is at this level that civil society becomes increasingly a tool of active and participatory democracy and to correct the limits of representative democracy. Civil society organisations also increasingly play the role of challenger, in defence of the interests of the population, watchdog on questions of governance and management of public affairs on a local, national, regional and even wider scale ... of mobilisation that can sometimes lead to uprisings, as in the case of Burkina Faso, Tunisia, etc.

Issues at stake and challenges facing African civil societies

In view of the preceding, the plural and diverse African civil society has its place and should play an important role complementary to the other players in the social transformation and change in Africa. But this is only possible if it takes into account the different issues it is faced with and the multiple challenges it must rise to meet.

Civil society and internal governance – one of the fields civil society works in is governance; in this domain it is very critical towards public institutions, rightly denouncing the poor governance that has become generalised (corruption, embezzlement of public funds, no renewal of political staff, manipulation of the constitution and other legislation and regulations that are not always enforced, lack of transparency, etc.). Unfortunately, in all countries it reproduces the same system, in certain cases worse than these public insti-

tutions. We have seen certain organisations collect considerable financial resources, manage them without being accountable and close up shop from one day to the next with no sanctions being taken against the perpetrators of such acts. Certain CSOs are run like monarchies or empires with the same people in the positions of responsibility and power since the creation and no system of evaluation or any intention of handing over the baton, no legal texts to ensure rigorous financial management, embezzlement of the funds supposed to be used to help the poor or for the running of organisations, enrichment of certain leaders who drive around in splendour and build themselves out-sized homes, the lack of mechanisms to make the organisation accountable for what it does, etc.

Civil society and relations with those governing – as it is plural, we find within civil society organisations which are very close to those governing. Some are created by people who work in government or other public institutions to receive funding which they then appropriate. Sometimes, the government exploits civil society to weaken it to prevent it from gaining the power of persuasion and action or even become a counter-power that defends and promotes the republican cause, which serves to discredit it. It is one of the strategies often used to prevent the unity of the civil society movement from becoming a threat for the regimes in power. Alongside this, we do in fact observe a positive trend in certain countries where the expertise and experience of civil society is positively valued, consulted and its proposals taken into account by the government.

Civil society and relations with the political parties – certain civil society organisations and their leaders often take up the cause of a political party and openly engage in activism. While they may not objectively be refused the right to engage in politics (party activism), the question is whether it is ethical to be a civil society leader, and at the same time an activist in a political party with responsibilities in it? After the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, we were given the opportunity of working in this country on the civil society. This involved updating the mapping of the SCOs and preparing the start-up of a civil society support programme. This work allowed us to analyse and understand what happened in civil society during the crisis. Inter-

national cooperation and particularly the European Union had funded civil society to observe the presidential elections. And it effectively deployed all over the country and had its own results which were separate from those of the Independent Electoral Commission whose results were blocked. While the results of the CENI were blocked, the whole world waited for civil society to give its results. Unfortunately, in the same way as the results of the CENI were blocked, those of civil society were too, simply because both camps that were facing off at the level of the political parties (pro OUATTARA and pro GBAGBO) were also to be found inside civil society. And as on the political scene, the pro GBAGBOs blocked the publication of the results of civil society which was not able to make them public. When enquiring of various players during this mission in Côte d'Ivoire, several if not all of them told me they were disappointed in this situation. They thought civil society was non-partisan and in such a circumstance should be neutral to save the Republic. This situation was not good for the image of civil society which showed clearly how politicised it was. In Cameroon, after the last presidential elections in 2011, we saw certain players from civil society make joint statements with the opposition parties. As a consequence of all this, not only do the other parties combat civil society which they consider to be a political adversary, but also and above all the population whose aspirations it is supposed to represent is losing faith in it, which weakens one of its essential legitimacies.

Civil societies and citizen aspirations – following what has already been developed previously, the population and the citizens generally are very disappointed in those governing and the politicians, particularly the ones they elected and who should have represented their problems to find solutions from the decision-makers at different levels. Faced with this disappointment they seek other players to better take over this role. And the civil society organisations, at the very least those who have decided to invest their efforts in the field of public policy, are a hope for this population. Unfortunately the lack of efficiency of some of these organisations and their manipulation or even sometimes their political dimension transform this hope into a despair that becomes a betrayal. The testimony of the citizens of Côte d'Ivoire shows their indignation at the inability of civil society to rise above sectarian considerations.

Hopes and perspectives for African civil societies

African civil societies must exist and have an important role to play to contribute to change in Africa, but this can only happen if fundamental, high quality work is carried out on several aspects.

Building values and ethics and enforcing them – civil society is increasingly an actor and a social corps that is asserting itself. Unfortunately in almost all the countries in Africa, there is no system for this sector to self-regulate, therefore, everyone speaks on behalf of and proclaims themselves to be from civil society, which affects the quality of the work these organisations do. It is therefore time for the civil society organisations to improve their internal organisation to define the profile of civil society and a certain number of principles, values to be respected by all the players with sanctions in place, to separate the good from the less good. This absence of self-regulation increasingly leads certain governments to want to regulate the sector, while others take advantage to encourage and not take into account the civil society organisations they exploit.

African civil society needs to believe in and strengthen itself – changes in the situation in all the African countries has led to the recognition of civil society as an actor of development alongside the public institutions and the private sector. One of the areas considerable progress has been made in is the recognition of this actor in the Cotonou Agreements which were signed by all the African, Caribbean and Pacific states and those of the European Union. The status of civil society in our countries is therefore no longer negotiable but rather to be confirmed to convince the sceptics and critics. To do so, it should improve its internal governance and avoid acting as a dumping ground. It should draw up and fix its own rules to streamline its internal dynamics, create monitoring bodies for self-regulation. Civil society should renew itself.

Civil society should be professional – whatever the type of civil society organisation and the field in which it wishes to operate, it has to leave amateurism behind. Quality expertise is required, no more improvising in domains

that are not mastered, technical skills need to be continually improved, and a serious attitude evidenced in the actions conducted. For example, we must stop acting as though making statements all the time in the media was enough to merit saying that we are performing advocacy.

Civil society should change to become itself an actor for change – a few years ago, we worked in support of an organisational change process in a development NGO in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This work was a unique, intense and very important experience for this organisation to be able to reflect on itself— even to find the energy it needs to adapt to the new context and improve performance levels. This exercise allowed us to become aware that for over fifteen years, the organisation had invested heavily in mobilising resources to render services to a diversity of players on the ground without taking the time to reflect on its own *modus operandi*. This case is not unique, on the contrary, the majority of the support organisations and their networks follow the same path, and their partners (those who grant them financial resources to implement the various activities) do not plan for resources to help them improve their internal dynamics including associative life. If civil society wants to become an effective actor of change, its member organisations must first work on changing their own system internally. And their partners must give importance to this section and plan the resources for accompanying them through these change processes.

Civil society should avoid taking political sides – As has already been shown above, sectarian politics and the work of civil society do not go well together. The vocation of a political party is to conquer and maintain power. And each political party makes the others, when they are not allies, opponents to be fought. When a civil society organisation or one of its leaders or managers appears as an ally or member of a political party, the opposing party turns them into an adversary to be fought, and whatever the relevance of their work, it will not be valued. By remaining in a neutral position, above sectarian politics (political parties in opposition and in power), civil society has more latitude to work at drafting proposals, implementing actions, criticising and challenging, irrespective of the regime and the political party, solely in the interests of the republican cause and the population.

The synergy between components of civil society – civil society has various components, thematic or sector-based and on different levels, first degree SCOs (grassroots associations and organisations), second degree (support NGOs), third degree (Network of support organisations), fourth degree (Networks of networks, platforms, coalitions). For it to play the role expected of it as an actor of change, it must create synergy between its different components for more complementarity. No civil society organisation, no level of organisation alone can achieve the results, complementarities and synergies must be built with the others to produce the best results possible.

Building alliances with other players around specific goals – the works in which civil society organisations intervene and mobilise are immense and complex, particularly the field of governance and public policy. To produce positive and measurable results, the civil society organisations and other players who share their vision around objectives should ally themselves to conduct joint actions for change. In the framework of the land ownership reform underway in Cameroon and the civil society actions through the Coalition of civil society mobilised around this issue, it has built alliances with the REPAR (Network of Parliamentarians), the CNCT (National Council of Traditional Chiefs), the Network of journalists, the CVUC (Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun), etc. By putting in place good work strategies, such alliances can produce better results than an isolated action of CSOs.

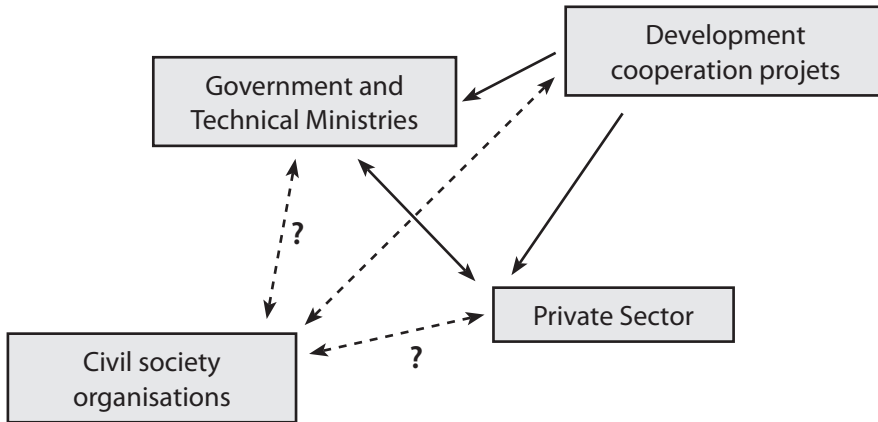
Working with the private sector – for a long time and even today, certain civil society players make the private sector an adversary to be fought. For those who hold this position, the private sector is capitalism with a vengeance, players who exploit Africa's resources with the sole objective of increasing their wealth at any cost and at all costs. While this trend may be confirmed with certain private national, African and multinational enterprises who operate in their own interests exclusively, there are increasing numbers of citizen enterprises which increasingly endeavour, in implementing their corporate social responsibility policy (CSR) to be useful (making profits) and appealing (their image, reinvesting a small proportion of the profits in the protection of the environment and the preservation of the interests of the local communities or population). It is in this respect that the major funding agencies in the

private sector (International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, European Investment Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) of the United States government, etc.) increasingly demand of the beneficiaries of their funding that they comply with environmental and social standards, and in the event of non-compliance, there are mechanisms for complaints by the population/communities who feel aggrieved and finance either audits or mediation processes to resolve the different conflicts. This second category of enterprises from the private sector is an actor that civil society should take into account and explore the channels and means for building multiple forms of work relations. The changes underway in several countries adequately show that the funds from the private sector will in the near future become a more important source of development funding compared to the resources coming from the bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies.

A new concept of civil society beyond organisations or legal entities – the reflection on the definition of civil society and its components continues. Unanimously and beyond the schools, most people agree that it is constituted by a diversity of organisations, therefore essentially, by legal entities. In practice we observe that beyond these organisations, there are individual citizens who are not members or do not identify with political parties, who are activists for citizen and republican causes but are not necessarily members of an organisation. These physical persons or private individuals should therefore be taken into account as players of civil society because they are the men and women who represent change, who share and embody a certain number of republican values.

Is Civil Society in Cameroon not useful, harmful or engendering hope?

Flaubert Djateng*



Relations between CSOs and key development players in Cameroon
(Zenü Network, November 2009)

This schema, produced by Zenü Network in 2009, is still valid and the role and place of Civil Society (CS) in the life of the Cameroonian people remains a preoccupation. We hear voices condemning it, saying the people from civil society are accomplices, embezzlers, that they have no governance bodies, that they are answerable to no-one ... Who controls them? They do not respect the procedures, they are bands of robbers! These organisations want uprising, they are manipulated from the outside!

On the other hand, other people praise their actions. It is thanks to CS that the chicken sector was started up again, it fights for quality and access to electricity and water, it demands good roads, and the fight against corruption in the school community is led by CS. An independent analysis of the

* CPS mobile team for Africa for BfdW, Zenü Network coordinator, one of the initiators of Mapinduzi Unit

State Budget and how it is used is carried out by CS. Others blithely dream about what happened in Burkina Faso and Senegal, that thanks to civil society there will be more democracy. The quality and strength of CS are presented as an indicator of the quality of governance in certain countries. The livelier it is and the more recognition it receives, the more progress is made in terms of quality of services and enforcement of rights. In certain cases, we even see more balanced justice along with better distribution of wealth. We hear “*civil society should...*”

But in fact, who is civil society in Cameroon? Many studies and mappings have been carried out, mainly by the donors we call technical and financial partners. No precise answer has been given to the question, in particular at the level of their responsibilities in relation to the types and forms of civil society found in Cameroon. There is confusion with the flourishes of descriptions of relations: civil society provider, civil society activist, broker, etc. and each time the environment (political and legal) of the CS is explored, they have to be structured, it has become something of an obsession. It even happens that they are asked for their representative as if they were a government. On a national level, we have observed uncoordinated actions that have been of disservice to the CS. There is a simmering leadership conflict which has wreaked havoc within Cameroonian CS.

