# African Politics & International Relations

Gordon & Gordon Chapter 4 & 6

#### **Donald Gordon: African Politics**

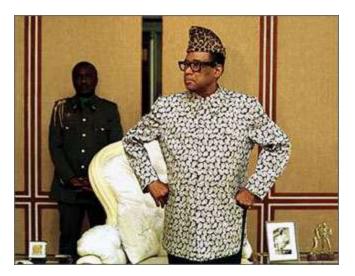
- Centralization: at independence the main challenge to leaders was to build and maintain unity.
- Centralization of state power was primary concern of new governments.
- Concentration of political power & control achieved primarily through:
  - 1. limiting/eliminating opposition
  - expanding bureaucratic agencies & security organizations.
  - 3. Maintaining & expanding systems for taxing rural cash crop producers.

## 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.



Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire



Hastings Banda, Malawi

#### 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 postcolonial regimes sought to govern.



Mobutu Sese Seko & Richard Nixon in Washington, D.C., 1973





## 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.
- 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

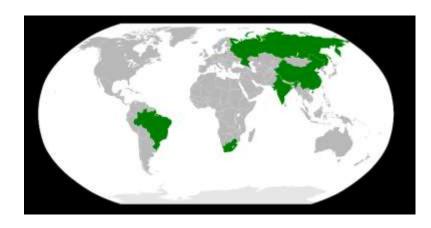
- IMF & World Bank based policies on assumptions that African countries could only build strong economies by focusing on increased sales of primary products – unprocessed raw agricultural and mineral products.
- Another goal was to open African states to investment from outside, especially wealthy industrial 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 19<sup>th</sup> century:
  - **1. Conference of Berlin**, 1884-1885.
  - 2. World War II & emergence of African nationalist movements.
  - **3.** Cold War (1947-1989).
  - 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, fastgrowing 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.





- Schraeder explores 6 topics:
  - 1. Formulation & implementation of African foreign policies.
  - 2. Pan-Africanism & African Union.
  - 3. Regional economic cooperation & integration.
  - Role of foreign powers in African international relations.
  - U.N. and international financial institutions (World Bank and IMF).
  - 6. Emerging trends related to military intervention on African continent.

# 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.

- 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).

- 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.
  - 3. Creation of unity & community between African states.
  - Economic and social reconstruction of Africa.

- Organization of African Unity created May 25, 1963 (replaced in 2002 by African Union).
- 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.

- 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.

- 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

- 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.

- 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.

- East African Community comprised of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda(1967-1977).
- 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.