

AFRO-REGIONS

THE DYNAMICS OF CROSS-BORDER MICRO-REGIONALISM IN AFRICA

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This book is dedicated in loving and eternal memory to
Helena Söderbaum, wife, mother and friend, who passed away
suddenly and tragically as this volume was being prepared.

And to Ludvig and Lovisa, proof that there is
always hope in the future.



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Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor
Göteborg and St. Andrews, December 2007

Abbreviations

ACEG	African Centre for Economic Growth
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADPN	<i>Agence pour la Promotion et le Développement des Préfectures et Provinces du Nord du Royaume</i>
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIM	Mozambique News Agency
AU	African Union
BIP	Beluluane Industrial Park
BOT	build, operate and transfer
BWI	Bretton Woods Institutions
C2C	Coast to Coast SDI
CAF	Central African Federation
CETI	Temporary Stay Centre for Immigrants
CFM	Mozambique Ports and Railways (Caminhos de Ferro de Mozambique)
CIP	Cross-border Initiatives Programme
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern African
COREPER	EU's Committee of Permanent Representatives
CPI	Investment Promotion Centre (Mozambique)
CVRD	<i>Companhia do Vale do Rio Doce</i>
DACDF	Diamond Area Community Development Fund
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa (South Africa)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry (South Africa)
EC	European Communities
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
EPFL	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPU	export processing unit
EPZ	export-processing zone
EU	European Union
FIAS	Foreign Investment Advisory Service of the World Bank

Frelimo	<i>Frenta de Libertação de Moçambique</i>
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GT	Growth Triangle
HSMF	Holy Spirit Mobile Forces
IDA	International Development Association
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation (South Africa)
IDP	internally displaced person
IFC	International Financial Corporation
IFI	international financial institution
IFZ	Industrial Financial Zone
IGO	inter-governmental organisation
LED	local economic development
LPC	Liberian Peace Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MCLI	Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative
MDC	Maputo Development Corridor
MFS	<i>Médecins Sans Frontières</i>
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
Mozal	Mozambique Aluminium Smelter
MRU	Mano River Union
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NCD	Nacala Development Corridor
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRA	new regionalism approach
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCDN	<i>Organisation Commune Dahomey Niger</i>
ODC	Overseas Development Company
PFDJ	People's Front for Democracy and Justice
PICAS	Programme for Innovative Cooperation among the South
PPP	public-private partnership
PRA	People's Redemption Army
PU	<i>Première Urgence</i>
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REC	Regional Economic Community
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana

RESDIC	Regional SDI Committee
RPA	Rwanda Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDCN	Nacala Corridor Development Company
SDI	spatial development initiative
SEMP	strategic environmental management plan
SU-TCDC	Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
TPFL	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TRAC	TransAfrica Concessions
TTCA	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USTDA	US Trade and Development Agency
WBCG	Walvis Bay Corridor Group
WBEPZMC	Walvis Bay EPZ Management Company
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZMM	Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique
ZMM-GT	Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle

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Introduction



Considering Micro-regionalism in Africa in the Twenty-first Century

Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor

Regionalist processes are occurring all over the world, not least the formation of micro-regions. Although obviously not a new occurrence, such micro-regions are becoming more and more cross-border in nature rather than contained within the boundaries of a particular nation-state (the standard conception of a micro-region). Of note, micro-regions exist between the “national” and the “local” level, and they are distinguishable from macro-regions (“world regions”), which are larger territorial units or sub-systems between the “national” and the “global” level.

The African continent has not missed out on the growth in the number of such micro-regions. These micro-regions appear on the continent in various guises: they might be sub-national or cross-border; formal or informal; economic, political, administrative, cultural and so forth. It has already been noted in previous work on the subject that projects known as Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) and development corridors have emerged as the most distinct form of policy-driven micro-regionalism in Eastern and Southern Africa (Söderbaum and Taylor 2003). This book aims to move such analysis forward and focus on a broader scope and greater sample of the various types of micro-regions that are developing across the continent.

Crucially, these nascent micro-regions are both formal and informal – and often both at the same time. Indeed, the informalisation of politics on the continent inevitably impacts upon the type and varieties of regionalism in Africa. The nature of personal rule in Africa has often been to erode any sense of broad public accountability in favour of narrow privatised networks of influence and an informalisation of politics (Hyden 2000). In order for us to correctly contextualise regionalising tendencies in Africa, it is necessary to weigh up critically how state-society complexes and the diverse governance modalities on the continent influence and shape the formation of micro-regions in Africa. This will be expounded below and throughout the book, but suffice it to say at this point that given the nature of the state in postcolonial Africa, the informalisation of politics has produced profoundly interesting forms of regionalisation on the continent. In short, in a considerable number of spaces in Africa, borders either essentially do not exist in

the Westphalian sense – being ignored by actors such as local populations and refugees – or they are strategically used by (often self-styled) representatives of the state to extract resources and rents. In either case, the notion of fixed boundaries and bordered delineations has little purchase across whole swathes of Africa.

Thinking About Micro-regionalism in Africa

This book seeks to complement but also to advance recent studies on regionalism in Africa and the implications that regionalism has for the continent's development. One problem with the considerable number of studies on regionalism in Africa thus far is that many of these analyses are state-centric, formalistic and concentrate either on inter-state (macro-regionalism) or sub-national (micro-regionalism) developments. This volume aims to be advance our understanding of politics and regionalism in Africa by drawing on regional and cross-border issues and processes, situating Africa's micro-regions within their national (or actually, cross-national), regional and global context. In addition, it also explicitly recognises that in Africa there does not exist a tidy separation between the state (in all its myriad forms) and broader society. Just as individuals straddle this conceptual divide on a day-to-day basis, when talking of regionalisation in Africa it is apparent that processes straddle both the formal and informal (which for all practical purposes merge). All such processes, however, impact social relations and the day-to-day lives of Africans, as well as having far-reaching implications for regionalisation and the sense of community within the various micro-regions.

Furthermore, what occurs at the micro-regional level is invariably reflective of what is happening at higher levels or "scales" (the latter is preferred especially by geographers and sociologists). In other words, micro-regional processes are not only about micro-regions but also reflect greater processes at the macro-level, but which can perhaps be more easily seen at the micro-level. In this book we argue that there is great heuristic value in studying micro-regions in order to gain meaningful insights into regionalising processes across the continent at higher levels, as well to gain good insights into the ways in which governance modalities work within Africa. In short, micro-regions act as a microcosm and an entry point to the study of both regionalism and politics in Africa in the context of globalisation.

Following on from this, although there exist a variety of studies on regionalism in Africa, the majority of such research focuses on macro-regions

and inter-state formal frameworks, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organisation of African Unity/African Union (OAU/AU) and so forth. Much of this work is decidedly state-centric and in general somewhat ignorant of what is actually “happening”, in favour of often optimistic and unrealistic accounts about what state actors say they are going to do to build regions. In fact, there are too many studies based on the rhetorical commitments to regionalism in Africa, which – we would suggest – have little to do with the reality of regionalism on the continent today, other than exposing the profound gap between stated commitments and actual practice.

In response, we favour an approach that looks at African regions *as they actually are* and how they are *really* being constructed. In doing so, we follow Chabal and Daloz’s (1999) attempts to look at Africa as it really is, rather than at how it might be portrayed through preconceived ideas or at how elite actors would have us believe it is. This is important within the context of regional studies, given the inherently Western origins and genesis of most prior “mainstream” investigations, wherein regionalism in Africa continues to be assessed in relation to the European example. Indeed, we would argue that the manner in which African political structures operate – and by extension, how regionalisation in Africa proceeds – needs to be explored and scrutinised at face value, rather than as a degenerated example of what happens when states “go bad”, as it were. It is surely axiomatic that we are now in the fourth decade of African independence and it is somewhat naïve to think that the modern Westphalian and Weberian state is somehow going to emerge in many parts of Africa. This has immense implications for any study of regionalising processes in Africa that seeks to apply lessons from Europe into and on to the continent. No, any serious analysis of micro-regions in Africa needs to scrutinise and try and make sense of the ways in which Africans encounter (and shape) regional dynamics and how various forces, be they based on ethnicity, gender, identity or occupation, influence Africa’s encounter with regionalism.

In order for us to do this, we take as our starting point a fusion between some of the more important “new regionalism” studies and concepts culled from the Africanist literature. In practical terms, this means that our understandings of regionalism spring from those works that take into account processes within and across communities, ecological and gender perspectives, and the multifaceted relationship between globalisation and regional

projects (Bach 1999; Hettne *et al.* 1999; Poku 2001; Simon 1998; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003; Söderbaum 2004), and the literature on the state in Africa and the essential conceptual tool of neo-patrimonialism (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; van de Walle 2001; Le Vine 1980; Crook 1989; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Mwenda and Tangri 2005; Brownlee 2002; Callaghy 1987; de Sardan 1999).

Within the regionalist literature, even that of the new regionalism, there remain very few case studies on how such regionalisms are affecting people “on the ground” and within specified micro-regional contexts in Africa (for exceptions, see Grant and Söderbaum 2003; Söderbaum and Taylor 2003). This neglect is unfortunate, since micro-regionalism is perhaps the form of regionalism most beholden to “real” “African” processes but also reflecting in detail some of the processes occurring at higher levels. In this sense, such regions are most obviously constructed at the interface between the top-down and the bottom-up, where state and society straddle each other. Top-down activities often merely grant a state’s legitimacy (even if this is very limited) to processes that have long-existed. All too frequently, such involvement by the state can also actually be predatory and negative. Concrete studies of regional interactions on the continent are perhaps the most fruitful in lifting the veil of obscurity over much of what is “really” occurring and identifying the interface between elite-derived agendas and popular reactions to such processes; between the formal and the informal; and whether this analytical distinction holds much water within the micro-regions. By now, it should be clear that we believe it does not.

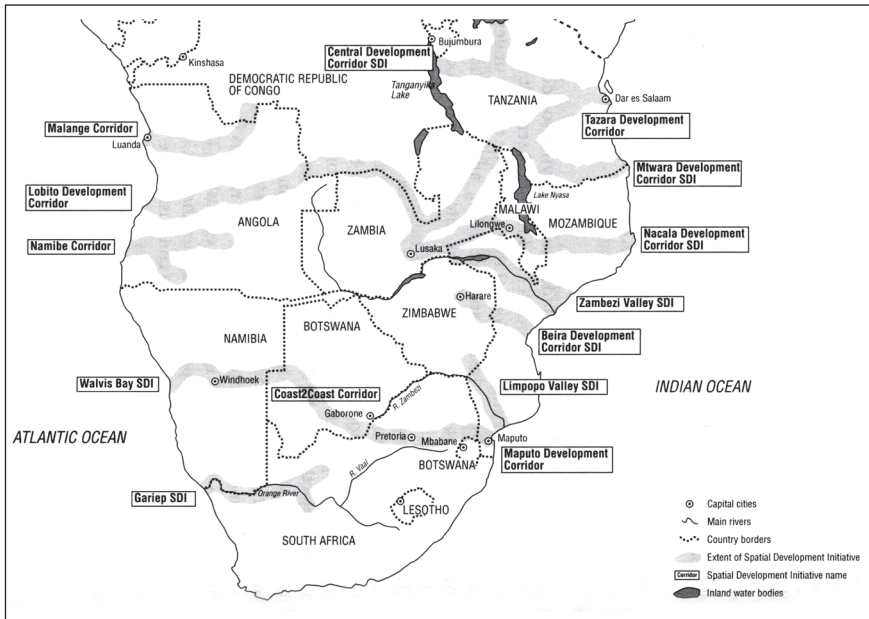
For heuristic reasons, we have separated the book into two parts, one that looks at how the informal informs the formal and vice versa, and one that concentrates pretty much on the informal *in toto*. Interestingly, the former part focuses on regionalisation in Southern Africa. How can we explain this? Although neo-patrimonialism constitutes ‘essential operating codes for politics’ across most of Africa (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:63), Southern Africa remains the most developed in terms both of economic infrastructure and, crucially, formal institutions. This can in part be traced to the colonial legacy whereby investment was put into building up rational bureaucratic structures, albeit ones based on racism and exploitation. The domination of the region by South Africa has perpetuated the *relative* institutional strength of region-building schemes in Southern Africa. So it can be said that the legacy of relative institutional potency has remained in Southern Africa which, in general, has avoided the type of intensive neo-patrimonialism, if not ‘pathological patrimonialism’ (Ergas 1987) that exists elsewhere on

the continent, Angola and Zimbabwe being the obvious exceptions. And conversely, the weakly institutionalised nature of the regional hegemon in western Africa, viz., Nigeria, has important implications and effects on the formal structures of, and indeed nature of, region-building projects in that part of the continent.

What this means for the study of regionalism is that the institutional bases of formal region-building projects are strongest in the southern cone and generally weaker elsewhere in the continent, spectacularly so in central and western Africa. As a result, the processes of micro-regionalism in Southern Africa exhibit greater mixes between the formal and informal and, in fact, these two impulses compete for supremacy in quite intriguing ways. The dividing line between the two is of course blurred and in some parts of the region formal and informal are wholly subsumed within each other. Yet it cannot be denied that the formal institutional manifestations of official projects are stronger in Southern Africa than they are elsewhere, resulting in a fascinating milieu where policy-driven (formal) processes are mediated by the informal processes of neo-patrimonialism, whilst in other parts of the continent the policy-driven formal element within many regionalist schemes is barely discernible, other than on long-forgotten policy papers and treaties, leading to an almost instantaneous undermining of any real implementation of regional plans by most governments in such spaces.¹ The division of the book into the two parts makes sense as a means of illustrating this reality and, we believe, graphically illustrates the important differences across and within Africa with regard to micro-regions and their character-

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1. There are different ways to define formal and informal processes. The former refers often to official policies and codified interactions, which are often backed by written texts, legal treaties or constitutions. Informal processes are a non-codified series of events based upon mutual understandings and accommodations and tacit agreements. The informal aspects of regionalism are under-researched in the field as a whole. The particular importance of informal regionalism in the African context derives from the undisputed fact that many parts of Africa are characterised by myriad informal and non-institutional interactions and activities between a mosaic of informal workers and self-employed agents, families, business networks, petty traders, migrant labour, refugees and so forth. In fact, the size of the informal economy in Africa relative to the formal economy is the highest in the world. Furthermore, informal employment as a percentage of non-agricultural employment is about 3/4 in large parts of Africa (ILO 2002, table 2.1.). The informal sector's GDP is nearly half of total non-agricultural GDP in sub-Saharan Africa, and much higher with agriculture included and for the informal economy as a whole.

SDIs and Development Corridors in Southern Africa



Source: Söderbaum (2004)

istics. This leads us into broader discussions of how exactly can we theorise micro-regions in Africa.

Theorising Micro-regionalism in Africa

A large number of frameworks and theories, both old and new, are available for the study of regionalism. As has been noted above, the research field, or at least its research output, is dominated by theories of macro-regional cooperation and integration that are state-centric and heavily centred on the European integration experience. There is no doubt that such studies have contributed to our understanding of regionalism and regionalist projects, both in the past as well as for today's macro-regionalism (see Mansfield and Milner 1997; Mattli 1999; Laursen 2003). However, in our view the lack of understanding of micro-regionalism in Africa is not only an empirical neglect, but also a direct result of theoretical inadequacies and weaknesses. The conventional frameworks dominating the study of regionalism need to be challenged on a number of counts. One of their weaknesses is that their pos-

itivistic logic of investigation results in a concern with the methodology of regionalism rather than a systematic concern for the socioeconomic circumstances and historical context in which regionalism occurs. This weakness is closely related to the fact that these theories are developed first and foremost for the study of Europe. When this geographical focus is transcended, the main focus is placed on North America and the Asia-Pacific. Even in such “developed” regionalisms, variations from the “norm” are explained in terms of how they differ from the “standard case” of Europe. It is telling that one of the core initial contributions to rationalist regionalism, *The Political Economy of Regionalism* (Mansfield and Milner 1997), “conveniently” ignores Africa and the dynamic regionalisation processes on this continent (also see Adler and Barnett 1998; Mattli 1999). Apart from the narrow empirical selection in most studies, the problem lies, generally speaking, in the fact that the same underlying assumptions and conceptualisations that stem from a particular reading of European integration – such as the notion of unitary states, the regulating influence of regional organisations, trade and policy-led economic integration, the notion of the rational bureaucratic state with regulated modalities of governance, and so on – influence the description and prescription of regionalism in the rest of the world. Such discursive hegemony is maintained by the common accusation that critical and reflective approaches that challenge the conventional wisdom are “non-scientific” and speculative (Mattli 1999:3–16) or simply ignored.

This volume, by contrast, adopts what has become established as the New Regionalism Approach (NRA). This is by no means a homogeneous school of thought, but refers to a diverse group of relatively like-minded scholars who share important common denominators and interact in overlapping networks of research. Its origins can be traced to the *The New Regionalism* research project led by Björn Hettne and sponsored by the United Nations University/World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) (Hettne and Inotai 1994; Hettne *et al.* 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c and 2001), and then developed by a network of new regionalism scholars (see Hettne and Söderbaum 1998 and 2000; Mittelman 2000; Schulz *et al.* 2001; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003). Subsequently, some scholars have made a call for a “new regionalisms” approach (Bøås *et al.* 1999; Shaw 2000). However, the two “approaches” are closely linked in varying degrees to more or less the same epistemic network and can, in our view, be treated as one (cf., Hentz and Bøås 2003; Grant and Söderbaum 2003). In the broadest sense, even the “world order approach” associated with the University of Sheffield’s Political Economy Research Centre is closely related

to the same “critical” school of thought (see Gamble and Payne 1996; Hook and Kearns 1999; and Breslin and Hook 2002).

The term “new regionalism” is widely used in the debate. There is, however, some confusion over its meaning due to the fact that regionalism can be “new” in a variety of ways. One distinction is temporal, but here it is important to draw attention to the many continuities and similarities between the different generations and waves of regionalism. There is no doubt that it is important to identify new patterns of regionalisation, coexisting with older ones, but we want to particularly highlight theoretical novelties.

The NRA is best understood within the broader tradition of critical and reflectivist International Political Economy (IPE) and the effort to transcend and challenge “problem-solving” mainstream theories (Murphy and Tooze 1991; Hettne 1995; Cox 1996). This has two important methodological consequences. The first is associated with the way regions are studied, and the other is related to the unpacking of the state-society complex.

With regard to the first of these aspects, many disciplines and discourses have maintained a strong emphasis on “territory” and “rule” in the study of both micro-regions and macro-regions. Often, especially in political science and economics, both macro-regions and micro-regions have been taken as pre-given, defined in advance of research, and fairly often simply been seen as particular inter-state or policy-driven frameworks. Integral to this reasoning is the view that regions exist “out there”, identifiable through material structures, regional organisations and regional actors. This is then closely associated with the attention devoted to determine what types of regions are the most functional, instrumental and efficient “to rule”.

The reflectivist perspective built on in this volume is different. It conceives regions as social constructions. From this point of view, the puzzle is to understand and explain the phenomenon of regionalism and the process through which regions come into existence and are consolidated – their “becoming” so to speak – rather than a particular set of activities and flows within a pre-given, and often pre-scientific, regional space or regional framework. As Neumann (2003:161) eloquently points out, ‘[t]he existence of regions is preceded by the existence of region-builders’. Following Neumann (2003:162), we need to ask questions about:

... how and why the existence of a given region was postulated in the first place, who perpetuates its existence with what intentions, and how students of regions, by including and excluding certain areas and peoples from a given region, are putting their knowledge at the service of its perpetuation or transformation.

This volume seeks to further such propositions of region-building by emphasising questions such as by whom, for whom and for what purpose micro-regionalism is being pursued?

As a consequence, (micro)regions will not be taken for granted: they are not seen as “natural”, organic, essential or material objects. Instead, regions are considered to be dynamic settings for social interaction, with particular focus placed on the process through which they are “becoming” and the way they are constructed/reconstructed by reflective actors. Due to the fact that there are no “natural” regions, they are, at least potentially, heterogeneous with unclear spatial delimitations.

As we have noted, the NRA is founded on the necessity to “unpack” the nature of the state, avoiding the Western conceptions of the state inherent in mainstream theorising in the field – be it neo-realism, institutionalism or regional economic integration theory. In doing so, NRA critically assesses state-society complexes in the formation of regions and opens the way for a broad and deep interdisciplinary, critical and reflectivist understanding of what characterises regionalism and regionalisation in various parts of the world. This volume to varying degrees uses this approach to study micro-regional developments on the continent, particularly the purchase the NRA grants to studying the nexus between the informal and formal processes associated with regionalism in Africa. It is to this important phenomenon that we turn next.

Formal and Informal Regionalism: The Regionalisation of Neo-patrimonialism

The NRA seeks to transcend the conventional obsession with states as actors and the undue emphasis on formal regionalism and intergovernmental regional organisations and also seeks to bridge the divide between formal and informal regionalisation by considering the connections between them. This perspective is highly relevant in the African context. Despite the recent fanfare surrounding the transformation of the OAU into the AU, many seasoned commentators are pessimistic that the new entity will be able to attain its vaunted goals of becoming a highly developed institutional framework (modelled on the EU no less), with attendant economic and political integration. The largely dismal track record of other regional African ventures, such as ECOWAS and COMESA and, to a lesser extent, SADC, only contributes to the general lack of confidence in formal state-led regionalisation in Africa. In contrast, when we witness the more informal processes

of regionalisation, ranging from illicit trade networks in blood diamonds and other commodities to grey arms sales markets, nascent regional trade corridors, regional conflicts, cross-border trading and migration, the “real” nature of African regionalisation is full of vitality and energy.

Indeed, there is certainly micro-regionalism in Africa beyond formalised inter-state action. States are not the only – or indeed primary – regionalising actors, and markets, civil societies, as well as external actors are deeply involved in processes of regionalisation on the continent. Rather than separating actors into perceived “autonomous” groups, the NRA suggests that actors will be grouped in – formal and/or informal – multi-actor collectivities (networks and modes of governance). In the context of this book and the development of studies on regionalism in Africa, the NRA is married to some analytical tools usually found in the literature on contemporary Africa. In particular, we believe that an analysis that blends elements of the NRA with understandings of how neo-patrimonial systems operate provides a good grounding for understanding how Africa’s regions “work”.

Importantly, as we have already noted, political power in Africa is often informalised. Indeed, state power within Africa is less about administration over the state and its attendant geographic area, with all the implications this might have for the provision of services to the populace, and more about the running of a relatively limited (in geographic terms and economic embeddedness) set of resources that are the sources of revenue and the foundations for entrenching power through patronage. In short, ‘the struggle for power [is] so absorbing that everything else, including development, [is] marginalised’ (Ake 1996:7).

To secure political incumbency, public benefits [are] distributed and opportunities to profit provided along political lines. Thus in their quest for self-preservation, state elites ... [dispense] government-controlled resources – jobs, licenses, contracts, credits – to select political allies as well as mediating access to economic opportunities in favour of close associates so as to enhance their hold over state power (Tangri 1999:10).

Crucially, resources extracted from the state or the economy are deployed as the means to maintain support and legitimacy in this system, with the concomitant effect that the control of the state is equivalent to the control of resources, which in turn is crucial for remaining a Big Man. Control of the state serves the twin purposes of lubricating the patronage network and satisfying the selfish desire of elites to self-enrich themselves, in many cases in quite spectacular fashion. In this light, the insights from the NRA that

regionalism is more complex (and sometimes also more detrimental) than simply being an instrument to enhance an ambiguous “national interest” (realism) or the procurement of the “public good” or “trade” (liberalism), is crucial and helpful. Potentially, state actors create regionalisation in order to achieve private goals and promote particular (vested) interests rather than broader societal interests. As a result, regionalisation will not necessarily be harmonious or beneficial to all participants. On the contrary, it may well be exclusionary, exploitative and also reinforce asymmetries and imbalances within society and within and across geographic spaces. In order to understand this, it is vital to unpack and problematise the state and the state-society complex.

In talking about something as broad as “the African state”, generalisations are necessary, and the applicability of such an overview to each individual African country is contingent. Having said that, it cannot be denied that a many postcolonial African countries, bounded by formal frontiers and with an international presence in various international institutions such as the United Nations, function quite differently from conventional understandings of what a formal Western state is and should do. This is, of course, not surprising, but in order for us to understand the politics of the state on the continent (and thus the politics of micro-regions in Africa), the concept of neo-patrimonialism has largely become the standard tool of analysis. If this concept is not recognised, analyses may be marked by a distinct naivety in evaluating the potentiality or otherwise of how regionalism in Africa may bring about change on the continent. Our critique of past analyses of regionalisation processes in Africa is in part based on neglect of this fundamental modality of rule on the continent.

Because access to resources depends largely upon being inside the state apparatus, patrons reward supporters with sinecures in government and nationalised industries – or in formal regional arrangements. Such bureaucracies have been ‘transformed into ... patrimonial-type administrations in which staff [are] less agents of state policy (civil servants) than proprietors, distributors and even major consumers of the authority and resources of the government’ (Jackson and Rosberg 1994:300). This is well understood and even accepted in many African countries. Indeed, the exercise of personalised exchange, clientelism and corruption is internalised in African politics (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:63). This is ‘accepted as normal behaviour, condemned only in so far as it benefits someone else rather than oneself’ (Clapham 1985:49).

Crucially, national or regional development and a broad-based produc-

tive economy is far less a concern (in fact, might stimulate opposition) to elites within such systems than the continuation of the gainful utilisation of resources for the individual advantage of the ruler and his clientelistic networks. In other words, instead of investing in regional projects that promote broad-based development and a regional collective good, the ruling elites will much more likely seek to control what material benefits of state sovereignty they can muster to strengthen their own political authority, as well as to benefit personally, often financially. This helps explain in part why so many regional projects fail in Africa: they simply do not personally benefit the elites in charge (either within the logic of the neo-patrimonial system or literally monetarily), and thus such rulers rapidly lose interest in promoting regional integration. What remains in such circumstances are often ad hoc arrangements, invariably financed by the donor community. These arrangements are then mediated by and through external attempts to encourage reform. The influence of neoliberal thinking and globalising discourses on “formal” regional projects is what we turn to next.

The Power of Neoliberalism in Africa

Since at least the early 1980s, important changes have occurred within the global economy that have formed the structural backdrop for the discussion about development and politics in Africa. The dominant modes of thought and action within the global economy, commonly described as neoliberal, have set the dominant parameters within which debates about Africa’s future and the manner in which the major external powers interact with Africa. Virtually all aspects of expressed contemporary state policy have been heavily influenced by neoliberal discourses, including trade, aid, investment, good government and governance, development, state-building, crisis management and peacekeeping and human rights. In short, neoliberalism has become the predominant ideology legitimating various policies (especially privatisation and de-regulation) and delegitimising others (such as centralised provision of basic welfare and increased public expenditure and taxation). The desire to develop high levels of social control thus lies at the heart of the neoliberal project.

The prevailing neoliberal discourse remains very much the dominant political and economic model for Africa as encouraged by the Western powers. This hegemonic discourse demands that the role of the state should be to “enable” the market, and the economies must look outward towards the global market as a means to attract resources and investment. This neo-

liberal agenda is thus broadly built on at least two main elements: (i) the down-sizing of the role of the state in the economy in order to boost the private sector and spur competition; and (ii) opening up African economies in order to integrate them into the global economy.

With regard to the first element, there is very strong emphasis that the state needs to be deregulated and made more efficient in order to encourage private sector development. State intervention is, to a considerable extent, seen as a distortion, whereas the “market” is seen as the engine of growth and a much more efficient mechanism for resource allocation. According to this line of thinking, states are seen as ineffective and bureaucratic: therefore their role in the economy should be drastically reduced. The state and the public should first and foremost ensure an enabling environment for the private sector. ‘Good governance’ is thus defined as ‘less government’ and ‘getting the prices right’ (Thompson 2000:45).

With regard to the second ingredient, although it is possible to talk of a “post-Washington consensus”, the dominant political and economic model demands that economies must look outward towards the global market as a means to attract resources and investment. This, so the discourse goes, is best achieved by “openness” through global and regional economic integration. In this light, state administrations must seek to construct and extend free trade areas and encompass more and more territories, whilst at the same time opening up their own economies. The eventual goal is to consolidate and integrate existing free trade areas, whereby borders and protective measures and other “obstacles to free trade” become mere memories. This vision is the basis upon which both SADC and COMESA are currently predicated, however far into the future the realisation of such objectives may be. Eventually, such giant free trade areas would constitute “stepping stones” towards multilateral free trade. Other forms of open regionalism can be understood in the same vein. The spatial development initiatives (SDIs) are intended to bring globalisation to Southern Africa at the same time as they are designed to enhance (open) economic integration in the region. In this way, there is no competition, but rather an anticipated synergy and close association between globalisation as well as various forms of market-oriented forms of regionalism at various scales (Söderbaum 2004).

Neoliberal regionalism should be understood as a distinctive “project”, with a highly political content, fashioned and pursued by identifiable actors, institutions and interests. The project is shared and reinforced by a wide range of politicians and policy-makers, think-tanks and researchers, businesses and corporations, private sector alliances and other agents from

within the regions, but also among a variety of external actors, above all the international financial institutions (IFIs), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and also in the EU. The NRA seeks to detect and reveal the power relations driving these grand processes and for whom and for what purpose such regionalisms are being promoted. One of the core problems in this regard is that ‘most discussions on globalisation and “development” take for granted the benefits of export orientation and more trade, wondering only if more or less, and what kind of state activity facilitates a positive insertion in the global political economy’ (Moore 1999:80).

Partial Reform/Partial Regionalisation?

What is interesting about the above is that both neo-patrimonialism and neoliberalism coalesce in divergent ways to shape and influence the regionalising processes within Africa, dependent upon the history and balance of forces within particular states and regions. As a result, the regionalist projects take on very different shapes and trajectories and are an intriguing hybrid, unrecognisable to most conventional analyses of regionalism. In places where neoliberal reforms are implemented, most notably in Southern Africa, the state “shrinks” both physically and sociologically. In these circumstances, paradoxically, liberalisation may actually coincide with and/or facilitate a slide away from formal regionalism, as this shrinkage stimulates the informalisation of regionalism *and* promotes more flexible and privately led mechanisms to tie into neoliberalism, such as SDIs. But we also see the informalisation of regionalism in order to promote neo-patrimonial regionalism and the privatisation of regionalism in order to sustain clientelism. This is because those engaged in the types of pathological neo-patrimonialism, as seen in West Africa, may seek to reduce the provision of public goods as a means to abet a clientelistic culture of dependency in order to consummate business. This is typically centred on personalised networks and access to well-connected elites, rather than through “normal” public service channels, which have been looted of resources anyway. Thus, both the capacity to administer and advance regional integration projects at the formal and institutional level *and the rationale* are undermined, to be replaced in many cases by the informal and the illegal.

Certainly, from the perspective of the elites, pursuing some form of formal regionalism does not make sense as they are not interested in some regional public good or general advancement. Furthermore, committing

themselves to a formal regional pact may actually lead to inhibiting factors (norms, sanctions, even military interference from fellow member states upset by their behaviour) that could threaten the continuation of their destructive activities. The neoliberal ingredients of globalisation may well, then, actually legitimise the peeling away of the state whilst at the same time helping to lay the foundations for decay and clandestinity as well as other forms of informal regionalism.

Equally however, the liberalisation message being advanced by the West does not actually undermine the politics of patronage that continues to underpin most policy decisions in Africa. Certainly, empirical evidence has suggested that the message of liberalisation has not set “free” the market from political interference but has, rather, stimulated a useful injection of political and economic resources that has the dangerous potential to perpetuate – if not entrench – patrimonial politics on the continent. This is the more likely when the “governance” strictures for regional arrangements lag behind – and are often subsumed – by the liberalisation and privatisation portion of the agenda. Indeed, the confusion and obfuscation about what governance is has meant that both external and internal elite actors have allowed the term to become synonymous with regional “open markets”. Whilst this grants a privileged position to international investors and their local partners, the foundations of patrimonial politics are likely to remain secure, as state elites have, over the last 20 years or so, shown remarkable adeptness in shaping and benefiting from what liberalisation is allowed to take place (Clapham 1996:173–81; King 2003). Besides, it is necessary to be cautious regarding the scale of privatisation that has actually occurred, as there has been an intriguing ‘taming of structural adjustment’ (Chabal and Daloz 1999) across the continent. In other words, African elites have been successful in not only resisting wholesale privatisation but also liberalisation, if and when it undermines their political positions. All this, of course, makes perfect sense if we are to understand that economic policies and decision-making in Africa are, in the main, based on the need to distribute resources to furnish clientelistic networks.

Certainly, the interests of the ruling elites systematically diverge from the broader idea of raising the general well-being of the populace, or some grand regionalist project. This has been shown time and again in what has been termed the ‘partial reform syndrome’, whereby symbolic gestures, rhetorical commitments and promises of change mask and further lubricate the diffusion of largesse and patronage (Van de Walle 2001). But even where the state does privatise, African states have retained significant minority equity

stakes in the few infrastructure privatisations they have concluded, holding back from the market an average of one third of the shares' (*ibid.*). What is avoided, however, by hook or by crook, is structural reform and policies aimed at broad-based development.

Partial reform, by permitting limited privatisation, neatly allows the elites to demonstrate their liberalising credentials to the donor community, but at the same time grants the same actors access to a continued flow of resources in the shape of shares and dividends that are likely to accrue from the improved efficiency of now privatised enterprises. And the fact that a significant number of former state-owned companies are bought up by foreign concerns means that there is limited scope for the development of an independent, indigenous private sector through the privatisation schemes – a sector which African governments have been traditionally suspicious of anyway and in which any nascent capitalist class has had to be more adept politically than it is economically (Leys 1996:161–2). Partial reform has also allowed African elites to cast themselves as “responsible” partners and, in doing so, has stimulated increased flows of aid to support ongoing projects, such as “region-building”. So, in short, we have mixed systems in which in some cases neoliberal reforms have brought about change, whilst in other states this should not be exaggerated. The implications for regionalist projects supposedly based on liberalisation and “open borders” is that the formal is far more circumscribed and can be characterised as partial reform, if not partial regionalisation – whilst the informal carries on as usual. Making sense of this phenomenon is no easy matter, but it makes the study of micro-regionalism in Africa a fascinating topic of debate and analysis.

What Micro-regions Tell Us About Africa

In the study of micro-regions in Africa, we discern a number of crucial insights that grant us interesting glimpses into how African social formations and economies operate, a crucial purpose of this book. Firstly, micro-regions represent the degrees of agency that Africans operationalise on a day-to-day basis. They can represent diverse strategies that non-state players utilise to survive in a difficult world. Here we may talk of the ways in which diasporas, migrants and traders all utilise micro-regions to live, even prosper. And in doing so, their agency makes use of and indeed shapes the ways in which state and society straddle each other in Africa and the ways in which the private use of public resources is employed.

Secondly, when discussing micro-regions we need to ask who sets the

agenda? Answers to this will vary across the continent. Certainly, whilst Africans' own agency plays a crucial role, the functions and involvement of other actors may at times be as important, if not more important. Thus, an analysis of a micro-region in Africa (as elsewhere, arguably) has to integrate investigations into the agenda-setting behaviours of multinational corporations, investors, diasporas, the local elites and – absolutely crucially given the current context in which Africa finds itself – the donors. Indeed, there is at present a fad among some donors to promote regionalism as a “solution” to Africa's problems. The classic example here might be the Swedish involvement in trying to create a region around Lake Victoria. This will invariably involve seeking to introduce agendas on the Lake that may not fit with existing patterns of life there, or with the dominant policy-frameworks, such as the EAC. The issue of agenda-setting within micro-regions is an important ingredient in any comprehensive study of regionalising process within Africa.

Thirdly, in studying micro-regions, we encounter the issue of reach, i.e., the local and global reach of micro-regions. Where do they begin and more crucially, where do they end? In this age of globalisation we can truly talk of the transnationalisation of micro-regions, given their linkages with the diasporas and migrants mentioned above in order to, at times, make the micro-region actually global in certain dimensions. The notion of hubs and spokes and trans-state networks links to these notions. In short, a local anchor, i.e., the micro-region, does not mean that micro-regions are necessarily focused only on the local. They can, rather, be geared towards the global, with the neoliberal discourse of globalisation providing a rationale and explanation, as can be observed in the Maputo Development Corridor (MDC), Walvis Bay as well as the Zambezi Valley Spatial Development Initiative (ZVSDI) (Chapters 1, 2 and 3). The diamond regions discussed in Chapter 5 on the Parrot's Beak are similarly globally oriented (even if informally so).

Finally, we can talk of the territorial imprint of micro-regions. Units indeed replicate themselves, as witness Nigeria's reincarnation at diverse levels from the national to the federal to the macro-regional or micro-regional. However, the modalities stay the same, only at the micro-region they are often in much sharper focus. At the same time, we can contrast regionalism in Africa with regionalism in Europe: in the former, there is often a lack of an overarching regulatory framework. So, Parrot's Beak in West Africa operates at a quite different level and way from, say, Flanders in Belgium. Equally, the inherent territorialism within regional studies, notwithstanding the increasing transnationalisation of many micro-regions, means that micro-regions can

at certain levels and times be exclusive. In this sense, micro-regions and the parochialism inherent in some of them act against the pan-Africanist dream that still energises the continent at times. In this sense, micro-regions can divide existing entities rather than aggregating them within the broader context of a continental Africa. Yet at the same time and quite intriguingly, there may be cases where the opposite may occur and where cognitive notions of a region defy conventional territoriality. We here think of the pan-Somali vision. So, in many cases and circumstances, a micro-region may not have neat geographical confines but may have to include analyses of discursive practices and questions of identity that may transcend a narrower definition.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to provide some initial comments on micro-regionalism in Africa. In doing so, we assert the necessity of understanding the state in Africa and its logic and modalities of rule before one can analyse regionalism on the continent. This allows one to situate studies on African regionalisms within the context of state-society relations. In this light, whilst individuals who have gained access to rents from the sort of enclave economies existing in Africa may benefit handsomely, the overall milieu fundamentally fails to promote economic growth and development and, in fact, across the continent tends to keep Africa's peoples down. As Clapham has asserted:

... the use of power over other people for the purpose essentially of private gain is corrupt, not merely because it fails to correspond to formal rules of essentially Western origin, or to meet the demands of "good governance" laid down by external aid donors, but because of its impact on the lives of the people most harshly affected by it (Clapham 1996:251–2).

Legitimacy is predicated on the need to both display the image of substance, thus being seen to be the Big Man, and at the same time to supply the networks upon which they drew their position.

Control of the African state, which immediately secures recognition and prestige from the outside world, also opens up external political and diplomatic backing and access to aid, which invariably further lubricates the patronage networks upon which the state is predicated. Many of the formal commitments made to ostensible regional organisations on the continent may be seen as cynical representations of this reality. In addition, assuming office in such states immediately grants membership of an elite club of

African rulers who, as history has repeatedly demonstrated, group together for mutual support and protection both against external threats and, regrettably, domestic opposition to their rule. Yet such recognition, be it external or intra-Africa, is based on the concept of sovereignty that grants opportunities to rulers of even the most dysfunctional and weakest states, stimulating the perpetuation of a whole grouping of 'quasi-states' (Jackson 1984).

At the same time, the use and abuse of the 'organised hypocrisy' of sovereignty allows an assortment of external (non-African) actors to successfully construct commercial and military alliances involving state leaders and their courtiers, as well as private corporations, on the continent (Krasner 1999), often – though not exclusively – at the micro-regional level. In short, many state elites in Africa use the mantle of sovereignty not to promote the collective good, but instead use it to bolster their own patronage networks and weaken those of potential challengers (Reno 2000). The international community is complicit in such a charade (Taylor 2003). But importantly, in such circumstances and in the context of Afro-regions, it may well be highly problematic to now stimulate the continent's development through regional development projects (despite the high hopes pinned on formal regional projects by the donor community) by relying upon the very same African state elites – who benefit handsomely from such networks – but who have undermined the continent's advancement. What this means is that formal state-led regional projects are, like many of the states signing up to them, quasi in nature. If analysts want to observe the "real" regionalism on the continent, then micro-regions are the best places to observe such empirical realities. And it is in micro-regions that, from day-to-day, regionalisms helps contribute in some measure to Africa's survival, if not development.



