

THE STATE IN AFRICA

Beluce Bellucci*

ABSTRACT

Africa still faces major challenges, particularly with respect to such factors as religions and ethnic groups, among others. An understanding of the African State requires knowledge of various aspects, at both national and international levels. From a Western state-model standpoint, the African experience entails investigation of fields such as territory, language, technology, production methods, and the trend toward a neo-liberal State. Changes undertaken have sought not only development, but also a restructuring of economies to align them to the world market, and have resulted in improved prospects for progress in Africa.

In Africa, seldom is ethnicity far removed from politics; at the same time, however, it does not provide the raw material for development. Within the scope of the contemporary State, ethnicity serves, principally, as an agent for accumulation, either of wealth or of political power. Tribalism is thus perceived as a political force in itself, and as a channel for expression in disputes for the acquisition of wealth, power and status.

J. F. Bayard

1 THE STATE, POLITICS AND THE ECONOMY

There are many prejudices in relation to Africa, and these include notions relating to the State, religions and ethnicity, all of which will be examined in this text. Ideas formed by hasty judgment and science or special interests which, subsequently, circulate among intellectuals and laypeople, lead to comparisons between what is to be seen from a western standpoint and analyses of African societies based upon western societal models. Over the long term, such views have led to stigmatization of African States, by affirming that, having been established by colonial law, they merit such epithets as “external”, “quasi-state”, “artificial” or “pseudo-state”. In counterpoint to this view, Jean François Bayard (1989) proposes a historical view of the State in Africa built upon the bases of pre-colonial State traditions and on the colonial experience. Contemporary African States have received influences both from colonialism and from pre-colonial kingdoms and empires, and are based both upon the Rule of Law and upon ancestral political traditions. These alternately draw near to and keep a distance from religion. Such phenomena are complex, making understanding and management of the African State more challenging.

* Economist, director of *Associação Centro de Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*.

An understanding of the African State may be found delving within itself, or through its connections with the outside world; in the institutional aspects of power, in its central decision-making bodies, its leaders and administrators; in bodies where negotiation takes place and agreement is reached; and in the production of public goods and services, all of which are permeated by traditional and modern values.

The debate on the African State is extensive and the literature presents a number of historical reviews, current analyses, and alternative proposals.

When enquiring about tradition in the Modern African State, one often hears references to polygamy, female excision, solidarity networks, hierarchies and social obligations, the weight of ancestors, duties of the young, rites and cults of the pagan religions, regional and ethnic mores and customs, and the way in which Africans, in their domestic economies, relate with power.

Which of these features is incompatible with a project for modernity? Which clash with universal values? As of that point, new questions may be raised. What is the aim of modernity today? One century ago, modernity sought to “civilize” the “savages”, by making them accept the Christian religion, the habit of wearing clothes, responsibility at work (above all else) among other things. Today it is well known what this “civilization” imposed by colonialism really entailed: forced labor, migration, compulsory cultivation, payment of taxes in cash, corporal punishment, imprisonment, massacres, banishment, denial of citizenship, legal segregation, and underdevelopment. These were the facets of modernity meted out to the African colonies. In counterpart, those colonized gave their labor, the fruits of which were appropriated and transferred to the metropolis. The latter became richer, accumulated capital, built infrastructure in its (European) territory, thereby becoming more knowledgeable and cultured. It became civilized to the point of requiring that Africans (not without their own participation and complicity, once they had become citizens of sovereign States) adopt the “civilized” standards of the moment: firstly, development and a strong State, and subsequently freedoms and the minimal State. First dictatorship, later democracy.

The rights to life, happiness, democracy, freedom and progress, held to be universal values, are generic abstractions that unfold as procedures, institutions, deadlines and particular rites, varying by region, ethnic group and country. How can these features be harmonized, while imbuing universal values with a historical setting? Polygamy, for example, can not be criticized outside its historical-social context. If the actual practices which brought it about have not changed, it is unlikely to be uprooted. What can be observed, even now in the 21st Century, are domestic societies living much as they did before, in terms of productive, cultural, religious and political aspects. Certainly, the proclamation of monogamy as

a universal value and repression of the practice of polygamy will not bring about its demise. Polygamy will only be abolished when its material bases no longer exist. Even more complex are the religious values which, dominated by individual faith and belief, are easily transferred to other material bases, and thus continue to propagate magical values within scientific societies.

In summary, the Western State model is used as a reference, supported by concrete data, to conclude that Africans are unfit to manage their State and, therefore, that westerners should do it for them (as they did under colonialism); or that these States should be dissolved, restoring the kingdoms and tribes of old, thereby enabling local and regional governance that is “better adapted” to the ways of Africans.

The task currently being undertaken by Africans is a redefinition of the concept of *African democracy*, so as to draft a State model that incorporates Africans’ historical and cultural processes alongside the scientific advances of this third millennium. This task entails not only an epistemological effort, of reason, but also the outcomes of social practices undertaken. However, the current crisis of the State has been accompanied by social difficulties throughout the continent, and the identity crisis that the western model is currently undergoing. The process of internationalization increasingly intertwines the history of the African continent with that of the rest of the world, so that it both influences and is influenced, thereby making it explicit that the historical responsibility and the quest for a new model are tasks to be pursued by all, and not just Africans. Since the crisis of 2008, the neoliberal model has come into question, and there are signs that new perspectives may be explored.

1.1 The African experience

“Nationalism came before the nations. The nations do not form States and nationalisms, but rather the reverse.” Hobsbawm

Following the wave of independence in the 1960s, debate took place between the pro-capitalist and pro-socialist schools, but such discussion always focused on how to maintain tradition within modernity.

What from the historical past should be preserved? Whether to adopt the language of the colonizer as the national language, or give preference to a local language? Should the borders drawn at the turn of the 20th Century, after the Conference of Berlin, be maintained or redrawn? What system of government should be adopted, monarchy or republic? These, and many other themes, were examined by leaders and intellectuals of the period and influenced the creation of the nations. Few States kept their traditional kings in power, as did Swaziland, where the king still reigns. All adopted the language of their colonizers as a common language,

with the exception of Somalia, which already had a national language of its own. Likewise, at the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, option was made for the maintenance of the colonial borders and national governments, despite the great influence of Pan-Africanism among its leaders.

The African State in the second half of the 20th Century was forged by Africans, who fought — to a greater or lesser degree, achieving domestic legitimacy — following the model of *pax americana*, which had achieved political victory in the anti-colonial struggle and was economically strong.

The State appeared as a modernizing force; a transformer of traditions that hampered development; strong and centralized, when not dictatorial; capable of defining and executing public policies and actively participating in all fields of the social and economic life of society. The outlook for the future was promising: all the rest was mere sentimentalism. Under discussion was the dosage; not the medication. The great debate centered upon capitalist ideals and socialist ideals (which is no mean argument).

In the literature, many criticisms are to be found claiming that the post-colonial State was waylaid by bloodthirsty dictators and unscrupulous persons, and that this explained all the evils of the continent.¹ They forget that such people exist not only in Africa, but everywhere, and that they are still very much in evidence. The correct question, then, is: why, at that time, did dictators command the nations? Indeed, at that time, this was also occurring in other parts of the world, notably in Latin America. What can be observed is that, it was not the State changed because men changed, but that men changed (or rather, their style did), because the economic policies changed. Those were the men required to perform the tasks before them: some being more competent, others more personable. In Africa, many such leaders remained in power, even after having radically changed their attitudes and political thought. That model, in the circumstances of the Cold War, facilitated, when it did not demand, dictators.

With the crisis of the 1980s, as hostages to international aid grants needed to face up to their domestic crises, the African States were cowed into adopting the neoliberal model.

At that time, the previously-advocated Strong State was deemed outmoded, and privatization and a decentralization of functions, with civil liberties, good governance and free flows of capital were in vogue. Traditional African values flourished in this power vacuum, encouraged by non-government organizations (NGOs), by religious groups, and by the discourse of international experts from organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (FMI)

1. As, for example, Biyouidi-Mampouya (2008).

and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). After all, it was postulated, if modernity is no longer to be attained via industrialization or building of a domestic market, why modernize minds? If modernity is now ecological, the natives should revert to their cultures, production, rites and religions. Such positions were endorsed by various African leaders and disseminated by NGOs.

