



GOVERNANCE & INSECURITY IN WEST AFRICA

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CONFERENCE REPORT



Program of African Studies

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Introduction

On November 13-15, 2003 a group of scholars, civil society representatives and policymakers gathered in Evanston, Illinois, to examine key issues in the promotion of economic and political development in West Africa. Organized by Northwestern University's Program of African Studies (PAS), the conference's three days of panel discussions elicited focused analyses and constructive recommendations for achieving progress in these areas.

West Africa has experienced decades of political instability, uneven development, and social conflict. With tenuous peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, democratic openings in several countries, and an increasingly dynamic regional organization, ECOWAS, the opportunity for continued progress clearly exists. The international community can make positive contributions to these processes by supporting research, training and capacity-building initiatives in partnership with local institutions.

In keeping with this vision, PAS will establish a Consortium for Development Partnerships (CDP) comprised of African, American



A group of the conference participants

and European universities, research centers, NGOs and government agencies. Inspired by PAS Director Richard Joseph's notion of "smart partnerships", the CDP will engage key institutions of governance and economic development within West Africa in long-term partnerships to conduct research and institution-building projects in a cooperative manner. The November 13-15 conference served to strengthen the Consortium's design and identify critical areas of intervention.

The eight panels addressed topics of democracy, conflict management and prevention, international investment and local entrepreneurship, corruption, legal and judicial systems, HIV/AIDS, ethnicity and religion, and institution strengthening. The discussions in each session provided valuable insights and recommended strategies to overcome the problems identified. At an evening roundtable session that attracted a large audience, nine participants offered suggestions for reversing the declining legitimacy and capacity of African states. In a keynote address, Daniel Kaufmann of the World Bank Institute presented important statistical findings based on the comprehensive research the Institute has conducted on issues of governance. The discussions and debates during the conference benefited from the diverse views of the 38 panelists representing 23 institutions, 10 nationalities, and 8 academic disciplines. In this report, the presentations and recommendations of the panels are summarized.

Panel 1: Accelerating Democratic Development and Reforming Electoral Autocracies

Chair: Baffour Agyeman-Duah
Michael Bratton
Pierre Englebert
Peter Lewis
Crawford Young
Discussant: Eghosa Osaghae

After a brief period in the early 1990s of considerable optimism about the possibilities for political reform in Africa, a note of pessimism has re-emerged. Current debates on democratization now tend to focus on the very partial and constrained nature of the so-called illiberal, pseudo- or virtual democracies that have emerged. Despite setbacks to democratic reforms in a few countries in West Africa, however, panelists were united in seeing cause for optimism as well. **Pierre Englebert** stated that, between 1989 and 2001, the average Freedom House score for 17 West African countries improved substantially, dropping from 5.9 to 4.1. He also pointed to the success of Ghana, Cape Verde, Mali and Benin in joining Senegal as relatively consolidated democracies in the region and recommended that such cases be studied further.

Peter Lewis suggested that the focus on the limited nature of political reforms falls a bit wide of the mark. Despite the partial nature of political reforms, there has been a widespread and significant opening and deepening of political space, and a spreading of democratic norms. He contended that “the page has really turned historically on old-style neo-patrimonial regimes.” **Crawford Young**, meanwhile, noted that while reforms have not permeated as far as had initially been hoped - in part because the institutions of the state had been hollowed out by predator states prior to the transitions - it is necessary to unburden emerging African democracies of unrealistically high expectations.

The panelists varied considerably, however, in their views of how processes of democratization can be strengthened. **Lewis** suggested a two-pronged approach. The first focuses on further expanding political space, including opportunities for public voice and the exercise of rights, through strengthening media, civic organizations, and new institutions such as anti-corruption agencies. Second, he urged the international community to increase the costs of maintaining repression, which are already much higher than they were in the past. He cautioned that while the current international setting is comparatively favorable to the persistence of poor democracies in Africa, the same global conditions are more likely to sustain a minimal, electoral pattern of democracy rather than impel further progress towards truly liberal systems.

Findings from public attitude research conducted by the Afrobarometer appear to support aspects of Lewis’s argument. **Michael Bratton** reported that the strongest factor shaping popular perceptions of the supply of democracy in a given country is the government’s success in expanding the supply of “political goods,” such as freedom of speech and association, and free and fair elections. **Bratton** also reported that levels of popular demand for democracy, which are relatively high in Africa, are shaped most strongly by cognitive factors, including education levels, access to media, and other sources of political information. This suggests that efforts to promote literacy, civic education and access to media deserve particular attention in democracy promotion.

Englebert proposed a fundamentally different approach. Although he agreed that there has been democratic progress in West Africa, he nonetheless would argue that African democracies are by-and-large dysfunctional, primarily because they have simply adopted external institutions and practices that leave deeper underlying forms of political mobilization untapped. His proposed solution cuts deeper than the suggestions offered by others. It would require building on existing, indigenous forms of mobilization, and recognizing local forms of organization and leadership, even or perhaps especially, ethnicity. Like **Lewis**, **Englebert** believes that incentives and disincentives provided by the international community can play an important role. But **Englebert's** tool of choice is sovereignty; he proposes that automatic recognition of states be withdrawn in favor of a merit-based system that grants sovereignty in recognition of the presence of effective institutions.

