

Introduction

Southern Africa: Continuities and Disjunctures in the Discourse and Practices¹

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In 2003 the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) celebrated its 30th anniversary with a series of sub-regional conferences that fed into a continent-wide meeting in Dakar in December. This volume contains revised versions of papers initially presented at the Southern Africa sub-regional conference held in Botswana in October 2003. The theme of the conference, ‘Southern Africa: From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance’ attested to the current preoccupation of African intellectuals and political leaders with defining new goals and strategies for a positive African trajectory. The emergent vision in Africa is one of development that focuses on human security, in which poverty alleviation and democratic participation are key pillars. The conference was an occasion for critical reflection on how the colonial and postcolonial experiences of the sub-region define the challenges and opportunities for the realisation of this vision.

The production of knowledge on Southern Africa has been rich and diverse, its contours reflecting the changing dynamics of the region and theoretical developments from within and without the continent. The primary post-colonial concerns of intellectual writing on Africa were, and remain, dominated by the quest for liberation and the development of stable, just national orders. The evolution of perspectives which sought to address these issues, and critiques thereof, have been extensively dealt with in the literature (see Rothchild and Chazan 1988; Apter and Rosberg 1994; Himmelstrand, Kinyanjui and Mburugu 1994; Osaghae 1994; Sandbrook 2000; Berman, Eyoh and Kymlicka 2004; and numerous others). Here we merely flag the

pre-occupations, debates and contestations that evolved in the attempt to understand the nature of post-colonial African states and chart a development path. We then briefly explore its play in the Southern African context.

From the 1950s to the 1970s scholarship on Africa focused on analysing the birth of nationalist thought, the rise of African nationalist movements, the processes of decolonisation and the formation of nation-states. Nationalism, therefore, constituted the primary focus of intellectuals and was constituted as the driving force for political renewal on the continent. Political theorists, in particular, sought to provide recipes which would enable these states both to cohere as viable political communities and to embark on the journey of development. This scholarship was generally optimistic about the potential of African societies to restructure themselves in the dominant image of developed western nation-states. The nationalist historiography of this period tended to conflate political protest with nationalism and/or largely romanticised the form and content of African liberation struggles (Young 1994; Ranger 2004). There was a distinct interplay between intellectuals and activists (the two often inseparable) during this period which shaped the content of African nationalism (self-determination, self-representation, unity and development) and posited the guardians of the ideology and practice, predominantly African elites, as those best able to fulfil those objectives for post-colonial states (see Young 1994).

Modernisation theory was the dominant development paradigm of this era. It focused on the institutions, practices and policies required to move from one system of governance, 'the traditional', to another, 'the modern,' and maintain stability whilst doing so (Apter and Rosberg 1994). The newly formed African governments were to play a central role in effecting this progress. This paradigm resonated with African elites who wanted both to consolidate and legitimate their rule: rule based on their being the bearers and harbingers of progress. They interpreted development as industrialisation and nation-state building. Central to their discourse and practice of nation-building was the need to suppress sub-national identities and create primary allegiance to a national identity.

By the 1970s the fissures in this nationalist vision were evident. Authoritarian rule, corruption, politicised ethnicities and a general malaise of development became the dominant features of many African countries. Scholars, predominantly of African descent, in the light of a perception of a 'betrayal of independence', began to question the representations of nationalist struggles, the content of nationalism and the perceived wisdom of the path of development outlined by modernisation theory.

This revisionist approach, popularised by scholars such as Walter Rodney, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Samir Amin, became known as Radical Political

Economy (RPE). Their intellectual gaze turned to a re-examination of the colonial period, and the formation of a world economy, to make sense of the lack of development that had transpired. RPE theorists argued that Africa's woes stemmed from the way in which it was incorporated into the world economy, as a dependent formation webbed in a set of unequal exchange relations. Contrary to imperial historians, they argued that the colonialists deliberately underdeveloped African societies. These theorists also concentrated on the processes of class formation and/or fragmentation in the colonial and post-colonial contexts. The inheritors of the post-colonial state (the nationalist elite) were revealed as a 'compradorian bourgeoisie'/ 'under-developed middle-class' cum parochial nationalists unable and/or unwilling to develop these societies. This portrayal led to a rethinking of the relevance of this class in the decolonisation process and a concomitant emphasis on peasant and worker struggles to break the pattern of neo-colonial rule and embark on alternative development paths. The RPE theorists therefore offered a materialist interpretation of the post-colonial state, pointing to the systemic structural impediments inhibiting transformation, and to class conflict as the motor of change. They remained optimistic about the potential for breaking the cycle of dependency and creating the modern nation-states envisaged at independence.

Radical Political Economy was an important theoretical contribution to the debates on the development of African states. However, it suffered from some of the same ills that plagued modernisation theory, namely, creating a false dichotomy between the modern and traditional, and the centrality of the role of the state in the development process. Eyoh points out that these theorists were unable 'to advance a more subtle and credible analysis of the manner in which the mixing of traditional and modern economic, cultural and institutional relations underscored the complexity of power relations in post-colonial society...' (1998a: 116). The theory was therefore too reductionist, ignoring the impact of other salient social divisions, such as gender, ethnicity and religion, on the processes of state formation and development.

