Death by 'African' Democracy: Killing Consequences of Western Power Prognosis
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Death by 'African' Democracy: Killing Consequences of Western Power Prognosis

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Abstract: *»Tod durch 'afrikanische' Demokratie. Die tödlichen Folgen der westlichen Machtprognosen«.* American enthusiasm for promoting democracy has waned since the longer term consequences of the 2003 invasion of Iraq became apparent. The neo-cons misplaced confidence in the superiority of their ideals appeared to blind them to lessons from history. Indeed, they might have been more cautious about encouraging electoral transfers of power had they studied experiences following the post-colonial imposition of democracy. This paper draws out some of those lessons, arguing that examples of newly independent sub Saharan African nations highlighted the lag between the notion of universal suffrage and levels of mutual interdependence that enable stable and secure transitions of power. The lag legacy continues to cast a considerable shadow over sub Saharan African politics resulting in elections being accompanied by killings in the pursuit of power by plebiscite. Despite complicity in the roots of these political problems Western governments and international institutions continue with their 'hopeful prognosis'. Rather than confront underlying failings, blame is localised, directed at corruption and 'big men'. Such targeting fails to understand that these factors are indicative of wider problems requiring deeper rooted exploration and consideration. Hence figurational insights are applied in order to gain a broader understanding of long term social processes and activities that result in failures to entrench democracy within political arrangements. Particular attention is placed upon interweaving balances of power, competition and cooperation and we/I which are applied to a number of case studies including South Sudan, Nigeria and Kenya.

Keywords: Competition, democracy, established, figuration, functional democratisation, mutual interdependence, outsiders, power, Sub-Saharan Africa.

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1.   Introduction[1]

Throughout modern history, western governments and international institutions have promoted, and on occasion enforced, democracy as the panacea for a variety of problems in other parts of the world. Stemming from the build-up to independence from colonial control through to contemporary solutions for economic stagnation, corruption and conflict, the remedial potential of the popular plebiscite continues to resonate within northern hemisphere circles. The disastrously ill-informed imposition of democracy in Iraq in 2003 is the most recent high profile example to neglect deep rooted systemic problems. For instance, Dodge (2003) highlights the significance of embedded problems such as the long standing use of state violence, use of patronage to secure loyalties and the deliberate exacerbation of ethnic and communal demarcations. Moreover, although Saddam Hussein was held to be the cause of the widespread political violence, Dodge points to the initial weaknesses in the British attempt to create an absolutist-monarchical nation-state out of three former Ottoman provinces. These flaws were not addressed resulting in Hussein's regime being more symptomatic of wider processes than their cause. Yet the projected salving solution of democracy as an imported panacea remains. Confidence in the building and healing powers of democracy may have been more guarded if much greater attention had been placed upon early African examples in processes towards political independence. This early phase of democracy failed to achieve either long-term, broad, popular mandates or widespread political engagement through the ballot box. Today Lynch and Crawford (2011, 277) argue for "greater attention to how a 'right to vote' for a choice of political parties can be translated into the realization of less centralized power, greater material inequality and less human insecurity across the sub-continent". As Mansfield and Snyder (1995) noted twenty years ago, the process of democratization can be dangerous, resulting in a period of instability and violence.

   In this paper attention is placed upon gaining social scientific insight into the conditions in which democracy has been (re)introduced within African countries, to enhance understanding about connections between the implementation of the populist method of power participation and violent outcomes. Emphasis is placed upon different examples including South Sudan, Kenya and Nigeria. In South Sudan, the newest African state, elections and independence were introduced and have been succeeded by a brutal civil war. The first successful transfer of Nigerian power from the losing incumbent to the electoral

winner happened in 2015. However, violence continues to accompany elections and conflict continues within north eastern and south eastern regions. Until 2007 Kenya had been considered to be home to a progressing democracy. Following a heavily contested election rioting and violence erupted and 1300 people were killed and 600,000 displaced.

By applying contributions from figurational sociology, attention shifts from one dimensional explanations that range from blaming the legacy of colonialism to the personal characteristics of political leaders. Instead the argument proposed here is that the likelihood of democracy becoming an integral part of power distribution depends in large part upon how power and dependency interact with other facets of development, most notably rising levels of competition and cooperation and we/I.