Panel 2: Regional Strategies for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Chair: Jeremy Levitt
Kayode Fayemi
William Reno
Daniel Volman
Discussant: John Prendergast

The panelists offered sharply contrasting frameworks for analyzing and improving the security environment in West Africa, focusing alternately on regional versus external (especially the U.S.) strategies and interventions.

Jeremy Levitt opened the session by emphasizing the importance of regional organizations such as ECOWAS, SADC, the AU, and NEPAD. **Kayode Fayemi** presented a review of regional initiatives, particularly those of ECOWAS, observing how regionalism is increasingly emerging as a tool to reinforce state-building in West Africa. He noted several factors that have prompted skepticism about these initiatives, such as the fact that many are leader-driven with little public input, and that they often seem to be more about protocol than action. But he also contended that the cross-border distribution of the causes of conflict – including resources and ethnic groups – requires a regional approach, and went on to show how ECOWAS is far ahead of other African regional organizations in developing its security function. The recent response to the coup in Guinea Bissau was innovative and norm building, with the organization taking steps that would have been unthinkable in the past. Nevertheless, the conflict mechanism of ECOWAS is still a work in progress, as demonstrated in Côte d'Ivoire, and the organization currently lacks the resources and capacity to improve its response capabilities. **Fayemi** recommends a greater role for the ECOWAS Parliament that he believes would strengthen the organization.

John Prendergast was not as sanguine as **Fayemi** and argued that a key problem for SADC and even ECOWAS is that they remain powerless to deal with crises in the big, oil-producing regional leaders. Their effectiveness seems limited to problems in the smaller states. But he also acknowledged the critical role of ECOWAS in peacekeeping, and emphasized the need for the international community to work in partnership with them and share these burdens. **William Reno** looked beyond the region to investigate the role and interests of the U.S. and the rest of the international community in enhancing the stability of African states. Between the Cold War and today's war on terror, Western states pressed for democratic reforms in Africa with little concern for their potentially destabilizing effects on internal conditions. Especially since 9/11, the goal of U.S. foreign policy has again become order, stability, and a centralization of coercive power

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in the state apparatus – goals that may frequently be at odds with democratic reforms with their capacity to unleash destabilizing forces of elite factionalism. This understanding suggests the need for sequential rather than simultaneous reforms: political and economic reform should follow the centralization of coercion. Gaining such control in post-conflict environments has proven extremely difficult. Alternatives to pursuing this objective include retraining national militaries and expanding training programs in other aspects of security related to state building, entering into various forms of shared sovereignty as in Sierra Leone, or the assumption of direct control over administration and security functions by the international community. **Reno** suggested that, of these options, the present U.S. administration is increasingly taking the first approach.

Daniel Volman buttressed this point through his analysis of U.S. interests and actions in the region, not just to defuse potential terrorist threats, but to ensure a stable supply of petroleum from diverse sources. Citing reports predicting that Africa's share of American imported oil could reach 25 percent by 2015, he enumerated a range of initiatives that have been taken to provide military and counter-terrorism support to West African states. **Volman** also cited evidence suggesting that the U.S. may be preparing, albeit on a small scale, to use its own forces in the region if necessary.

Prendergast argued, however, that this assessment of US policy is overstated. He believes that the U.S. does not, in fact, have a coherent policy in the region. The Pentagon initiatives cited by **Reno** and **Volman** are actually very small, perhaps even meaningless in the overall security picture. While he agrees with **Reno** that restoring security is an immediate, short-term imperative in post-conflict societies, it is also essential to have a second approach that includes long-term political and economic reconstruction. This is particularly true given that centralized coercion has often been more dangerous in Africa than the fragmented forms now feared by the West. When designing conflict management strategies, emphasis must be placed, according to **Prendergast**, on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) efforts and post-conflict military reform.

The audience joined in, with most agreeing that the interest of the current U.S. administration in the region remains largely rhetorical, but also identifying major shifts in the actions and interventions of various government agencies. Oil interests have played a significant – and perhaps increasingly destabilizing – role both domestically for a number of producers, and internationally. Ultimately, most participants agreed, the impetus for developing peacebuilding and peacekeeping partnerships must come from within the region, as it is not a priority of the U.S. or other external powers

Panel 3: Enhancing Capital Flows and Local Entrepreneurship

Chair: Richard Joseph
Stephen Brundage
Benjamin Jones
Discussant: Célestin Monga

This panel highlighted a number of areas of consensus about steps needed to tackle impediments to greater capital flows and promote local entrepreneurs. There were also moments of sharp disagreement among the panelists.