Part One

INFORMALISING THE FORMAL
– OR VICE VERSA?



Competing Region-building in the Maputo Development Corridor

Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor

This chapter deals with the cross-border micro-region known as the Maputo Corridor. For more than a century, the space connecting southern Mozambique with eastern South Africa has been a largely informal cross-border micro-region, constructed by millions of migrants, extensive informal trading and dense socio-ethnic interactions. Since the mid-1990s, we have witnessed the emergence of a more formal Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) project, officially known as the Maputo Development Corridor (MDC), which seeks to reconstruct, revitalise and, importantly, *formalise* cross-border relationships between Mozambique and South Africa. It has already been noted in previous work on the subject that the SDI projects have emerged as one of the most distinctive forms of micro-regionalism in South and Southern Africa (Söderbaum and Taylor 2003).

This chapter aims to interrogate critically the MDC and how it is affecting/reifying existing power relations in relation to alternative and competing region-building strategies. The analysis proceeds as follows. In the next section we discuss the historical origins of the micro-region and the main characteristics of the formal MDC initiative. We then seek to explain the underlying basis of the policy-led initiative, which, in our view, must be understood in the broader context of both neoliberalism and neo-patrimonialism. By this we mean that the state is active within the MDC, but in certain directions and in the service of particular agendas. By advancing particular ideas as to what constitutes common-sense economic policy and how this interacts with regionalist strategies, state and business elites are crafting a quite precise model for promoting growth and integration, one based on neoliberalism and public-private partnerships. Yet this is having the effect of entrenching corruption and patronage politics, whilst privatising many former sites of state power – especially in Mozambique. In doing so, the position of well-connected state-business elites is being cemented, whilst the average citizen generally misses out. Having discussed such phenomena, we then concentrate on alternative, and even competing region-building strategies, particularly the various informal and illegal responses and reactions

that occur in this context: the migrant corridor, the informal trade corridor and the criminal corridor.

Origins of the MDC

“South Africa” is of profound importance, critically informing the setting and features of the dilemmas facing the micro-region in contemporary times. This constructed historical space demonstrated all the idiosyncrasies of a dominant and subordinate relationship, with White South African capital exploiting Black labour. Mozambique became a regional conduit and effective labour reserve for the minerals-based industries in South Africa, fastening southern Mozambique and the Johannesburg environs together and firmly establishing the migratory labour system that formed/forms the basis of the historical space around which the MDC has been formulated. Migration has long been a crucial component of the asymmetrical cross-border relationship between South Africa and Mozambique.

A transport corridor linking Johannesburg and its environs to the Indian Ocean – and the world – via the sea port in Maputo (then Lourenço Marques) developed and became a major feature of Southern Africa’s regional dynamics. Being the shortest link to an export harbour from South Africa’s industrial heartland, this corridor rapidly became a major intersection for the region’s linkages with the world economy. Hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans travelled to work as migrant labourers in the mineral industries along the Witwatersrand, with others finding work as agricultural contract workers.

Such arrangements were dislocated when in the mid-1970s the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) assumed power in Maputo after Portuguese rule collapsed. A period of mutual hostility between Maputo and Pretoria ensued, with the apartheid regime actively undermining Frelimo’s efforts to construct a socialist developmentalist state. Space precludes a history of the Mozambican revolution and its demise (see Saul 1993; Vines 1994). Suffice it to say that a combination of factors induced Frelimo gradually to shed its socialist pretensions. With this, it has been argued, came growing levels of corruption (Harrison 1999). The current movement and phenomena associated with attempts to bring closer integration between Maputo and eastern South Africa can be said to reflect processes that have been developing ever since Frelimo began casting off its socialist clothes, “liberalising” and engaging in dialogue with the then minority-rule regime in Pretoria. These have served to reinforce the con-

solidation of a micro-region that has long been in existence, even during the height of provocations from South Africa, and imply that the practical concept of a cross-border economic and social sphere between Mozambique's southern and South Africa's eastern territories is a reality that is simply being institutionalised (and, importantly, directed) by the newly-constituted MDC.

This has been facilitated by a seeming policy “fit” between South Africa's Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy and Mozambique's neoliberal conversion (Baptista-Lundin and Taylor 2003). The Mozambican state elites have been pursuing an uneven neoliberal project since the country implemented its Economic Recovery Programme in 1987, largely at the behest of disciplinary agents such as the World Bank, the IMF and other donors, who supply some 60 per cent of Mozambique's income, but also because the project provides well-connected elites with tangible personal material benefits.

Concurrently, a contested revolution in how the state is seen and what it should provide has occurred in both Mozambique and South Africa. In both countries over the last ten years or so, the ANC and Frelimo have sought to acquire hegemony for their particular liberal policies. Both countries have witnessed attempts by ruling parties and by business to win hegemony for a particular agenda regarding the market – its institutions and social relations. In short, both states have seen an attempt to restructure the economy along largely neoliberal lines. Indeed, both the South African and the Mozambican governments see as their primary task the need to work in “partnership” with private capital in order to facilitate regional and global integration. What this means in practical terms within the MDC is that ‘the principal mechanism underpinning the SDI programme is private sector investment which will be “crowded in” through a number of public sector interventions’ (Lewis and Bloch 1998:730). South Africa's role in the construction of these types of SDIs is crucial, both in terms of its business sector and the driving and dominant role of the South African government in the design and construction of these projects. The SDI approach to development, and the importance attached to the private sector, is very much in line with the South African government's neoliberal GEAR policy, adopted by the ANC in 1996 (Williams and Taylor 2000; Taylor 2001). In fact, the SDIs have been sold as ‘the practical implementation of the government's economic strategy as set out in its Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy’ (‘Spatial Development Initiatives in Southern Africa’, www.africansdi.com).

The MDC Initiative

The MDC has become known as the “flagship” of the SDI programme. The SDI programme was launched by the central government in South Africa in 1995 as a set of targeted and short-term interventions to facilitate global competitiveness, access to global capital, infrastructural development and job creation in areas that have unrealised economic potential for a range of historical and political reasons (Jourdan 1998:718). This has resulted in the implementation of a substantial number of SDIs in South Africa, and more recently also in the broader Southern African region (www.africansdi.com)

The basic idea behind the MDC initiative is the implementation of a large number of investment projects. A rough distinction can be made between infrastructural projects and major economic development projects. With regard to the rehabilitation of primary infrastructure, the following projects, with a total estimated value of US\$ 661.5 m, were of crucial importance. Firstly, there was the Witbank-Maputo N4 toll road. This was the first major public-private partnership (PPP) in Southern Africa and was concessioned for 30 years to a private sector consortium, TransAfrica Concessions (TRAC), on the basis of build, operate and transfer (BOT). Other projects included the rehabilitation of the port of Maputo; the establishment of a public/private company to manage, operate and maintain the southern Mozambique rail network; and a single facility/one-stop border post at Ressano Garcia/Komatipoort.

The most comprehensive economic development projects were the US\$ 1.3 bn Mozambique Aluminium Smelter (Mozal), which in the second phase was supplemented, making it worth a total of more than US\$ 2 bn in investment (see Hentz 2003). The Maputo Iron and Steel Project (US \$1.5 bn) and the Beluluane Industrial Park (BIP), which is an industrial free zone aiming to attract foreign, regional and local investment to heavy industrial manufacturing and hi-tech industries, were also key projects, as was the Pande/Temane gas pipeline (US\$ 250 m). In addition to these gigantic projects, there were a significant number of other investment projects in fields such as mining (a magnetite, vanadium and heavy minerals project), energy, chemicals, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, commerce and tourism (eco-tourism, lodge and game-park development and so on) (see De Beer and Arwkrigh 2003).

Although each SDI has to adjust to the different conditions under which it operates, there is a generalised “SDI methodology” (see Söderbaum and Taylor 2003b). According to this methodology, the institutional structure should

be kept to a minimum, the main role of the institutions being to fast-track project implementation. The role of the market in promoting such a schema is held to be rather definite. This does not mean that the state is absent from such projects – far from it. Rather, the state acts as a facilitator and agent in bringing together the private sector and public spheres in partnerships as well as smoothing the way for private investment. In other words, despite the neo-liberal character of both GEAR and the SDI programme, the state retains a discernible role – one as a supposed spur to the market in guiding investment and identifying potential destinations for such capital inflows. Elements of the state also retain a presence through their positioning in ostensibly privatised companies, whereby they utilise connections to advance self- or clientelistic interests. The state most certainly has not been simply “rolled back”. Having said that, as Harrison (1998:75) noted, there is

... some element of smoke and mirrors in the presentation of SDIs. To some extent a SDI represents a “packaging” of projects already planned by the private sector and a spatial focusing of investment capital that may have gone elsewhere in the country. However, state support for SDI projects has reduced investment risk, and may well have led to investments that would otherwise not have occurred. (ibid.)

Region-building by State-business Elites

The making of the MDC as a formal project is closely linked to attempts by state-business elites in South Africa and Mozambique to tie into – and benefit from – what they perceive as economic globalisation. This is not only the objective of the MDC and other SDIs, but has also to be understood in the context of national structural adjustment and reform programmes in the two countries, as well as through their visions of region-building and regional economic integration in forums such as SADC and NEPAD. In this context, the elites in both Mozambique and South Africa have been quite active in advancing particular ideas about what constitutes economic common sense. Indeed, Mozambique ‘has been the model patient envisioned in neoliberal prescriptions’ (Pitcher 2003:3). The role of the IFIs and foreign governments in pushing and sustaining neoliberalism is very strong.

However, as outlined in the introduction to this volume, the emphasis on neoliberalism is not sufficient to understand the strategies and agency of the main actors in Africa. In fact, the concept of neo-patrimonialism has largely become the standard tool of analysis for understanding African politics. The question is then, how do these two modalities of governance –

neoliberal reform and neo-patrimonialism – interact with each other within the MDC? In short, quite well. In fact, these two modes of governance complement one another and help us understand the underlying logic of the MDC.

Liberalisation in both Mozambique and South Africa has not always been pursued in a manner that recognisably fits with the sort of “neutral” and technocratic ideas associated with the discourse of “setting free the market” and bringing about greater efficiency, which is implicit in the formal prospectuses of the MDC. Rather, only certain parastatals have been sold, while strategic publicly owned companies have remained under the state. This is particularly so where such parastatals are important sources of patronage and bases for political backing. Indeed, empirical evidence has suggested that liberalisation has not set “free” the market from political interference, but has rather stimulated a useful injection of political and economic resources with a real and dangerous potential to perpetuate – if not entrench – patrimonial politics. Particularly within Mozambique, such parastatals as are sold off invariably go through highly dubious processes that subvert the supposed “market values” associated with privatisation. Corruption, insider information, partiality in tender processing, political interference, cronyism and nepotism have come to pervade the whole privatisation process in that country.

In Mozambique, the classic example has been the privatisation of national banks, which has led to very high levels of corruption and dirty politics. Despite being ostensibly subject to IMF and World Bank conditionalities, state banks were sold off in non-transparent circumstances, often to well-connected elites (some with familial links to higher offices). The banks have not had to deal with their inherited debt problems and have not established international standards for managing their capital assets. More importantly perhaps, the banks were rapidly viewed as a milk cow for assorted elites and their clients.

Indeed, banks were sold off to a consortium of Mozambican and foreign “investors”, who then lent large amounts to fund other privatisation deals to advantage state elites. This occurred even though those who received such loans had no way of paying back the debt. Such banks were ‘run politically. There were bad loans, letters of credit without cover, transfers of money to ministers, and many favours to people. Decisions were taken by officials outside their mandates and which violated rules and procedures, and perhaps the law’ (*Mozambique News Agency AIM Reports* (Maputo), no.175, 8 February 2000). By conservative estimates, close to R 1.5 bn has been stolen from the two banks (*Banco Commercial de Mozambique* and *Banco Austral*) over

the last several years – in a country where the vast majority of the population survives on less than R 5 a day. The crusading Mozambican journalist, Carlos Cardoso, and the government's head of banking supervision, Siba-Siba Macuácuá, paid the ultimate price for exposing such scandals: both were assassinated (Fauvet and Mosse 2003). As Gastrow and Mosse (2002:67) aver, 'Mozambique is very close to becoming a criminalised state'.

As mentioned in the introduction, in parts of Africa we witness partial reform, which leads to partial formal regionalisation. Partial reform neatly allows the elites to demonstrate their liberalising credentials to the donor community, by permitting limited privatisation, but at the same time grants the same actors access to a continued flow of resources in the shape of shares and dividends that are likely to accrue from the improved efficiency of now-privatised enterprises. Indeed, it is remarkable how many so-called "private companies", for instance, have serving politicians or actors intimately linked with the ruling elites on their boards of directors. The SDI projects in Mozambique are a classic example. For instance, in the Nacala Development Corridor (NCD), the Nacala Corridor Development Company (SDCN) has as its chairman the ex-Mozambican defence minister, General Alberto Chipande, while of those Mozambican companies that own 33 per cent of the SDCN consortium 'several leading figures from the ruling Frelimo Party are on the boards' (*Mozambique News Agency AIM Reports* (Maputo), no.175, 8 February 2000). It can be argued that the SDI methodology that demands "political champions" encourages such tendencies. The international community, i.e., the donors, effectively rewards corruption and patronage politics because, quite simply, they are more interested in sustaining the myth of Mozambique as a neoliberal "success story" (Hanlon 2002). How else can these actions be interpreted, given that two months after the murder of Siba-Siba Macuácuá, the Frelimo government asked for \$ 600 m in aid and was given \$ 722 m, despite the fact that his murder was linked to his investigation into how at least \$400 m was plundered, in part by leading figures in Frelimo? Such phenomena, combined with the liberalising impulses within the MDC, have important implications for any developmental content of the Corridor.

The Logic of Inclusion/Exclusion

The World Bank's deputy chief resident in South Africa asserted at the start of the MDC's foundation that 'the Corridor must be seen as a means to an end, and that end is poverty alleviation' (*Cape Times* (Cape Town), 11

August 1997). However, such developmental impulses are profoundly compromised by the neoliberal underpinnings of the SDI concept and the concomitant ingredients within neoliberalism itself. This of course is not to say there will not be “winners” from the (re)construction of the micro-region in terms of current practices/policies (Söderbaum and Taylor 2001). But, the explicitly neoliberal thrust of both the South African state’s and Mozambican state’s economic policies and the accompanying playing out of such tendencies within the MDC in a context where neo-patrimonial logic, particularly in Mozambique, trumps most policies, is hugely problematic. Unpacking the implications of this is obviously important.

In contrast to the stated objectives, the “actually existing” MDC is based on a narrow and instrumental strategy to promote economic development (or rather crowding-in of global capital), whereby, rather naïvely, development is believed to arise more or less automatically as a result of the implementation of some major investment projects, mainly in infrastructure, aluminium smelters, iron and steel projects and so on. There is a strong emphasis on commercial viability but very few concrete measures for a people-centred development path, or on how people in the corridor can contribute to development. According to this view, development is externally rather than internally and endogenously driven and mobilised.

From this it is clear that the MDC is designed first and foremost for big business, especially from South Africa and further afield. Local participation occurs on a rather arbitrary basis or when favourable conditions arise, rather than being an integral and systematic part of the formal projects. That is, the MDC is founded on a capital-intensive, big business and top-down development strategy, with the real intention to increase export growth and foreign exchange rather than people-centred development. It is basically an investment initiative resembling the old capital-push, “big-bang approaches” prevailing in the 1950s and 1960s (albeit seasoned with some ingredients from the economic growth paradigm in east and southeast Asia). The so-called holistic, environmentally sustainable and people-centred development aspects are difficult to discover in practical implementation.

The SDI model, as it were, is explicitly connected to perceptions held at the elite level that, in an era marked by globalisation, various types of regionalisation are a crucial means by which states may come together and tap into this process in order to maximise their pulling power vis-à-vis international capital. It also reflects the dominance of certain ideas regarding how best to pursue economic development. Problematically, however, the SDI programme is largely silent about endogenous development potential as

well as 'about deep structural inequalities, especially the qualitative aspects of underdevelopment lodged in the blockage of highly inegalitarian social systems' (Mittelman 2000:126). Yet in both countries, neoliberalism affords the elites and their constituencies important sources of resources and patronage, particularly in the way in which contracts are awarded (in South Africa, i.e., towards the nascent Black bourgeoisie) and in Mozambique, where there are ample opportunities to profit personally and politically from privatisation.

The economic strategies in both countries in general and the MDC in particular are predicated upon policies that further impoverish the masses whilst an ostentatious class of "entrepreneurs" (both local and South African) appears to be the only winner. Evidence of the direction in which processes have led thus far is provided by the United Nations Development Programme's 1998 'National Human Development Report on Mozambique', which posed a number of questions about Maputo's neoliberal elevation of growth as the main developmental goal:

What is growing and for whom? The growth of absolute poverty for the great majority, or the growth of ostentatious incomes for a small minority? The growth of social and civil security, or the growth of crime? Economic growth that promotes the human development of Mozambicans, or growth that is exported to soften the country's indebtedness? The growth of democracy and participation, or the growth of political apathy and abstention? The equitable growth of human development, or the inhuman deepening of inequalities between the sexes and between social, ethnic and racial groups? (quoted in Fauvet 2000:12).

Indeed, the winners in the ongoing processes within the micro-region appear to be restricted to a small fraction of the population, the well-connected elites. Certainly, an elite is using power 'in order to enrich itself. They don't think of Mozambique, they think of themselves' (*Mozambique News Agency AIM Reports* (Maputo), 24 May 2002). This is the reality within which the micro-region of the MDC finds itself embedded.

Competing Region-building Strategies

The state is doing little to forcefully advocate development within the MDC and there are few, if any, functioning structures and mechanisms for this to be integrated into the Corridor. What we see is a separation between the formal project as created by state-business networks and a diverse set of informal alternative and counter-strategies, such as the migrants' corridor, informal trade corridors and the criminal corridors.

The Migrant Corridor

Since far back in history there has existed a migratory tradition in Africa, *inter alia* documented by the spread of people of Bantu origin over all of Southern Africa. From the late nineteenth century there was also a pattern of migration from south of the Save River in Mozambique to work on the plantations in KwaZulu-Natal and the diamond mines in Kimberley. After the so-called pacification campaign carried out by Portugal in Mozambique in 1895, the colonial powers in Mozambique and Transvaal signed the first accord to regulate the influx of labour to the mines in the Transvaal in 1897. This marks the beginning of migratory patterns along the corridor as such. In return for the right to recruit Black labour in southern Mozambique, almost half of the export traffic from the Witwatersrand in South Africa was directed through the port at present-day Maputo (Taylor 1999:4).

Throughout the twentieth century, there was a steady flow of migrant labour along the corridor from Mozambique to South Africa, but also from Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana, and in the past significant numbers also from Malawi and Zimbabwe. A considerable portion of the miners have always originated in Mozambique, although the figures have fluctuated substantially over time. Regulated labour migration decreased in the 1990s but, at the same time, there are now an estimated one to three million so-called “illegal aliens” in South Africa, many of them from Mozambique. Many Mozambicans are seeking agricultural work on plantations around KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province. These migrants can be either legal or illegal, but often they tend to “crowd out” South African workers, since they are willing to work for lower wages and in poorer working conditions than the South African workforce. Other Mozambicans are engaged in a rich mix of informal trade or selling on the streets of Johannesburg, or small towns in Mpumalanga and Gauteng, often “illegally”, without proper documents.

Tolerated in the past as a source of cheap labour for businesses owned by Whites, the continuation of migration flows from Mozambique into South Africa has stimulated an increasingly hostile attitude towards Mozambicans. All “refugees” from Mozambique are now classed by Pretoria as illegal immigrants and South Africa enforces a policy of forced repatriation. Tens of thousands of illegal emigrants from Mozambique are deported every year. Most of the time they are simply dropped off on the Mozambican side of the border, returning soon after. Despite the elaborate fencing along the South African-Mozambican borders, a flow of impoverished migrants continues to stream across and through the micro-region.

This so-called “migrant problem”, and the xenophobia that flows from it, is created and maintained, consciously and unconsciously, by certain groups and interests in South Africa society in order to serve specific ideological goals (including racism, of course). This circumstance is an historical irony, considering the role of the Southern African peoples and countries in the build-up of the South African state and economy as well as in the anti-apartheid struggle. Peter Vale (2003:86) emphasises that the migrant problem is constructed in the minds of those who see states, borders and citizens from a particular viewpoint, whereby ‘migration can be addressed only in a specific predetermined way: migrants are always and forever aliens, outsiders, unwashed’. According to this ideology, migrants are seen as threats to national security, state stability and for some people even their identity. But as Vale goes on to argue, ‘in the construction of the South Africa state, migration has always been a source of security, not a cause of insecurity ... Southern Africa’s people have continuously serviced South Africa’s growing wealth and its assertion of political and strategic hegemony over the states that have been constructed around it’ (Vale 2003:95, 101).

The Informal Trade Corridor

Along the MDC there is a high degree of social and economic interconnectedness, be it formal/informal, legal/illegal. Formally, South African-Mozambican trade is growing, but there is a massive trade imbalance in favour of South Africa. This imbalance is seen as problematic for Mozambique. As elsewhere in Africa, the figures for official trade tell only one part of the story, however (MacGaffey 1991; Bayart *et. al.* 1999). In fact, ‘the fiction of the Westphalian state system in southern Africa contrasts with the lived reality on the ground: goods, people, resources, animals, and so forth continue to ignore these borders and to get along in spite of them’ (Swatuk and Vale 1999:366). Hence, outside the parameters of the official are the informal trading networks that tend to either have their separate life or emerge in a rather sophisticated interplay with the formal project. Regardless of the reasons for and effects of informal trade, this trade goes to the heart of issues surrounding gender equity and accessibility to any developmental spin-offs that may accrue from the MDC.

In Mozambique, the *mukhero* is one example of informal business practices that often span borders (Baptista-Lundin and Taylor 2003). Informal market activities and petty trade have flourished following the abandonment of the socialist project in Mozambique and the gradual disappearance of the old safety net provided by the state. This marks the beginning of the institu-

tion of *mukhero*, whereby a variety of goods, vegetables, fruits, clothes and small home appliances are brought in from other parts of Mozambique and the neighbouring countries to be sold on the informal market in Maputo. Again, the activities are often conducted by females and revenues are used to buy goods in South Africa and Swaziland and other neighbouring countries only to be sold back in Maputo. The vivid cross-border interactions that make up the *mukhero* involve all the countries bordering Mozambique, but particularly South Africa. Initially it was mainly a question of acquiring agricultural products to supply a market in need, but gradually other products have been incorporated. To a large extent these activities constitute a modern survival strategy, but several of the female traders also end up building viable, informal, business enterprises. Various attempts have been made to regulate and control borders, smuggling, informal trading and hawking, but people have often found other ways to get around these restrictions. In the words of one *mukherista*:

None of us hold a valid passport or visa, we cross the border under the fence. We have special arrangements with some officers, 'we pay and they don't see us'. However, the agreement is not always respected because many times we pay and they catch us anyway. When that is so we have no choice other than either to pay again, many times with sexual services to more than one of them, or to lose our goods risking also being arrested. Mukhero is not an easy business, but as far as I see it is at the moment the only alternative for us to survive (quoted in Baptista-Lundin and Taylor 2003:99).

Closely related, and one of the most contentious issues in this regard, is the privatisation of formerly publicly accessible transport routes, such as the N4 toll road. This has already provoked tensions between local communities and the investors involved in the project. Initially, women informal traders were chased off the N4 for trying to sell fruit to travellers (something they have done for decades). With the increase in traffic flows along this route, the impoverished women felt that they had a right to try and make a living this way. However, the local council felt that this activity was dangerous to road users and so a hard-standing area with a slip-off road was planned. Local women interviewed felt that this would deprive them of potential customers and complained about the sanitation conditions they work in (interview with informal traders outside Nelspruit, 3 April 2000).

According to formal policies of the MDC and two of its most important projects, the Mozal smelter and the N4 toll road, it is as if there is no informal economy in Mozambique or that it is an impediment to develop-

ment rather than a resource that needs to be promoted and reconciled with formal policies. The neglect of the informal economy – which constitutes between half and two-thirds of the total economy in Mozambique – can be seen in the gigantic financial resources devoted to large investment and infrastructure projects with only a small fraction going to local development and community participation, and hardly anything that targets the informal economy itself.

The difficulties in reconciling formal decision-makers with the agents in the informal economy is to a large extent a consequence of the failure of the former to acknowledge the potential of the latter. In fact, the MDC project is geared towards strengthening ties between state and a small number of big business actors, with the result that the informal economy is seen as a problem. The state-business actors are grouped in fairly small and introverted partnerships and networks, which tend to work rather well for those on the “inside” but are very difficult to penetrate and influence for those on the “outside”. There is certainly an obvious lack of institutions and formal mechanisms in the MDC which actors outside the state-business networks can access. Apart from a few committees tied to DBSA, more or less the only institution left to deal with the corridor is the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI). This is membership organisation, composed of private infrastructure investors and service providers, and with minor representation from public actors in South Africa. According to its stated purpose, the MCLI should promote the logistical development of the MDC and the interests of its members, but also promote the broader objectives of the MDC, which among other things include ‘creating an increasingly favourable climate for investment and new opportunities for communities along the length and breadth of the Corridor’ as well as ‘represent[ing] the combined views of all users of the Corridor and all parties involved in the provision of services in the Corridor’ (www.mcli.co.za). The MCLI is professionally managed and has already had an impact on networking between formal agents and businesses.

The fundamental problem is that the MCLI and its supporters in the state bureaucracy have a narrow understanding of who the corridor is for and how development can be achieved. This narrow understanding contrasts with the stated objectives of the MDC project in general (which is to facilitate a holistic and people-centred development path) as well as the MCLI’s own objectives noted above. The problem with MCLI is related to its claims about who the users and “communities” of the corridor are. It can hardly be disputed that many (small-scale) users and informal traders

“belong” to the communities in the corridor area, and also use the corridor on a daily basis. However, from the point of view of the MCLI, these agents and users constitute a problem, not a resource. The MCLI’s negative attitude towards the informal economy is seen in the following statement by its CEO in an interview in December 2004, which reveals an exclusionary notion of who is in the informal economy, why it exists, and what should be done about it:

The MCLI is not against informal trading *per se*, only the black market part of it, but it needs to be better organised. The Lebombo border post ... looked like a pigsty because of the vendors. People lived there and traded there. Vendors were in danger, any moment they could get hit by a truck. Vendors need to be capacitated [*sic.*] about rules and regulations connected to trading etc., there are bodies for that. From a logistical point of view, the squatters/vendors living at the border-post had to be evacuated, which is a good thing. Now they reside in a place with good facilities and better infrastructure some km’s away from the border-post.

This view contrasts sharply with that of Patricia Horn of the StreetNet International alliance of street vendors, who argues that the proponents of the MDC are bad at recognising street vendors and informal traders: ‘They try to pretend that they do not exist by dealing with what they call the SMME’s (Small, Medium and Micro-enterprises) ... if the government continue to do their planning without any consultation with the organisations of informal traders, it will be a matter of pot luck whether they happen to benefit the vendors or not’ (e-mail interview, StreetNet, December 2004). Furthermore, the vendors operating around the Lebombo border-post were seen as stumbling blocks to the improvement of the post and were finally removed in September 2004 to an old, isolated airport area far from the main road. According to Horn, this is just another sign of bad communication between the MDC policy-makers and informal traders. She adds that ‘it is appalling that they think that a roadside free of vendors is more desirable than an active trade along the roadsides with traders who come from the local communities’ (*ibid.*). Here it needs to be said that our analysis is by no means intended to romanticise the informal economy, but to pinpoint the different conceptions of the corridor, which interests are behind the different strategies, and why it seems so difficult to reconcile the two groups.

The Criminal Corridor

Illegal activities are equally important in discussing the processes at work along the MDC. For instance, Mozambique’s historical experience of armed

conflict continues to play itself out in a host of different ways, some more negative than others, often drawing together criminal elements along the Gauteng-Maputo nexus. Weapons smuggling is one important example. Estimates of weapons imported into Mozambique during the civil war range from 500,000 to six million. During the United Nations peacekeeping operation of 1993–95, about 190,000 weapons were collected. However, most were not destroyed and through various corrupt practices were soon back in the public domain, either circulating within Mozambique or being sold and illegally smuggled into neighbouring states, the main destination being South Africa. In four recovery operations performed jointly by South African and Mozambican authorities in recent years, a total of 11,891 firearms were seized and destroyed. These have included over 100 pistols, 6,000 anti-personnel mines and hundreds of the ubiquitous AK47. Also captured were over three million rounds of ammunition (*Business Day* (Johannesburg), 18 January 2000).

This profusion of illegal weaponry flows back and forth along the micro-region, much of it for hire at hourly rates. This criminality surely erodes any coherent notion of a security community, at least at the ground level and, lofty rhetoric aside, there has been a lack of success in stopping such illegal activity within the micro-region. In fact, recently it was announced that 144 organised criminal syndicates are operating in Mpumalanga, specialising in offences ranging from cash heists to stock theft. These syndicates also act as conduits for drugs and firearms along the Gauteng-Maputo nexus and use their organisations for counterfeiting money, cross-border vehicle smuggling and (increasingly) subverting government through corruption (*Business Day* (Johannesburg), 28 March 2000). Narcotic smuggling has become big business along the MDC. As one report framed it, ‘Mozambique is essentially a corridor for drugs, rather than a major user’, but that ‘drug money must be one factor in Mozambique’s record growth in recent years. This trade is only possible with the agreement of the Mozambican police and very senior Mozambican officials’ (*Mozambique News Agency AIM Reports* (Maputo), 29 June 2001). Certainly, ‘Mozambique could not have become an international transit centre for narcotics without widespread collusion between organised criminal groups and state officials’ (Gastrow and Mosse 2002: 53). Mozambique’s extreme poverty, low salaries and climate of pervasive corruption encourage bribery and corruption among police, border guards and government officials within Mozambique generally and the MDC specifically.

Indeed, corruption and crime go hand in hand along and within the corridor. Currently, there is a lack of political will to tackle crime and corruption, particularly within Mozambique, and there is evidence to suggest

that elements of the political class are associated with organised criminals. Indeed, according to one source, 'powerful criminal networks can almost be seen as having created a parallel power base from which to challenge the structures and capacity of the state' whilst working hand in hand with elements from within the Mozambican state (Gastrow and Mosse 2002:53). The political elite are intimately involved in this whole corridor of crime, protecting criminals and providing patronage to those involved in illicit activities. It is alleged that 'senior political figures, mainly those whose political authority is derived from their participation in the war of liberation in Mozambique, use their influential positions to intimidate those state officials who would be in a position to act against corruption and organised crime' (Gastrow and Mosse 2002:64).

Meanwhile, the donor community looks the other way and celebrates the MDC's "success". As Hanlon (2002:6) puts it:

Mozambique has become a donor playground, and the Mozambican elite has become highly skilled at giving the donors what they want. Thus management of donor money is transparent and clear. The predatory elite do not steal donors' funds; instead they rob banks, skim public works contracts, demand shares in investments, and smuggle drugs and other goods – and they ensure that the justice system does not work so they cannot be caught.

It needs to be recognised that these activities and networks are inherently inequitable and extremely uneven. They accumulate power and resources at the top, to the rich and powerful, and to those with jobs, including the urban poor and the rural producers. Small-scale cross-border traders are at a disadvantage since the economies of scale are 'only for those who can pay the necessary bribes' (Bach 1999:162). The only "popular" dimension of these networks can be found in their capacity to adjust to market demands and in the ruthless exploitation of populations that are confronted with diminishing alternatives to satisfy their needs. But what remains is 'a perception among some in Mozambique that the state mainly serves a minority of political supporters who benefit from its resources' (Gastrow and Mosse 2002:64).

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the MDC micro-region is an interesting mix of neoliberalism at the elite level infused within neo-patrimonial structures of governance. Certainly, any study of Mozambique in particular will show that neoliberal reform has gone hand in hand with the creation

and development of clientelism, patronage and corruption. Simply put, clientelism and graft do not take place outside neoliberal reforms and are not an aberration, but, in the context of such reforms being grafted on to neo-patrimonial systems, are actually part and parcel of the reforms. This has profound implications for how development is viewed as being pursued by elites in both Mozambique and South Africa. And this is particularly urgent when the MDC is seen as a model for the rest of the region. After all, in Tanzania recently the Mombasa-based Transport Transit Corridor Authority (TTCA) asserted that ‘the TTCA secretariat will rely on the experience in Southern Africa, particularly the Maputo Development Corridor, in working towards the transformation of the Northern Corridor from a transport corridor into an economic development corridor’ (*The East African (Nairobi)*, 13 September 2004). This assertion has important implications for governance structures within these spaces, as well for levels of corruption.

Furthermore, the political context of the MDC has important implications for any micro-regionalism within the MDC. It is a fact that Mozambique’s “democratisation” and postwar rebuilding has been characterised by cooptation and a return to (or intensification of) patrimonial behaviour. Frelimo has energetically sought to centralise authority and has continually tried to coopt opposition forces, rather than deal with them outright in an authoritarian manner (Frelimo’s natural predilection). This approach has far more to do with image and the desire to project a good impression to donors than it does with any intrinsic commitment to democracy. Those that succumb to such blandishments are incorporated into patrimonial structures and suitably rewarded. According to Lalá and Ostheimer (2003:52–3), ‘National reconciliation is conditional and based on the interests of the hegemonic party. Such a situation [has] only secure[d] a temporary peace, characterised mainly by passive resistance within society’. Indeed:

While the initial phase of Mozambique’s transition (1990–94) seemed to indicate that the country was on the path to democracy and democratic consolidation characterised by mutual respect between political actors, tolerance, dialogue and a climate of social trust, the years thereafter clearly highlighted the re-emergence of patrimonial structures and deeply rooted mistrust amongst political forces. Frelimo managed to dominate and steer Mozambique’s transition process. It did so in the beginning when it initiated an economic and political liberalisation process, and does so now. The entanglement of party and state, Frelimo’s patrimonial networks and the corrupt behaviour of the political elite, constitute severe obstacles for Mozambique’s progress towards consolidated democratic structures (ibid.).

Such impulses, it might be said, also constitute severe obstacles for the construction of any inclusive micro-regionalism along the MDC.

The broader macroeconomic vision upon which the MDC is constructed is vitally important. The neoliberal forces behind the formal micro-region's inception can only push for further privatisation, which will inevitably – given the context in which they take place – lead to more corruption and clientelism. The donor community is clearly not bothered by this, as long as liberalisation continues apace and Mozambique can be still held up as a “success story” with fantastic growth rates. Frelimo's elites quite happily go along with this charade, indeed personally profit from it. At the formal level, the MDC is designed for the purpose of crowding-in external capital in order to build industrial and infrastructural mega-projects and continue the myth of Mozambique as a neoliberal success story. It is driven by very select interests and the endogenous (and informal) capacities in the Maputo corridor are neglected. In fact, the MDC is designed almost as if there were no informal sector.

But, it is important to emphasise that the MDC cannot simply be defined as a top-down project to reconfigure spatial areas along neoliberal lines: globalisation and regionalisation stimulates reactions involving the reorganisation and re-territorialisation of spaces in order to meet the challenges posed and suggests that agency in such “Afro-regions” is present throughout. Though existing regionalist projects such as the MDC reflect the impulses of a neoliberal world, space for contesting alternatives exists, with counter-reactions being continually generated and with diverse forms of regional connectivities being constructed. This chapter has drawn attention to three particular competing notions of region-building in the corridor area – the migrant corridor, the informal trade corridor and the criminal corridor – but there are others.

What all the above suggests is that the regionalism of the MDC is not only driven by state elites, who have their own agenda, but also by communities and peoples who utilise the micro-region for a heterogeneous set of reasons and motives, as made explicit in the making and un-making of the formal MDC project and a set of more informal and alternative regional strategies. These two sets of processes – the formal/top-down and the informal/bottom-up – frequently clash and are in confrontation at a multiple and quite complex set of levels. Such processes and outcomes of region-building and region-destruction, in all their multiple activities and levels, characterise the micro-region.

Walvis Bay-Swakopmund: Desert Micro-region and Aspiring Regional Gateway

David Simon and Muriel Samé Ekobo

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the emerging Walvis Bay micro-region in Namibia, and the strategies driving its development, in the context of the broader post-apartheid regional dynamics of economic cooperation and integration in Southern Africa. The analysis is undertaken from the vantage point of a critical perspective on the ‘new regionalism’ (Grant and Söderbaum 2003; Neumann 2003; Söderbaum and Shaw 2003). This perspective regards states and official bodies as only one set of actors interacting in complex ways with NGOs and other elements of civic society and private enterprise, as well as the supra-national institutions of the regional bloc and beyond. Overlapping and contradictory influences and activities are worthy of analysis, as are new forms of rights-based politics (including minority group protection), identity, hybridity and informality that emerge both within and straddle the internal and external boundaries of a region (Simon 2003:69–70).

However, the particular case study presented here, namely the Walvis Bay micro-region, is no longer juridically transboundary in character because of recent political changes. It can, though, be distinguished quite easily in both physical and functional terms on Namibia’s desert Atlantic Ocean coast. Moreover, the historical transnational legacy that determined the infrastructural orientation, as well as the current external/transnational focus of the Namibian government’s development plans centred on Walvis Bay as a “gateway port”, justify its inclusion here.

Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, Arandis:
From Separate(d) Enclaves to Micro-region

The micro-region is delimited around the two coastal urban centres and immediate hinterlands of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, located only some 30 kilometres apart. Because of its degree of economic integration, the Rössing uranium mine and adjacent mining town of Arandis, about 70 kilometres into the Namib Desert from the coast, should be considered as the third

constituent pole. To assert that this coastal nexus represents a micro-region is surely uncontroversial. However, these three components have remarkably different histories and present-day economic bases, sociocultural compositions, identities and atmospheres. In the post-independence context and especially since Walvis Bay's reintegration into Namibia in 1994, this micro-region is delimited more by human and commodity flows and local political commitment than by physical frontiers. Although Walvis Bay was juridically an enclave until 1994, the Walvis Bay-Swakopmund-Arandis micro-region forms a coherent area beyond the original area along the Kuiseb River that has been Topnaar Nama territory since the ninth century. All this creates a unique micro-region in the country, one that is related to institutional will but also to the intensification of people's circulation/migration, be it urban, local and rural mobility or urban national mobility.

Such mobility is reflected in the micro-region's physical configuration, which hinges on the crucial importance of material/visible and immaterial/invisible flows that produce a regional dynamic. These include key elements of infrastructure such as the road from the capital, Windhoek, to the coast; the railway from the northern mines to the coast; the harbour and two of the country's three international airports. These links include not only a key axis of the country (from the interior/capital to the coast), they also reinforce exchanges of local goods and people, increasing, *inter alia*, many services and community links. Indeed, the three towns within the micro-region form both an essential part of the country's vital axis and the core of the Erongo Region (thus making it a micro-region within an administrative region). They represent the bulk of economic productivity, with almost the totality of employment and economic activities. They are also the main consumers of public funds: for example, in 1997, 80 per cent of the development projects funded by the government or international donors in the Erongo Region were located in Walvis Bay (60 per cent), Swakopmund (17 per cent) and Arandis (Samé Ekobo 2003:183).

