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May 2020

"Traditional chiefs have a special ability to organize collective responses to local problems in many communities."

Chiefs, Democracy, and Development in Contemporary Africa

KATE BALDWIN

At the moment of independence, the institution of traditional chieftaincy appeared to be headed for the dustbins of history across sub-Saharan Africa. In Guinea, nationalist leader Ahmed Sékou Touré hurried to abolish chieftaincies in 1957, followed by his counterpart Julius Nyerere in Tanzania in 1963. In Uganda, President Milton Obote ordered a military assault on the Kabaka, the traditional king of Buganda, sending him into exile in 1966. In Mozambique, the nationalist movement Frelimo first targeted traditional chiefs for assassination, then abolished them in 1978, just after independence from Portugal. Even in cases where such dramatic confrontations were avoided, post-independence governments reduced the legal powers of chiefs over local administration and justice systems throughout the continent.

Ways of Governing

Eighth in a series

Yet traditional leaders still have significant political authority today. Even as multiparty elections have been institutionalized over the past three decades in many African countries as a means of selecting presidents and legislators, chiefs have drawn increased interest from political leaders and policymakers.

Some of their most dramatic reversals in fortune occurred in Uganda and Mozambique in the 1990s. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni restored the Bugandan Kingdom, along with the property it had owned before Obote sent the Kabaka into exile. In Mozambique, President Joaquim Chissano reversed Frelimo's stance toward traditional chiefs, giving them official recognition and authority over land, taxation, and policing in many communities. Traditional chiefs have not universally managed to resurrect themselves, but there are signs of their regeneration across the continent.

How widespread are traditional chiefs in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa? According to data collected by German political scientist Katharina Holzinger, about 84 percent of the population belongs to an ethnic group that has active traditional political institutions. In national public opinion surveys conducted by Afrobarometer in 18 countries, a majority of citizens say that traditional leaders have at least some influence in governing their local communities. Traditional chiefs tend to have greater authority in rural areas.

This has raised concerns among some observers that powerful chiefs could taint the democratic process. Traditional leaders are a varied group, distinguished from other political leaders by their association with customary governance practices. Although these practices differ across communities, chiefs typically are selected from within local ruling families, rarely are popularly elected, and frequently rule for life.

How democratic can a society be if unelected chiefs rule at the local level? How can political equality be achieved if women and migrants are accorded fewer rights than men and indigenous groups under customary law?

These fears are not limited to the implications of a residue of undemocratic rule obstinately maintaining itself below national-level democracy.

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Traditional chiefs could also reduce the democratic accountability of elected national governments if voters defer to decrees from their chiefs when deciding how to vote in presidential and parliamentary elections. Presidential candidates regularly visit the palaces of traditional chiefs to ask for their endorsements, causing consternation among many political observers. How democratic is a country if endorsements by hereditary chiefs can sway election outcomes?

These are important questions for anyone who cares about democracy on the continent. Fortunately, the institution of traditional chieftancy is more compatible with democratic politics than it appears at first glance. Concerns about chiefs corroding national-level democracy are largely misplaced.

CHIEFS, NOT KINGMAKERS

In the run-up to Ghana's 2016 presidential election, the incumbent, John Mahama, visited the chief of Sunyani. This type of meeting between politicians and chiefs has become commonplace during election campaigns everywhere from Burkina Faso to Zimbabwe. The chief endorsed Mahama, confidently promising him 80 percent of the vote in his region of Brong Ahafo. However, when the votes were counted, a majority in the region and even in the chief's own area had supported Mahama's opponent, Nana Akufo-Addo. A majority of the national vote also went to Akufo-Addo, making Mahama the first president in Ghana's history who failed to win a second term.

The limited influence of the chief of Sunyani exemplifies the weak electoral power of traditional chiefs. It is rare for a chief to sway the result of a presidential or parliamentary election with his (or, in rare cases, her) endorsement. Chiefs can be cunning in hedging their bets, offering statements of support to multiple candidates. But even when a chief clearly endorses one candidate, this is unlikely to have significant electoral impact. Most people are aware that voting is conducted by secret ballot. More than three-quarters of Africans say it is unlikely that powerful people could find out how they voted, according to the Afrobarometer survey. Traditional chiefs may be accorded great respect in cultural and social settings, but this does not directly translate into political influence.

Traditional institutions and customary law are more fluid than they are often imagined to be.

My own research in Zambia shows that traditional chiefs' endorsements have limited influence on voters, even in cases where chiefs retain significant social standing. I spent close to a month in each of three different chiefdoms. The first two, Kashiba and Lubunda, are in Zambia's Luapula province. These are areas that in the precolonial period were part of the powerful Lunda confederation, a central African commonwealth that, at its peak in the nineteenth century, covered a territory the size of Italy. Even today, traditional institutions in these chiefdoms are very hierarchical, with chiefs Kashiba and Lubunda serving under the senior Lunda chief, Mwata Kazembe.

This contrasts with the third chiefdom, Ndake, in Zambia's Eastern province, where power is more decentralized. Chief Ndake does not report to a higher chief. Although at the time of my research the chief was a respected leader, he interacted with other community members on a relatively equal footing.

Each area had a relatively new member of Parliament, elected just two years earlier. I was interested in learning about the effect of the chiefs' political opinions on other community members' views of these representatives. I first interviewed each chief about his opinion of his member of Parliament. These opinions were not widely known at the time, since the research was conducted well in advance of the next election, and parliamentarians' performance was not yet a salient topic of local discussion.

With a team of research assistants, I also conducted a survey of a representative sample of adults in each chiefdom. I shared the local chief's opinion with half of the respondents, and assessed the effect of chiefs' endorsements on public opinion by comparing respondents' stated support for their member of Parliament depending on whether or not they were informed of their chiefs' views. Again, this was long before the next parliamentary election, so the research did not interfere with an election campaign.

My findings indicate that only a small subset of voters consider their chiefs' political views when forming their own opinions about politicians. Interestingly, the findings are remarkably similar across the hierarchical Lunda chiefdoms and the more egalitarian Ndake chiefdom. Zambian chiefs are not the electoral kingmakers they are some-

times made out to be. Like the chief of Sunyani in Ghana, they have limited electoral influence.

But if this is the case, why do politicians visit chiefs so regularly? Why have chiefs received renewed political attention since the post-1990 wave of democratization in Africa? The answer lies not in their electoral importance but in their developmental importance. Traditional chiefs have a special ability to organize collective responses to local problems in many communities.

EPIDEMIC RESPONSE

One dramatic example of a problem that requires a collective response is an epidemic. The worldwide spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 has put traditional chiefs on the front lines of the fight against this disease in many communities. The responses of traditional chiefs in Sierra Leone during the West African Ebola epidemic between 2014 and 2016 provide insight into the important role these leaders can play in the current pandemic.

Ebola is a deadly viral disease passed between humans through physical contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person. The spread of the disease from the first sites of outbreak was linked to funerals of prominent community members, at which large numbers of mourners paid their respects by carrying and touching the bodies of the dead in preparation for burial. Another group at major risk of infection was family caregivers who could contract the disease while nursing and comforting sick relatives in their homes.

This made Ebola a brutally difficult containment challenge, requiring major changes in how communities conduct funeral rituals and how families care for sick members. It also required effective quarantines and contact tracing of those exposed to infected individuals, both of which depend on high levels of cooperation and monitoring within communities.

The Jawei chiefdom in eastern Sierra Leone was one of the first in the country to be affected, with confirmed cases in late May 2014. It was also one of the hardest hit. Among the earliest victims was the wife of Paramount Chief Musa Kallon. The chief's daughter, who had cared for her mother during her illness, also subsequently died of Ebola.

As British anthropologist Paul Richards has documented, Paramount Chief Kallon responded quickly and effectively to the outbreak. He organized 52 young men to form an anti-Ebola task force responsible for educating the public, track-

ing cases, and burying the dead according to a safe protocol. He orchestrated the passage of bylaws restricting movement within the chiefdom, mandating the reporting of cases, and prescribing safe burial practices.

These measures were remarkably effective. By the end of July 2014, just two months later, the outbreak had ebbed in the chiefdom. Its bylaws became a national model, inspiring the National Council of Paramount Chiefs and the Ministry of Local Government to order similar measures across all chiefdoms in Sierra Leone that August.

Paramount Chief Kallon's effectiveness in containing Ebola within his chiefdom was not simply the result of a well-reasoned policy approach. As a powerful paramount chief, he also had the authority to enforce control measures, many of which citizens were initially reluctant to follow. The strength of traditional institutions allowed the paramount chief to communicate regularly with sub-chiefs and village headmen to monitor local movements and to sanction those who tried to break quarantine. Traditional hunting groups still carried social prestige in the chiefdom, allowing the chief to draw on this paradigm in recruiting for his Ebola task force. Across Sierra Leone, chiefdoms with more powerful ruling families were consistently more effective in lowering the death toll from Ebola, as demonstrated by the research of Dutch political economists Peter van der Windt and Maarten Voors.

DEVELOPMENT BROKERS

The critical role of traditional chiefs in organizing effective collective responses to community problems is underscored during extraordinary times, such as the Ebola epidemic. But chiefs often play a role in organizing more mundane development projects as well. Community participation is critical to the success of a wide variety of projects in rural communities, from school construction to road maintenance to sanitation campaigns. In areas where traditional chiefs still exist, they are often well placed to ensure that community members do their part by contributing to these projects.

In Zambia, traditional chiefs play two complementary roles in organizing local development projects. First, they request contributions from community members, who are frequently asked to volunteer labor or materials for infrastructure projects. If a primary school needs to be built, the chief or headman will often be the one to ask each household to contribute a set number of bricks.

If a path needs to be cleared through the brush, a traditional leader will typically organize a work gang to take care of it.

Second, traditional chiefs act as brokers between their communities and the government, serving as spokespersons and lobbyists for local needs. The most effective chiefs are in frequent contact with their areas' district commissioners and members of Parliament, who may rarely visit rural chiefdoms in person. Active chiefs often remind these officials of local infrastructural needs and alert them immediately when new problems arise.

Government administrators note the challenges faced by chiefdoms without a sitting chief. Such vacancies can occur if the previous officeholder has recently died and a successor has not yet been installed—or, worse yet, if the succession is contested by multiple contenders. My own research shows that chiefdoms obtain significantly fewer infrastructure projects in the years immediately following the death of a chief. In Zambia, the impact of such a vacancy is immediate and material: without a chief in place, fewer new classrooms are built and fewer water boreholes are drilled in the local community.

Why do chiefs expend effort on organizing these projects to the benefit of their communities? Not all chiefs do. Some take advantage of their positions to sell off community assets, like communal land and natural resources, for their own private gain. But chiefs who have strong social connections to their communities and who expect to rule them for a long time have an incentive to broker local development with broader benefits.

Thus, from Sierra Leone to Zambia, traditional chiefs play a vital role in mobilizing community members to solve collective problems. Chiefs can draw on long-standing local organizations and traditional legitimacy to organize collective action. In many rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, no other leader can rival a chief in this capacity.

But a chief's ability to organize development projects does not directly translate into the ability to mobilize votes. If a chief asks for contributions to a development project, this is usually considered a legitimate request, and compliance is easily observable. But directing voters to support a candidate endorsed by a chief is not typically viewed as legitimate, and individual voters' compliance with such a directive is not verifiable.

Still, the fact that chiefs can act as development brokers partly explains why they have received renewed attention at the same time that multiparty elections have become institutionalized in sub-Saharan Africa. Elections have provided governments with new incentives to deliver development projects to rural voters, who still make up a majority of the electorate in most sub-Saharan African countries.

Their role as development brokers may give chiefs some indirect influence over how community members vote. Voters concerned with how well political candidates will perform in delivering development projects may give weight to their chief's ability to work with those candidates when deciding how to cast their ballots. But this influence over elections is indirect and limited, whereas chiefs' influence over local development projects is direct and extensive.

POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

These findings undercut many concerns about chiefs' compatibility with democracy. Traditional chiefs do not corrode national-level democracy. Since they have limited influence over how voters cast their ballots, they do not break the chain of accountability between voters and their elected representatives. But chiefs can play an important role in brokering development projects, and in doing so, they may help elected governments respond to rural citizens' needs.

Instead of traditional chiefs endangering democracy, the larger danger might be that competitive elections encourage politicians to undermine the legitimacy of traditional chiefs. Despite chiefs' limited electoral influence, politicians frequently make efforts to co-opt incumbent chiefs and impose new ones in their efforts to secure any electoral advantage possible.

It has become common practice for governments to increase the salaries of chiefs in the run-up to an election. In one recent example, Zambian President Edgar Lungu more than doubled the monthly salaries paid to traditional chiefs immediately before the 2016 election, from 4,000 Kwacha ($400) to 10,000 Kwacha. This probably did not give him a large bump in his vote share, even if it improved some chiefs' opinions of him. However, large salary raises risk making chiefs more dependent on the state than on their communities, undercutting their ties to local citizens.

More damaging are government efforts to impose appointments and even create new traditional leadership positions. In Zambia, Lungu's predecessor Michael Sata tried for years to influence the selection of the Bemba paramount chief, Chitimu-

kulu, inciting a feud with the candidate preferred by the Bemba traditional council. Ultimately, Sata's administration was successful in delaying but not overturning the installation of the council's preferred candidate. The current Chitimukulu was installed in July 2015, a full three years after the death of his predecessor. (Sata himself had died in October 2014.)

President Joyce Banda of Malawi also intervened widely in traditional affairs, creating new chieftaincy offices as a means of bestowing patronage on particular leaders. In the two-year period before the 2014 Malawian elections, tens of thousands of traditional leaders were given higher ranks: village headmen received the status of group village headmen, sub-chiefs gained the status of chiefs, and so on. Across all regions of the country, close to half of all officially recognized traditional leaders were likely promised promotions during this period, along with the associated increased salaries and perks of office.

This strategy of buying off traditional chiefs did not yield large electoral benefits for Banda. She was in a weak position going into the election, having ascended to the presidency from the vice presidency after the death of President Bingu wa Mutharika, and she was no longer a member of Mutharika's Democratic Progressive Party. Even so, it is noteworthy that despite the widespread promotion of traditional leaders during her tenure, she lost the 2014 presidential election by a wide margin, taking just 20 percent of the vote.

Although the strategy of elevating chiefs had limited electoral benefits, it harmed the strength and legitimacy of traditional institutions. Many chiefs and chiefly families objected to the new appointments, creating tensions among traditional leaders. Following the 2014 election, the new administration appointed regional committees to investigate the Banda-era promotions, overseen by paramount and senior chiefs. Numerous appointments were overturned.

This evidence shows that political interventions into traditional leadership appointments are a counterproductive strategy. These interventions bring limited electoral gains. More importantly, such meddling harms the government's ability to work with chieftaincies to deliver development projects because it undermines the institutional

How democratic can a society be if unelected chiefs rule at the local level?

capacity and legitimacy of traditional leaders at the local level.

I do not want to overstate the orderliness of power transitions in traditional institutions in the absence of contemporary political interventions. Even in the precolonial period, political authority was fiercely contested due to both competition between different lineages within chiefdoms and conflicts between societies. Colonial administrations intervened extensively in chieftaincy successions, in some cases inventing new traditional chiefs. As a result, not all chiefs enjoy local legitimacy, even if present-day politicians restrain themselves from intervening in chieftaincy affairs.

Despite these complicated histories, many traditional leaders are able to play constructive roles as development brokers. It is important to safeguard their ability to do so, especially in states that lack well-functioning bureaucracies.

Traditional institutions have some tools for resisting political intervention. In certain cases, they can simply wait out elected leaders, as chiefs in Zambia and Malawi were able to do with the Sata and Banda administrations. Still, I see a greater danger in vote-seeking politicians undermining chiefs than in chiefs undermining national-level democracy.

LOCAL DESPOTS?