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While **Stephen Brundage** focused on the national or regional macro-environment, **Benjamin Jones** directed attention to the institutional/entrepreneurial micro-level of economic management. Nevertheless, the two drew similar conclusions about the changes needed in Africa's economic environment in order to increase investments and grow economies. Both emphasized the priority of reducing corruption and creating better regulatory environments to improve opportunities, predictability and enforceability. **Jones** raised particular concerns about the vertical monopolies that restrict entry for entrepreneurs and investors, while offering enormous rent-seeking opportunities and creating roadblocks, including high costs, to starting new businesses. **Célestin Monga**, on the other hand, put greater weight on the lack of an adequate regulatory framework than on corruption. He contended that while losses to corruption are important, those arising from the inadequate investing of the 80 or 90 percent of resources that remain is an even greater problem.



Benjamin Jones and Célestin Monga

Other points on which **Jones** and **Brundage** agreed include the need for improving access to credit for small and medium size entrepreneurs, and the importance of diversifying economies. **Jones** suggested export diversification in areas such as information technology and business service outsourcing, which are already gaining market share in countries such as Ghana. **Brundage** proposed expanding housing construction and mortgage markets as well as the energy sector, and also identified improvement of regional infrastructure as a sector of opportunity.

There was no consensus, however, on the relative benefits of a regional approach. **Brundage** argued that individual country economies in West Africa are too small to go it alone, noting that transport, telecommunications, power and other sectors must all cross borders to thrive. He recommended that greater emphasis be placed on cross-country harmonization of legislation and regulations, peer review structures along the lines being developed by NEPAD, and the creation of regional stock markets. **Monga**, citing the Baltic states, countered that the smallness of individual economies is not much of a problem if you believe in trade, and argued that regional integration can in fact be a trap. In West Africa where there is no regional powerhouse to lead the way, the target for each individual country should be integration into world markets, not regional ones. **Monga** suggested that peer review mechanisms being advanced by NEPAD could be of limited value when the peers (leaders) involved have so little credibility.

Monga also disagreed with **Brundage's** advocacy of the macro-economic stability achieved by the CFA countries of West Africa. Claiming that the rationale for the monetary union is purely political, not economic, he asserted that CFA countries will not succeed as long as they are stuck in an arrangement with fixed exchange rates and other features that limit their ability to adjust to external shocks and inhibit diversification.

In response to the two papers, **Monga** stressed that economic growth and economic development are not the same thing, and that focus must be on the latter. Development will require the

building of stronger institutions and widespread agreement on political rules that go with them; these are the real foundations for change, rather than more narrowly conceived economic fixes. What all the audience and the presenters did share was a belief in the need to improve regulatory and governance frameworks.

Panel 4: Curbing Corruption and Improving Economic Governance

Chair: David Messick
 Nicolas van de Walle
 Baffour Agyeman-Duah
 Jeffrey Herbst
Discussant: Dwayne Woods

Panelists addressed efforts to reduce corruption while promoting better economic governance. **Baffour Agyeman-Duah** described progress in promoting Ghana’s “zero tolerance” policy, particularly in the public sector, with the media playing an especially useful watchdog role. Impediments remain, however, in the form of constitutional limitations on enforcing horizontal accountability between the executive and legislative branches, a weak regulatory framework, and the absence of a culture of good corporate practices in the private sector.

Turning to the international community’s efforts, both **Jeffrey Herbst** and **Nicolas van de Walle** began by noting that aid conditionality during the 1980s and 1990s had been ineffective and even destructive, distorting relationships between domestic and international partners, undermining government planning capacity in many African states, and destroying a sense of domestic ownership of economic policy.

With this history in mind, **Herbst** contrasted the new Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) with the World Bank’s lending criteria. The MCA makes access to funds competitive among countries and replaces what used to be hundreds of conditions with a handful of indicators to measure performance. Most important of these is a corruption index that will serve as a “hard hurdle” – if a country scores below the mean, it cannot qualify for MCA support. In contrast, the World Bank takes a much more flexible approach, to the extent of providing support as a peace dividend to a country as corrupt as Congo-Kinshasa. This may ultimately produce a division of labor among donors, with those countries that merely face a crisis of governance earning support from the MCA, while those facing more fundamental crises of the state that have no hope of MCA funding would turn to the World Bank system.

Panelists and participants identified several problems with this scenario such as the actual status of the MCA. Some participants raised doubts about whether it will ever be funded and whether its criteria will be so watered down as to be meaningless. **Herbst** noted that one major problem of the MCA approach is that most of the larger African countries are performing badly on most measures and are unlikely to qualify. **Van de Walle** believes that many of the countries that will qualify do not need more aid but instead more access to foreign markets and other non-aid support.