Like other countries, Cameroon is living through a critical period of its history. The State alone cannot provide all the answers. It is urgent to trigger the rise of a citizen rationale that encapsulates initiatives to rebuild and transform society. The context of decentralisation instigated by the public authorities already bodes well for deep transformations in the modes of promotion of economic and social development¹. These transformations will have a major influence on existing human relations.

The decentralisation process can serve as leverage for development, if it is properly controlled. Otherwise, it can widen the social fracture in a country like Cameroon where the vast majority of the population are already experiencing situations that involve intermittent, short-term or structural violence.

Cameroon is a country with a very high potential on both a national and a regional level. Of course it also has weaknesses.

¹ The new laws relative to decentralisation voted on 27 July 2004, transfer many competencies to the decentralised local authorities (CTD).

Potential	Weakness
1. Rich soil and climate favourable to production	1. A disconnection between the population and the politicians in power
2. Dynamic, industrious population	2. A rise in ethnic division
3. A cultural diversity unique in Africa	3. A crisis of the buffer, mediation or dialogue structures (Churches and other)
4. Stable institutions	4. A regression in economic terms
5. Possibility of instigating industrialisation	5. Youth that is discouraged
6. Reputation throughout Africa for quality of human resources	

The civil society organisations should be able to influence government and private sector for more justice, fairness, transparency and “democracy” in their actions (see schema). The task is immense in this domain, but this is also where there is a lack of resources and sustainable funding mechanisms consistent with the mission of these organisations. For civil society to do effective work, answers are required to the following questions: how do we promote cooperation between the structures of the government, the private sector and civil society? How do we support the search for quality in development actions? How do we make civil society a real actor recognised by the others? How can we prevent the practice of nepotism from ruining the debate on quality and merit? This is a question of the recognition of society as a key player in development. This recognition is a challenge, a trial, because it is a question of proceeding to a change in culture both within the CSOs and the other players.

Building up the role of the CSOs will allow certain functions useful to the quality of life of the citizens to flourish:

- ◆ *creating contacts*: the interface between the different players requires preparation and actions of information. The CSOs possess tools and leeway which gives them the capacity to connect the players in a same locality or working on the same topic.
- ◆ *skills development*: the presence of numerous programmes set up by the technical and financial partners has allowed capacity building activities to

make the CSOs capable of working on behalf of the citizens and their organisations on the level of organisation, leadership and technical capacities

- ◆ *extension effects*: with well-organised capitalisation, the transfer of approaches and methods can make it possible to reach a wider audience.
- ◆ *social communication*: the CSOs are capable of engaging development and implementing tools for communication among elected representatives, authorities and population
- ◆ *citizen monitoring and accountability*: by facilitating the existence of spaces of accountability where the appointed managers or elected representatives answer citizens' questions, the CSOs organise participation and reduce the distance between the administration and the administrated, paired with citizenship education for all.

The recognition of the CSOs as credible partners is a pledge for quality services to citizens and progress in the respect of human rights. However, on observation, it seems to be almost non-existent in Cameroon.

After 50 years supporting development, we were given multiple programmes characterised generally by the interventionist and corporatist behaviour of the different players, which made the citizens weary. Government budgets do not produce the desired effects at local level. The donors seek new players and the CSOs become the alternative and sometimes even the cure-all. With time, cooperative funds became an opportunity before the employment crisis. We have also seen associations and NGOs launch into actions that are the responsibility of the public services (making bridges, wells, markets, etc.). Then new challenges pushed these so-called non-governmental players into the sector of governance and the defence of rights.

The CSOs are the first to blame for their inaction and lack of effectiveness. In the first instance, **several CSOs operated like whirligigs**, looking for money all over the place, adopting all the new topics and becoming experts in everything. Then, they started to reproduce the systems that had been criticised; no governance structure, corruption, lack of strategy, improvisation as a management method, no accountability. The human resources of the CSOs constitute an essential weakness, they are “jack of all trades” therefore ineffec-

tive, or those who are competent are taken up by cooperation projects due to the lack of a human resource management policy within the CSOs, or an organisational framework that valorises individual skills. Certain CSOs, sometimes encouraged by their donors, provide services and win contracts, without changing status. By behaving in this way, they get on the wrong side of the public authorities, because they do not pay tax and this creates confusion by the lack of legibility in their lines of work.

When we observe the development landscape in Cameroon, we see there are “outlets for frustration” specially for civil society. At first sight, these mechanisms are at the service of the CSOs but they in fact consume their energy and do not permit quality work to be done. In the front line are all the actions of the technical and financial partners, the programmes to support civil society. These are well-organised mechanisms that alternate calls for proposals, the use of consultants and experts, subsidies and audits, an entanglement which spins like a wheel, consuming a lot of resources without really creating change in the lives of the citizens. The freedom of the press and free association are also “outlets for frustration”. We can let it all out to feel release; we can also create the structures we want, which are spaces where people come to moan and feign a concern for sensitive subjects. Committees are created, or concertation frameworks, platforms and we go from one meeting to another without ever producing anything other than reports full of recommendations which are almost never implemented. In the same momentum, seminars and conferences are organised, although sometimes useful these moments of analysis can operate according to the rationale behind industrial factories. Production line work, each week a seminar or a conference to the extent that taking part in them has become a lucrative business because of the per diems and other benefits. This leads to excesses where people who have come to receive training in a capacity building seminar demand to be paid for their mere presence.

We can also mention as a cause the inefficiency of the CSOs, **the cowardice and irresponsible behaviour of the technical and financial partners**. The Technical and Financial Partners or TFP as we like to call them are the first players to demand a strong, activist civil society. Observing the development scene puts into action players with diverging interests. Those towards whom all eyes are turned in expectation of an action from civil society are in power

or have a lot of power. To make things change would require concerted action and strong leadership on the part of civil society. The working themes often concern legality and touch the domain of the criminal, rights enforcement, the fight against corruption, the respect of standards and regulatory frameworks. Seeking change in these domains means taking risks, the people or the institutions engaged are sometimes threatened, their rights are ignored, sometimes they are banished or even deprived of their liberty. One would expect the TFPs to express themselves and manifest their solidarity or even defend the CSOs or the leaders who are suffering. There is an absence of communication and our “partners” wall themselves in silence and explain their attitude by the obligation to discretion or non-interference.

We also observe the irresponsible behaviour of the TFPs at the level of the “war of the flags”. When things go well and the citizens adhere, then the “need for visibility” makes itself felt. Each side tries to appropriate the results, demands the display of logos, the building of plaques and respect of the principles documented in the visibility guide quickly becomes a priority. This way of working becomes harmful when tensions mount to the point where they prevent the project concerned from being able to operate.

The tools for access to the TFP funds are also a source of inefficiency. There are sectors that demand synergy between the players to make progress and even obtain sustainable changes. The CSOs must seek funds to be able to work, the tools of the donors are for the most part competitive, the calls for proposals that enable access to the funds give the impression of entrance exams to prestigious academic institutions. Although it is sometimes recommended to submit joint applications, there are no framework conditions to take advantage of synergy between the joint applicants. Then, even when we have access to funds, respecting the procedures takes precedence over the technical quality of the work and the achieving of the goals. Some financial partners require no fewer than 9 documents for one item of expenditure. The CSO executives spend most of their time producing the documents to justify the expenditure. There is a continuous shuttling back and forth when the financial statements are submitted. The partners on the ground are stressed because each time they are asked to prove they exist, and all just to respect procedure. This respect of procedure and the constraints that go along with it are more important than social transformation.

Civil society also suffers from **concepts, tools and instruments that are inappropriate** for its work. The logical framework is an essential instrument in any relationship with the donors. This instrument, if we look closely, is part of the answer to the question why Africa is not developing. We have here an instrument that focuses on the analysis of the problems to choose the one on which to concentrate its resources. Result: we are closed in our problems and we do not focus on the potentialities and tracks for solutions. In fact, to develop a nation, the potentials should be at the centre of the analyses. An analysis of the existing potentials following the rationale of making use of them and profiting from them will certainly open tracks to respond to our needs and lead onto the production of wealth and services.

Another concept is that of work approaches, we are experiencing a clash between the *neoliberals* and the *neoconservatives*, the *charitable* movements, *post-third world activists*, *anti-globalisation activists* and even *neo-institutionals*. Of course, we need basic concepts to better direct the work, but when these concepts are used for mutual denigration or exclusion, time is spent justifying what we do instead of bringing about change for the collective good. This debate around concepts brings us out of our usual context and makes us dependent on the philosophy skilfully conceived by the development-broker-researchers.

We must not give up hope, however; we must not abandon this important work. The African youth which is rising up against the current situation, which demands to be listened to, is a source of great hope. The existence of certain leaders who face the difficulties of our occupation against all odds is reassuring. Associations such as ACDIC in the defence of citizen rights, *Dynamique Citoyenne* in the monitoring of public policy, Zenü Network in the combat against corruption in the school community, still make us dream of a possible change in our daily lives. Encouragement to continue the work also comes from the revolution afforded us by the new communication technologies and social media. Our work will provide change, another quality of life and to do so we should be guided by the following principles. A real CSO is one that can be:

- ◆ HEARD (is audible, creates spaces for dialogue and accountability, disseminates knowledge, etc.)

- ◆ READ (issues statements, produces knowledge, capitalises on its experiences and makes them available, etc.)
- ◆ SEEN (organises marches, takes a stance, creates a critical mass around key subjects, respects its commitments, its members are determined and want to change things).
- ◆ a civil society that has an impact on the lives of the people and the institutions in society.

Bafoussam, Yaoundé, April 2015



Women in participatory governance

How do civil society organizations address the specific needs of women?

Laura Anyola Tufon*

So much literature has been developed for well over a century, commitments undertaken by nations, high level conferences ... at all levels and by every stratum of the society with Civil Society Organizations as the flagship of efforts to promote women's participation in governance, ensure gender equality and women's empowerment in order to end gender discrimination and work towards achieving sustainable development. To enable women to take active part in governance issues, it is important for their specific needs to be identified and addressed. Civil Society Organizations across the globe are doing a marvellous job in accompanying women especially local women to identify their needs in every situation especially in times of conflict and extremist movements. Fifteen years ago, the U.N. enshrined the idea that equality between men and women is inextricably linked with peace. It's time to act on that! The Security Council adopted **Resolution 1325** on the importance of women's participation in all areas of peace and security, including conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. This milestone was the result of decades of activism culminating in one revolutionary idea—that peace is inextricably linked with equality between men and women. Overwhelming evidence from around the world shows that women's empowerment is a powerful force for economic growth, social and political stability, and sustainable peace (all related to participatory governance). Gender equality and women's participation in the workforce and income generation are linked to higher GDP per capita; equal access to women in peacebuilding strongly increases

* Justice and Peace Commission, Archdiocese of Bamenda, Cameroon

the probability that violence will end. It is no coincidence that in societies and communities where gender equality indicators are higher, women are less vulnerable to the impacts of violent extremism.

The current world order indicates that women continue to be victims and are victimized in extremist movements. One common thread shared by the extremist movements that have captured the world's attention in the past few years, from northern Nigeria to northern Iraq, Syria to Somalia, and Myanmar to Pakistan, is that: in each and every instance, the advance of extremist groups has been coupled with vicious attacks on women and girls' rights. Last year, the **UN Security Council**, the highest decision-making body on international peace and security, strengthened its commitment with a follow-up resolution and undertook to incorporate women's voices and participation in all areas of work, including counterterrorism. Though this came as an afterthought how much change have we experienced after all? Women and girls continue to be traded among fighters, forcibly "married," forced to convert, and repeatedly raped. These horrific mass violations are mirrored in the accounts of Nigerian girls who fled from Boko Haram, in the tales of Somali women liberated from the rule of al-Shabab, and in descriptions of life under the Islamist group Ansar al-Din in northern Mali. Names and location may change, but the common agenda and first order of business for these extremist groups is almost invariably to place limits on women's access to education and health services, restricting their participation in economic and political life, and enforcing the restrictions through terrifying violence. This failure must be remedied. A renowned Sociologist Zeinabou Hadari, with over two decades of working on the promotion of women's rights and leadership in Niger, once said that "... every step forward for women's rights is a piece of the struggle against fundamentalism". Therefore the International community and Civil Society Organizations must recognize that empowered women are the foundation of resilient and stable communities—communities that can stand firm against radicalization. And this can effectively be achieved when both women and men participate in making it happen.

Types of governance settings

In our localities there are appointed and elected settings and these will include civil government positions such as councils, parliamentary, and ministerial positions.

There are also other settings where governance is practiced such as traditional settings, religious and economic groups.

