GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: An Overview

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GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: An Overview

By: Maria Nzomo- CODESRIA.

Introduction

Most Sub-Saharan African countries have entered the 21st Century poorer than they entered the last millennium. The combined effects of numerous factors including poor governance, undemocratic structures and processes, war and famines, the effects of the oil crisis of the 1970s, unfavorable international trade and investment regimes, as well as the globalization trends of the 1980s and 1990s, have contributed to the rapid downward slide for Africa since the early 1970s.

Having enjoyed fairly reasonable economic growth rates, averaging 5.9% in the 1960s the annual growth rates began to decline in the 1970s reaching an average of 4.1% by the end of the decade, and further declining to an average of 2% during the 1980s (Enemuo 1999; Chole 1999). By the turn of the 1990s, many African countries were not only experiencing negative growth rates but had become so marginal in the global arena, that some scholars grimly concluded that: "Africa has for all practical purposes been dropped from world affairs." (Adedeji 1993:3).

The deterioration in the African economic condition has most dramatically been exemplified by the increasing impoverishment of the majority of the citizens of this region. Despite some modest improvement registered in the overall economic performance of Africa during the second half of the 1990s. (Botchewy 1997:16) Enemuo 1999:6-7), analysts caution that human development indicators for Africa remain abysmally low; poverty remains widespread and living conditions for the vast majority of the people remain desperate: (Enemuo 1999:6, Chole 1997: 4-6).

The economic deterioration has moved at tandem with bad governance and authoritarianism within African countries, despite the introduction of political pluralism in most countries during the 1990s. Lack of democratic governance has manifested itself not only in the political authoritarianism and repressive tendencies of the African state, but also in the decay of governance institutions, thus facilitating widespread and unchecked corruption in public life, with state functionaries spearheading the pillage and looting of national wealth, without concomitant productive investment that could benefit the poor majority. This situation has been further compounded by natural disasters and intra and inter-state conflicts.

The major global political and economic countries and institutions aggravated this situation. Apart from their economic and political propping up of undemocratic African regimes up to the end of 1980s, they continued to impose on Africa unfavorable economic policy frameworks. The Bretton Wood's Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) conditionalities were justified on the grounds that they would promote democracy and economic development: (Sandbrook:1993:87), but instead aggravated the African socio-economic and political crisis. Politically, the already authoritarian African State became even more authoritarian in its mode of governance, in order to force unwilling African populations to comply and acquiesce
to cutbacks on social services, lower incomes and higher costs of living. Furthermore, during adjustment, "the external debt of sub Saharan Africa more than doubled, infrastructural base and human capital formation deteriorated, compounded by massive brain drain and demoralization of the civil service, caused by sharply declining real wages and massive retrenchment. Poverty has intensified, and human-development indicators have worsened; and the fragile industrial base has shrunk even further in many countries (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999:88)."

The momentous changes in human existence engendered by the advent and rapidly expanding phenomena of *globalisation* (Aina 1997, Nnoli 1997, Goldblatt 1997, Rosenau 1997), has not only spearheaded the explosion and expansion of information technology and rapid modes of transportation, but also increased global movement of capital markets, increased momentum in international trade and the explosion in International finance, thus resulting in tremendous shifts and transformations of economic, political, and socio-cultural relations within and between countries and individuals. However globalization has transformed the world into one "global village", where the weak and the poor become even more vulnerable, impoverished and marginalised and where the relevance of statist based governance is challenged.

This being the case and after four decades of failed development and governance paradigms in Africa, it stands to reason that there is critical need to explore new and more innovative strategies and approaches, with different governance patterns and a variety of coalitions and actors, who collectively might just advance the elusive project of development and democratic governance. As one scholar has noted, Africa may move from regression to renaissance in the new millennium, "if the continent moves towards a new form of governance; not just formal local, national and regional government but more diverse and informal relations among states, companies and civil societies at all levels: from local/urban through national and regional to continental and global" (Shaw:1999).

It is against this background that I have interpreted the tasks of this assignment which requires the following:

- examine what governance means in different contexts;
- review and analyze the state of governance research and emerging concerns in the field;
- establish why citizens are not engaged in governance and processes by which they can become more actively engaged;
- examine the interactions between the variety of social actors involved in governance and leadership roles and styles;
- identify some potential strategic entry points for IDRC.

**Conceptualizing Governance**

- *World Bank's Perpective*
Although the concept of governance had been defined many times before 1989, the world Bank set the ball rolling for what became in the 1990s, a major conceptual industry for scholars and a catch phrase for policy makers, development practitioners and civil society organizations.

The World Bank who along with the IMF in the early 1980s spearheaded the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in most countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), had by the end of the decade reached the conclusion that the market economic reform policies recommended had achieved very little because these policies fell on institutionally barren ground and were stalled by internal bottlenecks and political ineptitude in terms of governance. In other words, the poor performance of SAPs was caused by lack of good governance. The Bank therefore declared:

Underlying the litany of Africa’s development problems is a crisis of good governance. By governance is meant the exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affairs. Because countervailing power has been lacking, state officials in many countries have served their own interest without fear of being called to account. In self-defence, individuals have build up personal networks of influence rather than hold the all-powerful state accountable for its systemic failure. In this way, politics becomes personalized and patronage becomes essential to maintain power. The leadership assumes broad discretionary authority and loses its legitimacy, information is controlled, and voluntary associations are co-opted or disbanded. The environment cannot readily support a dynamic economy (World Bank 1989:60-61).

The Bank therefore argued that adjustment alone cannot put Africa on a sustained poverty-reducing path, and therefore must be complemented with institution building and good governance which must include public accountability of government officials, transparency in government procedures, rule of law and efficacious public sector management (World Bank 1994:2; Olukoshi 1992; Nunnekkamp 1995). The process of evolving good governance in Africa according to the Bank requires the shrinking of the state and engendering support for non-state actors.

Following the footpaths of the World Bank, almost all other donor agencies – multilateral and bilateral - concurred with the Bank’s conceptualization and incorporated the demand for “good governance” in their aid policies and development co-operation agendas for Africa.

* Other Perspectives on Governance

Perspectives on governance by African and africanist scholars, policy makers and the African community in general, have been quite mixed and varied.

Most scholars and policymakers have simply been reacting to the World Bank’s perspective Some have found the World Bank’s conceptualization inadequate and have suggested improved definitions. Others resent what they view as the Bank’s arrogance and hypocrisy in prescribing and imposing its concept of ‘good governance’ on Africa as a political conditionality; in the same way it had imposed economic conditionalities for the implementation of SAPs. Others question the relevance of the concept of “good” governance and prefer what they view as a more wholesome concept of “democratic” governance.
According to one African scholar, Archie Mafeje (1999), the concept of «good governance» as introduced by the Bank, has nothing to do with democracy of any kind because if by it is meant good management of public affairs, probity, and rectitude, then this is no distinguishing characteristic of any government since even the most authoritarian regimes can meet these requirements. Worse still, if the Bretton Woods institutions and donor countries meant what they preach, they would not have propped up dictators such as Mobutu, Banda, Bokassa, Moi etc., and the successive military dictators in countries like Nigeria until the 1990's. Furthermore, the SAP's economic conditionality favored more authoritarian regimes than populist ones and in practice have proved to be extremely anti-social. Therefore, the Bank's concept of "good governance" should be regarded as an invitation to authoritarianism and a negation to prospects for social democracy. Thus, while democracy is unquestionably good in itself and may augment good governance especially with respect to the civil and political liberties it guarantees, it does not add up to nor is it organically linked with good governance. Constructing good governance in Africa will be determined by two factors: the first, is the extent to which people will enter decisions which affect their life chances or such decisions to reflect or aggregate the interests of the majority of the people and, the second refers to the extent to which their means of livelihood are guaranteed. These two factors are likely to be more realizable not within the context of liberal, but social, democracy (Mafeje, 1995:26).