By the mid 1980s, African societies were described as being in 'crisis' and a distinct Afro-pessimism was discernible in the literature. Both capitalist and socialist states (in all their African variants) suffered the same fate of economic decline and political illegitimacy. Statist models of development appeared to have been exhausted with few results yielded. At the same time, the world witnessed the collapse of communism, disillusionment with nationalism and the rise of neo-liberalism. The new discourse on development began to concentrate on free markets and democracy. African countries, heavily indebted to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), were forced to embark on this new development path via the imposition of Structural

Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). African scholars had long argued that democratic reform was needed and they were in broad agreement that the state was a central component of the crisis, but they differed on the frameworks for democracy and development. Many disputed the reduction of democracy to multi-partyism and the feasibility of simultaneously embarking on political and economic reform (Mkandawire 1999; Nzongola-Ntalaja 1997; Olukoshi 1998). SAPs were critiqued for their effects on the poor (erosion of social-welfare policies) and their inherent liberalisation thrust was thought to exacerbate the African 'crisis'. A number of important African scholars thus sought to elaborate more substantive, just and sustainable transformation agendas.

There was a new burgeoning multidisciplinary literature on the role of women in development, identity politics, the role of civil society, the rise of new social movements, and so forth. In the 1990s post-colonial and post-modernist perspectives entered the discourse. They re-directed our conceptual lenses and epistemologies to give voice to those previously marginalised, to deconstruct totalising narratives, interrogate representations, and to discern the manifestations and reproduction of power relations in varied spaces. The 'Janus face' of nationalism was highlighted and a new discourse on diversity/multi-culturalism gained currency.

Democratic renewal is now foremost on the African agenda. African governments, through the formation of the African Union (AU) and the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) framework, currently claim to seek to finally deliver the 'fruits of independence'. Scholars, such as Nabudere (2002) and Wanyeki (2002), have already pointed out the limitations of these institutions and development frameworks, but their inauguration has increased the optimism and engagement of African scholars, which is in and of itself a positive development.

Southern African discourses

The trajectory of Southern African scholarship is shaped by, and shapes, the debates outlined above. The decolonisation process for many of the states in Southern Africa occurred when the RPE paradigm was at its peak. This influenced the interpretation of decolonisation, and, indeed, the mode of achieving independence and development. Many scholars working within this tradition were also closely aligned to the liberation movements and guilty of the same form of romanticisation of the liberation struggles. They focused predominantly on the racialised accumulation of power and wealth and/or class formation and often presented the violent overthrow of the colonial state and the creation of an equitable/classless society as the desired method for, and form of, liberation. Their analyses also accorded with the aspirations

of the nationalist elite for state-driven modernist projects of nation-building and development.

The race-class debate that emerged in South Africa in the 1970s provides an example of the types of arguments advanced by RPE theorists in the region. Liberal historiography had portrayed race-relations in South Africa as anachronistic and irrational and contended that economic development was key to the transformation of these relations. A 'revisionist school' influenced by the work of E.P. Thompson, Walter Rodney, Giovanni Arrighi, Eric Hobsbawm, Eugene Genovese and others challenged this narrative (see Copley 2001 for an overview). Martin Legassick, Shula Marks, Stanley Trapido, Harold Wolpe, Colin Bundy and John Saul were key protagonists of the sub-regional school, illustrating the functionality of apartheid for the development of capitalism. In short, their argument was that institutionalised racism developed to ensure a cheap labour system and, therefore, capitalism itself would have to be overthrown in order to transcend racism. For Saul and Gelb, writing in the 1980s, the time for revolution was imminent as an 'organic crisis' existed: both capitalism and apartheid were in crisis. These 'revisionists' were thus primarily seeking to expose the material basis of Southern African societies.

In the latter part of the 1980s, this materialist historiography was critiqued as 'top-down', deterministic and reductionist. The focus of RPE, in vogue continentally, was on the state, class formation and class conflict, to the exclusion of other social categories. In Mafeje's critique, for example, the point was advanced that there was a need to 'filter the Marxist vocabulary through local history' (cited in Ranger, 1988: 480). A more general critique was on the lack of agency afforded to Africans and a need to focus on the many intra-African struggles that had taken place, or were taking place (Lushaba's chapter elaborates on this aspect).

The rapid decline into civil war of those countries that embarked on a socialist path of development, and the general lack of development of countries in Africa that pursued state-led development, challenged the hegemony of this body of knowledge. By the mid 1980s the scholarly field had opened to produce a knowledge base that was more methodologically, conceptually and epistemologically varied. The lives of ordinary people became worthy of scholarly attention, women were made visible, sub-national organisations, identities and struggles were provided textual space, and the modes of operating and agendas of African nationalist movements, and those turned ruling party, were increasingly interrogated. Africans were accorded with agency in the making of their lived experiences and the construction of their identities, and the complexity of the relations that were revealed rendered the oppressor/oppressed binaries or victim tropes inaccurate and limiting. A plethora of analyses emerged, with differing foci

of time and space, teasing out the interconnections between race, gender, nationalism and ethnicity. This currently remains the dominant form of theorisation.