In the second decade of the 21st Century, still suffering the effects of low production, economic and political crisis, civil wars, endemic health issues and the destruction of school systems, despite some signs of recovery of economic indicators in recent years and having found new international partners, Africa still has no new State model with which to underpin its rebirth. It lacks theoretical and practical bases; but is now feeling its way, speculating and criticizing, rather than simply lamenting. New forms of participation are being sought and, in some places, the masses are beginning to take to the streets (much to the chagrin of leaders and dominant classes) evidencing hope for change.²

Accepting and understanding the weight of ethnic groups and of regions, and also of the African religions (be they traditional or syncretic) within state institutions and decision-making bodies is crucial for understanding how they work.

Beyond the rationalism inherent to public institutions, the African State is a place of power (in the traditional sense) with primordial functions in society (solidarity and obligations) and, whereas society continues its pre-contractual relations, based on extra-economic ties, such power will surely prevail. There are reasons to believe that groups and countries that maintain external relations with the continent will remain interested in maintaining domestic pre-capitalist or post-modern relations with Africa, in the same way that the people seek forms of participation in decision making.

In this context, classification of the African State into five periods — *i*) traditional (or pre-colonial, until the 19th Century); *ii*) colonial exploitation (from the end of the 19th Century until World War II); *iii*) colonial valuation (from World War II until the early 1960s); *iv*) independent developmentalist (up until the 1980s); and *v*) the Neoliberal State (from the 1980s to the present day) — helps us understand the changes that have occurred and, during each of these phases, the types of governments, institutions, and specific economic, social and cultural policies that have prevailed, imbuing each with an identifiable individual “face” in each period, in the light of modern and traditional, internal and external pressures.

2. In this regard, see events in Mozambique at the beginning of September 2010, where popular demonstrations against an increase in the price of bread and the cost of living in general led to a retreat by the government but left more than ten deaths. “When appraising the situation (which will probably be repeated, not only in Mozambique but also in other African countries, as it was in 2008 when, for the same reasons, the ‘revolt against hunger’ broke out after rises in the price of rice in many parts of the continent) it becomes evident that ‘something is rotten in the kingdom of globalization’ (National Union of Peasants (UNAC) Mozambique, 2010).

2 THE AFRICAN STATES UP PRIOR TO THE 19TH CENTURY

Africa has experienced various forms of social organization, ranging from segmented societies to centralized models. The distinction between societies without a State and centralized systems³ postulates that the former are based upon groups organized around the extended patriarchal family, with common heritage, i.e., clans, with common ethnic ties, under the authority of an elder. For their part, centralized systems also preserve social stratifications, configured as casts or orders, and range from sultanates to kingdoms and States.

The great West African empires, such as Ghana in the 8th Century, Mali in the 14th Century, and Songai and Bornu in the 16th Century, were organized politically on the basis of trade with the Arab world. Their towns were built on the banks of rivers and dominated vast expanses of hinterland. They were characterized by religious and political ties, by personalized power, by lack of a written language, and by decentralized organization. The central authority held a monopoly on material goods and lived off tribute paid in goods and men, and revenues from taxes on harvests and cattle, levies on metals, customs duties, and booty from warfare. Tribute provided the economic bases of some empires, such as those of the Wolof of Senegal and the Hausa cities of Nigeria.

Exchanges took place in the local market, and medium and long-distance trade depended upon the safety of trade routes. Exports consisted of gold, slaves, kola nuts, gum, ivory and hides; and imports of iron and copper bars, pearls, and cloth. Despite their economic power, comparable to that of the Arabs and Genovese and Venetian merchants, these States never achieved overseas conquest nor established strong local economies.

Although currencies had long circulated in certain African regions, they were not used for purchases, but rather, for payment of debts in parallel to the merchant economy. This was the case of cowries, pearls, bars of salt or of gold, which were equivalent to goods and chattel, as were women in matrimonial alliances or men in times of war.

Currency in circulation thus reached only a part of society. Monetized mercantile, fiscal and tributary networks did not constitute a monetized society, with debits and credits, enabling transfers of possessions or property of real or symbolic value (HUGON, 2009). Thus, money did not penetrate the interior of the African continent. It did not assume all the functions it has in a capitalist economy: general equivalence, means of exchange and of payment, store of value and deferred payment, or basis for accumulation. In gift economies of segmented, little-stratified societies, the giver affirms superiority in

3. On this subject, see Evans-Pritchard and Meyer-Fortes (1964).

relation to the receiver. The receiver is obliged to reciprocate with a counter-gift at a later time, i.e., he becomes indebted. Differently, in hierarchical societies, tribute delivered is the mark of one's submission to the sovereign who receives it. The circulation of prestige goods displays ties between wealth and power, as power is an accumulation of social ties and of symbolic goods, and not merely of material goods.

If we were to make a fair distinction between one type and another, the number of African societies that have a separate political organization (the empires, kingdoms, city-states, chieftainships or sultanates) would certainly be greater than that of societies considered without a State in the classical sense, thus contradicting the view of traditional Africa as a mosaic of clans and tribes or of societies recently emerging from prehistoric humanity (Dozon, 2008, p. 24. Free translation).

And this is taking into consideration that affiliation to groups and lineages constitutes one of the essential vectors of these States (especially at the level of dynastic organization) and that population movements make borders movable and uncertain.

Pre-colonial African States ensured unity, order and the defense of territories they had conquered and, upon installing administrative, judicial and military bodies, they overturned the previous social organization; i.e., they were dynamic structures in constant transformation. They were societies that acknowledged social divisions, had aristocrats, priests and field workers, both freemen and slaves and, furthermore, various closed casts subject to prohibitions, such as blacksmiths, musicians and sculptors.

These societies possessed longstanding traditions and state culture, even if, as a whole, they did not last very long or possess great capacity to control their territories. They were societies in which clear divisions existed, between oppressors and oppressed, exploiters and exploited, i.e., they were aware of the mechanisms of domination and of exploitation. A number of African kingdoms remain to this day. Kings legitimately ascend to the throne and exercise their obligations, and the aristocracies and casts display their status, even when such manifestations are officially forbidden in today's States.

Aside from political systems, Sub-Saharan Africa has myriad beliefs, rites and representations of both the living and the dead, which are also viewed with prejudice by westerners. The "religion of fetishism"⁴ invented in the 18th Century has been presented as magic and is despised and looked down upon as the work of the devil up to the present day.

4. The pioneer of this line of research was Charles Brosses who, in 1760, in Geneva, published, *Du culte des dieux fetiches or Parallèle de l'ancienne religion de l'Égypte avec la religion actuelle de la Nigritie* (cf. Dozon, 2008).

Traditional religions revere mythological entities, ancestors and spirits, organized into symbolic and cultural systems that have a place within political and social organizations. Thus, lineages were collectively upheld by genealogical ties, but also by the myth of the founder and by common legend, placing before them the same obligations and interdictions. Kings were accompanied by priests and identified with supernatural powers, blending divine power and earthly power, in this sense no different to western monarchies.

Symbolic and cultural systems, however, were ruled by historical movements and underwent changes in response to events. In situations of extreme poverty or epidemics, whole populations would change their territories and abandon their goods; the same would occur in response to conflicts and institutional crises. Groups would abandon their cults and appropriate the cults of neighbors, thereby demonstrating great flexibility in molding themselves to circumstances.

This capacity to adapt also applied to contact with Islam and Christianity. The Islamic theurgic and divination arts were accommodated into local systems. With Christianity, symbols such as the cross were incorporated, taking on new meanings and giving rise to syncretic cults. For these reasons, the words spell (*feitico*), fetishism and animism fail to do justice to African paganism (Dozon, 2008).

The presence of Christianity in northern and eastern regions of Africa harks back to the first centuries AD. Beginning in the 15th Century, along the Atlantic seaboard, Europeans evangelized fugitives from slavery, the banished, and traders hooked up to the economy of merchant trading posts. The major Christian missionary thrust, however, was contemporary to the European colonization which advanced upon Sub-Saharan Africa throughout the 19th Century and took part in the establishment of new territories and the formation of States. Its participation in colonial activities was of greatest relevance in Central, Southern and Eastern Africa, having lesser influence in Western Africa where it was blocked by the presence of Islam.

The “invention of Africa”⁵ was a form whereby colonizers appropriated African paganism and classified it in accordance with their interests. They identified the pagan gods, and those deemed compatible with Christianity were classified as civilized; those that were not, were demonized.