Several other scholars concur with Mafeje and argue that while the Bank preaches good governance, rule of law and human rights in Africa, the SAPs it has imposed undermine those noble political ideals (Kiely 1998; Adejumboi, 1999; Mkandawire 1995, Mkandawire and Olukoshi 1995, Olukoshi 1993, Asobie 1993, Mustapha 1992, Beckman 1991 Lewis and Stein, 1997, Szeftel, 1998). SAPs, rather than empower civil society, encourages its ruthless repression and dismemberment; rather than promote social security and welfare, contracts them quite significantly, rather than encourage public ethics and accountability promotes declining public morale and weakens the capacity of the state to control corruption and tighten rules governing corporate relations. In summary, adjustment confounds the logic of good governance in Africa. Furthermore, the object of the Bank's "good governance" project is mainly to provide an enabling political environment for the market to function properly in a globalised context, and not because good governance is good in itself and deserved by the African people. Similarly, Yash Tandon (1996:27), argues that the Bank's "good governance" project, is self-serving, opportunistic and designed to serve the interests of capital within the context of a neo-liberal economic ideology. It is certainly not governance on behalf of the common people but a governance on behalf of industrial and banking transnationals and a few local economic and political elites.

Other scholars especially those from the North, refrain from critiquing the World Bank and focus on crafting a conceptualization of governance that is scientifically operationalisable, Hyden (1992) for example argues that empirically, there are a number of indicators or yardsticks that determine the extent to which good governance exists. They include: 1) Citizen influence and oversight which refers to the means by which individual citizens can participate in the political process and thereby express their preferences about public policy; and hold governors accountable for their decisions and actions. 2) Responsive and responsible leadership, namely attitudes of political leaders towards their role as public trustees; in particular, their orientation toward the sanctity of the civic public realm; their
readiness to share information with citizens; and their adherence to the rule of law. 3) Social reciprocities, namely the extent to which citizens or groups of citizens treat each other in an equal fashion; how far such groups demonstrate tolerance of each other in the pursuit of politics; and how far voluntary associations are capable of transcending the boundaries of such primary social organizations as kinship, ethnicity, or race. In sum: degree of political equality; degree of intergroup tolerance; and degree of inclusiveness in associational membership. Along the same lines, Gerry Stoker, 1998, 17-28) contends that good governance in this case also parallels liberal democracy. Similarly, Richard Joseph(1990) stresses that accountability is the most fundamental principle of good governance which is assured through competitive, free and fair elections, which he views as the most important means of making governments accountable to the citizenry.

Others distinguish between macro and micro levels of governance and argue that at the micro-level, good governance denotes organizational effectiveness, that is the capacity of an organization to achieve tasks assigned to it, with rules and regulations laid down by it, and within the context of favorable environmental conditions. At the macro-level, good governance, is measured by the extent to which a political regime can guarantee and promote general socio-economic welfare of the greatest number of people in the society.

**Non-academic Perspectives on Governance**

In regard to non-scholars, their perceptions of governance vary depending on their own interpretation of their situation as well as the ideological and social interests that they represent.

My personal assessment based on my work with ordinary citizens in Kenya, and recollections of numerous conversations with various civil society groups in seminars and conferences across Africa is that, the conceptualizations of governance are very diverse and tend to be partial; primarily inspired by the concerns of the particular interest or constituency represented e.g. women, the youth, labor, religious groups, the disabled, minorities etc.

Generally however, ordinary people take a very practical view of governance that is directly linked to issues of basic survival, so that a good governance milieu framework is one that facilitates the effective pursuit of individual and collective welfare needs and that allows people adequate space to manage their affairs. However some especially those that have acquired a degree of civic awareness, take a broader perspective and argue that good governance, must entail inclusion and participation of all in decision making, at all levels and in all matters that affect their lives and welfare.

For many who work with human rights NGOs, construction of good governance requires the existence of an institutional legal, administrative and policy framework that responds to the needs of the people and that guarantees and upholds the basic human rights and freedoms of all citizens, regardless of their social-cultural, economic or political status.
Since the beginning of the 1990s, most gender based NGOs and gender aware African women have been concerned that most definitions of governance tend to be gender blind and ignore the gender oppressiveness of patriarchy, so that even when all other structural reforms of governance have been put in place, the level playing field remain uneven, gendered and undemocratic, unless affirmative action and a conscious effort is made to deconstruct these structures and make them more gender responsive. It is argued in this regard that it is not enough to have political pluralism or even constitutional reforms, unless such changes are gender responsive and the governance structures and processes mainstream gender concerns. For example most of the governance structures, and policy frameworks of opposition political parties in many African countries remain gendered and hence limiting women’s effective participation in their decision making structures. Engendering governance is indeed required at all levels; from the micro-level of the household to the macro-level of parliaments, government ministries etc. (Nzomo 1987; 1994; 1996; Kabira & Masinjila 1997. Mama, Imam, Sow eds., 1997).

Most African government leaders have mastered the rhetoric of good governance but hardly put any of it in practice. For example, Frederick Chiluba, President of Zambia at an earlier stage in his political career, was once quoted as saying:

Africa’s lag vis-à-vis the rest of the world is astronomical. We need good governance – that is meaningful participation by our people in the political process, transparent and accountable governmental systems with sensitivity to the sufferings of our people. When our people are motivated by good governance and fair rewards for their labors, African economies will then begin to grow at a pace which will ultimately see us catching up with the rest of the world or at least bridging the yawning gap. (Chiluba, 1992)

After nearly a decade in power, Chiluba can hardly be said to have practiced what he preached in 1992. Some like President Moi of Kenya demonstrate a very twisted and self-contradictory understanding of good governance. In one and the same breath, Moi views himself as the indispensable factor in Kenya’s governance and then proceeds to fervently defend his autocratic government, as being democratic and upholding good governance.

On the other hand, members of the opposition political parties generally tend to interpret governance within the context of the regime in power which they accuse of corruption and total mismanagement of the political economy. For them the restoration of good governance would first involve removing the current generation of African leadership, and replacing it with one democratically elected through free and fair elections. Concurrently, they insist that constitutional reforms to remove oppressive laws and replace them with laws that guarantee basic rights and freedoms, promotes popular participation and ensures accountability of the rulers to the ruled, must be put in place.

My assessment of the various conceptualizations of governance reviewed above indicates that many African scholars do not provide helpful conceptualizations as they are either too preoccupied with castigating the role of Bretton Wood’s institutions in Africa or are too abstract in their analysis. Some scholars provide scientifically operationalizable definitions, that remain abstract and in need of contextualization.

In my view, beyond the conceptualization debates, it is not necessary to have one uniform understanding of good governance; Indeed, a plurality of views reminds us
that in the final analysis, the application of good governance must be contextualized and localized. It must be made relevant to the diverse visions and needs of ordinary people. But at the very minimum, good governance requires the existence of structures and processes that provide an enabling environment for people to work and earn a reasonable livelihood, participate in all decisions affecting their lives and enjoy basic freedoms and security against external threats. Quite simply, a good government should provide a conducive policy and administrative framework and enabling infrastructural environment for all to effectively participate in production and public affairs. Democratic governance also entails that individual citizens recognize that rights come with responsibilities and obligations. In other words democratic culture should be demonstrated in the way citizens treat each other and conduct their own affairs, including the level of group and inter-group tolerance, inclusiveness, equity etc across kinship ethnicity race, gender and other social cleavages.