Walvis Bay settlement was first annexed by the British in 1878, then ceded to the Cape Colony in 1884. The Cape became part of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Following South Africa's capture of Deutsch Südwestafrika from the Germans in 1915 and its subsequent recognition by the League of Nations as the mandatory power, Walvis Bay was administered together with the rest of South West Africa. This classical colonial conquest was formalised by the South West Africa Affairs Act of 1922. Successive settlements schemes brought Afrikaner farmers from South Africa to consolidate control of rural areas (which later came to supply beef to South Africa),

while exploitation of valuable diamond, base metal and fishing resources – the latter organised through Walvis Bay along with mineral exports – proved very profitable to South African interests over the next fifty years. However, Walvis Bay's status became contested during the Namibian liberation war. The South African government decided in 1977 to annex the port and the settlement of Walvis Bay to safeguard its perceived interests in the event that SWAPO – then still an avowedly Marxist liberation movement – ever came to power in Namibia. This action (re-)created an international boundary, albeit a highly contested one in international law (Berat 1990). Until the bilateral negotiations between the South African and new Namibian governments over Walvis Bay's future status moved forward in 1992, South Africa sought to retain control over "its" enclave in order to be able to hold Namibia to ransom in a veritable 'noose or lifeline' situation (Simon 1989) in the event of a perceived threat to its interests. The resolution of that border dispute through peaceful negotiations culminated with the subsequent transfer of sovereignty over Walvis Bay to Namibia at midnight on 28 February/1 March 1994 (Simon 1996a).

Swakopmund was founded at the mouth of the Tsoakhaub/Swachaub/Swakop River in 1892 (i.e., two years after Windhoek) as the main harbour of the nascent German colony. By this time, Walvis Bay was already in British possession. Rapidly becoming one of the colony's main towns, Swakopmund developed as a "Little Germany", a distinctive character retained to this day.

Arandis has also enjoyed a distinctive status, since the Rössing uranium mine was a forbidden area and the town was developed in parallel with increasing uranium production, particularly at the end of the 1970s. It has constituted a kind of private and informal enclave, very similar to any Western mine system developed around a single coal mine, with headquarters, engineers' and employees' houses, then workers' houses, one shop belonging to the mine, and so forth.

Under Namibian government control, these three entities no longer have different statuses, even if administrative differences remain, especially among the decentralised electoral constituencies implemented since 1992. But there are still great differences between these towns, since the various local authorities and governmental rules have not led to the same economic and infrastructural developments. For instance, Walvis Bay is Namibia's principal port and headquarters of the national fishing industry, with associated service and downstream industries, and has the largest airport outside Windhoek. By contrast, Swakopmund has, since German colonial days,

evolved principally into a tourist, leisure and retirement centre with only modest light industries, while Arandis was created to house the non-white workers of Rössing uranium mine (Diener 2000:291–2), one of Namibia's principal employers, foreign exchange earners and sources of corporate tax income.¹ However, the mine has been in decline for some years now, creating a real dilemma over the future of Arandis, particularly as it is planned to close in 2007. However, a possible extension until 2017, involving increased employment and output, is currently under scrutiny.

Paralleling these radically different economic orientations, each town also has a distinctive cultural background. Since the 1980s, Rössing Uranium Ltd. has portrayed itself as forward-looking in terms of wages and non-discriminatory workforce management. Indeed, the company desired to upgrade its image and to be advertised as a progressive company (following similar South African initiatives by De Beers, for instance). However, this has never really changed the social relations that still operate within the mine system, opposing bosses and workers, particularly in respect of the ethnic divisions created by apartheid.

Culturally, the German influence remains disproportionately strong in Swakopmund, despite whites long having been a minority of the population. In contrast, Walvis Bay was heavily dominated by Afrikaners (reflecting South African colonisation) and Oshiwambo-speakers from northern Namibia, who have traditionally provided the bulk of migrant workers in the fishing and other industries. The coloured population has been significant in artisanal trades. Given the Walvis Bay enclave's history and contested nature, strong senses of local identity have emerged over time, with radically different symbolisms and meanings for the respective apartheid-defined African, white and coloured communities. Harnessing these differences, overcoming the inherited legacies and integrating the communities into a new sense of belonging to the postcolonial Namibian state have presented new challenges after 1994. However, Walvis Bay's inhabitants also still possess a certain "south-afritude", revealing that the main shared experience beyond apartheid fragmentation is the South African influence, which has produced these typical habits (shared by white, coloured and black residents), through music, clothes, architecture, food, even mobility to Cape Town, for example. All this is considered by other Namibians as constituting "Walvis style",

1. In 2001, Rössing contributed 2.5 percent of Namibia's GDP and 10 percent of Namibia's export earnings.

a very tangible subjective and historically derived element of the micro-region's transnational character.

Such a nexus of multiple local identities overlain by historical, national(ist) senses of belonging-at-a-distance and contemporary Namibian identity-information attests to the complex multi-scale nature of regionness within the micro-region.

Showcase Micro-region

The eventually peaceful resolution of the Walvis Bay border dispute created the conditions for a proactive micro-regional development policy centred on Namibia's principal port and new export processing zone (EPZ) nearby (Simon 1996a, 1998, 1999 2002; Samé Ekobo 2003). Although Walvis Bay itself ceased to be a transboundary entity, its new-found national "home" would provide the immediate context for highly (perhaps even overly) ambitious local development dreams, based on a dovetailing of Namibian national reconstruction and emerging transboundary development initiatives from the mid-1990s onwards.

Such possibilities were enabled by the insertion of Walvis Bay into independent Namibia's post-apartheid local and regional governance system. A unitary and non-racial town council was established under the 1992 Local Authorities Act, and since the first elections in August 1994 it has operated like other Namibian municipalities (the most sophisticated category of local authority), such as Swakopmund, while Arandis is a town council (a lesser category). Furthermore, the former enclave became part of the Erongo Region (the subnational or second tier of governance) administered from Swakopmund. On account of its economic base and relatively wealthy population, it is one of the best endowed of Namibia's 13 regions but, like most others, is hamstrung by inadequate finances and personnel relative to its extensive responsibilities (Simon 1996b, 1998; Forrest 1998). Although the regional council is seeking to promote a sense of regional identity, efforts to attract investment – especially from abroad – through "place marketing" and related strategies are undertaken principally at the local authority level.

Overall, the central Namibian government's development programme and local plans in Walvis Bay and Swakopmund have been mutually reinforcing, providing substantial political will to create a sub-regional "hub" around the existing infrastructure and tangible economic potential of this micro-region. This, in turn, is consistent with the regional transboundary initiatives of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), which

are ultimately driven by the South African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). While ostensibly forming a key part of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) drive for regional integration, as Söderbaum and Taylor (this volume) indicate, there is little evidence of direct involvement by SADC officials or political leaders. Analysis of the micro-region's experience to date, therefore, provides an excellent opportunity to assess Namibia's liberalisation and foreign investment policies (Simon 2002) and how they fit with the regional-scale transboundary initiatives (such as spatial development initiatives (SDIs)) or development corridors geared to boosting regional competitiveness within a liberalising and globalising world economy. Thus, the making of this micro-region to date has definitely been via an institutional and top-down approach, i.e., state-driven, under the leadership of local/national/regional public bodies (especially Walvis Bay municipality, SADC and the DBSA), to obtain private sector investment. A key role is that played by local elites, through their activities in seeking formal and informal coalitions or partnerships. Such investment promotion efforts have remained the principal source of regional "achievement", rather than the activities and initiative of the local inhabitants.

This is significant, as the Walvis Bay micro-region is being touted within Namibia as a showcase for the new regionalism. In other words, the example has rhetorical and potentially also practical value as a model of what can ostensibly be achieved under the prevailing neoliberal politico-economic regime, utilising appropriate tools. It should thus serve as a source of inspiration to be emulated elsewhere. The principles of EPZs, development corridors, creating a hub and increasing the tourism sector are the main elements of post-independence Namibia's orientations and constitute an attempt to lessen dependence on the declining mining sector. Indeed, this new regionalism is supposed to fulfil three main objectives. First, at a local scale, the task is to find new economic bases to lessen the mono-orientation of each of its three core areas (the fishing sector in Walvis Bay, mining sector in Arandis, tourism in Swakopmund). Second, at a national/regional scale, it is to create an additional gateway and thereby to lessen Namibia's dependency on South Africa. Finally, at a global or international scale, it is to demonstrate Namibia's adaptation to globalisation and to neoliberal orientations, particularly the promotion of open, trade-based economic relations based on comparative advantage. The role of the state in such formulations is to be that of a regulator and referee, as recommended by key international institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and World Trade Organisation.

Walvis Bay as Heart of the Micro-region

The mechanisms put in place to advance the micro-region are very much built around the idea of a “hub”, with Walvis Bay being touted as a regional gateway port. These ideas constitute potentially significant (perhaps even powerful) vehicles for transforming local attitudes and mentalities, even if material progress on the ground has been modest. Indeed, Walvis Bay has become the heart and the motor of this region-making process, not only because of its geographical situation but also because of its local story. We illustrate this by means of two examples.

Delineating Multi-scalar Politics

The Walvis Bay micro-region project can in part be seen as an attempt by local actors to obtain more autonomy vis-à-vis Windhoek and, at the same time, reinforce their link to state power. In the past, power was accorded by the social hierarchy of apartheid but in the post-independence context, new kinds of arrangements are occurring – and they are very intense considering the provincial character of Walvis Bay and, even in national terms, the small size of Namibia’s elite. In such a milieu, political arrangements follow three logics: business circles, state power and local government. Walvis Bay’s four elites (or segments of the elite) are the local authorities (black), the municipal technicians/engineers (white), the businessmen (white) and the new racially mixed bourgeoisie – linked to the ruling party. These four groups are linked together in relations of power dominated by mutual interdependency. For instance, the technicians depend on the local authorities, which have the political power to decide: but the local authorities also depend on the technicians who have the power of knowledge. In addition, the local authorities depend on the central state for their negotiating capacity whilst the state is dependent on the local authorities to consolidate its political basis. And the businessmen are dependent on the local authorities as a relay to central state power, and so forth. Interestingly for present purposes, this interaction is working fruitfully, even though the elite is fragmented. This dynamic – which has strong continuities from the 1977–94 period – empowers Walvis Bay’s position in the national and regional system.

No similar configuration exists in Swakopmund or in Arandis. In Swakopmund, potential collaboration between the different elites is somewhat compromised by the political conflict between the “old German” politics and the “new SWAPO”, despite (or perhaps because of) the economic stakes being smaller. As a mine town, Arandis lacks the economic base for

the emergence of true elites, especially since the skilled workers tend to commute to work there from homes in and around Swakopmund.

The Legacy of the Period 1977–94

This short period is far from insignificant relative to the far longer era preceding 1977 when Walvis Bay was administered as an integral part of South West Africa. In particular, in relation to its occupation of Namibia Pretoria's strategy was to shape Walvis Bay as a model apartheid town. Moreover, the legacy of this period largely determines Walvis Bay's position nowadays, evidenced, for example, in a substantial municipal budget and over-equipped urban infrastructure, and, as mentioned above, in the distinctive local identity that has built up. We argue that the present micro-region around Walvis Bay could not have emerged if the geopolitics of the enclave had not been so high profile and had such high stakes. In other words, Walvis Bay would today probably be just a port in the desert instead of a growth pole with a distinct identity. All the political and business relationships that deal with the micro-region process are linked to the enclave-shaping period, i.e., the "urban regime" of overlapping formal and informal coalitions between the business and political elites (Stone 2001) of Walvis Bay, and relations between the local authorities, central government and SWAPO (Samé Ekobo 2003).

Indeed, the dominance of Walvis Bay has been – and continues to be – reinforced by a high level of public (and partly private) investments in the harbour, the EPZ and the various modes of transport. Walvis Bay's harbour is still the trump card of the regional project (Moorsom 1984; Simon 1998; Simon 1999:500–1; Simon 2002:180–1; Samé Ekobo 2003:93–6). It is a port without equivalent in Namibia (compared to Swakopmund and Lüderitz) or on the southwestern Atlantic coast between Luanda and Cape Town. Even if its military role since independence and since the official end of the Angolan conflict is no longer significant, it is nonetheless Namibia's only naval base. Since 1994, the port has been managed by Namport, a commercial parastatal corporation which owns the harbour installations, while 90 per cent of the nets, pallets, slings and other wharf equipment belong to private stevedoring companies. Cargo handling services (fishing boats, oil industry vessels such as offshore supply boats and anchor handling tugs), marine services, leasing of land, storage and bunker services are available. Virtually all Namibia's sea-borne imports and exports pass through Walvis Bay harbour. The new deal for the harbour comprises modernisation, expansion and reorganisation of management in terms of current neoliberal policies to separate the regulatory

function from the operating function of Namport (Simon 2002:181; www.namport.com) and infrastructures to cope with increased traffic and competition with other ports. It seeks to comply with international standards (especially the growth of containerisation). It also seeks to meet domestic demand (for example, the increasing needs of a growing urban population with new consumption profiles) and different needs in relation to the new orientations of the country's economy or areas (e.g., drought) and to anticipate regional demand (from poor or landlocked neighbour countries, especially Zambia and the DRC). This challenge has been met with partial success, as evidenced by a noticeable increase in trade flows, volumes of cargo, shipping lines and number of vessels recorded since 1994.

Walvis Bay Corridor

Economic growth in Namibia has traditionally been only weakly linked to foreign private investment in the manufacturing sector (Foreign Investment Act of 1990, amended in 1993). Hence, the Namibian government's policy on investment provides for a wide range of incentives to encourage manufacturing and exporting strategies. These have been developed in line with the standard model of EPZs in developing countries since the 1960s, a model that was also being applied elsewhere in Southern Africa during the 1990s (Jauch *et al.* 1996; Jauch 2000).²

EPZ status is granted to demarcated areas (namely EPZs) or to companies (Export Processing Units, EPU), on condition that the total production is exported to countries other than the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) member states (Billawer and Samé Ekobo 2002:58). The products manufactured have duty-free access to European Union markets and there is preferential access to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

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2. The Namibian EPZ scheme offers the typical EPZ incentives such as corporate tax holiday; exemption from import duties on imported intermediate and capital goods; exemption from sales tax, stamp and transfer duties on goods and services required for EPZ activities; reduction in foreign exchange controls; guarantee of free repatriation of capital and profits; permission for EPZ investors to hold foreign currency accounts locally; access to streamlined regulatory service ("one stop shop"); refund of up to 75 percent of costs of pre-approved training of Namibian citizens; no strike and lock-outs allowed in EPZs; provision of factory facilities for rent at economical rates (www.mti.gov.na).

EPZs are claimed to represent the best way, using fiscal tools (tax concessions and financial incentives from government or local public bodies such as the municipality or the chamber of commerce) to combine the objectives of increasing the manufacture of export goods and expanding export earnings, creating industrial employment, attracting foreign investment, encouraging technology transfers and labour skills, and promoting integration into the global economy. The EPZ strategy, representing the Namibian local authorities' principal explicit local economic development (LED) strategy, was initially centred on Walvis Bay before being extended countrywide (Simon 1999:496–500; Endresen and Jauch 2000; Jauch 2000). After various development proposals by Southern African and foreign firms, the Walvis Bay municipality took the initiative to implement an EPZ in terms of the EPZ Act of 1995.

The concept of development corridors emerged during the 1960s in advanced industrial countries (US, Canada and then Europe). The corridor is a route system that is designed to be faster and eventually cheaper as a result of forwarding goods through transport networks that combine airways, roads and railways to/from a harbour. Its potential significance has increased because the South African government and the SADC have favoured this form of regional integration since the 1990s. It involves concentrating investment geographically in the hopes of achieving multiplier effects more readily. The most important corridor for purposes of this chapter, the Coast to Coast (C2C) scheme, has been planned since the new millennium, although largely by the South African Department of Trade and Industry rather than the SADC itself. However, these plans mesh seamlessly with the grandiose visions of the interests behind the Walvis Bay Corridor. Management of this corridor is undertaken by the Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG), a public-private partnership involving various Southern African freight associations and governmental and local authorities (www.wbcg.com.na). This Corridor consists of (a) the port of Walvis Bay; (b) the TransKalahari Highway (which links Walvis Bay with Gaborone, the Botswanan capital, and South Africa's Gauteng industrial heartland by means of tarred roads, a rail line from Walvis Bay to Gobabis and Grootfontein in northern Namibia, with transshipment facilities at both Windhoek and Gobabis); and (c) the Trans Caprivi Highway (a tarred road of 1,500 kilometres from Walvis Bay to the northeastern borders of Namibia, connecting with Zimbabwe and Zambia and further connecting to the southern DRC via Zambia). Strictly speaking, aerial and maritime routes are not considered but they do indeed form part of this corridor. These overland routes join the Maputo Corridor.

The Corridor's marketing strategy is basic: Walvis Bay's geographical location offers the shortest distance (in the form of trade routes to Central and Southern Africa) to a market of about half a billion people and saves transporters and traders hours on what have become 'traditional' trade routes. Its implementation began in 1997–98 and the Walvis Bay Corridor has been partly operational since 2001 (*Namibian*, 31 May 2001) and is showing 'efficient record and good interchange facilities' (Simon 1998:123). The Corridor's reduced geographical distances theoretically reduce transit time by a few days, while the harbour presents quite a low average turn-around time for container ships (18 hours), whilst there are also feeder services and Namport claims to provide safe handling (interviews with Jerome Mouton, Namport marketing manager 1998, 1999, 2001). Despite the growing importance of tourism revenues for Swakopmund and the dominance of uranium from Rössing/Arandis for the national accounts, this micro-region is really centred on Walvis Bay, which controls the communications infrastructure. Is it possible to steer an active and coherent sustainable regional policy under these conditions?

Fragile and Precarious Region-Building Process

Here we explore three issues that enable us to throw light on dilemmas facing the micro-region, namely (a) the lack of shared political will by the states of Southern Africa and the extent to which the regional actors actually possess the power to act decisively; (b) the competitive pressures perceived by the micro-regional and Corridor's champions, not least on account of Walvis Bay's global and even regional insignificance in the globalisation stakes; and (c) the nature and extent of economic diversification. These issues are far from unique to Walvis Bay and Namibia: indeed, they are also pertinent to region-building efforts at other scales within the SADC region (see Hansohm *et al.* 2002; Lee 2003; Söderbaum 2004). On the basis of actual progress on the ground, Hansohm *et al.* (2002) play the Devil's Advocate by posing the question of whether regional integration really has the importance that people ascribe to it.

Lack of Common National Political Will

A fundamental question is whether there is sufficiently strong political will on the part of the different states to create the Corridor links or whether internal competition remains stronger? For instance, there is still no common customs legislation among the 14 member states of the SADC, a situ-

ation now recognised as the main obstacle to the efficiency of the corridors (*Namibian*, 31 May 2001; *Namibia Economist*, 25 April 2003). In addition, many technical and financial problems, such as different national maximum legal axle loads, different opening hours at border posts and shortages of clearing agents and equipment (*Namibia Economist*, 7 December 2001), have not yet been resolved, thus hampering the efficiency of the Walvis Bay Corridor. Nevertheless, gradual progress is being made, for example with the recent introduction of a single document policy in terms of the SADC free trade protocol, although implementation and compliance are often still patchy and ineffective.

We also need to assess the will and ability to act concertedly. The environmental issue illustrates the dilemmas and difficulties well. On the one hand, the orientation in Namibia and Botswana towards exclusive, high income, supposedly low-impact tourism (targeting rich Western clients sensitive to ecology and the natural environment) instead of mass tourism tends to protect the rare, fragile and water-scarce environment of this ecologically important micro-region from rapid destruction (Billawer and Samé Ekobo 2002:18–20). On the other hand, local actors are the first to neglect the protection of this “green gold”: there is no doubt that pollution is increasing (Environment Evaluation Unit 1999) with the growing traffic and new facilities. In fact, a wide range of legislative tools, both international and national, exists, but their impact is questionable insofar as the definition of protecting the environment remains unclear. The same applies to the responsibilities and sanctions for infringements, and insofar as each company can decide its own environmental standards. Moreover, each local authority has its own approach and does not collaborate systematically with its neighbours. Sometimes, local authorities even compete against each other (e.g., over the location of a desalination plant). Driving forward an environmental policy at the micro-regional scale will require concerted action. In the absence of an appropriate micro-regional authority with relevant powers, this will necessitate innovative and concerted collaboration among the different local authorities (something that so far seems unlikely) or a top-down initiative by Erongo Regional Council or the government.

“We Must Compete”: Lack of Visibility of the Walvis Bay Hub Outside Namibia

The total traffic through Walvis Bay harbour in 1995–96 was a mere 2 million tonnes per annum, having risen significantly since the town’s re-integration with Namibia (Simon 1998:109) and having increased since. However, the harbour has a very low capacity compared with South African

ports. Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Saldanha Bay, Durban and Richard's Bay harbours have respectively 3, 4.5, 12, 16 and 40 times higher traffic than Walvis Bay. Walvis Bay harbour would probably be unable to compete with Luanda or Lobito if they were to be rehabilitated in due course. In addition, could Walvis Bay compete effectively with South Africa's low port rates? The harbour also has to deal with physical limitations, especially in view of the problems of deepening the access channels to permit larger ships to dock. Capacity is thus limited to a likely maximum of 10 million tonnes even after the current expansion programme.

On the EPZ side, the poor skills level and quality of the workforce are also problematic. No training plan exists and no technology transfer is occurring, since the machinery used by EPZ companies is usually not highly sophisticated (*Die Republikein*, 14 April 2000). Even if officials insist on a long-term view and on an absolute need for competition and argue that 'Namibia is ranking as number four on the African Competitiveness Report in terms of investment' (*Namibia Economist*, 17 July 2002), the competition is stiff, especially considering other EPZs in Southern Africa (not to mention the rest of the world). EPZs in Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe or disguised EPZs in South Africa offer nearly the same advantages and incentives as Namibian EPZs. Mauritius has one of the world's leading EPZs, whence some senior personnel were brought to Walvis Bay to assist in the establishment of the local EPZ. Mozambican and South African zones are assisted because of the proximity of South Africa's vast industrial hinterland, the rate of economic growth and because Western businessmen are more disposed to invest in South Africa (the new African giant), Mozambique or Angola (the new postwar economies) than elsewhere in Southern Africa. In this context of neoliberal globalisation, EPZs, governments, local authorities, cities and regions are competing directly with each other for the same footloose investors, often using "place marketing" strategies (see above).

Furthermore, to date the C2C highway link remains more of a vision than a reality. The Trans-Caprivi and the Trans-Kalahari routes are good tarred roads rather than "highways" and parts of the infrastructure are not yet complete anyway. It is true that the elegant new 900-metre road bridge over the Zambezi river linking Namibia's eastern Caprivi Strip and Zambia opened more or less on schedule in mid-May 2004 while the 202 kilometre road linking it to Livingstone has been tarred, but who and what it is supposed to link remains unclear. A Corridor committee has been established by the Namibian, Zambian and DRC governments to promote the route's efficient utilisation with great hope being placed on an upturn in traffic if

Zambian agricultural and copper exports and mining equipment imports can be attracted to this route. Interviewed in the *Namibia Economist* (13 June 2004), Nick Hibbert, the project coordinator, claimed confidently that 'it won't be a white elephant like the Trans-Kalahari used to be'. However, a note of caution is appropriate: while this and other trunk routes are certainly reducing the overall distance and improving landlocked countries' access to ports, they are not necessarily shortening travel time, since other obstacles remain: numerous border posts and cumbersome customs procedures – of which the still-poor recognition of the single document policy provided under the SADC protocol on transport is the most frustrating, as well as inadequate cooperation between the respective ministries of transport (Dierks 2004).

Moreover, apart from the bridge, the northern extension of the Trans-Caprivi to Lubumbashi in the DRC has been delayed; the shortcut through the Khomas Hochland for the Trans-Kalahari is 'still in the pipeline'; while the truck port at Walvis Bay was initially dropped after the government's decision to put off the building of a tarred road behind the dune belt (*Namibia Economist*, 23 November 2001) due to a lack of money. Furthermore, air traffic is barely growing and the upgrading of Walvis Bay airport was postponed from 2002 to the 2004–05 financial year. However, in late 2003, the Walvis Bay council sold three hectares of land to a company for the development of a truck port (*Namibian*, 9 September 2003). Meanwhile, a new study supported by the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) is currently investigating improvements to the Trans-Kalahari Corridor: the plan will examine the operation of an integrated multimodal transport system and include analyses of information technology requirements, port handling equipment and improvements to the rail link between Walvis Bay and Windhoek and Gobabis, on the easternmost extension on the Trans-Namib railroad (www.rra.co.za).

The growing traffic figures on the Walvis Bay Corridor must be assessed carefully, since the increasing heavy commercial traffic represents only a tiny fraction of regional shippers. The issues of speed and safety also call into question the slogan of Walvis Bay Corridor supporters that 'reducing distances = saving money and time'. At the national level, security breaches in the Kavango and Caprivi regions constitute a negative factor while the lack of coordination – including administrative delays, high fees, banditry or awkward relations – with neighbouring countries constitutes a major grievance.

What Kind of Economic Diversification?

The current strategy for region-building around Walvis Bay is presented by the region-makers (government officials, local authorities, some SADC politicians and business leaders) as the best way to diversify the local economy and thereby solve the crisis presented by the decline in Rössing's activities and output, and to expand economic activities. These objectives are far from being fulfilled, since the hegemony of the traditional sectors still exists despite the growth of tourism, and overall dependency on South Africa has not declined significantly.

Initially, the EPZ business plan targeted light industries such as textiles and garments, electronics, footwear and leather goods, sporting goods, pharmaceuticals, household goods, car assembly or car part manufacture and foreign direct investment from Asia. However, the reality is quite different. The Walvis Bay EPZ has provided some diversification of the local economy, with new manufacturing activities such as car components, packing materials and household goods. But as Jauch indicates, 'backward linkages with the host economy remain quite insignificant': all EPZ companies import their machines, raw materials and input materials from outside Namibia and they carry out their own maintenance work in-house or require services only occasionally (Jauch 2000:52–3). The financial equation of the EPZ for the local economy and the main investor (i.e., the municipality) remains far from profitable: the only direct revenues for the municipality come from water, electricity and building leases. However, these are very modest compared with the substantial development costs of the EPZ infrastructure and the staff costs of the EPZ management company and municipal staff seconded to the EPZ programme. The subsidised services to EPZ companies, promotional trips and materials, not to mention the government revenue foregone as a result of tax exemptions and economic distortions due to the special incentives for EPZ companies, government loans to the ODC and so forth all mount up (Jauch 2000:50).

One key environmental constraint requires mention: the region has been beset by periodic water shortages since the commencement of colonial settlement. The Kuiseb River aquifer is under severe strain as domestic and industrial demands have risen, while concerns about toxic groundwater contamination from the Rössing mine have been aired. Recent official data suggest that actual usage in the micro-region is about 11 million cubic metres p.a. (with consumption in Walvis Bay having stabilised due to reduced fish processing and a new progressive water tariff structure), while a maximum sustainable yield of 12.9 million cubic metres p.a. is available

from existing sources (the Kuiseb River and Omdel Dam scheme). Plans to construct a desalination plant to augment supply are on hold but might be revived if demand rises, for example from a proposed new uranium mine in the Namib Desert (*Namibian*, 29 October 2004).

Micro-region Expansion: An Elite Vision?

Economic mechanisms are presented by the political leaders and businessmen as being the only means to foster a dynamic micro-region. In attempting to assess the adequacy or importance of these tools to region-building, we find various weaknesses, some of them contradictory to the original idea. In short, even if the local elites have great expectations of future expansion and confidence in the announced profits, there is negligible involvement “from below” in economic activities.

Indicative of the top-down nature of this EPZ/SDI vision and efforts to implement it is the following quote, which reveals that even the local business community was in the dark or had at best a sketchy knowledge of what was afoot:

Kruger, former head of the WBEPZMC (Walvis Bay EPZ Management Company), said it was important that the local business community know what an EPZ is and what it is not, as many questions have been asked since the inception of the EPZ at Walvis Bay. ‘An EPZ is not a magic formula for attracting investments, it is not a formula for bringing instant hi-tech investment and it is not a quick-fix solution to unemployment and the transfer of skills’ he said. Kruger said EPZ was in essence an area set aside for export manufacturing activities where equipment and materials of foreign and domestic origin can be imported, processed and exported without the payment of import and export duties or trade restrictions (*Namibian*, 22 July 2001).

Employment figures reveal that the number of net jobs created within “showcase mechanisms” has fallen well short of predictions, and this situation helps to explain why the regional vision is still dominated by an elite, with little resonance for ordinary people. For instance, the port has had more or less the same number of employees since 1994, representing about 2 per cent of the local workforce: contract workers are recruited if needed (i.e., seasonal workforce, especially dockers). The Corridor has generated very few new jobs. Confusing statistics of the employment generated by the EPZ show a very different reality from the high expectations spawned by over-optimistic official announcements: a few hundred rather than tens of

thousands. Even now, the failure of the EPZ strategy, both in terms of the number of firms actually operating and the number of directly created jobs, is denied by officials. Far fewer people work in Walvis Bay EPZ than in the fisheries or mines, but the EPZ is still presented as the leading employer. Yet mining employment, concentrated at Rössing Uranium at Arandis and the salt pans in Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, has declined. Tourism in this micro-region (as in the rest of Namibia) has been probably the fastest-growing sector, headed by Swakopmund, the country's premier holiday and tourism resort. However, both the region and country as a whole have experienced a sharp recent decline in tourist numbers. This is disturbing the predicted growth of both employment and investment and, if it persists, will pose a threat to the principal form of economic diversification.

A crucial point to emphasise is that the main employment sectors in this micro-region (namely, fishing, tourism and mining) are highly globalised through patterns of corporate ownership and investment, as well as through strong links to international (market and policy) fluctuations. In this way, they may be little affected by – and unresponsive to – local economic initiatives unless there is a strong (local, national and sub-regional) political will to tie them in as economic catalysts, often at considerable direct financial and opportunity cost (in terms of incentives and allowances, and revenues foregone, respectively).

In this context, the weaknesses of the economic mechanisms developed to reinforce the regional gateway concept and functions reveal more about the place and role of the discourse in region-making than its effectiveness for the inhabitants of this micro-region. In essence, the Walvis Bay micro-region exists through the vision, attitudes or strategies of the elites but has no practical meaning in the lives of most people, for whom relations and interactions with Windhoek or even Cape Town are more concrete than a regional dynamic. This confirms Söderbaum's (2004:82–4) finding in respect of micro-regional governance in Africa.

In fact, there is negligible grassroots involvement in the very weak social dynamics of region-building from below and the Walvis Bay micro-region has singularly failed to capture the popular imagination. Only through essential drivers like employment, salaries and so forth is there (weak) economic redistribution, in contradistinction with the top-down political discourse and electoral promises. Local and national governments must then answer to (and regulate) social demands but their inability to do so increases criticism and loss of legitimacy. Even if SWAPO continues to win the majority of votes, the presentation of independent lists during the last local

elections indicates a new phenomenon of contestation of the traditional political structures.

For example, there were numerous demonstrations, petitions and strikes during the 1990s at Walvis Bay harbour, the EPZ and at Rössing. The workers fought against poor labour relations (wages, working conditions, discrimination) and to obtain more legal protection, particularly in the face of the government's efforts to implement EPZ legislation containing an exemption from provisions of the Labour Act so as to prevent strikes and suspend other workers' rights within EPZs (Jauch 2000:54–7, 2002:104–7; Simon 1999:499–500). Small workers' victories, like wage increases at Namport in recent years, or more important ones such as the right of EPZ workers to strike, have not yet changed the context of employment within the micro-region. Moreover, the consequence has been ambiguous relations between trade unions, local and national authorities, political parties and government. The poor employment conditions and high unemployment rate of 24 per cent in Walvis Bay are contributing to growing poverty, especially among the vast majority of the "previously disadvantaged" (i.e., non-whites), who are also the losers in the process of post-apartheid reconstruction, which has not adequately tackled the roots of social and spatial discrimination. With this inertia of the inherited apartheid structure, an emerging pattern at the scale of this micro-region combines spatial fragmentation with competition for economic and political resources.

Conclusion

The Walvis Bay/Swakopmund/Arandis micro-region reveals both distinctive features and a number of commonalities with micro-regional strategies and transport corridors (national and transboundary SDIs) elsewhere in Southern Africa. The analysis also underscores that, even in such a hostile, arid environment and with physical isolation of the principal economic cores, a region has no single or unique meaning and is multi-faceted. As Söderbaum and Taylor (Chapter 1) point out, 'regions are not simply material structures, but highly subjective phenomena'.

The region-building process around Walvis Bay shares several common characteristics with others in Southern Africa, such as those reported in Grant and Söderbaum (2003). Firstly, the approach is top-down, driven by state policy and is advanced by an alliance of state and corporate elites. This approach is consistent with SADC's strategy of regional integration through collaboration among formal state structures (Simon 2003; Billawer

and Samé Ekobo 2002), and the way in which the SDI programme is being driven by South Africa's DTI. Despite public pronouncements (and probably aspirations) to the contrary, the roles of public bodies are thus complex rather than being straightforward and revolving around coordination and facilitation.

Second, the micro-regional project is being implemented in a neoliberal macroeconomic and political context (of which it forms an integral part), focusing on international competitiveness, with considerations of costs, efficiency and reliability to the fore. However, it is questionable how successful such strategies can be in a marginal region within a marginal continent: sub-Saharan Africa as a whole remains very marginal to the world economy except as a source of raw and some semi-processed materials and for certain specific areas that are international tourist destinations. South Africa remains exceptional and while transboundary areas adjacent to its heartland, like southern Mozambique, can be quite successfully integrated – as facilitated by the Maputo Development Corridor – the potential for isolated and peripheral localities like the Walvis Bay/Swakopmund/Arandis micro-region seems limited.

Third, marketing is occurring on the basis of an elite leadership vision of a model micro-region and transport corridor, characterised by economic diversification and sustainable development. Fourth, dependency on South Africa's economy remains high (although somewhat lower than before independence), despite Walvis Bay's harbour infrastructure now being fully integrated into Namibia (Simon 1998, 1999; Samé Ekobo 2003). Efforts to reduce this umbilical connection have yielded only disappointing results, while the corridor and its transboundary extension into the Coast2Coast SDI are designed to enhance infrastructural integration with South Africa and other neighbours. Finally, the champions of this process have not considered or sought to promote any aspect of cultural regionalisation, i.e., the creation of a common/shared sense of regional identity.

On the other hand, the micro-regional strategy also differs from similar experiences (e.g., the Maputo Development Corridor) in several respects. It reflects a certain understanding of a micro-region, i.e., formal and intra-national, with no direct cross-border interactions, with various formal institutions implicated in a hierarchical manner. Indeed, the micro-regional strategy was launched after the disappearance of the international boundary that previously divided the Walvis Bay enclave from its natural hinterland. It is also not a lagging area with unrealised economic potential, due to the legacy of apartheid. Third, the challenge may be not so much to revitalise

an axis as to increase the growth of a pole to create an economic axis traversing both national territory and transboundary space. Fourth, the small geographical scale of the micro-region and its constituent societal fragments reveals the very real impact that a determined and well-resourced group of elite champions or “region-builders” can have in driving forward their vision, even in the absence of a wider buy-in or sense of ownership by the local population at large.

We have sought to assess whether the current approach represents a means to transform the micro-region from enclave to gateway, or is just a means to manage the transformation of Walvis Bay from a national growth pole to a small globalising town. To date, the EPZ and other initiatives to attract international capital and promote diversified industrialisation as the engine of employment creation and economic development through global trade have proven very disappointing. The fishing and mining industries have both been traditionally well integrated with transnational resource and capital flows, so this dimension is not new per se. Since the Coast2Coast SDI and Trans-Caprivi Highway are only now nearing completion, it is premature to evaluate their impact, although we have indicated our reservations about the highly ambitious trade flow targets being espoused by their Namibian champions. One additional possibility, not yet showing any signs of materialising but at least flagged in a study sponsored by SADC to assess the region’s position in relation to the US’s AGOA, relates to enhanced production of garments in Botswana and their export to the US through Walvis Bay via the Trans-Kalahari Highway, along with garment exports from the other landlocked states and northern parts of South Africa (Lee 2003:187).

More generally, despite its small geographical extent and tripolar nature, the micro-region exemplifies many of the concepts and features outlined by the editors in the introduction to this chapter. In particular, we have explored the complexity of, and asymmetrical relationship among, the many overlapping, competing and complementary layers and fragments of social, cultural, ethnic-racial, political and economic identity. All the categories of micro-region cited by Söderbaum and Taylor in the introduction to this volume co-exist, overlap and compete in space and time in the Walvis Bay micro-region (as elsewhere): physiographic, cultural, economic, administrative-planning and political. Yet, as a former foreign enclave (or, seen from a Namibian perspective, more accurately an exclave) now reintegrated with its surrounding territory, Walvis Bay is an unusual case and one which, despite the vast differences of economic structure and dynamism, population

size and national political dynamic, is structurally comparable to Macao or Hong Kong. Both of these forged distinctive local identities under Portuguese and British colonial rule respectively and are now grappling with political, social and economic issues of identity and difference following their even more recent reintegration into China. For Walvis Bay, such ambiguities are likely to characterise the future for some time to come, in relation to both the rest of its micro-region and Namibia as a whole.

Region-building in Central Mozambique: The Case of the Zambezi Valley Spatial Development Initiative

Milissão Nuvunga

Formal regionalisation in Africa is undergoing a qualitative change. Old organisations such as the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU) have changed their scope and depth – symbolically represented by the change from the OAU to the African Union, suggesting a transition from merely cooperative goals to integrative ones. In addition, new regionalist ventures have been established either in the form of transborder micro-regional arrangements – such as transfrontier conservation parks or Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) – or continent-wide ones such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). This chapter seeks to shed light on one such novel process in Southern Africa, namely the SDI in the Zambezi Valley in Mozambique.

This region in Mozambique encompasses a number of administrative localities that are adjacent to or part of the ecosystem of the Zambezi river. The river enters Mozambique its westernmost border with Zambia and Zimbabwe and runs towards the Indian Ocean, passing in the vicinity of Malawi. Most of the commercial companies operating in the region were destroyed or stopped their activities during the long civil war in Mozambique. Years of economic paralysis led to local technology becoming obsolete and to widespread bankruptcy. In short, the Zambezi Valley in Mozambique is an area of economic stagnation and underdevelopment. The SDI’s focus on specific high profile projects is hoped to start the revival of the economy of the region and, importantly, its integration into the international market.

This chapter attempts to increase our understanding of the dynamics of region-building in Africa and of the relationship between outcomes and the interests of different actors involved in multi-level forms of governance. Two interrelated questions are asked: which novel features region-building assumes in contemporary Africa; and have the links between regionalisation and development been strengthened or weakened by the regionalisation projects?

Several studies have been conducted on SDIs in Mozambique and South Africa as new mechanisms for regional integration in Southern Africa (Rog-

erson 2001; Söderbaum 2002; Söderbaum and Taylor 2003b; Simon 2003). These have found that SDIs have a closed governance mechanism, and that they are informed by the need to increase the role of private actors in the economy and to create regulations favourable to market actors. SDIs have been criticised in such studies for neglecting the developmental outcomes of the projects, despite the official rhetoric. In the case of Mozambique, these studies have been largely dependent on empirical material garnered from the Maputo Development Corridor (MDC) SDI, the first of the SDIs and one that possesses peculiar characteristics, given its geographical and economic connections to South Africa and its economy. This chapter, therefore, seeks to advance the empirical base underpinning previous studies of SDIs and thus enrich the theoretical understanding of SDIs. It will contribute to the understanding of the dynamics constraining the promotion of development-friendly regional approaches in Southern Africa.

The chapter discusses region-building in terms of its challenges, arguing that processes of region-building are connected to the dynamics of state-change affecting Africa, epitomised by liberal economic and political reforms. Concentrating on the SDI process, and placing it within the dynamics of economic and political reforms in Mozambique and in the region, the chapter aims to throw light on a micro-region in the process of construction. The Zambezi Valley has a colonial origin and the Mozambican government is very much interested in showing how different (in local development terms) region-building is from the colonial past. How (and whether) this goal is achieved is a key subject of this chapter.