2.   Failing to Explain the 'Failures' of 'African' Democracy

Accounts for the failures of African plebiscites can be broadly categorised into explanations that ostensibly either blame Africans or the West. The former includes excessive emphasis on competing tribal, ethnic and religious loyalties which spill over into violence. Despite the wide resonance of this argument, some of the more peaceful African countries such as Ghana have diverse mixes while one of the most violent countries in Somalia has minimal ethnic diversity. Tribalism has been identified as the cause both of conflict and failure of democracy in the form of primordialist explanation. However, this argument has a certain irony because, as Thomson (2016) explains, tribal identification became more bounded during colonialism. Because of the manner in which tribes were shaped, the sense to which the conceptual application has negative connotations and the failure to capture the multiplicities of behaviours, I shall be following Thomson's (2016) application of the term. Consequently in this paper ethnicity, rather than tribe, is applied as a more accurate, detached explanation to describe interlocking, overlapping, diverse identities.

In countries with religious tensions such as Nigeria, denominational composition has been identified as the base for conflict. However, despite the extent of religious commitment in the continent, religion is relatively rarely at the heart of conflict and is not the root cause. Moreover, as I explain below religion can also be included within part of the neo patrimonialism mix.

Weaknesses in African societies more generally have also been attributed to political and moral failings of leaders rather than systemic issues. Instead as Chabal and Deloz (1999) have reported, change at the top does not necessarily alter arrangements. Leaders have different styles, discourses, personalities and supporters. However, violence and democracy continued to be seemingly incompatible bedfellows.

The alterative view point posits the failures of democracy within a broader narrative that traces the roots of contemporary problems to colonialism, the destruction of existing social relations and constraints and the reshaping of local dynamics. Such a viewpoint is not without problems. Williams (2011) argues that focussing upon colonialism fails to explain why the most devastating conflicts within African societies occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, twenty and thirty years after independence.

At this point I should stress that the central thread through this paper does not argue that these broad explanations hold no relevance. My argument is not that the above factors are necessarily absent, rather that they feature alongside other aspects which collectively provide more rounded insights into outcomes. Moreover, the dark sides of attempts at promoting and establishing democracy should not hide electoral transformations over recent years. Lynch and Crawford (2011) highlight how alongside 'democratic rollbacks' and mindful of differences between countries and complexities, sub-Saharan Africa is typically more democratic today, and remains a supported concept within populations. Competitive democracies are more prevalent, power is being transferred through popular voting such as the previously entrenched Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, who ruled for 22 years before reluctantly ceding power after defeat at the ballot box. There has been a gradual shifting to formal rules and controls such as those insisting on two term presidential terms in Nigeria and reliance on constitutional framework rather than presidential power. Huntington's (1991) conviction that a state can only be classified as a democracy if there are two turnovers of government can be more confidently applied to Africa. Alongside these changes, concerns remain about the widespread lack of accountability in-between elections. And as Lynch and Crawford (2011) explain when referring to the situation when the then Nigerian President Obasanjo was prevented from competing for a third term, the subsequent election was marred by extraordinary levels of vote rigging and intimidation. Optimism has often been replaced by pessimism. Moreover, as Thomson (2016) points out, some of the claims for democratic progress tend to overlook that places often put forward as being at the forefront, such as Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, are dominated by one party electoral landslides. Hence the perceived political stability is also indicative of a lack of representative democracy for sections of the population who do not have a realistic opportunity of electing a government.

My starting position in examining African politics is motivated by a desire to avoid both the intellectual stupor, which contributes to Africa being viewed as a static, generic abstraction, underpinned by western perceptions of modernisation routes, and the compensatory trap of idealising pre and post-colonial practices. To address these imbalances, my argument is that an Eliasian approach can provide a more comprehensive and compelling conceptual toolkit to enhance understanding in a way that avoids concerns about 'development stud-

ies' and 'post-colonial discourse'. Although I am critical of the paucity of sociological insights, I am mindful of the sensitivities surrounding post-colonial linguistics and terminology. For this reason, I have shied away from applying the most misunderstood concept within the Eliasian canon, namely civilisation or civilising. This was a concept Elias applied in a descriptive sense and as he explained "I have not been guided by this study by the idea that our civilized mode of behaviour is the most advanced of all humanly possible modes of behaviour" (Elias 2012, 8). Nevertheless, the preceding manner in which the concept had been adopted by colonialists means that any application, even within an Eliasian account, would be an unhelpful distraction. The colonial application of 'civilising' does however draw together interweaving balances (Linklater 2016). For instance, from the early nineteenth century the British drive for land rights and commercial opportunities was cloaked in the language of civilising. Similarly prominent is the projected altruist sense of purpose of enhancing the civilisation of the world and, in particular, the peoples under direct and indirect rule (Berger and Weber 2014). To avoid any misguided confusion, this paper draws out key criteria within these figurations and processes of social development to be found within the work of Elias and figurational sociology.