The implementation of SAPs across the region, which coincided with the movement for democratic reform, beginning with the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change in Zambia and including the formation of a post-apartheid democratic state in South Africa, produced a concentration of development studies literature on democratic renewal. Here, too, scholars challenge the viability of SAPs, extensively critique the now hegemonic neo-liberal approach to development and contest the form and content of the democratic processes underway (see Solway 1995; Matlosa 1998; Nkiwane 1998; Bond 2000; Buthelezi 2000; Habib and Padayachee 2000; Marais 2001; Alexander 2002; Mhone 2003 and opinion pieces in the *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly*).

Scholarship in Southern Africa, therefore, remains committed to finding new approaches to understanding the past and to showing how the past impacts on the choice of goals and strategies for alternative development trajectories. The scholarship in the region has matured and is now able to advance more subtle and complex analyses of social, political, economic and power relations, both past and present, and their linkages. The ten chapters in this book are broadly concerned with aspects of the development of the sub-region's political economy, and, in particular, the ways in which colonial legacies and the nature of the liberation movement imprint on post-liberation patterns of change and the continued challenges confronting the sub-region.

The authors are representative of both mature and emerging scholars, predominantly from within the sub-region. Drawing on new discourses and theoretical innovations, they address, from different theoretical perspectives, issues of identity, citizenship, reconciliation, gender, post-liberation state building, democratisation and the politics of knowledge production. While collectively paying homage to the contributions by past regional scholarship, the chapters are oriented by the need to advance critical knowledge of socio-political, economic and cultural conditions that define the struggle for a more positive developmental path in the current African conjuncture. In other words, the authors consider it imperative to rethink old ideas and theories in the light of today's vocabularies and realities. Before providing a broad overview of the arguments in the chapters and how they link with broader debates, it is important to indicate the ways in which Southern Africa coheres as more than a mere geographic unit.

Deconstructing Southern Africa

Southern Africa has a shared colonial history which accounts for the similarities in socio-economic and political structures, and simultaneously differentiates the region from other African sub-regions. In a classic study of the colonial shaped political economy of the continent, Samir Amin (1972) designated the sub-region as part of a macro-region called 'Africa of the labour reserves': a region marked by the intertwined processes of white settler colonialism, proletarianisation, dispossession and subjugation. This shared history shaped the nature of the resistance by the colonised and the challenges for state-reconstruction. These challenges include land alienation, racialised distribution of resources, politicised ethnicities, reconciliation, migrant labour (which has increased the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the region), and centralised state structures (informed by the organisation of power in the liberation movements).

Despite these similarities, it is misleading to treat the sub-region as a homogeneous entity; the variations between its constituent states are as great as the ties that bind them. Southern African states experienced different degrees of white settlement that would later define the fault lines within countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. There were different methods of achieving national liberation: for example, Angola and Mozambique were liberated through the pressures of the barrel of the gun, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland were granted independence without much struggle, and Zimbabwe and South Africa became majority-ruled states via negotiated settlements. In the immediate post-colonial phase Mozambique and Angola, whose liberation movements had embraced Marxist-Leninism, became socialist states, Tanzania and Zambia adopted what they called African Socialism, whilst Malawi, Botswana and Lesotho espoused capitalism even though they lacked an industrial base. Zimbabwe and South Africa, relatively industrialised countries, had to contend with the processes of reconciliation and reconstruct racially inclusive states. There are also marked differences in the levels of socio-economic and political development which continue to inform both intra-state and inter-state relations in the region. For example, Swaziland remains under the tutelage of a monarchy and multi-partyism in Zimbabwe is stifled, leading to civil unrest in these countries. South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and infrastructure make it the dominant economic player in the region, but it is also the country with the largest socio-economic inequities. We will more closely examine the characteristics and challenges for the construction of post-colonial societies, of the sub-region's defining feature – white settler colonialism.

White settler colonialism

White settler colonialism is characterised by the permanent settlement of a large number of colonialists and their appropriation of space, power and wealth. Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe were subjected to this form of colonialism. The institutionalisation of a system geared to the protection and reproduction of white settler interests remains a matter of concern for the latter three countries.

For the present purpose we focus on four of the features of settler colonialism in Southern Africa: the co-existence of the colonisers and the colonised within the same geographical space over an extended period of time; the violence inherent in this form of colonialism; the racialisation of inequality; and the construction of identities in the furtherance of this colonial project. We briefly flag what these mean and the challenges they present for post-liberation development.