This activity relied upon participation of Africans, especially through religious syncretism that blended components of local cults and cultures with aspects of Christianity in the struggle against fetishism and witchcraft of the local cults. In this contact, the African custom of changing rites and gods was based upon the notion that their gods were no longer protecting them from the penury brought

5. Expression used by Mudiné (1988).

on by colonialism. The modern “strong men”, prophets or “modern sovereigns” ended up replacing the “strong objects” that comprised the magical world.⁶ This phenomenon proliferated also into Muslim territories, with messianic movements proclaiming adherence to the Koran against the colonizers.

3 THE EXPLOITATIVE COLONIAL STATE

When considering the colonial economy, conceptualization and quantification of economic surplus and accumulation must take into account that a significant part of the surplus was transferred from the territory, mostly to the metropolis, i.e., almost nothing was allowed to accumulate internally, thereby characterizing an exploitative colonial economy.

From the 19th Century and up until the period of independence, mechanisms of accumulation were closely linked to relations with the outside world, given that there was practically no accumulation within domestic societies.

After the Conference of Berlin⁷ the European powers instituted plantation economies, whose production was all for overseas consumption, based on European capital. This led to growth of large companies, geared toward the export of agricultural goods to Europe, known as concessionary or royal companies.

The metropolises issued sovereign charters, granting ample powers to capital groups. These invested in the colonies for economic gain, paying a tax to the metropolis which thus found itself unencumbered of the costs of administration. In most cases, these companies replaced the State in all its functions, but were dedicated especially to the enlistment and organization (and disciplining when necessary) of labor for their own productive enterprises. The financial success of such enterprises varied, depending upon the region and colony but, in all cases, the dispossession of African peoples was brutal.

3.1 The colonial pact

The African colonial pact,⁸ whether or not formalized, was the specific means employed by European capitalism to transfer revenues from domestic societies to owners of industrial enterprises in the metropolises. It was based upon a set

6. See the early 20th Century movement in the Ivory Coast, under William Wadé Harris, an early Liberian missionary. The Harrist movement, which assumed great proportions, sought conversion to Christianity and struggled against fetishism and witchcraft. It called upon people to join in view of the superiority of the God of the colonizers, in the light of their conquests and victories and their administrative and scientific prowess.

7. The Conference of Berlin took place in 1884-1885 and set criteria for the partition of Africa among the European powers.

8. This was a colonial pact for Africa, which began in the late 19th Century when capitalism had already undergone its second industrial revolution, and lasted until the Second World War. It should not be confused with the colonial pact between Europeans, Brazilians and Africans that was in effect at the time of Brazil's independence. The former was, in effect, a pact between colonialists of the metropolis and the colonial administration in the colony, and not between colonizers and Africans.

of laws and juridical procedures, generally imposed by force upon the African population, and can be summarized as follows:

- 1) forced cultivation: obliging rural populations to cultivate crops determined by the metropolis, such as cotton, cocoa, and others, for export;
- 2) forced labor: consisting of forced enlistment, usually for very low wages, for work on infrastructure projects (ports, roads) or for private colonial companies, particularly on plantations and in mines; and
- 3) payment of taxes: obliging Africans to pay taxes in the currency of the colonizer. To this end, they should become wage-earners and/or produce for trade. This policy was of great importance in bringing African populations into the money economy.

These were the economic principles of colonialism in Africa. To these were added *industrial conditionalities*, under a policy that allowed establishment of industries on African soil, only in so much as they did not compete with those of the metropolis.

This set of measures brought millions of Africans into the world economy, without immediately removing them from their domestic societies. This is how Africa was introduced into the world economy, and is what led the continent to a state of underdevelopment. Workers were tied down to a system of exploitation that impeded them from improving their own living conditions. Their lot was to visualize another material and cultural world, which, however, remained forever beyond their reach.

3.2 Articulation of the means of production

During the colonial occupation, the economy was based upon a complex articulation involving two systems of production. On the one hand, units were created and managed under the capitalist system (modern agricultural, mining companies) that served the interests of the metropolises and relied upon capitalist relations (wage labor); on the other, the economy of domestic society, which produced in accordance with its own “traditional” methods and values.

Non-modern domestic society, classified as “backward”, continued to furnish the food consumed by Africans, thus supporting the proto-workers for infrastructure projects, mines and plantations, and giving them succor when no longer needed by the capitalist sector.

Colonialism in Africa imposed itself upon structured societies and established specific relations of exploitation. It did not, however, take land ownership from the hands of the people, a primary condition for capitalist production (according to Marx). Neither did it make wage labor a general rule. It left domestic society with its own social relations, which were conserved and/or adapted to serve colonial interests.

As Meillassoux (1977) explains, colonial exploitation, by means of articulation of these two systems of production, was the outcome of reproduction of a cheap labor force and of income transfer (punction) from domestic to capitalist society.

It is known well that in underdeveloped countries, subsistence food production remains almost entirely outside the capitalist sphere, maintaining direct or indirect links to the market economy, either by furnishing fed workers to the domestic sector, or through the production of export goods produced by farmers fed from their own harvests. This food economy thus pertains to the *sphere of capitalist circulation*, only in that it provisions the labor force, while remaining outside the *sphere of capitalist production*, given that no capital is invested and relations of production are of the domestic non-capitalist variety (Meillassoux, 1977, p. 155-156).

Relations between the capitalist and domestic sectors can not, in themselves, be regarded as sufficiently binding to explain the unequalness of the exchange. The relationship is established between sectors in which different relations of production predominate, and through dynamic relationships between the capitalist and domestic economies in which the reproduction of a cheap labor force comes into play for the benefit of capital.

Access to a cheap labor force means that capitalism, through maintenance of domestic society, has at hand means of extracting a maximum from workers while paying wages below their real value. This is because the labor force, when not employed “productively” by capital, assumes tasks within domestic society.

The costs of nurturing the labor force until it reaches a productive age, and of care in the event of disability or old age, are not included in the wages. From the socially-necessary working time that constitutes the value of wages, costs produced in domestic society are discounted. The calculation includes only what is produced by capitalist society since, from the capitalist standpoint, capitalist society is the only one that matters. It thus considers only what it produces itself as being “socially necessary”.

The exploitative impulses of the developed countries rely essentially upon the productivity of labor to ensure greater profits. Articulation of the means of production opens up the possibility of obtaining greater profits than could be gained under *normal* conditions of value-added extraction, without productivity increases. In this manner, income, of the pre-capitalist category, is appropriated by capital through exploitation of the domestic community. Capital helped itself to the structures of this community, resorting to extra-economic impositions, often of a violent nature, to exact the partial or total fruits of the work of peasants. Thus, the domestic laborer that performs work in commercial agriculture or is engaged in non-agricultural activities such as mining and construction, upon being individually exploited, transmits an additional exploitation, i.e., exploita-

tion of the domestic community (Nunes, 2000, p. 188). Under this arrangement, the greater the return on capital, the more the domestic community is burdened.

It is worth noting that migrant labor exerts a strong ideological influence, as it contributes toward an inversion of the causes of extreme poverty in the eyes of the worker. A Mozambican miner, for example, might regard South-African mines as places where money is to be made, in comparison to the paltry cash earnings to be obtained in his own community. Frequently, wage work would be seen as a means of escaping poverty – enabling the worker to obtain goods that mark his social integration – rather than the cause of his plight.

Colonialism did not seek to replace domestic production by capitalist production. It was not simply a matter of destroying one mode of production and replacing it with another, but rather, the contradictory organization of economic relations between the two sectors, capitalist and domestic, with the former preserving the latter so as to carry off its subsistence and, in so doing, destroying it. (Meillassoux, 1977, p. 159)

This notion of contradictory organization of economic relations, and of different world views, is important for understanding the behavior of populations. These are not passive agents. Articulation is a play of forces, and the domestic community, even when subordinated, has ways of defending itself against change. There is a relative independence of the domestic sector in relation to the capitalist sector, which becomes more apparent in certain historical circumstances.

Nonetheless, on the one hand, if this articulation preserves the domestic economy so as to exploit it, on the other, it contains the elements for its destruction in the long term.⁹

3.3 The traditional and the modern

The colonial States were administrative, juridical and political systems created by European nation states and which served the latter economically, but which also had great symbolic capacity, especially in that they engendered, among the colonized, a feeling of belonging to the same territorial unit. These were States of Exception, if compared to the European States since, internally, the *indigenato* laws¹⁰ applied, at least in the French, Portuguese and Belgian colonies. It was in these States of exception that Africans experienced relations of power with

9. Maintenance of the domestic society did not block influences of capitalist values and techniques, such as introduction of agricultural implements, health and education, which altered customs and rules of conduct.