3.   A Balanced Approach

Figurations are networks in which people are bound together through shifting patterns of interdependence. People are instrumental through their inter-relations "forming figurations or networks with each other which connect the psychological with the social, or habitus with social relations" (van Krieken 1998, 49). Crucially habitus is not innate but becomes integral to the individual through social processes and learning from birth onwards. Individuals become exposed to differing processes which shape behaviour and degrees of self-restraint and foresight in accordance with standards of the period and habitus. Hence people learn self-control and drives "according to the pattern and extent of socially given drive and affect regulation" (Elias 1980, 202). Within figurations there are constraints placed upon violence in particular settings and against particular people. And there can be instances when constraints are much weaker within certain contexts, especially during periods of insecurity and uncertainty. In the remainder of the paper I argue that the likelihood of democracy contributing to violence is partly dependent on the figurations, the length and levels of differentiation and integration between peoples within chains of interdependence that draw them together and apart. Shorter, narrower levels are less likely to enable interrelationships which could encourage wider consideration and empathy while restricting opportunities to mobilise electoral support through scaremongering concerning the threat of the 'other'.

To help illuminate the levels of interdependency at key stages of democratic processes in Africa I draw upon Wouters' (2014) interconnected balances which underpins Elias' 'triad of controls' which are considered to be integral to social development. The triad are three fundamental controls of people in society, namely humans over extra-human natural events, people over each other and control of each person over him or herself. Wouters proposes seven interconnected balances that in conjunction with the triad help to summarise social development. Balances are

> conceptual instruments for determining relations, tensions and conflicts between two or more connected entities, of one or more balances – and on all existing or relevant levels of integration, from the level of individuals and small groups to humanity at large (ibid).

Hence these balances open a window on changes in the size and density of networks of interdependencies (figurations) and enables insight into level of differentiation and integration. These insights provide indications of changes in levels of functional and social differentiation and integration.

The seven balances are: competition and cooperation; external social and self-controls; power and dependence; formalisation and informalisation; lust-balance of lust and intimacy; the we-I balance and; involvement and detachment

Although the balances are interrelated, in this paper for the sake of brevity, I want to draw out common explanations for democratic failures under the rubric of power and dependency. However, because I consider that focussing on politics in isolation can only, at best, provide partial insights I will apply the intertwining balances of competition and cooperation and We/I in pursuit of a more rounded understanding.

4. Power and Dependency

Across this balance power and dependency relations feature between regions, states, social classes, genders and generations. Functional democratisation is integral, indicating trends towards stronger and higher levels of competition and cooperation within more expanding and tighter interdependencies. These more equal power relations entail pressures and initiatives for more reciprocal controls between and within groups (Wouters 2016). When this insight is applied say for example to religion, the size of the gap in power relations between religious groups helps to explain the nature of their relations. Hence it can be large power gaps, rather than closer, that result in weaker restraints between groups. And when applied to some African contexts, emphasis on communal ethnic loyalties can restrict inter group working and agreements.

Wouters (2014) explains how decolonisation and the emancipation of workers, women, gays, children and old people implied shifting power balances and

a more inclusive consideration of the needs, and desires of others, within networks or webs of interdependence. Nation-states with greater centralisation of power over taxation, and the means and use of violence, contributed to the development of longer and more complex chains of social and economic interdependence. These more tightly knit webs of interdependence provide links between previously disparate groups. The figurations also contribute to greater pressure towards the more peaceful regulation of conduct within, and between, interdependent groups. To understand contemporary figurations within contemporary African societies the starting point is to return in history.

4.1 Colonial and Post-Colonial Power and Dependency

Colonialism tended to concentrate on economically productive or strategically important regions. Control was implemented by a 'thin white line' of administrators whose reach was restricted to particular trades and regions with state infrastructure and penetration otherwise weak. Local Africans were employed to support the administrative apparatus. Many were involved in imposing law and regulations, able to utilise these intermediate positions between colonialists and indigenous population. Because of their centrality to the imposition of power, chiefs and elites were engaged whom could be trusted to conform. Indeed, conformity became a key basis for awarding and maintaining positions resulting in questionable decisions both in ill-suited appointments and removing people from posts on non-competency grounds.

In the build-up to independence, a sense of national identity provided collective consciousness. However, this allegiance was shallow, lacking universal support for norms and values within contested boundaries. And although indigenous governments initially had popular mandates, they lacked frameworks through which disputes could be resolved constitutionally rather than through violence. Alongside the rhetoric of independence surrounding self-determination and freedom were constraints from the past, the institutional and structural legacies of colonialism (Berger and Weber 2014). In other words, the new nation-states were built on colonial foundations (Chatterjee 1986). Moreover, the lack both of preceding representative relationships, and opposition between colonial governments and people, meant there was no history of political engagement and limited connections with civil society. Trust and shared political values had not emerged between elite and masses or between different ethnic groups with alternative forms of conflict regulation and resolution. Both limited experience of oppositional politics and preparation meant that the colonial 'intermediates' were in advantageous positions to secure power when post-independence elections were held. However, the function of mediating unity among ethnic groups against colonial power ended with the leaders' transition to state power.