Mamdani's 1996 study, *Citizen and Subject*, concluded that indirect rule was the generic form of rule for all colonies in Africa. That being said, however, white settler colonialism was distinct in that the visible presence of the colonialist, the racialised class formation and the racialisation of space made the colonial encounter directly oppressive. Blacks were herded into virtual dormitories (rural reserves with little potential for capital accumulation and/or where excess labour was contained or urban townships) – with the train line often symbolising the border between spaces of privilege and spaces of deprivation. Moreover, white settlement meant that, post-liberation, there would be no 'Great Trek back to a Motherland'. The re-ordering of the societies therefore had to take cognisance of a continued presence of whites and their control over the 'commanding heights of the economy'. Not surprisingly, non-racialism and reconciliation became the platform and process for the construction of more inclusive post-liberation nations in the sub-region. However, these post-colonial societies are confronted with the problematic of practising non-racialism in profoundly race-based societies and the limitations of reconciliation when structural cleavages, coinciding with race, continue to exist.

White settler colonialism was a violent form of rule. Physical violence was the means through which land was seized and it structured the form of resistance to dispossession: all of this is inscribed in 'colonial wars', to use the shorthand. Settler colonialism could only be maintained by the sort of structural violence which permeates everyday life and governs the interaction between coloniser and colonised, and psychological violence which strips people of dignity and respect and renders them inherently inferior. Violence then also became the means through which the oppressed, excluded from their societies, and unable to effect change through peaceful avenues, fought for self-rule

and an equitable distribution of resources: hence the resort to armed struggle in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Violence has thus become normalised ('a culture of violence') patterning itself in the ordering of the post-colonial societies and the methods through which differences are resolved.

The consequences of the armed struggle include centralised, commandist, loyalist, non-transparent organisational cultures which continue to resonate in the post-colonial states where organisations which gained control of the state continue to function more as liberation movements than political parties (see Suttner and Amuwo's chapters for an elaboration on these aspects). Secondly, the cache of arms from this period has fuelled the high levels of crime in the region and, in the case of Mozambique and Angola, development has been retarded in rural areas littered with mines. Thirdly, there is the phenomenon of war veterans, many with expectations of the state which remain unfulfilled. Fourthly, more positively, the role played by women within the armed struggles and the broader liberation movement, has, to some extent, enabled women to assert their rights in the restructuring of their societies. Though gender discrimination still persists, Southern Africa now has the largest percentage of women's representation in government in Africa.

The racialisation of inequality that was a hallmark of white settler colonialism constitutes *the* source of continued tensions within 'post-white settler societies' (to employ the terminology of Mandaza 1987). The economies were premised on a racial division of labour where whites owned the industrial and commercial agricultural means of production, whilst blacks filled the ranks of the unskilled labour category. In the case of South Africa, large-scale agriculture, mining, and, later, industrialisation, required cheap black labour to be supplied by a migrant labour system. This system involved all the countries in the region, creating a 'skewed, integrated regional economy' (Marais 1998:11). It explains the high rate of urbanisation and proletarianisation in Southern Africa. The migrant labour system is also a major factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region.

Land alienation, political exclusion and racial domination were the pillars of the National Question. The liberation struggles in Southern Africa were not merely about deracialisation, they were centrally concerned with getting back the land. A direct link was made between black poverty and the lack of access to fertile tracts of land, in other words, unequal land ownership. Negotiated settlements in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, occurring as they did when the neo-liberal paradigm was becoming influential, left the National Question unresolved. Although these settlements created the conditions for the deracialisation of the political environment they left largely to the vagaries of the market and land (and broader economic) reform.

Only limited remedial measures were put in place to bring about transformation. The principle of the 'willing buyer, willing seller' conditioned the pace and scale of land reform, and land ownership in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa remained largely in white hands, although the new black bourgeoisie also acquired some access to this land. Sam Moyo (2003) has argued that throughout Southern Africa land alienation and control over land constitutes a threat to the security of the region. He has also broadened his argument to include the black elite and foreign investors making other countries in the region vulnerable to the same threats of instability. This threat became a reality in Zimbabwe in 2000, when 'war veterans' began to seize land by violent means. The formation of the Landless People's Movement in South Africa indicates the urgency for land reform if the country does not want to walk the same road as Zimbabwe.

Ten years after South Africa's transformation, racialised inequality persists despite the nationalists' strategy of creating a black bourgeoisie through access to state power, policies of affirmative action and black economic empowerment. Blacks remain largely trapped in apartheid's ghettos and urban shanty towns, populating the unskilled, unemployed and underemployed economic sectors. Moreover, the level and scale of inequality is increasing as democratisation proceeds (see Amuwo's chapter). The vexing challenge here is to transform the national economy to serve the interests of a majority black citizenry under conditions of continued domination by a powerful white bourgeoisie and in a global environment that allows little deviation from neo-liberal policies and principles. Other countries in the region have been constrained by SAPs for much longer than South Africa and have also registered increased levels of deprivation among the poor, even though their GDP appears to indicate economic growth.