There was not complete consensus on the overall importance of corruption. Following on the discussion in the previous session, **Dwayne Woods** observed that while corruption matters at some level, the dividends of reducing it are too small, merely a distraction, and should not drive

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the conceptualization of what governance is all about. Increasing the functionality of institutions, he believes, is much more important than decreasing corruption.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) described by **van de Walle** are one such effort at institutional strengthening. PRSPs were initiated by the International Financial Institutions as an effort to increase ownership of development planning after years of conditionality and donor-dominated planning processes had decimated internal planning capacity in many countries. But **van de Walle** reports that PRSPs have a very mixed record so far in meeting their objectives. They still do not reflect a fundamental change in conditionality-driven “ventriloquism” among recipients – there are no examples of significantly new or different policies that have emerged once governments have been given the “freedom” to design their own strategies. Much more systematic change is needed that would include: reducing the number of donors, replacing project assistance with program assistance, and narrowing conditionality to a few key criteria leaving more room for creativity.

Keynote Address: “Governance Redux: The Empirical Challenge” Daniel Kaufmann

The starting point for **Daniel Kaufman**’s presentation is the assumption that governance can be measured, monitored and analyzed. He cited Kelvin’s dictum that “If you can’t measure it, you can’t do anything about it.” The team he leads at the World Bank Institute has collected data from multiple sources and developed a comprehensive set of indicators of political and economic governance. Significant time was devoted to the discussion of margins of error in order to highlight the World Bank’s awareness of these shortcomings and their attempts to control them. While **Kaufmann** focused on the macro-, cross-country level of analysis, he also mentioned the significant research on governance being conducted at mezzo- and micro- levels.



Daniel Kaufmann

Analysis of these indicators demonstrates that governance matters for income growth and development, although the reverse relationship does not hold. Thus, significant improvements in key aspects of governance – e.g., improving the rule of law, reducing corruption, or increasing political voice – can produce dramatic long-run increases in per capita incomes. This analysis also suggests a growing “governance gap,” whereby improvements in governance performance are not keeping pace with significant

strides in economic policies or movements towards democracy. Though some countries have shown improvement (such as Ghana, Botswana and Madagascar), governance has in many countries become a major constraint on growth and development.

The indicators and their analysis have also been useful for discrediting a number of popular governance myths, for example with respect to the value of anti-corruption laws and new commissions for oversight and enforcement. **Kaufmann** also argued that the data suggest that globalization and privatization are not in fact culprits in stagnating growth. His presentation identified a number of issues for further debate, such as the relative importance of transparency

mechanisms, or of voice and democratic accountability. He concluded his presentation by showing how his own country, Chile, had simultaneously improved governance, and accelerated growth and social development, presenting a model of how these factors are dynamically related.

Panel 5: Strengthening Judicial Systems and the Rule of Law

Chair: Douglas Cassel
Cynthia Bowman
Thomas Geraghty
Zainab Bangura
Discussant: Babafemi
Akinrinade

Panelists cited several examples of the importance of strong, independent and accessible judicial and legal systems for the effective functioning of societies. **Zainab Bangura** explained how Sierra Leone's politicized judiciary had become an instrument of state interests and represented the failed governance and heightened economic and social exclusion that facilitated the state's collapse. **Cynthia Bowman** described the particular problems encountered by women in obtaining access to the legal system to enforce their rights regarding family law, sexual and domestic violence. The interactions between customary and modern legal systems are not always well defined, and even when women's rights are protected constitutionally, they are often not enforced. While women may have legal access to courts, they are usually unable to obtain redress because of the shortage of funds, the lack of awareness of their rights, and the indifferent or antagonistic attitudes of court workers.

There was less agreement among the panelists on the best ways to improve African legal and judicial systems in a context of limited resources, limited donor interest, and limited buy-in from members of the judiciary. **Thomas Geraghty** argued that donors should restore support for legal education. It was once popular with them but was reduced in the mid-1970s amid disputes about "legal imperialism". He proposed the provision of improved resources such as computers and libraries, salary increases for lecturers, and the introduction of new and more participatory teaching methodologies. **Babafemi Akinrinade**, citing the difficulty of introducing change in African law schools, supported these suggestions. **Bowman** proposed making legal education more practical, for example, by using law students to represent women in legal settings as a low-cost means of improving their access, or involving them in research and law drafting projects.

Bangura, meanwhile, proposed a range of measures focused on securing the independence of the judiciary, including security of tenure, financial independence and self-administration, better conditions of service including salaries, and greater opportunities for training. **Akinrinade** also called for re-training judges and reducing their isolation from society, while others proposed testing judges as has been done in some Eastern European countries. But **Geraghty** countered that judges often suffer from "black robe fever": they see themselves as the experts, and may therefore be resistant to "training".

Bowman, finally, called for further exchanges and collaborative research efforts on issues such as interactions between customary and modern laws, and suggested that partnerships between Northwestern University and African legal institutions would provide an ideal framework for such efforts. Several other participants raised questions about the interactions between Islamic Shari'a law and other legal systems that should also be explored further, as this interaction affects women and the prospects for political change and the rule of law more broadly.