The SDI Process

Studying the institutional design of the SDI is a good entry point into the discussion about region-builders in the Zambezi Valley. This section starts by analysing the involvement of Mozambique and South Africa in the SDI initiative, and the extent to which this involvement translates into outcomes that are favourable to different actors. Given the bilateral nature of the SDI process (between Mozambique and South Africa), this section will deal separately with the role of each of these actors. This provides the background for the discussion on the Zambezi Valley and the extent to which the SDI approach has been transformed in light of previous results to better achieve its objectives of investment promotion and local development. We start this discussion with a critical overview of the SDI process in Mozambique.

Mozambique and the SDI Process

Initially, the SDI programme was created in South Africa to increase the international economic competitiveness of underdeveloped regions of that country. It almost immediately involved Mozambique, as the increased competitiveness of the mineral and industrial-rich region of Mpumalanga in South Africa demanded a quick and affordable access route to Maputo's harbour. This was achieved through the creation of the MDC SDI. The perceived success of the MDC led to the SDI initiative being adopted as a successful tool for regional integration and investment promotion in other micro-regions of Mozambique, such as the Zambezi Valley. The Zambezi Valley SDI is one among eight so-called regional SDIs established in Southern Africa as the fruit of a cooperation agreement between South Africa and targeted countries in the region.

Following the completion of the MDC SDI, Mozambique created five more SDIs: Limpopo, Lubombo, Beira, Zambezi Valley and Nampula. The goal of the Mozambican SDI programme is to optimise infrastructure and promote investments in the belief that:

It is no longer enough for the region's transport and infrastructures to merely perform well. They have to perform to global standards if the region is to remain competitive. Thus, the use and further development of existing transport infrastructure has to be optimised through the establishment of viable investment projects. The Mozambique government has therefore joined the SDI programme in order to unlock investment potential along the main transportation infrastructure (Salomao 2003).

The SDI approach to regionalisation in Mozambique has to be understood within the framework of structural reforms in the country. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) commends the government and its officials for their strong ideological consensus and commitment to the market as an engine for growth, and the role of big projects (connected to the SDI approach) in the overall efforts by the government of Mozambique to attract external capital and know-how to the country. In encouraging investors to Mozambique, MIGA also considers that there is virtually no space for state-led development, as 'a recent survey carried out by the World Bank shows that there is a strong ideological consensus and commitment regarding the role of the private sector and [Foreign Direct Investment] to drive economic growth' (MIGA 2001:7).

One main publicised result of the big projects associated with SDIs was that they would contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction

through revenues from the export of commodities. However, in order to attract investments to the projects promoted under the SDI approach, the Mozambique government has developed a set of incentives through an Industrial Free Zones regulation (IFZs) that covers projects whose portfolio exceeds US\$500 million, as well as investments in public domain carried out under a concession regime. This implies an exemption from customs duties on construction materials and other machinery and equipment, as well as goods and merchandise for the project. Companies established in an IFZ also benefit from a 60 per cent reduction in the corporate income tax rate, among other things (Republic of Mozambique 1999 and 2002a). The combination of low-taxes and special economic zones makes the contribution of these projects to the national economy lower than the state would get if taxes were set at the normal level in the country. And the fact that they operate in special zones insulates their economic dynamics from the national economy.

In the early phases of the SDI process, and for reasons linked to financing and political commitments, many SDI local development goals were not achieved. After initial claims about building structures, and efforts to build such structures to support and promote local development goals, this ambition seems to have been abandoned. The first formulations of the SDI initiative objectives were very proactive: ‘The approach was not one that “waits for the market to operate” as a means of generating economic growth and development’ (de Beer and Arkwright 2003:31). The designers of the SDI process catered for the provision of technical and institutional support for the SDI initiative in areas such as cluster and linkage processes, policy research and capacity building, and strategic environmental management in order to guarantee that the SDI process would also include development concerns (Söderbaum and Taylor 2003a; Rogerson 2001).

However, these developmental ambitions did not materialise in Mozambique. In some instances, such as policy research and capacity building programmes, donors have interrupted the disbursement of funds without notice. In other instances, such as the development of institutional structures to manage the MDC, Mozambique did not develop such capacities, relying instead on consultancies and South African expertise. This has meant that those programmes focused on tourism-led, agriculture-led and forestry-led development have been worst affected. This in turn has impacted local development initiatives (de Beer and Arkwright 2003:30, 25–7). Having established the role of Mozambique in the SDI process, let us now turn to South Africa, which together with Mozambique coordinates these micro-regional initiatives.

South Africa and the SDI Process in Mozambique

What is the role of South Africa in the SDI process? Initially, the SDI process was conceived as a domestic response to the challenges facing localised economic enclaves in South Africa. The first of the SDIs, the MDC, was supposed to provide quick and affordable access for the industries in Mpumalanga to Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. It is based on a dynamic link between industry and transport concerns, a link realised in South Africa by the coordination of SDIs between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Transport. The decision to extend the SDI process to other regions in Southern Africa led to the institutionalisation of the initiative in South Africa in collaboration with the participating states.

The daily management of the SDI process in South Africa has been delegated to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). DBSA is a publicly owned South African bank with the mandate to develop infrastructure in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). DBSA hosts the regional SDI unit and its particular contribution to SDIs is linked to areas such as project management, technical expertise in the provision of infrastructure such as roads and water, consultancy studies and environmental appraisals. DBSA has specific knowledge in dealing with crucial issues related to project management such as, 'corporate accounting, treasury and internal auditing, all of which are necessary for effective project management' (DBSA 2000:5). As a result of the cooperation agreement between the governments of Mozambique and South Africa, the DBSA is responsible for discharging the duties of the South African government resulting from the agreement.

Another South African institution involved in the SDI initiative is the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). The IDC is a self-financing, development finance institution established in 1940, and it focuses on contributing to economic growth, industrial development and economic empowerment through its financing activities not only in South Africa but also in the SADC region and the rest of Africa (www.idc.co.za). The IDC is deeply involved in projects connected to SDI initiatives in Mozambique. It participated in financing the Mozal aluminium smelter in Maputo and is now involved in its expansion. It has also co-financed other projects worth US\$500 million in mining, agriculture and tourism around Mozambique (DBSA 2002:20).

Hence, the SDI approach not only relies on South Africa's technical capabilities, but is also leading to the increased involvement of South African-

based capital in Mozambique. This is clearly stated as an SDI objective for South Africa in the terms of reference for evaluation of the MDC's first phase programme. In this regard, the SDI programme has two objectives: to assist the Mozambique government to implement its development strategy, while benefiting South African companies by providing investment opportunities. This involvement surely pays off. There is an overwhelming presence of South African companies in projects linked to the SDIs in Mozambique. Among the ten biggest projects in Mozambique, seven are directly linked to the South-African mineral-energy complex, and three serve it. According to some estimates, 76 per cent of all the investments in big projects are in the south of Mozambique and these projects are *all* linked to South African mineral and power generation interests.

Hentz (2003) argues that what is happening with SDIs is that the South African government has positioned itself as a middleman between international financial capital and institutions and neighbouring countries. Hentz sees this as a sign that the South African government has developed the regional SDI programme as a strategy to help its own companies tap into International Financial Institutions' development loans and economic opportunities in neighbouring countries in the name of regional integration. Regardless of such interpretations, the fact is that South Africa attracts global capital to the region and to Mozambique in particular, while at the same time institutionalising South African economic hegemony and promoting industrial development in Mozambique.

Zambezi Valley SDI

The SDI process was created to cater to the needs of localised economic dynamics in South Africa and Mozambique. However, for the case of the Zambezi Valley SDI, a combination of spatial and trans-border dynamics makes this SDI a prime example of new forms of regionalisation in Southern Africa. In spatial terms, the Zambezi Valley addresses specific development concerns of the Mozambican government, together with its development partners, in the Zambezi Valley and in the overall national economy. It also shows how South Africa was able to make the transition from a purely spatial and inter-sectoral focus, such as the one present in the MDC SDI, towards emphasis on de-localised formulation of goals, especially in cases where the physical geography of the SDI is not connected to South Africa's. We start this discussion by presenting the genealogy of the Zambezi Valley, followed by the institutional configuration of the Zambezi Valley SDI. After

that we embark on an analysis of project implementation and the development content of this SDI.

In Mozambique, this SDI is under the aegis of the Zambezi Planning Bureau (Gabinete do Plano do Zambeze or GPZ), a public bureau responsible for promoting development in the Zambezi Valley. This SDI is thus the only one under a decentralised development agency with overall responsibility for development in the space targeted by the SDI. Other SDIs in Mozambique are the main responsibility of a line ministry, such as transport or tourism. The Zambezi Valley SDI is the only SDI that is genuinely Mozambican in the sense that it was not conceived as a transport corridor for neighbouring countries, but as a strategy to promote development in a particular region in Mozambique. It aims at promoting integrated economic growth and local development along the Mozambican part of the Zambezi river valley through the reopening of a coal mine in western Mozambique and the rehabilitation of a railway to guarantee access from the mine to the Indian Ocean port of Beira in central Mozambique. It expects that the dynamics of these projects, and the special fiscal regime under which they operate, will lead to further projects up- and down-stream.

The GPZ is, however, a colonial construct. During colonial times, the idea of development in the valley was anchored in two axes, one connected to big industries and the other to local development. The most famous example of industrial development was the construction of the Cahora Bassa dam to provide electricity to South Africa. The strategy for local development was based on the promotion of a settler economy, whereby an influx of settlers would be encouraged to start different agro-industry business opportunities. As such, the GPZ was at that time very much aimed at satisfying Portugal's colonial designs. With Mozambican independence in 1975, the GPZ disappeared temporarily, only to reappear in 1993 after the end of the civil war.

The new GPZ is in the same way also responsible for managing and coordinating the development of the valley. One crucial difference from the colonial-era GPZ is its focus on bringing development to the indigenous local populations, 'not to bring in white settlers to colonise the local people', as one government official puts it. The GPZ has retained the focus on big projects, and is currently promoting such projects in the Zambezi Valley through the SDI initiative.

The Zambezi Valley region in Mozambique



Source: Zambezi Valley Planning Bureau, GPZ
http://www.gpz.gov.mz/imag_import/picture%202.jpg

Institutional Configuration

In 1999, the governments of Mozambique and South Africa agreed to apply the SDI methodology in the Zambezi Valley ‘in order to fast-track the development of the area, facilitate investments and create jobs’ (Zambezi Valley SDI 2004). As such, given the colonial legacy of the GPZ, the extent to which region-building through the SDI process in the Zambezi Valley takes into account local development concerns is an important criterion for judgment, not only for scientific reasons but also because of the political rationale behind the GPZ.

As with other SDIs, the Zambezi Valley is also a jointly coordinated venture between Mozambique and South Africa through the DTI. A project manager employed by DTI coordinates the activities in Mozambique through the GPZ. In terms of resources, the Zambezi Valley SDI gets some financing from South Africa. The GPZ received a loan of R21 million in 1999 in order to enable it to start discharging its responsibilities of ‘plan-

ning, promoting, directing, participating, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the multi-sectoral integrated development programmes' of the Zambezi Valley Development Corridor (DBSA 1999).

The project manager of the Zambezi Valley SDI (who also happens to be the regional SDI coordinator) is employed by DBSA. While the overall plan for the SDI is agreed between the governments of Mozambique and South Africa and put into effect by the GPZ and the DBSA, the daily management of the SDI process rests with DBSA. The project manager is accountable to the DBSA, and is responsible for implementing the yearly business plan for this particular SDI. The contact point in Mozambique for this SDI is at the Mozambican Investment Promotion Centre (CPI), through its acting executive advisor, Lourenço Sambo.

The SDI process also privileges coordination in the process of project implementation. Interdepartmental coordination in the Zambezi Valley SDI is achieved through the formal structure of the GPZ, within which invited officials from different government departments form a consultative forum. It is still unclear to what extent the coordination of the implementation of this SDI has had an impact on its outcomes in terms of project implementation. Some of the possible benefits are that coordination can speed-up decision-making in different areas when projects have a cross-sectoral impact. In an environment where government tries to provide a favourable investment and production climate to potential investors, knowledge of the bottlenecks in related sectors can lead to quicker project implementation.

One problem with this and other SDIs in Mozambique is that they are not coordinated at the national level, a fact that weakens the possibility for regions to increase their bargaining power in relation to market actors. Mozambique currently has an SDI coordination unit under the aegis of the ministry of transport and communications that acts as a consulting body for the minister. This unit coordinates the SDIs politically championed by the minister of transport and communications, but not the Zambezi Valley SDI.

There have been renewed talks about integrating all the SDIs in Mozambique in order to increase coordination. The meeting of the Regional SDI Committee (RESDIC) on 14 May 2004 called for the creation of a coordination mechanism that could 'facilitate a more equal access to investors and allow countries to pursue competitive advantages more efficiently' (RESDIC 2004). Unfortunately, each SDI competes for resources from almost the same cluster of private actors and international financing agencies. As part of a single common package, the SDI process can be a powerful

device to lure investors into the country. However, where SDI amounts to a number of seemingly disconnected regional projects, the bargaining power of government is curtailed. Yet this discussion is based on the underlying assumption that there is a broad development rationale behind the involvement of the central government in the SDI process, besides financial revenues narrowly defined.

The institutional link between the Zambezi Valley SDI or the SDI initiative in Mozambique in general to South Africa's economic interests is much debated and variously interpreted. South Africa not only manages the SDI process through the DBSA, but it is also involved in financing some of the projects through the IDC. Projects promoted within the SDI approach also seem to lead to abundant penetration by South African companies' in the targeted sectors. For those analysing the situation from a managerial point of view, the arrangement is beneficial for Mozambique in terms of shifting the burden of planning and investment promotion in specific regions of the country to South Africa. The SDI institutional arrangement also allows South Africa access to investment intelligence and hence to motivate its private sector to get involved in the projects. The SDI process is clearly beneficial to South African economic interests in the region, and it would not be rational for South Africa or any other actor to engage in a process to its disadvantage. In line with our critical concern, however, what is of relevance here is how the allocation of resources also benefits the larger population in Mozambique.

On the political side, two distinct kinds of motivations are put forward. Some claim that the SDI approach was a strategy by South Africa to compensate for the destruction Mozambique suffered from the apartheid regime. As it was not possible for the majority-ruled post-1994 South Africa government to simply hand over funds to Mozambique as compensation, SDIs logically fill this gap, particularly as SDIs are a national project in South Africa. The second set of political arguments is connected to the continuity of economic policy in South Africa from apartheid times to the new democratic regime. The argument here is that the SDI process is also a tool for South African political hegemony in the region, or as one Mozambican government official put it to me, 'the realisation of all apartheid goals in the region [but] under a black regime'.

International Financial Institutions are actively involved in the Zambezi Valley and the SDI process in general. World Bank officials argue that the presence of such institutions as the IDA and the IFC in specific processes and projects makes it necessary for private actors to follow operational

guidelines and internationally agreed codes of conduct. According to a World Bank senior economist, the role of the bank is crucial when dealing with groups such as BHP Billiton. One example was the need for an environmental plan for the Mozal aluminium smelter. The presence of IFC as shareholders in Mozal forced Billiton to develop an environmental plan that met international standards. The World Bank assisted government in the design of the code of fiscal benefits for Mozal, (which was later extended to other big projects). An IFC official has made the same arguments regarding IFC's advisory role in the Moatise coal mines by arguing that IFC guaranteed that the private sector would engage in development projects. The involvement of IFIs is supposed to lead to better development outcomes.

Expected Outcomes in the Zambezi Valley

In terms of project implementation, the SDI approach in the Zambezi Valley is supposed to lead to the reopening of the Moatise coal mines in west-central Mozambique and the rehabilitation of the Sena railway leading to the coastal city of Beira, in central Mozambique. The cost of redeveloping the Moatise coal mines is estimated to be around US\$375 million. The idea is to develop and exploit this natural resource in two ways. First, there is the classic SDI approach, exploitation for export in an internationally competitive way. This demands quick and affordable access to the coast through the Sena railway line to the nearest port. Coal is the single most important commodity to be trafficked along the Sena line, accounting for more than half of total traffic volume. Other commodities include sugar, limestone, fertiliser and construction materials.

The second notion is through the construction of a nearby US\$1 billion coal-fired power station that would sell energy to Beira and Zimbabwe. Another envisaged use for the coking coal was for it to serve an export-driven US\$520 million iron-carbide plant in Beira. This would also require upgrading the port of Beira. Under the optimum scenario, developments around the iron-carbide plant in Beira would be accompanied by the construction of a deep-water port in the vicinity of Beira (República de Moçambique 2002b:12; DBSA 2002). The concession for the Moatise coal mine and the Sena railway have been won by a Brazilian conglomerate, Companhia do Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD) and an Indian consortium comprising Rites and Icon International.

The contract with the Indian consortium will last for 25 years. It is expected to invest US\$55 million and the World Bank the remaining US\$120

million. The consortia will have to, besides reconstructing the line, acquire locomotives and rolling stock and install communications systems along the line. The company 'is exempt from the normal fees paid to CFM [Mozambique's ports and railways company] by leaseholders for the first five years, but it must make an initial payment of two million dollars immediately after signing the contract' (*AIM News*, 8 June 2004). Work is expected to be finished by 2009, thus allowing its main user – CVRD – to export 14–15 million tons of coal a year (*AIM News*, 7 June 2005).

Mozambique pursues regionalisation in the Zambezi Valley in close collaboration with the World Bank and South Africa. Pretoria does not merely participate in the process of project design in the Zambezi Valley through the DBSA, but South African financing interests also team up with foreign investors and co-finance and benefit from some projects, such as the Moatise coal mine. The IDC has taken a lead in attracting investors, or in SDI language 'instilling confidence in potential investors'. Within this logic, it has signed a non-binding memorandum with CVRD and the South African Ispat Iscor Limited, the dominant steel producer on the African continent. The grouping expects to invest US\$3 million dollars to update a pre-feasibility study carried out by CVRD and other partners in the 1980s (*Business Day*, 13 June 2003). Eventually, CVRD won the bid for the exploration of the Moatise coal mines. The coal is expected to be sold to CVRD and Ispat Iscor companies in Brazil and South Africa, respectively. It is possible to see from this that the involvement of South Africa in this SDI has positive returns for the country's strategic energy interests.

No official local development plans directly connected to SDI projects could be identified in the Zambezi Valley. However, this absence is not considered problematic by the Mozambican government officials interviewed. The rationale here is that government makes it clear to potential investors that a good social profile weighs in their consideration of the merits of each project. While government is not directly involved in promoting local development, it encourages the private sector to do so. This is done either through direct job creation in the project or through social services provision by a charity fund created by the projects.

However, these objectives cannot be made part of the conditions for a project. One CPI cadre said these objectives are just politically correct and are not binding, at least for big projects. This position is also taken by an ex-project manager, who, from a different perspective, argued that the design of the methodology does not allow for considerations of development linkages to come to the forefront of discussions, because the focus on individual

projects prohibits the successful insertion of what are considered secondary goals (meaning local development).

In Moatise, CVRD has promised to spend US\$6.47 million on “social projects” by 2006. ‘The principle that the CVRD would invest in the social area was included in the coal concession signed with the government in November 2004’ (*AIM News*, 16 June 2005). These social projects include the rehabilitation of Tete provincial hospital and the Moatise health post, training staff to work in these units, and constructing an orphanage for children whose parents have died of AIDS. The government was most satisfied with this arrangement, with AIM reporting the minister of mineral resources as saying that ‘one of the main goals of the government’s five year programme is poverty reduction, and so formalising this agreement to develop social projects is another victory for the efforts we are undertaking’ (*AIM News*, 16 June 2005).

According to the CVRD managing director, António Miguel Marques, the project is expected to employ 10,000 people in the construction phase and 8,500 people once the mines are fully operation (*AIM News*, 6 November 2003). CVRD will also embark on an intensive programme of social services provision, following a local development strategy adopted in another key SDI project, the Mozal aluminium smelter in the MDC SDI. It has plans to build schools and rehabilitate other basic infrastructure, such as hospitals.

What is interesting is that instead of leading to efforts to integrate these goals into later SDIs, what seems to be happening is an effort to “rationalise away” development from SDIs. Nowadays, there are disagreements as to whether the SDI process should include local development concerns, although this is one of its much publicised goals (at least according to the politicians). SDI, government and World Bank officials agree, however, that one should analyse SDIs not for their developmental impact, but for their demonstrative effect. In their formulation, development in SDIs equals externalities, on the argument that a direct link between big investment and local development impacts is a misreading of the objectives of SDIs. The expectation is that the big project will attract other projects to the area, and hence contribute to ‘unblock[ing] the economic potential of a given region’, as one SDI official has said.

Regarding the demonstrative impact of this regionalisation process, a two-pronged argument is offered. On the one hand, the SDI approach offers government the possibility of rehabilitating its infrastructure and upgrading its industrial park. This is politically relevant in a country where

most of the infrastructure and industrial capital has been destroyed or became obsolete during the civil war. On the other hand, SDI sets in motion prestigious projects that enhance the profile of the country as a “safe destination” for investment in a continent under threat of political and economic marginalisation.

Some government officials and academics involved in the SDI process have pointed out that the absence of a clear strategy for local development by the central Mozambican government is the major factor behind failures to promote local development goals. According to some sources, the problem does not lie in how big projects can benefit local communities and contribute to local development, but in what their role is in the industrial strategy of the Mozambican government, if there is one. One academic interviewed complained of what he called the ‘absence of government’ in the SDI process, manifested by lack of intervention in capacity building for the national private sector to participate in big investments. For that sector, the link between big projects and local development needs to be made operational through the state, since the private sector cannot perform the social functions entrusted to the state.

This last line of argument sounds very persuasive, and because of that, is even more deceptive. It is true creating a development strategy in Mozambique has never been one of the SDI’s objectives. In this sense, the SDI should not be blamed for the institutional shortcomings of and lack of political will on the part of the Mozambican government. However, a minor and often forgotten detail related to the adoption of the SDI initiative in Mozambique is omitted by those who try to separate SDIs from development. The SDI methodology was created to bypass bureaucratic and institutional constraints on the promotion of regionalisation. One set of goals was connected to investment promotion and the other to local development. The nature of the state is not to blame for the use of development as a rhetorical device to promote regionalisation, while the governance mechanism simultaneously ignores development concerns. Rather, the blame must lie more with the strategic interests of the parties involved.

The argument here is not that SDIs don’t bring about development. It is that local development concerns are not formally pushed forward by those involved in region-building through the SDI approach. They *do* form part of SDI goals, but the institutional design of the process does not take account of development challenges. It may be that major development outcomes will come about as a result of the projects promoted through the SDI process, but that remains to be seen, and is not the object of the present study.

Conclusion

Region-building as epitomised by the SDI process can be seen as an example of the new regionalism in Africa, in which the dynamics of region-building are informed by the strategic considerations of the states building the region. These region-building processes do not do away with systemic dynamics at the international level, but explore new kinds of state-society configurations.

The SDI process is a novel approach to region-building in Southern Africa, with states as the key actors in the SDI governance mechanism. Given the externally oriented development character of SDIs, the focus is on attracting international capital not through tax havens, but through appropriate regulations leading to the creation of production havens (in the case of Mozambique). These production havens go hand in hand with states' direct involvement in production (as in Mozambique) or as institutional backers and financiers (as in the case of South Africa).

For Mozambique, state involvement in the economy is linked to an increased role of the IFIs. The World Bank acts as an international champion for these projects by guaranteeing that the role of the state in them is sound and sustainable from the point of view of international capital and private companies. IFIs discharge this role by providing political guarantees for external investors and by co-financing major projects with private actors. In other cases, IFIs also finance the Mozambican government in order to allow it to participate in specific projects with the private sector. The state and IFIs are not only building novel approaches to regional integration, but also to local development in Southern Africa. SDIs can be said to revolutionise the governance of external relations, not the domestic level.

However, the link between regionalisation and development does not seem to have been strengthened by these new regionalisation projects. Even though they have been promoted as novel approaches to governance – by supposedly opening the policy process to other actors than the state – SDIs do not revolutionise the domestic political arena in the targeted countries to the benefit of the local population. Local development has been operationalised as social services provision by companies operating projects in a particular SDI, and local development goals have been rationalised away from the formal SDI process. While the process is indeed creative in its approach to the role of the state, IFIs and private actors in region-building, it falls short of being innovative in terms of local development, where only the most obvious goals, such as job-creation and infrastructure development, are considered.

However, this is not to claim that interventions do not make a real difference for the people in the targeted regions. It is more the case that the size of the cake available to the local population is not regulated and subjected to discussion as part of the SDI governance mechanism, as is the case with tax revenues and benefits for private actors. Local development is more incidental than integral to long-term development strategy for the region. Formal region-building through the SDI process is thus to be understood within the overall process of restructuring state-society relations in Africa informed by the need to promote externally oriented development. The “success” of region-building is measured by the degree of external orientation of the process, and not by its connectedness to local actors and local economic dynamics. While this focus on internationalisation has been criticised in previous SDIs, the Zambezi Valley SDI seems to be following the same path and avoiding prolonged debates about local development. In sum, a mix of weak state concern for the plight of the poor and the neo-liberal content of the region-building process seems to work together to promote regionalisation processes that ignore broader development concerns.

The Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle (ZMM-GT): Discursive Region-building in Africa and Consequences for Development

Nikki Slocum-Bradley

This chapter examines an ostensible process of region-building in Southern Africa from a critical, reflectivist perspective in line with the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) (Söderbaum 2004). In studying regions from this perspective, key questions are by whom and for whom is a specific region being conceptualised and made operational? In other words, whose region is being constructed and to what ends? Thus, the chapter will examine how the existence of a region was postulated, the nature of the actors who perpetuate its existence (Neumann 2003:162), the type of development being fostered and the targeted recipients and the social forces that act as drivers or barriers to the project (Hettne *et. al.* 1999; Söderbaum 2002).

The notion that regions (like nation states) are “natural” entities is rejected and they are seen, rather, as subjective phenomena that are continuously (re-)created through discourses by various actors and for various purposes. In the words of Neumann, ‘the existence of regions is preceded by the existence of region-builders’ (2003:161). This does not mean that there is no physical reality to regions. However, the geographical space is perceived, thought about and treated as an entity – that is, as a region – through the discursive activities that generate the very notion that the space is a “natural” unit. The same is true, to an even greater extent, of nation-states, as has been adeptly illustrated by Billig (1996:184), who writes that, ‘the world of nations is not merely a political form, but it is also [a] psychological or ideological form’. Whether national or regional, such geographical units are framed as actors in a narrative that provides a context within which actions and events can be interpreted.

Narratives of Development Initiatives

Development initiatives, like all aspects of social life, are constituted by two mutually influential parts: a material part and a meaning. The material part consists of actions (physical activities) and objects (material realities), while

meaning consists of acts (the significance given to physical activities) and symbols (the significance given to objects). While the parts are inter-related, it is important to be able to separate them analytically in order to evaluate a development project properly. Insofar as they are attributed agency, regions can be said to occupy *positions* in the international relations system (Slocum and Van Langenhove 2004). In this chapter, I analyse and compare the discursive construction of a regional development project in Southern Africa.

Central to the chapter is the issue of how we deal with the “why” question, or the so-called intentions or motivations of the various actors engaged in region-building. A common hypothesis among reflectivists, and the region-building approach in particular (Neumann 2003), is that actors attempt to define and design regions in ways that will place and maintain them as key actors within the constructed space. While the actions of actors may indeed achieve this, it cannot be empirically established that the relationship is teleological. Motivation and intention are concepts that are themselves used as discursive tools to accomplish various social tasks. They do not “exist” and thus cannot be empirically verified. Therefore, utterances (hypotheses, suppositions, proclamations, etc.) about motivations, intentions, purposes, goals and so forth – that is, utterances about *why* a regional project has been initiated – are treated as part and parcel of broader storylines embedded in narratives. These narratives are analysed to identify their components and the social functions they serve, but without claiming they were “intended” to serve these functions.

The case study examined in this chapter is the Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle (ZMM-GT), which covers the Zambezi Valley in Mozambique and certain micro-regions of Malawi and Zambia that border Mozambique. The focus on this region-building project aims to illuminate the processes through which micro-regions are constructed, rhetorically and through various activities, and the consequences for development. These insights can contribute to an understanding of the consequences for development of various alternatives when designing regional projects in Southern Africa.

Methodology

The methods of data collection used included semi-structured interviews, in person and via telephone, with relevant government officials and representatives of key institutions, e-mail correspondence, collection of public documents and *in situ* observations. Most of the literature available on the ZMM-GT is promotional in nature – written, compiled and published by

the ZMM-GT secretariat – whose members have also been the main drivers of the project. As the memorandum of understanding that officially established the ZMM-GT was signed by all three member state governments only in 2003, much of the initiative to the present has been preparatory and conceptual. Thus, the present discussion of the ZMM-GT will reveal a region-building that is largely rhetorical in nature.

Before discussing the ZMM-GT in depth, it is important to note that the Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle is a cross-border development initiative that was designed by replicating some of the perceived methods of the Asian Growth Areas, which aim to promote regional integration and thereby “fast-track” development in a region. The Growth Area model is based on the ability to exploit the differences in factor endowments of border regions and thus stimulate economic growth in these oft-neglected areas. More specifically, Growth Triangles are defined as transnational economic zones spread over well-defined, geographically proximate areas, usually covering three or more countries, where differences in factor endowments are exploited to promote external trade and direct investment for the mutual benefit of the participating countries. They are normally private-sector driven, with the public sector playing a supportive and facilitating role. Of particular significance is the centre-periphery relationship, with a certain bias towards the periphery in order to accelerate the impact of economic integration. Growth Triangles are also known as sub-regional economic zones, natural economic territories or extended metropolitan regions (Zambian Investment Centre 2002:1 and Annex VI, Question 1). Whether or not the ZMM-GT has any meaningful comparative relationship to what occurred in Asia is of course a highly moot point.

ZMM-GT Narrative: “Widespread support from many actors”

The greater part of the literature on the ZMM-GT was engendered by the initiator and those in the secretariat under her supervision (see, for example, ZMM-GT Coordinating Secretariat, 2003; Zambia Investment Centre, 2002). The first narrative analysed here emerges from the abovementioned literature and can be read at great length and detail in these publications.

The *sequence of events* in the ZMM-GT narrative from the secretariat begins in 1998 with the four-month sabbatical of a former United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative and regional coordinator in Zambia. The stated purpose of the sabbatical was ‘to obtain a first hand experience of economic developments in those countries and identify

what could be transferred or adapted to Africa, [and] in very pragmatic and concrete terms, to help propel forward the continent's development efforts' (Zambia Investment Centre 2002:4). From April through August, the representative travelled to the Southeast Asian countries of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, supported by UNDP's Learning Resource Centre, and "learned" about growth triangles, which had proven very successful in increasing the pace of development in Asia. The UNDP representative apparently thus decided that she would try and import the growth triangle concept upon her return to Southern Africa. She has since been the motor driving the initiative forward. She successfully recruited the interest and support of various donors for the project, and a pre-feasibility study was commissioned. Such donors referred to in the literature include the UNDP's Africa Programme for Innovative Cooperation among the South (PICAS) and Special Unit/Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (SU-TCDC), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union through the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The three UNDP country offices also contributed funds for the pre-feasibility study. Another actor mentioned in the narrative is United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), which initially assumed the management of the study that was later taken over by the coordinator for the regional PICAS and UNDP Zambia (ZMM-GT Coordinating Secretariat 2003). This is the very same UNDP representative who started the initiative.

In addition to the above actors involved in the narrative about the inception of the ZMM-GT, various actors are cited as being engaged in its implementation. In the publication, *Walking the Vision* (Zambia Investment Centre 2002), under the rubric, 'Who does one contact for more information on the ZMM-GT?', six contacts are listed with the relevant contact information: the coordinating secretariat, the Malawi Investment Promotion Agency, the Mozambique Investment Promotion Centre, and the three country chapters of the ZMM-GT private sector forum.

Asked about the developments of the ZMM-GT since 2002 in a telephone conversation and e-mail correspondence (dated 7 September 2004), the current director of the coordinating secretariat reported that in the last quarter of 2003 the secretariat was preoccupied with the publication of a ZMM-GT book in association with ACEG, USAID, UNECA and others who provided financial support. He said that the book was launched in November 2003 under the joint chairmanship of the three governments and

the private sector. The director underscored the continued commitment to the project of the original initiator, who continued to provide opportunities to enhance the project's visibility, and stated that the main actors/stakeholders in the project had expanded to apparently include AU and NEPAD, mentioning as evidence that the special supplement on Africa Day issued by the AU had featured the ZMM-GT, among others.

The director also reported that USAID was on the ground investigating a potential infrastructure project related to the Nacala port, implying that this was somehow part of the ZMM-GT project. He mentioned that a public-private sector meeting was to be organised 'soon' and that a total of four or five had taken place previously. He reported that the desk work for pilot projects in the areas of competitiveness and supply chain analysis and business/investment climate had been developed on the basis of the secretariat's interactions with the various actors and the World Bank's Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS) report. Furthermore, according to the director, since November 2003 'a lot of work has been done on the peace and security issues of the GT ... upon request from UN Headquarters'. Asked specifically about the needs of the ZMM-GT project, the director stated that the private sector wanted partners in investment ventures, adding, 'understandably so in the wake of all the poverty alleviation efforts of the governments in the sub-region'. He also asserted that the research aspect of the GT is of great interest and importance, underscoring that 'a relevant research organisation needs to be found that would be ready to make financial and human resource inputs in support of the secretariat in order to do what needs to be done'.

Throughout this narrative, a prominent theme is that the ZMM-GT is constantly receiving the support of many diverse actors. The UNDP representative has clearly tried to position the ZMM-GT as an example of South-South cooperation, since the Growth Triangle model for the project in Southern Africa was borrowed from Asia. Furthermore, the story that is being promoted is that much work and many activities are taking place under the auspices of the Growth Triangle project. Whether this is true or not will be discussed below.

ZMM-GT Narrative: "Poverty reduction and deepening regional integration"

The context and principal goals of the ZMM-GT are clearly set out in the definition of the Growth Triangle given above. Accordingly, the context is

entrenched poverty in Southern Africa, and the goal is to alleviate the poverty. The instrument to do so is the ZMM-GT. These basics are elaborated in various ways throughout the literature of the ZMM-GT. The initiators suggest that the ZMM-GT can serve, furthermore, as a potential model for future African development projects, as well as to “deepen” regional integration. For example, the literature cites the secretary-general of COMESA as saying

Inspired by the successful experience in South-East Asia, the ZMM-GT, which is a private sector-driven initiative, represents a mechanism for deepening and complementing efforts being made by regional economic communities towards enhancing sub-regional or regional cooperation and integration as a means to engender economic growth and alleviate poverty (ZMM-GT Coordinating Secretariat 2003:13).

Here, the ZMM-GT is positioned as complementary to other actors, namely the regional economic communities such as COMESA, SADC and SACU. Here it should be noted that this reference hints at an element of trouble in the narrative plot. The trouble takes concrete form in a recommendation of the FIAS report (FIAS 2001), which asserts that the difference between the ZMM-GT initiative and formal integration efforts be clarified. To address this problem, the ZMM-GT is promoted as being “complementary” to other integration efforts. According to the ZMM-GT coordinating secretariat:

This complementarity is evident in the concept’s pragmatic, ‘bottom-up’, flexible and market-oriented approach aimed at external markets, thereby speeding up and deepening the process of regional cooperation. The concept contributes to the realisation of SADC and COMESA goals at the local level, thereby ensuring grassroots participation and involvement in the integration process (ZMM-GT Coordinating Secretariat 2003:13).

In *Walking the Vision: The Story of the ZMM-GT* (2002:2), this positioning of the ZMM-GT as complementary to other regional economic organisations is elaborated:

Of significance is the fact that the ZMM-GT responds to the need for ‘deepening’ regional integration, as underscored in the UNDP-SADC 2001 Regional Human Development Report. Again, the Third African Development Forum (ADF III) held in March 2002 organised by UNECA in association with the OAU had as its theme ‘Defining Priorities for Regional Integration’, and dealt extensively with experiences of past regional integration efforts in Africa.

In addition, 'the private sector' is put forward as a main actor in the ZMM-GT narrative, and the ZMM-GT is thus neatly positioned as a bottom-up initiative (driven by the private sector) that will result in 'deepened' or real, on-the-ground integration and thus be 'complementary' to the efforts of COMESA, SADC, etc. Furthermore, the AU is pulled on to the stage, with the rhetoric being advanced that the ZMM-GT is somehow an integral tool for the 'operationalisation' of the pan-continental body. Finally, the ZMM-GT is also positioned as 'a model for the "operationalisation" of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) at the ground level' (ZMM-GT Coordinating Secretariat 2003:iii), thus portraying the initiative as complementary to, and even necessary for the efficacy of all other initiatives in the region. Similar rhetorical promotions of regional initiatives in Southern Africa have been previously noted by Söderbaum (2004).

These rhetorical pronouncements can be understood against the backdrop of discussions as to whether the multifarious regional organisations in Africa with overlapping membership are complementary or competitive in nature. Proponents of a more streamlined system of integration that entails one continental integration bloc (e.g., the African Union) claim that multiple and overlapping memberships in regional groups are less cost efficient and less effective at boosting the negotiation position of African countries vis-à-vis external trade partners, potential or actual. Others, such as the authors of the ZMM-GT initiative, propose that micro-regional groupings can act as the grassroots implementation level of larger regional economic communities – in this case, SADC, COMESA and the AU. But what all these positions assume (naively) is that the regional initiatives will actually be implemented, properly funded and free of patrimonial politics and interference.

The context and goals of the ZMM-GT narrative thicken in the dedication section of the ZMM-GT book (ZMM-GT Coordinating Secretariat 2003:i). A passage from Dr. Cristofa Jamo is cited in which he asserts that the ZMM-GT is:

... contributing to reuniting cultural similarities that were destroyed by artificial boundaries brought by colonialism and the development of the periphery which is the emphasis of the concept [e.g., the ZMM-GT] and which would lead to, among others, the decongestion of people and industries from the centre to the periphery, and the enhancement of peace, unity and good relations among the people of the border areas.

In this passage, the ZMM-GT somehow becomes a cure for all ills inflicted by colonialism upon Africa, by reuniting destroyed cultural similarities. It

also becomes a tool to ensure peace and social harmony across the region. Another reference to cultural similarities, embodied more specifically by the Chewa kingdom, is found in the dedication, which also cites Fernando Fazenda as stating that 'the basic projects of the ZMM-GT are already there in the minds of the people to be involved in this initiative; the spirit of the GT is there and we must quickly do something concrete for the Chewa people' (ZMM-GT Coordinating Secretariat 2003:ii). While these narratives (re-) create a perception of commonality, the concept of the ZMM-GT is offered as an institutional embodiment of such a common cultural heritage. The publication, *ZMM-GT* (2003:i-ii) states that the Chewa people, an indigenous population, are spread over considerable areas covered by the ZMM-GT. It suggests that the ZMM-GT is thus founded upon cultural commonalities and proposes that the project will be a concrete way to help these people.

Alternative Narratives on the ZMM-GT

While many attempts were made to find alternative narratives, these were few and far between, since most people asked said that they were ignorant about the ZMM-GT, what it was or even whether it actually existed. For example, in a phone conversation a representative from USAID Zambia excused himself from commenting on the ZMM-GT on the grounds that that he had only come to the Lusaka mission recently and so did not know much about the initiative!