To-date democratic governance has been a rare commodity in Africa. One is indeed hard pressed to find success stories in the midst of the fragile democratic transitions that have no where reached the stage where we can talk of democratic consolidation. Exceptions perhaps are Botswana and Mauritius which have both experienced relatively democratic, economic and political stability over a long period of time without reversals. South Africa’s democratic transition shows signs of holding up, despite Mandela’s retirement. Nigeria and Senegal have recently held fairly free and fair elections but the political situation there is still too fragile to engage in any conclusive analysis. Senegal’s case is however instructive as it demonstrates how a combination of citizen’s determination and good information and dissemination system, especially the role of the media, electronic mail and a good telecommunication network, can positively influence the outcome of multiparty elections. Senegal also provides a good lesson for opposition political parties in countries such as Kenya; on how to organise and sustain a political coalition and form a government of national unity.

But in general the process and likely modes of democratic governance within the context of plural politics in Africa , is still fraught with serious tensions, conflicts and contradictions. and hence cannot easily be determined at this stage.

**State of Research on Governance**

**Introduction**

Numerous studies have been conducted on various aspects of governance, most of them during the 1990s. As it is not possible to review all of them here, this paper examines and analyzes a representative sample. In addition, part of the review is done within the context of responding to the various aspects of the TOR. I also a provide a detailed bibliography at the end of this paper.

Basically, the way governance has been conceptualized, has largely determined the framework within which various studies and debates on governance have been conducted. Methodologically, the extant literature indicates that most scholars employ political economy, liberal and neo-liberal paradigms. Furthermore most of the governance research has been undertaken by individual African and africanist scholars within the Social Sciences and humanities disciplines. Some of it is
institutional research carried out under the auspices of various research institutions. In this paper, apart from universities we have identified six research institutions that undertake governance research about Africa: CODESRIA (Senegal), Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF)(Addis Ababa), African Center for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS)(Nigeria), Center for Democratic Governance (CGD) (Nairobi), International Research Center on Democratic Governance (Canada) and the Carter Center (USA).

The research studies under review cover a wide range of topics. Some are concerned with the relationships and linkages between governance and other variables but principally: the state and non-state actors, development, democracy, decentralized governance, citizen participation and globalization. Such literature is concerned with not only the linkages but also with the extent to which these factors are prerequisites or consequences of good governance. Some studies are of a general nature, while others focus on specific aspects of governance that the authors believe are crucial to the attainment of democratic governance and development.

Some of the literature lay emphasis on the economic dimension, especially the question of the efficacy of SAPs and whether or not they are compatible with the building of democratic governance. Some of this literature examines and analyzes alternative frameworks that could replace Bretton Wood's SAPs and that would be more compatible with the building of democratic governance.

In order to capture some of the main elements of the debates, reflections, prescriptions, etc on the governance question in Africa, I have organized the review of the state of governance research around the themes that I found most recurrent in the literature; namely: the role of the African state, and the role of non-state actors, especially civil society decentralized governance and the linkage between democracy governance and development.

Civil Society and Governance

Civil society as a social and analytical category has become an important factor in the elusive search for democratic governance and development. And after four decades of African state's failure to advance the democratic development project, many external donors have shifted their attention to the civic realm in the search for an alternative framework on which to hang their development agenda. Opinions vary sharply among scholars over whether civil society is necessarily a democratizing force and whether it has the capacity to act as an alternative to government or just to serve as an effective partner to a reformed state.

For nearly a decade now there has existed a tendency to turn away from the disappointments of the nation state, and to embrace the world outside the state as an alternative source of inspiration and development. In this connection, civil society has become a catch-all alternative to the demonized state. The concept of civil society like that of 'governance' has become a conceptual industry, as interest in civil society has intensified especially in the 1990s (Cohen and Arato, 1992; Kumar, 1993; Harbeson et. al., 1994; Chanhoke, 1995; Hall, 1995; Ndegwa, 1996; Rooy, 1998; CIVICUS, 1999 and Nyang'oro, 1999).

Debates range over a wide range of concerns including what forms of associational life qualify as civil society and the criteria for that; the space that defines the limits of civil society especially in regard to the Nation State and the rest of society; the
overlapping mandates of State and civil society etc. As these conceptual issues have been extensively addressed elsewhere, and they should therefore not detain us here. It suffices to note that some insist that a distinction needs to be made between associational life that includes all types of voluntarily formed and autonomous organizations and civil society, which narrows down this universe to those demonstrating civic norms (tolerance, inclusion, non-violence and commitment to promoting public good). In other words, while associational life includes all civil society organizations, civil society does not include all organizations that comprise a society’s associational life (Civicus:1999). But even with this distinction between civil society and associational life, the question still remains as to whether indeed the majority of civil society organizations demonstrate these civic norms.

**CODESRIA Research on Civil Society**

Empirical research studies conducted under the auspices of CODESRIA in 1998-1999 in 12 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa\(^1\) noted that since early 1990s, there has been a dramatic increase in civic awareness and hence greater participation in the enlarged public space arising out of state retreat and democratization trends. However, it is not clear whether this expansion is not just another rent seeking industry, fuelled by the accelerating economic crisis and lack of alternative forms of livelihood in various African countries.

Some studies noted that civil society associations have some strategic strengths, including: their resilience, flexibility and close proximity to the community, what some term "a strong streak of resistance, creativity and robustness", which offers a concrete basis for realizing a strategy for poverty alleviation based on participatory and sustainable development. The resilience of civil society is demonstrated by its ability to continue to exist under state collapse. (Zartman 1999:268-269). Thus civil society contains strong groups that cannot be easily written off. These groups defend their autonomy and carry out broad democratic struggles directed at empowering the people to obtain their human rights and freedom.

Most studies however indicate that Africa has rapidly expanding but weak civil societies with inadequate capacity to shape democratic change. They identify numerous weaknesses; the most commonly cited include: i) Poor coordination of activities, with minimum connectivity and functional relationship between and within various sectors of civil society. ii) Weak financial base with a high western donor dependency syndrome; iii) Inadequate flow of information within and between civil society groups, resulting in high duplication of efforts, as well as of unnecessary competition and rivalries. iv) Poor organizational and managerial skills. v) Weak civic and democratic culture.

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\(^1\) Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Uganda, South Africa, Cameroon, Rwanda, and Democratic Republic of Congo
Regarding State – Civil Society Relations and Governance, studies noted that current relations between civil society and the African State in the countries studied, are characterized by tension and mutual mistrust. This is attributed to a number of factors which include lack of well developed frameworks for cooperation, and limited understanding of each other’s divergent mandates. This, combined with competition for limited donor financial resources, contributes to government’s intransigence and tightening of control over national policy and institutional frameworks, in a manner designed to curtail autonomy of the civic sector and undermine prospects for collaboration and good governance.

The studies therefore, caution that we should not romanticize the role of civil Society and its capacity for democratizing governance. The evidence available shows that some organizations in the civic sector suffer from some of the same weaknesses as government: – lack of accountability, transparency, weak institutional capacity, and undemocratic tendencies. Civil society should therefore not be viewed as the paragon of virtue, and as an antithesis of corrupt authoritarian and collapsing African states. Analysis of African democratization therefore need to resist the unwarranted theoretical jump from “the state is not viable” to “civil society is the key to Africa's success” and vice versa. There is clearly a need for greater reflection on state – civil society relations and their impacts on governance.

The studies also noted a close linkage between African civil societies and ethnic associations as instruments of both democratic and undemocratic governance in the 1990s. It was noted that in some cases African states facilitate the formation of their own NGOs to undermine the organizations grounded in genuine Civil Society. However, even the “genuine” NGOs in some cases tend to be dominated by a few ethnic groups, typically those that also dominate opposition politics ». Frequently, these civic groups are further divided by policy and programmatic differences, patterning themselves on the larger social cleavages of class between opposition and government. In this regard, the studies caution against the orthodox belief that civil society is necessarily an arena for negotiating interests, and democratic deepening, as it could mask the point that civil society can and often does feed into and aggravate existing social and political cleavages.