Even if traditional institutions are not a significant threat to national democracy, they undeniably incorporate undemocratic practices into local governance. Traditional chiefs are rarely elected and often rule for life. Women and ethnic minorities are frequently underrepresented in traditional councils, and customary law often enshrines gender and ethnic inequalities. Customary justice frequently emphasizes the restoration of social order above the protection of individual rights. What can be done about these undemocratic aspects of traditional institutions?

One proposed solution is to introduce elections for traditional chiefs. But this is akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater. In areas with no tradition of electing chiefs, holding such votes effectively replaces traditional leaders with a new class of political leaders who cannot draw on traditional institutional capacity or legitimacy to organize collective responses to local problems.

What can be done to democratize local traditional leadership without undermining its effectiveness? Rather than fully replacing traditional political institutions, it may be possible to draw on their inclusive aspects to encourage reform from within.

To the extent that these institutions allow for popular participation and accountability, they have typically done so through deliberative rather than electoral processes. Historically, traditional leaders ruled as members of councils, and chiefs depended on the advice of councilors in their decision-making. Ugandan anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani has shown how colonial administrations empowered chiefs without giving corresponding recognition to their councils, thereby weakening deliberative processes that checked the power of traditional leaders.

Even so, traditional councils have demonstrated institutional resilience in many communities. Katharina Holzinger recently conducted an expert survey on contemporary traditional political institutions around the world, and found that advisory councils remain active in most groups. Chiefs are expected to consult advisers before rendering decisions and to justify their actions to these councils.

The importance of deliberative processes to decision-making in traditional institutions presents both an opportunity and a challenge. At their best, deliberative processes allow for dynamic popular participation in articulating social issues and finding collective solutions. However, if key constituencies cannot participate in deliberative processes on an equal footing, their interests may be ignored in decision-making. The limited rights of women and ethnic minorities in some traditional institutions is an major concern in this regard.

Fortunately, it may be possible to make deliberative processes within traditional institutions more inclusive. As American political scientist David Stasavage has argued, political leaders have incentives to include councilors in decision-making in contexts where councilors have access to information the leader lacks. This suggests the possibility of encouraging traditional leaders to broaden their consultative practices by amplifying the value of information held by marginalized groups within their communities.

American-Congolese political scientist Eric Mvukiyehe, Zimbabwean geographer Shylock Muyengwa, and I have conducted research that shows the promise of this approach in Zimbabwean villages. We examined what happened when local civil society leaders who were not part of traditional governing circles were given information by a local nongovernmental organization on laws and policies related to village-level governance. We found that this made them valued advisers to village chiefs, and gave the chiefs an incentive to consult more broadly and govern more inclusively. We specifically found that village chiefs could be encouraged to consult more women, indicating that traditional practices are often malleable and that some discriminatory practices can be mitigated.

Concerns about traditional chiefs being at odds with local-level democracy are often well founded. Many customary legal systems need to make progress in improving gender and ethnic equality before the law. But traditional institutions and customary law are more fluid than they are often imagined to be. The question for ongoing debate is how traditional leaders can be encouraged to act as development brokers on behalf of their communities while mitigating the discriminatory features of local-level traditional governance. ∎

Sudan's Rule of Law Revolution

MARK FATHI MASSOUD

On April 11, 2019, after four months of street protests that shut down Khartoum, Sudan's capital, military leaders deposed President Omar Hassan al-Bashir. Although his failing health, rifts among his deputies, and the country's economic decline were all weakening his authority, Bashir had been planning to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the June 30, 1989, coup that brought him to power. Instead, a June 3, 2019, massacre of pro-democracy protesters left at least 100 dead in Khartoum. Dozens of bodies were found in the Nile River. But on August 17, 2019, a deal between protest organizers and the military leadership launched a 39-month transition to democratic elections in 2022. As Sudan takes its first steps toward democracy in a generation, now is the time to take stock of what Bashir, and the regimes that rose and fell before his, left behind.

Sudan is haunted by the legacy of its two long civil wars (1955–72 and 1983–2005), which took the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions. Those wars led to the 2011 secession of South Sudan, the world's newest independent country. South Sudan subsequently spiraled into its own devastating civil war, which left thousands more killed or displaced.

But Sudan has another crucial and less-studied legacy: its justice system, once considered the strongest in Africa. Although colonialism perverted Sudan's legal system, it also deepened a respect for the rule of law that survived a series of of postcolonial dictatorships. For the past five decades, politicians have wreaked havoc on this system by writing laws and using courts for their own ben-

efit. Yet Sudan's weakened legal infrastructure and its enduring respect for the rule of law remain the country's best hope for achieving sustainable peace and justice.

The rule of law is a system of governance built on the principle that law constrains politics, not the other way around. It limits politicians' arbitrary authority. In Sudan, historically, the rule of law has been in short supply, as is typically the case in countries ravaged by colonialism and postcolonial political conflicts. But today, the rule of law is under threat not only in these countries but also in the West, as populist leaders seek unfettered authority.

Establishing the rule of law is the goal of many human rights lawyers, international aid workers, and United Nations agencies. In 2007, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro called the rule of law the "very heart" of the organization's mission. For the past two decades, successive secretaries-general have instructed all arms of the UN and their partners to prioritize building the rule of law in their field operations in postconflict settings, including Sudan.

A PERMANENT TRANSITION

In Sudan, as in other volatile countries, laws were replaced soon after their enactment, or else were rarely enforced or simply ignored and never implemented. Since Sudan's 1956 independence after nearly 60 years of joint British and Egyptian colonial rule, three military coups have replaced failed democratic administrations, and seven constitutions or constitutional declarations have replaced one another in succession. The 2019 revolution effectively amounted to yet another military coup that supplanted the regime installed by the previous coup, only this time with broad support from civil society.

Dictators have led Sudan through 53 of the 64 years since colonial independence (1958–64,

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1969–85, and 1989–2019). From the perspective of Sudanese citizens who have almost never experienced democracy, but are now living through the country's fourth transition to it, the law seems to be yet another victim of the country's ongoing conflicts and upheavals. As a prominent Sudanese lawyer once told me in Khartoum, the country has existed for decades in a "permanent state of transition."

The responsibility to tell the story of law's historical role in Sudan's revolutionary and transitional politics lies not only with those in the country trying to rebuild, but just as much with Sudanese emigrants like me. My family fled Sudan when I was a boy, as the country's second civil war was beginning in the early 1980s. I lived in Sudan in the 2000s as a graduate student researcher and, later, as a visiting professor.

What I learned from my research in Sudan, including more than 200 interviews with lawyers, human rights activists, and government officials, is that both aid workers and state personnel who took on the work of building or rebuilding the country over time have used the same legal tools to achieve their goals. These tools include constructing courthouses and training judges, writing laws and constitutions, building law schools and law libraries, and creating mechanisms for processing grievances. Whether they worked for dictatorships, democracies, or human rights groups, all used the same strategies of lawmaking to try to solve the country's most intractable problems and impose their visions on the country.

The legal profession is slowly rebuilding, from the outside in and the top down.

COLONIAL PLAYBOOK

Bashir's authoritarian regime was not the first to make the law do its bidding. It took a page from the colonial playbook. The British colonial administration in Sudan (calling itself the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, and lasting from 1898 to 1956) instituted courts, legal procedures, and standard methods of appeal to deter crime, resolve private disputes, address individual grievances, and moderate the exercise of state power. But the colonial administration promoted weak forms of the rule of law in order to legitimate colonial rule. It used laws, lawyers, law schools, and courts to stifle opposition and limit the expression of nationalism.

British judges enforced the legal codes drafted by colonial officials to maintain social and political order and prevent anticolonial rebellions. Colonial authorities devolved some legal authority to local elites who were known as tribal chiefs—a form of indirect rule. The tribal chiefs used customary laws that predated the British arrival by centuries. The colonial administration paid these men to maintain village security and resolve local property claims and marital disputes. (Customary laws continue to play an outsize role in many areas of Sudan to this day, especially rural areas.) The chiefs also collected taxes and served summonses on behalf of their colonial employers.

British officials used colonial courts and prisons to monitor and stem the spread of forms of Islam that demanded an end to foreign occupation. According to colonial reports I gathered, summary convictions—judicial rulings without trials—grew by more than 50 percent in the late 1940s, to 34,000 annually, as soldiers who returned from deployment in World War II began agitating for independence. The hard-fought campaign for democracy lasted a decade and culminated on January 1, 1956, when Sudan became the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from the British.

DEMOCRACY'S BLUNDERS

Sudan's first postcolonial foray into democracy ended after just two years. The leaders of a 1958 coup then held onto power until 1964, when a popular revolution brought about the country's second democratic transition in less than a decade. Much like the 2019 revolution, the 1964 uprising began when Sudanese professionals—lawyers, judges, journalists, teachers, doctors, and union leaders—took to the streets demanding political change.

The five-year democratic period following the 1964 revolution holds important lessons that can be applied to Sudan's contemporary transition more than a half-century later. During the 1960s, political parties were at an impasse, leaving it to the judiciary to uphold democratic values. The two major parties, which represented different Islamic religious orders, failed to form a working coalition or put forward meaningful policies. As the London *Sunday Times* reported, the parliament was operating in a "state of democratic chaos."

While lawmakers languished in this power vacuum, the judiciary's trained staff was instituting legal stability and basic social order. Judges were the country's most trusted officials. They adapted and

maintained elements of British common law—including judicial independence from political interference. They were fluent in both English (the language of the law) and Arabic (the language of the people). The legal system flourished at a time of political turmoil.

But judges could not hold the country together for long. Elected officials' refusal to implement High Court decisions provoked a public outcry and the resignation of Chief Justice Babiker Awadalla. Parliamentarians' sense that they were under no obligation to respect the judiciary or a separation of powers set in motion a series of events that ended in a 1969 military coup led by Colonel Jafaar Nimeiri. Upon taking power, Nimeiri declared himself president, with former Chief Justice Awadalla at his side as vice president. Nimeiri declared that Sudan had "tried liberal democracy. . . . It failed, and we will never go back to it."

PLAYING WITH LAW

The Nimeiri years (1969–85) were a grim period in modern Sudanese history. Opposition parties remained disorganized, able to do little but fight among themselves. In 1972, Nimeiri helped bring an end to Sudan's first civil war, which had begun in 1955; in 1973, he ushered in the nation's first permanent constitution. These events crystallized the dictatorship's unchecked authority. Buoyed by financing from foreign investors and the International Monetary Fund, Nimeiri took the Sudanese state and its citizens hostage. His regime began seizing and nationalizing private businesses.

By the late 1970s, many nationalized companies had failed, and wealthy investors left Sudan in droves. Business owners who stayed were harassed or had their assets confiscated. Record levels of inflation devastated the economy. Nimeiri abandoned the socialist principles that had guided his policies and declared himself a sheikh—a religious leader. In the early 1980s, he instituted repressive forms of Islamic criminal law to crack down on any would-be revolutionaries. A new civil war began after a rebellion by southern Sudanese military forces.

One of the most notorious instances of Nimeiri's brutality occurred in 1985, when a presidential military court ordered the execution of Mahmoud Mohammed Taha, a prominent 76-year-old civil society leader. The court ruled that Taha's alleged crime—speaking out against Nimeiri's government—was a form of apostasy (renunciation of Islam). But apostasy was not listed in Sudan's criminal code at the time. It was added to the code under Bashir in 1991.

The Nimeiri regime was finally ousted in 1985—by street protests led by middle-class professionals, just as in 1964—resulting in the country's third transition to democracy. But as in the 1960s, democracy did not last long—only from 1985 until Bashir's coup in 1989.

BASHIR'S BLEAK LEGACY

Nimeiri's heavy-handed use of the law in the 1970s and 1980s led to his undoing. But the same tactics would become the source of Bashir's political survival. Having learned from his predecessors' mistakes, Bashir turned the law into a servant of his political agenda to an extent unmatched by any of Sudan's previous governments.

In addition to overseeing a devastating war in southern Sudan, the secession of South Sudan in 2011, and what most international observers have called war crimes in the western Darfur region, Bashir spent thirty years controlling the work and lives of lawyers, judges, and legal academics to an unprecedented degree. Sudanese legal professionals had played critical roles in the toppling of his predecessors, so his administration carefully devised ways to undermine their ability to organize.

Bashir adopted a program of strict Islamization, and his regime built a system of law schools that would teach a state-approved type of Islamic law. The number of lawyers trained in Bashir's academies grew at a rate quadruple that of the Sudanese population. Lawyers and judges who were not affiliated with the regime were targeted in raids, sent to ghost houses where they were tortured, or pushed to resign.

Citizens were encouraged to rely on the regime's new laws and courts to resolve all kinds of disputes. The regime built hundreds of new courts across the country, including specialized courts focusing on taxes, customs, electrical and telephone services, and intellectual property. By setting up courts and law schools in key cities across Sudan, the regime extended the judiciary's reach deeper and broader than ever, into areas left untouched by previous governments. Such was the insidious nature of Bashir's authoritarianism.

Bashir focused resources on promoting repressive forms of Islamic criminal law. His administration passed a public order law and quadrupled the number of criminal courthouses to enforce compliance. The law gave police and security services broad discretion to intimidate, harass, and detain

women, youth activists, and members of ethnic minorities under the guise of protecting morality and social order.

In the criminal courts, summary convictions with no lawyers present resulted in punishments of forty lashes. During mid-mornings, bailiffs could be seen in plazas outside courtrooms whipping the backs of poor people who had been convicted of possessing, brewing, or consuming alcohol. The highest-profile cases in these courts—women charged with violating public order by wearing trousers—made international headlines. As with alcohol consumption, this offense brought punishments of up to forty lashes.

During my fieldwork in the last decade of Bashir's rule, people regularly told me that Sudan's best judges—those with experience, courage, and commitment to judicial standards—were gone. They had retired, fled overseas, been forced out of the profession, or worse. One person asked me, given these difficult conditions, "Why is it even necessary to have laws?"

Courts were a means of imposing a harsh form of social order, but they could not compel foreign investment. The regime encouraged foreign firms to invest in Sudan's infrastructure—roads, bridges, buildings, oil pipelines, and refineries—by making contractual promises to resolve any dispute that might arise between the government and its investors in international arbitration tribunals overseas. These tribunals are ad hoc courts that conduct their business largely behind closed doors, and are typically located in major financial centers in Europe, the Gulf states, and China. To foreign investors, arbitration tribunals offered a more trustworthy legal venue than Sudan's courts, since judges appointed by Bashir were believed to be pawns of the regime who would certainly rule in its favor. Sending financial disputes to arbitration facilitated the state's push for judges to prioritize cases of public morality, further suppressing the citizenry.

ANOTHER TRANSITION

Pulling down the intricate legal web that Bashir spun for thirty years will not take long. By November 2019, barely 100 days after the dictator's ouster, the Ministry of Justice had already repealed the infamous public order law. But building a new legal system to replace the apparatus that Bashir created for his regime's survival, and convincing citizens to trust it, will be among the biggest challenges that postcolonial Sudan has ever faced. To meet this challenge, the transitional administration has been laying the foundation for a democratic government.

Its first major action—as with every previous authoritarian, democratic, or transitional administration—was to draft a constitution. In August 2019, representatives of the military and the opposition issued a transitional constitutional declaration, replacing the interim constitution that had been on the books since the end of the civil war in 2005.

The new constitution's guarantors are a prime minister and a sovereignty council of 11 members. These 12 officials are to serve from August 2019 until the 2022 general election. The sovereignty council is made up of five members chosen by the military and five selected by former protest leaders. The eleventh member, Raja Nicola, is independent. (A respected lawyer from Sudan's Coptic Christian minority, she was appointed by representatives of both the military and the protesters.) The transitional government's own laws prevent these unelected council members from running for election in 2022.

The cabinet, led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, spent much of late 2019 and early 2020 doing what was expected of it: writing laws and enacting them. A series of measures created human rights, anticorruption, transitional justice, and peace commissions. The cabinet also drafted a measure abolishing the existing *zakat* (almsgiving) law, which many believe facilitated Bashir's corruption, and bills to remove the Bashir regime's restrictions on voluntary organizations and the press.