Our last focus is on the construction of identities under white settler colonialism and the challenges this presents for post-colonial states in the region. Much has been written on the role played by colonialists in the construction of ethnic identities in Africa (see Vail 1989; Mamdani 1996; Ranger 1983; Berman 1998; Hendricks 2001 and 2004; and Lushaba in this volume). Of particular importance has been the politicisation of identities through the dual processes of hardening the boundaries of previously more fluid cultural identities (through legal codification, for example) and making identity the basis upon which access to resources is determined. Mamdani (2003) has elaborated upon the 'technology of colonial rule', noting that the census divided the populations into races (non-natives) and tribes (natives/indigenes), the former governed by civil law and the latter by customary law which reinforced cultural difference. Ekeh (1975) made a similar argument, elaborating the notion of 'two publics,' the civic and the primordial,

constructed to safeguard colonial interests in the continued subjugation of the population under colonial rule. The strategy of compartmentalisation contained the idea that ‘races were meant to have a common future; different ethnicities were not’ (Mamdani 2003: 455). The consolidation of communities into a plethora of ethnic minorities, according to colonial logic, would disrupt the easy emergence of a national consciousness and the quest for self-determination.

The construction of identities in Southern Africa, though hardly unique, took this logic to extremes. In South Africa, for example, the Apartheid State, through to its policy of separate development, sought to turn ethnic groups into nations, each with their own homeland. The South African state also sought to differentiate those of ‘mixed descent’ from both African and white identities and invest this differentiation with a materiality that would reinforce this identification (see Hendricks 2000, 2001, 2004). This resonates in other white settler societies (see Mandaza 1997), the larger point being that, though these identities predate colonial or apartheid rule, much of their contemporary character and social and political significance developed under colonial rule.

This fragmentation of these societies impacted on the quest for unity during the struggles for liberation and in the immediate post-independence phase, as well as the often-noted problematic of the post-colonial African state where the ‘unity project took on the form of a unitary project’ (Olukoshi and Laakso 1996:13). Fragmentation in the liberation struggles in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe had ethnic dimensions and catapulted these societies into civil wars after independence (see Mashingaidze’s chapter which highlights the case of Zimbabwe). A repeat performance was feared in South Africa where the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), a predominantly Zulu-based party, threatened secession after clashes between it and the African National Congress (ANC) supporters had already left thousands dead in Kwa-Zulu Natal. However, aware of the failure of the nation-building strategy encapsulated by Samora Machel’s oft-cited statement, ‘For the nation to live, the tribe must die’, South Africa and Namibia adopted multi-culturalism and/or civic nationalism as the basis for constituting new political communities. The phrase, ‘rainbow nation’ was coined to signify the ‘unity in diversity’ approach that sets these countries apart from other states in the region, indeed, on the continent.

It is, however, through ideological struggles within South Africa, particularly struggles about the basis for citizenship, rather than through intra-African ethnic tensions, that a vision of a multi-cultural non-racial nation-state was constructed. Simply put, the question to be resolved was who is a citizen or what are the lines for inclusion and exclusion? Mamdani has captured this problematic under his oft-cited question ‘when does the settler become a

native?’ For the ANC, this question had been resolved in 1955 at the historic Kliptown conference which produced the Freedom Charter. This charter, though not uncontested, noted that ‘the land belonged to all those who lived in it’. In the 1980s, the United Democratic Front (UDF) popularised the principle of non-racialism. Non-racialism’s discourse is primarily about rights, asserting that an ‘individuals citizenship, legal rights, economic entitlement and life chances should not be decided on the basis of “racial ascriptions”’ (Marks 1994: 2). These ideas diluted the categorisations of ‘indigene’ and ‘settler’ in the South African context and made possible a negotiated settlement in which all could see themselves as an integral part of a post-apartheid state.

Breaking out of the worldview of the settler and the native (which Mamdani, 2003, deemed necessary to solve the problematic) has not, as the social history of the sub-region demonstrates, completely abated the problem of racism. The limitations of liberal democracy, now dominant in the sub-region, as the measure of political accommodation and social integration in ‘post-white settler colonies’, has already been analysed (see Hendricks’s chapter). Liberal democracy’s celebration of a narrow form of political equality conceals and further perpetuates white dominance and privilege. Protest against this state of affairs inadvertently turns into a race question, hence the continued salience of race in the region. The features of the sub-region highlighted above constitute the spectrum of issues within the scope of contemporary analysis of Southern African politics and history. In various ways the ten chapters outlined below tease out, and read anew, the problematic of these features for development in the region.

Situating the chapters

Broad themes that emerge in the chapters of this volume are: the production of knowledge on Africa; alternative sites of struggle for national liberation; democratisation\democratic renewal; and post-liberation identity politics and social transformation. Read together, the chapters make a modest contribution towards filling the gaps in Southern African scholarship and identifying alternative approaches to democratic renewal.

The production of knowledge on Africa

Post-colonial studies has revealed a close relationship between the writing of history and broader societal power relations. In other words, historical narratives are often embedded within existent power relations and are reflective of the values of the dominant socio-political forces. For example, colonial/imperial history was concerned to rationalise and legitimate colonialism through a discourse that pitted the ‘civilised’ against the ‘savage’: a discourse that constructed the colonised as an inferior ‘other’. There have been numerous

works exploring and/or analysing these constructions (see, for example, Said 1978; Mudimbe 1988, 1994; Pieterse 1992). During the decolonisation process, we saw a corresponding shift in African history to the retrieval and celebration of Africa's pre-colonial glories and civilisations. A nationalist history developed, capturing the rise of nationalism and the moments of liberation. These histories often amounted to uncritical celebrations of both Africa's past and the gallant struggles for independence by African nationalist movements.