Assessment of the economic, security and other benefits of women's participation

Women's meaningful participation in governance affects both the range of policy issues that are considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. To begin with, Economic empowerment cannot be divorced from the care economy. There are several dimensions of empowerment and economic empowerment can be used to enable other kinds of empowerment; social, political, and cultural. Education, both formal and non-formal, is key to women's economic empowerment. In addition, social protection can be economically empowering and socially transformative. Economic empowerment is a cornerstone of women's equality and a useful ground test to determine the effectiveness of existing gender mainstreaming strategies. The following points though not exhaustive are to be considered:

Strengthening education is key in building the foundations for women's economic empowerment. Education, both formal and non-formal, is vital to women's economic empowerment particularly in increasing their access to the labour market.

The health of women is crucial to their economic empowerment: The empowerment of women needs to take into account women's health, in particular sexual and reproductive health. Health needs to be incorporated into the economic empowerment framework. Governments, Civil Society Organizations and other development actors need to secure women's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, throughout the life cycle.

Investing in and for women. Microfinance is mainly linked to women, while investments mostly target men. There is a need to revise the model of micro-credit and scale up its availability for women

Strengthening women's property rights. There is a huge difference between access to and ownership and control of property such as land and housing. Strengthening women's right to land and other assets is key to economic independence and security. Tools designed to address land issues such as land reform, land management and security of tenure should be designed to benefit both women and men.

Women are deeply committed to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and have a unique and powerful perspective to bring to the negotiating table. Women often suffer disproportionately during armed conflict and extremist movements and often advocate most strongly for stabilization, reconstruction and the prevention of further conflict and rightly challenge the root causes of extremism. Peace agreements, post-conflict reconstruction and governance have a better chance of long-term success when women are involved. Furthermore, establishing sustainable peace requires transforming power relationships, including achieving more equitable gender relations.

There are other constraints; time, financial, and knowledge that can be viewed in the following dimensions; women may not have the necessary knowledge on participatory governance which means they may not know about pushing through gender perspectives into the agenda of governance institutions. This is because in most cases the burden lies on women to project their needs to the forefront (even though this should not be the case), on another note, are issues raised by women taken seriously?

Analysis of the major preconditions for increased participation

Despite these positive indicators and gains, considerable challenges remain to women's meaningful participation in governance. And while no ideal environment currently exists to jumpstart women's political advancement, there are certain conditions that make it easier.

First, women must have reasonable access to positions of power. Political leadership is often centralized and informal. Holding a formal position, even an elected position, does not necessarily lead to greater influence, as the real leaders do not always hold formal titles. Power in democracies is further built on relationships that often have existed for many years. In countries where women's public roles are only beginning to develop, women's absence from this history can present significant barriers. However, by giving women the tools they need to lead, creating the opportunity for advancement and helping build networks of like-minded men and women, and ensuring that women's legal rights are firmly entrenched, a pathway to power can be developed.

Transparency in the political and legislative processes is critical to the advancement of women in democratic governance. The lack of openness in political decision-making and undemocratic internal processes are challenging for all newcomers, but particularly for women. Similarly, the complex hierarchies in political parties and legislatures represent a barrier to many women who enter politics at the local level and aspire to rise to other levels of leadership.

Over and above, there must be the willingness of citizens to accept 'new' ideas about gender roles in society. There are still many countries that discourage women from competing directly with men or consider childcare and housekeeping to be the exclusive domain of women. As such, it is common throughout the world to see women activists supporting democratic activities at the grassroots level, yet to see few women in leadership positions, thereby creating an absence of women from whom to draw for higher levels of political leadership. Concerted efforts must be made to raise awareness on gender inequality and the ways in which stereotypical gender roles create both formal and informal barriers. The support of male political leaders is also a key ingredient in creating a political climate that encourages women's political participation.

The ability of women to attain financial autonomy or access to economic resources is also necessary for their greater participation in political life. Worldwide, women's lower economic status, relative poverty and discriminatory legal frameworks are substantial hurdles to overcome. Because women control and have access to fewer economic resources, they are often unable to pay the formal and informal costs associated with gaining a party's nomination and standing for election.

The significant role of the civil society sector in participatory governance

The dimension of the Civil Society Sector is very important in identifying what role it plays in participatory governance. Civil society has been widely recognized as an essential 'third' sector. Its strength can have a positive influence on the state and the market. Civil society is therefore seen as an increasingly important agent for promoting participatory governance like gender equality, transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness and accountability.

Civil society can further participatory governance in five ways: (1) by policy analysis and advocacy; (ensuring gender equality), (2) by regulation and monitoring of state performance and the action and behavior of public officials; (3) by building social capital and enabling citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms and democratic practices; (4) by mobilizing particular constituencies, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized sections of the masses, to participate more fully in politics and public affairs; and (5) by development work to improve the wellbeing of their own and other communities.

Given the importance of its potential contribution, the question that arises is whether there is enough presence of such organizations to make a meaningful contribution? A clear answer to this question is difficult, if not impossible. This is because of the paucity of existing quantitative and qualitative information, particularly in the context of developing countries, and particularly Sub-Saharan Africa on the dimensions of civil society. There are, however, fragmented pieces of research, which throw some light on the size of the sector in different countries/regions.

Seemingly the number of CSOs around the world is impossible to calculate but it is safe to say that it is very large. UNDP estimates that the total number of people 'touched' by NGOs in developing countries across the world is probably 250 million, although this almost certainly underestimates the case if account is taken of the NGO influence on public policy making (Adair, 2004).

Advocacy is another important role of civil society. This includes its role in identifying unaddressed problems and bringing them to public attention, in protecting basic human rights and in giving voice to the wide range of political, environmental, social and community interests and concerns. Beyond

political and policy concerns, civil society also performs a broader expressive function, providing the vehicle through which artistic, spiritual, cultural, ethnic, occupational, social and recreational sentiments find expression.

In economic development and poverty alleviation, recent years have witnessed a considerable upsurge of interest throughout the world in CSOs, which are now recognized as strategically important participants in the development process and an effective but underutilized vehicle of development. The rising popularity of CSOs is largely in response to the widespread disillusionment with the performance of the public sector in developing countries. In fact, even some governments are now increasingly viewing CSOs as an integral part of the institutional structure particularly for addressing the problem of rising poverty. This is reflected in the poverty reduction strategy put in action by governments in most developing countries.

What is the link between civil society and poverty alleviation? What role can CSOs play to help tackle the problem of poverty and promote local economic development? Arguments in favour of CSOs include:

CSOs are perceived as more flexible, participatory and responsive to local needs of the poor—all prerequisites for sustained development. State bureaucracy and corruption erodes finances and policies are often motivated by institutional, political and even kinship interests. These policies are typically urban based, delivering to politically favored areas (Lehmann, 1990). CSOs can counter this by targeting pockets of poverty better.

CSOs can potentially foster and support grassroots organizations to become more numerous, sizable, resourceful, and self-reliant. Also, grassroots contacts enable CSOs to provide critical information on potential crises and thus contribute to early warning and early response systems.

Typically, CSOs require less financial inputs than government agencies and therefore are more cost effective, an attribute that is important in financially constrained developing countries.

CSOs can be more resourceful and innovative as they involve local communities in the identification and resolution of development problems which are more cost effective, more sustainable, and more compatible with community values and norms. Over and above these direct development roles, CSOs also have a very important advocacy role to play in promoting effective participatory governance and valorizing the specific role of women in the process.

Strategies employed by CSOs

According to Covey (1994), CSOs use a clear breakdown of strategies to influence policy. She says that CSOs use five strategies to influence national policy formulation. These strategies are *education, persuasion, collaboration, litigation and confrontation*.

The education strategy is one where the CSOs attempt to give the government a lot of information, analysis and policy alternatives. CSOs also educate the government by creating and testing innovative development approaches that could be adopted by the state. Education is done through workshops, conferences, physical visits and initiation of pilot projects. Education strategies may also target other groups besides the government such as the public at large, the media, and CSOs or community members.

In using persuasion as a strategy, a CSO acts like a pressure group to press for policy changes and show public support. The idea here is to convince the government that the CSO supported policy or policy change needs to be recognized and enacted into legislation. Persuasion is done through various means, which cover meetings, workshops, and conferences, invitations to the site, lobbying, demonstrations and even strikes. The main aim is to pressurize the government into changing its policy direction.

The collaboration strategy is one where a CSO works hand-in-hand harmoniously with the government. Relations are usually good and amicable between the government and the CSO that is collaborating with it. Collaboration calls for mutual trust between the government and the CSO it is dealing with. It also calls for transparency within the collaborating bodies. That is, both sides need to show all their intentions, interests, needs, goals, agendas, etc. It is when and only when these needs are identified can we easily say how CSOs intervene- impacting knowledge to women on participatory governance, empowering women to stand/vie for elective positions, to carry out campaigns, to attend sessions during governance, to write out their needs before attending sessions, advocate and lobby for their interests and needs to be taken into consideration, gain male gender advocates who will spear head the problem with them etc. This is the basis of building trust and relationships.

In the litigation strategy, the CSOs use the courts to press for policy change. When a CSO believes that the law is being broken or misapplied it can take

the government or other offending parties to court for the issue to be legally dealt with.

Lastly, confrontation involves protesting in various forms for policy issues. The protests usually involve radical tactics such as violent demonstrations, destroying property, etc. In most cases, relationships between the government and the CSOs become sour and there is a lot of animosity between the two parties.

If CSOs employ all these strategies effectively then the talk of gender discrimination, inequality and violence may be laid to rest and participatory governance with women taking their role effectively will be the order of the day.

Whether critical or optimistic, it is evident that the nature of CSO engagement has served to enrich the dialogue and debates surrounding women's participation in matters of governance. This not without challenges ... and the dialogue continues!

Civil society in Mali: Opportunities and questions

Mamou Daffé*

Civil society encompasses all non-governmental and non-profit organisations. It therefore concerns the self-organisation of society, outside of any institutional (in the political sense of the term), administrative or commercial framework.

Charles de Montesquieu saw citizen society much less in the role of controller of the State than as an intermediary between the citizens and the State. He believed there were two clearly distinct spheres: politics, on the one hand, and citizen society on the other.¹

For a country, a nation, civil society comprises all the more or less formal players, associations; organisations, movements, lobbies, interest groups, think tanks, etc., which are non-governmental in nature and non-profit-making. It constitutes a type of self-organisation of society in citizen initiatives outside the government or business framework. These objectives are founded on the common good in various domains: socio-political, solidarity, humanitarian, ethics, legal, environmental, scientific, cultural, etc.²

¹ Nina Cvetek, Friedel Daiber, *Qu'est-ce-que la société civile?*

² http://www.toupie.org/Dictionnaire/Societe_civile.htm

* Director of the Kòrè Cultural Centre, Mali

The role of civil society in good governance

In many countries in the world, the CSOs³ play a vital role in the life of their nation as a counter-power in order to control, regulate, criticise and make relevant proposals for the development of their country.

Civil society is both a means for weak organisations to combine forces to deal with the public authorities and a sort of recentralisation.⁴

Civil society should play a role of regulator and control the action of the public authorities.

In a democratic system, civil society plays a key role in monitoring the efficiency of those responsible in government and of the elected representatives. This monitoring role begins with the monitoring of elections but goes largely beyond this context to extend to the regular control of policies, the definition of priorities, budget implementation, equity, allocations and efficacy in service provision. The role of monitoring civil society in a decentralised system is of critical importance not only at the level of the central government, but also at regional and local levels.

Ideally, decentralisation and the democratic system of governance confer on civil society the important role of controlling/monitoring/criticising the governmental initiatives aimed at the different categories of society.

Civil society in Mali

Malian civil society has experienced large scale effervescence since the advent of public liberties following the events of 26 March 1991. Although the structuring predates 1991, the internal organisation process of civil society is progressing in parallel to the issues at stake for the players that compose it.

In 1991, the country already had almost 200 NGOs, 1,000 associations and cooperatives. Similarly, the private press already existed and contributed greatly to raising awareness for a more profound democratic change. All this cul-

³ CSO: Civil Society Organisations

⁴ Charlick, Robert, *Institutional Dynamics in Contemporary Mali – A Study of the Context for the Impact of Citizen Advocacy*, World Education Report, January 2003

minated in the events of March 1991, which led to the introduction of a democratic State, originating from the National Conference.

In Mali, several CSOs came together in two major platforms: the National Civil Society Council (CNSC) created in March 2003 composed of collectives of associations, NGOs, syndicates and federations, coordination and other specialist associations.... It is more recognised by the Mali government and enjoys greater notoriety; and the Forum of Civil Society Organisations, set up in 2009 and composed of 57 organisations members of different sectors and 9 secretariats at national level, also has its networks and connections. These two structures are frameworks that created dynamics of cooperation and conciliation so that their members may, upon common agreement, represent the CSOs, dialogue, defend their common positions and promote their development. Their aim is to boost the actor role of analysis, watch, negotiation and proposal with a view to improving development policies and programmes. Their mission can be summarised in the defence of human rights, information and education for citizens, control of citizens, influencing policies, the formulation, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of the projects and programmes, mediation. But we are forced to admit that today, the CSOs have an increasingly weak position in the country to the extent that they are struggling to fully play their role of counterweight to the State as a credible, independent and neutral player.