Many lawyers and judges who worked in key posts under Bashir remain in Sudan. But the legal profession is slowly rebuilding, from the outside in and the top down. In 2019, Nasredeen Abdulbari returned to Sudan from the United States to serve as minister of justice. Abdulbari, 41, holds a law degree from the University of Khartoum and had been a doctoral student at Georgetown, finishing his dissertation and preparing for an academic career.

The transitional government, though largely made up of men, has appointed women to important leadership positions. In addition to Nicola, the government in 2019 also appointed Nemat Abdullah Khair as Sudan's first female chief justice. She is one of a long line of Sudanese women who have emerged as influential lawyers, judges, and constitutional court justices since the 1960s,

including some who served under Bashir or as judges in religious courts.

Decisions made by the transitional government with regard to reforming Sudan's legal system will shape the country's relations with its citizens and with the international community. In December 2019, a Sudanese court convicted Bashir of money laundering and corruption, sentencing him to two years' imprisonment. But many Sudanese felt that the light sentence—to be served in a "reform facility" rather than a prison—failed to deliver justice, considering the severity of the fallen ruler's 30-year criminal record.

In February 2020, the transitional government reversed course on another important question of transitional justice when it announced that it would consider handing Bashir over to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. For the better part of a decade, ICC prosecutors have sought Bashir's extradition so they can put him on trial for war crimes and genocide in connection with the military's armed response to a 2003–5 uprising in Darfur.

To stabilize the ailing economy, the transitional government is also actively working to lift global economic sanctions long imposed on Sudan. Key to this aim is persuading the US State Department to remove its nearly two-decade-old designation of Sudan as a "state sponsor of terrorism," alongside Iran, North Korea, and Syria.

Meanwhile, the judiciary is asserting an independent authority that the Sudanese people have not seen in decades. Following a March 2020 attack by two army officers on a judge in eastern Sudan, Chief Justice Khair ordered all judges and court staff to stop working. The strike was meant to send the message that judges now refuse to endure the affronts they suffered under past regimes. The chief justice ended the nationwide strike one day after army leaders publicly affirmed their respect for the independent judiciary, calling the attack an isolated incident.

ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

As the transitional government prepares for elections in 2022, civil society faces the challenge of keeping itself alive. Over the years, I have observed Sudan's most sophisticated activists move out of positions in local community-based groups or nongovernmental organizations to take jobs with international aid groups and United Nations agencies. As Sudanese activists move up this employment hierarchy, they earn prestige and higher salaries.

But their new roles shift these experienced activists away from field support and direct assistance to the urban poor or people displaced by conflict, as they work at desks in air-conditioned offices within guarded, walled compounds. One activist in Sudan told me that some of these workers had found that the salaries in these prestigious positions are not as high or as reliable as they had anticipated.

Since the 2019 revolution, many of Sudan's most sophisticated activists have moved into government positions. Their career shifts may seem to be good news for the project of rebuilding the state. But this trend also saps civil society of its capacity to monitor the transitional government, and it could prevent civil society from keeping any future government in check. As one activist told me, it is effectively "dumping" a great deal of practical experience into the government, rather than using that experience to lift up vulnerable organizations and groups.

Bashir turned the law into a servant of his political agenda.

ACCOMMODATING ISLAM

Another challenge faced by the transitional government is clarifying the role of religion in the state. The Bashir regime promoted its own interpretation of immutable laws rooted in Islam. But as one civic leader told me, during Sudan's civil wars, when everything else—government and NGOs—seemed to fail, religious institutions were "the only ones left" to provide people with a sense of hope. For centuries, Islam has shaped everyday life and legal practice in Sudan. The call to prayer can bring an end to official meetings, court proceedings, and other events.

Throughout the revolution in 2019, protesters gathered regularly for marches after Friday prayers. Tens of thousands of them fasted for Ramadan together, enduring Khartoum's intense heat without food or water from sunrise to sunset. As they picketed on the streets outside military headquarters, they carried banners calling the holy month Sudan's "most beautiful" Ramadan ever.

In this context of popular piety and hope vested in religion, the key political question is not whether to accommodate Islam, but how to do it. The question is especially fraught given Sudan's

diverse, multireligious society. Rebuilding trust among citizens and between Sudan and the international community will involve showcasing the state's ability to align Islam and international human rights standards openly, vocally, and realistically.

For decades, Islamic law and human rights law were each separately pushed on Sudanese citizens as the key to their salvation. Authoritarian governments advanced their own versions of Islamic law to instill discipline and obedience in citizens. Meanwhile, people interacted with aid agencies that advanced human rights law to liberate citizens from the state's harmful actions. To some survivors of persecution under Bashir, there were parallels between the unitary and top-down character of the state's rhetoric of religious law and that of the international aid community's rhetoric of human rights law. Each was touted as the people's savior from the other.

The difficulty now lies in convincing people that similar processes of legal change—writing laws, building courts and law schools, and adapting elements of Islamic law, just as Bashir, Nimeiri, and the British colonial administration did—will lead to different outcomes.

At the same time, international donors are clamoring for partnerships with Sudanese organizations that can implement new projects with their funding. The designs of their rule-of-law programs tend to suggest a vision of linear progress, whereby the debris of Sudan's decades of political violence would give way to human rights, justice, and the rule of law. Aid workers and international lawyers hope that in the delicate context of the democratic transition, state and civil society leaders will work together to embed these principles into a permanent constitution and new laws.

PRINCIPLES AT STAKE

The legal order in Sudan can best be described as radically plural. Since the start of the colonial administration in 1898, multiple systems—including British common law, Egyptian civil law, Islamic law, and Sudanese customary legal traditions—have been combined and put to use in various ways, creating a complex and uneven legal landscape. Law is a messy business in Sudan, where there has never been a single, agreed-upon set of national legal principles, even among democratically minded politicians.

The leaders of the 2019 Sudanese revolution took its three guiding principles—freedom, peace, and justice—into the transitional government. Protest organizers put their lives on the line as they fought for those principles. Rebuilding people's trust that the state also espouses these core values will necessitate patience, which many Sudanese may be apt to lose as the economy continues to falter and now faces the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The government is balancing the need for justice and redressing past rights violations with a sensitivity to the divergent interests of the factions seeking power. Extending the revolution's values, so that they seep from the protesters into constitutions and laws, and then into society at large, is a process that will take much longer than the 39-month transition.

Nonetheless, the remarkable achievements of the revolution and the transition since 2019 offer reasons for optimism. In one of my interviews in Sudan in 2006, a young female lawyer told me, "I want a legal renaissance in this country." After waiting 14 years, she can now feel hope that the rule of law will come with democratic change. And this time, for the first time, peace might last more than a few years in Sudan. ∎

How Informal Transport Systems Drive African Cities

DANIEL E. AGBIBOA

By 2030, 50 percent of Africans will be urban dwellers. Yet African cities have some of the world's worst cases of transport poverty. Survey evidence from Kampala, Lagos, and Douala (the largest cities in Uganda, Nigeria, and Cameroon, respectively) suggests that there are only 30 to 70 vehicles per 1,000 people—far below the global average of 180 vehicles. An estimated 75 percent of daily commuters in African cities walk to and from wherever they need to go, by necessity, according to a study by the Urban Intelligence Unit.

This reality has amplified calls for more efficient, environmentally friendly, and affordable rapid-transit bus lines and light rail systems. For now, though, African cities mainly run on informal modes of transport—typically minibuses, but also motorbikes, tricycles, and shared taxis. These are ground-level responses to growing demand for mobility in the face of absent or inadequate formal public transport services.

For many African urbanites, it is impossible to imagine city life without its ubiquitous minibuses. They are the subject of news, gossip, rumors, and urban myths. Minibus taxis account for an estimated 80 percent of Africa's total motorized trips, according to a study by the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program. They go by various appellations: *trotro* in Accra, *daladala* in Dar es Salaam, *matatu* in Kenya, *danfo* in Lagos, *car rapides* in Dakar, *kamuny* in Kampala, *gbaka* in Abidjan, *esprit de mort* in Kinshasa, *candongueiros* in Luanda, *poda-poda* in Freetown, *sotrama* in Bamako, *songa kidogo* in Kigali, and *kombi* in Cape Town.

The failure of state-owned mass transportation services occasioned the growth and popular-

ity of these informal and ostensibly unregulated services. They are also known as "paratransit" to indicate an alternate mode of flexible passenger services that cater to the poor in the developing world. Unlike modern mass transit systems with fixed stops, fares, routes, and timetables, paratransit services run flexible, even extralegal, schedules. As one *kombi-taxi* slogan in Cape Town puts it: "This Is a Taxi! It Can Stop Anywhere, Anytime, Anyplace."

These vehicles are notorious for their squealing brakes, bald tires, and rattling exhaust pipes emitting thick, black smoke. And the practice of overloading has long been common in many African cities. In his 1965 play *The Road*, Nigerian Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka describes paratransit taxis as a form of "transportation torture on four wheels," not simply because of the "famished road" they ply daily. He describes "humans crushed against one another and against market produce, sheep, and other livestock, suffocated by the stench of rotting food and anonymous farts."

On his 1977 album *Shuffering and Shmiling*, Fela Kuti sang about the discomfort of informal transport services in Lagos, particularly the iconic *molues* (midibuses): "Everyday my people dey inside busbus / Forty-four seating and ninety-nine standing / Them go pack themselves in like sardine."

Across African cities, paratransit services continue to vex vehicle inspection officers. "You wonder how these buses secured roadworthiness certificates in the first place," an officer in Lagos told me. "And when you ban these buses from the roads, they still find a way of returning to them."

Although paratransit services are notorious for their chaos and criminality, they nonetheless offer more than cheap transportation for multitudes of

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city dwellers. They also provide employment opportunities for many jobless youths from both urban and rural areas, which partly explains their influence on politics and popular culture. In Lagos, there are more than 200,000 *okada* (motorbike-taxi) riders; overall, the industry provides jobs to approximately 500,000 young men as riders, renters, mechanics, and spare-parts dealers. The popularity of *okadas* stems from their relatively low start-up capital and maintenance costs, and the feeling of economic freedom and autonomy that motorcycles afford.

In Nairobi, according to historian Kenda Mutongi, the ubiquitous *matatus* embody "the era of cosmopolitanism, multiparty politics, neoliberalism, and global hip-hop." In South African cities such as Durban, Thomas Blom Hansen writes, *kombi-taxi* vans became a powerful symbol of postapartheid freedom and an important arena for black economic empowerment, even as they retained underworld associations. Whatever their symbolism, paratransit vehicles provide the primary form of mobility for average Africans who otherwise rely on walking to navigate the city, especially those eking out a living on the margins of society.

MULTIPLE IMPACTS

Considering that the informal transport sector has manifold impacts on the political economy of everyday life in Africa, it is remarkable how little research has been done to understand its contributions to African cities. First, informal transport essentially serves the African poor, who typically make up the large majority of the urban population—in many cases these services account for over 80 percent of urban mobility needs. In Africa, owning a vehicle is a key marker of wealth, power, and privilege. One study finds that 99 out of 100 households in Africa's poorest cities do not own or have access to a private car, and thus are wholly dependent on paratransit services. Other studies show that the average household in African cities can afford just one round trip daily; for the poorest, even that is out of reach.

In Lagos, the average passenger spends about 40 percent of their income on bus fares. But walking is the primary way of getting around town for lower-income people who do not own a car. In Nairobi, only an estimated 12 percent of the population uses private vehicles, while the rest use paratransit services such as *matatus* or simply "leg it." Although paratransit services are widely available, they do not appeal to higher-income groups because they are seen as dangerous and unreliable.

Second, informal transport provides opportunities for interaction and a means of economic survival, shaping circulation patterns for people, resources, and information in urban space. The vehicles themselves do not simply express political, social, and economic relations, but rather shape and produce them. They are in effect meeting points for daily conversations in which humor alternates with pathos and dreams coexist with existential angst about bribery and corruption, endless road delays, dysfunctional services, moribund infrastructure, hard work and marginal gains, poverty and relative deprivation.

Third, the informal transport sector provides a unique window onto the political and social conditions of African cities. Operators and unions are key factors in party politics, often playing a decisive role in determining election outcomes.

It is impossible to imagine city life without its ubiquitous minibuses.

Despite the chaos and disorder that is commonly associated with Africa's informal transport sector, there is an underexplored "logic of practice" (to borrow a term from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu) that organizes and animates the sector: namely, a contested field of power relations, including the tactics and strategies of unions and operators in their dealings with the state. African cities do work amid the chaos, and we can gain a better understanding of how they work by studying an apparently chaotic sector like informal transport.

DIRTY WORK

The state of informal transport in African cities mirrors the harsh lived realities of its workers—mostly marginal men. Like many informal workers, transport operators have no fixed income, no days off, and no social protection. In 1958, the sociologist Everett Hughes used the phrase "dirty work" to describe occupations and labor conditions that are perceived as disgusting or degrading. This term well describes the workaday world of informal transport workers in African cities, from Lagos to Nairobi.

Despite lengthy workdays averaging around 20 hours (or "24 hours on the road," as one *danfo* slogan puts it), informal transport workers take home

meager incomes due to the culture of corruption among police and other street-level bureaucrats, the exacting demands of vehicle owners, and the extortionate powers of mafia-like transport union touts who roam bus stations and junctions, collecting onerous fees from operators with impunity. "*Okada* [motorbike taxi] is just daily income," said an operator in Nigeria. "What you get today you use today, and tomorrow you start again from scratch."

There are four basic figures involved in running paratransit businesses in African cities: the fleet owner (also known as the taxi baron), the owner-driver, the taxi driver, and the bus conductor. In most cities, minibus-taxi drivers often have to remit a specific target income to the taxi owner each day; they are paid according to how much they bring in. The driver is responsible for all overhead costs, including fines frequently imposed by touts and police.

For motorbike-taxis, the arrangement is slightly different. Riders often acquire their motorbikes through a process of "hire purchase": they run their bikes for owners to whom they must make daily payments known in Lagos as a "balance." Drivers are under immense pressure to meet the financial targets set by owners or else forfeit their vehicles—their primary source of survival and social status—at the expiration of the 12-month agreement. This pressure results in long working hours, high accident rates, and poor health. To meet their daily targets, drivers must race between the two end points of their chosen routes, weaving in and out of traffic with little regard for life. For these operators, navigating the African city compels constant improvisation and experimentation.

In Lagos, according to the State Ministry of Transportation, 99 percent of *danfo* drivers suffer from hypertension, a health challenge directly related to the demanding and dangerous nature of their work. Survey evidence from the Lagos State Drivers' Institute shows that 22 percent of *danfo* drivers are partially blind. The poor condition of the roads, especially the dust, mainly accounts for this problem (though many *danfo* drivers never had to undergo a vision test since they work without a license). In Nairobi, a study by the International Transport Workers Federation found that *matatu* workers regularly reported "respiratory problems [resulting from] long hours of exposure to air pollution . . . [as well as] back pain, aching joints, swollen and painful legs, eye conditions, dust-related issues, sore throats, headaches, and ulcers."

The struggle to get by or get ahead forces many paratransit operators to reproduce the transgressive system that they condemn. Behavior such as overloading passengers, speeding dangerously, engaging in arbitrary pricing, failing to comply with the rules of the road, and feuding contributes to the criminalization and stigmatization of Africa's informal transport sector and workers. Many operators struggle to construct a positive self-image. They see their work not as a "real trade," but as a temporary one to which they resort for lack of a better option.

But many still derive pride from their vehicles—the material symbols of their survival, manhood, and respectability. Across northern Nigerian cities, it is common to see tricycle-taxi (*keke napep*) drivers wiping dirt from their vehicles at the slightest opportunity, especially while stuck in traffic. In northern Nigeria, where a man's social and marital statuses are inextricably linked, *okada* work is a way out of "social death" for unmarried men: it enables them to pay the oft-inflated bride price, marry, and acquire the status of *masu gida* (household heads) and *homi completo* (complete men).

INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Across Africa, the informal transport sector is a site of indigenous entrepreneurship and creative adaptation. Nowhere is this versatility more evident than in the building of Lagos' trademark *molues*, known as "flying coffins" and "moving morgues." They are built locally on chassis derived from second-hand (*tokumbo*) trucks and engines imported from Europe. This process of "hybridization," as the scholar Adedamola Osinulu calls it, is the stuff of cultural production and globalization in postcolonial Africa.

Minibus-taxis in African cities often have slogans written on their sides, such as "Man Proposes, God Disposes," "No Money, No Friend," and "It Still Moves," reflecting transport workers' life histories, aspirations, fears, and philosophies. In cities like Durban and Nairobi, minibus-taxis fiercely compete to attract passengers with decoration and music.

In Lagos, *danfo* slogans shape the moods and choices of commuters on a daily basis. Commuters described to me how these slogans influence their decisions on which *danfos* to enter or avoid each day. As one market woman explained: "When I see a *danfo* slogan like 'Relax: God Is in Control' or 'Be Not Afraid,' I feel good about entering it be-

cause I feel protected. I feel like the driver really trusts in God's powers, not in his own abilities."

THE CORRUPTION TRAP

Corruption and violence are prevalent in African cities' informal transport sectors. Union touts, urban street gangs, and law enforcement officials run riot. Paratransit workers say that corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of their workaday world. In Nairobi, criminal gangs (so-called cartels) such as the *mungiki* use violence to control *matatu* terminals and routinely demand "security" fees to allow transport operators to ply specific routes. In the Lake Chad Basin (comprising Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad), a region where the violent insurgency of Boko Haram has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions, truckers and bus drivers complain about the violent extortion and delay tactics of paramilitary police and cross-border security personnel.

For every 100 kilometers traveled in West Africa, truckers transporting goods often lose nearly an hour to illegal checkpoints en route. "At some checkpoints if you don't dash [bribe] them, they can delay you for up to four hours before you will be released," said a trucker in Maiduguri. "Due to all the delays, a two-hour journey will take you ten hours."

In Nairobi, a *matatu* driver often leaves a 50- or 100-shilling note hidden under the handle of the trunk to avoid any delays, since "time is money." Traffic police inspectors know just where to reach for the bribe as they "inspect" the vehicle. In Lagos, it is not uncommon for a *danfo* driver to drive right up to a traffic inspector and squeeze a 50-naira note into his hands, saying, "Officer, for beer." The police officer will quickly put the bill in his pocket and wave the driver through an illegal "one-way" lane.

Showing any reluctance to pay the required bribe can be a costly mistake that results in lengthy delays at roadblocks, detention in a police station, vehicle impoundment, or tire deflation. "We just pay them and go our way. What else can we do?" said a *danfo* driver in Lagos. It is not uncommon for security personnel to open fire on paratransit vehicles when drivers refuse to surrender a portion of their hard-earned cash.

In Lagos, the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)—the most politicized and violent trade union in Nigeria—employs motor park touts (*agberos*) to extort illegal fees from *danfo* operators. The list of bribes is endless and borders on farcical, ranging from loading fees to "money for party" (*owo faji*). *Agberos* are typically men between the ages of 20 and 50, and can be easily recognized by their gruff voices, bloodshot eyes, and sometimes missing teeth (lost in street brawling).

At almost all the bus stations in Lagos, *agberos* can be seen racing after *danfo* operators off-loading or picking up passengers. They normally charge at the conductor, screaming "*Owo da?*" (Where is the money?). If the conductor fails to respond, his side-view mirror may be smashed, or his windshield wipers and fuel-tank cover removed. Sometimes a conductor is beaten to death, in full view of complicit police officers.

Most *agberos* are recruited from the large, ready pool of jobless "area boys" roaming the streets of Lagos. But to become an *agbero* it is not enough to be jobless; you must also be feared. As a former *agbero* told me: "If you're in your street and you can create a scene, cut somebody's head, do whatever, the NURTW will find a motor park for you to control as an *agbero*. You're born to kill."

NETWORKS OF SOLIDARITY

Africa's informal transport workers are hardly passive in the face of police abuses, passenger insults, or other trouble. Despite their bottom-of-society status, paratransit operators draw power from their sheer numbers and capacity for collective organizing. The anthropologist Daniel Jordan Smith describes how road accidents involving cars and motorbike-taxis (*okadas*) in Nigeria often draw scores of supportive *okada* riders in a matter of minutes. "I have seen instances when they [*okada* riders] gang up in support of their colleague, even if it is he who is at fault," said a trader in Maiduguri.

Informal transport workers often belong to neighborhood associations that provide networks of solidarity, financial support (from informal cooperatives known in Nigeria as thrift collections), and protection to drivers. Such associations are directed by social relations of patronage, informed by trust and mutual dependence. Given the risk and radical uncertainty of urban life, coupled with its political economy of patronage, an operator will think twice before rejecting associational support, which he is sure to need one day. Operators

> *Paratransit vehicles provide the primary form of mobility for average Africans.*

are compelled to pay one-time union membership fees, as well as "ticket fees" assessed on a daily basis. These fees tend to be exorbitant, and many operators complain that they cannot afford them. But failure to pay exposes them to violent attacks by union touts.

In Maiduguri, a leader of a tricycle-taxi association told me:

> If one of us is involved in an accident, it is our job to look after him in the hospital and take care of his bill and to take him home. If there is any problem between our members and mobile police, you know this job involves a lot of youth bound to make mistakes, it's our job to resolve the problem amicably. Also, if your vehicle got damaged or malfunctions, the association will give you N2,000 [approximately $5.50] on credit for you to repair the damage and pay back N1,000. If your wife delivers a baby and you can't afford a ram for the naming ceremony, the association will help you out.

This strong sense of solidarity among informal transport operators (especially motorbike-taxi drivers)—or what the Cameroonian anthropologist Francis B. Nyamnjoh calls "conviviality"—is often conveyed by vehicle inscriptions such as "Marry One, Marry All" or "Mourn One, Mourn All."

UNION CLOUT

Transport trade unions in postcolonial Africa tend to oscillate between autonomy and political affiliation, cooperation and conflict. They are at once "agents of order" and "primary perpetrators of violence," as political scientist Adrienne LeBas puts it. Across African cities, they typically double as "reservoirs of thugs" (as Human Rights Watch dubs them) for local politicians, especially during election season. In return, these unions are allowed by the state to appropriate transit spaces such as terminals and exploit informal transport operators with impunity.

Motor parks, bus stops, junctions, and roundabouts in African cities are sites of activity in a grey area between the legal and the illegal. Consider the NURTW branch in Lagos. Founded in 1978, the NURTW constitutes the primary support base for the Lagos state governor during election campaigns. The state is often unwilling or unable to rein in the union's predatory treatment of its workers. The union routinely engages in patronage politics and voter mobilization to support various parties and candidates in return for permis-

sion to levy taxes on informal transport operators in public spaces. "The NURTW is a law unto itself," said a *danfo* driver.

In South Africa's cities, Hansen observes, taxi operators "enjoy a very substantial de facto autonomy in terms of regulation and police intervention" as a result of their "politically well-connected bosses." He adds, "The sheer size and quasi-legality of the taxi industry have made it an important source of corruption." In his study of the politics of order and chaos in the informal transport sectors of Kampala (Uganda) and Kigali (Rwanda), Tom Goodfellow found that *bayaye* touts constituted "both an important voting bloc and a potential source of violence [that] could be mobilized" by unions.

MODERNIZING AMBITIONS

Although paratransit services fill an important void in African cities, they also contribute to urban insecurity through traffic congestion ("go-slow," as they say in Lagos), road accidents, air and noise pollution, and violent skirmishes among rival transport union touts. A study by the Stockholm Environment Institute estimates that Africa has less than 3 percent of the world's motor vehicles, but suffers 11 percent of global road fatalities. In Nairobi alone, the notorious *matatus* account for an estimated 95 percent of car-related fatalities; as many as 13,000 people die in road accidents involving these vehicles every year.

In many African cities, it can take up to 3 hours to cover 15 kilometers because of jammed roads at rush hour. In Nairobi, daily productivity lost to traffic congestion is estimated at 58 million Kenyan shillings (approximately $550,000). South Africans reportedly lose about 90 working hours per year stuck in traffic. One study found that Lagosians spend an average of 30 hours in traffic each week, or 1,560 hours annually. Compare this with drivers in Los Angeles and Moscow, who spent only 128 and 210 hours in traffic, respectively, in the whole of 2018.

This inefficiency explains why Africa's informal transport sector has increasingly been treated by policymakers and city planners as disposable. Today, the political economy of urban megaprojects and megacity planning in Africa threatens to dislodge thousands of paratransit operators and reshape their localities, provoking shock, anger, and resistance from below.

Such large-scale projects, generally couched in the language of urban renewal, are shaped by ways

of seeing African cities that are still dominated by what Africanist scholars Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall call "metanarratives of urbanization, modernization, and crisis." These assumptions give rise to the idea that African cities are "not-quite cities," having failed to meet the "expectations of modernity" dictated by Western planning and logic. Such thinking activates state-led interventions and public-private partnerships aimed at "modernizing" and "ordering" the African city and transforming it into a clear text that is "planned and readable."

Driven more by the logic of the market than by the needs of their inhabitants, urban authorities in Africa increasingly exercise power through what urbanist Ananya Roy calls the capacity to construct and reconstruct categories of legality and illegality. From Lagos to Johannesburg and Dar es Salaam, elite-driven modernizing ambitions have led to support for measures aimed at homogenizing and partitioning urban space, exemplified by the disruption of informal markets, the flattening of illegal structures, the deportation of street beggars, the violent eviction of dumpsite dwellers, and other measures aimed at purging African cities of supposedly undesirable elements.

In 2017, Lagos Governor Akinwunmi Ambode hinted of a plan to ban the yellow *danfos* from the city's roads: "When I wake up in the morning and see all these yellow buses and see *okada* and all kinds of tricycles and then we claim we are a megacity, that is not true and we must acknowledge that that is a faulty connectivity that we are running." Ambode's comments highlight popular perceptions of the informal transport sector as a chaotic and violent embarrassment that needs to be replaced. The favored substitutes are bus rapid transit systems (BRTs), generally deemed more befitting of a "modernizing" city with world-class ambitions. BRTs, typically operated by public-private partnerships, feature dedicated lanes and right-of-way infrastructure to facilitate rapid and frequent service.

In February 2020, Ambode announced a ban on motorbike- and tricycle-taxis in Lagos, including burgeoning motorbike-hailing startups (like Gokada and O'Ride) that offer a much safer alternative to the notorious *okadas*. Given the limited reach of the state-endorsed BRTs, motorbikes and tricycle-taxis have bridged enduring

mobility gaps. The ban has caused widespread disruption and discontent in Lagos, leaving many drivers and passengers without options. A leader of one bike-hailing startup in Lagos believes that the ban reflects long-term state urban planning, which has no place for paratransit services. "They have a master plan," he said, "but *okadas* are not in it."

Over the past decade or so, African cities—such as Lagos, Accra, Johannesburg, and Dar es Salaam—have increasingly turned to BRT projects in their quest for a safer, efficient, and cost-effective solution to the need for mass transportation and the chaos of paratransit services. In 2008, Lagos introduced Africa's first BRT corridor, with technical support from the World Bank. But sustainable development scholar Jacqueline Klopp contends that the shortcomings of BRT projects in African cities underscore the need to expand and enhance the capacity of the informal transport sector to effectively tackle traffic jams and environmental pollution.

Informal transport provides opportunities for interaction and economic survival.

BRTs undoubtedly can make a positive contribution to urban lives and productivity. Johannesburg's Rea Vaya system—arguably the first true BRT in Africa—carries an estimated 16,000 passengers daily. According to a New Climate Economy report, Rea Vaya has saved South Africa as much as $890 million thus far by reducing travel time, improving road safety, and cutting carbon emissions.

But BRT systems present serious challenges. For one thing, their rise has spotlighted the struggles of Africa's paratransit workers for survival, recognition, and inclusion in decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods. In Lagos, initial plans to restructure key public transport routes and introduce a BRT system were undercut by opposition from the NURTW, which feared that it would be forced out of the market if bus routes were reconfigured and sold off to the highest bidder.

Similarly, in South Africa, efforts to develop BRT corridors and to phase out paratransit services met with stiff resistance from informal transport operators. In Johannesburg, the arrival of BRTs set off strikes and violent clashes between transport workers in the informal and public sectors. In Kenya, a BRT system launched in 2015 by President Uhuru Kenyatta has remained on hold due to inadequate funding as well as protests by private

matatu owners who fear that the new system will relegate them to the margins of the city. In Dar es Salaam, Matteo Rizzo observes, the recent rapid growth of BRT systems has given rise to similar tensions.

TRANSPORT CULTURE

The urbanist AbdouMaliq Simone has argued that "while the absence of regulation is commonly seen as a bad thing, one must first start from the understanding that no form of regulation can keep the city 'in line.'" Paratransit services in urban Africa are, above all, a way of life, an organizing urban logic that cannot simply be banned. At issue here is not just the informal sector, but the entire transport culture of African cities. As a vital element of mass mobility, paratransit services are embedded in social networks that are integral to the informal infrastructure of African cities—what

Simone calls "a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city."

Africa's informal transport sector is likely to continue to drive mass mobility well into the future and remain central to urban economies and the production of new city forms. This reality is slowly sinking in: rapid-transit bus lines in African cities such as Lagos and Dar es Salaam are beginning to change from an ineffective paradigm of displacement and replacement to a promising strategy of upgrading paratransit services while involving transport unions in the ownership and operation of new BRT systems. A hybrid transport governance—one that not only absorbs paratransit services but allows them to coexist with new forms of public transport such as BRTs, light-rail systems, and e-ridesharing—would be the most sustainable way of moving commuter journeys in African cities onward and upward. ■

African Popular Culture Enters the Global Mainstream

MATTHIAS KRINGS AND TOM SIMMERT

"N is for Nollywood. . . . N is for Netflix! But most importantly . . . hello, Nigeria!" With these words on Twitter in February 2020, Netflix announced its arrival in Africa's most populous nation. As if to prove that the streaming service is ready to invest in African productions, a photo accompanying the tweet introduced several of its brand ambassadors from Nollywood, as Nigeria's film industry is known.

A few Nollywood productions had already been made available to the worldwide Netflix audience—most recently Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart*, released in 2018. With its high technical standards and its progressive plot about a woman in a male-dominated working world, *Lionheart* is on a par with Netflix productions from elsewhere, and drew an international audience. But the urban African scene it portrays, and its Nigerian cast, make it unmistakably a genuine product of Nollywood.

The recent success of musical exports from Africa offers a comparable display of similarity and difference. There have been numerous collaborations between African and American or British artists, and African music has received increasing attention in the global North. Reflecting the new optimism about the potential of so-called Afrobeats music and dance styles to become pacesetters of global pop culture, Nigerian producer Puffy Tee boldly declared in 2018, "Beyoncé will dance shaku-shaku."

The Nigerian culture industry has developed into the most prolific on the African continent. In light of the considerable influence it has had on other regional producers, some observers even speak of the Nigerianization of African popular culture. A closer look at the two dominant genres—Nollywood films and Afrobeats music—reveals how African cultural production has evolved and gained global influence over the past three decades. Africa was long seen primarily as an importer of global cultural forms, but it is now on the verge of becoming a major exporter of popular culture to the world.

The beginnings of Nollywood and the new Nigerian pop music industry can both be linked to the economic crises that have afflicted Nigeria (and many other African countries) since the mid-1980s. As a result of a massive recession that would continue for a decade and a half, cinemas closed down, celluloid film production ceased, and the recording industry came to a halt as international music labels left the country and local labels went out of business. Meanwhile, Nigerian audiences developed a predilection for foreign films and music, which had begun to circulate mostly in pirated copies on cassette-based media.