Within these historical narratives, other equally important dynamics of struggle were glossed over: for example, the divisions within the liberation movements, different forms of struggle, and race, class, ethnic and gender cleavages among the dominated. As earlier alluded to, the post-nationalist historiography of the 1980s began to tease out these complexities. This disrupted the static binary categories of coloniser/colonised, tradition/modernity, white/black, producing new narratives in which Africans of all genders were provided with agency, the fluidity of relations was revealed, and the internal cleavages and contradictions within homogenised categories brought to the fore. Some of the chapters in this volume continue this exercise.

In chapter 1, Nyeko provides an overview of the historiography of Swaziland and contests the positioning of the country vis-a-vis the liberation struggle in Southern Africa as a 'willing bedfellow of apartheid South Africa' (pg 25). Pointing to the emergence of a new social history, he notes that there is a need to make a distinction between the policies and actions of the Swazi government and those of the ordinary citizens: a 'bottom-up history' reveals very different forms of Swaziland's interaction with, and contribution to, the national liberation struggles in the region. Through an analysis of the topics of post-graduate students and historians at the University of Swaziland, Nyeko highlights the concerns now dominating historical investigation in the country, such as, gender and society, race relations, labour relations, and HIV/AIDS. This research places Swaziland within the context of larger continental processes and scholarship shifting from the earlier emphasis on Swaziland exceptionalism. However, this scholarship still has a glaring gap with regard to the democratisation process (or lack of it).

Mushonge's chapter points to the need for a broader analysis of the history of armed struggle that not only focuses on the main protagonists but shows how non-combatants/unarmed civilians were drawn into the struggle as willing or unwilling participants. In the logic of the armed struggle the highest price that could be paid for liberation was death on the battle fields. Nationalist historiography tended to concentrate on the deaths and sacrifices that were directly related to the armed struggle. Mushonga's chapter takes us to the other, uncelebrated sacrifices that were made. He considers how curfew laws, imposed by the white Rhodesian regime during Zimbabwe's liberation war,

led to the death of many peasants and placed them between a rock and a hard-place. The exigencies of the war meant that they were forced to be on the wrong side, either by the liberation/guerrilla fighters or by the state security forces. This chapter provides a situational analysis of the liberation struggle through the lens of the experiences of the peasants caught between the demands of the liberation movement and those of the state. It is a refreshing reminder that things were never simply black and white and that ordinary people had to negotiate their lives in the context of these complexities.

Alternative sites of struggle for national liberation

Nationalist history tended to concentrate on the strategies and tactics of the liberation movements and how they responded to the manoeuvrings of the settler colonial regimes. It ignored the contributions and sacrifices made by ordinary civilians and any other forms of challenging the colonialists or the apartheid government. The chapters by Bagwasi and Vanek address this issue.

Bagwasi employs a textual analysis to show how language is used as an instrument/site of struggle and/or as a register of power relations. For a long time research on language focused on the imposition of foreign languages on the peoples of the continent. This chapter draws our attention to language as an inter-subjective space within which a contest between the colonisers and the colonised is played out. Bagwasi analyses the salutations, beginnings and endings of letters exchanged between British administrators and chiefs in Botswana. Through this process she is able to show how British administrators invest themselves with superiority that is reflected in the ways in which they address letters to chiefs, and the resistance by chiefs to their perceived place in the hierarchised colonial society. This preliminary investigation indicates the need for further exploration of different forms of resistance, as well as the need for a closer look at the role of language in power struggles, and for greater complexity in our analyses of the relationships between chiefs and administrators.

Vanek, in a case study of the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (WFC), looks at the internal and external difficulties faced by a predominantly white liberal faith-based organisation in its quest to counter apartheid ideology and practice in South Africa. She focuses the reader's attention on the way white liberals dealt with the challenge of racial segregation. The chapter, by elaborating on attempts by the state to close the WFC, once again shows the white supremacist obsession with racial degeneracy. The centre was constructed as a 'den of iniquity'. It was the possibility of interracial sex, always constituted in racist discourse as capable of destroying the fabric of white society (Dubow 1995), that caused the greatest concern for the authorities.

Vanek lists a number of influential Black Consciousness Movement people whose politicisation began through an encounter with the teachings of the WFC. She argues that the WFC's emphasis on 'self-definition' shaped their ideological stance. This analysis is at variance with the portrayal of a decisive break, through the emergence of Black Consciousness, in the development of liberation thought in South Africa and instead indicates a logical progression. However, Vanek's analysis can only be understood in the context of an elaborate discussion of the differences between a race-relations paradigm and a non-racial or anti-racist paradigm.