The main alternative to the ZMM-GT narrative provided by the secretariat, however, argues that the ZMM-GT is a paper invention of little or no substance. In this storyline, there is little or no practical implementation of the initiative and many of the purported actors do not actually exist. This position, which chimes with observations on the ground, can be seen in the replies of a representative for USAID Malawi:

Is there an Action Plan for the initiative? Is there an organisation or responsible party on the ground that is implementing this plan? What are the benchmarks for progress under the initiative? Sorry I keep answering your questions with more questions! ... Unfortunately, I don't have any information on what is happening on the ground regarding this initiative. In fact, I had assumed it was another example of a bold pronouncement of intentions by the three governments, but that there had been little follow-through and little change in terms of trade restrictions or more regional planning.

A similar theme can be found in the comments of a COMESA representative in charge of relations with the ZMM-GT. In a telephone interview on 24 August 2004, the representative remarked that there is currently a 'lull' in the project (note, this is only two years after it was officially launched). He said that there has been 'lots of paper' but 'nothing has been happening for a long time', adding that there was perhaps no money and so the project had 'fizzled out'. He said that action plans were needed and that, 'the coordinating secretariat needs to do more on the ground, not in Lusaka'. The representative emphasised that 'the private sector should be more involved' and that the decisive link between the public and private sectors was weak. He elaborated that an 'institutional network and framework for the private sector' was needed to make the project move forward, as well as a clear public investment programme. Previously driven by UNDP, the initiative, in his opinion, currently lacked leadership, someone to drive it internally. He said that it was necessary to identify the key actors and how to get investments flowing; the investment centre needed decision-making powers, and some pilot infrastructure projects were key. Furthermore, the COMESA representative stressed several times the need to involve civil society in the project, saying that such involvement was often spoken of during forums but that nothing was then ever done about it. When it was mentioned that the author found it almost impossible to get in touch with any of the private sector forum chapters, the representative said, 'That's because there is no one there!'

In the opinion of another COMESA official, the project needs meticulous planning and civic education to explain to the community how they are benefiting from the project (assuming it is running). Critical issues, in his view, were security – particularly between Malawi and Mozambique – as well as the migration of labour and the movement of factors of production within the GT area. He advised that the clan chiefs should be involved to promote understanding and minimise tensions. Asked who the stakeholders in the project were, he answered 'the three governments, all private sector institutional bodies, banks, development banks, UNDP, and the implementing industries'. He added that sometimes the stakeholders were a problem, because 'if they think there's donor money, they will go to grab it'. Another problem was government commitment, in his view, which was related to a leadership issue or lack thereof. He said that since the project's initiation, there had been changes of government in Malawi and Zambia and that the head of state of Mozambique would soon step down too (this has subsequently occurred). Since the ZMM-GT was 'not their idea', the new governments were less motivated to support and drive the project.

Consequently, he said that 'it's necessary to start afresh, but there's nothing'. In his view, it is up to UNDP to 'provide the personality between the past and present and lead the process forward'. The representative said that COMESA had given US\$8,000 to the project and that its main interest was in the transnational park initiative. Asked about the references to the Chewa people within various items of ZMM-GT literature, the COMESA representative said that while there was a common culture in the area, the Growth Triangle could not be based upon this but rather had to be underpinned by rational economic considerations. He said that the area encompassed by the GT was chosen for tourism purposes and the reference to the Chewan culture was added later.

It seems clear from such information that the ZMM-GT is all ideas and no action. While there are many potential stakeholders, there are currently no active actors driving the project forward and the ZMM-GT seems to consist of the bold announcement of intentions but without meaningful implementation. Many normative statements were made regarding what the goals should be and what should be done to achieve these. Added to the scene are stakeholders who will try and capture donor money anywhere it can be found without determining whether a project is well planned and without long-term commitment. Whether the ZMM-GT is actually just a scheme to attract donor funding to maintain the careers and livelihoods of individuals is a provocative but relevant question to ask.

The Material Part: Analysing Actions

While the GT concept is founded upon factor complementarities, such complementarities have not proven strong in the ZMM-GT region. The World Bank's FIAS mission visited the area from 15–28 May 2001 to help design the project's business plan. Among the findings of the report was that the most significant economic bases for the ZMM-GT would appear to rest with the common cultural heritage and family linkages among the populations; an existing vibrant, yet largely informal cross-border trade in food and other consumer goods; potentially large infrastructure synergies, including transport, communications and energy; and existing and potential supply chain synergies in agriculture and agro-industry. The World Bank found that there was evident private sector support, but this tended to be from weaker businesses in the border areas of the three countries that were not integrated into formal business association/chamber frameworks at the national level.

Given these comments about the private sector actors, we now turn to examine the actors of the ZMM-GT. As mentioned previously, in the official publication, *Walking the Vision* (Zambia Investment Centre 2002), six contacts are listed: The coordinating secretariat, the Malawi Investment Promotion Agency, the Mozambique Investment Promotion Centre, and the three country chapters of the ZMM-GT private sector forum. All phone numbers provided were called multiple times and were either non-functioning (the lines had been cut) or no-one answered. Letters were sent to all e-mail addresses given, and all bounced back multiple times with error messages. The same was true of attempts to contact the Private Sector Development Programme's Centre for the Development of Enterprises, also given as a contact in the publication. The coordinating secretariat was finally reached using the mobile phone number of the director, which a researcher happened to possess. Thus, the effort to gather additional information about the reality 'on the ground', to corroborate the information received from the secretariat and to collect other accounts of the project, proved exceedingly difficult. It is doubtful that any potential investor would be impressed by such inefficiency and incompetence on the part of the ZMM-GT in promoting itself and being available to answer investor enquiries.

While promoted by the GT initiators as being "bottom up", private-sector driven and as ensuring grassroots participation, the ZMM-GT does not appear to have any of this thus far. Indeed, many people interviewed have expressed concern about the *lack* of private sector initiative and civil society involvement. The FIAS report lists private sector initiatives (and building the capacity of the private sector) among the key factors that will determine the success of the ZMM-GT (Zambia Investment Centre 2002:25). Similarly, the Inter Africa Group (2002) has cautioned that regional integration initiatives in the future would need to address (i) the existence of dominant partners and asymmetries in regional blocks, concentrating the benefits with the dominant partner in the agreement, (ii) the relative absence of the private sector and civil society, (iii) the complexity related to the existence of many initiatives overlapping country groupings, and (iv) the weak (national and supra-national) institutional basis. Regarding the debate on whether overlapping between initiatives are a waste or can be ways to enhance implementation, the extent of the validity of either claim depends in part upon how initiatives are implemented (or not). Thus, we turn to examine the content of the implementation of the ZMM-GT and address the reflectivist question, 'What kind of development is achieved?'

One "achievement" is that a coordinating secretariat has been established

for the ZMM-GT. If one takes the view that the ZMM-GT is simply a way to attract funding to preserve the employment of individuals, then this is instantly understandable as being the main achievement of the initiative.

According to the director of this secretariat, considerable time has been invested in publicity and visibility for the project. In addition, progress has been made in developing plans for pilot projects and evaluating a potential infrastructure project. Of particular interest is the director's statement that work was being done on the peace and security issues of the GT upon request from UN headquarters. From the little information given, it appears that this work is conceptual, entailing an elaboration of how the ZMM-GT could possibly contribute to promoting peace and security in the region. It should be noted here that the specific inclusion of peace and security aspects contrasts with the Asian GT model, which is purely economic in nature. Issues of peace and security were already mentioned briefly in a 2002 publication on the ZMM-GT, which states that 'the main objectives of both the ZMM-GT initiative and regional groupings like COMESA and SADC are to: Promote trade policy reforms, enhance regional/sub-regional security [and] encourage foreign direct investment' (Zambia Investment Centre 2002, Annex VI, question 10). The authors also cite the Mozambican high commissioner as having 'emphasised that the concept would promote the development of remote areas traditionally ignored by politicians and enhance peace and security by reducing political tensions and chances of conflict in the Great Lakes region' (*ibid.*, 5).

This elaboration of peace and security aspects in what originated as a purely economic model was also done by other African regional organisations, such as COMESA, which also began as solely a common market, as its name attests. However, possibly conflicting with this manner of developing the ZMM-GT project concept is the advice of the FIAS report, which stated that the ZMM-GT should *not* incorporate all aspects of regional cooperation. The report emphasises that clarification of the central goal of the initiative is essential and that it should not duplicate national, bilateral or international initiatives being implemented in the three member states (Zambia Investment Centre 2002:25). From a more practical viewpoint, it might be queried as to *how*, in practice, the ZMM-GT could ever contribute to peace and security.

Conclusion

To summarise, we turn to a few critical questions: who is driving the initiative?; who does the project benefit?; what kind of development, i.e., what

has actually concretely happened?; and how have the achievements been brought about? It appears that the only answer to the first question is the coordinating secretariat, which consists of the director and an uncertain number of additional staff. The same answer can be given for the second question as to whom the ZMM-GT is for, because for the moment at least, it is not clear that the project has benefited anyone who is really 'on the ground' and not being employed by the secretariat. The concrete achievements of the project heretofore are several publications such as the conceptual development of the project and the establishment of a secretariat, which provides employment.

There is a temptation to ask why the practical implementation of projects has not yet occurred. However, the answer to this question would necessarily entail development of another narrative. One might give the account that the coordinating secretariat and other (potential) actors/stakeholders suffer from a severe lack of adequate resources (human and financial) to drive the ZMM-GT project forward. One might further explain that any existing inertia seems to be finessed by the conflicting advice of different interest groups and that the 'enthusiasm and high-level commitment' that were listed as among the key strengths of the initiative have consequently all but dissipated. Or, one might propose a cronyism and bureaucracy storyline that the entire initiative is, in the end, a top-down effort to provide comfortable jobs for individuals who were no longer being employed by the UN, but who utilised the contacts made with donors during their UN employment to line up positions for themselves later.

Whether or not the ZMM-GT will develop so as to have consequences "on the ground" remains to be seen. As expressed by the FIAS report, the acquisition of adequate and sustained funding is key to the success of the initiative, and it seems that funding priorities should lie in gaining a clear, focused vision and detailed strategic plan, building the capacity of the private sector, developing adequate institutional infrastructure, improving the transportation infrastructure in the region and developing the capacity to engage civil society in a participatory manner. Participatory methods might be useful in developing a truly grassroots initiative. Of course, all this assumes that the ZMM-GT is a genuine region-building project. But without coordination and true support and drive from civil society, governments and private industry, it is unlikely that the micro-region project will ever move beyond brochures and employment in Lusaka for a chosen few.

Part Two

THE INFORMALITY OF MICRO-REGIONALISM IN AFRICA



Informal Cross-border Micro-regionalism in West Africa: The Case of the Parrot's Beak

J. Andrew Grant¹

While some scholarly attention has been given to examples of formal regionalist projects in West Africa (Francis 2001; Mistry 2000; Asante 1997; Pennetta 1996; Iheduru 2003:52–5), such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union (MRU), there have been very few studies of regionalism at the micro-level. One of the least explored instances of regionalism at the micro-level in West Africa is that of the “Parrot’s Beak”. The Parrot’s Beak is located in the southern part of Guinea where its border converges with those of Sierra Leone and Liberia (see Maps 3.1 and 3.2). Although the Parrot’s Beak is a micro-region in and of itself, its analytical value lies in the fact that it is an important example of not only cross-border micro-regionalism but also an intersection between regions. Like the Maputo Development Corridor and Walvis Bay, the Parrot’s Beak provides a trading interface that is embedded in wider regional networks and conduits that cross state boundaries. In contrast to these micro-regions, however, the Parrot’s Beak is not part of a formal regionalism project. Nevertheless, the study of extant informal cross-border processes in the Parrot’s Beak is relevant insofar as it seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on regionalism and regionalisation at the micro-level in Africa.

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1. I thank Christopher Clapham, David Simon, Daniel Bach and the editors for their helpful comments and suggestions. I also thank the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) in Freetown and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Koidu for their institutional support in Sierra Leone. This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Dalhousie University and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade through a Canadian Consortium on Human Security Fellowship Award. John Harker, Olayinka Creighton-Randall and Mary Margaret Dineen provided invaluable logistical support that helped make the field research possible. The views presented are the author’s own and do not represent those of the above institutions or individuals.

Regionalism in West Africa

As mentioned above, discussions of regionalism in West Africa tend to focus on ECOWAS and, to a much lesser extent, on the MRU. Established in May 1975, ECOWAS is an institutional arrangement of 15 countries that aims to increase economic integration and political cooperation (Francis 2001). ECOWAS is by far the most important macro-regional grouping in West Africa. The MRU, which was founded in October 1973 by Sierra Leone and Liberia and was later joined by Guinea in October 1980, was initially envisioned as a macro-regional economic integration project that would create a customs union with common tariff policies as well as increase the amount of formal trade and development among member states. (Although smaller in size and population and replicating many ECOWAS aims, the MRU is not a micro-region *per se*.) In practical terms, however, the MRU functioned in only a minimal fashion. Several major infrastructural projects were planned ranging from developing and sharing hydroelectric resources to improving the roadways that link the three national capitals to establishing a common telecommunications network (Pennetta 1996). One of the few completed projects was the construction of the Mano river bridge in 1976. The goals of economic integration also proved overly ambitious in the first two decades of the MRU's existence due to funding shortages and political inertia. In the 1990s, the MRU suffered a major blow when civil war erupted in Sierra Leone and Liberia, with elements in the latter supporting insurgency groups in the former as well as in Guinea. Despite the current existence of relative though uneasy peace among and within its three members following the exile of the capricious Liberian president Charles Taylor to Nigeria, the MRU and its Freetown-based secretariat remains largely moribund.

ECOWAS, the MRU and other regional associative groupings in West Africa are forms of – or at least efforts at – formal economic and political integration. Economic and political integration are hallmarks of the so-called “era of globalisation” (Scholte 2000; Mittelman 2000). The rubric of globalisation is often focused on the reduction of barriers between states and the increase of interactions – economic, political, societal and cultural – across borders. These forms of integration impact upon notions of identity. Susan Berresford (1997:1), president of the Ford Foundation, notes the effects of globalisation on identity: ‘[Globalisation] implies a diminishing importance of national borders and the strengthening of identities that stretch beyond those rooted in a particular region or country’ (Mittelman 2000:5). Identities – and regions – thus are subject to the forces of globalisation.

Regions, states and identities are all affected by globalisation. According to Neumann (2003:160), a nation-state may be constructed 'by identifying, and thus making relevant to the identity of the human collective in question, a host of political ties, cultural similarities, economic transactional patterns and so on'. By implication then, 'the region-building approach simply suggests that such insights should be applied not only to nations, but also to regions' (Neumann 2003:161). Region-building may be formal or informal, explicit or implicit, though the former seems to garner most attention from scholars and policy-makers. Nevertheless, informal region-building represents fertile ground for theory-building and empirical study. This implicitness is highlighted by Söderbaum and Taylor: 'There are no natural or given regions, but these are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed – intentionally or unintentionally – in the process of global transformation, by collective human action and identity formation' (2003:11). Identity formation – by its very nature – is a fluid process. Both within and outside the Mano river basin identities based on conceptions of nationality, ethnicity, language, religion and symbols are in constant flux. These identities may clash, but they may merge, intermingle or coexist in a peaceful manner. Individuals may have multiple identities, which overlap and change over time.

Just as identity is imagined, however real it appears to be, so too are regions. As Neumann (2003:161) posits, 'it is a largely neglected fact in the literature that regions are also imagined communities'. Although some micro-regions are subject to explicit or formal region-building projects that seek political ends or promote economic integration, others are "built" in only the most minimal sense. The Parrot's Beak belongs to this latter category of micro-regions. The Parrot's Beak is certainly "imagined" – so much so that the micro-region is referred to in many quarters. For instance, various non-governmental organisations, such as Médecins Sans Frontières and Première Urgence, make reference to the Parrot's Beak explicitly in their aid programmes. The Parrot's Beak is also considered to be a refugee area by the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In terms of integration, the Parrot's Beak does not harbour secessionist movements or free trade zones. Rather, the Parrot's Beak is home to informal regionalisation processes that attract actors from areas that lie beyond the region itself. While these regionalisation processes have political and economic ramifications, they are not concerned with (formal) integration.

Micro-regionalism and Micro-regions: The Parrot's Beak²

Given its relatively small size, the Parrot's Beak is best described as an implicit micro-region. The Parrot's Beak is implicit because it only roughly conforms to geographic or administrative sub-unit boundaries. In other words, the Parrot's Beak is not a micro-region in explicit terms of legislative recognition, as witnessed in semi- or quasi-autonomous entities that may exist within states. Thus, the Parrot's Beak does not share much in common with sub-national regions like Quebec, Scotland, Catalonia or Zanzibar, nor those entities that agitate for increased autonomy or even outright independence, such as the Basque country, Corsica or Cabinda.

Yet the Parrot's Beak is home to important trade networks, however informal and illicit. As is the case with all forms of informal commerce, it is exceedingly difficult to calculate accurately the amount of trade that occurs in the Parrot's Beak. The only alternative is to estimate the amount of informal and illicit trade, though this never appears in GDP accounts. It is estimated that anywhere from one-half to one-quarter of Sierra Leone's actual diamond production is smuggled out of the country (UNOCHA, 21 June 2003). A portion of the smuggled gems exit in and around the Parrot's Beak. Over the past several decades, illicit diamond flows – valued at tens to hundreds of millions of dollars – have been an important means of exchange in the micro-region.

As mentioned earlier, the Parrot's Beak does not possess explicit and formal economic and trade arrangements envisioned in Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) such as the Maputo Development Corridor in Southern Africa (see Chapter 1 in this volume and Söderbaum and Taylor 2003) and other development corridors such as export-processing zones. Some micro-regions are being constructed through formal projects and policy-led processes and may correspond to formal political/administrative boundaries. However, one should not interpret them to be “natural” or unitary. Micro-regions contain myriad peoples and identities that have evolved throughout history and will continue to do so (Grant 2003:127).

For people on the ground, ranging from long-time inhabitants to refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs) to aid workers belonging to

2. There is another region referred to as the “Parrot's Beak”, which is located in southeastern Cambodia where its territory protrudes into Vietnam. In the early 1970s, the Asian Parrot's Beak was the scene of intense fighting between Communist forces on one side and South Vietnamese and American forces on the other.

transnational NGOs, the Parrot's Beak, however, does exist. And, if we add "micro" to the term "regional" and "region" in Neumann's caveats, we can see how the Parrot's Beak may enter the present discourse:

[Not] each and every aspect of nation-building is replicated on the regional level. To mention but two obvious differences, region-builders may not always, or only exceptionally, see the forging of a region as a prelude to the forging of a political entity; nation-builders, on the other hand, do so by definition. Furthermore, in the sense in which it is used here, region-building implies the crossing of state borders, so it is entangled with the question of state sovereignty in a different way than is nation-building (Neumann 2003:161).

Notably, trade networks in the Parrot's Beak and surrounding region predate the colonial state boundaries. During the pre-colonial era, the area in and around the Parrot's Beak was a vibrant intersection of trade and commerce. For centuries, gold, iron ore and agricultural goods from the sub-region attracted traders from the Sahel. Iron implements represented a valuable "manufactured" good, as iron smelting in what is now Guinea had been practised for more than 2,000 years (O'Toole 1978). Mandigo traders from what is now Mali and Niger began to settle in the sub-region in the tenth century. Although human traffic in the region was primarily comprised of traders and farmers for hundreds of years, this later came to include slaves. From the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, the proximity of the micro-region to the coast meant that it was also a transit point to the ocean as part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.³

As the prohibition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade steadily took hold in the nineteenth century, colonial powers began to take a greater interest in the interior regions of Africa. The geographic dimensions of the Parrot's Beak (also known as 'la Languette' in French) are a by-product of colonial-era negotiations and treaties between the British, French and Liberian governments in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The British and French sought to either consolidate or extend the territorial holdings inland from the Atlantic coast. While Liberia was not a colonial power – the country had been founded by freed African-American slaves and became a self-declared republic in 1847 – it was nonetheless eager to claim as much

3. Although the British outlawed the international slave trade in 1807, slave ships sought to continue to ply their trade well into the nineteenth century.

of the so-called hinterland beyond Monrovia as possible. To this end, the Liberian government was happy to support American-born Benjamin Anderson's travels inland along various Mandigo trade routes and visits to the trading town of Musadu from 1868 to 1869 and again in 1874.⁴ Liberia cited Anderson's travel accounts (Anderson 1971 [1912]) to assert its claim to much of the Mano river basin, including Musadu. However, the young republic was no match for the British and French, and Liberia ended up ceding up to 44 per cent of its originally claimed territory by 1910 (Mgbeogi 2003:7). The borders between French Guinea and British Sierra Leone were finalised in 1913 (Browlie 1979:321–49). Liberia and Sierra Leone concluded border negotiations in 1930.

The colonial partition of Africa has been criticised by a legion of scholars as unjust, with the actual borders largely arbitrary. As with other colonial enterprises in other parts of the world, the demarcation of the African continent led to a variety of hardships for the inhabitants. However, in many cases, the *de facto* porosity of the borders provided new opportunities for trade – a situation that continues to the present. Despite the best efforts of European colonial powers to enforce tariffs, currency regulations and controls on travel, goods and people were usually able to cross the borders with relative ease. Physical patrolling of borders was impractical from both a logistical and financial standpoint. Thus, large- and small-scale entrepreneurs were able to exploit the differences in tariff regimes as well as grey- and black-market currency exchange rates between border areas and major urban areas.

These cross-border flows continued during the postcolonial era. After shunning its former colonial master and declaring independence in 1958, Guinea's brand of African socialism meant that many types of manufactured and consumer goods were scarce and therefore expensive when available. Guinea's government-imposed system of fixed prices for agricultural production meant that higher prices could often be obtained across the border in Sierra Leone or Liberia. This enticed many farmers to sell their produce in Sierra Leone or Liberia rather than in Guinean markets. Smuggled manufactured and consumer goods would flow across the Guinean border in the opposite direction because such items would fetch a relatively high price

4. Benjamin Anderson served as Liberia's secretary of the treasury from 1864 to 1866 and was present on behalf of the Liberian government during the November 1885 negotiations to settle the country's northwestern boundaries with British Sierra Leone.

(O'Toole 1978:64). Neighbouring states such as Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau were also involved in these trade networks.

Regardless of actual decision-making powers being overwhelmingly concentrated in the national capitals, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia are all divided into administrative sub-regions. Many micro-regions conform to sub-state administrative boundaries. The Parrot's Beak only very roughly conforms to extant sub-state administrative boundaries because there is no universal agreement regarding its precise territorial dimensions. Some observers equate the prefecture boundaries of Guinea's Guéckédou with the Parrot's Beak, while others go so far as to include the Kolahun district of Liberia and the Kono and Kailahun districts of Sierra Leone as part of the micro-region. Though the borders of Guéckédou prefecture resemble the beak of a parrot, owing to the way in which it juts into Sierra Leone's north-eastern flank as demarcated by the Meli and Moa rivers, the extant micro-regional processes and issues spill over the Guinean border and into its MRU neighbours. While these processes and issues do not extend throughout the Kolahun district of Liberia and the Kono and Kailahun districts of Sierra Leone, the areas within these districts that traverse the border with Guinea should be included as part of the Parrot's Beak.

Some micro-regions contain movements that seek self-determination. Angola's provincial enclave of Cabinda is home to an independence movement that has agitated for secession from Angola for nearly four decades (see Grant 2003). However, there is no such movement in the Parrot's Beak. The Parrot's Beak lacks the trappings of formal symbols that even semi-autonomous regions enjoy – Zanzibar has its own constitution and flag. This is not to say that secessionist sentiment does not exist or will not develop in the future in Parrot's Beak. However, the prospects are slim despite shared history and cultural elements, certainly as long as local elite mobilisation of secessionist sentiments remains low to non-existent.

In fact, the extent of cross-border interaction would be a strong countervailing force to any secessionist movement. For instance, it is not unheard of for Guinean traditional authorities in the Parrot's Beak region to hear disputes and impose their verdicts on people living in the Sierra Leonean districts of Kono and Kailahun.⁵ On the Sierra Leone-Guinea side of the Parrot's Beak, the Guinean Franc is the preferred unit for financial transactions instead of

5. Interview with a human rights field monitor, Campaign for Good Governance, Koidu, Kono district, Sierra Leone, 9 May 2003.

Parrot's Beak



Source: Médecins Sans Frontières

Parrot's Beak, Kono District and Lofa County



Source: Gberie (2001)

the Leone. Sierra Leone's currency continues to depreciate steadily while the Guinean Franc enjoys much more stability. This is a marked change from the 1970s, when Guinea's then non-convertible currency was shunned in favour of the convertible Leone or Liberia's US dollar.⁶ Furthermore, many people in the area consider Conakry as the capital of primary importance.

Micro-regionalism and the Political Economy of Conflict

Crucially, the Parrot's Beak is home to cross-border micro-regional flows of licit and illicit goods and persons. The repercussions of such flows and linkages cannot be ignored in the wider context of West Africa (Bach 2003; Bøås 2003; Iheduru 2003). The dual forces of globalisation on the one hand and already-weak state capacity on the other provide fertile ground for elites located within the Parrot's Beak to bypass the state apparatus and ship goods – such as diamonds, gold, timber, rubber and palm oil – via overland trade routes, seaports and air to regional and global markets. The state loses revenues from taxes and tariffs in such circumstances. Even if goods are exported via official conduits, bribes to underpaid civil servants will hasten transactions. There is little incentive to follow the rules in the form of paying taxes, tariffs and other government fees given the legacy of graft and mismanagement of public revenues in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia and the seaports of all three countries are notorious for holding up the transit of goods.⁷ The porosity of borders among the three countries and throughout West Africa represents a major obstacle for government regulation of trade in the region. Moreover, the neo-patrimonial legacy of past and present regimes in all three states means that such cross-border flows are not utilised to promote broad-based development.

6. Smuggling has a long legacy in the sub-region and micro-region. In the early 1970s, diamonds and various goods were smuggled throughout the Mano river basin via the markets in Koindu, Kailahun district, Sierra Leone, where Liberia's US dollar was the currency of choice for traders. I am indebted to Christopher Clapham for conveying this information.

7. The customs officials at Freetown's seaport are notorious for their slowness in processing imports and exports. Allegedly, containers and shipments belonging to NGOs tend to pass through customs at a faster rate than others. This has led some merchants and others to either secure NGO markings on their goods or exploit connections to have their goods included in NGO containers (author's interview with an employee of the Campaign for Good Governance, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 12 June 2003).

Notably, the political economy of civil conflict has regional implications. Klare (2001:52) highlights the nexus between civil war and valuable commodities as the 'new geography of conflict, a reconfigured cartography in which resource flows rather than political and ideological divisions constitute the major fault lines'. Indeed, in many ways, the boundaries of the Parrot's Beak have been shaped by the new geography of conflict. Charles Taylor's ambitions for a "Greater Liberia" put pressure on not only the already weak borders between Liberia and Sierra Leone but also between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire throughout the 1990s. As Francis (2001:134) concludes, 'exploiting the political economy of warlordism led to the informal re-drawing of the territorial boundaries of both Liberia and Sierra Leone, whereby Liberian territory became informally extended to include eastern and southern Sierra Leone'. During the early 1990s, Taylor's Greater Liberia was surprisingly resilient in view of the fact that he did not control the actual Liberian capital, Monrovia. Taylor's remarkable ability to conclude commercial deals with a wide range of business interests on exporting timber, rubber, diamonds and iron ore provided the means to pay his military commanders and officials, promote patrimonial networks among chiefs and other supporters and purchase weapons (Ellis 1999:89–92; Reno 1993).

Despite its apparent strength, Taylor's Greater Liberia was subject to external threats. There was a continual threat of reprisal from expatriate Liberian soldiers, businesspeople and refugees residing in Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Attacks from bases in the latter were the most frequent, as 'armed factions such as ULIMO [United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia] and LPC [Liberian Peace Council] who had fought Taylor [were] always waiting in the wings poised to launch military attacks and destabilise his regime. Taylor's fears were confirmed when an armed faction attacked Lofa County from the Guinean border' (Francis 2001:136). The greatest thorn in Taylor's side was the regional power Nigeria, which intervened in both the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars through the vehicle of the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

ECOMOG was created as a security apparatus in West Africa in 1990. It is a mechanism within ECOWAS, and like ECOWAS, it is dominated by Nigeria. ECOMOG should not be considered a full-fledged security community: it consistently fails to provide human security for the populations under its auspices. As Bøås (2000) concludes, at best ECOMOG is a regional security complex because it has carried out numerous armed interventions in West Africa and has often sought to protect the interests of governing elites alone. Yet ECOMOG interventions have often failed to provide succour even

for the elites while at the same time undermining the norm of state sovereignty – something that, ostensibly, it seeks to protect. ECOMOG's campaign in Liberia in the mid-1990s enabled it to seize the country's major ports and thus control the primary sea conduits for the illicit export of minerals, timber, rubber, foodstuffs and various goods as well as the meagre imports that arrived by boat from abroad. ECOMOG forces – particularly members of the officer corps – were able to earn a sizeable income from the ports and through the seizure of mineral, timber and rubber interests in the interior of Liberia (see Ellis 1999). ECOMOG's venal behaviour in Liberia earned it the truncated acronym EMOG, which stands for "Every Movable Object Gone". ECOMOG's tactics changed little upon its entry into the Sierra Leonean civil war in 1997.

It is not without irony that something as precious and beautiful as diamonds played a significant role in Sierra Leone's civil war (see Reno 1994, 1997 and 1998:113–45; Abiodun 1999; Smillie *et al.* 2000; Hirsch 2001). While decades of bad governance, corruption and overall government mismanagement of the economy provided fertile ground for the emergence of the RUF (Revolutionary United Front), it was the rebels' control of the diamond mining areas, particularly those in the Eastern Province such as Koidu and Tongo, that provided much-needed financial means to conduct the war from about 1995 onwards. As Francis (2001:137) notes: 'In the exploitation of conflict diamonds, the RUF relie[d] on the shifting informal patterns of regional trans-border and international commercial linkages to market its diamonds and secure arms and other war-fighting logistics'. The granting of diamond concessions played a role in the government's fight against the rebels in terms of paying for the services of Executive Outcomes (EO). Furthermore, several reports suggest that some segments of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces that were deployed in the country engaged in illicit mining once RUF rebels were pushed out of diamond mining areas. Despite the ethical dilemmas associated with employing mercenary groups or private military firms, EO was effective in repelling the RUF. Similarly, ECOMOG lost many soldiers as part of its fight against rebel forces in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. Although such losses occur in most peacekeeping operations, ECOMOG's dubious reputation looms large in many assessments of its less-than-perfect conduct in these civil wars. In other words, EO and ECOMOG should not be viewed in zero-sum terms of being either fully negative or fully positive.

Due in part to the logistical constraints of regulating their extraction, alluvial diamond resources have proven to be a mixed blessing for several

African countries, especially in West Africa. Despite the recent period of relative calm in the Parrot's Beak and surrounding countries, 'diamonds, however, continue to be both a regional asset and a regional problem' (Gberie 2001:13). While the ongoing Kimberley Process and its international certification scheme have accomplished much in terms of regulating the way in which the global diamond industry operates and in stemming the trade in conflict diamonds, several flaws and challenges remain (see Grant and Taylor 2004). Briefly, logistical challenges such as the physical characteristics of diamonds to the porosity of borders persist. These problems are compounded by doubts regarding the effectiveness of the certificates of origin and the chain of warranties offered by diamond merchants as well as the sincerity of some governments regarding implementation and eliminating corruption (Global Witness 2004). Moreover, the practice of neo-patrimonialism is still very real in countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. These shortcomings mean that once again, diamonds could become a significant source of financial support for armed insurgency groups.

The states of the Mano river basin are unable to implement meaningful control over their borders, especially in the Parrot's Beak region. Presently, some Sierra Leonean diamonds are known to exit through the region to markets in Guinea and Liberia, with the hope of garnering a higher price from middlemen and exporters. Due to the UN sanctions against Liberia, some Sierra Leonean diamonds are smuggled out and sold to buyers in Liberia, then re-smuggled back to Sierra Leone (or Guinea) to gain export certification. Criminalised trans-border trade continues in the micro-region and will only increase once the UN presence in Sierra Leone's Eastern Province is removed. Yet, who benefits from the lack of firm border controls in the region? A finger is often pointed at the Lebanese community present in all three countries and throughout West Africa (Gberie 2002). While some Lebanese businesspeople have traded in illicit diamonds and were known to have commercial links to Charles Taylor, so too have numerous others drawn from a multitude of national or ethnic backgrounds. The Lebanese community – residing in the region for up to four generations – represents an important pillar of the West African economy. In towns in and around the Parrot's Beak, small Lebanese shops offer a surprisingly wide range of manufactured goods ranging from radios and hi-fi equipment to diesel-powered generators to shovels and pick-axes. Others benefit from weak borders in a more explicit manner. Police and border officials may benefit from weak state overview through the acceptance of bribes that supplement meagre incomes. Elites in the area, such as chiefs, may also benefit. On the

Sierra Leonean side, some chiefs have diamond mining licences. Also, as part of Sierra Leone's present scheme to redistribute diamond revenues to the areas of provenance – the Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF) – chiefs have been known to pocket the funds or at least not spend the funds on development-oriented projects, such as road repair, schools, medical facilities and water pumps. While some chiefs redistribute funds in an equitable manner in the community, others do not.

The international political economy of conflict extends to petroleum resources as well. Disputes over maritime oil resources are not uncommon. Much oil exploration has already occurred off the coast of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia – assisted by recent advances in deep-sea oil extraction technologies and fuelled by the discovery of oil beneath the territorial waters of Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe in the nearby Gulf of Guinea as well as further south along Angola's northwestern coast. While it is too soon to calculate accurately offshore reserve figures, the combination of high oil prices and strong demand increases the probability of extraction and subsequent fees, taxes and royalties on oil revenues to the MRU states. Governance issues concerning oil revenues aside, offshore oil can lead to very stormy relations and sabre-rattling between neighbouring states as witness the heated disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula. If a significant amount of oil is extracted from the coastal waters of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, it should not be considered a panacea. Like the disputes and acrimonious negotiations concerning land boundaries during the colonial era, we can expect that the maritime boundaries among these three countries will be contested as well.

Sources of Instability in the Micro-region: Displaced Persons and Presidential Ambitions

Events in the greater West Africa region have contributed to refugee flows among MRU states, such as the civil conflict in nearby Côte d'Ivoire – previously considered one of the most stable countries in Africa. Human security issues for refugees and IDPs are also a concern in the Parrot's Beak. Weak state capacity in the region means that the UN and its agencies, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the UNHCR are left to look after people who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence or the threat of violence. Transnational NGOs and Northern aid agencies share the task of looking after refugees and IDPs by providing food, medicine, shelter, clothing and various services. While

the UNHCR, NGOs and aid agencies provide some measure of relief and stability for refugees and IDPs, the camps should not be considered a safe haven. It is well known that refugee camps can be a very dangerous place. Theft, physical assault, sexual assault and even murder are known to occur. Crowded and transient living conditions facilitate the spread of disease. Even aid workers have been known to engage in predatory behaviour, such as trading food and medicine for sex acts. Local populations are often hostile to camp residents owing to the strain on local food and other resources as well as a perceived increase in crime.

As of late March 2004, Guinea was home to 89,728 Liberian refugees and 11,025 Sierra Leonean refugees, while Sierra Leone had 67,000 Liberian refugees. Liberia, for its part, is still home to about 13,000 Sierra Leonean refugees (UNOCHA, 23 March 2004). Although some of these refugees have since returned home, they have been replaced by tens of thousands of Ivorian refugees. Presently, there are no formal refugee camps in the Parrot's Beak. However, the region remains a main transit route for the repatriation of refugees with assistance ("facilitated return") or without the assistance of the UNHCR, as a number of camps are located in neighbouring administrative regions such as Kissidougou and Macenta prefectures in Guinea and Kenema, Bo and Pujehun districts in Sierra Leone. Sometimes, refugees and IDPs are reluctant to return home. Despite repatriation assistance offered by the UNHCR and the World Food Programme, many refugees and IDPs located in the Parrot's Beak and surrounding region are choosing to stay, at least for the short-term. Although hostilities formally ended nearly three years ago, some Sierra Leonean refugees wish to remain in camps in Guinea. Under ECOWAS provisions, it is legal for displaced persons from member states to continue to reside in member states where they have taken refuge.

In addition to people, diamonds, weapons, illegal narcotics, various extractive commodities, foodstuffs and consumer goods are known to pass relatively freely across the borders. According to one estimate, more than 8 million small arms are in use in West Africa (UNOCHA, 26 March 2004). About half of all these weapons belong to those engaged in criminal or illicit pursuits. Trucks and vehicles of all types are known to navigate the exceedingly poor cross-border roads, especially after nightfall. The motivation may be relatively benign – simply to fetch a higher price or respond to increased demand – or more malevolent, such as a means to escape marginally higher taxes or launder the proceeds from illicit enterprises.

Despite the ongoing flow of displaced persons, including possible militia and other insurgency group members in the Parrot's Beak, the region is

presently experiencing a temporary reprieve from overt clashes and fighting. It cannot be asserted that the simple existence of diamonds, gold, bauxite, rutile, iron ore, timber and rubber will result in renewed violent conflict. Such a claim is not only deterministic, but simplistic as well. Yet a sober review of the region's recent history calls for an assessment of the prospects for the outbreak of hostilities over the control of natural resources among militia, rebel, government or even intervening forces in and around the Parrot's Beak. Warlordism may very well break out in any or all three countries of the Mano river basin (Sawyer 2004). After all, few would have predicted the instigation of civil war in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire in 2002.

Conclusion

This case study of the Parrot's Beak has illustrated an interesting example of cross-border micro-regionalism in West Africa. Although it does not conform to what may be considered an orthodox or traditional micro-region, the Parrot's Beak nevertheless pushes the ontological boundaries of such conceptions. The Parrot's Beak is a point of intersection for not only small-scale and informal trade but also (and more importantly) illicit commerce. Commercial links are sometimes forged in unexpected circumstances. For instance, refugee camps attract resources in the form of international humanitarian aid. The presence of UN aid agency workers and members of transnational NGOs supports local economies through various spin-offs, ranging from employment for locals to the purchase of foodstuffs and goods at local markets. However, these financial opportunities also attract combatants and potential warlords, thus making the refugee camps and surrounding areas potentially very dangerous for civilian populations.

Although the present study has focused primarily on contemporary cross-border micro-regional flows of licit and illicit goods and persons, the historical context of the Parrot's Beak has been acknowledged. Throughout Africa, colonialism's focus on directing the extraction of mineral and agricultural resources through coastal capitals and towns meant that much trade and other commercial endeavours followed suit. Consequently, many overland trade networks became either extinct or extremely marginalised. Although the Sahel-West Africa trade routes have all but disappeared, new opportunities arose following the establishment of colonial borders. Cross-border flows and attendant networks that were established during the colonial period continued to flourish after independence. For several decades, an illicit though lucrative trade based on price differentials and currency fluctuations meant

that Guinean agricultural products arrived in Sierra Leonean and Liberian markets and manufactured and consumer goods travelled north across the border.

The Parrot's Beak has evolved with changing external conditions to remain a vital intersection between regions for goods and people. These and other cross-border flows continue to have important ramifications for the three countries that share its environs. Conditions in and around the Parrot's Beak, while seemingly stable on the surface, are in fact fragile. The UN's track record in Sierra Leone and Liberia is mediocre at best. As crises erupt elsewhere, pressure will mount to withdraw troops from eastern Sierra Leone ahead of the planned date of June 2005. It is unclear what (or if) levels of UN deployment will remain in eastern Sierra Leone after this date. UN efforts to disarm combatants in Liberia continue to encounter problems. The UN has slowly and only recently made its presence felt in northern and western Liberia. Guinea continues to plod along in the wake of its flawed elections. "Business as usual" (or graft as usual) persists under the Conté regime, though elites will continue to jockey for position as the Guinean president's health continues to deteriorate. Furthermore, the ongoing civil war in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire contributes to regional insecurity. With relations now strained between France and the Ivorian government, a reduction or complete withdrawal of French forces cannot be ruled out. ECOMOG troops would be a likely replacement, touting the ostensible aim of promoting peace and disarmament. The risk, however, is that ECOMOG troops will seek to supplement meagre incomes by controlling and thereby capturing the rents of the lucrative cocoa trade – as was the case with valuable commodities during the interventions in Sierra Leone and Liberia in the 1990s.