Panel 6: Improving Responses to the AIDS Pandemic

Chair: David Shinn
 J.K. Anarfi
 Robert Murphy
 Krista Johnson
Discussants: Catherine
 Boone, Kearsley
 Stewart

Panelists approached the discussion of the AIDS pandemic with a mixture of realism in the face of grim statistics, and hopefulness in the context of the increasing resources being provided for prevention and treatment. Prevention and treatment efforts – and the frequent impediments to their success – were discussed at both the micro-level of behavioral change and individual treatment regimens, and the macro-level of policy formulation and implementation.

Drawing from his study of youth attitudes and behavior in Ghana, **J.K. Anarfi** observed that while massive behavior change remains the only option for reducing infection rates, there has been little success in achieving this adjustment among Ghanaian youth. Despite major education efforts and now nearly universal awareness of how AIDS is transmitted, levels of condom use and other means of protection remain completely inadequate, and the country's infection rate continues to climb. Obstacles to change are many: the sense of invincibility among youth; poverty and unemployment (which limit alternatives and place the immediate struggle to survive above concerns about long-term risks); cultural impediments such as polygamy along with taboos about discussing sexual issues; poor health facilities and frequently unfriendly attitudes of healthcare workers; the powerlessness of women; the continuing stigma associated with the disease; and a lack of political will and resources from the top. As a result, prevention programs

have been more prescriptive and biomedical in their focus despite the very social character of the disease. A more holistic approach to addressing the



problem is needed that includes individual, societal and governmental factors.

Kearsley Stewart, Catherine Boone, David Shinn, Robert Murphy, J.K. Anarfi and Krista Johnson

Robert Murphy agreed that prevention efforts had generally failed, though in his view the key source of failure lay in the focus on vaccine development. He offered a more hopeful assessment of treatment possibilities and cited a major shift in the treatment paradigm over the last nine months as drug costs have plummeted. **Murphy** argued that massive treatment programs are now both affordable and feasible, discrediting common arguments that shortages of skills for administering medications, poor infrastructure, or other factors would prevent their effective implementation. However, the poor turnout to take advantage of Botswana's well-funded programs indicates that education and destigmatization efforts must accompany treatment programs.

It is not only in individual responses that we see failure but also in state responses. South Africa had been expected to set an example for vigorous action on the continent in view of the country's high prevalence rate. Instead, government leaders stonewalled. **Krista Johnson** presented a revealing study of the political context that shaped this inadequate response. She traced the failure to three key factors. First, compromises agreed on during the transition to majority rule – including retaining the old bureaucracy despite the hostility of many white civil servants to the ANC's goals – led to a gap between policy intentions and implementation. Second, hierarchical and authoritarian patterns of leadership inherited from both the apartheid government and the freedom movement led to a centralized and top-down rather than consultative approach to policy formulation, which further impeded implementation. Finally, the domestic and international focus on neo-liberal reforms and a state-centric paradigm constrained policy-making and implementation options. These findings suggest that policy implementation can be as problematic as policy formulation, that routine bureaucratic methods may not be the most conducive to addressing the AIDS pandemic, and that leadership styles matter. South Africa has suffered greatly from the lack of enabling and mobilizing leadership on this issue.

Catherine Boone observed that political scientists have been slow to take up the issue of HIV/AIDS, perhaps in the mistaken belief that promoting democratization more broadly was the best means for getting states to respond more effectively. Also responsible for the lack of attention may have been prevailing anti-state attitudes. For many observers, the pandemic has clarified the need for a strong central state to coordinate multi-sectoral responses to the crisis, a role which NGOs alone cannot fill. But strong states must also be complemented by an open political arena in which a strong, professionalized, and politically-independent public health community can speak freely and act autonomously. **Boone** called for more studies like that of **Johnson**. The HIV/AIDS pandemic presents scholars of African politics with a window through which to reconsider debates on the nature and role of the African state, state-society relations, and the effects of democratic and decentralized decision making.

Kearsley Stewart drew a conclusion from the papers that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a multifaceted problem, and approaches that are both multidisciplinary – i.e., that account not just for the economic and epidemiological, but also the political and social aspects – and multilateral are required to tackle it. She also argued that culturally-relevant interventions may offer greater hope for improving prevention efforts.

Panel 7: Religion, Ethnicity and the Public Sphere

Chair: Pierre Englebert
Stephen Ndegwa
Eghosa Osaghae
Benjamin Soares
Discussant: Souleymane
Bachir Diagne

The panelists were relatively united in their vision of recent ethnic and religious mobilization (or re-mobilization). They drew attention to the failure of states to provide sufficient resources to meet societal needs as well as the increasing competition for access to available resources during the 1980s and 1990s. **Eghosa Osaghae** cited the increasing concern of elites about who will control the state in a new era of succession politics. **Benjamin Soares** described the mobilization of religious agendas in Mali in response to what are seen as unwelcome forms of social liberalization alongside the political

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liberalization. **Ndegwa**, on the other hand, pointed out that these complex and often messy engagements can be seen as a natural part of the imperfect historical process of creating centralized states that can provide safe environments for accumulation. In **Osaghae's** words, this is a moment to rethink state-society relations in Africa and to think the unthinkable in terms of reconfiguring or finding alternatives to the nation-state. **Souleymane Bachir Diagne** observed that it is not clear the extent to which these new forms of mobilization reflect a reconstruction of the public sphere, versus its fragmentation and disintegration.