Democratisation/democratic renewal

Since the late 1980s, the continent has been engulfed in struggles for democratic renewal. This has generated an abundance of scholarly debate on the appropriate form of democratisation and the conditions for its consolidation. Eyoh (1998b) divided African scholarship on the topic into three categories 'universalist', 'popular democratic' and 'nativist'. The 'universalists' dominated the debate at first, emphasising universal procedures for democratic rule, with multi-partyism as the most important component. The 'popular democratic' theorists questioned the conflation of democracy with multi-partyism and argued that too much emphasis was placed on democratic procedures with a subsequent neglect of substantive issues of socio-economic rights. 'Nativists', according to Eyoh, also questioned the reductionist view of democracy and highlighted the need for African societies to build on democratic values that are culturally germane. It is noteworthy that despite their differences, all three groups of scholars accept democracy as the best form of governance. However, the neo-liberalism that has gone in tandem with political democracy has been widely rejected. There is a plethora of literature on structural adjustment in relation to democratisation that stresses the impoverishment of the poor and the deepening of class cleavages. The linkage of economic liberalisation to political liberalisation is seen as undermining the latter, giving rise to what Mkandawire referred to as 'choiceless democracies' (1999).

South Africa's democratisation process has been subject to a similar trajectory and concomitant analytical debate. The left argues that the self-imposed, neo-liberal informed macroeconomic policy, Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) has compromised the democratic transition. This policy has meant a shift in the emphasis on redistribution to, and development of, the poor that guided the aims of the liberation movement. Instead, it facilitates the emergence of a new black middle class which is increasingly beginning to resemble Fanon's depiction of the post-colonial nationalist bourgeoisie.

Amuwo (chapter 2) and Suttner (chapter 3) probe the nature of politics in post-apartheid South Africa, inquiring into the meaning and content of democracy in the country and the reasons why it assumes its particular form. Amuwo argues that while there is 'formal democracy (in terms of institutions and procedures of a neo-electoral democracy), substantive democracy partly explicated in terms of "redistribution of power – the degree to which citizens can participate in the decisions which affect their lives" [citing Luckham 2003] remains largely a shrinking province' (page 39). He further argues 'that the problem of a de facto one-party state seems to loom large on the horizon' (page 40). Amuwo's arguments can be situated within the 'popular democratic' school of thought on democratisation as outlined above. His concern is to show how the neo-liberal democratic paradigm results in the institutionalisation of an elite-driven formal democracy, what he calls the 'political science of democracy', to the detriment of the more urgent and empowering 'political economy of democratisation'. Against the expectations of independence raised by the long and excruciating fight against apartheid, the chapter points to the ANC's capitulation to domestic and international capital and the consequent alienation and impoverishment of the masses and political demobilisation of civil society. Amuwo sees continuities in autocratic decision-making in the national liberation and post-liberation phases. While he applauds South Africa's progress at the super-structural level he warns against the danger of autocracy and the backlash that may result if substantive issues are not addressed.

Suttner's chapter closely examines a period in the South African struggle when the United Democratic Front (UDF) was dominant. His intention is to uncover the meanings and practices of democracy during this period, contrast these with current conceptualisations and modes of enactment, and identify the lessons of the UDF period. In so doing, he offers a nuanced and introspective interpretation of the liberation struggle and the factors that have shaped the current state of democratic practice in South Africa. Suttner contends that during the UDF period, democratic accountability and popular power informed democratic practice. The concept of 'prefigurative democracy' is employed to depict an understanding of democracy, operative during the UDF's heyday when people 'understood that their daily practices were part of the process of building the 'new South Africa' (page 63). His overview is not a romanticisation of the period for he is well aware that along with this conceptualisation came forms of abuse and an intolerance of diversity. His analysis provides agency to the populace who, he contends, played a substantial part in determining the ways in which extra-parliamentary governance unfolded. His explanation of the demobilisation of society differs in emphasis from Amuwo's. Instead of focusing on the ANC's predilection for authoritarianism, he concentrates on the UDF's self-conceptualisation –

as ‘curtain raisers’ – providing the ‘opportunity structure’ for the ‘real liberation movement’ (who by the very nature of their modus operandi were less inclined to tolerate dissent from below) to assume power. The shape of South African democracy today can largely be attributed period. In this chapter we see the complexity of the process of arriving at the current conjuncture in South Africa: the process cannot be reduced to either the machinations of globalisation, capitalism and/or neo-liberalism. Suttner also alludes to the necessity for taking identity seriously and argues that its corresponding organisational forms, even if race-based, should not necessarily be taken as racist or reactionary. It is to the issue of identity politics and social transformation that the discussion turns in Mashingaidze, Hendricks, Lushaba and Palmary.

Post-liberation identity politics and social transformation

Earlier we noted that settler colonialism, as a form of rule, was sustained in the sub-region through the twin processes of divide and rule (separate development) and violent repression. Consequently, its dismantling also took a violent form. These societies therefore faced the task of post-conflict reconstruction or rebuilding: fashioning a social and political system where former enemies, in this case, the colonisers and the colonised, can co-exist harmoniously in a ‘politics of accommodation’. In these societies a transitional notion of justice emerged in which the emphasis is on revealing and forgiving, in an attempt to heal the nation’s psychological wounds and move on with the task of nation-building. The ultimate goal, therefore, is to foster unity and a sense of belonging among the different sections of the population.