The aforementioned political instability and the potential for renewed civil warfare are among the most pressing implications associated with the processes of cross-border micro-regionalism in the Parrot's Beak. The juridical boundaries of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia remain intersected by refugees and armed combatants, supplemented by new arrivals from neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire. In sum, the Parrot's Beak may very well return to being a hotly contested micro-region as belligerents fight for control of diamonds, gold, timber, rubber, agricultural products and humanitarian aid – not to mention of the requisite cross-border routes and conduits for weapons, goods and people.

“At the Gates of El Dorado”:
Micro-dynamics in the Transnational Border Area
Between Northern Morocco and Europe

Terhi Lehtinen

While formal and informal region-building on the African continent is an emerging area of interest for scholars, it is crucial to look beyond Africa as a monolithic geographic area and focus on the impact of transnational and cross-border dynamics in different and specific African regions. North Africa is an example of a “peripheral region”, where European expansion and colonisation not only shaped the prevailing models of state authority but also left a number of contested territorial questions unresolved, such as Western Sahara, the Spanish enclaves in Morocco and the Tuareg problem in the Sahel. At the same time, North Africa’s position as a crossroads of multiple cultural influences continues to fuel geopolitical disputes about the “true” identity of the region. Historical references to ancient empires and colonial conquests still define the contours of the discursive space and political legitimacy in North Africa, while historical linkages to sub-Saharan Africa continue to shape many ordinary people’s lives at the margin of state ideologies. More recently, while North Africa faces the effects of globalisation, international terrorism and the worldwide pressure towards economic liberalisation and regional integration, the region’s governments still attempt, usually in vain, to control the flows of people, ideas and information that appear to undermine the rigid authority of the postcolonial state.

The transnational border area between northern Morocco and Europe offers an interesting case of a historically constructed micro-region where transnational dynamics involving economic, political and social forces have shaped the life of local populations for many centuries. The history of the region is complex, with intertwining tales of fierce local resistance by the local Berber populations in the Rif mountains and the contrasting cosmopolitanism of cities like Tangiers or Tetouan, whilst the connection with Spain within northern Morocco contrasts with the rest of the country, heavily influenced by France. Indeed, international rivalries for the control of the region, as the continued existence of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla and the former international status of Tangiers demonstrate, show that the

micro-region is indeed a contested space. Furthermore, the current micro-dynamics in the region reflect the globalisation of informal economies and the revival of regional identities at the margin of nation states. All of these dynamics provide us with valuable insights into the future of transnational border regions where the developed and developing worlds collide.

In this chapter, I propose to analyse the processes of micro-regionalisation in the transnational border area between northern Morocco and Europe, where various actors contribute to the emergence of a discursive space that responds to economic and social realities and to the definition of regional identities at the margins. Ahluwalia Pal and Zegeye Abebe (2002) have argued that the social and political transformation of Africa will not occur at the level of the state, but rather through African cultural production, which may give new meanings to the cross-border spaces of people's daily life. These perceptions about the differences between official state ideologies and people's daily lives are crucial to understanding current cultural and political transformations in northern Morocco.

Regionalism in North Africa

Recent literature on new regionalism defines a "region" as a group of countries with a more or less explicitly shared political project (Hettne *et al.* 1999). At the same time, in peripheral regions, there are various cross-border and regional conflicts that undermine the achievement of such shared political projects. Regionalisation involves comprehensive multi-dimensional phenomena and occurs "from below", driven by various state and non-state actors. In this sense, regionalisation can be compared with the historical formation of nation-states, and according to Björn Hettne (1999:9–10):

Like the formation of ethnic and national identities, the regional identity is dependent on historical context and often shaped by conflicts. And like nations and ethnies, regional formations, as here defined, also possess a subjective quality, and can consequently be seen as "imagined communities". ... The new regionalism also presupposes the growth of a regional civil society, opting for regional solutions to some local, national and global problems.

Parallel and contradictory regional processes involve ideological competition between groups for the definition of the content and course of regional identities. This dynamic articulation of competing ideologies¹ is manifested

1. "Ideology" is used here to designate an intentional social construction with its own symbols and values.

by “semantic struggles” (Ahonen 1993) in the public sphere. Success in determining the social interpretation of national and regional reality is a result of such semantic struggles. Public spheres, even at a regional level, are thus invested with competing discourses, which often search for their legitimacy through ideological interpretations of the region’s history and constructions of reality.

According to most definitions, North Africa may be considered as a macro-region. However, paradoxically, this apparently evident geographical reality is often contested, both by the region’s governments and even by some scholars. On the one hand, the governments of the region ideologically “detach” North Africa from the African continent and seek to attach it culturally and politically to the Arabic and Islamic “Middle East”. On the other hand, the ideological representation of the Sahara as a boundary between *Afrique Blanche*² and *Afrique Noire* still dominates our (Western) perception of African geography. Even in academic circles, African Studies are mainly focused on sub-Saharan Africa, while the analysis of North Africa is often attached to Middle Eastern Studies. Why has such a dichotomy been brought about? Can we conclude that there are really “two Africas”, which have very little in common culturally, politically and ideologically, while belonging to the same continent? Although at first sight the “Africanity” of North Africa appears to be a purely geographic concept, with the governments acting as if Maghrib³ was located in the Middle East, a closer look reveals the strong influence of historical trans-Saharan networks in cultural, musical, economic and even demographic terms, as the ethnic diversity of North African populations shows.

At the same time, North African governments recognise their political, social and economic linkages to Europe. Morocco even applied for the

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2. French colonial ideology talked of “White Africa” (*Afrique Blanche*), which is fundamentally different from “Black Africa” (*Afrique Noire*). In French, the concept of *Afrique Noire* is still in use, while *Afrique Blanche* has been replaced by *le Maghreb*, in accordance with the political identification of the region’s governments with the Middle East.
 3. In Arabic, *Maghrib* (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya) refers to the western horizon where the sun sets, in contrast with *Machrek*, which refers to the Middle East (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria etc.) where the sun rises. *Maghrib* is also the Arabic name for Morocco, the westernmost country in the Arabic world. This “west-east” dimension of the North African identity is crucial to understanding the formal efforts at institutional region-building in the region.

membership of the European Community in 1987. However, the application was rejected on the basis that “Morocco is not a European country”. This apparently self-evident statement about the non-European nature of Morocco raises several questions: Is Europe a purely geographic concept? How about the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, which are located on the African continent? How much more European is Turkey than Morocco? These questions reflect the historic complexity of identities in the Mediterranean coastal areas of Africa and the Middle East.

Northern Morocco as a Micro-region

Northern Morocco, where postcolonial state borders were drawn by the European powers after long negotiations and successive diplomatic crises, constitutes a real challenge to our state-centric conception of what “cross-border” really means. The local conception of space is marked by a patchwork of mountain paths leading to coastal areas, which form the basis of economic activities – legal or illegal, formal or informal – much more than by the formal state borders between Europe and Africa. Also, traditional ethnic and national identities in the region cut across the borders between Morocco and the Spanish enclaves of North Africa. Meanwhile, tighter immigration policies in Europe have sharpened the boundary between Europe and Africa, and consequently northern Morocco has become the passageway for sub-Saharan migrants who wish to try their luck as a *harraga* (i.e., illegal immigrant passing to Europe through the Strait of Gibraltar).

In essence, northern Morocco as a micro-region can be defined in physical-geographic, cultural, economic, administrative and political terms. The geography of northern Morocco is dominated by the Rif mountains, which constitute a natural boundary between the coastal cities by the Mediterranean Sea and the rest of Morocco. The Rif, rising as high as 2,460 m, run west to east a short distance from the Mediterranean coast. The slopes facing north are generally well watered and have some farmlands and forests. However, the monocultural farming of *kif* (i.e., hashish) has eroded the environment, leading to serious problems of deforestation and poor soil. At the same time, the climate of the Mediterranean is warm and agreeable and this, together with their strategic location, has contributed to the development of coastal cities.

Northern Morocco can also be seen as a cultural space. The Rif mountains are inhabited by the local Berber populations who have shaped their identity through historical armed resistance to invasions by foreign powers

and the Moroccan *makhzen* (i.e., state), which latter has marginalised the region since the latest uprisings in 1959. More recently, migration flows to Europe have enhanced the transnational dimension of local identities. In the context of the revival of the Amazigh (i.e., Berber) cultural movement in Morocco, the promotion of the Tarifit dialect as a spoken and written language has been an important element in the re-reading of the region's past and future. In the coastal areas, the influence of the Spanish language and Spanish culture since colonial times is a specific feature of northern Morocco.

Economically, the Rif region is one of the departure zones for emigration to Europe. Consequently, many families survive through remittances from migrants. The marginalisation of the micro-region by the Moroccan state, the closeness of the European markets and a favourable climate have contributed to the success of the cultivation of *kif*, which is locally transformed into hashish, ready to be transported to lucrative markets in Europe and North Africa. Despite the discourse on "containment" and "prohibition", the Moroccan state has failed to address the problem of drug production seriously. Furthermore, the powerful networks of intermediaries and some corrupt state authorities benefit from the trade far more than local peasants, who can barely make a living. Therefore, alternative cultivation schemes have not succeeded as the revenue is far lower. At the same time, "*kif* tourism" and other related activities in the region have created jobs, thereby relieving the pressure to migrate. Another important economic activity relates to contraband electronics and other goods from the Spanish enclaves, which can be sold profitably on Moroccan black markets.

Administratively, northern Morocco belonged to the Spanish protectorate until 1956 and the legacy of the Spanish administrative culture and a physical border with French Morocco are still visible in the region. Formally, northern Morocco consisted of the two provinces of Tetouan-Tangiers and El Hoceima-Nador. The region also borders two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Given the development challenges in the region, the Moroccan government created the Agence pour la Promotion et le Développement des Préfectures et Provinces du Nord du Royaume (ADPN) in 1996 aimed at addressing the problems through investment and development programmes.

Politically, the region's identity has been intertwined with armed resistance to colonialism and even to the modern Moroccan state. This quest for independence and autonomy culminated in the declaration of the "Rif Republic" during the War of Rif in 1921–26 and in the uprisings of 1959.

Against this background, the formation of transnational migratory networks and the proliferation of cross-border illegal activities can be considered as spaces of resistance to the modern nation state as we understand it.

The political micro-region of northern Morocco is also more geared towards Spain than towards the capital of Morocco, Rabat, where northerners often feel marginalised in national political debates. However, the visit of King Mohammed VI in 1999 inaugurated an era of symbolic “re-engagement” by the central government with the north after 40 years of neglect.

Historical Perspectives on the Transnational Dynamics in Northern Morocco

The history of northern Morocco is characterised by the early development of international cities facing the Strait of Gibraltar and the fierce resistance of local Berber populations, masters of the Rif mountains, to foreign invasions. The main urban agglomerations on the Strait of Gibraltar include Ceuta, Tangiers and Tetouan.

Ceuta (Sebta in Arabic) is a Spanish enclave in North Africa located on the northernmost tip of Morocco, on the Mediterranean coast near the Straits of Gibraltar. It covers approximately 28 square kilometres. The city is dominated by Monte Hacho hill, on which there is a fort occupied by the Spanish army. Ceuta's strategic location has long made it a crucial gateway for military and trade adventurers, beginning with the Carthaginians in the fifth century BC. When the Romans took control of the port city in about 42 AD, they named it Septem. Around 400 years later, the Vandals ousted the Romans and later the city fell to the Visigoths of Spain. In 710, the Muslims attacked the city and the Berber general Tarik Ibn Ziyad used the city as a base for an assault on Spain. Various Muslim dynasties succeeded in the city until 1415, when Ceuta was taken by the Portuguese under the leadership of Prince Henry the Navigator. The aim was to expel Muslim influence and promote Christianity. In the Lisbon peace treaty of 1668, Don Alfonso VI of Portugal ceded Ceuta to Carlos II of Spain. Ceuta is formally known as the Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta, and since 1995 has been ranked between a standard Spanish city and an autonomous community. The city is a free port and is not part of the EU's customs framework. There is a great deal of pressure from African illegal migrants to enter Ceuta, as it is defined as a Spanish territory and is thus ostensibly a part of the EU.

Tangiers is located at the crossroads of civilisations and in a strategic bay between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean. The city has belonged to

successive Mediterranean powers, including Spain, and since 1800 most European nations have had diplomatic missions in Tangiers. In 1880, the Convention of Madrid regulated external powers' relations with Morocco and afforded France certain privileges. The Franco-Spanish convention of 1904 recognised the special status of Tangiers as a place for diplomatic missions. German Emperor Wilhelm II was unhappy with French domination in Morocco and in 1905 he disembarked in Tangiers, provoking a diplomatic crisis. The conference of Algeciras in 1906 confirmed the diplomatic positions of each European power and the autonomy of the Moroccan sultan in his territory. In 1923, European powers negotiated the special international status of Tangiers, which was finally confirmed in 1925. The sultan was represented by a *mendoub*, his special governor in the international zone. The city had European and indigenous quarters, all facing the sea. In 1956, the conference of Fedala granted Tangiers to Morocco and ended its special international status. However, the city remains a free port. Over the decades, Tangiers, once known as 'Tangiers, the mythic, Tangiers the international', the city of artists, writers and diplomats, has become the destination of *harragas* dreaming of a maritime passage to Europe (*Le Monde*, 19 January 2001).

Since 1975, the rural-urban exodus has led to chaotic urban planning and the creation of shanty towns like Beni Makada, where insecurity, unemployment and the absence of social services serve as a breeding ground for urban uprisings and radical Islamist movements in the absence of traditional political and religious communities and structures (Prolongeau 1996). Drug trafficking, the influx of illegal migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, contraband and other illegal activities, including links with terrorism, are a persistent feature of city life.

Tétouan is the capital and cultural centre of northern Morocco. It is located about 40 kilometres east of Tangiers, close to Ceuta and the Strait of Gibraltar. To its far north are the Rif mountains, where the indigenous Tarifit (Berber) culture is still preserved. The city was founded in the third century BC. It was expanded around 1305 by the Medinid dynasty to serve as a basis for attacks on Sebta. Around 1400 it was destroyed by the Spanish, because local pirates used Tétouan for their attacks on European ships. Later the city was rebuilt by the Jewish community and refugees from the Spanish *Reconquista*. In 1913, the city became the capital of the Spanish protectorate of Morocco and remained the capital until 1956, when Morocco gained its independence. Many people still speak Spanish in the city today.

On the other side of the Strait, Gibraltar is an overseas territory of the UK. It is located in southwestern Europe adjoining the southern coast of

Spain, a strategic location on the Strait of Gibraltar that links the North Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The territory was under Moorish control until 1462 when it was overrun by Spanish forces. An Anglo-Dutch force seized the rock in 1704 and the territory was ceded to Great Britain by the 1713 treaty of Utrecht. Ever since, it has belonged to the UK, despite several attempts by Spain to claim the strategic territory.

The rivalry between Christian Spain and the Moroccan Muslim dynasties has been a thread running through the region's history and social dynamics. The relationship between Morocco and Spain has deteriorated over the past decade and Morocco has refused to cooperate on many border issues, while rejecting all non-Moroccans who try to use the country as a stepping-stone to Europe. The government of Morocco has called for the integration of Ceuta and Melilla into its national territory, drawing comparisons with Spain's claims on Gibraltar.

Most recent disputes have concerned the status of Isla Perejil. Isla Perejil (Isle of Leila in Arabic) is a small, rocky island in the Mediterranean Sea, 200 metres off the coast of Morocco and five kilometres from Ceuta. In 1415, Portugal conquered the island. It has been under Spanish control since 1668, but is claimed by Morocco. It was occupied in July 2002 by Moroccan police and troops, who were evicted without bloodshed by Spanish naval forces, which soon after withdrew from the island. Moroccan authorities expressed their concern that smugglers and terrorists were using Isla Perejil.

Historically, the Rif mountains are part of *siba*, a rebellious area, which contrasts with *makhzen*, an area controlled by the central government. With Morocco's independence in 1956, the Spanish protectorate was formally integrated into the kingdom of Morocco. However, uprisings in 1957 and 1959, suppressed by then Crown Prince Hassan II, left the monarchy deeply resentful towards the Berber-speaking Rif region, whose political, cultural and economic marginalisation led to the massive flows of migrants to Europe and to the illegal cultivation of hashish and the importing of contraband from the Spanish enclaves. This marginalisation strengthened the local population's resentment towards the state that had failed to integrate the region into the Moroccan nation. The revival of the Tarifit Berber identity through the Amazigh cultural movement has contributed to the rehabilitation of historical memories of the Rif War (1921–26), when Abdelkrim Khattabi declared the Republic of Rif and fought the colonial powers until he was forced into exile.

“Bottom-up” Strategies: The Dark Side of Micro-regionalism

Cross-border relations dominate social, economic and political life in northern Morocco where the central government in Rabat plays only a limited role in people’s lives. The economy of the region is based on migrant transfers from Europe, contraband and *kif* production as well as some subsistence agriculture. These cross-border activities link the region directly to flows of goods, people and capital, while the ability of the nation state to control these flows has eroded.

Everyday, some 40,000 Moroccans cross legally into Ceuta to work in the homes of wealthy Spaniards or to sell merchandise on the streets. Ceuta is one of Africa’s most modern and ethnically diverse cities: Jewish, Muslim and Spanish inhabitants mix with illegal migrants from all over Africa and beyond hoping to gain permission to sail across the Strait of Gibraltar to the EU. Some illegal immigrants come from countries that have not signed readmission agreements with Spain and are housed in Ceuta’s Temporary Stay Centre for Immigrants (CETI). They cannot be turned away until their asylum cases are heard. Migrants who apply to go to the Spanish mainland by providing their names and country of origin are liable to be sent back home. To avoid this fate, many migrants destroy their identity papers and then notify the police of their arrival, paradoxically, in the hope of being expelled from Ceuta. Expelled immigrants, in turn, are shipped on public ferries to Algeciras, Spain, where they are released and told to leave Europe within 15 days or face arrest. Many, unsurprisingly, stay longer and become involved in black labour markets. Despite the anti-immigration discourses of governments, European economic liberalism calls for cheap labour, for example, in the fruit and vegetable sectors, where seasonal agricultural workers work hard for low wages and with no labour rights (Herman 2003).

Poverty and unemployment in Moroccan cities makes Europe, only 10 kilometres across the Strait of Gibraltar, look like a promised El Dorado. In Tangiers, young men sit in the El Hafa café, situated on the rocks whence one can admire the Strait of Gibraltar and distant shores of Spain, smoking *kif* and drinking mint tea and dreaming of a better life. The illegal crossing of borders by boat without visa or identity papers is called *harraga*⁴ (Teariah 2002). This means “burn” in Arabic, referring to the act of destroying

4. “La “Harraga”, le voyage sans visas des jeunes Algériens, www.maghreb-observateur.qc.ca

identity papers to avoid being sent back to one's home country by border guards. The refugees escaping from African civil wars, Algeria and even Iran and Iraq, constitute the majority of illegal migrants who camp in the forests of the Rif mountains in miserable conditions while waiting for an opportunity to attempt the perilous crossing to El Dorado. Also, many homeless children risk their lives and try their luck: they have nothing to lose. The fee that *harraga* candidates must pay to *passeurs* (i.e., intermediaries) may be as much as 1,000 euros and there is no guarantee of success. *Passeurs* make huge profits from this traffic.

The attraction of El Dorado is often fatal, as a number of illegal migrants drown tragically. Every year, thousands of illegal migrants are caught by coast guards and 1,000 others are drowned, their bodies washed up on Spanish beaches daily. Some *harragas* prefer trying to cross the 160 kilometres of ocean to the Canary Islands from Saharan Morocco, where surveillance and control by border guards is less intense than in the Strait of Gibraltar (Marfaing and Wippel 2004).

In addition to being reservoirs of illegal migrants, the *bidonvilles* (i.e., shantytowns) on the margins of Tangiers and other cities are a breeding ground for radical Islamist fundamentalism, resulting from the break-up of traditional social environments. Fundamentalism lay behind the 'kamikaze' bomb attacks in Casablanca in May 2003 (Belaala 2004).

At the same time, the Rif mountains host a dense rural population living off *kif* cultivation. The first plantations appeared in the seventh century during the Arab conquest. In 1890, Sultan Hassan I confirmed the right of local tribes to cultivate *kif* and this right was reconfirmed in the 1950s in an attempt to ease social tensions. The area of cultivation constantly increases, despite the official policy of containment. A United Nations inquiry in 2003 reported that some 800,000 people, or two-thirds of the rural population, derive revenue from *kif* plantations, which generate some €10 billion every year (*Le Monde*, 17 December 2003). These plantations cover 135,000 ha, a substantial part of the agricultural land in the north. The production zone is characterised by mountainous reliefs, poor soil and high population density. Cannabis production without irrigation is seven to eight times more profitable than wheat and up to 15 times more profitable with irrigation. The monoculture is harmful to the soil due to overexploitation and deforestation. *Kif* plantations are an important source of revenue for between 200,000 and 800,000 of the region's people, who do not benefit from the social programmes of the Moroccan state. Paradoxically, *kif* has slowed down illegal migration and the rural exodus from the region, while

Tangiers and other border cities are flooded with African migrants in search of entry into Europe.

Fields of *oro negro* (black gold) lie deep in the mountains with the town of Ketama a capital of hashish, a “no go area” for foreigners. Meanwhile, numerous European tourists continue to flood into Chefchaouen, a small town where a traveller can recapture the spirit of the 1970s hippy movement in bars where *kif* smoking is tolerated. Local peasants process hashish for transport to European and North African markets through powerful networks of businessmen, who do not hesitate to resort to bribery and other means to ensure that profitable trade continues. Drugs are often routed through Algeria and from there to Europe, Libya, Tunisia and Malta with the complicity of customs officials, some high level state authorities, wealthy businessmen and, increasingly, networks of Islamist fundamentalists, all of whom find the drug trade to be a lucrative business. Some hashish is paid for in cash, some in hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin brought in for local consumption in northern cities, where social problems and criminality are, as a result, on the rise. It is alleged that networks of Italian and Spanish mafia and other high level operatives are involved in the drug trade with, money flowing through Moroccan banks in Europe. Money can be laundered, for example, by buying buildings and opening a multiplicity of bank accounts to avoid arousing the suspicions of European authorities.

While illegal migrants and drugs are destined for European markets, the flows of contraband from Spain to Morocco by sea or by other cross-border means, such as mules, continues (Teriah 2002). Kim Willsher (2003) has described sea smuggling in the following way:

Porteadores cross the land border to collect Spanish goods, wrap them in plastic and swim back to avoid paying customs duties. In Morocco, a fridge can be sold for twice as much as in Ceuta. The trip takes just 10 minutes but the smugglers must run the gauntlet of gun-toting Spanish Guardia Civil and Moroccan police on either side to earn less than 10 euros for each crossing. ... Fridges and washing machines are dismantled and the motors transported by road while the bodies are swum across the maritime border. ... Though the Spanish border guards mount round-the-clock patrols and sometimes fire plastic balls at smugglers, they are more concerned about stopping the drug and human traffic coming in the opposite direction.

Cross-border contraband trading also occurs on the border with Algeria. The smugglers bring fuel, agricultural products and cattle in exchange for *kif*, alcohol, cigarettes and clothes, whilst custom officers turn a blind eye

and benefit from the trade. The system is based on paying *baksheesh* (bribes) to the police, who are intimately involved in the network of the informal economy at the margins of formal state structures.

“Top-down” Response Strategy: Surveillance and Development Plans

The cross-border nature of illegal phenomena in northern Morocco has attracted the attention of the authorities on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar. Spain, as a member of the EU, is at the forefront of trying to stem the flow of illegal immigrants and drug trafficking. Ceuta is a favoured destination for illegal migrants since, once inside, they are on European soil and cannot be forcibly repatriated if they have destroyed their identity documents. The situation has been aggravated in recent years after the EU tightened its immigration policies, in part spurred on by fears of terrorism. After all, Islamist networks involving Moroccan citizens have targeted European cities, the attack on Madrid in 2004 being a prime example.

In the effort to seal off its southernmost gateway, the EU has financed the construction of a razor wire barrier between Morocco and Ceuta to stop illegal immigration and smuggling. A number of illegal migrants have been shot while trying to cross the barrier. In turn, the government of Morocco has criticised Spain for constructing a barrier in what they regard as Moroccan territory and in setting up camps where illegal migrants are held while awaiting expulsion.

The Agence pour la Promotion et le Développement Economique et Sociale des Préfectures and Provinces du Nord du Royaume (APDN) created by government in 1996 (Benchemsi 2002) aims to reduce regional economic disparities and to optimise the use of natural resources.⁵ It has developed strategic areas of intervention such as environmental protection; agriculture, rural development and fishing; industry, handicrafts, tourism, commerce and services; territorial integration through transport; infrastructure and urbanism; public health, socioeconomic action and education and integrated local development. The agency implements concrete projects in strategic areas. However, much still needs to be done. Many NGOs also promote the development of rural cooperatives for reforestation, ecotourism and fishing, as well as promoting micro-credit schemes.

5. www.apdn.ma

Despite these efforts, the government's position is marked by a double discourse of eradication and containment of cultivatable areas where *kif* is grown, while at the same time many senior public officials and businessmen benefit from the drug distribution networks. Government tends to deny or underestimate the production amounts, monetary benefits and cultivation areas.⁶ Officially, it has promoted the image of *kif* as a means of survival for subsistence farmers on the distant slopes of the Rif mountains. In this context, it has initiated projects for alternative cultivation. However, most of these alternatives are not credible. Even the position of Europe is ambiguous, since some countries are moving towards decriminalising the use of soft drugs like cannabis. Also, the authorities are less concerned about the flow of contraband products from Spain to Morocco than the other forms of cross-border traffic towards Europe.

In October 1999, King Mohammed VI surprised observers with his first official visit to northern Morocco, which was interpreted as a sign of reconciliation between the Rif region and the central Government after 40 years of marginalisation. Ever since, the king has shown a growing interest in northern issues, including the claim for the return of Ceuta and Melilla to Morocco. His main argument for their return is based on "territorial integrity". Meanwhile, Spain is conducting similar negotiations with the UK over Gibraltar. However, Spain claims that the Spanish enclaves predate the Moroccan state and, therefore, are constitutive parts of the Spanish territory. By contrast, Spain alleges that Gibraltar has never been an actual part of the United Kingdom. It is on this basis that Spain can on the one hand stubbornly cling to its African possessions, a legacy of its colonial past, whilst on the other claiming Gibraltar and denouncing British "colonialism". In recent years, Spain and Morocco have had many other disputes over fishing, agricultural products like strawberries and tomatoes, traffic at Gibraltar and illegal immigration (Abouyoussef 2001).

Meanwhile, many development and cultural associations for the defence of Berber identity in northern Morocco have become more vocal in demanding an end to the central government's neglect of the region's economic, social and political integration since independence. Despite democratic hopes after the coronation of King Mohammed VI in 1999, the slow pace of reform has disappointed many analysts (Dalle 2004). The unequal distribu-

6. Meanwhile, the production area doubled between 1992 (approx. 65,000 ha) and 2003 (134,000 ha) despite the official policy of containment.

tion of resources in the country continues and since the May 2003 attacks in Casablanca, the perceived terrorist threat has led to a tightening of security measures and anti-terrorist laws, often at the expense of civil liberties (El Sarafi 2003).

Conclusion

Northern Morocco offers an example of a micro-region where the economic, social and political marginalisation of a peripheral region vis-à-vis the capital has strengthened its transnational and cross-border linkages in its darkest forms: human and drug trafficking, smuggling and a deepening divide between developing and developed countries. The region's identity is based on resentment over the perceived social injustice and an absence of state assistance. The existence of such a micro-region at the gates of Europe forces us to think about how to deal with the effects of globalisation on Africa, where some citizens, who have nothing to lose, are willing to enter Europe by any means, even at the risk of perishing in the *harragas*, the "boats of death".

However, northern Morocco's wider connections are not surprising. North Africa has always been linked to global networks of people, ideas and commodities. First of all, it is not possible to understand the North African political and ideological reality without taking into consideration its connection with Europe. The colonial heritage and migratory networks have long linked the two continents closely by creating a transnational space between them (Gallissot 1992). The internet and modern communications have strengthened the quest for modern life even in rural regions and especially in urban shanty towns on the margins of a Mediterranean metropolis.

Similarly, various Islamist terrorist groups use the internet and other modern communications to interact, while recruiting new members in the marginal populations, who have nothing to lose. These networks have brought many marginalised individuals into the cyber-reality of international terrorism. The bomb attacks on Casablanca in 2003 and the involvement of several Moroccans in the Madrid bombings in 2004 reflect the gravity of a regional identity crisis in North Africa in the era of globalisation. North Africa is at the crossroads of transnational loyalties which may turn against the citizens of the major cities. The suicide bombers of Casablanca, for the first time, targeted other fellow Moroccans through methods more commonly used in Israel and Palestine. This collective shock has raised questions about the true regional identity in Morocco and revealed an uneasiness with Middle Eastern models of political action.

In the final analysis, it seems that in peripheral societies like in North Africa, the systems of nation-state and territorial integrity have never been fully achieved. Unresolved colonial questions and imported state models have made it difficult for North African regimes to gain legitimacy in the mind of their citizens. The case of northern Morocco reflects the inadequate economic integration of rural populations into the modern state apparatus. At the same time, the regional identity crisis aggravates the effects of the demographic explosion, the continued rise in poverty levels, unemployment and Islamic fundamentalism and the increasing flows of illegal immigration. The only way out seems to be to strengthen the positive identity of North Africa, while promoting the economic and social integration of peripheral areas into the Moroccan nation.

The Road to the Sea: The Regional Politics of Ethiopia's Trade

Christopher Clapham

This chapter examines the regional politics of trade between the Ethiopian highlands and the sea, with reference especially to the two main corridors through which access to the sea can be most conveniently routed. The first, or northern, corridor runs from the northeastern edge of the northern highlands, at the point where these come closest to the sea, to the Red Sea coast at Massawa, Eritrea.¹ The second, or southern, corridor follows the eastward-projecting spur of the southern highlands immediately south of the great African rift, and thence to the southern Red Sea, Gulf of Tadjoura, or western Gulf of Aden. The two key ports of Assab and Djibouti are part of this corridor.

In a sense, the central features of cross-national regionalism in this part of the Horn of Africa are not so very different from those of many other micro-regions in Africa: the core dynamic is created by the need of the populations and economies of a more developed and densely inhabited area in the interior to gain access to the sea. The need to traverse a less developed area that forms part of the territory of a separate state binds the micro-region together. But in the case of the Horn, the dramatically different contours of the relationships between highlands and lowlands, and between the state authorities involved in contemporary times, demonstrates the very varied ways in which apparently analogous micro-regions can be constructed in different parts of the African continent.

Origins

The transport corridors of the Horn are marked by their sheer longevity, in comparison to other African micro-regions. The northern route noted above has a documented history of over 2,000 years, while the southern one – though documented only for the last millennium – probably has an

1. Conventional spellings are retained throughout for Massawa (alias Mitsiwa), Djibouti (Jibuti) and Assab (Aseb)

ancestry almost as long (Pankhurst 1961:27–9). Unlike most of the rest of Africa, moreover, where colonialism imposed sharp breaks on pre-colonial economic and political relationships, those in the Horn have been preserved with far less disruption as a result of the survival of an independent Ethiopia through the colonial partition, and its continued role at the heart of the region. Though colonialism sharply affected the littoral zones, these remained subordinate to the power in the interior in the broader definition of regional relationships, with the result that postcolonial states – once these emerged – tended to reproduce patterns of earlier eras. This has produced a heavy overlay, in which successive constructions have been imposed on, and remain affected by, those that were already in existence.

The Ethiopian empire itself owes its origins to the Axumite empire, formed in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era with its capital in the city of Axum in today's northern Tigray region (see Zewde 2002). Its location was central to control of trade between the highlands and the Red Sea, and its first appearance in the Western record, in a document called *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* written by a Greek sea captain in the first century, shows it to have been a well-established state engaged in extensive economic relationships between the African interior and the Mediterranean world from the port of Adulis, just south of today's Massawa (Henze 2000:17–19). These relationships were critical in the conversion of the empire to Orthodox Christianity early in the fourth century, and this in turn – following the Muslim conquest of the Red Sea littoral from the seventh century onwards – helped to characterise the relationship between the interior and the coast as one between Christianity and Islam. Each side was thus defined in terms of rival external linkages and political agendas, ensuring that the commercial structure of the region would remain subordinate to violently contested politico-religious hegemonies. For nearly a millennium, indeed, the Muslim conquest of the coast greatly reduced the level of trade from the highlands, and though tenuous relations with Egypt were maintained, Ethiopia was largely isolated from the Mediterranean world until the sixteenth century. The Muslim city-state of Harer, astride the southern corridor, nonetheless served as the key entrepôt for trading relations with the Indian Ocean zone, at least from the medieval period onwards.

The impact of colonialism on the region consisted essentially of the seizure of the coastal areas by European powers – the Italians in Eritrea and Somalia, the French in Djibouti, the British in Sudan and Somaliland – at the same time as the Ethiopian empire was both expanding territorially and greatly increasing its contacts with the outside world. The attempt by colo-

nial powers to dominate the interior from the coast, following the pattern established elsewhere in Africa, was thwarted by the defeat of the Italian army by a resurgent Ethiopian empire at Adwa in 1896. However, the Ethiopian emperor of the time, Menilek II, whose personal power base was centred in the Shoan region around today's Addis Ababa, made no attempt to follow up his victory by driving the Italians into the sea and seizing control of Massawa. Whatever the reason, this left the coast and the interior under different political dispensations, defined the current territorial structure of the region (in which the colonial pattern re-emerged in the 1990s, following the failed unions of Eritrea with Ethiopia and Somaliland with Somalia), and intensified the cultural and political divisions between coast and hinterland.

Much of the history of the region has thus consisted of attempts to link the two zones, either through the domination of coast over hinterland or vice versa. In the early decades of the century, Italian control over the northern route (including a strategically significant foothold in the highlands) led to intensified Ethiopian efforts to develop the southern corridor, which lay beyond Italian control. This resulted in the building of the Franco-Ethiopian railway from the French-controlled port of Djibouti. Started in the late 1890s, it reached Addis Ababa in 1917 and – combined with the construction of a permanent capital in Addis Ababa and the expansion of Ethiopian territory into productive lands to the south and west – ensured that for the first time the southern route overtook the northern one as Ethiopia's principal transport corridor (Pankhurst 1968:9). It did not, however, prevent Haile Selassie (then regent, as Ras Tafari) from seeking Ethiopia's own outlet to the sea in unsuccessful negotiations with the French, British and Italians in the 1920s (Marcus 1987:59–69). So undeveloped was the transport infrastructure within Ethiopia at this time that governors of the northern Tigray region would travel to the capital through Massawa in Italian Eritrea, and thence by sea to French Djibouti and by rail to Addis Ababa. The initially successful Italian invasion of 1935–36 then imposed a coastal hegemony, analogous to that created by colonial occupation in other areas of the continent, which proved short-lived as a result of Italy's defeat in the Second World War and the subsequent colonial retreat from the continent as a whole.

The Postwar Settlement and its Collapse

The diplomatic opportunities opened up by the Second World War enabled a restored Ethiopian empire, firmly allied with the victors of the war, to

assume control over Eritrea and thereby acquire control over the northern corridor and the chance to develop a variant of the southern route from the Eritrean port of Assab. Effectively, this promised to unify the transport structure of the region under the hegemony of the hinterland. Assab had until then been all but useless since the distance inland to the highlands across the Afar desert was there at its widest: but since Massawa was too far (along appalling roads) from Addis Ababa and the export-producing areas of southern Ethiopia to be viable, Assab was greatly extended and linked by road to the highlands as an alternative to Djibouti, which it promised to overtake as the major source of access to global markets. Ethiopia's only oil refinery was built at Assab in the 1950s, conveniently placed to offload Middle Eastern crude oil and transport the finished products inland. Meanwhile, the line of rail to Djibouti, which ran alongside the western section of the road link to Assab, served a string of towns that grew rapidly from the 1950s onwards as a "development corridor" for Ethiopia's nascent industries and agro-industrial processing. The main road to the southwest joined the corridor at Mojo, to the north of which Debre Zeit and Akaki became Ethiopia's main industrial centres. To the east, in the Awash valley, sugar plantations were established by the Dutch HVA company at Metahara, with the cotton plantations of the British company Mitchell Cotts further down the valley at Tendaho (Harbeson 1978). The railway town of Dire Dawa, at the foot of the eastern escarpment, replaced Harer at the top of the escarpment as the main entrepôt for eastern Ethiopia.

Ethiopian dominance effectively prevented the region from following the pattern normal elsewhere in Africa, by which the various European colonies were each converted into independent states within the colonial boundaries. Eritrea was simply swallowed up by Ethiopia, following a consultation process under United Nations supervision, over which controversy continues. Djibouti was prevented from gaining independence, until the French eventually withdrew in 1977, because of Ethiopian fears that control of the port by a hostile state (worst of all, by the Somali Republic) would obstruct its access to the sea. Since Ethiopia was by a long way the strongest military power in the region, the threat that it would intervene should Djibouti fall into hostile hands had to be taken seriously. The two ethnically Somali territories, Italian Somalia and British Somaliland, united at independence in 1960, advanced a claim to unify all of the Somali peoples into a "Greater Somalia", which would incorporate all of Djibouti (whose population was roughly evenly divided between Somalis and Afars), the southeastern part of Ethiopia (the Ogaden) and the Northern Frontier District of Kenya (Lewis

2002). This project, however, had little chance of success, opposed as it was both by the regional hegemon, Ethiopia (which at this time enjoyed a close military relationship with the United States), and by the diplomatic consensus of the Organisation of African Unity, which Ethiopia uncoincidentally played a large part in establishing. The collapse of the Somali state itself in 1991 still lay in the future.

This highland-dominated structure had a strong commercial logic. The ports of Massawa, Assab and Djibouti, like those of Nacala, Beira and Maputo, existed largely in order to serve their highland hinterlands, and the incorporation of Massawa and Assab into Ethiopia enabled them to be integrated into a regional transport network with the minimum of disruption. It was the underlying social and political divisions on which this network had been superimposed that complicated matters.

The major source of regional instability turned out to be not Somali irredentism, but the domestic political deficiencies of the hegemonic state itself. The decaying Ethiopian empire was quite incapable of developing any kind of political mechanism for meeting the aspirations of its own populations, a failure that was most evident in Eritrea – and thus threatened the Massawa and Assab routes to the coast – but which also affected other outlying groups and provinces, as well as the bureaucracy, the intelligentsia and most dangerously the army. The resulting upheavals from 1974 onwards amounted to a real revolution, which led to the destruction of the old socio-political order, the imposition of radical changes, of which the most important was the nationalisation of land, and the installation of a Marxist military regime with close links to the Soviet Union. In contrast to South Africa, where the collapse of the apartheid regime between 1990 and 1994 led to the installation of a new government that was able to repair relations with its neighbours, the Ethiopian revolution had quite the opposite effect. The revolutionary regime, Jacobin quite as much as Marxist in instinct, embodied a greatly intensified form of nationalism that exacerbated the strains in the relationship between coast and highlands and led eventually to the loss of highland control over key transport links to the coast.