They do certainly achieve positive results in their fields of action such as mining, budget control, decentralisation, reconciliation, etc. The action of Malian civil society has thus obliged the mining companies to declare their production for better taxation, to support the efforts of the State for decentralisation. Also within the framework of the Mali crisis the two structures worked together and produced a joint document in favour of reconciliation in Mali that they submitted to the government.

Beyond these isolated actions, the observation we can make is that there is a certain dualism between the two most important CSOs in Mali, which creates a leadership quarrel between them and weakens both their positions. Furthermore, certain CSOs are on the payroll of the political parties, whence the question of their politization. The reality is that in general, these CSOs often lack their own vision of the country's development and suitable strategic positioning and show a certain weakness in the steering of change.

We often observe that, even following a political decision by the government or a situation that is a flagrant violation of human rights (e.g.: the explosion at La Terrace restaurant in Bamako) no judgement or simple reaction was expressed, not even by the CSOs who deal with the specific topics covered, while in Tunis or Paris everyone saw the mobilisation around the attacks at the Musée Bardo, Charlie Hebdo and the Kosher Supermarket.... The citizen debate is almost non-existent or is very timid.... Civil Society in Mali seems not to be sufficiently organised to fully assume its role of regulation, defence and control. It also seems to be not well understood, no doubt because it is not always close to the citizens in critical situations and because it does not communicate enough.

If we were to conduct a survey today to ask Malians what they understand by “civil society”, the answers would be vague and evasive ... the population doesn't identify with it and doesn't have a good grasp of the role and the mission of civil society. Sometimes we also observe the distance of civil society with intellectuals.

In parallel to these problems which are all related to understanding roles, there is the worrying question of the funding of civil society and of its professionalization for those who know that most members of civil society are volunteers....

What questions should we be asking about civil society in Mali?

A strong civil society is the best guarantee of a healthy democracy. The instances of civil society create the conditions necessary for the development of democracy by ensuring impartial elections and demanding that the elected representatives implement the principles of good governance.

Today, given the situation of the civil society organisations in Mali, we have the right to ask questions about their true role and legitimacy. A civil society that has often remained silent and invisible when faced with the real issues and problems of society. What should we think about the civil society organisations which are at a very far remove from local realities, distant from the population? Given the preceding, the ordinary citizen has the right

to ask questions about civil society and its true role: is this a role of regulation, control, criticism or just a springboard for reaching political positions? If civil society were effective in Mali, would the country have been victim of the multiple crises it has experienced? Do the civil society players still have legitimacy in Mali? Does civil society really play its role in the development of the country? What type of civil society must emerge for a new Mali? How can we build common reference points accepted by all through a new social pact that unites all the elements of society?

The challenges of civil society in a national context

With regard to all of these observations, civil society in Mali should rise to certain challenges which include:

- ◆ The quest for good governance (legal, political and economic) through healthy management of public affairs, the placing of public contracts, the fight against corruption and a better allocation of resources for development actions;
- ◆ Boosting democracy through the participation of all the players, strengthening decentralisation by effective skills and resources transfer from the State to the local authorities and greater participation of women in the management of public affairs;
- ◆ The continuing search for cohesion between the CSOs through the experience begun as part of the participation in the conception of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP);
- ◆ Lastly, the professionalization and capacity building of civil society players to allow them to fully assume their role of citizen control by providing reliable statistics and alternative reports for the review of the PRSP to boost advocacy towards the government partner and the donors.

Opportunities in Mali

Like the movements in neighbouring countries such as *Y'en a marre* in Senegal and *Balai Citoyen* in Burkina Faso, the movement the *Sofas of the Republic*, created following the events of March 2012, attests to the liberty of expression that is beginning to be a reality in our country. This is also manifest in the writings of young rappers in Mali. This freedom of expression is part of a dynamic that is not yet compact in Mali, it is dissenting, but if we add a little expertise and structure, it could transform society.

The fact remains that civil society in Mali is evolving in a changing environment, characterised by the implementation of political reforms, new players coming on board, such as the decentralised local authorities in charge of implementing these reforms, and has, in this context, a chance to boost its skills and play an active part in defining, influencing and implementing national sustainable development policies.

Also, The Algiers Agreement, although imperfect and difficult to implement, offers a real opportunity to civil society today, after the periods of turbulence experienced by Mali, to accompany development through the regionalisation in progress in our country.

Regionalisation is political, administrative and economic decentralisation on a regional scale. This is why it is part of the determination often expressed by the high authorities to make the region the engine for economic, social, cultural and environmental development. The civil society organisations must be the key players in this rise in regionalisation.

Former US president John F. Kennedy once said in a speech: "*In Chinese, the word CRISIS is composed of two characters. One means DANGER. The other means OPPORTUNITY*". This crisis should therefore be a decisive turning point for CSOs in Mali. A real opportunity to give more structure to the sphere of the CSOs in our country. A real opportunity to play an active and positive part as a neutral, legitimate and credible player in dealing with the questions related to the country's development. A real opportunity to boost the peace and national reconciliation process, in order to favour the unification of the country. A real opportunity to boost the democratisation process by the participation of all the actors ... boost the process of effective skills and resource transfer from the state to the regions, through regionalisation. A real

opportunity to build the capacities of civil society players so that they can fully assume their role of citizen control. The crisis constitutes above all a real opportunity for the CSOs of Mali to strengthen the cohesion between them, to prevent competition and internal cleavages which do not profit the population and which dent the credibility of civil society in the eyes of the citizens and their different interlocutors.

A few thoughts on the emergence of a new civil society

In such a mitigated context as Mali, the following areas of reflection can contribute to the emergence of a new type of civil society:

- ◆ **The implementation of diligent actions for taking control of the education system as a national priority founded on citizenship education right from school;**
- ◆ **Review the charter of the civil society organisations forum and adjust it to suit the context and current realities in order to regulate the CSOs in Mali;**
- ◆ **Build the capacities of the members of the CSOs in the domains of knowledge of the local, national and international institutions and participation in their development;**
- ◆ **Participation of Mali civil society in the extended and durable international coalition networks, to be able to build a strong civil society and constitute a valid counterweight against the government and the elected representatives.**
- ◆ **Intensification of the dialogue between civil society and the State.**

Youth and reinventing governance in post-crisis Mali

Ambroise Dakouo*

Since it gained independence in 1960, up until today, Mali has continually traversed periods of challenge in terms of security, politics and its institutions. The armed rebellions in the North of the country, the military *coups d'état*, the poor turnout at elections, low economic development and the inadequate basic social services available all pose the problem of the credibility and efficacy of the modern State. And yet the democratic elections engineered thanks to the popular revolution of 26 March 1991 has painted Mali in a very positive light these past twenty years. Regular elections and the changing of leaders in 2002 was convincing evidence that democracy had become entrenched in the country.

Unfortunately, the military *coup d'état* on 22 March 2012 showed how fragile the Mali Government was. The concept of “Fragile State” is used to describe the ineffectiveness of the government apparatus faced with multiple politico-institutional crises and impasses, which is the situation of many sub-Saharan nations. “(...) *fragility refers to lack of capacity, defined as not only organizational, institutional and financial capacity but also by the lack of existence of common norms, rules and regulations that are recognized and shared by both the state and the people*”¹. However, despite the numerous challenges it faces, the international institutions have never considered Mali a fragile State. On

1 “The Legitimacy of the State in Fragile Situations”, report commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Bellina Séverine, Darbon Dominique, Sundstøl Eriksen Stein and Jacob Sending Ole, (2009) p.3.

* Institut du Local /ARGA-Mali

the contrary, it has continued to benefit from external aid, making it a “*donor darling*”².

It is against this background that we must grasp the factors of ungovernability that made it relatively easy for armed groups to establish themselves in the northern regions of Mali. An analysis of the nation’s variables of ungovernability shows a low level of State penetration in society, as evidenced by the inadequate physical infrastructure, a prevalence of the informal economy (drug smuggling, arms trade, hostage taking, etc.) and also by the historical, social and cultural resistance of the population against the Government administration. Lastly, another variable characteristic of the ungovernability of the northern regions of Mali is the crumbling of the state monopoly on violence. The presence of organised armed groups established in the Sahelo-Saharan strip, the multiplication of criminal networks, and the massive circulation of light weapons.

Young people have been the direct and indirect victims of the profound crisis in Mali. Many young people have been press-ganged, subjected to violence including rape, have been displaced, taken out of school, etc. A great number of them have lost their jobs. Since the official end of the crisis in Mali, there has been no real policy in favour of young people, especially in the post-crisis zones. And yet it must be admitted that young people represent 60% of the population and are key players in the process of reinventing governance in post-crisis Mali.

Malian youth faced with politico–institutional contradictions

The occupation of the northern regions of the country by armed groups has disorganised the production system, destroyed the local economic fabric, etc. Stores and markets have been pillaged, the offices of the public administration and bank branches have been sacked, and basic infrastructure destroyed. Added to this is the interruption of tourism, the hotel and catering industry,

² Keita Amadou, & al. (2015), “Etat, décentralisation et environnement: inventaire critique d’une crise multiforme”, in Brunet-Jailly Joseph, Charmes Jacques & Konaté Doulaye, *Le Mali contemporain*, Editions Tombouctou, p.72.

trade and industrial activities, and the suspension of the investment and infrastructure projects funded by the development partners.

The population of Mali is expanding quickly, according to National Population Department forecasts, it could triple or even quadruple by 2050 to a total 45–60 million inhabitants. According to the same forecast, this strong growth is “due to the combined effect of the falling mortality rate and the fertility rate, which remains high”. This means that each year, 300,000 young people enter the job market; many of them do not succeed in finding decent jobs. Because of this, despite average annual economic growth of 4.5%, unemployment is rising³. Although more marked in the north, the job crisis affects the entire country. Today, the lack of jobs is particularly acute for young people between 15 and 35 among whom the unemployment rate is estimated at 40–45%. There is a mismatch between the education sector and the job market and the unemployment rate for university graduates is high⁴.

Despite this context, public policies do not take the challenges facing youth sufficiently into account. After the 2013 elections, the new authorities of the country fixed the following priorities, as part of the Government Programme of Actions 2013–2018: create strong, credible institutions; restore the security of people and goods across the national territory; implement an active policy of national reconciliation; rebuild the Malian school system; build an emergent economy; implement an active policy for social development.

An analysis of these governmental priorities leads us to a double observation — the low involvement of youth in the implementation of the reforms and the low capacities of the young people themselves to face challenges at local and national level. The causes of such issues are multiple and especially complex. In this respect, we may mention, among other things, the continuation of exclusive practices in public governance in Mali, the excessive partitioning of young people’s initiatives, the lack of youth involvement in debates and the major initiatives within their local authority, such as the basic social services on offer (health, education, etc.).

3 Sustainable Human Development Observatory (SHDO), (2013). Impacts of the 2012 socio-economic and political crises on the Millennium Development Goals. Bamako.

4 World Bank, (2014), “Promoting State legitimacy, stability and cohesion in sparsely populated areas, case study: Mali”, Report/ 26 June 2014, p.26.

The challenges young people face in reinventing governance

Post-crisis Mali faces many challenges. Inevitably, there is a process of social, political, cultural and economic change underway. All Malians aspire to a qualitative transformation of the country's post-crisis governance. And this governance deserves to be reinvented. Malian youth should therefore commit to the process of reinventing post-crisis governance. Along this path, a number of obstacles remain.

Building the commitment of the community

In Mali, many young people are actively involved in their local community or municipality. They express their ideals and civic commitments. Young people today therefore have multiple options for formal participation: municipal elections, CSO local youth councils, the youth sections of political parties, etc. For instance, in the town of Hombori in the region of Mopti, the young people are represented on the municipal council. Out of eleven members, there are six young people, including the deputy mayor. But their impact is relatively weak on decision-making at municipal level. It is essential to strengthen young people's democratic commitment, not only in terms of participation (quantity) but also in terms of influence (quality).

Coordinating deliberative exchanges

In the region of Timbuktu, young people take part in informal, local debates on the neighbourhood policies. The model of deliberative democracy is a real opportunity for young people to make joint decisions and offers an alternative to the traditional representativity that is very strong in Mali. The young generation should therefore strengthen and better systematise their participation in formal and informal deliberative exchanges on subjects of public policy and develop basic solutions in their municipalities and communities.

Innovating in terms of local management

Local authority governance is a real challenge in Mali. Through their organisations, young people should put forward innovative approaches to the management of local public affairs. For example, in the urban commune of Bandiagara, in the region of Mopti, large numbers of youth groups are involved in implementing participatory governance. This approach stresses methods such as the participatory budget, multiple stakeholder consultation spaces and citizen certification. The issue at stake is to foster the re-establishing of trust between young people and the municipal authorities, with a view to correcting the malfunctions that “take root” in the management of public affairs.