Nollywood is a child of this cassette culture. Its early proponents—former television station employees, theater people, and electronics dealers—based the emerging industry's modes of production and its distribution system on VHS consumer video technology. Video was comparatively cheap, and it democratized filmmaking to a certain extent. Although production values were modest and piracy soon became a serious problem, the films readily found an audience, and the industry prospered during the first decade of its existence.

The themes of these movies resonated with the everyday experiences and sensibilities of a society in transition, confronted with multiple impositions of modernity under military rule. There were films about money rituals, secret cults, and scandalous women; some were about the fight

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of charismatic Christianity against the powers of darkness. What made these early Nollywood films popular was their display of moral transgression and its punishment—an "aesthetics of outrage" meant to provoke and shock the audience, as anthropologist Brian Larkin has observed. This can be linked to the rise of evangelical Christianity and the spread of the "politics of the belly," as political scientist Jean-François Bayart has called the notorious confluence of patrimonialism, clientelism, and corruption in postcolonial African politics.

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF MUSIC

Nigeria had produced a number of internationally influential musicians in the era of vinyl records, but the recording industry that helped them thrive had collapsed under the pressures of recession and cassette piracy in the early 1990s. It was the advent of digital audio technology that set off the reinvention of the industry by the end of the decade. Personal computers were already sophisticated enough to begin to take the place of traditional studio equipment, drastically reducing the costs and time needed for recording and editing music. The introduction of digital audio workstation software in the early 2000s further changed the way songs were written, streamlining composition and production into a single process. This allowed one person to create complete songs of any genre with only a computer, a microphone, a set of speakers, and an interface to connect them.

In Nigerian film and pop music circles, nothing is more coveted than international recognition.

Despite a lack of revenue sources, the declining cost of recording allowed a growing number of young Nigerians to spend time in a studio. While many previous genres of popular music had been performed by hierarchically structured bands, the new pop industry gave individuals artistic and economic responsibility to act as creative entrepreneurs. Unlike their predecessors, they are rarely called musicians; instead, they are commonly known as "artistes."

This development can also be linked to the influence of hip-hop, which has had a presence in Nigeria since 1979. Rapping brought with it the promise that anyone could become a star without the band required in virtually all other genres featuring vocal performers. Nor was any formal education in singing or playing an instrument required.

By the beginning of the new millennium, an independent music scene had emerged in Lagos, headed by the labels Kennis Music and Dove Records. Stylistically, the music released in the early days of this new recording industry was characterized by an eclectic mixture of influences—from international styles like hip-hop, R&B, reggae, dancehall, and boy band pop to local genres such as highlife, jùjú, and fújì. With respect to the lyrics, however, some new ground was broken. Some performers seized on the still-young Fourth Republic as an opportunity to explicitly address social and political grievances that were not open to debate during the preceding reign of Sani Abacha, the military head of state from 1993 to 1998.

The newly established record labels faced a lack of infrastructure for producing and distributing CDs. Rapper eLDee, part of a group called Trybesmen and owner of an eponymous label founded in 1998, was the first label owner to strike a deal with the Alaba marketers, who operate in one of Lagos' biggest marketplaces and had played a central role in the production and distribution of Nollywood films. Other labels followed in eLDee's footsteps, and before long the marketers had taken over responsibility for manufacturing and distributing albums and DJ mixes on CDs— the physical format used to promote the release of singles and disseminate them across the country and beyond.

It quickly became apparent that piracy remained a problem, weighing heavily on both industries. However, piracy also aided in the wider dissemination of music and films, within Nigeria and eventually across the continent.

PAN-AFRICAN INFLUENCES

Audiences beyond Nigeria were fascinated by Nollywood's images of a parallel African modernity that looked glamorous and dangerous at the same time. In East Africa, Nollywood left its stylistic imprint on the nascent video film industries of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, which took off during the first decade of the new millennium. Tanzania's Bongo movie industry, famous for its Swahili-language films, became almost as prolific as Nollywood. Nigerian films and Nollywood film culture—-its glamor, star system, galas, and awards—-became an aspirational model for the regional industry. In a bid to tap into Nollywood's

prestige, the Tanzanian producer Mtitu Game began assembling mixed Tanzanian–Nigerian casts for his films. One of them, *Dar-to-Lagos* (2006) was shot in both Dar es Salaam and Lagos.

Nollywood's relationship with the industry in Ghana, to which it is linguistically and culturally much closer, demonstrates how it became increasingly difficult for African cultural producers elsewhere to thrive alongside Nollywood. At a certain point, Ghana's video film industry, though at least as old and pioneering, suffered from the massive intrusion of Nollywood productions into its market. Local audiences preferred Nigerian films. This changed only when Ghanaian filmmakers adopted Nollywood narratives and aesthetics, and began producing films in local languages.

Despite the heavy influence of Nollywood, Tanzanian and Ghanaian filmmaking have had their own trajectories that connect them to preceding local forms of popular culture. Most notable are the various genres of live performance by "cultural troupes" in Tanzania and "concert parties" in Ghana.

NEW PLATFORMS

Even with Nollywood's rising popularity across the continent, making money in video film production became more difficult due to overproduction and piracy, discouraging investment in better production values. Starting in 2003, the Africa Magic channel of the South African digital satellite television provider DStv provided another option for Nollywood producers looking for new ways to distribute their films. The license fees paid by the company were low, so this option was not particularly lucrative. But it sustained Nollywood's continental appeal.

It also made Nigerian films trailblazers once again. Within a few years, Africa Magic, stocked with new content, divided into several channels broadcasting films in various African languages with English subtitles. They now offer movies in Swahili as well as in various South African languages, but the bulk of the content still comprises films and series produced in Nigeria, with dialogue in Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, or English—attesting to the diversity of Nollywood's output.

While video and satellite television were decisive factors in the expansion of Nollywood, no medium contributed as much to the spread of the new pop music as music download blogs. At first, these blogs tended to be limited to posting reports about new releases with links to videos on YouTube. But by late 2008, blogs like notjustok.com began to publish links that fans could use to download new songs.

There was nothing unusual about this at the time. Similar music blogs had been flourishing around the world, financed by advertising. The major labels Sony and Universal soon took legal measures to ensure that websites that repeatedly offered their content for download without permission were shut down. But the proliferating Nigerian music blogs were able to avoid the crackdown because they specialized in Nigerian music, and the Nigerian Copyright Commission is well known for its reluctance to combat infringements.

The opportunity to download Nigerian songs free of charge contributed greatly to their popularization on the continent and beyond. While there are still no digital distribution channels for much of the popular music from some other West African countries, DJs all over the world have access to a catalog of Nigerian music that has grown daily for over a decade now. Particularly on the continent but also in the diaspora, countless DJs have posted their mixes of Nigerian songs on YouTube. This gave wide exposure to artistes like Davido, Yemi Alade, Wizkid, and Tiwa Savage, all of whom became celebrities across the African continent.

Similarly, Nollywood films early on were uploaded in segments to YouTube by Nigerians in the diaspora who, out of sheer fan devotion, wanted to promote their favorite actors, actresses, producers, and directors. Even more important to popularizing Nigerian films beyond the diaspora was the coinage of the term "Nollywood" in 2002 by Norimitsu Onishi, who at the time headed the West African bureau of the *New York Times*. Though notoriously imprecise and controversial right from the start, the term has served as a brand-like shorthand for Nigerian film production ever since.

THE BIRTH OF AFROBEATS

Nigerian pop music underwent a branding process of comparable significance, in tandem with a stylistic emancipation. Songs released within the first decade of the new millennium often sounded generic, since they resulted from attempts to create hybrid Nigerian versions of existing genres like hip-hop, reggae, and R&B. Budget constraints and technical limitations often left the desired production standards out of reach.

That began to change by the end of the decade, once ordinary consumers had access to hardware and software that could compete with the audio quality of large, expensive recording studios. This

technological leap coincided with an increasing stylistic focus on up-tempo dance music, constructed around a rhythmic pattern called *clave*—a key ingredient in a multitude of musical genres in West Africa and the Caribbean, including son, highlife, dancehall, and reggaetón.

In the early 2010s, both developments culminated in the emergence of a genre that is now widely referred to as Afrobeats, which since then has incorporated elements from every possible source, yet has retained a steady core of local ingredients. Beyond the instrumentation, the Afrobeats sound is characterized by vocals that often are significantly altered with Auto-Tune, an audio processing system that enables producers to correct the pitch and dramatically alter the timbre of the voice. The technology has encouraged artistes to sing who would not have done so otherwise. Moreover, it has given rise to its own aesthetic conventions, which are among the defining characteristics of the Afrobeats genre.

Influences from other African countries have been critical to the development of Nigerian Afrobeats. Contributions from Congo, South Africa, and Ghana are easy to identify. However, opinions about influence are tinged by regional rivalries, which sometimes are so intense that Nigerian artistes and producers shy from acknowledging the impact of Ghanaian genres like hiplife and azonto on their development. Still, cross-border exchanges of influences and ideas, as well as collaborations, seem to have an ever-increasing impact on the development of African popular culture.

THE NEXT LEVEL

Netflix's recent arrival in Nigeria is the latest in a succession of investments made by international media corporations, in what could be dubbed the scramble for African mediascapes. The untapped resource of millions of potential subscribers was touted in reports issued by PricewaterhouseCoopers and other analysts, luring Google chief executive Eric Schmidt to Lagos in 2013, followed by Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg in 2016. In the past several years, following the lead of DStv, China's StarTimes and France's Canal Plus have made inroads in the distribution of African popular culture through subscription-based TV networks across the continent.

Earlier, streaming Nollywood films was made possible by iroko.tv, dubbed the Netflix of Africa. Founded in 2010 in London by a Nigerian, iroko.tv got its start as a channel on YouTube, mainly catering to the diaspora, and eventually became a legal digital distributor of Nollywood films. In 2018 it was bought by Canal Plus, which specializes in broadcasting Nollywood films dubbed into French in Francophone African countries.

A substantial improvement in the overall quality of films released by a segment of the industry labeled New Nollywood catalyzed these developments. Since 2005, a focus on producing films intended for the big screen has been linked to a revival of cinema-going in Nigeria—which has also been fueled by the introduction of luxurious multiplex cinemas, whose numbers have been growing substantially. From the outset, New Nollywood aimed not only to open up new possibilities for generating revenue before films are released on DVD, but also to measure up to global standards of film production and eventually gain international recognition. Although it was not the first of its kind, Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine* (2009) is the film most often associated with this period of new Nigerian cinema. Nollywood films that are internationally available on Netflix today can mostly be traced back to this deliberate departure toward mainstreaming Nollywood.

The Nigerian culture industry has developed into the most prolific on the African continent.

For Nigerian pop music, a comparable turning point occurred in 2011. Pioneering American rappers—namely Akon, Kanye West, and Snoop Dogg—participated in the first wave of collaborations and made record deals with Tuface, D'Banj, and P-Square, three of the most successful Nigerian music acts of the time, as well as the newcomer Wizkid. These collaborations gave the Nigerians a boost in visibility in the United States while at the same time affirming their status in Nigeria and Africa at large. In retrospect, seemingly minor events have had great symbolic significance, such as West's cameo appearance in the video for D'Banj's song "Oliver Twist," the first Afrobeats song to enter the Top 10 on the UK Singles Chart in 2012.

The genre's name had been coined in Britain a few months earlier, when Ghana-born DJ Abrantee launched his weekly radio show "Afrobeats with Abrantee," as well as a weekly event titled "Afrobeats Sundays." The neologism obviously draws on Afrobeat, the genre created by the famous Nige-

rian musician-cum-activist Fela Kuti in the 1970s. Despite the fact that Afrobeats shares more stylistic similarities with other Nigerian genres than with Afrobeat—rhythms from highlife and electric guitars from jùjú, for example—commentators from outside the continent often struggle to distinguish the two and thus present Afrobeat(s) to their audiences as a single continuous phenomenon that has existed for over half a century.

Afrobeats has drawn more widespread attention since 2016, when Canadian rapper and singer Drake released the hit song "One Dance," a collaboration with Wizkid that introduced the Nigerian artiste and his genre to their largest North American audience to date. Such collaborations have enhanced the fame and market value of the artistes involved, both within Nigeria and beyond.

Another milestone was reached when the major labels Sony and Universal, after withdrawing from Nigeria in the 1990s, decided to open new franchises in 2016 and 2017. They signed Nigerian artistes and released their songs on streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music, neither of which was available in Nigeria at the time. (They still have not spread across the entire continent.) This involvement by the major labels has contributed to the increasing availability of contemporary African music around the globe, giving them the role of gatekeepers who determine which artistes get international exposure and in turn shape representations of African popular culture in global markets.

INTERNATIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

The term "Afrobeats" has drawn criticism since it has become synonymous, as far as parts of its audience in the global North are concerned, with a range of popular music from Africa. Non-Nigerian music stars like the South African rapper Nasty C are portrayed as sideshows in a common music scene. Popular playlists like "Afrobeats Hits" on Apple Music reinforce this misperception. While Spotify offers a section called "Afro-Hub," where specific playlists for Tanzanian bongo flava or Ghanaian hiplife can be found, any playlist not narrowly defined in terms of its region of origin or a specific genre is dominated by Nigerian pop.

This tendency has been perpetuated by American appropriations of Afrobeats. After collaborations with numerous Nigerian artistes, the producer Diplo released an entire DJ album called *Afrobeats Mix*

Piracy aided in the wider dissemination of music and films.

(credited to his trio Major Lazer) consisting of seventeen songs featuring African musicians, about half of them Nigerian. Beyoncé followed the next year with her Grammy-nominated album *The Lion King: The Gift*, compiling collaborations with twenty-four musicians, including eight Nigerians and eight from other African countries. She herself is featured on ten of the fourteen songs, two of which fit seamlessly into the current sound of Nigerian pop. Beyoncé may not dance shaku-shaku, but she has clearly incorporated the Afrobeats aesthetic.

At a slower pace, Afrobeats is also spreading outside the Anglosphere. In 2015, French rapper MHD founded the Afro Trap genre, a combination of fast rapping in triplets, Auto-Tune vocals, and instrumentals that resemble Afrobeats and its Ivorian sibling *coupé décalé*. Along with a series of hit singles, he released two albums that included collaborations with established grandees of West African music, Angélique Kidjo and Salif Keita, and with Nigerian Afrobeats stars such as Wizkid and Yemi Alade.

Rappers from Germany and Austria began to adopt Afro Trap in 2016, and the sound quickly became a trend within German-language music. MHD demonstrated the same attitude toward this development as his Nigerian colleagues, emphasizing that he had always hoped others would take up the genre, "even if they are not from Africa."

Nollywood films have not yet been subject to similar appropriation of their key elements by cultural producers outside Africa. This might be due to the fact that as it has gone mainstream over the past decade, New Nollywood has lost much of the initial "aesthetics of outrage"—the defining feature of Nollywood films during the industry's formative years.

GLOBAL ASPIRATIONS

In Nigerian film and pop music circles, nothing is more coveted than international recognition, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom. Members of a generation that grew up watching mostly foreign movies on VHS and listening to foreign music on the radio now believe that they finally deserve a prominent place in the globalized culture industry.

New Nollywood films have been screened at international film festivals for a number of years now. Managers, artistes, media representatives,

and other key players meet regularly at industry events such as the yearly Social Media Week and discuss how Nigerian music can be promoted globally. Many have touted the possibility of a Grammy music awards category for Afrobeats in the near future, citing the creation of a reggae category in 1985 as a model. Although debates continue to swirl around the name of the genre as a catchall term, it is credited with the virtue of being less vague than "world music," the category in which Nigerian artiste Burna Boy was nominated at the 2019 Grammys.

Meanwhile, Nollywood has begun to aspire to winning Oscars. The submission of *Lionheart* for best international feature film at the 2019 Academy Awards was a first step in this direction. The Academy turned it down for failing to meet the standard of having "a predominantly non-English dialogue-track," a decision that prompted director Genevieve Nnaji to comment on Twitter: "We did not choose who colonized us."