Other Perspectives on Civil Society

Beckman (1997) and Mamdani (1996) concur with the latter view both interject cautionary notes into the uncritical embracing of civil society as the alternative to the pervasive crisis of the African state. And point to growing skepticism over whether African civil societies have any of the capacities and qualities the African state lacks for democratic governance. Beckman draws attention to the possibility of “patriarchal, Islamic, communist and fascist civil societies”. Mamdani (1996:19) points out that that the origins of modern civil society in Africa are far from innocent... Mama (1999:32) concurs and asserts that the Nigerian situation suggests that there are good grounds for rejecting any simple polarization of “state” and “civil society”, and as both have the capacity to generate anti-democratic discourses that are gendered, or have gendered effects.

Another problem noted with most NGOs, is that they tend to be single-subject organizations and they are so fanatical about their single agenda, that they may not see any other problems round them. None of them is particularly accountable.
Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that a combination of economic liberalization and political liberalization will facilitate the strengthening of civil society.

As noted above, Botswana is a country often cited for its good record of democratization and governance. However, it does not seem to have a particularly strong civic sector nor collaborative partnerships between the state and civil society. (Somoleka 1998:164)

What the above review suggests is that enough research exists that tell us of the limitations of the civic sector but not quite enough about what concretely needs to be done to strengthen this sector. Indeed we do not know enough about democratizing potential that can be tapped and strengthened and who indeed in this whole maze of associational life should be targeted for capacity building.

Governance and the Role of the African State

Here research analysis and debates have moved in at least 3 directions: (i) what kind of state is necessary for promoting/building democratic governance (ii) given the disastrous history of the African State and its current collapsing, shrinking but dictatorial nature, is it efficacious, desirable or even possible to resuscitate it? (iii) what is the role for the African state in the 21st Century where global governance is dominated by non-state economic giants?

The school of thought dominated by a neo-liberal and largely economistic paradigms insists that with the advent of globalization, the concept of the state has lost much of its explanatory value. Socio-economic and political issues are better understood through other lenses than those provided by theories of the state. Thus according to this school of thought the era of the nation-state is over, and national-level governance is ineffective in the face of globalized economic and social processes. National politics and political choices have been sidelined by world market forces which are stronger than even the most powerful states. Capital is mobile and has no national attachments, locating wherever economic advantage dictates, but labor is both nationally located and relatively static, and it must adjust its political expectations to meet the new pressures of international competitiveness. The nation-state has ceased to be an effective economic manager. It can only provide those social and public services deemed essential by international capital and at the lowest possible overhead costs (Hirst and Thompson 1999:261).

While much of this may be so, nation-states are still of central significance because they are the key practitioners of the art of government as the process of distributing power. Nation-states can do this in a way no other agency can; they are pivots between international agencies and subnational activities because they provide legitimacy as the exclusive voice of a territorially bounded population. In Africa the low levels of development still demands the role of a democratic development state is still needed to guarantee to provide basic social services and to uphold security of those living within any state, authoritarian or democratic, but especially the latter, needs to buffer the sociopolitical consequences of transformation(Callaghy & Ravenhill 1993) However the exact form and role of the state in this era of globalization, may differ in different contexts. But it is debatable as to whether as Hyden has noted, “Without the State there would be no Society, certainly no Civil Society” (Hyden 1992).
Oyediran and Agbaje (1999) cite the case of Nigeria to illustrate that constitutional changes alone do not necessarily bring about democracy unless there is political will on part of the regime and unless accompanied by comprehensive administrative and political reforms. Nigeria had focused a lot of attention on making constitutions, but was not governing according to the constitution or upholding the rule of law but rather capricious governance. In other words, Nigeria has witnessed a lot of constitutions but it has yet to entrench constitutionalism. Not even the deliberate creation of strong electoral commission, a directorate for mass mobilization, a Center for Democratic Studies (CDS) and a press council could enhance the democratic content of structures and practices (Oyediran and Agbaje 1999). We await to see whether the combination of a non-military and democratically elected leadership will make the difference in Nigeria. Zartman (1995) argues that reconstructing the state is slow and uncertain, made up of many interacting elements to which leadership must give direction.

The importance of the nation-state notwithstanding, states should no longer be seen as 'governing' powers, able to impose outcomes on all dimensions of policy within a given territory by their own authority, but as loci from which various forms of governance can be proposed, legitimated and monitored. States are now simply one class of powers and political agencies in a complex system of power from world to local levels, but they have a centrality because of their relationship to territory and population, which remain territorial and subject to the citizenship of a national state. States remain 'sovereign', not in the sense that they are all-powerful or omnipotent within their territories, but because they police the borders of a territory and, to the degree that they are credibly democratic, they are representative of the citizens within those borders (Hirst & Thompson, 1996: 261).

My assessment is that large amounts of research exist on the shrinking collapsing and undemocratic African state and there is also some consensus among the Africanist scholars that the role of the African state remains important in the globalized context. However, the state needs to be reconfigured within a new social economic and political framework of plurality of voices and demands for entitlement at all levels. Research is needed here to document and deepen our understanding on the nature and role of a democratic developmental African state in a globalized context. Ultimately the key to state reform lies with an empowered citizenry with high levels of civic awareness and democratic culture that would propel it and give it capacity to transform the governance structure and processes.

Case for Decentralized Governance

Accompanying the enlargement of political space for civic associations in Africa should be the decentralization of governmental operations in which power and resources are transferred to bodies that are closer to the people. Such decentralization should be introduced along with the progressive empowerment of civic and communal associations. No government should assume the full monopoly of governance, especially at the local levels of society where there is a rich array of customary and modern associations in most African countries. Decentralizing authority and key functions of government, from the center to regions, districts,
municipalities and local communities enables people to participate more directly in governance processes.

In Tanzania, Shivji has made the case that democracy will not taken root due to lack of decentralised governance involving the "empowering of villages". He notes in the case of Tanzania that historically and in the contemporary debates on democratization, there is hardly a mention of villages as a possible form of organizing democracy; as a form through which a large majority of citizens living there can control their own life-destinies by participating in the crucial decisions which affect them. The process of villagization in Tanzania has been seen, conceived and implemented as a top-down process of managing rural folks, rather than a process of democratization as one of the instruments for democratization and "empowering villages". (.Kibwana 1996:25-26) In this connection, the village Assembly introduced in 1982 Act. does not give villagers power to make bye-laws. If there is any power at the village level, it is concentrated in a few members of the Village Council, who in turn do things at the behest of the district bosses. Numerous rules, regulations, directions, instructions, orders etc which govern the daily productive and social lives of the villagers are simply imposed on them from the top without their participation. Even production at the village level is controlled through compulsory cultivation regulations. Failure to cultivate a minimum acreage of specified crops leads to criminal penalties, a fine or imprisonment. Shivji therefore further argues that the authoritarian model has failed because it has gone against the grain of Africa’s participative culture in which the burdens and rewards of citizenship are shared, in which nothing is private, not even marriage, not even death. Everything involves the participation of everybody. Authoritarianism has therefore led to dissociation, confusion, and the phenomenon of withdrawal (Kibwana 1990).

Mutahaba (1990:160-164) also contributing to the reflections on citizen’s role in governance makes the point that while citizens withdraw from participation in state controlled governance, the alternative structure of governance they are putting in place are not necessarily democratically organized – which then suggests that civic awareness and citizen’s role in governance is still low at the local level.