Making the digital a potential for transformation

In Mali, the internet has become one of the most dynamic sites of political debate and expression of the demands of young people. Protest on the social networks, as well as artistic messages from young people regarding undemocratic practices, corruption and political cronyism have become widespread. However, the challenge remaining is the “transformative potential” of the digital arena on the mode of public governance.

Resisting the economy of organised crime

In many localities in the north, alongside the traditional cross-border trade conducted to supply the local markets with staples, an economy of banditry has grown up, as evidenced by kidnappings, vehicle thefts, the smuggling of light weapons, cocaine, etc. The amount of cocaine passing through West Africa reached a peak of approximately 47 tonnes in 2007, and settled at around 18 tonnes in 2013. Between 13 and 15% of the cocaine arriving in Europe, worth more than one billion dollars on arrival, comes through West Africa⁵.

⁵ Report (2013), “Transnational organised crime in West Africa: a threat assessment”, UNODC, p.1.

The tourist sector which used to employ a large proportion of the young people in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal has been badly hit, particularly among tourist guides. For many of these young people, who are familiar with the territory and used to “easy money”, the new perspectives offered by drug trafficking constituted a rampart against unemployment with huge, fast gains. The public powers should therefore implement inclusive strategies in favour of young people to counteract this threat.

Local governance: a niche of actions for young people

At local level, three sectors emerge as action frameworks for engaging young people within their local authorities.

Rallying around local institutions (mobilisation on decentralisation reforms)

The renewal of public management decentralisation reforms in Mali should constitute a favourable framework for reinventing governance. To build a democratic society for the well-being of all requires that the population recognises, understands and accepts values and standards. In this sense, young people must play a crucial role within the framework of the political and social entrenchment of reforms. Because it is from an approach involving the redistribution of roles and responsibilities as part of the coproduction and co-management of the land that young players will be able to contribute to reinventing a local democratic space.

Marshalling outside resources

The difficulty of marshalling outside resources means there is little funding available for municipal development initiatives. The State contributes less than 10% of local authority funding, and so it is crucial to be able to rally local energies to meet such a challenge. Young people can play an important role by becoming highly involved in their organisations and movements.

Citizen mobilisation

Youth movements in Mali are very diverse and are severely limited in terms of internal cohesion, self-sufficiency, organisation and their capacity for action. This is why building the strategic and institutional capacity of these players is considered to be one of the major obstacles to achieving real citizen mobilisation. The issue at stake is to place young people at the heart of the systems of accountability and co-production of local public services.

Approaches for reinventing governance

There are 5 aspects to achieving the systematisation of young people's engagement with reinventing governance⁶:

- ◆ The first aspect concerns the domain of governance. What are we seeking to govern? In this respect, management of public assets should be a domain young players are involved in.
- ◆ The second aspect relates to scales. *There are different levels of governance — neighbourhood, town, country, sub-continent and global level.* It is the methodical commitment to scales which will ensure the efficacy of the action of the youth organisations.
- ◆ The third aspect concerns the various principles that guide governance. Transparency, accountability, co-production, ethics, respect of values constitute, among others, the major principles behind the reinvention of governance.
- ◆ The fourth aspect concerns methods. The reinvention process includes the renewal of the mechanisms for managing public affairs. This approach includes methods such as citizen certification, co-construction and aggregation, among others.
- ◆ The fifth aspect concerns the players. There are many forms of citizen representation, such as local authorities, political parties, associations, etc. But the

⁶ The five aspects refer to the analytical framework suggested by Pierre Calame during his intervention on the topic of “*Les conditions d'une révolution de la gouvernance*”. ARGA, “*Journée de dialogue sur la gouvernance au Mali*”, Report, June 2007.

more legitimate and credible the representatives are, the better the opportunity for ensuring better citizen mobilisation for the qualitative transformation of reality on the ground.

References

- Bellina S., Darbon D., Stein Sundstøl E. & Sending Ole J. (2009), *The Legitimacy of the State in Fragile Situations*, report commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.
- Pierre Calame (2007), *“Les conditions d’une révolution de la gouvernance”*, ARGA, (Journée de dialogue sur la gouvernance au Mali), June 2007,
- World Bank (2014), *“Promoting State legitimacy, stability and cohesion in sparsely populated areas, Mali: a case study”*, Report/ 26 June 2014,
- Keita Amadou, & al. (2015), *“Etat, décentralisation et environnement : inventaire critique d’une crise multiforme”*, in Brunet-Jailly Joseph, Charmes Jacques & Konaté Doulaye, *Le Mali contemporain*, Editions Tombouctou,
- Report, Sustainable Human Development Observatory (2013). *Impact of the 2012 socio-economic and political crisis on the Millennium Development Goals*. Bamako,
- UNODC (2013), *“Transnational organised crime in West Africa: a threat assessment”*, report.

Partnership? Emasculation?

Government – Civil Society Relations in Rwanda

Frederick Golooba-Mutebi*

Introduction and Background

In order to contextualise properly relations between the state and civil society in Rwanda it is important to start by examining the emergence of Rwanda's current political system and the factors that influenced that emergence, and then look carefully at its evolution. It is through such careful examination rather than speedy judgement that one gets to appreciate the challenges both sides face in trying to structure a workable relationship.

Before Rwanda became independent in 1962, the Belgian colonial administration authorised the emerging political elite to form political parties in 1959. Several of the parties that emerged were ethnicity-inspired, pursuing exclusionist agendas in one form or another. The most exclusionist of all, APROSOMA¹, founded and led by members of the majority Hutu group, sought as one of its goals, to end the political dominance of members of the minority Tutsi group, even if it had to be achieved via their extermination.

Both Tutsi and Hutu extremists marginalised the moderate, mainly Tutsi party, RADER.² By independence moderate Hutu and Tutsi elites who had sought compromise and gradual evolution towards independence had been marginalised and excluded from the political process.³ Inter-party rivalry and the extremism that underlay it transformed ethnicity into a political instrument and poisoned the rest of society, leading to widespread, politically motivated violence.

¹ Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse.

² *Rassemblement Democratique Rwandais*

³ Strauss, 2006 (chapter 7).

* Researcher and consultant based in Kampala, Uganda, and Kigali, Rwanda.

When Rwanda became independent, independence was granted on the basis of the majority Hutu having the right to rule. With the dominant Hutu political elite determined to exclude their Tutsi counterparts and the Tutsi population more generally, independence *de facto* led to a dictatorship of the majority. The local elections of 1961, which preceded independence, illustrate this. Extremist Hutu-led parties organised under the umbrella name PARMEHUTU/MDR, won 70 per cent of the popular vote, having campaigned on an anti-Tutsi platform. Their victory was followed by violence targeting Tutsi and their moderate Hutu allies. Political violence which had first exploded in November 1959, continued on and off until 1973. Once a Tutsi-dominated monarchy, at independence Rwanda became a one-party state resting on an exclusionist foundation.⁴

These upheavals left large numbers of Tutsis dead, forced others into exile, and excluded almost completely those remaining in the country from politics. The post-colonial political order that emerged therefore translated the Hutu's numerical superiority into exclusive access to political power. Nonetheless, internal contradictions within the Hutu community, including the great rivalry between Northern and Southern political elites, led to a violent change of government in 1973. And so emerged a northern-Hutu elite led by Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana. Former President Gregoire Kayibanda was killed alongside many of his southern Hutu allies. Habyarimana founded the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND)⁵ in July 1973 and re-introduced one-party rule. Political inclusion under his government consisted of compelling all Rwandans to become members of the ruling party.

For more than a decade Habyarimana presided over a peaceful and stable Rwanda posting high economic growth rates.⁶ No mass killings of Tutsi or Hutu took place before 1990. Meanwhile, like its predecessor, the Habyarimana government opposed the permanent return to Rwanda of Tutsis and other exiles. Tutsis who still lived in Rwanda had only limited possibilities for employment in the army, forces of law and order, and in much of the public sector.⁷ As with the Kayibanda government and its marginalisation of North-

4 Strauss, 2006.

5 Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND).

6 Uvin, 1997.

7 Gakusi & Mouzer, 2010.

ern Hutu, under Habyarimana Southern Hutu suffered the same fate. The exclusion of large numbers of the elite from power prepared the ground for political violence.

By October 1990 when the Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded Rwanda from Uganda, the ground for political instability had already been prepared.⁸ The history of political violence, the war that toppled Habyarimana and the genocide that accompanied it were to have profound implications for the post-war organisation and practice of politics in the country, and for relations between society and the state.

Politics after the war and genocide: 1994–2015

The violence of the civil war and the genocide against the Tutsi left Rwanda in ruins, with a broken state and a collapsed economy. However, the new RPF-led government moved quickly and, over the last 21 years, has achieved significant progress across a wide range of domains. In the economic sphere, it has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Between 2008 and 2012, growth averaged 8.2 percent. In 2013 it was the ninth fastest growing economy in the world. One outcome of this trend was the lifting of over one million Rwandans out of poverty between 2005 and 2010, the equivalent of 12 percent poverty reduction rate. Just as significant, over the last 20 years Rwanda has achieved the highest school enrolment rates in Africa, at 95 percent for boys, and 98 percent for girls, with overall completion rates at 72.7 percent.

Access to health care for the entire population is also high. At over 90 percent according to 2014 figures, Rwanda has probably the highest health insurance coverage for ordinary citizens not employed in the formal sector, in the whole world. As a result, life expectancy has doubled in the past two decades from 28 in 1994 to 63.5 in 2012. Rwanda is easily the only African country expecting to achieve all or most of the Millennium Development Goals.⁹ How has the government been able to achieve all this success? The following discussion looks at the role of politics against the background of the RPF-led

8 Otunnu, 2000.

9 <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/04/against-odds-rwanda-20-years-af-201441292413620474.html>. Also, Kinzer, 2008; Crisafulli & Redmond, 2012

reconfiguration and re-ordering of the political system. It shows that political inclusion and the non-adversarial, collaborative relationship between the state and civil society have played an important role.

The new politics of inclusion and consensus building

After the genocide Rwanda's new leadership turned decisively away from the winner-takes-all politics of previous regimes. It started by establishing a government in which several political groupings that were active in the country would play a role, with the exception of those credited with bearing the greatest responsibility for planning and executing the genocide, the former ruling party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) and its ally CDR, were excluded.¹⁰ This decision was in line with the broad outlines of the Tanzania-brokered peace accords signed after the negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania, to which all participating parties had acquiesced.

Power sharing in the first post-genocide government

<i>Parties and Stakeholders</i>	<i>Provisions by Arusha Agreement</i>	<i>Implemented after the genocide</i>	
		<i>As per the legal provision</i>	<i>As practiced</i>
MRND	5	0	—
RPF	5	10	8
MDR	4	4	4
PL	3	3	3
PSD	3	3	3
PDC	1	1	1
Independent	—	—	2

Source: Rwanda Parliament, 2010: 116

¹⁰ It is important to note, however, that individual former members of the MRND who were not tainted by participation in the genocide or who were accused of involvement and then absolved by the gacaca courts did not suffer exclusion and have taken up important roles in the post-genocide government, some as members of the RPF.

It is notable that even after scoring a total military victory over the MRND government and given its overwhelming military dominance and the legitimacy it derived from having stopped the genocide, the RPF did not seek to re-enact the political monopoly of the previous ruling parties.

Power sharing in the National Transitional Assembly during the first five years of transition

<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Provisions by Arusha Peace agreement</i>	<i>As Implemented during the first 5 years of transition (1994–1999)</i>
MRND	11	0
RPF	11	13
MDR	11	13
PL	11	13
PSD	11	13
PDC	4	6
Other parties	11	6
National Army	—	6
Total	70	70

Source: Rwanda Parliament, 2010.

A key factor in the RPF’s magnanimity was the determination to leave Rwanda’s history of political exclusion of which its leadership and membership had been victims, behind, and start afresh. And so the right of political parties to exist was recognised. Nonetheless, measures were imposed to limit their activities in the interim, with the aim of preventing disruptive political contestation.

A notable feature of the Rwandan state today is its widely acknowledged effectiveness in such arenas as service delivery and combatting corruption. The seriousness with which corruption is tackled is responsible for the enforcement of anti-corruption measures that account for Rwanda’s reputation as a generally corruption-free country.¹¹ Civil society organisations and NGOs have played important, if low profile roles in both arenas.

¹¹ Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index for the year 2012 has Rwanda as the least corrupt country in East Africa, with Burundi the most corrupt followed by Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and then Rwanda.

The other side of the coin

However, the government has long faced criticism on issues of democracy and rights. For example, Strauss¹² argues: “Inside Rwanda, the RPF is allergic to political dissent. Free political expression remains severely limited; the government has frequently shut down the critical press as well as independent civil society organisations, especially those advocating human rights”. Critics such as Strauss are prone to overstatement. Nonetheless, the criticism does reflect broadly the situation on the ground, especially during the early days after the genocide when, lacking experience of running a state and mostly learning on the job, the new leaders of Rwanda attached great importance to achieving and maintaining peace and stability ahead of other aspirations.