10. The *indigenato* regime did not extend the Rule of Law to natives, as they were not considered citizens. Natives were subject to common law, but owed obligations, such as forced labor, payment of taxes etc. to the colonial State. It was foreseen, in law, that a native could become a citizen, i.e., by undergoing a process of "assimilation", whereby European culture was acquired. The *indigenato* regime remained in effect in the French colonies until 1946, and in the Portuguese colonies until 1961. In the English colonies the system was based on segregation, under which there was no chance of assimilation, all being subjects of His Majesty, but with no prospect of transfer from one culture to the other. In practice, the two models served to enable submissive participation and brutal exploitation of African peoples.

whites, and that they first expressed their initiative and launched their struggles for nationhood.

By means of the monetized economy, the administrative and fiscal organization, and through education and Christianization, the colonial State left its mark on the populations under its governance, from a racial, ethnic, religious and customary standpoint. Colonial States were States of exception, up until the end of the *indigenato* regime, for two reasons. Firstly, because they derogated the laws that applied in their metropolises, subjugating local populations and suppressing public liberties. Secondly, because there was a constant reinvention and renewal of traditions in their territories. This was true of social customs that underwent new developments, such as dowries and funerals, the importance of which were enhanced with monetization.

It was such a State that led Aimé Césaire (1976) to affirm that colonialism is nefarious, not only for those that suffer under it, but also for those that put it into practice. Though it lasted only a short period of time, European colonization was not merely a parenthesis in African history (Dozon, 2008). The territorial and State frameworks established, notwithstanding their arbitrary nature, were of undeniable symbolic efficacy, and were accepted by the colonized population. Thus, isolated nationalities – Angolan, Senegalese, Mozambican, Malines etc., became references of identity for those peoples, and for others.

The European colonizers demarked territories, delimited borders and made inventories of populations, with a view to their economic exploitation, of course.

In this way, they cut economic-social formations into two or three. In counterpoint, they established modern State systems, and linked the various levels of power to their knowledge of the colonized populations, so as to administrate and control them. This was the administrative and *ethnographic* State, which gave its name and character to the native population.

The *ethnicization* of colonial territories, that gave rise to western Africanism, was the work of English social scientists and of French, Belgian and Portuguese administrators. This ethnographic work consisted of establishing ethnic or racial names and characterizing, appraising and ranking social groups. Thus, populations, “races” and “ethnic groups” governed by complex social orders, especially kingdoms, were better regarded than those that possessed no specific political structure. The former were considered “civilized”; whereas the others were regarded as “savages”. Likewise, Islamized groups were more highly regarded than those described as animist or fetishist. An attitude of collaboration on the part of a group, when faced by a colonizing power, might also lead to a more favorable assessment (Amselle and M’Bokolo, 1985; Lopes, 1997; Dozon, 2008).

The Europeans did not create ethnicity, though they did invent certain tribes and names that had not formerly existed. Classifications they made between “ethnic groups” and societies took on a colonial significance that was to have grave consequences, as in the case of the Hutus and Tutsis.

The relationship between the population and the State has almost always been problematic. Relations between the State and the national component of the population reflect the existence of a political community of a Nation State.

Indeed, a majority of African States is multiethnic or multinational, and the strength of plural societies organized around ethnicity, region, language, race etc., relativizes the State’s claim upon a citizen’s obedience. Co-occurrence of obedience to one ethnic group and to a State does not, in itself, imply a crisis of the State: individuals in Africa, as in other places, are constantly faced with situations where their identity is judged. They have overlapping roles: for example, to be Fang and Gabonese is no more demanding than to be, simultaneously, faithful to a church, active in a political party, member of a trades union, and French. It is the circumstances of time and/or place that determine the priority of one or another identity; and it should be understood that an affirmation of ethnic identity is not, *a priori*, incompatible with a statement of nationality (Sindjoun, 2002, p. 45. Free translation).

After the first decades of colonization, movements of revival of magic and ancient rituals were detected. The advance of modernity, the merchant economy, new products, and teaching of the young fostered unequal development among peoples and groups. Those that benefited from modernity drew closer to western beliefs; whereas, those that were left out tended to revert to their traditional beliefs, thus raising tensions in the social fabric.

This penchant for spells displays a form of defense against processes of modernization, given that significant portions of these societies were excluded from their benefits. Ironically, it was from among those that most benefited from and came into close contact with modern religions that the nationalist leaders of most countries emerged. However, modernization of living and working conditions are not incompatible with the ideological perpetuation of pre-existing forms of social and political control over the oppressed. Thus, modernizing and traditional values and practices remained side by side and overlapped.

In summary, this colonial State was marked by brutal exploitation of African manhood and society, but also by a proliferation of mystical and magical activities, and by prophetic¹¹ movements that arose to uproot magical practices. This period is also marked by conversion of Africans to Catholicism and to Prot-

11. Significant prophetic movements arose, such as kimbanguism, under Simon Kimbangu, who founded the Church of Jesus Cristo in the Belgian Congo and worked with Abako, the main Congolese political party, in suppressing both fetishism and colonialism.

estantism, and also by the strengthening of Islam, especially in countries of the Sahel, through Marabitic brotherhoods and trade networks.

The Christian churches of the South, as places for agglutination, teaching, healthcare and social welfare, influenced socio-political commitments, winning people over to the colonial governments, or opening up space for opposition and resistance, as did also the Islamic establishments to the North.

4 ENHANCING THE VALUE OF THE COLONIAL STATE (THE COLONIAL STATE OF VALUATION)

With the end of the Second World War the situation changed. The USA, the great winner, had no colonies and European capitalism was undergoing internal restructuring.

If efforts were made to improve the living conditions of Africans and increase the wealth of Africa, England, France and Belgium would then be able to sell more goods and create new English, French and Belgian jobs on European soil for sale on the African continent. They would also, in turn, be able to secure more foodstuffs and raw materials from their African dominions.

To trigger this spiral of development, more investment in the colonies would be needed. Should private investors be unable or unwilling to effect such investments, owing to depressed monetary markets or reluctance to speculate in Africa, then national States would have to assume the task (Fage, 1997, p. 438).

Enhancing the value of colonies was a policy designed to benefit the metropolises. Particular care was taken to restrict competition from foreign goods vis-à-vis products from the metropolis in the colonial market. The capture of colonial markets by metropolitan industries was upheld through mighty protectionist barriers, customs duties and quantitative restrictions on foreign imports.

After Bretton Woods, with the establishment of the dollar as the main international currency, the European countries undergoing reconstruction sought to protect their dollar-denominated hard-currency reserves. Thus, the Colonial powers created free monetary-exchange zones for their currencies in their respective colonies. The consequence of this was emergence, in Africa, of zones where the dominant currencies were: the pound sterling, French franc, Portuguese escudo and South African rand (the currency used by South Africa to settle accounts with its neighbors) (Leite, 1989; Fage, 1987).

Prospects for development, creation of industries, investment in the countryside and in urbanization, rapidly began to effect deep changes in African geography and to produce alterations in African thinking, which thenceforth as-

sumed a nationalist outlook. Objective conditions provided the bases for Africans themselves to take the lead in this process of modernization. Subjective conditions were clearly manifested at the 5th Pan-African Congress of 1945,¹² held in Manchester, during which, for the first time, full independence for all African colonies was proposed; i.e., total political power, including, if necessary, armed struggle; thereby going far beyond the demands for improvements and equality in the colonial system proposed at previous congresses.¹³

In this environment national liberation struggles flourished culminating, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in the independence of all the African countries, excepting the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe, which achieved independence in 1975; of Zimbabwe (1980); Namibia (1990); Eritrea (1993); and Western Sahara which remains a colony of Morocco to this day.

African nationalism, however, according to Sindjoun (2002) is not merely a “nationalism of combat” forged during the anti-colonial struggle, as claimed by Badie and Smouts (1992), but also a “nationalism of government”, mobilized by leaders to legitimize themselves before the population and ensure its identification with the State, and repressing attempts at secession such as occurred in Nigeria in the 1960s.