In an empirical study of decentralized governance in Uganda within the context of the Local Resistance Councils (RCs), it was noted that these RCs were functioning well until the state began to seek to control them (Mamdani 1994). The findings suggest that there is a qualitative difference between Resistance Councils (RCs) during the war and afterwards, following their countrywide establishment. The development from 1986 indicate that there has not only been a significant tendency for the bureaucratic control of RCs but also in the specification of their functions, the state has tended to turn RCs into bureaucratic organs - implementors of government policy. And hence to restore effective decentralized local governance there is need to lessen state control, to become more of an organizational structure simply for coordination purposes (Mamdani: 1994 :404).

In his contribution to the reflections on decentralized governance in Africa, Mamdani (1995) suggests that decentralized governance does not necessarily result in democratic governance:
"The Archille's heel of the contemporary "2nd independence movement" lies in its political failure to grasp the specificity of the mode of rule that needs to be democratized. Theoretically, this is reflected in an infatuation with the notion of civil society, a preoccupation that conceals the actual form of power through which rural populations are ruled. Without a reform of the local state, democratization will remain not only superficial but also explosive ... Too many presume that despotic power on this continent was always or even mainly a centralized affair, in the process forgetting the decentralized despotism that was the colonial state and that is one variant of the African State to-day. In the absence of alliance building mechanisms, all decentralized systems of rule fragment the ruled and stabilize their rules. But the state structure remains top-down, with the villages at the receiving end, of instructions, directives, laws and regulations of which they are not a part nor a participant (Mamdani 1996: 289-300).

Similarly, Claude Ake (1990:5) cautions against assuming that the proliferation of grassroots organizations and independent community groups is a sign of the growth of the civil society and the growth of pluralism. On the contrary, it seems to some extent what is in fact happening is the dissolution of society. It is often of malady and not a sign of health and vitality at the grassroots. Insofar as they are not connected at more ecumenical levels these groups pose a serious problem to survival of the society at large.

On the other hand some scholars idealise rural life and their social networks they argued that rural networks and institutions function as arenas of negotiation over access to productive resources and suggests a potential for effective decentralization and greater popular participation in the exercise of power as well as the pursuit of economic benefits, and capacity to respond to efforts by national governments to create wider arenas for discussion and negotiation. At the local level, negotiability works in part because it takes place face-to-face: everyone knows everyone else's business. It follows that the prospects for negotiability on a national scale will be enhanced by taking steps to increase public access to information and protect all citizens' freedom of expression (Berry 1990 :122). In regard to the role of the peasantry, Newbury suggests that, we need to, in the context of the uncertainties and inequalities within which these people live. Surviving at the margin, many rural dwellers use their land and labor in ways that are rational from an individual point of view. Many peasants in Africa are eager for participation, not "mobilization" from the top down, but consultation and working out of problems in ways that permit their voices to be heard and their concerns to be met. Such organizations demonstrate the vitality and possibilities of popular modes of participation, reflecting people's willingness to work together collectively to achieve better living standards, improve the physical quality of life, and increase productivity (Newbury 1990:129, 179, 180).

I think that Mamdani's observation that we need to democratize decentralised governance needs serious reflection. From my own observation, Villages and those organized around them are not necessarily repositories of democratic governance. I think that the way most rural networks conduct their affairs is not guided by any sense of commitment to any democratic ideals notwithstanding the authoritarian arm of the state at that level, rural people are not necessarily democratic themselves. Thus, as we talk of decentralizing governance we should also think of decentralizing and democratizing local governance. New research would need to deconstruct and take a closer analysis the existing structures/institutions and processes of local governance and its linkages with the current government super structure.
Democracy Governance and Development – What are the Linkages?

The existing literature suggests that there is a linkage between democracy governance and development. The major issue of debate is over the dependent and independent variables. In other words is development and governance a prerequisite for development and vice versa, Mkandawire (1990.10-12) argues that “Development” is too precarious a concept on which to hang democracy. The struggle for democracy must be for democracy in its own right. But democracy may have instrumental value in the development process, as it is the legitimate right of the African people to democratically map the destinies of their countries, to determine the rates and types of development they want.

Ake (1990;5&6) on the other hand argued that Africa needs democracy not only because democracy is desirable in itself, but because it will greatly facilitate development. The development project in Africa has failed largely because of political authoritarianism. The whole case for democracy implies precisely the assumption of differences to be negotiated to be conciliated, to be moved into phases of higher synthesis. If democracy means anything at all, as a form of relationship, that is precisely what it means. If there is social pluralism, that is in fact an argument for a democratic form of governance. The type of governance needed in circumstances of social pluralism is democracy. Similarly Lancaster(1990:38) also insists that without an improvement in governance, sustained growth will not occur, for behind problems of economic mismanagement and corruption are political problems of leadership, interest group pressures, patronage politics, a lack of transparency and probity in government decision-making and an absence of public accountability. On the other hand, Mazrui(1990:27) argues that the relationship between governance and economic development, as well as between economic liberalization and political liberalization remains problematic. In the final analysis it can be a choice between either political freedom or economic development but not both together (Mazrui 1990:27).

Msuya (1990:51) stresses on the importance of popular support for success of an economic reform program. The mobilization of the good will of the population behind the program requires a well balanced combination of exhortation and example setting life style by the national leadership and a meritocratic system of short and long-term incentives for the citizens and health facilities. Corrective strategies also call for actions to restore moral standards as well as build or rehabilitate the capacity of personnel and institutions in order to fill up gaps in know how as well as provide incentives for improved productivity. Diamond (1988:69:101), asserts that democracy requires moderation and restraint; but throughout much of Africa, the swollen state has turned politics into zero sum game in which everything of value is at stake in an election, and hence candidates, communities and parties feel compelled to win at any cost.

There are some who take the view that, with more representative and responsive state institutions and greater freedom of association and communication among citizens, there will be more airing of policy opinions, more extensive consultation and feed back from wide range of interests before government policy is made. Policy formation is thus likely to be more workable, credible and predictable and less likely to constrain rather than encourage entrepreneurial activity (Killick 1990:104).
On the linkages between political legitimacy and economic performance, it is noted that the more representative the regime the more legitimacy it has for its decisions (Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1988). The more successful a regime is at providing the people what they want the greater and more deeply rooted tends to be its legitimacy. Again the cases cited are those of Botswana and Mauritius. The experience of Botswana and Mauritius suggests that ethnic and linguistic differences are not in themselves inimical to multi-party democracy, but that much depends on the mechanism employed to channel and meditate these cleavages. In Mauritius proportional system of political representation guarantees minority rights and reduces social tensions thus making it possible for political coalitions to be formed which include representatives from various communities (Rothchild and Foley, 1988:239:141). Both countries have comparitively strong economies but also relatively small populations compared with most other African countries. These two cases illustrate the importance of a political culture that respects institutional rules and procedures for governing democratic political activity, and constitutional provisions to prevent any single ethnic or cultural group from dominating politics.

Regimes stand to gain greater political legitimacy if they are willing to take account of the concerns of a wide range of interests when deciding their action, provided the policy output is credible and can be seen to represent a fair compromise with these interests. There can be no assurance that political liberalization or multi party democracy will also ensure better economic management. Governments which no longer monopolize power and are obliged to be more responsive to the effects of their actions on their own citizens should, as a result, formulate policies which are better adapted to changing conditions and needs, and are more credible and workable. Nevertheless such governments will have to negotiate conflicts of interest more openly and skillfully and handle the pressure of increased popular expectations in the context of limited state resources. The prospect for a combination of greater political freedom and competition with improved economic management seems more likely to occur under conditions where excessive expectations are not encouraged, where the skills and the morale of the bureaucracy can be rapidly improved and where those who hold power seek institutional mechanisms effectively to control overall public expenditure or its monetary.