It was evident to all presenters that mobilization of ethnic and religious identities can take many shapes and have a variety of consequences for state and society. For example, **Osaghae** contrasted the response of elites, with their interest in retaining access to power during periods of political transition, with that of non-elites, that often involves a withdrawal from an ineffective



Eghosa Osaghae

state and a turning to various forms of self-administration, perhaps even forming new “shadow state” structures. In this sense, **Osaghae** observed that while ethnicity can be a dangerous tool in the hands of elites, it may be used productively by non-elites. Efforts by states and societies to explicitly or implicitly control the resurgence of ethnicity through constitutionalism (e.g., federalism or quasi-federalism) or decentralization, as described by **Ndegwa**, were regarded by **Osaghae** as an elite response that may be essentially irrelevant to non-elites.

While there is some consensus that ethnic mobilization tends to focus on access to or control of state resources – either capturing them within or mobilizing alternative sources – religious mobilization is less clearly understood, and appears to be much more varied in its purpose, manifestation, and outcomes. In some cases, such as the rise of evangelical and Pentecostal Christian movements in Kenya, they appear to reflect a form of withdrawal from engagement with the state, and from the politicization in recent years of more mainstream Christian churches. They usually reflect a relatively conservative social and political agenda. **Soares**, however, described the mobilization of religious movements in Mali as having a specific aim of engaging with – or taking on – the state. Thus, while a sense of marginalization may be at the root of the emergence or resurgence of many of these groups, their responses to this marginalization seems to vary widely.

The subject of who exactly are the marginalized being engaged by these movements fueled debate. Participants on the panel and in the audience cited the importance of disenfranchised youth and their distance from the state. **Diagne** saw youth as a driving force in a new form of mobilization that is not based on primordial ethnicity or religious affiliation but rather a search for new pathways, making them “today’s response to today’s problems.” In the view of **Ndegwa**, however, “youth” may simply be those marginalized individuals who do not as yet have jobs, while **Osaghae** posited that they comprise all those who want to carve out new spaces for themselves and their interests, and would include professionals and elites.

All seemed to concur that the mobilization of ethnic and religious identities is today often innovative, imaginative, adaptive, and even constructive. On the other hand, the practices within

new ethnic and religious spaces can become despotic and unrepresentative, and the proliferation of such spaces may endanger the state and the inclusiveness of politics.

Panel 8: Building Institutions and Expanding Human Capital

Chair: Richard Joseph
Gerti Hesselning
Adebayo Olukoshi
Joel Barkan

The panelists addressed institution building from both an internal, domestic perspective, and in terms of the constraints on, and opportunities for, effective international collaboration. A consensus emerged regarding the need for domestic agendas and domestic political action to drive institutional-strengthening efforts, as well as policy-making processes.

Targeting the domestic arena, **Joel Barkan** argued that, in contrast to the typical focus of democratization efforts on institutions of vertical accountability such as elections and civil society, our attention should be directed to the need for stronger institutions of horizontal accountability within the state. State and quasi-state institutions that can check and mutually support each other – including parliament, the judiciary, universities, think tanks, and the state bureaucracy – are all weaker than they should be. **Adebayo Olukoshi** argued that this is both a cause and effect of international domination of the public policy process, and argued that the orientation of the accountability structures described by **Barkan**, and efforts to mobilize consensus around public policies more broadly, must be turned inward toward these horizontal



Richard Joseph, Gerti Hesselning, Joel Barkan and Adebayo Olukoshi

institutions and society at large.

Barkan observed that despite political liberalization over

the past dozen years, these institutions still face intractable problems of clientelist politics, slow- or no-growth economies limiting resources for change, and the continuing demands of Hyden’s “economy of affection.” Pay reform is on the one hand essential. However, it is virtually impossible in the context of a political stalemate arising from the political impracticality of implementing massive retrenchments, and the unwillingness of the IMF and the World Bank to tolerate exploding wage bills. Some externally-funded think tanks have been more successful, although they face many of the same pressures as other institutions, but it is difficult to transfer and scale-up these experiences to government. Ultimately, strong domestic leadership for reform is the only option. The Chief Justice of Tanzania’s efforts at judicial reform offer one example; these reforms cannot be externally imposed. This means that progress will be uneven both within and among countries.

Despite coming from “opposite” sides of the international partnership equation, **Olukoshi** (from an African institution) and **Gerti Hesselning** (representing an “international partner”) shared remarkably similar perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships. In particular, both cited the potential perils arising from an asymmetry of resources and power in these relationships. **Olukoshi** pointed out the potentially authoritarian nature of development

cooperation, with African institutions facing pressures to mimic or simply follow the lead and agendas of resource-providing international partners. He stressed the need for developing and then defending an autonomous institutional point of view. **Hesseling** cited practices developed in the Netherlands aimed at ensuring that research agendas are tested and vetted by African researchers to confirm that they serve local rather than international needs.

