African Politics &
International Relations

Gordon & Gordon Chapter 4 & 6
Donald Gordon: African Politics

• **Centralization:** at independence the main challenge to leaders was to build and maintain unity.

• Centralization of state power was primary concern of new governments.

• Concentration of political power & control achieved primarily through:
  1. limiting/eliminating opposition
  2. expanding bureaucratic agencies & security organizations.
Single party state

• By late 1960s most common political organization of new African nations was a single party state.
• Ruling groups fortified three main government structures:
  1. administrative bureaucracies (civil service)
  2. military & police
  3. executive branch (President/Prime Minister)
Patronage, Patrimonial State, & Personal Rule

• To maintain themselves in power, African leaders needed strong bases of support.

• Approach taken was *discretionary distribution of patronage* & development of *patron-client ties* to individuals & groups.
Patronage, Patrimonial State, & Personal Rule

- Essence of patrimonial rule is personalization of power by a country’s ruler.
- In some countries the personal authority of a strongman ruler became virtually synonymous with government itself.
- Personal rule depends on a combination of patronage and coercion.
- Maintaining patronage networks & forces of coercion requires a huge amount of money.
- Increasing opportunities for those in government to use their positions for personal gain.
- Ghanaian economist George Ayittey on Cheetahs vs. Hippos, Vampire States.
Political Economy of Decline

- Resources needed for effective, broad scale development were drained away by efforts to support and consolidate power.
- Private appropriation of state resources and use of government money to build and expand personal rule lay at heart of process by which most post-colonial regimes sought to govern.
Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast

- Constructed between 1985-1989, cost of $300 million.
- Guinness World Records lists it as largest church in world, having surpassed previous record holder, St. Peter's Basilica, upon completion.
- 322,917 sq. ft. in area, 518 ft. high.
- In 1983 President Félix Houphouet-Boigny chose his birthplace of Yamoussoukro to be future site of new capital city of Cote D'Ivoire.
- As part of plan of the city, Houphouet-Boigny wanted to memorialize himself with construction of what he called the greatest church in world.
- He is even pictured besides Jesus in one stained-glass panel.
Political economy of decline

- Government economic policies handicapped farmers.
- Development of rural areas suffered.
- Prices kept low for urban residents since they constituted a potential source of instability.
- One major result was increase in rural to urban migration.
- Most often men moving to cities in search of work; women & children remain home in villages.
Structural adjustment & reordering of the state

• By early 1980s most African governments did not have capacity to meet growing budget requirements.
• Had to begin borrowing heavily to finance their operations.
• By 1990, 40% of export earnings were needed to pay interest on loans.
• To get these loans governments had to agree to structural adjustment, as spelled out by World Bank and International Monetary Fund.
Structural adjustment policies

• Measures include:
  1. currency devaluation.
  2. freeze on government salaries.
  3. ending price supports for agricultural products & subsidies for urban consumers.
  4. ending import restrictions.
  5. privatization of state owned operations – airlines, railways, power companies, telephone companies, etc.
  6. increase in bank interest rates to encourage savings & generate capital investment.
Political Economy of Democratization

• IMF & World Bank based policies on assumptions that African countries could only build strong economies by focusing on increased sales of primary products – unprocessed raw agricultural and mineral products.
• Another goal was to open African states to investment from outside, especially wealthy industrial states.
• Was believed that the benefits of structural adjustment would quickly “revive and modernize” African economies.
• Political reform, democracy and development of civil society would promoted.
• The outcome has been very different.
• To be continued.
African International Relations
Peter Schraeder

• Major events that influenced evolution of African international relations since late 19th century:
  2. World War II & emergence of African nationalist movements.
  4. End of Cold War with fall of Berlin Wall & its replacement with Cold Peace – competition for economic superiority in highly competitive environment of 1990s.
  5. Growing competition between today’s economic superpowers: China, Germany, Japan, U.S. [BRICS?]
BRICS

- An association of emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa.
- With exception of Russia BRICS members are all developing or newly industrialized countries.
- Are distinguished by their large, fast-growing economies and significant influence on regional and global affairs.
- As of 2013, BRICS countries represent almost 3 billion people, with a combined nominal GDP of US$14.9 trillion, and an estimated US$4 trillion in combined foreign reserves.
- Presently, South Africa holds the chair of the BRICS group.
African International Relations

• Schraeder explores 6 topics:
  1. Formulation & implementation of African foreign policies.
  3. Regional economic cooperation & integration.
  4. Role of foreign powers in African international relations.
  5. U.N. and international financial institutions (World Bank and IMF).
Formulation & Implementation of African Foreign Policies

• Big man syndrome characterized first generation of African leadership.