Conduct perceived as disruptive or as potentially destabilising, whether by individuals or groups, including civil society groups, elicited strong reactions intended to put it to an immediate stop. This pre-occupation with peace and stability and the general commitment to consensus building and inclusion remain key features of post-genocide politics and are responsible for the very stringent rules regulating the registration of new political parties and things such as public demonstrations. Critics of the post-genocide government often disregard this background. In doing so, they obscure the reasons, however debatable, that account for what they usually portray simply as intolerance of dissent and abuse of rights and freedoms. In many instances the government and its critics approach the same issue from two different sides. One domain where this is most evident is in state-civil society relations.

Civil Society and the State

The complex relationship between the government of Rwanda and civil society groups, including NGOs, dates from the earliest encounters between the two sides, soon after the RPF took over the reins of the state. The encounters were of a very specific kind. Immediately after the genocide donors channelled their humanitarian support for the country through international NGOs.

¹² Strauss, 2006, pp. 243–244.

Donors also funded groups working to monitor human rights in a highly complex environment where it was at times difficult to identify who between government forces and armed insurgents was responsible for which instances of human rights violations. To the government, however, it seemed as if human rights advocates were too quick to assign it responsibility for violations without verifiable evidence.

Also, in their work inside the country, NGOs engaged in humanitarian work paid little, if any, attention to the views of the government. The government viewed both this approach to humanitarian assistance and the behaviour of human rights NGOs as distractions that could easily undermine its efforts to re-establish social order and kick-start as well as take charge of and direct the country's reconstruction.¹³ In late 1995 many international NGOs were obliged, directly and indirectly, to leave the country. Thereafter, the government established a robust regulatory framework for 'managing' local and international NGOs.

Popular and academic critiques tend generally to criticise the restrictions embedded in the relevant legislation. Others claim that civil society groups have been co-opted by the government.¹⁴ The critique stems from failure by critics to identify groups that style themselves as watchdogs and whose relationship with the government is steeped in confrontation. However, looking for contestation between the two sides easily misses a critically important aspect of the local reality. As with the way political parties of which there are 11 interact, the preferred mode of interaction between the state and civil society groups is collaboration and discussion regarding matters of mutual interest around a table, even if the outcome is agreeing to disagree. A senior minister once articulated the government's thinking on the matter:

There are two debates on the role of civil society organisations in developing countries by international scholars. On one side civil society is seen as a counter power to government, and on the other, civil society is seen as an effective partner in the service delivery and development process. Rwanda favours the latter approach.¹⁵

¹³ Interview with a senior government official whose work entailed dealing directly with NGOs immediately after the genocide, 2007.

¹⁴ Gready 2010.

¹⁵ Maina and Kibalama 2006, p. 66.

So committed is the government to this approach that attempts by some civil society groups, especially human rights groups, to influence policy through adversarial engagement in the past failed. In some instances the resulting tensions led to civil society activists fleeing the country.¹⁶

It has to be acknowledged, however, that the relationship is by far asymmetrical. The weakness of civil society vis-à-vis the state and the latter's preference for the 'partnership' model of engagement have meant that expression by civil society groups and NGOs of criticism of, or opposition to, government policies is rather rare, though not totally absent.¹⁷ This choice not to be too vocal extends to donors. Since the end of the genocide donors have for the most part been generally careful not to behave in ways that the government may view as disruptive.¹⁸

Is civil society tame and ineffectual?

A notable feature of the claim that civil society in Rwanda has been tamed, co-opted and compromised is that it does not reflect the views of a significant section of civil society activists. For example, many assert that, far from being evidence of abdication of their advocacy role, the non-confrontational approach to engaging the state merely reflects a choice to engage differently. As one pointed out, "we do not engage in confrontational advocacy, but advocacy is not about confrontation".¹⁹

Elaborating on the effectiveness of the non-confrontational approach, one activist focused on the national budget-making process. Here, civil society groups receive the budget framework papers from the Ministry of Finance so that they can comment on the content and indicate where the government ought to reflect further in whatever it may be proposing to do. Some may choose to write position papers to elaborate their views in detail. This, according to another activist, elicits a specific response from the government: "where

¹⁶ Waldorf 2011.

¹⁷ See, for example, Golooba-Mutebi 2011a.

¹⁸ On donor-government relations and the donors' much criticised perceived reluctance to rock the boat, see Hayman 2011.

¹⁹ Interview, May 2012.

you provide a position paper, they are likely to call you for a discussion”.²⁰ Nonetheless, in practice things are not as rosy as this account may make them sound. One reason why they are not is because of limitations suffered by numerous civil society organisations, whereby many lack the expertise and experience necessary to engage on equal footing with experienced and well-trained government officials.

Civil society's limitations

Lack of capacity and associated constraints that curtail engagement with the state is a key feature of civil society in Rwanda. A senior member of the fraternity elaborated on the issue: “Influencing policy entails research but we are weak in that area. For example, we have wanted to comment on *imihigo*²¹, land consolidation, *umuganda*,²² but we don’t have sufficient evidence on which to base our criticism”.²³ This, not simple co-optation, explains to a large extent why many civil society groups and NGOs have readily embraced service delivery roles on behalf of the state. Some, such as Imbaraga, Rwanda’s largest farmers’ cooperative, are major transporters and distributors of subsidised farm inputs, fertilisers and seeds to farmers under the government’s flagship crop intensification programme (CIP) whose objective is to boost agricultural productivity in Rwanda and reverse the country’s historical food insufficiency.²⁴

A notable exponent of adversarial state-civil society relations²⁵ has described at length the turn-around in relations between the government and civil society groups from adversarial to mainly collaborative, in the agricultural sector:

“The massive increase in state and donor funding to the agricultural sector has increased the material resources available to some civil society actors in the rural development and farming sectors but has further entangled them within state bureaucratic networks. For example, agron-

²⁰ Interview, May 2012.

²¹ Performance contracts.

²² Mandatory monthly communal work.

²³ Interview, May 2012.

²⁴ MINAGRI, 2012.

²⁵ Huggins, 2012, p. 26.

omists working for one of the largest farmers' organisations sometimes describe themselves as working 'for' government programmes such as CIP. Their methods of working... are completely intertwined with state designs and activities and interviews with them suggest little sense of independence from government in thought or deed. Agronomists working for NGOs essentially support state agronomists and are thoroughly incorporated into the state agricultural reform machinery. They have largely lost the ability to act as an effective advocacy organisation for smallholder farmers".

This is the sort of critique that privileges ideology above the understanding of phenomena within their proper context. Huggins is keener to apply to the Rwandan context a template of how civil society is supposed to relate to the state. Finding that his template does not fit, he makes no effort to understand what the unusual relationship between the state in Rwanda and civil society groups working in the agricultural sector produces. Form triumphs over substance.

Critiques of this kind ignore complexity. To further understand the complexity of the relationship between the state and civil society and between the state and society at large, one has to examine reform in local government. Several writers routinely comment on the long history of Rwandans obeying and submitting to the state, and the negative impact it has had on their capacity and drive to make demands. So deep was 'compliance with the powerful'²⁶ before the genocide that when the new government embarked on encouraging ordinary Rwandans to ask questions of their leaders, they reacted with scepticism.²⁷ A key factor behind the decentralisation of power was the desire to undermine the culture of obedience that, some analysts contend, was responsible for widespread participation in the genocide.²⁸

Although today there are signs that the culture of questioning leaders is taking root, it has taken a great deal of work by the government itself to make

26 Newbury 2011, p. 229.

27 In one instance a man stood up and told one official that such exhortations amounted to inciting the population against the government (Conversation with Protais Musoni, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister and former Bourgmestre, Permanent Secretary and Minister of Local Government, 2004).

28 Kimonyo 2008.

it happen.²⁹ New research³⁰ and observation³¹ show that Rwandans are now keen to make demands.³² Also, despite civil society groups avoiding confrontation, embracing collaboration with the state and playing key roles in service delivery on its behalf, the government consult them on policy matters.³³ Critics³⁴ may persist in portraying the country as enveloped in a climate of fear, but clearly that is far from being the overall story. The fear some Rwandans feel and express with regard to the government is only part of a more complex and evolving reality.³⁵

More evidence of civil society influencing the state comes from the agricultural sector. This happens through the activities of the Agricultural Sector Working Group (ASWG). It meets every month and its membership includes civil society groups. The value-added of civil society membership is the direct interaction between civil society groups and farmers and the mediating role they play between farmers and other actors, including the government and the private sector. The importance of this in policy making cannot be over-emphasised. Their advocacy role may be rather limited. However, this is not entirely the outcome of the way the state has structured its relations with them. Some limitations stem from donors deciding to channel financial assistance through the government and not civil society groups. One of the outcomes of this has been that civil society groups lack the financial means to hire and retain skilled people of similar calibre to the public servants and government officials whose views or actions they wish to influence. As a result, their capacity for policy engagement remains modest.

29 See, for example, Golooba-Mutebi, 2010b; and Golooba-Mutebi, 2014.

30 Chambers and Golooba-Mutebi 2011.

31 Golooba-Mutebi 2011a; Golooba-Mutebi 2010a; Golooba-Mutebi 2010b.

32 See also Asimwe 2008.

33 Interviews, August 2011.

34 See, for example, Purdekova 2011; Beswick 2010.

35 For an examination of the complexity of the situation, see Golooba-Mutebi 2011b.

Conclusions

Rwanda is often presented as a difficult environment for civil society groups to work in. On the surface the claim seems to be justified. However, detailed examination of the issue reveals much complexity. It shows that far from being hostile, the environment has been reshaped to align the conduct of civil society groups to the government's broad strategy of avoiding adversarial contestation in policy matters and privileging consensus building and collaboration. The results, the paper shows, have been major advances across a wide spectrum of domains, advances for which Rwanda has earned worldwide acclaim. It demonstrates that, while there is ample room for debate and exchange of views between the state and different actors, among them civil society groups, there is hardly any for the adversarial contestation conventional analyses of state-civil society relations envisage.

References

- Asiimwe, B. R. (2008) 'Five Ngoma Councillors Resign', *The New Times*, Kigali, Rwanda, 10 November
- Beswick, D. (2010) 'Managing Dissent in a Post-genocide Environment: The Challenge of Political Space in Rwanda', *Development and Change*, 41(2):225–251
- Chambers, V. and Golooba-Mutebi, F. (2011) *Is the Bride Too Beautiful? Safe Motherhood in Rwanda*. Research Report 04, Africa Power and Political Programme, London, UK: Overseas Development Institute
- Gakusi, A. E. and F. Mouzer, 2010. *De la Revolution Rwandaise a la Contre-Revolution: Contraintes Structurelles et Gouvernance 1950–2003*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Golooba-Mutebi, F. (2014) "Holding local governments accountable the unfashionable Rwanda way". *The East Africa*, December 6
- Golooba-Mutebi, F. (2010a) 'A reserved people reach out to "expatriate Zambians", civil society in a unique debate', *The East African*, Nairobi, Kenya, 20 December
- Golooba-Mutebi, F. (2010b) 'A tale of two Rwandas and why Kagame makes some people scream', *The East African*, Nairobi, Kenya, 17 December
- Golooba-Mutebi, F. (2011a) 'With the national dialogue, Kagame has dumbfounded his critics and enemies', *The East African*, Nairobi, Kenya, 27 December
- Golooba-Mutebi, F. (2011b) 'When Nyakatsi is no longer good enough for the people of Rwanda', *The East African*, Nairobi, Kenya, 17 January
- Gready, P. (2010) "You're either with us or against us": Civil Society and Policy Making in Post-genocide Rwanda', *African Affairs*, 109(437):637–657

- Hayman, R. (2011) 'Funding Fraud? Donors and Democracy in Rwanda,' In Strauss, S. and Waldorf, L. (eds), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press
- Huggins, C. (2012) *Consolidating land, consolidating control: What future for smallholder farming in Rwanda's 'Green Revolution?*, paper presented at the International Conference on Global Land Grabbing II, 17–19 October, Ithaca, NY: Department of Development Sociology, Cornell University
- Kimonyo, J.-P. (2008) *Rwanda: Un Genocide Populaire*, Paris, France: Karthala
- Kinzer, S. (2008). *Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Maina, C.P. and Kibalama, E. (eds) (2006) *Searching for Sense and Humanity: Civil Society and the Struggle for a Better Rwanda*, Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers
- MINAGRI (2012) *Farm Land Use Consolidation in Rwanda: Assessment from the Perspectives of Agriculture Sector*, Kigali, Rwanda: Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
- Otunnu, O. (2000). 'An Historical Analysis of the Invasion by the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA)'. In Adelman, H. and Suhrke, A. (eds). *The Rwandan Crisis from Uganda to Zaire: The Path of a Genocide*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Purdekova, A. (2011) "Even if I am not here, there are so many eyes": surveillance and state reach in Rwanda', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49(3):475–497
- Strauss, S. (2006). *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Uvin, P. (1997) *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press
- Waldorf, L. (2011) 'Instrumentalising Genocide: The RPF's Campaign Against Genocide Ideology', in Strauss, S. and Waldorf, L. (eds), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press

The grabbing of land from the poor in the Municipality of Moundou, Southern Chad

Djeralar Miankeol*

The land ownership issue is a recurring concern in most developing countries, particularly in Africa. Unfortunately Chad is no exception. The land ownership issue is expressed on the ground by the grabbing of land from the poor, in towns and in the countryside. The phenomenon has taken on greater proportions these past ten years because land is perceived solely as a commercial commodity.