With weak national identities, elected members in the winner takes all system could mobilise sufficient support through ethnic maths, appealing to the largest 'tribe' or enough groups to reach the electoral threshold. In so doing ethnicity and concomitant exclusion became the basis for political identification as areas for differentiation and explanation that resonated with potential supporters (Lynch and Crawford 2011, Mann 2005, Thomson 2016). An 'ethnic state' emerged that privileges one ethnic group over others (Mengisteab 2007) and the management of tensions and conflict allowed permeable inclusionary boundaries that enable the co-optation of vocal and influential opponents into power and business circles (Omeje 2006).

After an initial burst of democratic activity Thomson (2016) explores how leaders put forward a range of reasons for the subsequent 'postponement' of elections including space in which to build democracy (Tanzania), elections were too divisive along ethnic lines (Ghana) or that only a one party state could enable long term economic development otherwise prevented by short term electioneering (Cooper 2002). Following the contraction of democracy, relying on conforming groups for support reinforced ethnicity as the most binding of wider group relations. In the process ethnicity became the basis for career development and political involvement. Factionalisation of the state through this neopatrimonialism increased the risk of instability. For example, uncontrollable crises, such as resource shortage, have contributed to rulers being "no longer able to assert their dominance over local strongmen in their patronage networks" (Reno 2007, 328-9).

Neo patrimonial regimes are considered to be hybrids combining legal-rational bureaucracies and personalised clientelism and patronage. They have been described variously as 'defective democracy' (Merkel 2004) or 'electoral' or 'competitive authoritarianism' (Levitsky and Way 2002). Through the motions of democratic processes and factional arrangements, state institutions can sustain patrons and supporters at the expense of opponents who are deliberately weakened. Bureaucracy lacks independence, with posts based upon nepotism and compliance. Hence biases within neo-patrimonialism, rather than professionalism, determined participatory inclusion and the basis for reward, political prominence and status. A lack of majority support for government can stem from neopatrimonialism and factionalism for whom the military provide armed underpinning. This reliance on the military in order to maintain power prevents greater integration and mutual empathy across populations which, as I explain later in the paper, hinder development of cooperation and self-controls.

Chabal and Deloz (1999) outline how formal structures have been ill-suited to concealing patrimonial and particularist forms of power. Colonial weakness of bureaucracy coincided with personalised nature of status and prestige that underpinned the basis for individual power. The system can attract and maintain supporters, providing politicians deliver benefits to communities such as jobs, cash and infrastructure. These people consider themselves to be included

within the neo-patrimonial framework which they will support rather than risk losing their advantage within an alternative arrangement.

Power became personalised with the state lacking robust institutionalisation to monitor and challenge. For instance, Mueller (2011) has argued that democracy needs integrity of the rule of law and institutions which must be matched by how they operate. However, the tremendous incentives to retain power and access to resources leads to a deliberate further weakening of safeguarding institutions and law. In the Kenyan build up to the 2007 elections, leaders had centralised power at the expense of judiciary, parliament and civil service and made partisan appointments. Consequently, the necessary checks and balances were either not in place or had been undermined. Without a vibrant civil society, government accountability to people proved weak enabling powerholders to act in their own, and their patronage networks' interests, rather than those of the nation. The limited depth of national identifications can partly be explained by the restricted ideological narratives that accompany sub-Saharan African politics.

4.2   Weak Political Discursive Consciousness

From the onset of post-colonial independence, ideological debate and allegiances has been notable mainly for their absence. With some notable exceptions such as the Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere's emphasis on African socialism, early Presidents positioned themselves first and foremost as fathers of the nation whom the population should depend, love, obey and/or fear. Yet as I explained above, the nation was a concept which had yet to be embedded within national consciousness resulting in the instrumental scramble for ethnic coalitions (Mann 2005). As Scarrit (1993) argues, there is low ideological intensity within most sub-Saharan African politics. The upshot of the loosely rooted discursive consciousness is that elections are not fought over metanarratives and debate surrounding societal goals and development. Instead electioneering focuses upon the distribution of resources and who is best placed to administer. The approach thinly hides the anticipated outcome that the winner's ethnic group or constituency community will receive a greater share of 'investment' and employment opportunities. Incumbents have a distinct advantage, with greater access to resources. By comparison oppositional parties have to overcome being numerically weak, fragmented and often leader personality focussed as they seek to overcome their institutional weaknesses of being both outside power and resource allocation (Rakner and van de Walle 2009). At the time of writing, the Kenyan elections are six months away. Electioneering is dominated by Big Men's personalities, which the two leading protagonists inherited from their more charismatic fathers, and claims and counter claims over revenue, corruption and governance. Political vision on how to address wider systemic developmental problems remains buried in the

scramble for the formula to win the ethnic maths competition. Instead of appealing to individuals, communal narratives intertwine democracy with ethno-regional divisions that continue to resonate in other locations. For instance, in South Sudan democratic elections were quickly followed by civil fractures that share striking similarities with other experiences in Africa over the last fifty years.