In his critique of the 1987 Zimbabwean National Unity Accord, Mashingaidze addresses the issue of transitional justice in Zimbabwe, arguing that its failure was mainly because, in both spirit and content, it remained elitist, and, therefore, bereft of integrative elements. According to him, ‘the Unity Accord had a poor post-conflict peace-building framework that encompassed the aspirations and demands of the grassroots’ (page 88). The consequences for the post-conflict era are that war memories continue to inform and shape political opinion and choices in those regions that were devastated when the state’s forces quelled the ‘rebellion’. Against this background, he concludes that the failure of the Accord to close the fissures caused by the Matabeleland conflagration is a ‘case of peace without reconciliation’ (page 82). This chapter is, therefore, concerned with the role of memory, an area of study that is increasingly yielding important insights into how our understanding of the past impacts on the present. Richard Werbner notes that there is a ‘post-colonial memory crisis’ and contends, in relation to Zimbabwe, that ‘In many places, people bring powerful, sometimes

intimately painful traces of the colonial as well as the postcolonial past to bear on their present politics' (1998: 1-2). Mashingaidze's chapter puts forward a similar argument to explain the discord that currently disrupts the easy constitution of a democratic order in this country.

A closely related question focuses on social transformation in post-settler colonies where differential racialisation imbued identities with a materiality that made them inter-subjective spaces within which privilege and deprivation were lived and experienced, thereby reinforcing the boundaries of those identities. Through the policy of differential racialisation and a host of other laws, settler colonialism created first- and second-class citizens. Post-liberation societies are confronted by the challenge of fashioning a social transformation agenda to break down the artificial barriers to social mobility that coincide with social and group identity boundaries, if they are to escape group-based agitations against marginalisation and domination. That group-based discrimination is antithetical to sustainable democratic governance is axiomatic. However, liberal democracy, widely embraced by almost all countries in the region, has proved its weakness in the face of such group-based discrimination.

The contribution by Hendricks deals with an analysis of the compatibility between liberal democracy and group-based deprivation/marginalisation. In her analysis of the interplay between race/racism and liberal democracy in the South African context, she brings to our attention liberal democracy's ability to legitimise and reproduce unequal social relations. In her view, it does this through its limited focus on political equality, thereby neglecting the structural foundations of socio-economic inequality. Liberal democracy, premised as it is on the individual, thus requires domestication in racialised societies, that is, group-based corrective measures must be brought to bear. Implied in Amuwo's chapter is a similar form of democracy that recognises unequal group relations.

In virtually all settler colonies, being white meant being privileged while being non-white meant inescapable poverty and marginality. The conspicuous gap between the living conditions and opportunities of the two social strata has been captured in neo-marxist studies of white settler colonies in the region. However, this kind of analysis has the unintended consequence of glossing over the protean nature of social relations entailed in settler colonial social structuration. Contrary to what the Marxist class analysis suggests, the social transformation challenge in post-white settler colonies involves far more than the equalisation of opportunities between whites and blacks. Lushaba's intervention problematises further this already complex imperative for democratising social relations by pointing to the unequal social relations within subjugated groups. Drawing on both Marx and Weber, he locates the

construction of an Indian identity in the apartheid government's structuration of the society and shows how the differential allocation of resources to Africans and Indians in Durban leads to tensions between the two dominated communities. His conclusion, supported by evidence from South Africa, that mere legislation is not enough to transform the identities and interaction of their bearers in the post-apartheid state, can be generalised to other settler colonies.

Scholars like McClintock (1995) have analysed the exclusionary, racialised and gendered nature of nationalism, drawing on Anderson's (1983) concept of 'imagined communities' that posits the nation as constructed through discourses of nationalism, as well as post-modernist and post-colonial interventions which deconstruct identity representation and the power relations they conceal, Palmary's chapter contributes to this scholarship by analysing the identity narratives of women refugees in South Africa. She considers 'how women make sense of the events leading up to their forced displacement to South Africa within the context of South African and their own nationalist rhetoric' (page 140). Using the private/public dichotomy, expounded upon at length by various feminist theorists, she notes how women remain stereotyped within the private domain within these nationalist discourses, and how refugee women often subvert their own political agency by presenting themselves as politically inactive and disengaged. Noteworthy here is that this is done as a conscious strategy for survival. Palmary's chapter eloquently explores the debates that have transpired around nationalism and begins to shift our scholarly gaze to the new theoretical interventions on transnationalism.

In conclusion, despite the overall unity of the subcontinent, the chapters reveal temporal and spatial variations in the actual processes of colonial and post-colonial development. Radical Political Economy provided a powerful analytical framework to comprehend the overall contours of Southern African development, but, as subsequent literature and these chapters demonstrate, it was too blunt an instrument to do justice to the subtleties and complexities of actual experiences. The chapters point to the contradictions and alternative paths taken in the movement toward democracy. Moreover, they question the very nature of democratisation and turn our attention to the continuing need to problematise and interrogate this fundamental goal and process. We hope that this volume succeeds in opening up and/or extending debates on issues that have long pre-occupied the sub-region and that it contributes to the realisation of new visions and practices in the continent as a whole.

Note

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