At first, the revolutionary regime appeared to be getting its way. The Somali government of Mohamed Siyad Barre attempted in 1977 to take advantage of the confusion consequent on the revolution (and especially the collapse of Ethiopia's relationship with its major external protector, the United States) by seizing the Somali-inhabited southeast of the country, in pursuit of the project of Somali unification. Had it been successful, this demarche would have placed most of the southern corridor (with the road

to Assab as the only possible exception) under the control of a hostile state, since the railway line to Djibouti ran through the contested territories and the government of Djibouti itself (which slipped into independence within weeks of the Somali attack) would have come under the effective control of the Somali Republic, even had it not been formally incorporated into it. Instead, however, the Ethiopian government was able to mobilise revolutionary nationalist sentiment at home, shift from the US to the USSR as its external protector and source of weapons, and inflict a devastating defeat on the Somalis. This set in train the course of events that were to lead to the collapse of the Somali state and the secession of the former British Somaliland.

The northern route, however, was a very different matter. Armed opposition to the incorporation of Eritrea into Ethiopia had emerged from the early 1960s, largely among the Muslim groups of western Eritrea, bordering Sudan, and increased over the years before the revolution, though without threatening government control over the routes to the coast. The revolution at first offered the prospect of undercutting this resistance, by incorporating Eritrea into a more participatory political structure, and the first post-imperial head of state, General Aman Andom, was himself Eritrean. However, he soon lost power and was killed in the vicious in-fighting that followed. His eventual successor, Mengistu Haile-Maryam, was viscerally opposed to any dilution of central power and the opportunity for political accommodation was lost. So great was the failure of political management under both the imperial and especially the revolutionary regimes, that the Eritrean separatist movement spread beyond the Muslim groups that formed its initial constituency to encompass many of the Christian highlanders who comprised about half of Eritrea's population. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), a nationalist movement formed under largely Christian leadership but operating from the Muslim lowlands, proved a formidably organised fighting force, and articulated a multi-ethnic Eritrean nationalism that sought Eritrean independence within the frontiers established by Italian rule. From about 1976 onwards, even though the government retained control over the road from the Eritrean capital of Asmara to the sea at Massawa, the whole of northern Ethiopia was too engulfed in conflict to allow the northern route to be used for anything much beyond military traffic and immediate subsistence needs. Ethiopia's entire dependence fell on the southern route, and especially the port of Assab, which though located in Eritrean territory lay too far beyond the battle zones to be seriously affected. Assab was the key port for relief aid to government-controlled areas during

the famine of 1984–85 and thereafter, while the opposition movements in Eritrea and Tigray brought in their own supplies through Port Sudan.

The critical breakthrough in the Eritrean war came with the EPLF's stunning victory over government forces at Af Abet in March 1988, followed by the Front's seizure of Massawa the following year. Thereafter, the northern route was completely severed and the Mengistu government was itself on its last legs, eventually falling to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which entered Addis Ababa in May 1991. The EPLF simultaneously seized Asmara and Eritrea effectively became an independent state, achieving formal independence two years later.

Reconstructing the Horn

The events of 1991 precipitated a dramatic reconstruction of territorial space on the trade routes of northeast Africa. The state systems that had attempted to maintain control over the region collapsed. Eritrean independence severed direct Ethiopian access to the sea and left Ethiopia as the most populous landlocked state in the world. Almost simultaneously, the Somali state imploded after the fall of Mohamed Siyad Barre in January 1991, and its northern region, the former British Somaliland, declared itself independent as the Republic of Somaliland, dissolving the union with former Italian Somalia that it had entered in 1960. The new EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) regime in Ethiopia, managed and dominated by the TPLF, rested on an explicit negation of the historic hegemonic ambitions of the Ethiopian state, which it sought to reverse (or at any rate, to reconstruct) through a system of ethnic federalism, under which the different "nationalities" of which Ethiopia was composed were assured local self-government through the division of the country into ethnically homogeneous regions, combined with formal rights of self-determination that explicitly included secession (Turton 2006, Vaughan and Tronvoll 2003). Only the microstate of Djibouti continued in its previous form. This left a new set of regional actors – new states, or fragments of states, with new rulers – to attempt to reconstruct regional linkages, in a setting in which the old hegemonies had disappeared. Unsurprisingly, it proved a tricky job.

The Northern Equation

The TPLF/EPRDF seizure of Addis Ababa was immediately followed by an assurance that the new government would recognise Eritrea's right to independence. Though this was no more than the inevitable acknowledgement

of a *fait accompli*, it aroused resentment from Ethiopian nationalists, who saw it as the abandonment of a cherished national mission, and revived long-standing Ethiopian fears of encirclement and isolation. It also projected the long and complex history of relations between the EPLF and TPLF, which had encompassed phases of both rivalry and cooperation, into relationships between their two now separate states (see Reid 2003, Young 1996). Prior to victory, the two movements had had an obvious tactical need for alliance against a powerful enemy backed by the Soviet Union. On the other hand, they diverged in tactics, ideology and long-term programmes, and clashed at critical junctures. One key difference was that the EPLF, fighting as it was for the independence of a former Italian colony, shared the common African approach to the sanctity of colonial boundaries and the need for “nation-building” within those boundaries. The TPLF, on the other hand, was not seeking to secede from Ethiopia, but sought instead an ethnically based federal structure in which each “nation, nationality and people” within Ethiopia would have a right to self-government. This programme was implicitly threatening to Eritrea, both in general terms because it provided minority ethnicities within Eritrea with a model far removed from the highly centralised EPLF approach to ethnicity, and specifically because several ethnic groups within Eritrea, notably the Afar of the southern Red Sea lowlands, also had substantial populations within Ethiopia and might well be tempted by the offer of local self-government to shift their allegiance to Ethiopia. The Afar, critically, controlled access to Assab. Some Eritreans even suspected the TPLF of harbouring aspirations for a “Greater Tigray”, which would encompass the large Tigrinya-speaking population of the Eritrean highlands, though since this population formed the core of EPLF support, the realisation of such a programme would have been extremely unlikely.

In the immediate aftermath of Eritrean independence, the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments entered into a series of agreements that formally guaranteed Ethiopia free access to the ports of Massawa and Assab. They also agreed that Ethiopia should continue to run the (inefficient and expensive) oil refinery at Assab, and that the two countries should at least for the present continue to use the Ethiopian birr as a joint currency (Negash and Tronvoll 2000:31–45). Under the Asmara pact of September 1993, they pledged to harmonise their policies across a wide range of fields, including trade, investment policy, tourism, taxation and so forth. The prospect that Eritrean independence would permit relations to continue undisturbed – and indeed to foster closer integration within what was now a zone of peace – nonetheless proved to be short-lived. Though economic disagreements

were by no means the whole source of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea that broke out in 1998 – hegemonic ambitions, old resentments, internal factionalism on both sides and the symbolic significance of the boundary also played their part – they were certainly one element in it.

At base, there was a structural problem: though most Eritreans had by 1991 acquired a sense of identity quite separate from Ethiopia, the Eritrean economy was no more than an appendix to that of its much larger neighbour. The economic interests of the Eritrean government correspondingly lay in a revival of the project of the Italian colonial regime that had previously governed the same territory, and which essentially involved the use of control over the coast in order to develop an entrepôt and processing economy as intermediary between the global market and the Ethiopian interior. During the Italian period, Eritrea had become considerably more “developed” than Ethiopia, and it continued to provide a significant proportion of Ethiopia’s total industrial capacity until the 1974 revolution. Eritreans retained a strong sense of being more “modern” and entrepreneurial than their cousins to the south, and a bitter resentment at what they regarded as the Ethiopian destruction of the Eritrean economy, especially to the benefit of the Addis Ababa region with its links to the southern corridor. Early statements after independence expressed the aspiration that Eritrea might become a northeast African Singapore.

Accordingly, Eritrea sought unrestricted access to the Ethiopian economy. Eritrean businessmen continued to operate in Ethiopia, and the Eritrean government sought to gain a disproportionate share of foreign currency, both by maintaining a slightly more generous external exchange rate for the birr and by exporting Ethiopian primary products (notably coffee, which was not grown at all in Eritrea) that they had paid for in birr but exported for foreign currency. By the mid-1990s, some two-thirds of all Eritrean exports went to Ethiopia, with a mere 15 per cent or so going to its other major neighbour, Sudan (Negash and Tronvoll 2000:2). Chronically unable to feed itself and with no exportable primary products of any significance (despite a hope of developing an offshore oil capacity around the Dahlac Islands), Eritrea depended heavily on the skills of a population that had proved extraordinarily resourceful during the long independence war, and was confident in its ability to adapt to the needs of peace. A post-independence reconstruction boom, with an influx of foreign aid, fostered this sense of optimism.

The central problem, not just of economic management but of the independent Eritrean state as a whole, was that the attitudes so deeply en-

trenched in wartime proved to be thoroughly counterproductive to this transition. For one thing, the war engendered an intense commitment to the ideology of sovereignty and a corresponding prickliness (or downright hostility) to anything that was seen as impinging on Eritrea's right to order things exactly as it chose. The country's very name, "State of Eritrea", which appeared on its stamps and banknotes, was designed to emphasise that it had at last achieved the goal for which its people had so bravely fought. It was an attitude uncondusive to cooperation, economic or other. Any kind of "conditionality" was indignantly rejected, and aid donors and international agencies found their activities monitored with suspicion. The continued use of the old adversary's currency was particularly grating, and Eritrea's own currency, the nakfa (named after the EPLF's impregnable redoubt during the independence war), was launched in November 1997. The Eritrean government appears to have assumed that this would circulate at par with the Ethiopian birr and was deeply hurt and disconcerted when the Ethiopians announced that trade with Eritrea would henceforth be conducted on a Letter of Credit basis, like trade with other countries.

Wartime attitudes likewise persisted in the internal management of the country and obstructed economic development. These were expressed above all in a craving for control and suspicion of any activity independent of the state. The external investment needed to promote industrialisation was not forthcoming, as those few companies that explored the possibility found an atmosphere thoroughly inimical to their plans. By far the largest foreign investment was the resale to Coca Cola of the bottling plant that had been nationalised under the Derg. Most strikingly of all, exiled Eritreans who had established flourishing businesses in the diaspora and sought after independence to repatriate their capital back home, found that even they were unwelcome. Used to operating in the free markets and societies of Western Europe and North America, and even Sudan, they found the social as well as economic atmosphere of Asmara highly restrictive. In the eyes of the former fighters who controlled the Eritrean government, they were not welcome returning patriotic investors, but rather traitors who had gone to make money abroad and become rich while their fellow-countrymen were fighting and dying for freedom. The idea that these people with their foreign dollars could now come and lord it over an independent Eritrea was deeply repugnant. In place of a genuine private sector, the EPLF (or PFDJ, People's Front for Democracy and Justice, as it formally became shortly after independence) formed its own "party-statal" enterprise, the Red Sea Corporation, which controlled most of the available business op-

portunities and used its privileged political connections to see off any rivals.

Most damaging of all, the EPLF retained an intense commitment to what it regarded as the territorial integrity of the state, which led it into entirely counter-productive conflicts with Djibouti (over a sliver of territory on their mutual frontier) and Yemen (over the Hanish islands in the Red Sea), while it also had more solidly based differences with the government in Sudan, whose Islamist agenda was deeply threatening to a state with a population evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. Relations with Saudi Arabia were poor for the same reason. By 1997, Eritrea's only remaining regional ally was Ethiopia.

Eritrea's problems had their counterparts on the other side of the frontier. Economic relations between the two countries were almost bound to be sticky, and as the EPRDF regime settled into the business of governing Ethiopia it assumed attitudes that took it further away from its days as a guerrilla insurgency. The joint ministerial commission and technical committees established under the Asmara pact to manage economic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea were deadlocked, as the interests of the two sides drifted further apart. In particular, since Eritrea had a strong interest in engagement with the Ethiopian economy, while Ethiopia had no equivalent interests in Eritrea (and would not, in any event, have been allowed to pursue them), supposedly technical differences essentially turned on Ethiopian efforts to obstruct the Eritrean role in Ethiopia. Differences over investment policy and tax harmonisation reflected the problem. The EPRDF also had its own party-statal enterprises, not so very different from the Eritrean ones (though operating in a much larger and more diversified economy), and wanted to discourage competition from its neighbour.

That the EPRDF's core support lay in Tigray, immediately south of the frontier with Eritrea, compounded the problems. The newly established Tigray regional government was determined to reward its people for their wartime heroism and set about building industries in Tigray – a tannery, pharmaceutical factory, cement works and textile mill – that competed with Eritrean products. Many of the TPLF cadres who remained behind in Tigray were also those most resentful of the Eritreans, remembering with particular bitterness the refusal of the EPLF to allow relief supplies to cross EPLF-held territory into Tigray during the great famine of 1984–85. They too had their commitments to the territorial integrity of Tigray, which clashed with the EPLF's conception of Eritrea's frontiers. Despite the initial euphoria and promises of cooperation of the immediate post-1991 period, the idea that

smooth economic relations could survive the differences in political control never stood a chance.

This is not the place to pursue the deeply depressing story of the Eritrea-Ethiopia war of 1998–2000 (see Negash and Tronvoll 2000). In simple summary, this was prompted by the forcible occupation by Eritrea in May 1998 of small frontier areas administered by Ethiopia, which it claimed to be part of Eritrea. Following the failure of international mediation, this led to a vicious two-year war, in which certainly 100,000 and possibly as many as 200,000 people died, and which ended in May 2000 with Ethiopian reconquest of the disputed zones (and indeed much of western Eritrea). A peace agreement monitored by a UN force was then followed by an appallingly botched attempt to arbitrate the frontier that has left the two states locked in positions of intense hostility from which no plausible exit can be conceived within the foreseeable future. With the northern route (down to Assab) now completely frozen, save for the possibility of smuggling, the politics of the region are now effectively restricted to the southern routes.

The Southern Equation

The politics of the southern routes are far more complex than the north. First, these traverse the territory of three (or in a sense four) different states, rather than just one: the Assab route passes through Eritrea, the Djibouti one through the eponymous republic, and a third route to Berbera on the Gulf of Aden through Somaliland, an effectively self-governing state which is still formally regarded internationally as part of the Somali Republic (see WSP International Somali Programme 2005). Second, while both Ethiopia and Eritrea are capable – despite their internal divisions – of acting as relatively monolithic states, the basis of statehood in the southeastern periphery is far more fragile. The lowland zones, with meagre rainfall and correspondingly sparse populations, are largely suited to pastoralism, which in turn fosters social structures with high levels of fragmentation difficult for centralised states to accommodate. Djibouti is almost evenly divided between its Afar and Issa-Somali peoples, and the domination of the state and the port-city of Djibouti by the Issas resulted in the formation of an insurgency (the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy, or FRUD), seeking an enhanced Afar role, with linkages across the frontiers to Afars in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Though the insurgency was ended by a peace settlement in 1994 (with a splinter group holding out until 2000), the underlying fracture remains. Somali clan politics lend themselves to endless shifts in alliances, which in Somalia resulted in the destruction of the state – still un-

reconstructed after 17 years – and which affect relationships across all five of the Somali-inhabited territories: Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti, southeast Ethiopia and northeast Kenya.

Third, the politics of the southern trade routes operate in a much less controllable international environment. Whereas the Eritrea-Ethiopia war could be effectively insulated from global rivalries (since the belligerent states had similar domestic ruling groups, drawn largely in each case from the Tigrinya-speaking Christian highlands, and shared similar international alliances), the southern equation embodies all the complexities of a deeply contested part of the world. The government of Djibouti, to take one example, has to balance not only its constituent domestic populations, but the Ethiopians (to whom the transit trade is vitally important) against the Arab world (in the form notably of Egypt and Saudi Arabia), the French (the former colonial power, which retains a military presence) against the Americans (whose concern for the stability of the region has in recent years become intense), and Somalia against Somaliland. The Somaliland government, as yet unrecognised by any other state, has to seek friends wherever it can find them. And over the whole area hangs the shadow created by resurgent Islam and the global “war on terror”.

In addition, trade itself is complex and contested, much of it escaping from official control. The area has been a smuggler’s paradise for centuries: the French poet Arthur Rimbaud was gun-running here in the 1890s. The great Ethiopian commercial centre at Dire Dawa provides the nodal point for micro-regional trade, where products of all kinds are on offer at prices that indicate that imported consumer goods can have paid no duty. Both because of its commercial importance and because it lies at the intersection of contested ethnic territories, the city has been kept outside the country’s federal structure and placed under direct central government control. The region’s principal exports are khat, livestock and coffee. Khat is a mild unprocessed narcotic for which Somalis and Yemenis in particular have an almost insatiable craving (Gebissa 2004). It has long displaced coffee as the cash crop of choice throughout the area (middle-level highlands with moderate rainfall) where it can be grown, and since its leaves have to be chewed fresh for maximum effect, it has generated an extremely efficient distribution network, in which evading the delays and exactions imposed by state authorities is a vital requirement. It is plausibly surmised that a growing trade in processed and imported hard drugs takes advantage of these networks. Conflict over their control pits different groups against one another, notably Afars against Issa-Somalis in the lower Awash valley.

Imposing order on this chaos is an all but impossible task, not least because different official actors seek to “construct” the region in very different ways. As the hinterland would-be hegemon, Ethiopia has the greatest vested interest in order. It needs unrestricted passage for its imports and exports, all the more so since the northern alternative is now closed for the foreseeable future. At the same time, the imposition of highland (and implicitly Christian) control over lowland Muslim pastoralists is inevitably resented, and Ethiopia is widely regarded as a regional bully. Since the most readily accessible way in which the lowland peoples in general and Somalis in particular can become united is by uniting them against Ethiopia, successive Ethiopian governments have had to pursue the alternative project of divide-and-rule, using the considerable leverage available to them in order to develop alliances with some groups within the perennially fractured local arena, so as to restrict the operations of other and potentially more dangerous groups. The risks inherent in this strategy are first, that alliance with the highland enemy will weaken the very factions that the Ethiopians support, and second, that the levels of disorder that they foment will spiral to a point at which they threaten the trade routes that they are intended to protect.

Endless permutations of the available options have been played out over time. Under Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian government supported the Afar Sultan Ali Mirah against his Afar opponents and the Djibouti-based Issa Somalis against other Somali clans. Under the Derg regime, the central government's Afar alliances were reversed (leading this Marxist-Leninist government to support a rival pretender to the sultanate), while after the defeat of the Somalis in the 1977–78 war, the Ethiopians backed a number of clan-based insurgencies against the Siyad Barre regime. Since 1991, the EPRDF government has had every interest in supporting the Somaliland secession, both in order to divide Somalia and (most important) to ensure access to the Gulf of Aden ports. It has extended tacit recognition to the Somaliland government, in the form, for example, of scheduled Ethiopian Airlines flights to Hargeisa, and establishing a kind of consulate there, even though it was in neither side's interest for Ethiopia to be the first state to take the plunge of formally recognising the secession (Hagmann 2005). Somali politics within Ethiopia have turned on the rivalry between the Ogaden clan and an alliance of smaller clans over control of the Somali ethnic regional government within the new federal system (see Samatar 2004), while in the area of Somalia remaining after the defection of Somaliland, the Ethiopians have generally (while loudly protesting the opposite) sought to prevent the emergence of any effective central government.

Ethiopia has on the whole proved remarkably successful in maintaining its external trade, despite the loss of access to Massawa and Assab. The road link to Djibouti has been greatly improved, almost entirely displacing the railway, while some trade has also been diverted through Port Sudan in the north and Mombasa in the south, bypassing the coastline of the Horn altogether. A high level of contraband trade, controlled largely by Issa Somalis, also generally works to Ethiopia's advantage and may even extend to routes across Eritrea that are barred to formal traffic. At the same time, the greatly increased importance of the southern corridor has exacerbated longstanding conflicts between the region's two major pastoralist peoples, the historically expansionist Issa and the threatened and retreating Afar. Issas have established themselves at key points on the now vital road through historically Afar territory, and Afar resistance occasionally brings the entire lifeline to a halt. The situation remains perennially fragile (Teka and Azeze 2002).

Into this complex arena has been projected the "global war on terror", which here significantly predates the 9/11 attacks on the United States. The eventually aborted US intervention in Somalia in late 1992, Operation Restore Hope, helped to cast local factions into a "pro" or "anti" American mould, while the bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in August 1998 drew attention to the uses of a nearby Muslim-inhabited area with no effective government as a breeding and training ground for Islamist terrorists. Osama bin Laden is known to have spent some time in Somalia in the 1990s. It was likewise entirely understandable that one way to tackle the catastrophic levels of social fragmentation in Somalia would be by using Islam as a rallying point for reconstruction, based on the values of the universally shared religion of the region – and equally, that the movement taking this line, al-Ittihad al-Islami, would adopt both an anti-Western and an anti-Ethiopian stance (Le Sage 2001). In practice, nonetheless, al-Ittihad has been unable to overcome the deeply entrenched Somali clan rivalries, while it is doubtful whether non-Somali Islamists could establish themselves in Somalia in the way that the "Afghans" and "Chechens" have done in parts of the Arab world.

The dramatic expansion of US interest in the region after 9/11 has been most strikingly expressed in the establishment of a US military base in Djibouti, the obvious (indeed only) potential location for the purpose: Eritrea and Ethiopia, which both instantly signed up as partners in the "war on terror", were locked in bitter rivalry with one another, while Somaliland was not a recognised state. The US presence has provided the Djibouti government of Omar Guelleh with enormous benefits, both financially and as a

counterweight to the French. The Ethiopians have likewise sought to enlist the Americans as allies in their own manipulation of regional rivalries, with some success given that the factions opposed to each of them tend to be the same. One area to which this applies is "Puntland", the self-governing (but not formally secessionist) area of eastern Somalia, where power is contested between two major factions, one of which is supported by the Ethiopians and the other by al-Ittihad.

Other actors have also shifted with the times. Omar Guelleh was deeply engaged in the Arta process, the attempt to establish an internationally recognised government for Somalia in Djibouti in 1999–2000, from which both he and commercial interests in Djibouti would have reaped a considerable financial reward. Though a Transitional National Government for Somalia was indeed set up, run by some of the most dubious survivors from the Siyad Barre regime, and was recognised by external bodies, including the United Nations, it failed to gain the required level of acceptance in Mogadishu and has subsided into no more than one of the innumerable Somalia factions. Omar's hopes of a pay-off went unrewarded, and with the arrival of the Americans the Djibouti government shifted towards closer relations with Somaliland. The American presence has also affected Eritrea, notably in the form of heavy pressure to dissuade the Isaias government from attempting to seize by force areas allocated to Eritrea by the boundary commission, which the Ethiopians nonetheless continue to occupy. Military defeat, domestic repression and international isolation have placed intense pressure on Eritrea, which is likely at some still undeterminable point to result in a change of government and the reopening of the northern corridor. Sudan and Ethiopia, historic adversaries but linked by common hostility to Eritrea, have reached an accommodation that is important for Ethiopian access not only to Port Sudan but to Sudanese oil, but that cuts across the historic religious fault line, which has been given greatly increased salience by the association of terrorism with radical Islam.

Conclusion

In short, the region remains deeply unstable. Recent developments are no more than variants of well-worn themes: the mismatch between the needs of economic integration in the region and its underlying socio-political construction; the almost invariable subordination of the economic to the political, which does much to explain why this region remains among the poorest and most conflictual in the world; the exploitation of both local

factions and global rivalries by indigenous actors seeking (with at best only limited and temporary success) to construct regional relationships in their own interests; and the shift back and forth between coast and hinterland, highland and lowland, Christianity and Islam, in the relative balance of advantage. These patterns have been replicated over many centuries, and whatever the immediate impact of specific developments, it is unlikely that they will change. At the same time, these tensions and impulses mean that any region-building can only remain nascent and at the sub-national level whilst the state administrations remain locked in bitter disagreement, if not conflict. Although it is true that new states, new actors, new technology, new goods and new transportation systems have emerged in the past decades, as a region with long-time micro-regions the Horn seems fated at present to be one of the less developed areas of the continent. This is an irony indeed given the historic nature of many of the corridors and socioeconomic linkages that bind the spaces together.

War in the Great Lakes Region and Ugandan Conflict Zones: Micro-regionalisms and Meta-narratives

Morten Bøås and Kathleen M. Jennings

Uganda constitutes one of several epicentres of conflict in the Great Lakes region. It is enmeshed in its own internal wars, is a player in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and is involved in tense relations with Rwanda that sometimes border on open conflict. It also, unofficially, used to fight a war, using proxies, against the Sudanese government in Khartoum. Cumulatively, these conflicts consist of a multitude of various layers and overlapping sets of actors. Yet much of the literature on these wars persists in circulating around two poles. One is the “greed kills” argument elaborated by Berdal and Malone (2000), according to which the continuation of war, violence and conflict is a consequence of the battle for control over natural resources, in particular coltan, gold and other minerals that can be extracted from the DRC. The other is ethnicity, according to which war is a consequence of ethnic hatred and, in the Great Lakes context in particular, caused by the Hutu-Tutsi conflict (Newbury 1998, Lema 2000).

Although we do not dispute that these poles offer insight into some of the dynamics behind Uganda’s involvement in the various conflicts in the Great Lakes, their dominant position also makes them highly problematic and may generate misguided policy responses. The main objective of this chapter is, therefore, to explore an alternative view of the causes of Ugandan involvement in the many conflicts that continue to haunt the Great Lakes region. More precisely, the chapter will present an alternative elaboration that emphasises the ideational dimensions underpinning and giving birth to the “micro-regions of conflict” that constitute Uganda’s involvement in the Great Lakes regional war zone.

This requires a reconceptualisation of the relationship between the many conflicts in this part of Africa. Currently there are conflicts in the DRC, Uganda, Sudan, the Central African Republic and Burundi. Rwanda is presently at peace, but clearly an important actor in several of these conflicts. The interpretation of these events is disputed: some suggest that what we have seen in this region is a convergence of separate historical phenomena

(Newbury 1998), whereas others contend that all these events are closely intertwined and should, therefore, be seen as integral parts of a larger regional war zone (Reed 1998). Our interpretation is that the current pattern of conflict in the Great Lakes region is best viewed as one constituted by a series of local and national conflicts that do not always have that much in common, but that become intertwined due to the weaknesses of the state systems in the region (Bøås 2004). These micro-regions of conflict are set in motion by the elaboration, contestation and manipulation of meta-narratives of identity, power and betrayal, and their spread across borders is facilitated by the particular pathologies and failings that may grow out of the neo-patrimonial state. Neo-patrimonial states – characterised by corruption, political and economic violence, identity crises, generational and other group clashes and deep poverty – have two common dominant attributes: political power is personal power, and political resources almost solely give access to economic resources (Bøås 2001). Yet like any state or state system, neo-patrimonialism operates according to a certain logic, with prevailing patterns of distribution/redistribution, patron/client relationships and the accommodation of certain key groups. It is primarily when neo-patrimonial states and state systems break down or, according to their own logic and inner workings, become dysfunctional, that widespread conditions of marginalisation, scarcity and alienation are created. It is these conditions that enable alternative reckonings or interpretations to find fertile ground.

We argue that these cross-border micro-regions of conflict can best be defined in terms of speech acts (Shapiro 1981), as multiple interpretations of the region struggle, clash, deconstruct and displace one another (Neumann 2003). These regions are thus first and foremost social constructions. They are imagined by regionalising actors and constructed through social practices based on the meta-narratives that are formed by these imaginations in the context of pre-established frameworks of storytelling. The region is made up of moving bodies and, as such, is lived social space, but this space is given direction by regionalising actors and the meta-narratives at their disposal (Bull and Bøås 2003). By lived social space, we mean the sum of social practices and discourses that exist within a certain physical or virtual space (see Bøås 2003).

In the following section, we examine the competing and clashing meta-narratives that cumulatively comprise the cross-border micro-regions that, in turn, constitute Uganda's complex and turbulent interlinkages with the Great Lakes regional war zone. We first consider how political and economic marginalisation in northern and western Uganda has resulted in

meta-narratives that have contributed to rendering these areas into chronic cross-border micro-regions of conflict. We then consider the rivalries between the former “brothers in arms” (e.g., Museveni and Paul Kagame) to demonstrate how this part of Uganda’s involvement with the region fits into a pre-existing pattern of meta-narratives revolving around issues such as betrayal, resistance, sacrifice and security. Finally, this approach is extended to Museveni’s National Resistance Movement (NRM), in order to suggest how the dominant NRM meta-narrative of itself as the sole keeper of stability in Uganda is both strengthened by the meta-narratives mentioned above, and simultaneously constitutes them. In describing and examining these meta-narratives, therefore, this chapter attempts to illustrate how regions are negotiated and (re-)articulated through social practices informed by meta-narratives of pasts and presents.

A meta-narrative is here understood as the outcome of processes of storytelling.¹ All of us tell stories, and by telling stories we define the world and our place within it. As acts of self-definition, this storytelling takes place within a pre-established framework: it can constitute, mould or break this framework, but it will always be conditioned by it. Most of these stories are first and foremost important for the practice of everyday life, but, when combined with perceived experiences of grievances (political and/or economic), they can be combined to form powerful meta-narratives about “self” and “other”. Thus, a meta-narrative is the supposedly transcendent and universal truth about a collective “self” and its relationship to other in-groups (e.g., “others”).² The power of the meta-narrative is, therefore, located in its empowerment of those regionalising actors who “master” them to integrate a wider set of memories, experiences and aspirations in a perceived coherent whole. The politics of memory is, therefore, an integral dimension in the construction of meta-narratives.³

This may seem to be an extremely ambitious agenda for a relatively short chapter, and it is important to make absolutely clear what this chapter does not pretend to achieve. Specifically, we do not even try to present a com-

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1. This approach to meta-narratives and the construction of war zones was developed in Bøås (2004), and the paragraph here draws on that work.
 2. The approach to meta-narratives used here is inspired by Lyotard’s (1984) elaboration on the same concept in his seminal work, *The Postmodern Condition*.
 3. See also Alexander, McGregor and Ranger (2000), who argue that violence as a constant theme in Shangani history has given remembrance of the past and the telling of history a particular significance not only in current Matabeleland but also in the larger Zimbabwean context.

plete history of the cases presented. They should be seen merely as illustrations that can help the reader evaluate the strength of the general argument, which is that there is more to these conflicts than just greed and banditry. Underneath, there are layers of unsolved political questions, and we need to understand not only their material basis but also their ideational basis, and how these mutually constitute each other. These conflicts are, more often than not, local rather than regional, but due to inherent weaknesses in the state system in the Great Lakes region they become intertwined. This is especially so because the states that comprise this particular international system are more part of the problem than the solution.

It is important to emphasise that a meta-narrative can be powerful even if it is not shared by all the members of the group it claims to represent. Thus, we do not assume that all members of a particular group or region agree on the respective meta-narratives “claiming to speak” on their behalf. Rather, a meta-narrative will always be contested and controversial. This is precisely the reason (1) why it is important to understand them, and (2) how the discursive conflict over their hegemonic interpretation under certain circumstances can “sing” movements like the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) into existence and lead regionalising actors in Kampala and Kigali to seemingly act in accordance with a pre-written script.

Northern Uganda in the Regional War Zone

Different explanations exist about the LRA’s objectives and survival, but one of the most prominent theories – which appears in most accounts of the war in northern Uganda⁴ – is that the conflict with the LRA is best understood as the by-product of the larger geopolitical rivalry between the governments of Sudan and Uganda.⁵ The leader of LRA, Joseph Kony, and his soldiers are

4. The conflict in the north has had devastating consequences for the civilian population there. In Acholiland (i.e., the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader) in June 2005, over 1.3 million people – the entire rural population – were living in IDP camps, due both to rebel activity and current Ugandan army activity (Atallah, Bøås, El Dada, Hatløy and Zhang 2005).

5. The July 2005 death of John Garang, Sudanese vice-president and long-time Sudan People’s Liberation Movement leader, may have ramifications for the conflict in northern Uganda, in addition to impacting the progress of the North-South peace agreement in Sudan.

seen as hired guns used by the Sudanese government to destabilise Uganda. We do not contradict the fact that a strategic alliance has existed between Kony and Khartoum. We argue, however, that the micro-regional war zone created by this conflict is, more than anything else, an unintended consequence of the inability of Museveni's state to deal with political cleavages deeply embedded in Uganda's history.

Under President Museveni and his NRM, Uganda's problems of national division and violent conflict were supposed to be a relic of the past. However, Uganda remains a deeply troubled and divided country in which cultural, political and economic divisions stemming from the pre-colonial past are exacerbated by both the colonial and various postcolonial projects. One of these divisions is the deep cultural as well as political and economic cleavage between the Bantu centre and southwest of the country and the Nilotic north.⁶ The colonial administration recruited the bureaucratic elite from the centre and the south, in particular from Buganda, while northern Uganda was mainly a reservoir of labour from which the colonial administration recruited men to the army and police. This ethnic division of labour reinforced pre-existing cleavages and differences between northern and southern Uganda and thereby also helped to cement the division between Nilotes and Bantus that has played such a significant role in Uganda's political history.⁷ This does not suggest that this division represents the totality of economic activity – for example, the main economic role of Acholi and many parts of Bantu-speaking Uganda during colonialism was to grow cotton – only that cultural differences were open to manipulation through ethno-cultural politicisation, so that 'the Acholi, far from being born soldiers, were transformed into a military ethnocracy' during the colonial period (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:8). This kind of manipulation of ethno-cultural variables did not vanish with colonialism: on the contrary, it increased, becoming an important tool for a string of governments ranging from Obote I to the current NRM administration. Consequently, resentment in the north against the central government has been consistent – the most durable ex-

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6. It is perhaps true, as Goyvaerts (2000) has argued, that the only scientifically warranted distinction between the terms "Bantu" and "Nilotic" is a linguistic distinction. However, in the same piece of work, Goyvaerts also shows how these terms are currently used to classify and group people. It is, therefore, first and foremost perceptions that matter.
 7. Ehrenreich (1998) uses similar arguments as the background for her 'ethnicity theory' of war in northern Uganda.

pression of which is the LRA, established in 1988 and operating from bases in southern Sudan since 1994.

The Meta-narrative of the Acholi

The roots of an Acholi identity are contested (Gertzel 1974, Atkinson 1994), but there is evidence that the creation of an Acholi polity and collective identity long predates colonial rule (Bøås 2004). During the early colonial period, the Acholi were considered politically, economically and geographically marginal: the relatively small-scale and decentralised nature of Acholi political organisation meant that they were neither a sought-after ally nor a feared enemy and were instead viewed as a “tribe” of an inferior order with little to contribute to the “development” of the colonial economy. Nevertheless, by 1902, Acholi was officially recognised as one of three districts in the Nile Province of the British Uganda Protectorate, and administrative centres were established first in Gulu and then in Kitgum. The result was far more intrusive interventions into the Acholi “way of life”. The turning point came with the confiscation and destruction of Acholi firearms in 1913: although the colonial administration promised that all Acholi men who handed in their rifles for registration would get them back, soon after registration most of the collected rifles were burnt. This event was to become a watershed in the memory politics of the Acholi, and this betrayal by those in political authority thereafter became a defining nexus in the history of the Acholi. The dominant meta-narrative repeated itself twice: first under Idi Amin, who in 1971 and 1972 ordered thousands of Acholi soldiers (whose loyalty he doubted) into barracks and had them murdered; and again in 1986 under the NRM government, which ordered the Acholi to surrender their weapons after the National Resistance Army (NRA) established itself in the north (Behrend 1999, Bøås 2004).

Joseph Kony’s LRA is a reflection and distortion of meta-narratives of betrayal deeply entrenched in Acholi identity: the disarmament enforced by the colonial administration; Amin’s murder of thousands of Acholi soldiers; and the NRM order for Acholis to disarm, which, for many Acholis, was taken as a clear signal that the government planned to kill all male Acholis.⁸

8. The unwillingness of the government to protect the Acholi against Karamoja cattle raiders fuelled these sentiments. In 1987, the Karamoja launched massive raids, removing almost the total Acholi herd. For most Acholis, it was obvious that the Karamojong had been given a free hand by the Museveni government. This was perceived as yet another government attack on their way of life.

It is also a clear successor to the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF), which came into being in 1986 in a situation of extreme threat, and was ordered to be built up by the spirit Lakwena in order to wage war against Evil (Behrend 1999):

According to the Lakwena two tribes had the most bad records in history of Uganda, namely the Acholi and the Baganda. But top on the list are the Acholi. They have been notorious for murder, looting, raping etc. It was therefore planned by God to help the Acholi to be converted (Holy Spirit Document, quoted in Behrend 1998b:111–12).

The popular view was that, because of the sins the Acholi had committed, God sent the spirit Lakwena to them. In this understanding, their particular sinfulness and guilt was also embedded in their transformation to salvation and, as God's chosen people for salvation (like the children of Israel), they were destined to the leadership of Uganda through the Holy Spirit Movement.

Building on the dynamics expressed in and unleashed by the HSMF, the LRA is, in its own imagination, fighting to free the Acholis from an oppressive government dominated by ethnic groups determined to exclude the Acholis permanently from the spoils of state power. Letters and statements have even been published calling for an Acholi nation to be established in northern Uganda – an 'Acholihood' based on a purified and renewed identity as Acholi (Baker 2002).

There is no doubt that the strategic decision by Kony and the LRA in 1994 to ally themselves with the Sudanese government – which has provided weapons, training camps and facilities and even a monthly allowance to Kony of £7,000 (Kayunga 2000) – added a new dimension to the regional war zone in which Uganda is implicated. This alliance was, however, by and large a consequence of the collapse of the peace talks the same year. Continuation of the conflict in northern Uganda and the establishment of the current micro-regional war zone are, therefore, due to intransigence and mistakes on both sides. On 10 January 1994, Kony and Betty Bigombe, then minister of the north in Museveni's government, met in person and agreed on a ceasefire. Acholi elders were also present at the meeting and Kony seized the opportunity to give a four-hour-long speech in which he held the Acholi community partly responsible for 'the war that had backfired with terrible results that everyone now blamed Kony for ... He claimed that Acholi elder sent them out and then abandoned them, forcing the LRA to turn their guns on their own people' (Conciliation Resources with

Kacoke Madit 2002:40). Apparently, Kony's point was that the traditional leaders of the Acholi – the people he and his fighters had taken up arms to protect – had betrayed the LRA, adding seemingly yet another dimension of betrayal to the original meta-narrative that facilitated the emergence of, and still sustains, the LRA.

Yet the peace attempt in 1994 could have succeeded: Kony clearly indicated that he wanted to come out of the bush with all his fighters and negotiations towards this end were begun. The talks started to crumble over the insistence of NRA commanders that the only thing to negotiate was the total surrender of LRA, a view confirmed by Museveni during his visit to Gulu in February the same year: LRA subsequently left the negotiations and struck a deal with Khartoum instead. The Ugandan army can, therefore, not be excused from blame for the persistence of the LRA rebellion.

Years of war and terror followed the deal with Khartoum, but there have also been several attempts at restarting a process of dialogue towards peace. Using mobile phones, LRA commanders continue to talk to key Acholi leaders on an almost daily basis. In December 2004, a new deal was in the making and once more the negotiations were supervised by Betty Bigombe, but unfortunately this initiative failed. Due to both misunderstandings and sabotage from elements within the Ugandan army, the attempt to rebuild trust between Acholi elders and their “lost boys” in the LRA was abortive. The old meta-narrative that once helped the LRA into existence is thus still a manifest force in northern Uganda, and it is this, more than anything else, that has made a cross-border micro-regional war zone between Acholiland and southern Sudan both a “real” event and the dominant discourse for the last 17 years.

Western Uganda Cleavages and the Congolese Conflict Zone

In the popular discourse, the locus of war and conflict in Uganda is in the north, whereas the people in southern and western Uganda are better educated, more prosperous and more “civilised”. In this telling, the north is full of thugs but the south and west represent the social fabric of the new Uganda of Museveni and the NRM. Yet this facile assumption masks similar patterns of social conflicts centred on ideas and identities that are based on perceived marginalisation. Traditions of resistance that harken back several decades or more can be identified. Even though the causes of the rebellions that have occurred in these regions are diverse and do not necessarily have much in common, there is a continuity of resistance in certain areas of

southern and western Uganda that grows out of a similar meta-narrative of longstanding rebellion against centralised state power.