4.3   South Sudanese Power and Dependence

South Sudan formed in 2011 following the long Sudanese civil war, ostensibly between the north and southern parts, within the then national boundaries of Sudan. During the build-up to independence, multi-party elections were held in 2010. Hopes that the new nation would quickly become a functioning democracy were short-lived. As Zambakari and Kang (2014) explain, the national government "did not develop into a strong democracy that adequately meets the needs of its citizens". With weak governance arrangements alongside recent history of political violence and insecurities, stemming in part from conflicts within the nation state, at the onset the likelihood of a successful plebiscite was slight. The new government quickly centralised, denying political space for diversity and alternative allegiances. Moreover, as de Waal (2014) points out, the newly installed government was able to utilise previous patronage arrangements. These networks had become vastly enriched since 2005 when the end of the civil war enabled a huge increase in oil revenue. With tokenistic governance arrangements President Kiir rewarded compliant loyal followers through opening up corruption opportunities along ethnic lines. Today South Sudan is ranked one of the lowest countries in the Transparency Corruption Index.

Post-independence fighting followed already established boundaries. Prior to independence Hutchinson (2001) outlined an attempted coup in 1991 against the Southern leader Garang's attempt to win the war for Sudan rather than making the fight about independence for the South region. The dispute led to military confrontation between the Nuer and Dinka, the two largest South Sudanese groups. Pinaud (2014) notes that within South Sudan the Dinka constitute roughly 1/3rd population and the Nuer equate to approximately 1/5th with other ethnic groups marginalised.

5.   Competition and Cooperation

Although focusing ostensibly on power the above analysis is indicative of the interweaving with other balances surrounding competition over resources and collective identifications. All are instrumental in the likelihood that democracy will contribute to peaceful power sharing or violence in the name of (some)

people. The remainder of the paper explores in greater depth two of the most interconnected balances, namely competition and cooperation and We/I.

Competition and cooperation draws together Elias' focus upon the interplay between the use of physical violence and taxation. When central authority power is weak, there are challenges to centralised control in different locations including localised competitive struggles for land. In these locations weaker social and self-controls and potential outbreaks of conflict and criminal violence restrict business investment and undermine transport and communication networks. With limited investment outwith the region, and national and international markets restricted by uncertainty and underdeveloped networks, the local economy tends to be informal, small scale artisan or subsistence farming. Wide ranging, complex divisions of labour or trade do not materialise. Consequently, levels of cooperation are ambivalent shaped by the scale of webs of interdependence.

When applying Elias' coupling of violence and taxation, the proportion of tax payers within many African countries is noticeably low. From the initial introduction in the African colonies onwards the payment of monetary taxes has been unpopular. When first introduced many of the indigenous farming populations had to change their practices. To recoup money to pay taxes meant shifting from subsistence to cash crops. This approach resulted in localised food shortages, malnutrition and sometimes famine. Changes to agriculture continued following independence. Countries specialised in one export crop contributing to over reliance on Western markets and price setting. Crop failures or global overproduction had devastating impacts on national economics, constraining resources to invest in economic diversification. The shortage of monetary resources led to largescale government borrowing which in turn created unserviceable massive national debts. Some governments invested money into nationalisation programmes that proved inefficient and were to prove integral to the patronage and neo-patrimonialism channels that also pervaded politics.

With limited resources and distribution priorities directed into neo-patrimonial networks, government service provision was patchy, especially in more remote regions where social controls were also weakly applied. In these locations informal economies are particularly prominent across economic and social spectrums to include food, water, health, fuel, housing transport, finance and telecommunications. The neglect of more sparsely populated regions meant that despite agriculture being the mainstay of national income, investment was directed at urban projects at the expense of rural areas. Cooper (2002) argues that often this policy was partly directed at limiting the resources of a potentially conservative opposition which could be translated into political strength. Moreover, prioritising cheap food for urban areas meant that governments paid artificially low rates for crops and farmers struggled to survive. The disparity contributed to growing urbanisation and farming becoming less attractive. In

one of the most extreme examples, Ajakaiye et al. (2011) explain how the vibrant agriculture in Nigeria during the mid-twentieth century declined to such an extent that the sector was virtually abandoned. Although contemporary urban migrants retain localised roots, the majority tend to be located within informal settlements where they share neighbourhoods with people from similar backgrounds and ethnicity. Lynch and Crawford (2011, 289) position indigenous migrants within the 'politics of belonging' that enable political elites and 'ethnic entrepreneurs' to 'exploit an almost naturalized sense of belonging and histories of precarious migrant labour policies'.