Music awards have also sparked debates over representation. Nigerian artistes such as Wizkid and Yemi Alade, as well as the Ghanaian Fuse ODG, for years have criticized the US cable channel Black Entertainment Television for not conspicuously recognizing "international acts" during its high-profile annual awards ceremony, honoring them instead at a separate event. That perceived snub has prompted some African honorees to decline to accept BET awards. BET eventually responded to the criticism in 2018 by giving the award for best international act to the Nigerian artiste Davido, and presenting it on the main stage for the first time.

Burna Boy followed suit in 2019, when he was set to perform at the Coachella Festival in Southern California, one of the largest music festivals in the world. The announcement itself received less media attention than his reaction. In several Instagram posts, he demanded that his name be given greater prominence in the lineup, citing his status as an "African Giant" representing a "whole generation of solid African creatives going global." The festival organizers never responded, but the statement was widely reported.

Taken together, these developments add to the overall impression of an African culture industry that seeks to extend its reach by all available means—and views itself as being fully in charge

of this endeavor, challenging its subaltern status in the postcolonial context. The rise of Nollywood and Afrobeats thus provides an opportunity to reconsider the role of contemporary African popular culture within the global circulation of cultural goods.

In his influential 1993 book *The Black Atlantic*, British historian Paul Gilroy portrayed cultural interchange between Africa and its diaspora in the Americas as a cycle in which elements always move in both directions. Yet to date, most attention has been focused on certain parts of this cycle, notably the transfer of elements of precolonial African culture across the Atlantic and their manifestations in the Americas since the transatlantic slave trade. More recently, African engagement with diasporic culture, as in the case of hip-hop and its African appropriations, has drawn notice. A closer look at the new genres of film and music emanating from the African continent completes the picture of this cycle and opens the door to discussions about African actors' access to global stages, while challenging backward-looking notions of Africa.

Both Afrobeats and Nollywood have reached a certain level of circulation on a global scale. While this success seems to attest to a Nigerian hegemony in African cultural production, the greatest strength of Nigerian industries is their branding. This enables them to sell new developments as their own, even if these are recently adopted from other parts of the continent.

Netflix made headlines with the opening of its new headquarters in Nigeria and is promoting investments in local productions. But *Queen Sono*, the first series to be produced by Netflix Nigeria, is made in South Africa. Netflix Nigeria has also commissioned a Zambian animation series and acquired streaming rights for two Ghanaian movies. Yet there is little doubt that for now, most productions will be Nigerian.

Some critics point out the neocolonial dynamics of African culture industries' dependence on multinational corporations from outside the continent for their global distribution, and question how long that dependence will continue. But the prospect of being able to fully participate in global markets is tempting enough that many disregard those concerns. African cultural producers are more confident than ever that they have the means to succeed on the world stage. ∎

African Decolonization's Past and Present Trajectories

SABELO J. NDLOVU-GATSHENI

Decolonization is an ongoing liberation project. Colonialism was a vast process of invading spaces, lands, minds—all spheres of the colonized people's lives. Inevitably, decolonization had to be a similarly vast process of transformation. But the twentieth-century anticolonial struggles did not deliver decolonization beyond the problematic and limited achievements in the political sphere, where independence was constrained by a hierarchical global power structure. Consequently, a genuinely postcolonial and postracial world was never born. This is why we are witnessing a resurgent and insurgent push for decolonization in the twenty-first century.

The vision of a better future was always central to African decolonization struggles. Colonialism was a system that foreclosed African possibilities. In December 1960, African agitation for decolonization resulted in a paradigm shift: United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514, the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples." National self-determination was no longer just a principle; it was now a universal human right.

At the end of World War I, self-determination had been promoted by US President Woodrow Wilson as a core principle for creating a postwar order. But for Wilson and other Western leaders, it did not apply to non-European parts of the world that were considered unready for self-governing. Thus, for African anticolonial freedom fighters and their allies, the 1960 UN declaration was a major breakthrough in the struggle for decolonization. The right to self-determination for all nations was finally endorsed as a pillar of the international system.

Colonial foreign rule and occupation would now be subject to international scrutiny and condemnation as a violation of human rights. A new UN committee received broad powers to investigate colonial rule and hear petitions from its subjects. This was the context in which 17 African colonies attained independence in 1960, which was hailed as the "year of Africa."

But recognizing Resolution 1514's significance for African decolonization does not require placing it within the liberal internationalist framework of a seamless shift from "empire" to "nation." At one level, decolonization was a world-remaking process that disrupted the liberal Wilsonian perspective and its central assumption that colonies would have to develop under European tutelage to qualify for self-government. Decolonization struggles directly challenged the international racial hierarchy.

The two overlapping projects of nation-building and world remaking were at the center of twentieth-century decolonization. For African sovereign statehood and nationhood to be sustainable, the modern global order had to be deimperialized, dehierarchized, and deracialized.

In January 1960, at the All-African Peoples' Conference in Tunis, anticolonial leaders were so confident of victory that they set 1963 as a deadline for the total decolonization of Africa. The deadline was not randomly chosen; it marked the hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln during the US Civil War. Its invocation in Tunis demonstrated how these leaders set decolonization within the context of broader struggles against enslavement. They linked the aim of continental liberation with uprisings in the African diaspora going as far back as the Haitian Revolution and even earlier revolts against slavery.

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Of course, the 1963 deadline for total liberation of Africa would not be met. But that year did witness the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which dedicated itself to the goal of complete decolonization while pursuing gradual continental unity.

PAN-AFRICANISM AND THE CONGO CRISIS

One of the key developments that spoiled the trajectory of African decolonization was the outbreak of the Congo Crisis in 1960. Patrice Lumumba, a committed Pan-Africanist who became the first black prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), set out to build a unitary, modern, and sovereign postcolonial nation-state out of a kaleidoscope of ethnic groups. To that end, he reclaimed the natural resources of the DRC for the indigenous people of the newly independent country. At the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, what was then called the Congo Free State had been claimed as the private property of King Leopold II of Belgium, who exploited its natural resources (especially rubber) with a violent colonial labor system that reduced the indigenous people to something worse than slavery.

Lumumba's moves to reconstitute the political system and to end this colonial legacy of external control of national resources provoked an array of forces. The DRC became the first independent African state to experience a military intervention against an elected leader. Ethnic secessionist politics, notably in the breakaway southern province of Katanga under Moise Tshombe, compounded the crisis. On top of this, Belgium, the former colonial power, intervened along with other foreign forces. In January 1961, Lumumba was killed in the first assassination of an African prime minister.

The Congo Crisis not only revealed the fissures beneath Pan-African and nationalist solidarity, but also exposed the dangers of what Kwame Nkrumah, the president of Ghana, in 1965 termed "neocolonialism." The crisis demonstrated the entanglement of African decolonization struggles with global imperial designs. The few independent African states soon divided into "revolutionaries" (the Casablanca Group), "moderates" (the Brazzaville and Monrovia Groups), and "neutrals" over the Congo Crisis. The UN's own problematic and ineffective role in the crisis was symbolized by the death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold in an airplane crash during a mediation mission to the DRC. All of this dampened the optimism of 1960.

At another level, the Congo Crisis more than any other event made the case for the urgent pursuit of Pan-African unity. Nkrumah had warned that neocolonialism was the greatest threat to the newly independent African states. Ethnic divisions and "tribalism" undermined nation-building projects and rendered them vulnerable to neocolonial forces.

Pan-African unity was seen as a bulwark against neocolonialism and a prerequisite for the total liberation of Africa. It was also promoted as an essential pillar of economic independence and social development. Two books by Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (1963) and *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), offered influential analyses of these complex issues. The Congo Crisis had amply demonstrated the limits of merely seeking the political kingdom in the belief that all other freedoms would be added unto it, in Nkrumah's words.

> *Genuine decolonization has to address the human question.*

The other major development that complicated the trajectories of African decolonization was the course taken by the former French colonies. In a 1958 referendum, only Guinea, led by Ahmed Sékou Touré, voted for independence.

Léopold Sédar Senghor, a prominent intellectual and an important leader in the struggle against French colonial rule who became Senegal's first president in 1960, promoted the idea of transforming the French imperial system into a democratic federation, with former colonies as autonomous members of a transcontinental polity. Senghor did not reduce decolonization to national independence; he had an expansive vision in which decolonization served as an opportunity to remake the world, reconcile the colonizer and the colonized, and attain a common humanity.

France took advantage of this broad conception of decolonization by creating a new system of neocolonial relations known as *Françafrique*, underwritten by a currency, the CFA franc, controlled from Paris and adopted by a number of West and Central African nations. Only now, in 2020, are the former French colonies trying to liberate themselves from monetary neoimperialism by joining the newly established West African

Monetary Zone and its eco currency, created by the Economic Community of West African States. But France has once again intervened, promising to peg the eco to the euro so as to maintain similar monetary relations with its former colonies.

As the challenges of neocolonialism became central to decolonization struggles, fundamental questions arose concerning the nature of colonialism itself, what decolonization really means, and how political independence, once achieved, could be protected from internal and external threats. The deeper meanings of colonialism and decolonization were captured in Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) and Frantz Fanon's seminal books *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). In these works, colonialism was broadly defined as a transhistorical and transnational form of domination with race as its organizing principle, racial capitalism as its economic extractive technology, patriarchy as its social formation, Christianity as its normative spirituality—and modern schools and Westernized universities as its forces for establishing cultural imperialism by invading its targets' mental universe.

Taken together, these colonial interventions amounted to a kind of dismemberment—degrading colonized people to the point of excising them from the human family. This was part of the construction of a pyramidal global power structure that was sustained by the social classification and racial hierarchization of human beings.

MARKETS AND MINDS

The colonial power structure has proved resilient, capable of replicating itself and surviving the dismantling of direct administrative colonialism. It lives on today in the form of global coloniality.

In the 1970s, the Nigerian historian Jacob Ade Ajayi introduced the idea that colonialism was a mere episode in African history. He bracketed colonization chronologically as an episode that can be dated in the West African context as beginning in 1884 at the Berlin Conference and perhaps ending in 1960. By doing so, Ajayi sought to counter imperialist accounts that denied the existence of African history prior to the arrival of white European colonists. He wanted to demonstrate that Africa had a long history both predating and postdating colonialism.

In the same way that Nkrumah spoke of seeking the political kingdom, Ajayi spoke of rolling back the physical presence of empire—that is, direct colonial administration. Both goals seemed to

be reached in 1960, but these celebrated victories proved to be limited if not illusory.

Colonization led to the institutionalization of colonialism, a system of power that radically redefines intersubjective relations based on institutions of domination, repression, and exploitation. It also involves long-lasting epistemic and psychological interventions. This is why Nkrumah coined the concept of neocolonialism, as a way to name the continuation of colonial domination, especially in the domains of the economy and the mind. This enables us to identify a commercial, nonterritorial form of empire that continued to exploit African resources and to maintain domination through debt slavery and other forms of remote control, long after the dismantling of directly administered colonialism.

Colonial empires sought to undercut African liberation movements through new international organizations ranging from the British Commonwealth to the postwar global financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. This financial empire introduced structural adjustment programs—external interventions characterized by prescriptions such as deregulation, liberalization, rolling back the state, and cutting social spending and subsidies.

All these prescriptions served to make Africa an open market for further exploitation of its resources, effectively operationalizing neocolonialism. They also laid the foundation for debt slavery, under which a continent desperate for development found itself trapped in an endless cycle of repaying the industrialized countries of Europe and North America, thus participating in and perpetuating its own underdevelopment.

Policy space was lost as the IMF took over. Austerity measures provoked conflicts as the workers and the poor were hardest hit. Nascent African industries could not compete with European and North American multinational companies. Africa entered what became known as the lost decade, lasting from the 1980s into the 1990s.

But what has often been ignored in studies of colonialism and decolonization is the "metaphysical empire," as defined by the Kenyan intellectual and novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o, or the "cognitive empire" described by the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos. The British historian Robert Gildea wrote of "empires of the mind" that continued to wreak havoc on Africa long after the end of "formal" empire.

In his 1986 book *Decolonizing the Mind*, Ngugi explained three interrelated techniques of the cognitive/metaphysical empires. The first is to invade the mental universe of their targets and colonize their minds. The second is to detonate a "cultural bomb," producing various forms of alienation in the colonized people and a loss of confidence in their history, culture, knowledge, names, languages, and even in themselves. The third technique involves removing the hard disk of previous African knowledge and collective memory, and downloading into African minds the software of European replacements. Taken together, these techniques produce epistemological colonization and cultural schizophrenia.

Since this has been a common experience in formerly colonized regions around the world, the members of the Latin American Modernity/Coloniality Research Program in the 1990s and 2000s introduced and popularized the concepts of "coloniality" and "decoloniality." Coloniality names the transhistorical expansion of colonial domination and the continuation of its effects in the present. As defined by the scholar Nelson Maldonado-Torres, decoloniality is expressed in a family of thought that identifies colonialism and coloniality as the creators of the most intractable problems haunting the modern world, especially in those regions that experienced slavery, colonial genocides, physical conquest, and colonization.

Decolonization struggles directly challenged the international racial hierarchy.

Decoloniality is essentially a call for completing the unfinished business of decolonization in the present century. At the center of this vision is the desire to reorder the world and move beyond Euro–North American domination into a new era free of slavery, racism, colonialism, underdevelopment, and capitalist exploitation.

Genuine decolonization has to address the human question. Colonialism denied humanity, belonging, and citizenship to the colonized. Decolonization must restore this denied humanity and deliver sovereign subjectivity to people who were reduced to slaves and colonial subjects.

At the very core of the decolonization project, therefore, is the task of re-humanization and the creation of new forms of life. Since colonialism denied African people history and agency, decolonization needs to turn the colonized into craftsmen and craftswomen—inventive people shaping their own destiny. It must unfold as a remembering project that enables Africans to pick up their dismembered pieces and reconstruct themselves.

HURRICANES OF CHANGE

One can delineate five overlapping phases or trajectories of decolonization. The first, lasting roughly from 1957 to 1965, prompted British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to give a February 1960 speech in Cape Town recognizing that a "wind of change" was blowing across Africa. Nkrumah defined decolonization in a more radical manner as a "hurricane of change" that was "razing to the ground the many bastions of colonialism." He saw it as a rupture that could open up the world for reordering and remaking. Starting when Ghana attained political independence (the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to do so) in March 1957, this period inspired high hopes and a sense of new possibilities for Africa, despite the eruption of the Congo Crisis in 1960.

There were other setbacks, notably the October 1958 constitutional referendum in French colonial Africa, held to determine whether the inhabitants preferred independence or remaining under French tutelage. Only Guinea voted for independence, an outcome that dampened the spirit of decolonization but did not slow its tempo, since the referendum could not prevent countries from declaring independence. Ghana, Guinea, and Mali came together to form a Union of West African States, pointing to a future Pan-African political union. This vision was reflected in Ghana's independence constitution, which included a clause stipulating that territorial sovereignty could be modified to open the way for the higher goal of a united Africa.

Strategically speaking, two battlefronts opened: on the continent, African nationalists confronted colonial regimes; in the UN, an Africa Group of ambassadors put forward collective demands. The formation of the OAU in 1963 was a milestone in both decolonization and Pan-Africanism, though it fell short of the radical visions of Nkrumah and others who called for substantive political unification to counter the threats posed by neocolonialism and ethnic divisions. The agreement struck in Addis Ababa was a victory for moderate forces that favored a gradualist approach to Pan-African unity, albeit with a commitment to total decolonization of the continent. But the 1966 overthrow of Nkrumah by

his own military (in cahoots with the CIA) marked the end of an era, and slowed the momentum of both decolonization and pan-Africanism.

The second phase of decolonization culminated in independence for the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe in 1975. Their anti-colonial armed struggles resulted in a military coup that toppled the regime of António de Olivei-ra Salazar in Lisbon, which in turn made it impossible for Portugal to maintain its overseas empire. The movements against Portuguese colonialism were distinctive in their radical embrace of Marxism. This indicated that the longer a colonial system resisted decolonization, the more radical the opposition to it grew. Portugal had worked with the brutal white settler regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa in an attempt to militarily defeat the anticolonial forces.