The Toro kingdom is located in western Uganda and its history as an independent polity goes back to around 1820, when Prince Kaboyo of the powerful Bunyoro kingdom seceded and formed his own kingdom based on an alliance between the Bakonzo hill farmers in the Rwenzori mountains and the Batoro people of the lower-lying land to the east. This has proven to be a highly volatile alliance, as the Bakonzo have repeatedly rebelled together with the Bamba against their inclusion in the Toro kingdom (Steinhart 1977). This unrest is largely attributable to the fact that the inhabitants of Toro were bound together not so much by a sense of collective belonging, but by a 'localised desire to escape the pressures arising from membership of a larger empire and their subordination to what they regarded as a remote and arbitrary government' (Ingham 1975:1). The tensions between locality and centrality, between representations of state power and a desire for local autonomy, were to dominate the Toro kingdom until it was abolished in 1967. It, therefore, seems tenable that the later activities of rebel movements such as the Rwenzururu and the ADF feed upon a tradition of resistance against central authority in this part of Uganda.

Upon Uganda's independence in 1962, Bakonzo members of the Toro royal court were arrested after demanding sub-regional autonomy. The direct consequence of these events was a low-scale guerrilla war that was to last nearly 20 years. From 1962 to 1980, a peasant guerrilla movement called the Rwenzururu was active on the Ugandan-Congolese border. This movement comprised Bakonzo and Bamba peasants living on the slopes of the Rwenzori mountains and was organised in response to oppression from, first, the colonial administration and, later, the national government (first Obote I and later Amin), which led to land deprivation and social and economic exclusion. The Rwenzururu movement was headquartered in the forest across the border in Congo (then Zaire). In that forest, the Rwenzururu, like the ADF later, made contact and shared experiences with Congolese counterparts, at that time the Mulelist guerrillas (see Doornbos 1970, Muhindo-Syahuka 1989, Mamdani 1996).

Fifteen years later, another armed resistance movement, the ADF, emerged in the same area. Some have presented the ADF as a successor movement to the Rwenzururu (see Human Rights Watch 1999, Johnson 2003): this is clearly wrong. That said, it is not purely by chance that the ADF emerged in this particular area.

The ADF is different – in origin, organisational structure, ideological

orientation and in relation to its area of operations – from most other the armed opposition movements that have operated in Uganda since 1986. First, the ADF operates in an area in which its leaders have few if any links: ADF leaders are almost exclusively from areas in central Uganda, yet ADF chose western Uganda as its battleground. The ADF is also the only armed group in Uganda with strong Islamic ties: comprised initially of a principal group of puritanical Muslims from the Tabliq sect, the ADF presents itself as Muslim evangelists fighting to counter the (perceived) marginalisation of Muslims by the Ugandan government (IRIN, 8 December 1999). Third, unlike most of the other armed groups, which appear to be relatively coherent organisationally, the ADF is a coalition of several groups with a core that is centred on a Muslim identity.⁹ It is also an integral part of the larger regional picture, due to strategic alliances with Interahamwe and Mai Mai groups operating in DRC. Fourth, whereas the leadership of other armed groups is clear and unquestionable, the ADF has kept its leadership structure and membership relatively obscure, which helps keep internal and external networks intact and relatively safe from state intelligence operatives. The obscurity of its leadership also adds a mythological dimension to the ADF: rumours and the ability to become “invisible” is an effective way of waging war for poor movements. However, the question remains: why did the ADF engage in this particular area of Uganda?

At least three reasons are usually given to explain why the ADF rebels adopted western Uganda as their theatre of operations: the mountainous terrain, the proximity of the DRC and the tradition of resistance against central authority in this region (IRIN 1999). The latter is particularly relevant for our purposes, as it enables an understanding of the ADF as the latest manifestation of a meta-narrative of resistance that spans decades. It is precisely here that the Rwenzururu movement enters the picture as the decisive element in the meta-narrative that makes the ADF a threat for NRM.

In the 1980s, after the official end of the Rwenzururu movement, some Bakonzo leaders chose to support a minor guerrilla leader by the name of Yoweri K. Museveni. This was a tactical alliance, predicated on Museveni granting the people on the slopes of Mount Rwenzori a high degree of autonomy – both from the central state and the Toro kingdom – upon coming to power. However, this promise was not fulfilled when Museveni assumed

9. For example, the ADF is allied with the obscure and largely defunct National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), although NALU makes statements claiming to be an autonomous organisation within the alliance.

power in 1986. Thus, when the ADF emerged out of the Tabliq movement looking for a place to stage their armed insurgency against the NRM state, they found a welcoming home in this particular area. The ADF view of central power as oppressive and persecutory meshes extremely well with the existing meta-narrative of resistance against state power in the Rwenzori area. This arrangement provided the ADF with a rear base and new recruits and also reinforced a latent meta-narrative of resistance in the area, thus making the ADF into a social phenomenon far beyond the borders of Mount Rwenzori. Moreover, the ebbs and flows of the larger regional war zone in which this micro-region is firmly embedded have exacerbated the situation: for example, the main reason Uganda initially sent troops into the DRC (then Zaire) was to attack and destroy ADF bases.

The tension that has percolated between Uganda and Rwanda since 1999 is also particularly instructive in terms of both the complex inter-dynamics of the regional war zone and the way in which internal political and oppositional issues can gain a cross-border, conflictual aspect through imposition and (mis-)representation.

Since Museveni's re-election in March 2001, the NRM have sought to establish links between the Ugandan opposition – specifically defeated presidential candidate Kisza Besigye and the “Reform Agenda” movement formed after the election – and different rebel groups. For example, the government has attempted to extradite Besigye from South Africa based on ‘intelligence information’ about Besigye's links with LRA and Kony (*Monitor* (Kampala) 26 August 2002); it has also claimed links between Reform Agenda coordinators Francis Ogwang Olebe and Dr. Peter Eriaku and the People's Redemption Army (PRA), which the Ugandan government asserts is a Rwandan creation consisting of former ADF fighters, Besigye supporters and dissatisfied soldiers. This is in turn linked with the situation across the Uganda-DRC border in north Kivu and Ituri, as the NRM claims that this new rebel movement is training in Ituru together with the ADF and receiving weapons and training from Rwanda in preparation for full-scale war (*New Vision* (Kampala) 13 January 2003, Johnson 2003). It is nearly impossible to verify the level of truth in these accusations. What is clear, however, is that they provide the Ugandan government with an excuse to keep troops in DRC and, equally significantly, help discredit the political opposition to NRM.

This dimension of Ugandan politics is, therefore, part and parcel of another important aspect of the regional war zone: the tension between the former “brothers in arms”, Museveni and Kagame. The former allies have

accused each other of supporting armed opposition groups against their respective governments, and political incitement and provocation from both sides has been a constant theme in the region since 1999. Deserters from the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) have been welcomed in Kampala and politicians and human rights activists have found it easy to escape Rwanda through Uganda.¹⁰ Rwanda has retaliated by, among other things, financing Besigye's presidential campaign in March 2001 (ICG 2001). This is precisely the same person the Museveni government now tries to link to the LRA, ADF and the PRA.

Uganda and Rwanda

To the outside world, the Rwanda-Uganda quarrel may look like an irrational and emotional family feud between the Bahima Bayankole leaders of Uganda and the Tutsi Rwandan refugees who took refuge and lived in Ankole after the Hutu "social revolution" of 1959. However, this relationship is also firmly embedded in a meta-narrative that has critically shaped perceptions and actions.

Prior to the genocide in 1994, most Tutsi refugees from Rwanda left in three different waves: 1959–61, 1963–64 and 1973 (Mamdani 2001:159–233). Those who arrived in Uganda faced a situation of permanent refugee status, as successive Ugandan governments considered even the Ugandan-born children of refugees to be refugees – "once a refugee, always a refugee". The Banyarwanda, as the Tutsi refugees are known in Uganda, were the target both of popular prejudice and official discrimination. For example, Obote's 1969 directive ordering the removal of all unskilled foreigners from public employment was first and foremost directed against the Banyarwanda. Not surprisingly, many Banyarwanda welcomed Amin's coup. However, some soon joined the anti-Amin forces, the most prominent being Fred Rwigyema, who joined Museveni's struggle against Amin in the mid-1970s.¹¹ When the civil war restarted after the rigged elections of 1980 (which brought Obote back to power), Obote deliberately referred to Museveni's NRM only as the "Banyarwanda". The outcome would be written in blood: and as the army stepped up its atrocities against the Banyar-

10. The most prominent being the former prime minister, Pierre Célestin Rwigyema; former parliament speaker, Joseph Sebarenzi Kabuye; and former minister for the interior, Theobald Rwaka.

11. In the 1990s, Rwigyema led the RPF insurgency in Rwanda.

wanda, the victimised Banyarwanda increasingly joined Museveni's forces. By the time Museveni took power in Kampala in January 1986, approximately one-third of his more than 16,000 troops were of Banyarwanda origin.

Although it is possible that the Banyarwanda joined the struggle in Uganda in order to acquire the military skills necessary to build an organisation that could fight the Hutu regime in Kigali, it is much more likely that they joined to stake a claim for Ugandan citizenship. "Going home" was not the single most important dimension of the Banyarwanda discourse in the early 1980s. Instead, this dimension rose to the forefront only when the Banyarwanda came to realise that "once a refugee, always a refugee" would continue in the new Uganda of Museveni. In spite of the fact that many of the Banyarwanda had taken part in the struggle both against Amin and Obote, they remained susceptible to mistreatment by the new government (Prunier 1998).

The experiences of the Banyarwanda underpin the idea that the perceptions and actions of the current Tutsi leadership in Kigali are informed by a meta-narrative of betrayal by Ugandans. They fought for Museveni in the Luwero Triangle: in their script, they paid with their blood in order to become naturalised as Ugandans when the war was over. This was a promise that Museveni made to the Tutsi refugees that fought for the NRA (Prunier 1998), but it was unheeded. The period after 1986 was instead constituted in the collective memory of the Banyarwanda by a series of betrayals – the most important of which being the removal, in November 1989, of Fred Rwigyema as army chief of staff by Museveni. This seemed a definitive blow: if Rwigyema could not become Ugandan, then no Banyarwanda could ever become Ugandan. In this alternative explanation, therefore, it is the 'great betrayal' of the Tutsi by Museveni that forges the Tutsi determination to return home – a return that could only take place through the 'barrel of a gun' (Mamdani 2001). The bitter truth for the Tutsis that came to constitute the leadership of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) was that, in the politics of autochthony in Central Africa, even the shedding of one's own blood cannot bring citizenship.

This meta-narrative of betrayal and separateness in turn nourished the creation of another meta-narrative about the politics of place and security of the Tutsi: that is, that the only place the Tutsi self could secure itself was in the "ancient" homeland, the borders of which must be protected at all costs because, if not, a new genocide would be lurking around the corner. The tension between the respective regimes of Kigali and Kampala is, therefore, not solely or strictly a by-product of the political economy of conflict of the Congolese war, as the "greed and grievance" literature suggests, but rather

an outcome of lived experiences of resistance, sacrifice and betrayal. It is this meta-narrative that currently informs the actions of the Kigali leadership, and it is precisely to these actions – underwritten by the same script – that Kampala reacts. The final question, therefore, naturally concerns the NRM, and what kind of script “sings” its stratagem into being.

The NRM: The Movement System or Chaos?

There is little doubt that the NRM campaign against Obote II was different from the other campaigns taking place at the same time. The goal of the NRM was to bring about a total change in the way Uganda was governed. In particular, it was determined to break the cycle of violence, dictatorship and mismanagement that had governed Uganda for so many years. As Museveni (2000:3) stated in his swearing-in address on 29 January 1986, ‘ours is a fundamental change’.

According to Museveni, this change could only be achieved by modernising Uganda. In Museveni’s view, Uganda and most other African countries are still pre-industrial and must be treated as such by the leadership. Museveni’s reading of the Ugandan situation discloses a society of vertical polarisation based on tribe and ethnicity, in which people support someone because that person belongs to their group, not because of the ideas held by the person in question. Given the lack of social classes, there are in Museveni’s opinion currently no healthy grounds for party political polarisation in Uganda. Since in this reading Uganda is a peasant society – and Museveni and the NRM interpret the peasant as illiterate and uneducated – the polarisation one is likely to get is vertical polarisation based on ethnicity: all political parties will thus be sectarian. Accordingly, multiparty democracy would only create havoc in Uganda and must wait until economic development and, in particular, industrialisation and the crystallisation of socioeconomic groups can provide a solid base for political parties. In the meantime, the movement system and ‘no-party politics’ will provide Uganda with a political system of transparency and accountability (Museveni 1997, 2000).

The NRM meta-narrative constructed by Museveni and summarised above is in many ways built on an elaborate reading of the past. There is little doubt that manipulation of ethnic variables by political elites from various parties played a significant role in bringing about the total turmoil that characterised the 1970s and 1980s in Uganda. This point is repeatedly argued by Museveni and the NRM when they associate multipartism with violence (Bratton and Lambright 2001). In the alternative narrative,

therefore, NRM, Museveni, and their political system (i.e., the Movement) become the only shield against a return to the atrocities of the past. If power ends up in the hands of the opposition, Uganda's future will yet again be ruined: there is no viable alternative to NRM rule and it is the moral duty of NRM and its leadership to do whatever it takes to stay in power. According to this meta-narrative, the alternative to NRM rule will always be worse, regardless of what the NRM must do to stay in power.

It is with this in mind that we should interpret the government's attempt to link main opposition politicians to armed rebel movements such as LRA and ADF – as a message to the population at large as to what constitutes the alternative to Museveni's NRM. In such a reading, the NRM is fighting a proxy war in DRC not primarily to enrich the leadership, but to protect the social revolution the regime hopes to bring about in Uganda. NRM is thus waging war both in Uganda and the region in order to protect its political project, for the greater good of the Ugandan people. If this involves fighting the regime in Kigali, so be it. In Museveni's NRM meta-narrative, it is the moral duty of the organisation to do so because, otherwise, Uganda will yet again descend into chaos and violence.

So far the tensions between the Kigali and Kampala governments have mainly played out in north Kivu. The situation there is complex, to put it mildly, but it is interesting to note that one of the actors is ADF. In north Kivu, myriad militias fight one another in an intertwined quest for resources and security, while the Ugandan army has massed troops on its side of the border, ready to move in (see Johnson 2003, Tull 2003). This situation could easily become more dangerous if the RPF regime in Kigali were to increase its efforts to retaliate against NRM and Museveni – this time not by giving financial support to the presidential campaign of one of Museveni's main opponents (i.e., Besigye), but by giving open support to the ADF and PRA. Thus far Rwanda and Uganda continue to fight a proxy war in and around north Kivu but should any of the participants decide to directly support an armed movement fighting against either regime in Kampala or Kigali, the situation in the micro-regional war zone could easily be transformed from proxy war to full-scale military conflict. If this were to happen, we would most likely see dramatic changes in the larger regional war zone as well.¹²

12. In September 2003, Museveni visited Kigali on the occasion of the swearing-in of Paul Kagame as president of Rwanda. Whether this signals real improvement in the relationship between the two leaders, or was just a façade, remains to be seen. See also the articles in *The East African* (Nairobi), 15–21 September 2003.

Conclusion

The crafting, elaboration and manipulation of the meta-narratives described above is key to the construction of conflictual movements based largely around notions of group identity, power (or lack thereof) and betrayal. The micro-regions created out of these scripts are “regions in the making”. Yet this is only part of the story. The spread of these micro-regions of conflict across borders is not necessarily a function of obvious similarities or affinities between the areas or conflicts in question. Instead, they are facilitated both by the weakness of the state system in this region and the inability of this particular postcolonial state (Uganda) to untangle the contradictions inherited from the totality of its history.

We argue that, among the neo-patrimonial states of the Great Lakes region, the meta-narratives – and the grievances underlying and shaping them – may differ, but the experiences of political, social and economic marginalisation and exclusion essentially do not, thus providing fertile ground for the spread of conflict. While the issue of the physical weakness of the state – manifested in, for example, a lack of real territorial integrity or ability to provide goods and services in a fair manner for all citizens – is clearly important, the shared perceptions of exclusion, marginality and lack of belonging, which transcend local or communal ties, is no less so. This vulnerable situation is further exacerbated by political expediency and rivalries among leaders, whose ability to act as “regionalising actors” enables them to create micro-regions of conflict to further their strategic agendas. The tactical support from Khartoum to the LRA as tit-for-tat for support of the southern Sudanese rebels by Kampala, or the micro-regions of conflict created along the western Uganda-DRC border as a consequence of the proxy war between Kampala and Kigali, are but two examples that illustrate how micro-regions of conflict become embedded in the larger regional war zone of the Great Lakes region. Yet these incidents cannot be understood in isolation from broader historical processes.

This chapter is therefore an attempt to reflect on how micro-regions are (re)articulated and negotiated through social practices informed by meta-narratives of pasts and presents. This elaboration was built on the initial assumption that the current pattern of conflict in the Great Lakes region is best viewed as one constituted by a series of local and national conflicts that do not always have that much in common, but that become intertwined due to the weakness of the state system in this particular part of the world. The Ugandan case is instructive in this regard because, as we have seen, it is

first and foremost internal issues that create the momentum for spillover effects across national borders. The LRA is basically a Ugandan and an Acholi problem, and it was the failure of the NRM state to deal with the challenges in northern Uganda that paved the way for the joining of forces of LRA and Khartoum in 1994. Likewise, the roots of the ADF insurgency and its involvement with Congolese militias in north Kivu are found in Uganda, and the ability of one particular group to tap into pre-existing local sentiments towards central authority in the Rwenzori area of western Uganda. The meta-narratives on which these movements seek their foundation are composed by lived experiences constituted by NRM policies, and as long as this constitution continues these meta-narratives will continue to exist and “sing” organisations such as the LRA and the ADF into existence.

A similar argument was made concerning the relationship between Kigali and Kampala, suggesting that the tension between the two regimes is better understood as the outcome of a meta-narrative of resistance, sacrifice and betrayal that informs the actions undertaken by the Kigali leadership than as simply a by-product of the political economy of conflict of the war in eastern DRC. The defining time and place for this meta-narrative was in Uganda between 1986 and 1990. Therein we find the foundation of the RPF project of protecting the Tutsi at all costs – the idea that the only place a self can be protected is in its own country. The script informing the actions of Kampala is, in fact, strikingly similar, built as it is on a meta-narrative identifying all opposition to the NRM of Museveni as an attempt to bring back the chaos of the 1970s and 1980s. This NRM meta-narrative also constitutes the three others, through the argument that the only alternative to Museveni’s Uganda is a descent into chaos and violence. We see this meta-narrative at work in the continuous linking of political opposition to Museveni with the LRA, the ADF and, most recently, the PRA. This strategy has been used against Besigye and Reform Agenda activists, and unfortunately is likely to figure as the project of a third term for Museveni is increasingly set in motion.¹³

Attempting to understand these micro-regions of conflict in the way advocated here can help to identify the various discursive practices at work

13. Museveni’s final constitutional term expired in 2006. However, certain segments of the cabinet were involved in the push for amendments to the constitution to have the term limit on the presidency removed. For reactions from the opposition, see articles in *The Monitor* (Kampala) by respectively Kakaire A. Kirunda and Prof. Dani W. Nabudere on 29 and 30 December 2003.

in various conflict zones, and how they continuously elaborate on already well-established meta-narratives of “self” and “other”. Such a focus on the ideational dimensions of conflict will not give us the complete picture of any given conflict zone, but it can constitute a useful rejoinder to simplified readings of war and conflict in Africa and beyond, which so easily see only greed and banditry while ignoring the political projects and fault-lines that lie beneath.

Such a research project also has important ramifications in terms of reconceptualising the “region” and the “regional war zone”. An examination of the processes around the construction and dissemination of these meta-narratives, and the rhetoric that goes with them, is crucial to developing an understanding of how these meta-narratives are built up and manipulated. Who controls and facilitates such processes and how meta-narratives can be rewritten and overwritten? These questions bring into focus the importance of actors in these processes. It is important to stress that the idea of meta-narratives is not deterministic: we do not argue that “the text” (i.e., the meta-narrative) dooms people to a lifetime of betrayal, marginalisation or oppression. It is rather the opposite: these processes of elaboration and contestation are actor-driven, malleable and manipulable. Mythologisation, representation and interpretation of the past are not set in stone, so the past is not doomed to be repeated. However, in order to understand the processes that underlies this “region-building”, we must understand how current meta-narratives of “self” and “other” contribute to setting such processes in motion.

Beyond Parochialism: Cross-border Regionalism as a Gateway

Daniel Bach

The study of regionalism in Africa is deceiving for anyone intent on replicating or deriving confirmation of models of region-building drawn from the experience of the EU. Region-building and regionalisation in Africa only really stands for policy-driven integration in the rare cases where hysteresis combines with hegemonic dominance (Bach 2005). The continent's Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are in the main associated with powerful cognitive representations, but their transcription is less about pooling sovereignty than about calls for domestic macroeconomic reform and agendas. Plans for the establishment of collective security regimes were for many years superseded by concerns about regime stability under the guise of sovereignty enhancement and "non-interference". However, since the late 1990s the rejuvenated mandates formally assigned to intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) in the field of regional security have prioritised the restoration of peace and the reconstruction of the security sector within failing states. Until such prerequisites are achieved, pledges about the establishment of common policies are bound to be structurally impaired.

It is against this backdrop that regionalisation processes in Africa take their cue. The stability or hardening of international boundaries, far from representing a constraint or barrier, continue to offer the populations in the borderlands opportunities for trade, migration and financial transactions that impart a specific flavour to cross-border interactions. Trans-state regionalisation in Africa also proceeds from an exploitation of the dividends of violence within and among states. In fine, much of the dynamism of cross-border regionalism in Africa has to do with the capacity of non-state players to avoid the state's territorial control or take control of state policies. This confers on cross-border interactions a low-key and parochial slant that contributes to their characterisation as a marginal phenomenon.

The following discussion argues that micro- or cross-border regionalism is not to be misinterpreted as a subsidiary form of regionalisation in Africa. Indeed, micro-regionalism offers unique opportunities for the study and assessment of regionalisation. Its expressions have more to do with reach than with

size and scale. They also relate to material or cognitive spaces rather than to clearly demarcated territorial span. Micro-regionalism often involves a powerful cognitive component whereby boundaries defined through geo-ethnic or religious bonds prevail over lines of territorial partition. The previous chapters confirm, each in their own way, how the study of micro-regionalism in Africa warrants a focus on the identification of non-state players that best reveal themselves in the borderlands, where their capacity to penetrate state policies and territories is put to the test. I wish to briefly explore three related components of a notion that may be best described as an entry point, a gateway into the study of African regionalism. Three issue-areas are addressed: the patterns of institution-building and institutionalisation; the knock-on effects of interactions between core states and their neighbours; and lastly, the dynamics of cross-border regionalisation.

Region building as Institution building

The distinction between regionalism as a cognitive or state-centric project and regionalisation as a process or an outcome remains central to the review of recent attempts to rejuvenate regional integration in Africa by enhancing lower-scale patterns of regionalism or formalisation of *de facto* trans-boundary interactions.

It should be noted that the flurry of cross-border or micro-regional schemes is not really a new phenomenon. Many regional IGOs owe their existence to colonial-era arrangements for inter-territorial coordination and integration or to enhance communications and transportation with metropolitan centres. These arrangements were underpinned by the assumption that economic self-sufficiency and imperial preference systems should prevail over pre-colonial trade routes and socio-historical bonds across imperial boundaries. Within each imperial bloc, coordination was enforced through common tariff policies, the build up of infrastructure and the creation of common services within federal structures. Thus, in Central Africa, the dissolution of the Central African Federation (CAF) in 1964 proceeded in tandem with the transformation of its common services into a multiplicity of small functional IGOs designed to manage cross-border interactions on a low-key technocratic basis.¹ The proliferation of new groupings was often a

1. The regional organisations that were established included the Central African Power Corporation (electric power system associated with the Kariba dam), the Central African Airways Corporation, the Agricultural Research Council of Central Africa and the Central African Airways Corporation.

temporary solution to the inability of member states to share assets or adopt national policies. The survival, at least on paper, of myriad cross-border organisations designed to manage common natural resources or infrastructure networks and equipment has done much to create a situation whereby sub-Saharan Africa combines 'the largest number of regional groupings in the world' with the 'largest number of ineffective or dormant arrangements' (De la Torre and Kelly 1992).

A number of cross-border projects associated with the notion of "micro-regionalism" proceed from attempts to revitalise and institutionalise schemes that were originally associated with common services established during the colonial period. The imprint of colonialism is also apparent in cross-border regional schemes that were motivated by geopolitical considerations rather than economics. In West Africa, the now defunct Operation Swallow (*Opération hirondelle*) is a good illustration of the idiosyncratic nature of imperial regionalist schemes. Operation Swallow was established by the French in the 1950s for the export of groundnuts from eastern and central Niger without depending on Nigerian railways and harbours. Niger's groundnut exports, the country's main source of revenue, had up to 1953 been exclusively transported to the coast down Nigeria's Kano-Lagos railway. By December that year, traffic congestion on the railway necessitated the establishment of an alternative route involving transportation by lorry to Parakou, in present-day Benin, and from there by railway to Cotonou. Operation Swallow was particularly costly since the road to Parakou was not tarred and the Niger river had to be crossed at Gaya-Malanville by ferry until a bridge was completed in 1958. Once in Cotonou, shipment was further delayed by the slow handling of traffic at the single wharf. In subsequent years, Operation Swallow had to be heavily subsidised and only handled about one-third of Niger's groundnut exports. At independence, its continuance was nonetheless seen as strategic by all parties. Benin considered the operation to be vital for the survival of its railway and the construction of a deep-water harbour at Cotonou. In Niger too, President Diouri Hamani considered that the operation would contribute to curbing cross-border interactions between northern Nigeria and Niger's Hausaland. France viewed the operation as a vehicle for the preservation of tight francophone linkages. As a result, the dismantling of the French West Africa Federation in 1959 did not bring an end to Operation Swallow. Its continuation and expansion were instead organised through a newly established IGO, the Organisation Commune Dahomey Niger (OCDN), which was entrusted with the management of the Niger-Benin transport corridor. Both countries also com-

mitted themselves to sharing equally any deficit that might arise. In effect, the priority given to preserving this francophone transport corridor had no real developmental impact. OCDN activities had to be heavily subsidised and the failure to secure international funding to extend the railway was eventually compounded by political tensions. These crystallised in late 1963, when the expulsion of Beninois civil servants working in Niger was followed by a conflict over the ownership of the tiny island of Lette, located near Gaya-Malanville on the Niger river. OCDN traffic was subsequently interrupted until June 1964, making Niger acutely aware of the dangers of placing increased reliance on a “francophone” outlet.

Interactions between colonial enclaves and their neighbours offer insights into another type of legacy. Cross-border interactions between the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Mellila and Morocco illustrate how “micro-regionalism” can be encapsulated in broad inter-regional political, economic, human and financial agendas. Cross-border flows of goods and people acquire a global and starker dimension as a result of the sharp disparities that crystallise along the boundary lines. The domestic and international flows that focus on the Walvis Bay-Swakopmund area point to the ambiguous regional implications generated by the dismantling of such boundary lines. “Micro-regionalism” in this area drew much of its impetus and flavour from South Africa’s ownership of Walvis Bay between 1884 and 1994. After Namibia became independent from South Africa in 1980, South Africa’s ongoing control of the Walvis Bay enclave transformed it into a strategic hub and a key transport corridor that could be manipulated to the detriment of Namibia. Cross-border trade and trans-border trafficking were stimulated by the disparities associated with distinctive fiscal, trade and labour regimes on each side of the boundary line. Walvis Bay’s formal reintegration into Namibia in 1994 abruptly ended the opportunities for interactions and transactions associated with re-export trade with South Africa. Micro-regional expansion has since become the object of ambitious top-down visions radiating across Namibia into neighbouring states. As noted by Simon and Ekobo (see Chapter 2) the material capacity to translate these grand projects into working agendas and programmes has yet to be confirmed. Nor should the cognitive value attached to such schemes be underestimated.

Growth corridors, development triangles and other spatial development initiatives lend a peculiar flavour to micro-regionalism and cross-border interactions in Asia. This flavour is also associated with a history of lean institutionalisation associated with a history of militarised boundary lines and tense inter-state relations. Conversely, in Africa, regionalism, through

its ample use of summit diplomacy and international patronage, is central to the conduct of inter-state relations. This translates into a conception of region-building as being associated with sophisticated institutional architectures. In this context, the EU's institutionally driven approach and its pre-eminence as an aid donor to Africa have hugely influenced African notions of regionalism.

The endorsement of region-building models drawn from the experience of constructing Europe has a long history in Africa. Over the past few years, the pattern has gained renewed salience with the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into an African Union (AU). The AU secretariat is now known as the Commission, while the former position of secretary-general of the OAU has been renamed president of the AU Commission. As in Brussels, the AU has its own commissioners. The Permanent Representatives' Committee, formed by African ambassadors, is a reminder of the EU's Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER). Regional disparities among AU members are to be addressed through the creation of the Community, Solidarity, Development and Compensation Fund, which draws its inspiration from the EU's allocations of structural funds (Bach 2006). Africa's sub-regional groupings similarly share a history of emulating and replicating European norms and models.

Attempts to emulate Europe's trans-frontier cooperation through a replication of the Euro-region template in West Africa confirm that micro-regionalism is not insulated from this trend (Dahou 2004). The stated objectives focus on the formalisation of trans-frontier linkages through the establishment of "cross-border areas" whereby informal trans-border interactions can become institutionalised. The gist of the concept, originally suggested by the Sahel and West Africa Club in 2000–01, is the promotion of the joint management of "border zones" and enhancement of existing patterns of integration between communities living on each side of the boundary line (Diarrah 2003, Söderbaum and Taylor 2007). This is to be achieved by mobilising funding for the development and pooling of infrastructures and amenities as well as by establishing bilateral border management structures. The proposal moved into an operational phase in January 2005, with the formal inclusion of cross-border cooperation on the agenda of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). As a result of the adoption by ECOWAS ministers of foreign affairs of a memorandum on the "Cross-border Concept or Local Integration", the Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) was mandated to compile, coordinate and formalise initiatives focused on the pilot projects at Sikasso (Mali) and Ziguinchor (Senegal).

CIP is part of a series of civil-society driven initiatives that may appropriately complement the top-down approach of ECOWAS. Forms of interaction slated for enhancement include shared access to hospitals and social amenities on both sides of the boundary, improved opportunities to cultivate unoccupied land, improved cooperation in farming and cattle-breeding as well as the more familiar issues of facilitating cross border trade and migration flows. This initiative proceeds from the assumption that informal cross-border interactions stand to benefit from their formal incorporation into public policy and inter-state agreements. This assumption also mirrors the idea that, as was the case for EU member-states and their immediate neighbours, ECOWAS states will be prepared to delegate authority to civil society and non-state players. For the stated objectives to be achieved, a Copernician revolution will have to occur in the borderland, since much of the dynamism of cross-border interactions arises from the capacity of players, who do not necessarily originate in the border areas concerned, to escape and avoid state control.

Narrowing the gap between informal and formal interactions so as to legitimise cross-border trade and linkages assumes that trade liberalisation should be welcomed by all players. Boundary lines are depicted as constraints that should be ameliorated. However, as suggested above, due to their porosity they also provide valuable opportunities and protection for people located at the periphery of the state. Due to the internationalisation of cross-border transit trade, the dismantlement of customs and tariff barriers needs to be part of a broader policy framework. Micro-regionalism in this respect offers a pragmatic entry-point into, as well as monitoring opportunities for the advantages and shortcomings of, the integration programmes of sub-regional organisations.

The South African-centred Hub and Spoke System: A Case of Lean-institutionalisation

In Africa as in Europe, attempts to boost micro-regionalism are underscored by ambitious plans for institution building and the framing of norms. Unlike in Europe, however, African policy initiatives are heavily constrained by the weakness of the state or its unwillingness to prioritise the pooling of sovereignty. Sovereignty- or regime-enhancement remain the priorities. The discussion of the Zambezi Valley Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) and the Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle (ZMM-GT) in this volume offers emblematic depictions of the differentiation between weak

and lean institutionalisation. The ZMM-GT is the product of an inter-state initiative that still remains largely an idea in the making, an evolving project that Slocum-Bradley (see Chapter 4) sees as promotional in nature. The rhetorical and bureaucratic character of the project is a reminder of the all too familiar experience of weak institutional capacity and lack of internalisation associated with state-driven regionalism. In contrast with this, the content and orientation of the Zambezi Valley SDI is driven by South Africa's hub and spoke system of dominance and its mix of private investment with public policy. Institutionalisation is lean because it proceeds from design rather than through unmatched ambitions.

The South Africa-centred hub and spoke system involves an intricate network of bilateral agreements and initiatives underpinned by public initiatives and private capital sponsorship. This contributes to a configuration in which integration proceeds from the structural hegemonic domination of a core state. Lean institutions and normative frameworks represent a voluntary substitute for weak institutions. Indeed, formal agreements – but also infrastructures and the strategies of transnational firms or diasporas – provide substance to patterns of regionalisation that fall squarely into the category of “micro-regionalism”.

Interactions between South Africa and its neighbours are shaped by the combination of formal interactions associated with the establishment of SACU, in operation since 1910, with transnational undertakings that reflect the predatory dynamism of South Africa's conglomerates. In the last decades of the apartheid system, South African President P.W. Botha's “total strategy” helped entrench the dependency of the SADC hinterland on South African harbours and infrastructure. In addition to its hegemonic hold over SACU, South Africa has bilateral trade agreements with four other countries (Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia). This legacy exerts considerable influence over present-day regionalisation processes. Indeed, these still proceed from the close interplay between policy orientations and the strategies pursued by international private investors and big South African capital.

The Maputo Development Corridor (MDC) initiative illustrates the interplay between South African-driven multi-scalar regionalisation and lean institutionalisation. The MDC initiative was officially launched in 1996 for the rebuilding of trans-frontier interactions between southern Mozambique and eastern South Africa through the rehabilitation of infrastructure between Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Maputo (see Chapter 1). The MDC's initial objectives involved the rehabilitation of road, rail and harbour infrastructure,

incentives for new investment and new employment opportunities through the alleviation of material and bureaucratic impediments to cross-border interaction, the construction of mega-industrial projects and the establishment of an industrial park essentially funded by private international capital. The MDC explicitly seeks to rebuild some of the trans-frontier linkages that, until the 1970s, combined labour migrations from Mozambique with Maputo's key role as a natural outlet for Johannesburg and the province of Mpumalanga. Within a decade of its formal launch, the MDC could claim to have given rise to an impressive array of trans-frontier projects, most of them funded through private-sector initiatives. These projects include the toll road to Mozambique; establishing the world's third-largest aluminium smelter near Maputo; modernising its harbour, now operated by an international consortium; rehabilitating the South Africa-Maputo rail link operated by South Africa's rail utility Spoornet; creating an industrial park in the city; and developing a gas pipeline. Further integration is expected to flow from South Africa's announcement of its decision to abolish visa requirements for Mozambicans.

Beyond Parochialism:

Cross-boundary Networks and their Global Reach

The chapters in Part II of this volume in particular point to the dynamism of cross-border regionalisation in conjunction with a disjuncture between the stability of boundary lines and the formation of regional spaces that straddle these lines. Africa provides favourable turf for the identification of situations where regionness grows independently of clearly identified regionalist strategies or aspirations. Regionalisation is then the outcome of the behaviour of geo-ethnic or religious communities whose activities contribute to the de facto formation of regional spaces. What is labelled as "micro-regionalism" often relates to the study of such non-state players and their manipulation of public function into private interests.

The study of cross-border interactions offers a rich field of investigation but often proves deceptive in relation to policy-making. Depending on time, location and circumstance, regionalisation is associated with transactions that are licit or illicit, formal or informal, locally banned but internationally acceptable or, conversely, locally condoned but criminalised abroad. The study of micro-strategies also offers key insights into cross-boundary networks that, far from being parochial in nature, operate in a continental and global environment. When, as is most often the case, trans-boundary inter-

actions combine a capacity to penetrate both the institutions of the state and its territory, they reflect on the performance of trans-state networks. By contrast with cross-border or trans-boundary interactions, trans-state networks mobilise social, ethnic or religious bonds that challenge the state's territorial control through their ability to avoid, penetrate or permeate and take control of state institutions. Such networks thrive whenever they are embedded in neo-patrimonial systems of governance, whereby institutional policies and territorial control are softened by the privatisation of public functions. Whereas trans-frontier interactions simply involve crossing boundary lines, trans-state interactions combine this capacity with the ability to penetrate state institutions. Controls assigned to state authorities are nullified through negotiation or avoided through complicity. Trans-state networks simultaneously challenge the institutionalisation of the state and its territorial control. They promote regionalisation through their exploitation of the opportunities offered by the customs, fiscal, normative or monetary disparities that are found along boundary lines. For this very reason trans-state networks and lobbies have no interest in the harmonisation of policies under the aegis of formal regional institutions. Indeed, whilst trans-state regional lobbies share a strong interest in the preservation of good relations between neighbouring states, they have little to gain from the implementation of sub-regional programmes to liberalise customs and tariff barriers. These programmes are in fact a direct challenge to the rent-seeking opportunities associated with the preservation of fiscal or tariff barriers and/or the establishment of formal or informal checkpoints.

Depending on circumstances and location, trans-state circuits are opposed or officially condoned by state policies. Impoverished national administrations have little reason to hesitate when presented with the opportunity to tap resources at the expense of neighbouring states. This diversion of official circuits towards trans-state networks may result in de-criminalising certain trans-state activities, which cannot, however, be public endorsed, since the profits are realised at the expense of the state(s) across the border. The strength of trans-state regionalism is linked inextricably to the lack of transparency, the extreme flexibility of the flows, as well as autonomy in relation to official circuits and policies. The networks' development rests on the capacity for prompt and global adaptation to the interplay of changing tariff and fiscal measures, shifts in currency demand and supply, international prices for export crops or for goods deemed illegal in other areas of the continent and beyond. The result is a nexus of constant fluctuations in the composition and direction of trans-state flows and consequently in the

articulation and impact of the networks at grassroots level. Far from conducting to the disappearance of existing frontier lines, trans-state regionalisation demands their preservation for the networks' activities to prosper. Trans-state regional networks have no interest either in regional programmes to dismantle intra-zone customs and tariff barriers, nor do they seek to generate alternatives to the continent's political fragmentation.

Cross-border interactions offer privileged insights into the dynamics of micro- or Afro-region-building. The strategies observed often result in reach without size, leverage without sovereignty and space without controlling territory. In stark contrast with the reified landscape of African regionalism, the analysis of cross-border interactions points to the need to revise a number of conventional assumptions about such interactions. De facto regional spaces can develop independent of boundary lines and establish bonds that proceed from cognitive interactions rather than territorial affiliations and citizenship. Regionalisation can also proceed from the exploitation of boundary disparities or distortions on a rent-seeking basis. Cross-border regionalisation also (and most importantly) points to states where opportunities for survival and accumulation associated with cross-border interactions are vital to large sections of the population and sometimes the state itself.

The study of cross-border interactions in borderland areas sheds new light on local, national and global strategies. Micro-regionalism represents an entry-point for the study of much broader issues and agendas. Indeed, micro-regionalism does not stand for parochialism or provincialism. The implicit hierarchy between macro- and micro-regionalist schemes is in substance largely devoid of meaning. Micro-regionalism, as the preceding chapters emphasise, is more about the crystallisation of broader issues than about the emergence of a specific path to region-building that may be articulated and/or given effect by policy-makers. Cross-border regionalism highlights the "glocal" nature of micro-strategies. Micro-regionalism, in this sense, stands in contrast to the contextual and cognitive representations of cross-border interaction as a peripheral area of investigation.

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