Potentialities for spreading levels of cooperation were to be further hit when structural adjustment programmes (SAP) were introduced in many African states during the 1980s. These states had been unable to adapt and accommodate global shifts. The most notable change was the 1973 dramatic hike in oil price. This increase impacted upon plans for fuel driven industrial programmes and contributed to worldwide recession, lowering prices and demand for primary exports. With national governments facing massive debts, loans from international institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF, were dependent upon the implementation of neo-liberal reforms. These initiatives included privatisation which saw the contraction of the public sector and the removal of tariffs for import substitution industries (Berger and Weber 2014, Cooper 2014, Thomson 2016). Klay Kieh (2009, 19) describes how financial institutions insisted that governments,

> remove all of the barriers to trade and foreign investment; to devalue their currencies; to lay off workers in the public sector; to freeze employment; to keep wages in the public sector stagnant; to raise interest rate[s] and to dismantle their 'social safety nets'.

Massive job losses followed and chains of mutual interdependence contracted. Health and social institutions closed while educational opportunities contracted. Anticipated international investments, that would accommodate significant portions of populations, subsequently failed to materialise. Instead investment tended to concentrate upon urban pockets or continued to be directed at primary resources. As Cooper (2002, 101) explains, industrialisation requires reliable communications, utilities, company linkages and skilled labour. However, the implementation of SAP conditions weakened all these requirements. Le Billon (2007) comments upon the growing distance between elites and people, a gap which was not hidden by an inclusive social safety net for the expanding poor. The contraction most adversely affected young people many of whom became involved in the informal economy. For instance in Kibera, the massive informal Kenyan settlement where violence was pronounced in 2008, 60% of residents are youth and 80% of residents are jobless or involved in very sporadic informal economic activities (Dimova 2010). The youth were also willing recruits to Big Men networks of patronage, across different layers of political influence, receiving payment for tasks such as mobilising support. Again highlighting the

interplay between power, competition and cooperation, privatisation provided tremendous opportunities for Big Men to profit through the accumulation of shares. In turn the shares could be utilised to strengthen political control.

Today, around 72% of working populations rely on the informal sector characterised by low wages and productivity and limited regulation and taxation (Benjamin et al. 2014). Rather than figurations extending to incorporate more and more people, the reverse happened through sector decline and market contraction. Consequently, contact between people engaged within the informal economy and the nation-state, surrounding contributions and expectations, has been further weakened. Moreover, within the informal economy, connections, rather than qualifications or abilities, became even more paramount. Familial connections were the route into urban opportunities, while providing necessary cover for rural lands left behind. And in a manner similar to other parts of the world, especially the Middle East, the contraction of state sponsored social services created gaps in provision which other groups, most notably religious organisations, moved into. Therefore, mutual competition and cooperation that underpin informal economies do not stem directly from structured government policies. Instead the informal economy is heavily shaped through networks with boundaries that allow and exclude participation.

As the expanded opportunities for the Big Men implies, the privatisation agenda was not accompanied by rigorous governance arrangements. Limited governance continues to help shape levels of competition and cooperation and interconnected allegiances. For example, the same processes which enabled voting abuses in Kenya also enabled corruption and land grabbing exercises. In 2007 with no agreed independent arbitrator or trusted mechanisms for appeal people resorted to the streets and violence. Similarly in the newly independent South Sudan the weakly developed institutions of government and overreliance on oil revenues and international aid agencies meant that there were very few constitutional checks on the distribution of revenue (de Waal 2014, Pinaud 2014). Instead arrangements created within war continued in the post war dynamics. SPLA commanders shaped their own economic and social capital through patronage networks which enabled a trickling down of resources to incorporate supporters. Like some other forms of politics found in neighbouring countries, ideology beyond independence was weakly formulated with personal wealth accumulation a more integral part of political and military arrangements. Without the goal of independence to unify southern groups, the government extended 'solidaristic graft' to try ensure a sufficient proportion of the population were incorporated within the self-interested distribution chain. Today shortfalls in agricultural production, exacerbated by fighting that has interrupted main trade routes with Uganda, has further reducing inter group cooperation. In the process access to food, associated supply chains and ultimately famine has been politicised.