Wanjohi cautions that as Africa embarks on the road to democracy afresh the past dangers on such a path are still likely to derail the effort. The first danger is poverty, itself a product of gross political and economic mismanagement since independence. Coupled with poverty is the problem of ethnic rivalry which has assumed extreme polarization as leaders resort to their parochial tribal and racist basis for backing in the struggle for political power and economic advantages. In the circumstances, intererthic and intertribal interaction assumes hostile rather than cooperative dimensions as leaders of different tribal groups denounce and discredit each other, to a point where diversity assumes the extreme proportions of murderous civil war (Wanjohi 1995:93).

The central challenge therefore in the development process is the need to achieve a synergy between the issues of economic development and those of governance while at the same time ensuring that both are supported by appropriate democratic institutions (Ladipo, 1990:83).
Research Trends

The current research trends on governance at CODESRIA include the following thematic areas:

**Security, Violence and Public Order**

Research here is premised on the concern that in most African countries, recent progress and setbacks in the democratization process have brought their own forms of violence, most of them associated with ‘citizenship conflicts’. The opening up of formerly authoritarian systems have also produced a privatization of security and the extra-legislation of justice and renewed struggles over property rights and security. Multiple organized forces of social control are involved in these processes; police, local militia, vigilante groups and death squads.

Research is concerned with contemporary forms of organized violence in present day Africa, the roles and powers of those directly dealing with criminals and banditry, and those in charge of ensuring the protection of people and goods. Also examined, within the context of the transformation of political norms, are popular conceptions of criminality and insecurity; forms and economic determinants of banditry; and changing notions of property rights and public justice.

**States and Taxation**

Concern here is with the multidimensional nature and dynamics of state-society relations as expressed in taxation and fiscal strategies and politics. Research inquires into the various mechanisms through which, in times of rapid change, public authority gradually becomes indistinguishable from private power and loses its monopoly on the means of violence and taxation. Of particular importance in this regard are the concrete forms and functioning of the parallel institutions to which these prerogatives have devolved. Since taxation necessarily involves encroachment on subjects’ property rights, the analysis also seek to establish how consent or resistance to taxation and other forms of exaction, such as parallel informal systems of taxation, in turn shape competing notions of authority and force, citizenship and rights, private property and public good.

**Migration and Citizenship**

The argument is that many transitions to democracy in Africa have theoretically included an expansion of political and socio-economic rights and entitlements. Due to the scarcity of the resources necessary to meet basic needs, these rights and entitlements are still more of a claim than a reality. Furthermore, the disruptions inherent in these transitions to democracy have produced debates over the very terms of membership in African nation-states. New ideologies of difference which give priority to biological ties and to membership in local, small-scale communities as the basis of citizenship are being asserted. Through commerce, violence, war and forced migration, a new social and economic map of the continent is emerging. Research here focus on forms and processes of migration and how these affect the public calculus of citizenship in contemporary Africa; the economic determinants of this calculus and discourses on the right to difference are also investigated.
Other research trends include: *Civil society Empowerment for Poverty Alleviation; Elections and Democratic transitions; And Post-adjustment and Globalization.*

**Why Citizens are not Actively Engaged in Governance**

There are many reasons but I think the following are important:

- Citizen's low civic awareness of rights and responsibilities.
- Poverty and inequality
- Citizens opt not to participate in macro level governance when they do not see their interests being served by such participation and instead create parallel structures of participation outside the state controlled structures.

**Low Civic Awareness of Rights and Responsibilities in Governance**

I think a major problem that hinders citizens participation in governance is low levels of civic awareness. In many African countries before 1990, most governing regimes had succeeded in keeping their citizens not only illiterate in an academic way, but also ignorant of their civic rights and responsibilities. This was my assessment from my experience working with civic associations and involved directly in conducting civic education in many parts of rural Kenya between 1992-1997.

For example, in Kenya at the time of return to political pluralism in 1991, the level of civic awareness was generally quite low and I am not sure it had dramatically increased in many parts of the country by the end of the 1990s, despite various efforts to conduct grassroot based civic education, by a few civil society human rights NGOs. In 1992, most people were unaware of their entitlements, rights and responsibilities as citizens. For example, most did not know what was contained in the old national constitution that the pro-democracy movements were seeking to be reformed. For them, government was located in the capital city Nairobi, and represented at the local level by the area chief and M.P. Government was "good" when it "brought" development services in the form of infrastructure, health and educational facilities.

It is also true that people at the local level have their own governance structures around which they organize their socio-cultural and economic activities. However, my observation was that such local institutions were not necessarily democratic or linked to any observable democratic culture. The fact that most people seemed to "accept" their place in the community especially the women who were often excluded from key decision making was not a reflection of "good governance" but rather of the same acquiescence of citizens that they demonstrated towards authoritarian state regimes, due to a combination of fear and ignorance.

Participation in national level electoral politics, was generally viewed as an opportunity to get as much money as possible out of politicians who could not be relied upon to "bring development" to the electorate, for the next 5 years until the next elections. Perhaps because of the extreme poverty of most people, some viewed civic education as an event to participate in "eating" donor money provided for civic education. That raises questions about the impact of civic education programs, under conditions of poverty.
Gender awareness was extremely low in many parts of the country; women's rights were not understood as human rights by both men and women. Hence the linkage between gender equity, governance, democracy and development were issues that civic education is still grappling with. However, the level of civic and gender awareness had increased significantly by the end of the decade and many women had began to question their place and seek great participation in decision making at all levels.

Indeed, at the beginning of the new millennium, the level of civil awareness is much higher than in 1992 with many more people asserting their rights and demanding political change. However, the inability to- date to bring about regime change may be an indication that the general level of civic awareness is not adequate to bring about the desired governance change.

In my view, therefore low civic awareness limits citizen's capacity to influence governance. Often, they employ unviable political strategies or fail to participate simply because they do not know how and they imagine it is someone else's responsibility.

**Poverty and Inequality**

Keeping the people poor and ignorant has been one of the major instruments of undemocratic governance. The poor are vulnerable to manipulation by those with economic and political power. Poor people are less likely to have the time and the absorbing capacity for civic education lessons. Thus, poverty exacerbates people's incapacity to participate in governance. Poor people are socially, economically and politically marginalized and have difficulty expressing opinions that will be heard by the national government. Indeed, the poor have little access to national decision makers, assets and opportunities. The unequal power relations bring feelings of helplessness and apathy that can only be changed through economic and political empowerment, as well as civic and social education that promotes a broader understanding of individual rights and responsibilities.

**Citizens may opt not to participate in governance**

Poor citizens who feel helpless to change authoritarian regimes and are daily struggling to survive and who only see national government's presence when its making demands on them without any reciprocal gains, are likely to withhold their participation in national level governance at every available opportunity. As we saw earlier in reviewing the literature on decentralized governance citizen's participation even at that level, may be ineffective due to government interference. In this regard, Shivji (1996) observed in Tanzania that *because of this state instigated arbitrariness and coercion, many people see the state simply as a hostile force to be feared, evaded, cheated and defeated as circumstances permit. They turn their loyalty from the more ecumenical level of the state and localize it in community groups, kinship groups, ethnic associations, or even religious organizations.*
The high coincidence between poverty, and low civic awareness makes citizens extremely vulnerable to manipulation and/or cooptation by authoritarian regimes, thus limiting their effective participation in governance. Furthermore it leads to a situation that breeds general political apathy, manifested in part by low voter turnout at national political elections by commercialization of such participation.