• Result was highly personalized foreign policy machinery based on idiosyncrasies of individual Presidents.

• These same big men often pursued foreign policies that were tied to those of former colonial power.

• Leaders were more responsive to the policy concerns of foreign patrons than to popular demands of their own people.
African International Relations

- Democratization of African foreign policies.
- Related to rise of a new generation of African Presidents less tied to former foreign patrons & more willing to pursue increasingly independent foreign policies.
- Process has led to strengthening of institutional actors, such as increasingly independent & vocal national legislatures.
- Greater popular input as leaders are increasingly more being held accountable to public opinion.
- Religious groups and leaders – especially Islamist movements – also having impact on African foreign policies.
- Guerilla groups opposed to central authority of their countries can promote parallel diplomatic networks to promote their causes.
  - Although the tendency is to see this as negative, must remember that the ANC was the guerilla insurgency that had most extensive diplomatic network (1960-1994).
African International Relations

• Pan-Africanism & Organization of African Unity.
• Ideal of African unity first articulated at Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, England 1945.
• Kwame Nkrumah – realization of Pan-African ideal will entail four stages:
  1. Attainment of freedom & independence.
  2. Consolidation of that independence & freedom.
  4. Economic and social reconstruction of Africa.
African International Relations

• First pan-African, intergovernmental organization of independent African countries based on African soil.
• HQ in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
• Major decisions & resolutions formally discussed at annual Assembly of Heads of State & Government.
African International Relations

• Guiding themes/principles of OAU:

  1. Support for the **inviolability of frontiers** inherited from colonial era
     ▪ African leaders steadfast in their commitment to maintaining borders inherited from colonialism.

  2. **Noninterference in internal affairs** of member states.
     ▪ Criticized for functioning as a club of Presidents engaged in tacit policy of not inquiring into each others practices.
3. **Peaceful settlement of all disputes** by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration.
   - Strict adherence to principles of territorial integrity and noninterference in internal affairs impeded OAU’s ability to mediate.

4. **Unswerving opposition to colonialism and white minority rule.**
   - OAU established Liberation Committee based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to aid liberation movements with economic & military assistance.
African International Relations

• OAU ended in 2002 and African Union (AU) began, hoping to build on successes of OAU in continuing search for African unity.

• Led by a 10 member executive body – the African Commission – composed of chairperson, deputy chairperson, & 8 commissioners who are responsible for 8 portfolios:
  1. Political affairs
  2. Peace & security
  3. Infrastructure & energy
  4. Social affairs
  5. Human resources, science, technology
  6. Rural economy & agriculture
African International Relations

• Differences between OAU and AU:
  ▪ AU has not enshrined inviolability of frontiers inherited from colonial rule.
  ▪ AU rejects principle of noninterference in domestic affairs of member nations.
  ▪ AU has right to intervene in cases of gross violation of human rights & war crimes.
African International Relations

• Regional economic cooperation & integration.

• Several rationales used:
  ▪ Strength in numbers – banding together and pooling resources in order to better compete with economic superpowers.
  ▪ Desire to promote self sustaining economic development & industrialization of continent.
  ▪ Regional economic schemes seemed best means of creating self-reliant development & reducing ties of dependency.
African International Relations

• Initial failure related to:
  ▪ Polarization of national development & perception of unequal gains.
  ▪ Inadequate compensatory & corrective measures
  ▪ Ideological differences and rise of economic nationalism.
• Revived in 2000, with inclusion of Rwanda & Burundi.
• SADC (Southern African Development Community) constitutes another example of a regional organization.