Finally, **Olukoshi** called for the de-personalization of the policy-making arena and the re-valorization of individual capacity. The key problem in Africa is not always lack of capacity, but rather, the lack of political space that allows professionals having the capacity to do their work.

ROUNDTABLE: African States in Crisis: What Should be Done?

Richard Joseph
Jeffrey Herbst
Nicolas van de Walle
Adebayo Olukoshi
Pierre Englebert
Zainab Bangura
Kayode Fayemi
Crawford Young
Stephen Ndegwa

In his introductory remarks, the Moderator **Richard Joseph** contended that many states in West Africa and elsewhere on the continent are still – or again – experiencing crisis, failing in one or more aspects of the state-building project they adopted at independence. Citing problems such as the inability of states to project power over their territories, continuing neopatrimonial and prebendal tendencies based on perceptions of the state as a pool of resources to be captured by individuals or groups, the failure to establish the rule of law and institutionalize power and authority, and the capturing of

the state by various ethnic, regional or religious sub-groups, he concluded that too often the state appears to be part of the problem rather than a source of solutions.

Joseph asked each of the panelists to make three recommendations for achieving significant improvement in state performance and integrity in Africa. Responses ranged in focus from the global to the local, and from getting existing models right to searching for new models. Several panelists questioned the characterization of the current environment as one of state crisis, noting the wide variations across countries which, according to **Adebayo Olukoshi**, are caught up in continuous processes of *both* decomposition and recomposition. **Stephen Ndegwa** echoed Olukoshi's concerns and argued that credit should be given for how much has been achieved during the last 15 years, and suggested that the collapse and crisis seen in various African states are essentially parts of normal state-making processes. **Crawford Young** similarly counseled greater patience with the often slow processes of democratization, arguing that both at independence and again in the 1990s the world anticipated rapid and complete transformations rather than supporting sustained and continuous long-term transitions.

Even when they agreed about the deficits in state capacity and legitimacy, no consensus emerged among the participants regarding ways to overcome them. A number of recommendations targeted various aspects of the relationships between African states and the international and donor communities. **Jeffrey Herbst** argued for both reducing international trade injustices, especially in agriculture, and repairing systems of distorted incentives that have African states focusing on what donors want, rather than what their societies need. **Nicolas van de Walle** likewise cited the dysfunctional relationships between African states and the world community,

especially with regard to donor aid and debt, and called for widespread debt relief. Both **Young** and **Englebert** highlighted the need for more explicit rewards for good performers. **Englebert** specifically recommended international recognition for Somaliland as an independent state, both as a reward for its achievements, and as a way of sending a strong message to the rest of the continent.

Other suggestions focused more on internal state dynamics. Both **Olukoshi** and **van de Walle** identified reconstruction and reform of the civil service (e.g. providing living wages and adopting meritocratic systems of appointment) and key institutions of the state, while **Young** and **Zainab Bangura** cited the need to reduce corruption and increase accountability of resource use. **Ndegwa** observed that substantial progress had been made in many second generation constitutions that are often more deeply rooted than colonial-era versions, and place greater limitations on the wielding of political power through the introduction of term limits. **Van de Walle**, observing that the worst problems often occur in presidential systems with long-serving rulers, emphasized the importance of term limits, arguing that donors should terminate aid to countries with rulers who have served more than 12 continuous years in office. In a similar vein, **Ndegwa** and **Bangura** both cited the generation gap that exists in many political systems, and called for a new generation of leaders that would include women, youth, and members of a more globalized and cosmopolitan generation. Both proposed greater decentralization of resources and authority as a means of increasing accountability and effectiveness.

Several panelists joined **Young** in citing the need to do more to prevent and resolve the continent's many armed conflicts. **Kayode Fayemi** called for improving the democratic governance of the security apparatus as a vital step towards stability without which development issues cannot be addressed, while **Joseph** proposed developing regional security frameworks, perhaps through a series of international security conferences that would bring together national, regional and international bodies. **Englebert** argued that efforts to resolve conflicts must include non-combatants to a greater degree if lasting and equitable solutions are to be found.

Finally, a number of panelists argued for more outside-the-box thinking. **Englebert** suggested the need to rethink sovereignty and perhaps limit – or liberalize – the supply as traditional approaches to sovereignty have only benefited the weakest states and insulated corrupt elites who destroy their institutions from external sanction. Similarly, **Fayemi** argued that we may need to look beyond “states that aren't really states, that don't deliver the goods” to seek out more effective sources of good governance. **Herbst** lamented the deficit in African contributions to Western models of democratization and economic reform, and called for more creativity and flexibility in these processes, while **Olukoshi** argued the need to revisit our current frames of analysis more broadly, and questioned whether they are adequate.