Modernization and economic-enhancement policies publicly highlighted local modernizing elites, thereby making the colonies less susceptible to witchcraft, as science assumed greater prominence on the agenda. Thenceforth, African public spaces were divested of religious or magical-religious significance to become more explicitly political, with parties, trades unions and the press comprising a new State. National and scientific outlooks began to dominate African politics, to the detriment of religion and ethnicity.

Two characteristics of post-war colonial States merit notice: *i*) investment ceased to concentrate on infrastructure for facilitation of exports and began to focus on manufacturing plants; and *ii*) opening up to Africans of opportunities in public administration and granting of political and trades-union freedoms. All this was, of course, adapted to the particularities of each colonial metropolis and colony. Thus, in 1946, France abolished the *indigenato* system and extended political participation to the (now) citizens; whereas Portugal only did the same in 1961. For their part, the English colonies already had legislative councils with participation of Africans, except that they never en-

12. The 5th Congress, though chaired by W.E.B. Du Bois, who had also presided at previous congresses, also had as organizers and prime influences George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah.

13. South Africa, though independent since 1910, was governed by a white minority.

joyed majority representation until, starting in 1948, elected Africans began to outnumber appointed members. These councils were early precursors of self-government, rather than parliaments.

The enhanced colonial State drew up development plans in practically all the British, French and (after a 15-year delay) Portuguese colonies. This new policy of enhancing the colonies required another sort of State and, though democracy could not be established, legislations swiftly enacted provisions on wages, thereby putting an end to the *indigenato* regime and forced labor, while also providing for certain liberties. Investments were made and development plans drawn up targeted at fostering nascent industries. To accompany this change in lifestyle, new education and healthcare facilities had to be introduced.

Little assimilation had hitherto taken place. But now, it became essential to have well schooled and disciplined Africans to place at the service of capital. Africa was to become a buyer of consumer and capital goods exported from the metropolises. This, allegedly, would open up prospects for improving the lives of populations, in that they would become wage earners, acquire universal culture, and gain awareness of the state of the world. As a consequence, nationalist ideas matured, and independence took its place on the agenda, not as a distant hope, but rather, as something palpable, with real prospects of applying a government program for the nation as a whole as a vision for the future.

The proposals of the 5th Pan-African Congress offered strong bases for achieving victory, whereas the policy of enhancing the value of colonies was never likely to be long lived. Pressures came from all sides. Financially, it would be more advantageous for capital if all encumbrances and risks of projects were born by the nations. Politically, the movements clamored for an end to colonialism, claiming that it was no longer sufficient just to put an end to its worst aberrations. Internationally, at United Nations' forums, there were calls for independence, to which the United States gave support with a view to bringing an end to the primacy of European interests on the continent.

The short-lived Colonial State of Valuation, for ontological reasons, could not be so democratic as was perhaps intended. Independences were granted, earned, or otherwise achieved. Where freedom of party affiliation and free elections were allowed, power changed hands, and generally the colonial powers gave way to pressures (Ngalasso-Mwatha, 2010, p. 370). Nonetheless, in a number of countries, such as Cameroon and Madagascar, sanguinary repression was not averted. In Algeria, after 132 years of colonial rule, an eight-year war raged; likewise, the former-Portuguese colonies faced fifteen years of armed conflict.

5 THE INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENTALIST STATE

René Dumont (1962) in criticizing the economic policies of the Sub-Saharan African States, pointed out that they were making large-scale investments with capital-intensive technology; that they were failing to respect local technologies or respond to the hopes and aspirations of Africans; that they were serving the interests of groups of the East or West; and that they were thus doomed to failure. Despite this critique, the great debate of the decade raged between capitalists (neocolonialists) and socialists. The basic difference between them resided in the character or class of State they envisaged, and alignments maintained during the Cold War. Whereas neocolonialists, allied to countries of the West, sought to maintain freedom of activity for local groups with capital and defended repatriation of profits; the socialists, aligned with East-block countries, proposed nationalization and state ownership of the economy, investment of profits in accordance with the needs of the population and centralized long-term planning. Both favored strong government structures, led by a single party or in thrall of a “great leader” with capacity to conduct large-scale projects, funded by English, French, Belgian, Italian, Soviet and Chinese resources (among others). Obsessed with the ‘development’ of their countries, projects aimed at achieving industrialization, and thus required technical-scientific knowledge and capital. In this respect, they could be classified as “developmentalist” States, though the rate and degree to which their goals were attained differed widely.

Most post-independence Heads of African States revered pre-colonial repertoires, such as the “conscienceism” of Nkruma in Ghana; the “negritude” of Senghor in Senegal; and the “ujamaa” ideology of Nyerere in Tanzania, making reference to mystic powers and boasting of idealized traditional forms of solidarity. At the same time, this same movement renamed various countries. French Sudan became Mali; the Gold Coast - Ghana; Dahome became Benin; and Upper Volta - Burkina Faso. But national borders were maintained; the colonial period was not discarded, and neither was the territorial legacy left by the colonial powers after the Congress of Berlin.

Many leaders contributed toward the balkanization of Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d’Ivoire, and even more progressive figures such as Sékou Toure of Guinea-Conakry, Modibo Keita of Mali, or Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and, more lately, Samora Machel of Mozambique, and became symbols of alternative development with policies based on national targets.

It can be observed that the African States inherited colonial territories which, though they might be considered artificial in relation to their pre-colonial past, are nonetheless an outcome of colonial policies which have become incorporated into the historical experiences of the peoples of such territories.

The building of independent States by such leaders resorted to nationalist statements, in apparent contradiction with national and ethnic identity, in much the same way as was done during the colonial period; i.e., they preached national unity and development goals based upon ethnic values. Castells (2002, p. 133) reminds us that “ethnicity was transformed into the main pathway for state control over resources. However, it was the State and its elites that created and recreated ethnic identity and loyalty, and not the inverse.”¹⁴

Swaziland, after independence in 1968, organized as a traditional monarchy; Nigeria and Camerons adopted federalist systems; northern regions of Nigeria apply Islamic law (*sharia*) in apposition to the principles of the lay state which central governments have sought to deploy. From the standpoint of integrity, excepting Ethiopia, the African States have faced up to problems very well. This goes to show the weight that colonial-era borders have had on the historical experience of Africans, based upon legality, the will of African leaders, and sustained by the founding charter of the OAU and of its successor, the African Union, both of which uphold the inalienable nature of these borders. Upon its founding, in 1963, the OAU set a vision of Africa as a distinct objective goal encompassing its Member States and providing an international profile to Pan-African relations.

This complex inheritance, especially the recycling or reinvention of African societies within their colonial contexts, was transferred to the post-colonial States. This explains why the territorial legacy remained untouched for so long, given that, from their standpoint, the purportedly artificial nature of borders was, in effect, the limit which framed their worlds and truly African forms of existence, simultaneously resulting, on the one hand, in a long span of history and culture on the continent and, on the other, in the brief (but effective) duration of the colonial period (Dozon, 2008).

On an initial level of analysis, in the early 1960s, the States were like their international counterparts. They were endowed with “rational-legal” frameworks, comprising a constitution, civil law and various levels of executive, legislative and judicial power.

The post-colonial States constituted or reconstituted themselves as States of exception; or as States of exploitation, until 1945 (1961 for Portugal). Their civil codes, copied from the West, were of little effect, since customs (such as polygamy, dowries and initiation rites for the young) continued to regulate gender, family, and inter-generational relations. Likewise, royalty retained its prerogatives and hierarchies. The post-colonial States were no less authoritarian than the colonial State.

14. Massimo d’Azeglio said of the building of Italy in the late 19th Century: “We have made Italy, now we must make the Italians” (*apud* Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 56).

This double reality of the post-colonial African States enabled them to claim to be under the Rule of Law while, in effect, functioning with a blend of colonial despotism and traditional authoritarianism, at the service of development, producing what Dozon (2008) has called a “structural pathology”, ranging from the grotesque to the obscene, in the assessment of Mbembe (1979).

Nonetheless, the post-colonial State did not stop there. Aside from achieving symbolic and political efficiency (through juridical and political institutions at various levels, characteristic of Modern States) it established mentalities among the managers and the managed, put limits on practices of patronage and, at the same time, allowed traditional practices such as polygamy to go unpunished.