**Process of Citizen Engagement in Governance**

There is no short cut to getting citizens more actively engaged in governance. The only path is the institutionalization of democratic governance at all levels, from the state to the household level. The process through which this engagement takes place will require genuine political will and commitment from both the citizens and the various governing bodies. In the macro level of the State needs such leadership has a primary responsibility of creating an enabling environment for popular and tangible structural, institutional and policy reforms which would have to be put in operation, in order to give people confidence to participate at this level of governance and hence collaborate with the state. Such reform measures must include legal, administrative and policy reforms, that respond to the needs and demands of various interest groups in the society, create mechanisms for access to resources, and enabling environment for self governance at the local level and there should be mechanisms for holding State governors accountable to the citizens. But as we noted earlier in the case of Nigeria, constitutional reforms alone are not enough if they remain unoperationized.

In order to develop a sound system of governance, it is also necessary that all key stake holders including those previously excluded in governance the youth, disabled, and women be involved in decision-making at all levels – from the household to the national levels of governing. In the case of women, institutions of governance face the challenges of addressing gender inquiries arising from patriarchy. Unequal sharing of power leads to an unequal sharing of resources – time, incomes and property – which in return leads to gender inequalities in the processes and structures of governance.

All this must be accompanied by regular and unrestricted flow of information and a comprehensive civic education program for all citizens based on a clear understanding of people’s existing knowledge, their visions and aspirations. Such education should wherever possible be structured as social dialogue forums for building democratic values and institutions that help people graduate from being subjects to being citizens.

**Interactions/Synergies Between Various Social Actors in Governance**

One of the ways out of the current governance paralysis in most African countries is the development of greater collaboration between key social actors that are implicated in governance: the citizenry, the civil society organizations, academics, government leaders, development practitioners and international donor agencies.
As the research studies reviewed above clearly indicate, at the moment, there is little or no meaningful collaboration in place, within, between and across sectors. With a few exceptions most citizens live in undemocratic African countries and hence lack confidence in their national leadership. Most of them generally fear and avoid state governors. Whenever they can they opt not to cooperate with the state. In cases where they cooperate, they do so because they are compelled or have been co-opted.

Civil society-state relations have generally been characterized by tensions and unhealthy competition; while intellectuals have always complained of government curtailment of their academic freedom (Diouf: 1994). While governments accuse academics of publishing seditious anti-people and anti-government literature.

The tension between the non-academic fractions of mainstream civil society organizations and academics is over what kind of knowledge, the methodologies of producing knowledge and the process of its legitimization. Scholars accuse non-academic civil society actors of being too activist and subjective in their orientation and hence unable to capture the relevant and scientifically valid issues. Civil society actors on the other hand resent what they view as intellectual arrogance of academics who allocate themselves the right to determine what type of knowledge production is relevant to society, and thereafter expect it to be accepted as relevant to the actual local conditions. Indeed, Civic activist now claim the right to be 'people's representatives' and insist that for research to have development relevance, the subjects and consumers of that knowledge must be consulted and be involved at all stages of its production, and thereafter it must be legitimated through non-academic fora.

I have observed this tension between scholars and activists for the last 10 years that I have been "straddled" between academic scholarship and civil society activism, and also in the course of managing the CODESRIA program for Civil Society Empowerment for Poverty Reduction in Africa. In the latter, non-academic Civil society insisted on taking charge of determining the relevant research questions and even conducting the research itself. CODESRIA on the other hand, found this methodology problematic and insisted that the research must be undertaken by scholars with knowledge of the conventional 'scientific' social science research methodologies. The compromise reached was to consult representatives of non-academic in the identification of relevant research issues and to have research undertaken by scholars that work with civil society organizations.

As noted in this paper civil society and other non-state actors need to develop a democratic culture\(^2\) and strengthen their management and governing institutions, while the state needs to provide an enabling legislative and policy environment for action. But in the final analysis it is only through political will and commitment to the course of democracy that will make civic actors serve as effective agents that make political and social interaction easier and that mobilize society to participate in economic, social and political activities.

\(^2\)Democratic culture is broadly conceived to involve values of tolerance, inclusiveness, equitable sharing of power and responsibilities and distributive justice.
Leadership Roles and Styles

According to Weber all political leaders seek to enlist legitimacy to their authority in the eyes of the governed, Weber identifies three types of leadership authority that are distinguished by the source of their legitimacy. These are the rational–legal, the traditional authority, and the charismatic. The basis of rational-legal authority is the "impersonal order" of norms and regulations defining the status of the person issuing the command. Widespread acceptance of the "sanctity of immemorial traditions" is the foundation of traditional authority. Charismatic authority arises from an individual's personal characteristics – attributes that set the person apart from others and endow him or her with exceptional powers or perhaps even supernatural, superhuman qualities (Mughan and Patterson 1992).

Weber's classification of political leadership fails to capture the most typical types of leadership in Africa until the 1990's namely the authoritarian leader who largely ruled according to the philosophy of Machiavelli's Prince. Africa has had very few genuine charismatic leaders The Late President Nyerere of Tanzania and the now retired Nelson Mandela of South Africa are among the few examples. In fact even those viewed as "charismatic" such as late president Nyerere were not necessarily democrats.

Although with the democratic transitions beginning early 1990s, the trend is towards replacing the phenomena of the authoritarian leadership with non-personalized, and institutionalized leadership, we should not exaggerate the actual changes that have taken place to-date. The typical leadership style in most management and decision making sectors in Africa still remain hierarchical, personalized and sometimes quite authoritarian especially in the case of countries such as Kenya. The differences in style perhaps are in the degree to which these factors manifest themselves. The clamor for the presidency by opposition political leaders which in some countries such as Kenya, has derailed democratic transitions does not indicate that the desire for the personalized governance has waned significantly. Monga (1997:65) observes that African government leaders, with a few exceptions, not only display patrimonial and authoritarian styles of leadership, their intolerance of their political opponents sometimes leads them to blatant uncivil behavior. the politics of intolerance pervades the rhetoric and governing styles of politicians. Cameroon's president Biya refuses to use his adversaries' names referring to them as "thugs", "vandals", and "outlaws". while Uganda's president Yoweri Museveni referred to his main challenger Paul Ssemogerere for 1996 presidential elections, as an "idiot" The violence in speech reflects the violence of the political game itself, which is viewed as a "winner-takes-all" fight to the finish where defeat means a loss not only of the emoluments and status that office brings, but sometimes life itself; a situation that prolongs reliance on personalized rather than institutional leadership.

In non-governmental institutions, there is normally a culture of civility and some degree of tolerance in interpersonal relationships but here too, as noted earlier the tendency for personalized rather than institutionalized governance is quite common. Management styles of course differ; some leaders may be authoritarian and engage in patronage politics, but at the same time be quite efficient in getting things done. As
I already demonstrated in the above review, the myth of NGOs as the site for good governance has been debunked, as has the myth that localized, "grassroot" leadership is necessarily democratic.

As we have noted throughout this paper the various key social actors in governance have both strengths and weaknesses. The pursuit of good governance therefore requires greater interaction, collaboration and hence maximization of the strengths of the various sectors, as a prerequisite to the building of people centred democratic governance. Conscious effort must therefore be made to develop regular social dialogue and collaborative activities between sectors: government, private sector, civil society and citizens in general. These social coalitions are an essential counter force against the encroaching globalization, whose dominant forces are capitalizing on the erosion of state sovereignty to impose their hegemony and to press for universal laws and an end of the state.

To realize such synergies and coalitions, there is need for people to develop professionalism and a sense of common citizenship and destiny, which should replace the current tendency for parochialism lethargy, opportunism and distrust for one another. As Adedeji (1993:209) rightly pointed out:

Africa must therefore develop a culture of acting in its own best interest, not in the interest of others or in the interest which others perceive for it. It must grapple with the reality of developing itself through primary reliance on its own resources - no matter how difficult this may be. Africa must also pursue restitution policies if it is to transcend its protracted dispossession and loss of autonomy. Africa must rediscover its self-confidence and self-respect, and emancipate itself from mental dependence, rehabilitate what is left of Africa's culture, traditions and value systems, that reflect their true and genuine identity, values and aspirations that are long overdue. As a people, Africa must abandon lethargy, opportunism, distrust for one another, unjustified fatalism and, the dependency syndrome.