Following the final panel, participants engaged in a brainstorming session on the design of the Consortium for Development Partnerships (CDP). A range of ideas were put forward and vigorously debated. A number of the recommendations will guide the creation of the Consortium and help shape its activities. These ideas will be incorporated in a draft document and circulated among potential partner institutions.

Conclusion

It is not possible to sum up adequately such vibrant discussions by a well-informed group of scholars and policy officials. Instead, by way of conclusion, we will identify some of the suggestions that cut across different thematic areas. The notion of “shared sovereignty” in Africa came up throughout the conference. Declining state capacity in some countries has resulted in governments that rely to an excessive degree on external financing for both recurrent and capital expenditures. Should such a situation be allowed to persist alongside the myth of full international sovereignty? It was strongly argued in the conference by a few presenters that sovereignty should be tied to positive statehood, that is, the capacity of state institutions to design, implement, and monitor policies in key areas. Otherwise, political elites will continue to misuse state resources while enjoying protection from scrutiny and sanctions to the detriment of the masses of the population.

A related issue that also came up frequently is the importance of domestic initiatives and agenda-setting in Africa, and the need to encourage internal creativity in the design of institutions, especially those established during the course of democratic transitions. The challenges posed by heightened ethnic and religious mobilization, and the resurgence of communal organizations, suggested to some participants that the nation-state in Africa is being reconfigured from within and below. Such observations clashed with the emphasis placed by others on the need for external governments and agencies to support efforts to restore the administrative and coercive capacities of central governments. A third dimension of restructuring in West Africa, it was further argued, is taking place in the regional arena, reflecting the cross-border nature of population flows, economic networks, and the increasingly significant role of ECOWAS in confronting peace and security issues. What these contrasting perspectives suggest is the need for further research and debate on the recomposition of power and authority in Africa to complement the sustained attention now paid to the erosion of these structures.

Different ideas presented at the conference will inspire readers of this report and audience members. For some it would be the call for renewed attention to legal education as a prerequisite for strengthening judiciaries and the rule of law. To others it would be the insights provided regarding the political and societal factors impeding effective responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The importance of strengthening regulatory frameworks and institutions of horizontal accountability to facilitate economic development would capture the attention of yet another set of readers. For many longtime students of sub-Saharan Africa, however, the keynote lecture by Daniel Kaufmann reflected an important advance in our approach to African development.

Kaufmann demonstrated that the tools now exist to measure and monitor governance. He used many charts to illustrate his claim that “significant improvements in the key aspects of governance – improving the rule of law, reducing corruption, increasing political voice – can produce dramatic long-run increases in per capita incomes.” We believe that the analytical and statistical frameworks developed by the World Bank Institute - when combined with available indices on economic growth, social development, democratization, perceptions of corruption, and others – would make it possible for academic scholars, policy professionals, and civil society activists to reach shared understandings about growth and stability in Africa and to work cooperatively to promote sustainable progress.

Conference Presenters

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| Baffour Agyeman-Duah | Centre for Democratic Development- Ghana |
| Babafemi Akinrinade | Northwestern University |
| J.K. Anarfi | University of Ghana |
| Zainab Bangura | National Endowment for Democracy |
| Joel Barkan | University of Iowa/ World Bank |
| Catherine Boone | University of Texas-Austin |
| Cynthia Bowman | Northwestern University |
| Michael Bratton | Michigan State University |
| Stephen Brundage | Bureau of African Affairs, US State Department |
| Douglas Cassel | Northwestern University |
| Souleymane Bachir Diagne | Northwestern University |
| Pierre Englebert | Pomona College |
| Kayode Fayemi | Centre for Democracy and Development- Nigeria |
| Thomas Geraghty | Northwestern University |
| Jeffrey Herbst | Princeton University |
| Gerti Hesseling | African Studies Centre, Leiden |
| Krista Johnson | DePaul University |
| Benjamin Jones | Northwestern University |
| Richard Joseph | Northwestern University |
| Daniel Kaufmann | World Bank Institute |
| Jeremy Levitt | DePaul University |
| Peter Lewis | American University |
| David Messick | Northwestern University |
| Célestin Monga | World Bank |
| Robert Murphy | Northwestern University |
| Stephen Ndegwa | College of William and Mary/World Bank |
| Adebayo Olukoshi | Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) |
| Eghosa Osaghae | University of Ibadan |
| John Prendergast | International Crisis Group |
| William Reno | Northwestern University |
| David Shinn | George Washington University |
| Benjamin Soares | African Studies Centre, Leiden |
| Kearsley Stewart | Northwestern University |
| Nicolas van de Walle | Cornell University |
| Daniel Volman | Africa Research Project |
| Dwayne Woods | Purdue University |
| Crawford Young | University of Wisconsin- Madison |

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For further information regarding the conference, the Consortium for Development Partnerships or the Program of African Studies, please contact us or visit the PAS website.

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