More positively, the post-colonial State proved able to incorporate a symbolic space in which public institutions could organize and engage in the building of a national identity. They thus constitute complex phenomena that can not be reduced to a single simplistic explicative model. Within them, are to be found patrimonialism and sacred power harking back to pre-colonial state formations, and which are not simply replications of European models:

The African States, since gaining sovereignty around the 1960s as geopolitical entities, have not ceased to be under strong tensions. They have not, in effect, ceased to face the confrontation between “rational-legal” modernist forms of their institutions and the realities of their authoritarian and patrimonial practices (which are themselves marked by pre-colonial and colonial habits) and to balance (well or badly) the centrifugal and centripetal forces and tensions among them, which may be more acute when outcomes stem from the same feats and the same historical experiences (Medard, 1998 *apud* Dozon, 2008, p. 53. Free translation).¹⁵

What characterized the independent African States, despite their colonial and pre-colonial heritage, their patrimonialism, patronage, despotism and sacred practices of power, was their capacity to conduct public policies and establish themselves as lay States. They remained aloof from religion in their pursuit of the development process.

Investments of the central powers in Africa, up until the mid-1970s, imposed upon it an economic development model reliant upon strong systems of government based upon dictatorship and a single party. In 1981, a World Bank report on this part of the African continent asserted that what had been done was “most adequate”. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF-1992) classified two first decades of African independence as “noteworthy”, stressing, among other favorable factors, good economic performance, increased exports and a 14% growth of *per capita* GDP, between 1965 and 1980 (Lopes, 1997).

15. Medard, J.-F. La crise de l’État neo-patrimonial et l’évolution de la corruption en Afrique subsaharienne. *Mondes en développement*, v. 26, n.

Optimistic development projects of the 1960s, applauded and encouraged by the industrial powers had, by the late 1970s, begun to show their incapacity to sustain these countries. Poorly planned investments, lack of capacity to manage the technologies applied, corruption in government, and dependence upon foreign models were among the reasons cited for the failure of economic policies, which culminated in an economic, political and financial crisis of unprecedented proportions throughout the continent. Investments brought no return; the foreign-debt shock made the situation worse; and the States, for lack of revenues, ceased to invest, thus engendering high unemployment and the swelling of cities.

To this crisis of modern African society was added a crisis of domestic society (at the root of which were actions of colonial and modern inspiration over the course of a century). The logic of non-accumulation and non-consumerist culture of (domestic) lineage societies did not serve modernity and, for this reason, was repudiated under developmentalist projects. Without definitively abandoning these projects, such societies ended up suffering significant destructuring. Various factors combined toward this: removal of workers from activities in lineage society for employment in capitalist production; implantation of schools, which hampered transmission of ancestral knowledge; health posts, that led to a rise in birth rates and a reduction in mortality, thereby fostering rates of growth unsuited to lineage production; demarcation of territories, blocking free circulation and installation of villages; large-scale deforestation, that accelerated degradation and reduced prospects for production, etc.

Although this helped foster accumulation, traditional society made little use of it, and began to rely on capitalist production. It also lost its ability to reproduce itself, for example, ceasing to produce its own work implements, including simple hoes. In the colonial period and in the first years following independence, traditional societies were relatively well balanced, as they remained in articulation with modern society and still managed to reproduce. Moreover, the crisis in these societies arrived rapidly and brutally, as they were agricultural societies possessing sparse reserves.

This double crisis, that began in the 1980s, left the States internally weakened and without resources, unable to hold their own vis-à-vis the multilateral organizations and great powers that were pressuring for their disestablishment. The unemployed masses, laid off by the crisis in modernization projects and famished members of domestic society were left to the care of governments lacking any prospects and which, in many cases, fell prey to corruption to perpetuate themselves in power. This, then, set the stage for a resumption of ethnic and regional wars and all manner of struggles against

the central authorities. Famine assailed entire regions; governments faced financial collapse, and had to resort to foreign aid to settle their accounts and avoid large-scale food catastrophes.

6 THE NEOLIBERAL STATE

The strong developmentalist State suffered a crushing blow in the 1980s and, as a consequence, in the 1990s, the “predatory model” (Castells, 2002) came to predominate among African States (“weak” States¹⁶ fell prey to “extremely high demand”) South Africa and a few others being exceptions.

(...) promoting governance of weak States, improving their democratic legitimacy and strengthening self-sustainable institutions (...) became the main thrust of contemporary international policy (...) If a science, art or technique exists for building States, then it must meet all of these goals at once and will be in extremely high demand (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 131, *apud* Siqueira, 2010).¹⁷

The Berg Report (World Bank, 1981) as it became known, stated that the causes of Africa’s problems could be attributed to poorly adjusted macroeconomic strategies and mismanagement in the public sector, and that these causes should be addressed, with a view to restoring the macroeconomic balance, as priority goals of development. To this end, the report proposed:

- improvements in foreign-exchange and foreign trade policies (implying devaluations and anti-protectionist measures);
- greater efficacy in the use of public-sector resources (reducing the weight of the State in the economy, reducing budgetary spending, and incentives for the private sector); and
- better agricultural policies (priority for peasant agriculture, better relative domestic prices, and liberalization of trade circuits).

At the same time, the report accepted the importance attributed by African governments to policy consolidation and creation of basic infrastructures for fostering national integration, and deemed the development of human resources to be a good approach. In summary, the report on the 1970s in Africa stated that:

the situation is not uniformly discouraging. There are signs of progress throughout the continent. There are many more Africans in schools, and most now live longer. Roads, ports and new towns have been built and new industries established. Technical and management posts formerly held by foreigners are now filled by Africans (World Bank, 1981. Free translation).

16. See the excellent dissertation by Isabel Siqueira (2010) on “fragile” States.

17. Fukuyama, F. *Construction of States. government and organization in the 21st Century*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2004.

After having been subjected to intense theoretical discussion, the premises of the Berg Report were implemented under guidelines of the structural-readjustment programs adopted in all Sub-Saharan countries. Thus, in the early 1980s, the State sector throughout Africa was put to task, despite the fact that, until the mid-1970s, its management of economic development (notwithstanding its inefficiencies) had achieved positive indicators, attracted financing flows to the continent (benefited by favorable agricultural, mineral and raw-material prices) and generated relatively high economic growth as compared to most of the industrialized countries.

This situation, however, began to change after the first oil shock, in 1973, which marked the beginning of a period of recession and industrial reconversion in the developed countries, accompanied by gradual adoption of protectionist policies on the part of the main raw-materials importing countries. It was the onset of the neoliberal era of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.¹⁸

The decline of international trade and a sequence of economic policies totally dependent upon imports contributed toward emergence, in the early 1980s, of chronic public and private foreign debt of the so-called Third World. Exacerbation of this caused the balance of financial flows between the central and peripheral countries to be most unfavorable for the latter. This directly affected their long-term prospects of economic recovery, owing to the ever-larger portion of their hard-currency revenues channeled toward payment or servicing of foreign debt.

Another factor influencing the reorientation of African economies in the early 1980s was the rise to power of economic liberals in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany, where they embarked upon economic policies of privatization and non-intervention of the State in the economy. Also weighing against direct participation of the State in the economy were changes in the cooperation policies of the socialist countries, caused not only by deterioration of their economies and balance-of-payments difficulties, but also owing to a reorientation of their strategic and economic development policies.

18. Subsequent financial problems in the region were exacerbated by a fall in export revenues, owing to a drop in commodity prices and an accumulation of arrears on the foreign debt, which soared from US\$ 210 million to US\$ 14.15 billion in 1992. The continent's accumulated debt in 1996 exceeded 300 billion dollars. By 1991, it had reached US\$ 281 billion, according to the World Bank. Debt service amounted to over US\$ 10.2 billion in 1992 and, in countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Somalia and Sudan it accounted for over 100% of GNP. Overall debt service, in that same year, was equivalent to 32% of all exports of Sub-Saharan Africa (Lopes, 1997).

The debt of Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s developed as follows
(in billions of US dollars)

1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
56.2	64.0	70.2	79.3	82.7	96.2	113.0	137.9	139.6	143.2

Source: World Bank (1994 *apud* Serra, s.d.).

Thus, instead of giving priority to cooperation projects, involving recuperation of state-owned agricultural companies or even new projects, preference was given to assisting cooperative organizations in the traditional family-agriculture sector. It was in this context that the World Bank and IMF, with their structural-adjustment programs, intervened directly in the economies of the African countries.