Following the implementation of international constraints on sub Saharan African government's sovereignty, the further expansion of globalisation has created uneven opportunities (Berger and Weber 2014). Greater fluidity of manufacturing has resulted in corporations locating to African locations when conditions are deemed favourable. The tremendous expansion of mobile phones does offer greater potential to overcome this gap. However, technology that enables the transfer of production is also exclusionary with internet connections and computer equipment often beyond the reach of the majority of African populations. Moreover, global mutual interdependencies, while indicating a shift towards greater, expansive interconnections, remain unstable. Relationships are stacked in favour of large corporations who can withdraw their businesses when better opportunities are perceived elsewhere. Consequently, global economic liberalisation and national adaptation programmes have failed to formally accommodate large sections of African populations. Instead Lewis (2008) reports on the lag between overall economic performance and localised experiences.

Ironically after numerous Western attempts to initiate and re-introduce democracy within African nations, one of the unintended consequences of SAP was the manner in which Big Men selected democracy as the means of maintaining power. Facing devastating damage caused to public institutions and with reduced resources to fund sufficiently inclusive patronage networks the purpose of the Big Men was under threat. In particular declining numbers of citizens believed that national best interests dominated political agendas. The partiality of policies became too restricted with disproportionate sections of populations mistrusting and questioning government legitimacy. Moreover, the Big Men no longer had the resources to fulfil their main purpose of continued power through levels of communally derived mutual interdependencies. In these settings Thomson (2016) outlines how leaders turned to democracy as a way to re-legitimise and restore trust in their institutions. Hence this 'second independence' or 'Third wave' was because,

> parties often grew, not out of socio-economic cleavages or struggles over the nature of state authority, but out of elites' urgent need for electoral vehicles which would allow them to compete in the newly devised rules of the political game (Manning 2005, 715).

Many of the former autocrats proved adept with the new rules of the game, often changing the rules to enhance their prospects while proceedings were still tinged by the veneer of democracy. And some leaders played the game fairly and won. The continuation of preceding leaders is highlighted in Lynch and Crawford's (2011) study of legislative elections in twenty-one countries. Between 1989 and 2007, there were only five instances where the incumbent President failed to be elected. However, playing to the rules of democracy and creating ethnic divisions can be two sides of the same coin.

6. We/I

The We/I balance explores levels of identification within individuals and groups. In essence, the interplay is between levels of individualisation and forms of group-feeling such as ethnicity, gender, religion and class. Expanding group-feeling or widening we-identification to the levels of nation weakened other We forms such as class, ethnicity and religion. Personal identity is an interweaving of individual history with intergenerational heritage and communal events. This intertwining can provide the basis for ethnic, religious, regional and socio-economic loyalties and hatreds which become embedded within habitus. These shared experiences and common memories are integral both to forms of I and We feelings, shared senses of truth and empathy and the boundaries for exclusion. When forms of civil society identification coalesce around religion, race, class or ethnicity such feelings can weaken the sense of national identification, most obviously if the nation-state is controlled by a different race, class or ethnic group. In locations where the state is relatively weak or only strong in concentrated areas, civil society can replicate wider fractures. However, with limited discursive consciousness, counter claims tend to reverse the established policies and behaviour. Rather than promoting widespread and deep rooted systemic change, excluded groups coordinate campaigns around the basis for their exclusion, whether ethnicity or religion, and in so doing set the parameters for inclusion. In Africa, Dowden (2009) has argued that the lack of common nationhood has been the chief cause of wars. Drawing upon the example of South Sudan, following Garang's failure to solidify opposition around a united Sudanese identity, the South Sudanese collaboration was to be dominated by Dinka leadership with rival ethnic groups marginalised. Following independence this arrangement continued.

Potential forms of alternative identification and senses of belonging are multiple. At the continental level, pan Africanism has taken various shapes and ideological undertones, including socialist during 1930 and 1940s (Berger and Weber 2014). Cooper (2002) highlights the significance of the diaspora in raising a sense of collective African identity. Today African organisations such as the African Union drive for economic and political unity in shared areas of interest with limited impact. Yet despite the tremendous variations in language, ethnicities, religion, cultural practice and geography, a sense of being African pervades sub Saharan habitus. Conversely at a national level in Nigeria, one of the most diverse nations, emerged out of 250 ethnicities and has over 400 languages and dialects and cross cutting religions.

Within African societies identities 'incorporate a communal notion of the individual' providing sense of intensity (Chabal and Daloz 1999, 52). In so doing, identities contribute to politics being both inclusive and exclusive. The roots for the interweaving were pointed out in approaches to independence by Sir Henry Willink Commissioner from the Nigerian British Colonial Office

when referring to a 'sharp recrudescence of tribal feeling' (cited in Bourne 2015: 82). And these feelings enable politicians to exploit communal loyalties. Nevertheless, as Chabal and Daloz (1999) explain the relationship is interdependent. Politicians tend to respect psychological, social and religious foundations of their local community. The connections are acknowledged within patronage relationships that accord with shared ethnic identifications and priorities.