The third phase of decolonization was represented by Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, after fifteen years of armed struggle. By this time, the Soviet Union's power was waning, and the neoliberal world order led by the United States was ascendant. The Chinese-sponsored Zimbabwe African National Union under Robert Mugabe won the 1980 elections, beating Soviet-backed nationalist Joshua Nkomo and his Zimbabwe African People's Union. Faced with extreme white settler resistance to decolonization, both movements had radicalized during their guerrilla struggles, embracing Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideologies.

But in a context of shifting global power relations, the postcolonial government of Zimbabwe adhered to socialism in its rhetoric while in practice taking the capitalist route. By 1990, it had adopted a structural adjustment program of deregulation and privatization that destroyed all of its achievements on the social front. Nonetheless, Mugabe maintained a radical anti-imperialist discourse and embarked on a fast-track compulsory land reform in 2000, ordering forcible transfers of land from white farmers to members of the black majority. This provoked the European Union and United States to impose sanctions; Zimbabwe was rendered a pariah state, and its economy collapsed. Even the military coup that removed Mugabe from power in November 2017 has not allowed Zimbabwe to reenter the international community.

The fourth phase of decolonization brought

The colonial power structure has proved resilient, capable of replicating itself.

independence to Namibia in 1990 and to South Africa in 1994. With the end of the Cold War, democracy and capitalism enjoyed a triumphalist moment in which they appeared to be the only viable ideologies. Radicalism was redefined in terms of being for democracy and human rights. Social movements and civil society groups mushroomed in Africa, promoted as progressive forces by international nongovernmental organizations.

The African National Congress (ANC), the party led by Nelson Mandela, embraced the liberal democratic discourse. The South African liberation struggle was redefined as a campaign for democracy and human rights, rather than for decolonization. The question of whether they could provide a panacea for apartheid and internal colonialism never arose. Whether liberal democracy was even possible without decolonization also remained a moot question.

The milestones that drew global attention were the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, under which the democratic transition was negotiated; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, meant to enable victims and perpetrators to settle differences and build a new unified society (the "rainbow nation"); and the 1996 Constitution, hailed as the world's most democratic charter. Yet South Africa has remained the most unequal society in the world. The reality of opulence on the white side of the racial divide and abject poverty among the majority of black citizens has raised doubts about the sustainability of the compromise politics of 1994. The legacy of Mandela himself is now questioned. So is the ability of neoliberal democracy to resolve structural inequalities left in place by apartheid colonialism.

RESURGENT AND INSURGENT

South Africa is now the site of a resurgent and insurgent decolonization movement led by students. This is the fifth phase of decolonization. South Africa had experienced the continent's longest anticolonial struggle, dating back to the founding of the ANC in 1912; eventually the country was the last frontier in the fight against the most brutal and violent apartheid colonialism. So it is not surprising that South Africa is now witnessing a renewed push for decolonization.

In the colonial imagination, South Africa was the "little Europe" at the southern tip of the conti-

nent. (Its name is still a mere geographical expression.) The country has the highest concentration of white people of European descent in Africa. Through the compromise settlement of 1994, the white beneficiaries of apartheid colonialism retained their economic dominance and the ANC ascended to political power—a trade often described as the whites being allowed to keep the jewel in exchange for letting the Africans take the crown. The question that arises is the value of the crown without the jewel.

Mandela predicated his transformative program on the goodwill of the South African people, hoping they all genuinely accepted that apartheid colonialism was a crime against humanity and that they would join him in building a post-apartheid society in which resources would be equally shared. This was the key weakness of Mandela's rainbow nation project: those who benefited from apartheid colonialism took advantage of the compromise, the Truth and Reconciliation process, and the new constitution to retain their economic privileges, leaving the ANC government to preside over an unsustainable liberal democracy with a propertyless black majority.

Today, radical political groups such as the Economic Freedom Fighters and Black First Land First, and student movements like Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall, are sharply critical of Mandela's legacy. While the first two have focused on campaigning for nationalization of key sectors of the economy and land expropriation without compensation, the student activists have forced onto the public agenda a set of issues that require a new phase of decolonization.

The first issue is decommissioning offensive apartheid iconography. The Rhodes Must Fall movement arose in 2015 to demand the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes from the center of the University of Cape Town's campus. (Rhodes was a mining tycoon and a leading figure in British colonial expansion in southern Africa, serving as prime minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896.) The statue was removed in April 2015.

The second issue is decolonization of knowledge and curricula. This demand addresses the resilience of Eurocentrism in universities and the relegation of indigenous knowledge systems to the academic periphery.

Third is a related concern: the dominance of colonial languages in research, teaching, and learning. Students have demanded greater use of indigenous African languages.

Fourth, students have called for reforming the universities' institutional cultures to root out what they perceive as racist, capitalist, patriarchal, and sexist biases that alienate African students.

Fifth is a demand for more inclusive access to education. As universities became more corporatized, students from poor African family backgrounds found themselves excluded by high tuition fees. The Freedom Charter of 1955 promised free, quality, and relevant education. In 2015 and 2016, students called on the government to honor this liberation promise. The students also campaigned for improved conditions and more secure job status for the lowest-paid black workers on their campuses, such as security guards and cleaners.

What started in South Africa quickly spread to the rest of the world. The University of Oxford became another hotbed of Rhodes Must Fall activism, as students demanded the removal of a Rhodes statue at Oriel College. At University College London and the School of Oriental and African Studies, students questioned why their curriculum was so "white." These movements dovetailed with Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, which arose in response to police killings of unarmed black people. Indigenous people's movements are pushing the decolonization agenda in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

The planetary resurgence and insurgence of decolonization is made possible by a concurrent epistemic break: the knowledge systems that carried the modern world for over five hundred years are showing signs of deep exhaustion. This decline has manifested itself in global environmental and economic crises, in increasing inequalities and exploding social divisions. Such trends have prompted many to question the promises and premises of a modernity that has created numerous problems without solutions.

Decolonization has reemerged as a compelling vision of a better future. Once again, the broader issues of colonialism, capitalism, racism, Eurocentrism, and patriarchy have been pushed onto the public agenda as the incomplete business of an ongoing decolonizing project. At the center of this resurgent and insurgent decolonization is still the complex question of human liberation. Where previous visions of freedom have collapsed, from Marxism and nationalism to neoliberalism, the renewal of decolonization's energies may provide an answer—in Africa and beyond. ■

'Carpe DM': Seizing the Afropolitan Day

HLONIPHA MOKOENA

On the west-facing side of Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, a mural by the artist Dada Khanyisa entitled "Afropolitan Tea Party," completed in 2017, lends character and gravitas to an otherwise nondescript wall. Constitution Hill is the seat of South Africa's Constitutional Court as well as the former site of the Women's Gaol and Old Fort, where many anti-apartheid activists (and prisoners of war) were detained without trial. The fact that Khanyisa's work sits so comfortably outside the country's highest court is in itself a comment about what the term "Afropolitan" may mean for South Africans who visit the court or drive by the mural. To many, the term is associated with the radio station Kaya FM, which describes itself as the "Home of the Afropolitan." From this popular perspective, the idea is denuded of its political meaning and is instead associated with celebrity culture.

In its vivid and monumental positioning, the mural presents a group of seven cosmopolitan types of all shades in the middle of taking a conventionally displayed high tea—macarons, petits fours, Swiss rolls, and other confections gorgeously arranged on a three-tiered cake stand. Rendered in Khanyisa's distinctive cartoon-like style, these Afropolitans are holding cellphones, some busily taking selfies as they partake of their high tea. These smart devices are a recurring theme in Khanyisa's work—they show the ubiquity of social media and the selfie in the self-definition of urban Africans. In the mural, the figures strike the pose that has come to epitomize the selfie—the bent L-shaped arm with the cellphone cupped in the hand.

Beyond just satirizing the vanity of the subjects, Khanyisa is also drawing comparisons between Afropolitanism and aesthetics. It is as though, in the aftermath of Africa's liberation and independence movements—and South Africa's late arrival to the independence pantheon—the utopia of autonomy and self-determination is no longer the only available expression for what it means to be an African.

A kingdom of aesthetic diversity has catapulted African artists and writers onto the world stage as icons and embodiments of the Afropolitan moment.

Whereas for an earlier generation the spirit of Africanness would have been visually expressed by an AK-47 and a clenched Black Power fist, for Khanyisa's generation, being an African is about connectivity and instant messaging. Even in jest, Khanyisa shows awareness that this is a generational question. The pun "Carpe DM"—the title of another work of theirs (the artist's preferred pronoun)—encapsulates the predicament of what has been called South Africa's "born free" generation.

Plainly stated, this predicament is about how to shape novel utopias when the very concept of a utopia has been made redundant. By the time apartheid ended in South Africa in the 1990s, the principal ideas that had shaped African liberation movements since the 1950s—African nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Third Worldism—had all been challenged by the reality of post-independence dictatorships and fraternal strife. For these young Africans, there seemed to be only two choices: nostalgia or Afrofuturism. (The latter is an umbrella concept that covers technology, culture, literature, and the arts, and is characterized by reimagining the planet's future through black and African eyes. Afropolitanism is often thought of as a version or branch of Afrofuturism.)

The clash between the philosophical stances of nostalgia and Afropolitanism erupted into a conflagration with the #Fallist movements, namely Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall. These movements began in 2015, when university students demanded free and decolonized education, but also the inclusion of authors like Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, and Thomas Sankara in their curriculum. The nostalgic iconography resuscitated by the Fallists stands in sharp contrast to what Afropolitanism espouses.

In place of the deceased saints of African thought, Afropolitanism holds up the present-day diaspora African as the epitome of the age. Instead of "roots," the Afropolitan has crafted a winged

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and polyglot existence of impermanent and mercurial identities. Instead of "home," the Afropolitan has laid claim to the entire globe, and even the galaxy, as the site of Africans' future and present. Instead of abiding by ideological correctness, the Afropolitan philosophizes with the sickle and the hammer—by being sensitive to global histories of class and exploitation while borrowing Nietzschean ideas to propose the possibility of African or black superheroes. This mix of ideas glimmers with the sheen of cosmopolitan aesthetics.

PART OF THE WORLD

The term "Afropolitan" is often credited to the novelist Taiye Selasi, who declared in a 2005 essay, "We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world." (Selasi was born in London to Ghanaian-Nigerian parents and grew up in Massachusetts. Her 2013 debut novel, *Ghana Must Go,* touches on themes of belonging, home, and diaspora.) As an assertion of worldliness and a transcending of borders and bounded identities, the term has been questioned and sometimes rejected by critics who describe it as a mere expression of bourgeois aesthetics.

For our purposes, the term is still useful because it has been taken up by others. To further elucidate its meaning, the South African–based Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe posits: "Afropolitanism refers to a way—the many ways—in which Africans, or people of African origin, understand themselves as being part of the world rather than being apart. . . . Afropolitanism is a name for undertaking a critical reflection on the many ways in which, in fact, there is no world without Africa and there is no Africa that is not part of it."

In combination, the Selasi and Mbembe definitions captured the mood of the turn of the century, but also posed the question of what comes next for Africa and its diaspora of Afropolitans. The uneasy tension that Afropolitanism creates between politics and aesthetics, ideology and sentiment, is the main reason the idea has not given rise to a new lexicon for young South Africans—except in the arts, where many have adopted what might be termed a worldly sensibility.

Again, this is not exactly a radical departure in African thought. Earlier thinkers took similar positions, notably Léopold Sédar Senghor, the poet who served as the first president of Senegal, and who wrote volubly about what at that time he called "African-Negro Aesthetics." Rather than attempt to upend Senghor, the modern Afropolitan simply takes it as a given that he or she is the repository or custodian of a historically valid and culturally unique "African civilization," and that this has imbued the self with a particular "rhythm" that expresses itself artistically. Whether one reads the work of James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Zadie Smith, or even Taiye Selasi, one becomes aware of being in the presence of a deftly deployed cosmopolitan erudition that nonetheless navigates by a compass that points back to Africa. Thus, for example, Smith in her essay "The Shadow of Ideas" explains a sense of uncanny identification in the following terms:

How to shape novel utopias when the very concept of a utopia has been made redundant?

> I saw myself as some kind of a decorative Moor, the kind who does not need to wrestle dolphins or anything else, a Moor of leisure, a Moor who lunches, a Moor who needn't run for her livelihood through the public squares. A historically unprecedented kind of Moor. A late-capitalism Moor. A tourist Moor. The sort of Moor who enters a public square not to protest or to march (or, in an earlier age, to be hanged or sold) but simply to wander about, without purpose. A Moor who has come to look at the art. A Moor who sits on the lip of a fountain and asks herself: "What, if anything, is the purpose of the artist today?" A Moor with the luxury of doing that.

In one stroke, Smith ironically affirms her "Moorish" heritage while registering her awareness of the urgency of the present dilemmas that confront the peripatetic Afropolitan. For Smith, it is the dilemma of being afforded the luxury to ruminate about art while remaining cognizant of the historical reality that in an earlier age, on the very same spot, she would have been sold as someone's property.

REINVENTED IDENTITIES

In the specific case of South Africa, the Afropolitan moment was announced by (among others) the author and academic Njabulo Ndebele, who called for the "rediscovery of the ordinary" and the rejection of protest literature and its characteristic concern with the spectacle of oppression and resistance. That was in 1984. His essay has been underread, in

part because even at the time it seemed to be calling for the impossible. How could a black South African living through the inferno of apartheid's total onslaught not adopt a voice of indignation?

The other Afropolitan moment that has been ignored is the speech by Nelson Mandela, who had just been inaugurated as president, at the opening of the first democratically elected Parliament on May 24, 1994. Mandela read an English translation of a poem written in Afrikaans by Ingrid Jonker (1933–65), "Die Kind" (The Child). The poem was originally written as a protest against the Sharpeville massacre on March 21, 1960, when police killed 69 people and wounded many others at an anti-apartheid demonstration in a township south of Johannesburg. The last stanza of the poem reads:

> The child is the dark shadow of the soldiers
> on guard with rifles Saracens and batons
> the child is present at all assemblies and law-givings
> the child peers through the windows of houses
> and into the hearts of mothers
> this child who just wanted to play in the sun at Nyanga is everywhere
> the child grown to a man treks through all Africa
> the child grown into a giant journeys through the whole world
> Without a pass.

This journeying through the world—whether in actuality or creatively—is what constitutes Afropolitanism as both a historically unprecedented (to use Zadie Smith's formulation) and a radically transgressive mode of being an "African." Whether one regards it as the opposite or even as the negation of Pan-Africanism partly depends on one's understanding of what the latter term refers to. If one expects Pan-Africanism to address only the "unification" of the African continent and the eradication of colonial borders, then the two ideas will eventually diverge. But if one understands Pan-Africanism as a signifier of all the possibilities of reinvented and reinvigorated diasporic and black identities, then there is space for Afropolitanism in Pan-Africanism and vice versa.

In a different time and under different circumstances, the Martinican author and Negritude philosopher Jane Nardal proposed exactly such a fusion when she coined the term "black internationalism" (in an essay published in 1928) to describe a movement animated by a "turning back toward Africa." In its simplest form, Afropolitanism is simply another term for the black internationalism to which writers and thinkers such as Nardal, Baldwin, Jonker, Morrison, Ndebele, Smith, and others have given voice under different guises. ∎

Black Travel and Presence in the Building of South Africa

ROBIN L. TURNER

In *Safari Nation*, Jacob S. T. Dlamini rewrites the history of Kruger National Park in South Africa by placing black people's actions at the center of the narrative. Writing against the widespread understanding that forced removal, exclusion, and labor exploitation fully define black people's historical relationship with this iconic park long known as a top safari tourism destination, Dlamini contends that this overly simplistic narrative mistakenly accepts "segregation and apartheid at face value." *Safari Nation* shows that black southern Africans have long had varied and complex relationships with the park, with conservation, and with leisure travel and tourism.

Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park
by Jacob S. T. Dlamini
Ohio University Press, 2020

This ambitious book aims not only to transform our understanding of South Africa's premier national park, but also to show that black people's mobility and leisure shaped the South African nation. Dlamini, an assistant professor of history at Princeton University, makes a significant contribution by attending to the perspectives of both black elites and neighboring black communities on Kruger National Park, as well as by connecting conservation and tourism history to black politics and intellectual history. This book shows how black people—so-called Africans, Indians, and Coloureds—co-created the nation through their sustained presence, mobility, and pursuit of freedom. Dlamini's close attention to black people's agency, their diversity, and their complex engagements with apartheid echoes themes in his previous books, *Native Nostalgia* and *Askari: A Story of Collaboration and Betrayal in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle*.

Safari Nation weaves together three stories through its ten chapters. The first details how black southern Africans lived in, moved through, and worked within the region at the confluence of South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe that eventually became Kruger National Park between the late nineteenth century and the early twenty-first century. Dlamini affirms that thousands of black "African" people were forcibly removed from the lands that were designated for the park and suffered enduring harms from this displacement, from mistreatment by park officials, and from wildlife attacks, as other scholars have recounted. But he foregrounds Africans' persistent presence in the park and in the region.

The second story Dlamini tells is far less well-known. He describes how black political leaders, journalists, and other professionals viewed and engaged in travel. Black elites, such as South African Native National Congress leader Richard Victor Selope Thema, wrote about leisure travel, nature, and conservation in black newspapers such as *Koranta ea Becoana*, *African Who's Who,* and *Bantu World*. Dlamini's analysis of how these self-consciously modern people saw the relationship between mobility and freedom—and how they traveled to Kruger Park, across South Africa, and beyond its borders—demonstrates that they saw such journeys as political acts.

These first two narrative threads place the third—which concerns the well-documented decades-long effort to build a white South African nation, white national park system, and white international tourism destination—in a strikingly different light. Although Dlamini devotes some attention to the substantial harms inflicted by white supremacist conservation, tourism, and labor policies on black people and communities, his account places greater emphasis on how black people affected these white supremacist projects. White decision-makers could not and did not act unilaterally, but instead had to react to the persistent

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presence of black southern Africans in the Kruger Park region, to black elite tourist travel to the park, and to the sustained rights claims of black South Africans. "The sheer presence of black South Africans altered the history of the KNP," Dlamini argues. Through this interpretation of park history, he makes larger points about the inherent incoherence and incompleteness of the white supremacist state projects of segregation and apartheid.

Dlamini criticizes previous studies for uncritically accepting claims that parks officials evicted all black residents from what became first the Sabi Game Reserve in 1898 and the Singwitsi Game Reserve in 1903, and then Kruger National Park in 1926, and that black people were barred from visiting the park. Archival records reveal that more than 1,000 black people lived within the park boundaries between the 1900s and the 1930s, and that hundreds remained in the 1950s despite the forced removal of many communities. In fact, the last "resident native" did not depart until 2000. Dlamini emphasizes that these black residents were not hidden or unknown. National Parks Board and Native Affairs officials corresponded with one another about park residents, collected taxes and rents from them, culled their livestock, employed many as park workers, and sometimes viewed them as useful tourist attractions.

Dlamini's criticism of archaeologists, geographers, and social scientists for failing to delve into the archives lends an unpleasant note to this otherwise compelling discussion. It seems less than generous to expect non-historians to question the "laborers or poachers" paradigm that dominates earlier well-regarded histories. Jane Carruthers's 1995 book, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History*, details how white southern Africans accepted black people as subordinate workers but criminalized their hunting and use of arms to protect their families and livestock. That work makes brief reference to facilities for black tourists and to black park residents, but devotes much more attention to black Africans on "the other side of the fence."

Large numbers of black people also traversed the park to visit friends and relatives elsewhere in the region, to poach wildlife, and to travel to mines, towns, and cities. State officials sought to restrict independent movement through the park

and worked with the Chamber of Mines to channel migrancy through labor recruitment agencies, delegating much of the responsibility for enforcing their policies to African park rangers and the "native runners" who brought Mozambican migrant workers across the park. Yet as Dlamini emphasizes, the Kruger National Park region has remained a "zone of movement" for people and wildlife despite ongoing efforts to fix park and national boundaries.

Tens of thousands of black domestic workers accompanied their white employers on their Kruger Park visits, even though the park provided African guides and attendants for white tourists. "Employing a domestic servant was not just a question of having someone perform household chores; it was also about maintaining one's standing as a white person," Dlamini writes. The presence of visiting domestic workers thus buttressed the racist social order, but it also worried park officials who feared that they "might raise discontent" among their underpaid counterparts employed by the park.

Self-consciously modern African elites connected leisure travel to freedom, mobility, and improvement.

NEW AFRICANS

Dlamini takes great pains to underscore the complexity and diversity of black people's relationships with Kruger National Park. Black people lived in, were removed from, and worked at the park, "but blacks also took holidays," as Dlamini writes. He contends that looking closely at these black travelers, at black tourism traditions, and at the black elite more generally is essential to understanding the history of the park and of South Africa's development into a safari nation. Kruger National Park has accepted, if not welcomed, black visitors since tourism began there in 1923. Thousands of black travelers arrived between the 1940s and the 1970s. Black tourists drove themselves to the park, viewed wildlife, and spent time with one another in segregated facilities, to which they were restricted until 1981, when park tourism was desegregated (though park labor was not).

A large share of these "black" tourists were Indian South Africans. Indian families that lived nearby spread the word about the park in their social networks, built the first basic park accommodations for Indian visitors in 1932, and hosted people in transit.

Dlamini places black tourism in Kruger National Park in the context of twentieth-century

black elite travel traditions and discourse. Focusing principally on "New Africans," *Safari Nation* details how these self-consciously modern African elites connected leisure travel to freedom, mobility, and improvement. Black elites challenged white supremacist discourses that depicted African people as inherently premodern and close to nature. They sought recognition as civilized modern people who were different from other Africans. These beliefs led New Africans to develop independent travel traditions; to lobby for equitable transport, political rights, and land rights; and to oppose zoo-like touristic displays of African people in Kruger Park and along tourist routes.

Black elites play a crucial role in the argument Dlamini advances in *Safari Nation* because their perspectives and experiences differed so significantly from those of most black people in the Kruger Park region, where the creation of the park brought "a new social and political order." So-called African, Indian, and Coloured elites chose to travel and spend some of their limited funds on leisure pursuits despite the racist hindrances they encountered. Travel was a means to improve themselves, to connect with "our kind of people," and to familiarize themselves with nature and with the country they claimed as their own.

The latter chapters of *Safari Nation* track the interaction among black and white southern Africa through the homelands era and the transition to democracy. Dlamini contends that conferring self-governance and then nominal independence on the four homelands that neighbor Kruger National Park hastened the fall of apartheid by heightening its internal contradictions. (Homelands were former Native Reserves decreed by the apartheid government to be ethnonational homes of African people.)

Homeland leaders espoused conservation philosophies that integrated ecological, economic, and human well-being. They sought to collaborate with Kruger National Park, while the South African National Parks Board worked to build relationships with these leaders without ceding control over the park. Black homeland citizens were exempt from racial restrictions as visiting tourists but continued to suffer from park-linked wildlife depredation, antipoaching violence, and terrible working conditions, just as they had prior to homeland self-governance.

The end of apartheid and the reintegration of the homelands into South Africa did not resolve these challenges. Instead, South Africa's political transformation created more public space for varied black perspectives on nature conservation, leisure, and tourism. Dlamini highlights the continuing diversity among black South Africans, contrasting the ways in which nearby communities mobilized to hold the park and the government accountable for past and ongoing harms, then-President Nelson Mandela articulated a more democratic and inclusive conservation vision, and urban black people tried to connect with nature. South Africa can and should belong to all who live in it, as the 1955 Freedom Charter declared. This nuanced, multivocal history of Kruger National Park provides a solid foundation for building a more cosmopolitan South African safari nation. ■

March 2020

INTERNATIONAL

Coronavirus Pandemic

March 8—Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announces a lockdown of northern Italy, an epicenter of the global COVID-19 pandemic, barring people from leaving their homes except for work and essential travel. The government extends the lockdown to the rest of the country March 10. Within days, other European nations hit hard by the virus, including Spain and France, follow suit with restrictions on movement.

March 19—China, where the pandemic originated, reports no new local infections for the 1st time since it began in late 2019, after weeks of stringent lockdowns. But China continues to report new cases of infected people arriving from other countries.

March 23—South Africa issues a 3-week stay-at-home order, making it the 1st African nation to take such a step.

March 24—Prime Minister Narendra Modi abruptly imposes a 21-day nationwide lockdown on all 1.3 billion of India's citizens, setting off a mass migration as 1,000s rush to leave the cities for their home villages.

March 27—British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces that he has tested positive for the virus and will go into self-quarantine.

March 29—US President Donald Trump, who had suggested the US could return to normal by mid-April, extends a social-distancing advisory until the end of April. On March 27, he signed a $2 trillion emergency economic package, the largest in US history.

March 31—More than 900,000 infections have been confirmed worldwide and more than 40,000 people have died to date.

Oil Market

March 7—Saudi Arabia cuts the price of its oil by nearly 10%, escalating a price war with Russia, which refused to join OPEC in a large production cut the previous day. Saudi authorities March 10 announce that the national oil company, Saudi Aramco, will boost output by over 25%. The moves trigger a collapse in international oil prices.

AFGHANISTAN

March 9—Both the incumbent president, Ashraf Ghani, who was declared the winner of a September 2019 election, and challenger Abdullah Abdullah, who insists the official result is fraudulent, take oaths of office.

March 23—After failing to persuade Ghani and Abdullah to form a unity government, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says the US will slash aid to Afghanistan by $1 billion in 2020 and possibly by another $1 billion in 2021 unless the rivals agree to form an "inclusive government."

ETHIOPIA

March 31—The National Electoral Board announces that parliamentary elections scheduled for August will be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Opposition parties endorse the delay. The country has confirmed 25 cases of infection to date.

GUYANA

March 13—Electoral authorities announce that President David Granger's party won the most votes in Georgetown, the capital, in a March 2 election, boosting the lead it had already amassed in the rest of the country. The result is rejected by many international observers, who allege that the vote count was marred by fraud. The stakes of the election are high due to recently discovered major offshore oil deposits.

IRAQ

March 1—Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, who had been selected as a compromise prime minister, withdraws his candidacy after failing to form a government. Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi resigned in December in response to nationwide antigovernment protests.

March 16—President Barham Salih taps Adnan al-Zurfi, a former mayor of Najaf, as prime minister–designate and gives him 30 days to form a government.

ISRAEL

March 3—Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party wins more votes than the Blue and White party of his top rival, former army chief Benny Gantz, in the 3rd general election in a year, but again falls short of a parliamentary majority.

March 26—Legislators elect Gantz as speaker of the Knesset (parliament). Citing a need for unity against the pandemic, Gantz says he is open to serving in a government headed by Netanyahu, reversing his previous rejection of any deal to allow Netanyahu to remain in office while facing corruption charges. Gantz's party breaks apart.

KOSOVO

March 25—Less than 2 months after taking office, Prime Minister Albin Kurti is ousted by a parliamentary vote of no-confidence. The vote was called over Kurti's refusal to declare a national state of emergency in response to the pandemic. It is also seen as part of a dispute between Kurti and President Hashim Thaci over a US-backed peace plan, opposed by Kurti, that would require Kosovo to make concessions to Serbia.

MALI

March 29—A long-delayed parliamentary election is held even though opposition leader Soumaila Cisse was abducted March 26, presumably by jihadists. Fears of the coronavirus and lack of security curtail voter turnout. The country's 1st COVID-19 death is reported hours before the polls open.

SYRIA

March 1—Turkey launches a counteroffensive against Syrian forces in northwestern Syria, 3 days after at least 36 Turkish soldiers were killed by Syrian and Russian strikes on enclaves held by Turkish-backed opposition forces. Turkey had sent 1,000s of troops into Idlib province to halt a Syrian push to regain control of the territory, which had displaced around 1 million civilians.

March 5—After talks in Moscow, Russia and Turkey announce a cease-fire in Idlib. Russian and Turkish troops will jointly patrol a strategic highway.

URUGUAY

March 1—Luis Lacalle Pou of the center-right National Party, who narrowly won a November election, is sworn in as president, bringing an end to 15 years of rule by the leftist Broad Front coalition.

VENEZUELA

March 26—President Nicolás Maduro is indicted by the US Justice Department on charges of running a drug trafficking conspiracy in collaboration with Colombian guerrilla forces. Maduro and 14 other current and former Venezuelan officials are also charged with corruption and money laundering. The US offers a $15 million reward for information leading to Maduro's arrest. ∎

PORTUGAL SPAIN GREECE TURKEY

20°

Madeira Islands (Portugal)

Rabat ✪ Algiers ✪ Tunis ✪ ITALY

MOROCCO TUNISIA *Mediterranean Sea* CYPRUS SYRIA IRAN

30° Tripoli ✪ LEBANON IRAQ

ISRAEL JORDAN KUWAIT

Canary Islands (Spain) Cairo ✪ BAHRAIN

Laayoun ✪ EGYPT *Suez Canal* QATAR

WESTERN SAHARA (occupied by Morocco) ALGERIA LIBYA SAUDI U.A.E.

Lake Nasser *Red Sea* ARABIA

20° MAURITANIA

Nouakchott ✪ MALI NIGER CHAD Khartoum ✪ ERITREA YEMEN

Senegal R. Asmara ✪ *Gulf of Aden*

Dakar ✪ *Niger R.* Niamey ✪ *Lake Chad* SUDAN *Blue Nile* DJIBOUTI Djibouti ✪

SENEGAL Bamako ✪ BURKINA Ndjamena ✪ *White Nile* ETHIOPIA

GAMBIA FASO *Chari R.* SOMALIA

Banjul ✪ Ouagadougou ✪ BENIN NIGERIA SOUTH Addis Ababa ✪

GUINEA-BISSAU GUINEA IVORY GHANA Abuja ✪ CENTRAL SUDAN Juba ✪

10° Conakry ✪ COAST Porto- AFRICAN REPUBLIC *Lake Rudolph* 10°

Freetown ✪ Yamoussoukro ✪ Novo Lagos Bangui ✪ UGANDA *Jubba R.*

SIERRA LEONE Lomé ✪ CAMEROON Kampala ✪ KENYA Mogadishu ✪

Monrovia ✪ Abidjan Accra ✪ Yaoundé ✪ Nairobi ✪

LIBERIA Malabo ✪ *Congo R.* RWANDA

0° Equator EQUATORIAL GUINEA Libreville ✪ DEM. REP. Kigali ✪ *Lake Victoria* 0°

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE São GABON OF CONGO BURUNDI TANZANIA

Tomé Brazzaville ✪ *Kasai R.* Bujumbura ✪ Dodoma ✪ *Pemba*

Cabinda (Angola) Kinshasa ✪ *Zanzibar*

Lake Tanganyika Dar es Salaam

10° ATLANTIC Luanda ✪ *Lake Nyasa* COMOROS 10°

OCEAN ANGOLA MALAWI Moroni ✪

Okavango R. ZAMBIA Lilongwe ✪

Lusaka ✪ *Zambezi R.* MOZAMBIQUE *Mozambique Channel* MADAGASCAR

Harare ✪ Antananarivo ✪

20° Windhoek ✪ ZIMBABWE 20°

Tropic of Capricorn NAMIBIA BOTSWANA

Gaborone ✪ *Limpopo R.* Mbabane ✪ Maputo ✪

Pretoria ✪ SWAZILAND INDIAN

Orange R. *Vaal R.* Maseru ✪ LESOTHO

30° SOUTH AFRICA OCEAN 30°

Cape Town

Cape of Good Hope

AFRICA

✪ **National capitals**

• **Other cities**

0 200 400 600 800 Miles

20° 10° 0° 10° 20° 30° 40° 50°

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