In 1961, reports of the UK's Royal African Society had predicted a grand and radiant future for the continent, with Western participation, naturally. By 1991, the Society was reporting on the catastrophe occurring on the continent, and held African governments responsible for maladministration and for having copied western models. In 1992, the Gross National Product (PNB) of Sub-Saharan Africa was smaller than its foreign debt (US\$ 280 billion); debt service corresponded to 32% of exports (US\$ 10.2 billion). Sub-Saharan Africa (excepting South Africa) had a GDP equal to that of Belgium, and accounted for less than 2% of world trade.

Three generations of policies for the African continent as a whole were implemented by the Breton Woods institutions in the 1980s and 1990s:

- in the early 1980s - stabilization of the economy, through short-term management measures that failed, however, to address underlying causes of the balance of payments crises;
- in the mid-1980s - the focus was structural adjustment, with a view to intervening in productive and institutional sectors; and
- in the 1990s - policies that acknowledged the importance of social factors and incorporated the theme of sustainable growth.

In the 1980s, the prices of Sub-Saharan Africa's main export products (*i.e.*, coffee, cocoa, cotton and tea) fell by 50%. In the same period, capital investment (on a *per capita*) basis dropped 50%, exacerbated by pressures of the foreign debt. The economic adjustment policy brought maladjustment into the lives of populations.

Between 1980 and 1989, 241 adjustment programs were carried out and became part of the prevailing ideology of the countries of Sub-Saharan African. As a consequence, GDP contracted by 1.1% per year throughout the decade. Despite total compliance with the IMF's Structural Adjustment Programs, outcomes were dramatic: capital accumulation slowed in most of the countries; public investment dropped drastically; foreign investment almost totally dried up; industry's share of GDP rose in only six of the countries between 1982 and 1988; and only six countries managed to increase exports by over 5% (Lopes, 1997).

As a consequence, famine became widespread, unemployment rose, and social upheaval reached even the remotest villages. Indeed, crisis afflicted most of the continent. Nonetheless, the IMF and the World Bank became net recipients of

Sub-Saharan African resources. It was against this backdrop that, to defray public expenditures, most African state companies were closed, transferred, privatized, underwent management reforms, or altered their relationships with other State bodies.

Discussion on economic policy, strategy and ideology gave way to quantitative and microeconomic debate on formulas for salvation (not previously a component of liberal economic theory) presented as the sole and indisputable alternative. On questions of food and agriculture, the focus of the Structural Adjustment Programs was threefold:

- reestablishment of the macroeconomic balance, which implied restricting demand for food consumption, reducing food imports, and increasing exports of agricultural-food products;
- resetting of prices, which meant depreciation of exchange rates, raising interest rates, putting an end to protection and subsidies, and elimination of controls and rationing of foreign-exchange, credit and consumption; and
- denationalization (privatization) of agricultural trade of production companies, aside from dismantling of monopolies and resetting of profitability rates.

This program ran counter to agricultural-food policies of the 1970s for Sub-Saharan Africa, which had featured the following:

- incentives for agricultural enterprise, to finance accumulation, industrialization and the public treasury;
- provisioning of low-cost food;
- the principle of food self-sufficiency;
- penalization of cash crops, by means of taxation;
- substitution of imports;
- direct participation of the State in agricultural-food chains; and
- rationing and free (or nearly free) distribution of food to consumers, control of exchange rates, etc.

These principles became constant elements under the Structural Adjustment Programs that restored agricultural-food chains and focused upon:

- expansion of exportable agricultural-food production chains, to generate hard currency needed to service the foreign debt;
- contraction of systems for importation and processing of foreign imported agricultural-food products (wheat, rice, meat, sugar, powdered milk, etc.); and

- fostering re-adoption of traditional food products (traditional tubers, cereals, etc).

The Structural Adjustment Program set as goals the redistribution of wealth from consumers to farmers, and of income from towns to the countryside. For their part, the stabilization programs which sought to reduce the wage/profit ratio led to exacerbation of hunger and malnutrition, a drop in living standards, and deindustrialization. To enhance the competitiveness of the exports of these countries (i.e., their agricultural produce) what could be more appropriate than to offer incentives in the countryside and credit to individual peasants? At the same time, in the towns, inefficient and uncompetitive factories were closed. The aim was thus to enhance workers' productivity and reduce the wage/profit ratio, so that more resources could be transferred abroad.

However, resources such as oil, diamonds and precious metals continued to be exported, contributing substantially toward economic growth of certain countries. The problem, as Castells (2002, p. 115-116) reminds us, resided in the use of resources thus generated and of international aid received by African governments:

Africa is not oblivious to the global economy; rather it is poorly articulated, owing to its fragmented participation in the global economy through selective relations, such as limited quantities of exports, speculative appropriation of high-value resources, cash transfers abroad, and parasitic consumption of imported goods.

6.1 Still States

Even though, for almost twenty years, the Nation States were weakened by neo-liberal policies and internal disputes, only Ethiopia lost territory to the formation of another independent State: Eritrea, in 1993, secession of which was based on pre-colonial claims. Attempts of secession by the Kingdom of Buganda culminated in its abolition in 1966, and incorporation into Uganda. Current movements in Somaliland seek to challenge central authority in Ethiopia (which they purportedly exercised in the remote past) and not necessarily secession of the Tigre region. There have been few other attempts at secession (in Senegal, Uganda, and Namibia).¹⁹

The civil wars of the 1980s and 1990s, generally considered ethnic conflicts, did not bring into question national borders. Movements in the Ivory Coast, in 2002, and in the Peoples' Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the 1990s, did not challenge the integrity of those nations and, despite their common history, no attempt was made to unify the two Congos. Similarly,

19. After this text was written, a referendum held in Sudan in January 2011 approved secession of the South of the country and creation of a new State. The North has Arab and Muslim traditions, whereas the South, where most of the country's oil is to be found, has black-African and catholic traditions.

the States of Ruanda and Burundi did not dissolve following violent conflict between Hutus and Tutsis.

Since the 1980s, when neoliberal policies took hold, privatization of public bodies has been pursued, alongside a weakening of monetary protection, exemplified by devaluation of the CFA franc²⁰ in 1994, and lowering of tariffs, especially those targeted at peasant farmers producing crops for export and whose earnings, since the 1950s, had been small but steady. Greater prominence was also given to programs of decentralization targeted at fostering good local governance. Also, at this time, there was a great proliferation of NGOs in Africa.

The dynamics of NGOs is quite unlike anything that had been done since the era of independence. The emergence of NGOs is a direct result of neoliberal policies that imposed their own forms of domination and which attributed to them roles formerly exercised by the States.

NGOs operating in Africa intervene in the agricultural, health, education, housing, and transport sectors, among others, working on their own account, without fostering emergence of local civil society. The widespread activities of these associations within national territories, and the powerlessness of the States, has lent weight to ethnic, religious and regional identity claims and awakened ancient yearnings. Disputes for land and for riches of the subsoil have been tackled by excluding participation of others. Actions stimulated by NGOs to promote local groups have strengthened parallel economies, leading to all manner of gangster-like relations that have gained force in the face of weakened States (Nunes, 2000; Dozon, 2008).

Day-to-day problems have engendered adoption of survival strategies and, thus, tensions and conflicts could hardly fail to emerge, affecting domestic family life. Whereas the policy of “reducing the State” was meant to result in better management of routine affairs, corruption has risen incessantly, multiplying as the processes of privatization and decentralization come into contact with international drug and arms trafficking and smuggling of goods, leading to a “criminalization of the State in Africa” (Bayard, 1989).

As of the 1980s, modernization projects and development plans practically ceased to feature in public policies. Talk focused instead upon sustainable development and human development, within the scope of small-scale local projects and the increasingly-numerous NGOs, whereas the State was divested of its pri-

20. The currency used by 14 countries of Western and Central Africa, all former-French colonies except Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea. Created in 1945, its name reflected the acronym for French African Colony. Since the early 1960s, the same acronym has stood for African Financial Community. It is divided into two regions: the Western CFA franc; and the Central CFA franc, each being legal tender in its respective region.

mordial role of promoting development. Thus, a series of essential public services were entrusted to private companies or associations and transformed into innumerable projects for combating poverty, promoting humanitarian actions and assisting refugee or displaced populations. Under the neoliberal wave, Africa was further from achieving better prospects for progress than it had been in the 1960s (Dozon, 2008, p. 150). Most notable has been the dissemination of “political tribalism”, *i.e.*, a phenomena of closing identity, that translates into crises of otherness, especially in urban centers, and recurrently resorts to violence and terror.