In Logone Occidental, the smallest region in Chad (*8.695 km², or 0.69% of the country's land mass*) situated in the South in an oil field, the urban and rural spaces are taken over by the oil companies and the major merchants (hundreds of hectares of land). On the other hand, the majority of the farmers scarcely have a hectare of arable land at their disposal. The average density of the population is *93 per km²* while the national average is *8.7 per km²*. In certain critical, very densely populated areas, there are 150–200 inhabitants per km².

In Moundou, the capital of the region of Logone Occidental and the second largest economic town in Chad, called “little Paris”, plots are divided up randomly and the poor are dispossessed of the totality of their land for the profit of a small group of rich people and enterprises, with the complicity of crooked agents from the State institutions (Land Registry, Municipality, Justice), firms of notary publics and brokerage bureaus.

* Consultant and civil society activist based in N'djamena, Chad

Another cause of the phenomenon of land grabbing from the poor in Moundou is the strong demographic growth. Considered to be the economic capital of the country, Moundou has seen its population triple in thirty years, from 50,000 in 1980 to 187,000 in 2010. This population increase naturally led to a need for living space which caused a very rapid expansion of the municipality, chaotically encompassing the surrounding villages and the fields of the population. In twenty years, the spatial expansion of Moundou has exceeded what had taken place over a period of sixty years (1930–1990), practically doubling. This spatial expansion of the municipality took place without any urban planning, the only engine being the parcelling and sale of plots of land. This situation naturally caused many problems and land disputes which eventually overwhelmed the local legal institutions and conflict settlement bodies.

As a consequence, changes in the municipality of Moundou are marked by the non-respect of the legal provisions and the total dysfunction of the state structures in charge of managing land ownership from the fourth stage. Since 1990, the land has been perceived solely as a commercial commodity. Urbanisation amounted to the mere parcelling into plots and sale of the fields, orchards and market garden perimeters around the villages surrounding the municipality. No services related to urban planning were delivered in the rural zones included in the urban perimeter. Everything was done in total disregard for the laws and regulations regarding land ownership management and urban planning standards.

The main consequences of this situation are the multiple conflicts among the people, particularly the customary owners of the lands they were dispossessed of and the new owners, the conflicts between the new buyers themselves because of the double, or even triple attribution of the same plot, the appearance of landless farmers in the municipality of Moundou, the blocking of natural water drainage channels, the dividing of flood prone areas into plots for housing areas, the parcelling, sale and/or occupation of State reserves, the destruction of areas where trees have been replanted, etc.

A brief analysis of the situation of land grabbing from the poor in the district of Moundou leads us to the following conclusions, already noted in certain African countries:

- ◆ *Infringement of the State of law*: the principal factors of the phenomenon of land grabbing observed are: irresponsible behaviour of the State institutions, the non respect of the legal and regulatory framework (legislation/laws), the development of cronyism and corruption;
- ◆ *A generalised breach of living environment*;
- ◆ *Breach of common good in favour of the interests of individuals or small groups*.

Major challenge to be met: how can the population be protected against the spoliation of their land?

Outlook: respect and application of the principal law in terms of land ownership management in Chad which stipulates that: *“No-one can be deprived of the ownership of buildings or the use of the soil, unless the public interest requires it, there is compensation and the legal provisions are applied”*.

Land resources in Katanga

International implications and spontaneous resistance movements

Pierre Kahenga*

CRONGD Katanga accompanies the farmers and miners chased off their land, away from their jobs and homes. There are numerous, isolated destructive rebellions, the representatives of the State do not generally play their role, the international corporations try to cope, but are faced with massive phenomena of desperate resistance.

After the mining sector, which was plundered, now DRC's arable land is subject to a land rush on an international scale.

“What future is there for family farming in a liberalised context in Katanga”?¹ There are burning issues: agro business, corporate social responsibility, food imports, destruction of arable land and land grabbing, climate change and complex management of the agricultural calendar.

Thanks to family agriculture², our communities survived multiple wars and crises. But with the current changes, dictated by economic growth and greed for natural resources, the traditional agricultural activities have been put in

¹ This was the theme of the symposium held by the Regional Council of Katanga Development NGOs with the provincial Ministry of agriculture on 26 – 27 September 2014 at the provincial Governorate. Run by Pole Institute, these sessions were part of the advocacy conducted on the mining activism and land problems facing the local population groups. One hundred people took part; representatives from the government and the provincial assembly; from mining companies, universities and civil society organisations from the four districts and three main towns in Katanga.

² Family-based farming constitutes a vast domain that encompasses some very different situations regarding access to land (owner-operators with very diverse land ownership rights, farmers and market gardeners, landless agricultural workers, small processing or marketing companies, urban animal owners, etc.), production techniques (manual cultivation, draught animals, motorisation), productivity and the destination of the products (self-consumption, local exchanges, supply to the national and international markets).

* Regional Council of Development NGOs – CRONGD Katanga

jeopardy and are destined to disappear in Katanga, the centre of copper and cobalt mining.

The farmers don't have a choice: become professional, as the Minister of agriculture said in his opening speech at the symposium. They can therefore lean on the international initiatives that are emerging towards an accompaniment of the transitional process from subsistence farming to family-based farming that is profitable in human, professional and economic terms. Nonetheless, the question of land ownership remains an essential prerequisite.

On 30 May 2014, *Africa confidential*, Vol. 55 no. 11 contained the article “*farm plan aims high; the government believes big farms and agro-industry can achieve food self-sufficiency. Small farmers fear a land-grab*” announcing the convening in October of the same year in Kinshasa of an “agro Business Forum 2014” where 450 businessmen and women from all over the world were expected to celebrate the option chosen by the Congolese government in favour of agro-business as a reassuring means of conquering the country's food insecurity. In the pipeline, Mozfood and Energy, a South African firm, are planning twenty agro-industrial parks to host the special economic zones subject to mixed public-private partnership management including one in Ruzizi plain in South Kivu; a second at Maniema and two others at Bandundu in Mushipentane and Bukangalonzo on the Bateke plateau. This vast project was no doubt inspired by the new alliance for food security and nutrition instigated by the G8 of 2012 and 2013, criticised by civil society for de facto influencing the states to sign agreements which, in the long term, could allow international agro business to grab African land, chase the families of farmers living there, patent the seed stocks and grant monopolies on the food markets.

Two agricultural sites, representing probably 16 thousand hectares of reserves in arable land cleared of stumps, have apparently been identified to develop a similar project in Katanga. This is the Pilot domain of Kanyama KCC in Haut-Lomami and the former Busange farm of SAGRICIM³ (*Société Agricole de la Cimenterie du Katanga*) from Lubudi in the district of Kolwezi.

³ The Katanga Cement company CIMENKAT, through its agricultural subsidiary “SAGRICIM”, maintained seed stock production by agricultural mechanisation in the territory of Lubudi alongside a seed stock project of the Ministry of Agriculture which was run at Busange funded by French Cooperation. Mechanisation was also applied intensively by the Catholic Church at Kiseba, Kansenia (Lubudi territory), Kanfwa (Mitwaba territory), Kapulwa and Ndakata (Kambove territory), and Sambwa (Kipushi territory).

In his book “The Future”, former American vice-president Al Gore said that 48% of the 120 million hectares of arable land in DRC is already in the hands of foreigners (and that) prices are being slashed unfortunately to the detriment of the Congolese people.

It therefore appears more than necessary to draw lessons from the mining experience in relation to land administration to avoid making the same mistakes when it comes to applying the governance of the agricultural sector.

A decade ago the government proceeded to streamline the mining sector to attract private foreign investment. This decision was part of the strategy of mobilising the resources indispensable for rebuilding the country announced in the electoral propaganda speeches. The implementation of these measures-forces engendered unfortunate consequences including conflicts relating to displacement.

The population affected decries the poverty they fell into due to their exclusion. Dispossessed of their usual means of subsistence in exchange for compensation deemed meagre and inadequate, the victims are obliged to leave the place they are established in to make way for the installation of large-scale mining projects. How can these allegations be confirmed? To what extent are the victims responsible?

How can we support our farmer partners affected by a humiliating forced expulsion?

With a view to gaining a better understanding of the problems generated by the displacement of the population for reasons related to mining practices, the CRONGD Katanga, contacted by the people concerned, organised a participatory survey in the eastern part of the town of Lubumbashi. A mixed steering group⁴ some of the victims belong to was deployed on the ground. This present article summarises what the group learnt.

The eastern part of Lubumbashi is ravaged by a recurring phenomenon of displacement-invasion which imposes a de facto unnatural proximity on contiguous land where landowners (mining companies, artisanal operators, farmers and locals) are in perpetual, angry and stubborn confrontation. This set-up is in defiance of the public land management policies implemented

⁴ Composed of nine people from the local Ruashi development committee and staff of CRONGD, among them two former representatives of the victims on the displacement committees installed by the companies concerned.

locally. There is real urgency, for the situation could explode like a lethal bomb at any moment. No single stakeholder with an alliance-free strategy could limit the damage. Why were things allowed to go this far? In a shared space, in often quarrelsome ambiguity, industrial and domestic activities are carried out, which, more or less incompatible in nature, expose investments to insecurity; the uncertainty of a forced, underpaid expulsion, the pollution of the land, rivers and air in an atmosphere of uncontrolled urban sprawl and intensification of mining activities (mine-clearance, backfilling, acid leaching, traffic, etc.).

Approximately seven years have passed since the companies Ruashi Mining and CHEMAF, having acquired the operating rights, proceeded to displace the population living around the mines: Ruashi and Kalukuluku, established in the eastern part of Lubumbashi⁵. An estimated thirty thousand artisanal diggers have been driven away from the sites and are now out of work. Seven thousand fields and/or agricultural concessions and ten thousand homes and/or plots were supposedly destroyed, then expropriated, forcing the owners to work or establish themselves elsewhere, outside a perimeter of eight hundred metres from the mine and the facilities (according to best practices). The duly identified victims were paid compensation, officials confirm. And yet the problem remains. Why is this the case?

According to the mining legislation in force in Congo, there are two types of displacement. One is economic, and the other physical. The first concerns either the loss of sources of revenue and means of existence; or restricted

⁵ The East of Lubumbashi covers a few territories under the administrative jurisdiction of the urban municipalities of Ruashi and annex and of the Bukanda sector, Shindaika grouping in Kipushi territory. These lands rich with minerals have two copper-bearing seams including the Ruashi mine run by the company Ruashi Mining and the Kalukuluku mine, a concession of CHEMAF. The hydrology of this land is essentially dominated by fresh water streams called Naviundu, Luashi and Kebumba, propitious to market gardening which the local population has practiced for many a year. The municipality of Ruashi was built in June 1955 on the place where the mining union of Upper Katanga established the transitional camp for recruits pending the installation of the factories. That year, the problem of accommodation was acute. The major companies, as ordered by the colonial authority, had homes built for the workers by the *Office des Cités Africaines* (OCA). When it was first built, Ruashi had only three neighbourhoods. Today it has seven including Kalukuluku, Luano and Kawama, which are subject to the present displacement. The extension of the commune is progressing into the former territories of agricultural concessions of the commune annex, one of the seven municipalities of Lubumbashi which constitutes both the green belt for the town and the border with Kipushi Territory, which surrounds the whole town of Lubumbashi.

access to certain resources (land, water, forestry) due to the acquisition of the land by the project; its exploitation or the construction of related facilities... The people who are economically displaced are not necessarily forced to move away physically. Physical displacement involves the movement of people from a place (village) without loss of the means of subsistence. Generally, it concerns homes that are destroyed following the development of mining activities or the related infrastructure (roads, etc.)

Any person or community that is a victim of displacement is entitled to compensation. Individual compensation targets the former occupants and the facilities lost by the new arrivals. They comprise the costs of labour and compensation in kind. In the agricultural sector for example, the compensation covers the loss of work invested in the fields and losses of harvests. These compensation payments were designed and implemented to allow people to remain economically viable in their new location.

The community compensation covers the loss by the community of the right to use the land and the extent of the damage suffered from both a human and environmental point of view. A compensation plan should allow for fair, adequate payments and verify the people, households and communities affected so that the perturbation of the population is kept to a minimum and the social fabric of the communities in the region of the project is respected.

Whether with Ruashi Mining or CHEMAF, there have been three types of displacement:

- ◆ Displacement of homes (physical displacement)
- ◆ Displacement of the fields and village (physical and economic displacement)
- ◆ Displacement of the artisanal mining operators (economic displacement)

The displacement of the artisanal mining operators

When they moved in, Ruashi Mining and CHEMAF had to expel almost 30,000 diggers who occupied the sites beforehand. Apart from the legal announcements, there are no commissioning standards dictated by the public authorities. The rules are at the discretion of each party.