**Some potential strategic entry points for IDRC**

Within the research mandate of IDRC and its current interest to support governance research, my preliminary thoughts on potential entry points are based on what I see as critical information gaps that need to be filled for more effective interventions in the pursuit of democratic governance.

- **Institution building for human security and democratic governance**

One of the major threats to governance in many african countries is the human insecurity, brought about by a combination of globalisation, poverty and the state's failure to guarantee security to its citizens. The rising levels of crime, organised vigilante groups, private armies and security companies have proliferated as has the acquisition of guns and other weapons. Alongside increasing levels of societal violence has been an erosion in the state controlled public order system.

Information is inadequate on how exactly to reverse this trend as part of the process of building democratic governance. Furthermore, we do not know enough on what kind of institutions need to be put in place to restore social cohesion and security. We also need more information on the role strategically placed social actors could play and what strategies they should employ: private sector, governments, civil society organisations, donor agencies and individual citizens.
IDRC could consider supporting research in this area. Some preliminary studies could be undertaken focussing on: (1) the modes of adaptation and survival strategies that find their expression in violence, crime, religiosity and militarization of private life and their implications for governance etc (2) the current responses and interventions of key social actors to the deteriorating human security problem civil society, policymakers, donors etc and strategies being employed

- **Citizenship and politics of multiple social identities**

The literature examined in this paper reveal some of the unhealthy tensions and conflicts that arise when people’s multiple social identities are expressed in the form of hostility and intolerance of difference, thus undermining rather than promoting social cohesion and collaborative engagement. Ordinarily, multiple identities should be an asset rather than a problem for building a pluralistic democracy. But experience in most countries of SSA has been that social differences, especially ethnic ones have been politicized and manipulated by African leaders to produce social cleavages and conflicts that have in extreme cases deteriorated into civil wars.

Research is already being done in this area, but my experience with CODESRIA research is that it tends to be highly theoretical and geared for academic consumption. Therefore, strategically, IDRC could support research that is action, policy oriented, that seeks to provide some practical answers to practical problems of governance. As suggested in TOR 2(b), IDRC could support research that seeks to investigate and analyze how multiple social identities can be harnessed and become positive building blocks for democratic governance. Research can also explore what kinds of institutional and policy frameworks need to be put in place to facilitate this desired outcome.

- **Civil Society and Local Governance**

A lot has been said about civil society, its strengths, weaknesses and potential. The literature available suggests that most of the high profile civil society organisations are urban based and have inadequate outreach capacity in the rural areas where most of the ‘grassroot’ associations are based. Often the latter not only lack connectivity with their urban counterparts, but also appear to lack adequate capacity for facilitating democratic local governance. In this regard, it has been suggested and I concur, that there is urgent need to develop greater connectivity and synergy between urban and rural based civic associations as one of the strategies for enhancing their capacity to contribute to better governance both at the local and national levels.

Research could explore this and some of the other ways the civic sector could be strengthened for better delivery of services such as civic education and facilitation of social dialogue among various stakeholders.
Furthermore, with the phenomenal proliferation of civic associations, it has become increasingly difficult for donors to determine which associations merit strengthening and which do not. Furthermore, my experience has been that once research is labelled civil society the gender component gets lost in the maze and yet much of the grassroot associational life is composed of women's association whose effectiveness varies greatly. In this connection, IDRC could consider supporting a study to develop indicators and conduct national level gender disaggregated surveys to establish mechanisms for civic capacity building and targeting.

- **Globalization and governance**

In their analysis of *globalisation, sovereignty and governance*, Smith & Naim (2000), note that the worst problems the world today are shared problems: drug trafficking, diseases, global warming, poverty and inequalities, conflicts etc. This interconnectedness of the problems that plague our world, offer hope for global cooperation in search of solutions.

The UNDP 1999 global Human Development Report argues that globalisation can be made to acquire a human face. The report recognises that globalisation is inevitable and argues that the challenge is to ensure that its benefits are shared equitably and that increasing interdependence works for people and not just for profits. This would entail good global governance to ensure equitable accessibility to its benefits and to check its adverse consequences. It would also involve a more holistic institution building approach that addresses issues of governance at all levels.

At this stage, there are major uncertainties and lack of adequate information about the current impact of globalisation on governance and the development project in Africa. Many are not convinced about the merits of globalisation or the possibility of democratising global governance. Furthermore it's not yet clear what is the nature and role of the African state in this globalized context.

IDRC could therefore consider commissioning research in this area to broaden the knowledge base on some of the issues raised here.

**Conclusions**

The limitations of time and the data available for this paper have not made it possible to exhaustively address all the pertinent issues. However, in summary, it can safely be concluded that Africa's post-adjustment strategy for economic reform and democratic governance must include economic policy measures that are based on a domestic social contract that strengthens rather than undermines fragile democratic institutions and processes in need of consolidation. With such a strategy Africa should be able to overcome the failings and short comings of the pre- and post political reform, orthodox adjustment years. The need for policy measures sensitive to the social and welfare aspirations of the populace cannot be over emphasized.

Few doubt that drastic measures should be carried out to reform African economies and polities. However such drastic measures will only succeed if they are built into a
negotiated social contract in which various interest groups have a stake. The contract will also provide a framework within which state and governmental legitimacy can be reconstructed for formulating and implementing policies. Groups are not inherently averse to making sacrifices, including taking cuts in their consumption levels, if they are satisfied that these are temporary measures carried out within the boundaries of a negotiated social contract in which they are stakeholders.

Developing a social contract at this time will require the removal of authoritarianism that permeates all levels of governance. It will also entail closer attention to the impact of the economic reform instruments and policies and a recognition of the limits of the state’s political capacity, as dictated by the balance of social forces. It is precisely because of the failure to come to terms with these factors on the one hand and the attempt to manage them out of existence, that the quest for democratic governance in Africa has been so elusive to-date.

Processes of political renewal that emphasize participatory governance will involve the granting of political choices to the citizens, the promotion by governments of an active rather than reactive role for the people in political affairs, the encouragement of institutional pluralism, and the fostering of self-regulation through governmental decentralization and community empowerment. Political renewal will also be manifested through vigorous efforts to promote regional integration. Regional integration should not remain just an affair of government ministries and state bureaucrats.

Sustaining democracy in Africa at this stage requires a democratic and developmental state, not only to regulate the market, but to provide social welfare human security and facilitate social cohesion.

Special mechanisms should be put in place for actualizing citizenship for those whose current citizenship is ambiguous or denied. This in some cases should involve affirmative action and provision for group representation to address the drastic under representation in power centers of women and minorities.

Finally, the international economic and political environment would need to be made hospitable, for democracy and good governance to evolve and be sustained in Africa. Issues of Africa’s external debt, deteriorating commodity prices and terms of trade and economic dependence have to be addressed. These global economic issues affect the texture and terrain of democratic struggles and political governance in Africa. In this connection, the importance of “good global governance” cannot be overemphasized as a vital aspect of attaining national and regional good governance. As UNDP rightly states in its 1999 Human Development report:

"Reinventing global governance is not an option – it is an imperative for the 21st. Extremes of inequality permeate and poison globalization and polarize many reasonable and desirable attempts to manage it better. The issues of global inequality are too fundamental to be swept under the carpet. With the new found awareness of globalization’s possibilities new approaches are needed" (UNDP 1999:105).
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