The religious history of Africa is continuously enriched through exchanges among local peoples; between the first inhabitants of a place and newcomers; between Arabs and Africans; between Africans and Europeans; such that it nourishes a number of assimilation and hybridization phenomena, but does not feature conflicts between faiths. The only faiths that were radically threatened were the pagan magic-religious systems, which were more tolerant and welcoming to each other, and that have almost totally disappeared in some regions of Africa, but which endure in others. Colonialism worked very well in this context of religious pluralism, guarding and repressing religious innovations and movements, such as Muslim or prophetic brotherhoods, that were – paradoxically and at the same time – the basis for colonial development (Dozon, 2008).

Counter to the 19th Century European ideal — according to which modernity should be a complement to the development of Nation States capable of transcending social, communitarian, religious and ethnic particularities — what can be perceived in Africa and in other parts of the world is a formation of post-modern ethnic, mono-faith States. Such States have sprouted from the colonial and neocolonial order and have accommodated to the prevailing globalization. In general, whenever a State presents itself as the expression of a group it has faced crisis. It is not heterogeneity of identity that lies at the heart of such conflicts. If it were, Somalia, that is ethnically homogeneous, would not be in conflict.

The increasingly frequent phenomenon of magic (witchcraft) and the process of demonization, which has become common in an environment dominated by “the blessed and the reborn” cast the State in a retrograde light. The globalized ideal of “doing well in this life” (according to which, good health and abundant wealth are attributed to divine providence as rewards for obedience to the laws) paints being excluded as the work of the devil. Hope has become an attribute of the divine.

To the extent that capitalist development brought on a deep economic crisis, reducing prospects for a better future, it has become facile for such societies to turn their backs on science (a basic premise of modernity) and to pin their values on traditional beliefs.

In the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and with popular mobilization (especially of urban youth) it was thought that such tensions could be resolved. Democracy was envisaged as multiparty systems based on public liberties. Many States (such as Ghana, Mali, Benin, Mozambique, Namibia, and other countries of southern Africa) survived the democratization process. Others (such as Serra Leone, Liberia, the two Congos and Sudan) engaged in prolonged civil wars; or (like the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon and Uganda) underwent severe crises. The number of conflict regions on the continent rose to fifteen.

Manifestly, in many cases, the end of the Cold War unleashed pent-up tensions of the decades of nation building, which had not been debated politically. Internal struggles, stemming from ethnic competition or religious intolerance occurred within the contexts of weakened States. The termination of advantages obtained under the Cold War, the Structural Adjustment Programs, the low prices of many export goods, land pressures, all contributed toward reducing funding sources, thus causing migration and internal divisions.

In the 1990s, a plethora of NGOs bolstering Christian, Islamic and traditionalist movements and supported by international networks or multinational companies, meddled in socio-political issues.

With the American post-World War II boom, there was an expansion of Pentecostal churches (among them, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) which promise a share of material progress here and now. These new reformist Christian churches have staged a come back of the language of magic, as their conception of salvation entails liberation from individual demons. Prior to seeking to transform converts into godly souls, such churches first give credence to existence of the Devil. According to these faiths, the plight of the sick, those in financial difficulties, facing family conflicts or unemployment does not stem from the will of God, but rather, from possession by the devil, meaning that they are in need of exorcism (Dozon, 2008). Such practices are, at times, viewed as a return to magic, manifested in new forms and by new means.

Liberal policies intrude upon the central functions of the State while, at the same time, impinging upon the character of the Nation State in which people share common references, leaving space free for ventures involving gods, the devil and capital. Thus, in the mid-1990s,

not only was Africa increasingly at the margin of the global economy / information society, but also, with a majority of its Nation States undergoing disintegration and its peoples disoriented and accosted, it was obliged to regroup into survival communities, under a great variety of labels, according to the taste of the anthropologist (Castells, 2002, p. 140).

7 CONCLUSION

Africa's potential, its mineral wealth, agricultural production and abundant labor force have ceased to be of interest under the new technical-scientific parameters of the revolution underway since the 1980s. Since that time, little has been said about development; the focus now being upon restructuring of economies (meaning adapting them to the needs of the global market) and financial stabilization, to ensure continuity of revenue flows to the central countries. Evidently, African and non-African groups linked to State systems and to the aid establishment have, during the course of the crisis, accumulated untold wealth.

Most African countries, though accepting the rules as presented, have served as a sort of global capital reserve, while rampant capitalism has made inroads through edges and gaps, taking advantage of the vestiges of colonialism, of apartheid, and of internal wars. It is against the background of deep crisis that the quest for an urgently-needed African renaissance proceeds.

7.1 Onset of the 21st Century

Since the colonial era, contemporary African States have struggled for territorial unity and national awareness, through development of ethnic configurations and the formation of ethnicities, though not always for independence. Almost all African countries have regions characterized by ethnicity or religion. Religious pluralism is a common feature of post-colonial States and, in many regions, devotees of various types of prophets live alongside each other, without any major conflicts.

Manifestly, in the line-up of unifying and disaggregating forces lies one of the best explanations for the structural weakness of African States and of their propensity for patronage and tribal-based systems. Nonetheless, this is a modern phenomenon, since the processes of nationalization and ethnization on the one hand, and of centralism and particularism on the other, walk hand in hand; each mobilizing a set of administrative, scientific and technical governance practices, characteristic of the era when the Nation States were undergoing construction. These are substantial characteristics of the African States and which, though at the root of their weaknesses, belie the idea that they are artificial constructs. Such historical experiences explain why, to date, neither secessionist movements nor the creation of new States have prospered.

Disaggregating forces have held the upper hand over unifying forces in the power balance of African States which, despite their authoritarianism, have become weakened States. Some observers go so far as to affirm that the very existence of such States is due solely to recognition of the international community;²¹

21. See Herbes (2000).

that they are mere territories, with a modicum of governance and of common technical forms of organization; and that they are barely effective in terms of economic and social life.

In the first decade of the new millennium, despite the authoritarianism of the post-independence years and policies which, for more than 20 years, have sought to undermine the State, and notwithstanding the civil wars, massacres and genocide, such as occurred in Ruanda or the Congos, the States have not been eclipsed. No express desire for secession has been voiced; rather the contrary, expressions of national sentiment have become increasingly vocal.

To all appearances, the continent is susceptible to change in the 21st Century. GDP growth of around 2.4% in the 1990s was followed by rates of 4% between 2000 and 2004, surpassing 4% in 2005. Africa's share of worldwide economic production increased by 5.5%, more than any of the member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Average annual inflation rates on the continent are in single figures and, in more than 30 countries, are below 5% *p.a.*

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to African rose 200% between 2000 and 2005 (from 7 to 23 billion dollars). The Johannesburg Stock Exchange has market-capitalization rates higher than those of São Paulo (Bovespa) and Shanghai. Another essential factor for attracting foreign financing has been a lowering of the debt burden, which was partially forgiven or written off: Africa's biggest debtor, Nigeria, has paid off its entire foreign debt (Lopes, 2007).

At the start of this millennium, many investment possibilities are available on the continent, which suffers from essential economic and social deficits that need to be addressed. In the trade area, African exports have grown 25% on average in recent years, a performance equal to that of China, and outstanding when compared to the 14% reported for other countries of the South.

Economic progress on the continent has been accompanied by a waning of violent conflicts, which have declined from 15 in the early 1990s, to essentially three: Darfur (and its ramifications into Chad and the Central African Republic); Somalia; and residual skirmishes in the Great Lakes region (eastern Congo, Burundi and northern Uganda). Moreover, unresolved conflicts persist in Western Sahara, the Ivory Coast, the Niger delta, and on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea (Hugon, 2009).

Improved security is also evidenced by upbeat figures on crime, delinquency and proliferation of light weapons. Also, the reform that transformed the Organization African Unity into the African Union has had a positive effect upon the coordination of African peace-keeping efforts, on new prospects for economic

collaboration, and on the presence in the region of new international players, such as China, the United States, India, and Brazil.

This scenario of stronger economic performance will, under present circumstances, unquestionably contribute toward the restructuring and strengthening of the African State, in this dialectic among the central and private, national and ethnic, modern and traditional, regional and international spheres in which actions take place, thereby giving rise to new models of social and political life, with decisive participation of peoples who, (regrettably?) as yet, have been unable to achieve well being outside or without the framework of the State.

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