When CHEMAF⁶ acquired the concession to the mine of Kalukuluku it organised a consultation with 20,000 active diggers on its land during which it solemnly committed to paying compensation of \$200 to each, and to hire them, apart from additional compensatory fees. In the night following the meeting, the company occupied the quarry and closed off all third party access. The next day there followed a clash with the diggers; the police became involved. There were fatalities.

Why did CHEMAF act in this way, when it had come to an agreement with the diggers the night before? Perhaps it was not quite ready to honour the payment of \$4,000,000 and hire 20,000 unskilled workers. What could the company have expected, after making false promises to diggers who are frequently reproached for their use of violence and destruction? It is clear that acting in this way was like declaring war, challenging to an arm wrestling competition, characteristic of the mining sector in the Congo. The work of the diggers stopped there. The company are in the right, the domain belongs to them. The policy acted to protect them. It does not owe anyone anything.

With only one detail that differs, Ruashi Mining⁷ treated the diggers in the same way. The company held awareness raising meetings on a famous “yield 5” standard expressing the compensation 10,000 diggers were led to expect. At the end of a long, complicated process, the company paid 500 diggers \$100 each. As usual, the compensation was accompanied with promises of relocation to other sites or jobs.

6 CHEMAF is a mining operation company based in Lubumbashi. It belongs to the subsidiary of the SHALINA group, supplier of pharmaceutical products to African countries, created in 2001, the company waited till 2006 in the month of December to begin mining copper and cobalt, and began by having striping carried out by a sub-contractor, ENPRICO (ULCO), which also transported the minerals from the mine to the Usoke plant.

7 The company Ruashi mining was set up in 2000 after the signature of a contract with Gécamines and the company Cobalt metal (CMC) in the north eastern part of the commune of Ruashi.

The displacement of the fields, land and agricultural concessions

The mining concession awarded to CHEMAF in Kalukuluku covers the villages of Washeni and Kebumba and some farms (Katumbwe, Kebumba, Mulol, Kabasa and Kaminolo, etc.) families who inherited them and organisations (Esprit Kebumba, Washeni cooperative, Assodi market gardening). Before the displacement there reigned in this area a cohabitation of people working the land. Local people worked it as well as farmers from the town (Ruashi municipality and Luwowoshi neighbourhood).

When CHEMAF took over the mine, it encroached on the land of the farmers. The occupation was brutal. The company proceeded to destroy 30 homes. Then they built an enclosing wall around the villages of Kumbumba and Washeni. The soil extracted from the quarry is filled back onto the fields, the bed of the river and on the cemetery where the villagers bury their dead. Thus began a long period of pressure the farmers were not able to resist. Although they burned a lorry carrying minerals during the uprising, in the end they lost everything: their resources, and the modest rights they had been granted on paper.

It was only after complaints from the victims that the public authorities ordered the competent services to take an inventory of the spoliated property. The available lists testify to 145 dwelling-houses, 63 unfinished houses, 622 empty plots, 328 fields and several fruit trees.

Forced to make peace, CHEMAF instigated a compensation procedure which was never completed. Some victims were paid, others are still waiting. Among the unfortunate: the latecomers; but also the group who were opposed to the displacement in return for money, preferring a displacement in exchange for the restitution of a corresponding piece of property. This group have remained in the concession to this day awaiting their compensation. Only 261 farmers out of 328 received compensation of \$300 each. Claims are still outstanding for 570 empty plots, 94 dwelling-houses; 40 unfinished houses at Washeni and 93 at Kebumba.

The compensation of farmers by CHEMAF was as rushed and clumsy as Ruashi Mining's was disappointing. The only compensation received by the farmers identified all along the "chaussée de Kasenga-usines" road route was

a non-negotiated fixed payment of \$100 per person. The concessions swallowed up by backfill by the company were paid for in a discretionary manner: \$50 here, \$80 there, with the most fortunate receiving \$100. While those working on the space where the factories were built were quite simply ignored, with the exception of a few fictional arrangements.

Displacement of dwelling houses

From a concern to install the processing factories and the security mechanism, store the backfill and draw the electrical line, Ruashi Mining initiated the physical displacement of the landed properties to the districts of Kawama, Luano, Kalukuluku, in particular the plots situated on the “usine – Radem” and “Kalukuluku – Guest House” sections of road. In addition, the action envisaged will affect the disappearance of fields for 2,000 farmers in the villages of Kijiba, Katanga Endache, Kalukuluku and partially Washeni.

Right from the start, the company discreetly sent a letter to the Mayor of the town requesting the authorisation to remove the occupants from the targeted sites. When the victims discovered this, they organised a protest march in June 2006 that led to the setting up of committees for dialogue with the company.

In 2007, the company negotiated compensation according to the following terms and conditions:

- ◆ An empty plot would cost \$0.67 per m² to be multiplied by the total area of the plot, and then add half the total again. For example a plot of 30/25 m² would cost: $30 \times 25 \times \$0.67 = 502.5 + \frac{1}{2} \cdot 502 = \753
- ◆ A house built in non-durable materials (mud bricks) would cost \$62.19 per m², to be multiplied by the total surface area of the house then added to the value of the land (to be calculated following the grid illustrated above).
- ◆ A house built in durable materials (cement blocks or baked bricks) would cost \$124 per m², to be multiplied by the total surface area of the house then added to the value of the land (to be calculated following the grid illustrated above).

What lessons can we learn from this experience of displacement in the eastern part of Lubumbashi?

On an economic level

The physical displacement in an urban milieu was successful in favour of the landowners. For it was very difficult for the company or its agents to get round the legally established landownership rights. Despite the acts of fraud, corruption or other forms of illicit trafficking noted here and there, the regular landowners received substantial compensation which enabled them, for the most part, to use some of their payment to set themselves up elsewhere. By the same token, it should be noted that rural land encumbered by a lease suffered the same fate. However (with large sums involved) only influential owners were able to obtain payment normally.

It was the farmers' lands that paid the heavy tribute to the phenomenon of grabbing. Passed down through inheritance, they were governed by customary law only, as agricultural usage and rural practices are not taken into account in the substantive law in force in DRC⁸.

In the absence of title deeds as recognised by the public administration, the land of the farmers was sold off for an arbitrary compensation price that was under evaluated and that is today responsible for the pauperisation of the affected households. These latter were forced to abandon farming for other occupations they were not used to and that were not suitable. The most skilful were able to push further on. They were obliged to displace their families

⁸ The mode of acquisition of the rights to plots in urban milieus obeys the positive legislation (written law) which authorises only the services of the land registry and land ownership deeds in granting land. These have the mission of dividing up the plots to be offered to the interested parties. Although in practice the business of plots is anyone's prerogative (head of cell, neighbourhood, civil leader, private individual, etc.) the buyers of plots, once they are in possession of the land, undertake a legalisation procedure with the land registry to obtain a rental contract covering the acquired land with rights. The juxtaposition of the positive and customary rights is an old legal conflict not yet resolved and we are aware of the damage it causes in our societies. With regard to the public administration, the occupants of rural land have no legal powers. Considered "res nullius" (nobody's property), these lands are added to the private domain of the Congolese state, exposed to any requests for concessions; it is up to the new buyer to indemnify the investments made by the former occupants. In virtue of the principle that "the soil and the sub-soil belong by law to the Congolese State", and the state alone transfers a portion to third parties under lease. With this fictional legal narrative, the Congolese State ignores that these inherited lands constitute capital for the farmers.

to the brush where there is no infrastructure, in particular schools for the children. Others resist against all threats. They continue to work in the areas around the mine with pollution as a consequence. They demanded a re-evaluation of the remuneration or frankly the acquisition of new land accessible from the competitive land sale centre.

The loss of earnings can be confirmed with a study carried out at the University of Lubumbashi on the typology of family-based farm operators, on Kipushi⁹ territory which tells us that:

- ◆ Peri-urban agriculture constitutes an important activity for the survival of the family.
- ◆ Self-consumption is the principal goal.
- ◆ On average, market gardening (principal crop) is practiced on an area that varies between $\pm 0.2 - \pm 1$ ha.
- ◆ 80% of the farmers work on land they inherited from their family. 50% of them have been operating for 10 years.
- ◆ Given the potentials present, market gardening could well take off in Lubumbashi.

According to Agronomist professor Lucien Nyembo Kimuni¹⁰ the market gardener who cultivates 0.2 ha earns \$1,000 a year whereas with 1 ha they can earn \$3,000 a year. In addition, he points out that *“income from market gardening depends on the areas sown, when in fact the areas are more or less constant or regress as urbanisation and the mining activities advance in the periphery of Lubumbashi”*.

⁹ Study by the faculty of agronomic sciences of the university of Lubumbashi (in partnership with the university of Liège-Gembloux Agro Organic-Tech) within the framework of the international colloquium on “Periurban territories: development, stakes and perspectives in countries in the south” held on 19 December 2013 at Ulg-Gembloux); the results of which were presented in the talk given by the faculty of agronomic sciences at the symposium on family-based farming on 26 – 27 September.

¹⁰ Inventory of research on family-based farming in Katanga: market gardening at Lubumbashi and its impact on poverty reduction: symposium on family-based farming on 26 September 2014.

Considering the above remarks:

- ◆ If a market gardener can produce \$3,000 per hectare, then the villages of Kebumba and Washeni have just lost 193 hectares therefore, in absolute terms, their annual loss of earnings equals $\$3,000 \times 193 \text{ ha} = \$579,000$. \$579,000 split among 328 established farming households, each one takes home theoretically \$1,765 per annum.
- ◆ If the exploitation only covers 20% (or 0.2 or 1/5) per hectare the annual gain per household falls to \$353. Which means that the compensation of \$300 awarded by CHEMAF to each household only covers a value of \$53 less than the value of the annual harvests of 20% of a hectare under cultivation. What can we say about those who received \$100 or less from Ruashi Mining?

On a political level

In the displacement process, the representatives of the mining company (agents, lawyers and consorts) and the representatives of the public authorities (civil leaders, agents, heads of urban services, agriculture, etc.) were intermediaries, but very powerful players who influenced or even dictated the final decision. Abusing their position in most cases, they brokeraged the decisions against the interests of the farmers who are suffering today and demanding compensation. According to their testimonies, Ruashi Mining and CHEMAF did not provide decent compensation in compliance with the norms preventing conflicts. These companies, or those who represented them to the communities, having acted with the complicity of the public authorities, swindled them.

Intimidations and false promises are the different forms of manipulation used in the displacement process. During the awareness raising campaigns, the players facing the farmers used flattery and deceit, especially violence to stamp out legitimate claims.

The farmers allege, furthermore, that:

- ◆ the process was at fault through a lack of responsible involvement on the part of the public authorities; that fake names were added to the list of people to be compensated;

- ◆ there were no negotiations between them and the companies;
- ◆ especially differences were noted in the assessment of the values of the property to be compensated for;
- ◆ the removal of the traces of the boundaries of the plots by covering them with backfill was a manoeuvre to discourage them;
- ◆ the presence of the mining company is a threat of expropriation of resources, pollution and destabilisation.

As for the companies, they testify to having been subjected to abuse of power and interference on the part of the politicians;

they were victims of the trickery and fraud carried out by the agents of the displacement who were scheming to further their own private interests;

the claims are unfair and multiple on the side of the farmers who are re-invading the concessions acquired or who persist in staying there.

On a cultural level

Several times, the population demanded in vain their compensation from Ruashi Mining and CHEMAF and contacted the public authorities. Unexpected effects of a rushed and clumsy displacement operation are coming to the surface. This does not only concern Ruashi mining and CHEMAF. The situation is widespread.

Each day that passes, we remark the emergence of protest movements. Very fragile because they are badly organised but full of anger and with destructive intent. These movements are springing up in isolated territories and are based on despair. They are expressed through criminal, unproductive acts that do not allow long-term solutions to be found. However, the protesters have been shown that this way of demanding rights exposes them to repression from the legal system and the police. This could delay the recovery of the desired situations. In between times the dispossessed return to the expropriated sites under the pretext that they have not found an alternative and each time the company is obliged to deploy considerable means to disperse them. The public authorities must more than ever rise above the situation. Instead

of stifling the affair and playing the hypocrite, it is their duty to act as a catalyst for sincere dialogue otherwise the worst may happen.

Another group of farmers from the municipality of Shituru o Likasi requested help from CRONGD Katanga. 400 households suffered expropriation of land by two Chinese companies installed in Buluo. On 28 April 2015, CRONGD met with the victims. Together the parties analysed the context. They posed the diagnostics on the state of the problem. A steering group of 12 people was installed at the end of the meeting to continue the action.



Mapinduzi Journal – 1

Context analysis: an important step towards
a strategy for social change



Mapinduzi Journal

2

125 years
after the Berlin
Conference:
time to invent
a new
cooperation



Mapinduzi Journal 3 Identity and governance in Africa