To apply an earlier point explicitly to We/I, at independence newly formed governments clothed themselves in nationalist garbs, irrespective of the ideology adopted, whether African or scientific socialism or state capitalism (Thomson 2016). Although in the short term this approach brought some stability and sense of unity, the same nationalist rhetoric could also be the basis on which potential opponents could challenge. By claiming the nation as their own and denouncing public criticism to be against the nation, governments reduced the space in which oppositional groups could operate. Therefore, when the opposition considered that the government's national vision was too exclusionary, through patronage loyalties, then ethnicity was the main source of oppositional identification to be mobilised around, what Osaghae (2006, 4-5) describes as, "counter-mobilization and counter-nationalism".

Following the achievement of the nationalist goal, subsequent attempts to create national consciousness have been weakened by the continuation and mobilising reinforcement of ethnic identities. These difficulties stem in part from the limited shared symbols, common memories and mythology which, Smith (1991) argued, are essential for the successful emergence of a nation-state. Cooper (2002) outlines attempts to accord cultures with distinctly national characters that sought to separate dress, music and art from local connections. During the 1980s cultural diversity mushroomed, especially among younger generations, as music, literature and art become more particularistic forms of expression and means of portraying forms of opposition to more sterile, national adaptations. Religion also became a more evident form of shared consciousness across Christian and Islamic denominations in particular, extending footholds from the spiritual to the secular. Conversely narrow focussed economic programmes contributed to the emergence of small, marginalised working classes. Moreover, the expansion of the informal economy further restricted work forms of We allegiances.

7. Conclusion

After decades of northern hemisphere critics bemoaning the state of Africa, there are many signs of progress that both support and confound 'development studies' and 'post-colonial discourse'. Life expectancies are rising, connected to cleaner water, sanitation, healthcare, education programmes and employ-

ment opportunities in a manner which supports development studies while challenging the post-colonial critical base. However, these changes are not universal varying both between and within nation-states. These differences and their impacts tend to be better explained by post-colonial discourse rather than development studies. The extent of raising life expectations correlates with strategic economic and political investments into commerce, peoples and regions. Losers in the growth game tend to be non-strategic industries or locations with people who are not prioritised by governing parties. Moreover, the dominance of informal economies means very low levels of taxation, thereby weakening the interdependencies between state and civilians. The upshot of these weak links into formal, wide ranging networks is that opportunities for greater cooperation between peoples from other communal groups and regions are sparse. Consequently, the conditions that enable shifts from competition to cooperation are largely absent or weakly formed. Following on from this weakness is the concomitant impact on levels of mutual interdependence.

The application of figurational sociology enables greater insight into development programmes and the patchy implementation of democracy that the positioning of development and post-colonial studies cannot fully explain. Thirty years of neo-liberalism have contributed to the introduction of the third wave of democracy and subsequent reinforcement of power and competition. Rather than result in an opening up of mutual interdependencies across populations, the changes have not significantly shifted levels of empathy between previously demarcated groups. Nor has the third wave addressed endemic problems, often traceable to colonialism, which continue to reverberate. In other words the losers of democracy are also losers in the division of economic and power resources. They are outsiders across power and competition and cooperation balances. Their social and individual characteristics provide both the basis for their collective identification and the grounds for their exclusion. Heightened emotional involvement is integral within 'We' outsider identities that are denied open participation. Conversely the established We are threatened by opening participation to outsiders (Elias and Scotson 2008). By viewing democratic processes through multi-layered prisms of balances, problems are identified that are more deep rooted. Hence potential solutions must be more wide ranging, capable of overcoming shifting patterns of compartmentalism and weak mutual empathy. Hitherto existing processes interact and reinforce existing inequalities. Interconnected balances also highlight how political and economic opportunities and constraints will continue to be intertwined until there is greater accountability, stability and confidence that the current 'winners' will not lose everything in more open, inclusive democratic and competitive arrangements. With less power orientated around We identifications, power differentials will diminish, and mutual interdependency between groups will increase and functional democratisation would become more equitable.

In summary, democratic processes are less likely to contribute to deadly outcomes if they are positioned within a multi-balanced change agenda that alters relationships between and within groups. Achieving shifts towards greater pacification therefore requires greater interweaving of competition and co-operation and power and dependency within wider figurations and more shared We identifications. The outcome will be a concomitant increase in mutual belonging and decline in mutual suspicion and fear that embedding democracy requires.

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