

Reinvention of an African patrimonial state: Charles Taylor's Liberia

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We seek ... credible democratic elections, and the establishment of a unified government based upon respect for human rights, democratic principles, and economic accountability.

Assistant Secretary of State, George Moose on US policy on Liberia delivered before House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, 18 May 1994

Ghankay [Charles Taylor] is our law. He understands that the man with the gun is a strong man.

Interview with National Patriotic Front of Liberia official, Lofa County, 'Greater Liberia'

These two quotes highlight a contrast between the way many reformers expect power to be exercised in Liberia and the actual exercise of power. The former expects bureaucratic institutions, territorial fixity and an administration that recognises the interests of citizens. The heir to this vision, the Monrovia enclave, occupies the capital city and environs under foreign military protection. The latter quote typifies the methods of Charles Taylor, a man who styled himself president of 'Greater Liberia' until rivals from within his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) challenged him in September 1994. Taylor dispensed with most forms of administration that observers elsewhere see as vital components of 'stateness'. His rule rested firmly upon coercion. NPFL boundaries continue to shift. Despite this, its resources and control attract the attentions of foreign firms, which have provided Taylor with money and weapons.

Does this transformed patrimonialism represent a new kind of state, an alternative institutionalisation of sovereign authority capable of defending itself and doing things without significant bureaucracies? The 'Greater Liberia' case indicates that, where others see marginalisation and unsustainability for patrimonial regimes, rulers in fact develop new techniques to draw in political and economic resources. Rather than representing what one author terms a 'pathology of state decay',¹ these men govern in ways compatible with rule through more exclusively non-bureaucratic elite networks, and with scant regard for conventional institutional notions of state power based upon maximising power through expanded bureaucratic capacity and administrative autonomy.² This paper looks beyond state decay to a simultaneous non-bureaucratic process of state building, an alternative institutionalisation of political authority heavily dependent upon external resources for survival.

Incorporating 'reform' into crisis management

The sociologist Emmanuel Terray likened this dichotomy to the air-conditioner and the veranda. Africa of the air-conditioner, he says, consists of 'Presidents,

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Ministers, Parliaments, Administration, Parties, Constitutions, Laws, Rules, an airport with a VIP lounge, companies of paratroopers ... motorcycle outriders with sirens ...³ The latter's role in maintaining internal order and managing external relations is not insignificant. But the main point of the bureaucratic manifestation is show—a presentation confirming the country's hold on a position in international society, colonial borders and all. Likewise, the display stakes a claim on supremacy over alternate internal centres of power.

Alongside the air-conditioner, says Terray, is 'Africa of the veranda', governed not with regard to efficiency, but to the share-out.⁴ In Zaire, for example, the same man runs both systems, through what Bayart calls a 'reciprocal assimilation of elites'.⁵ That is to say, the veranda provides pay-offs to a range of constituencies—ethnic, generational, communal, commercial—familiar to students of patrimonialism, and these groups in turn support and act in the rulers' interests.

Critics of patrimonialism, however, have long held that the logic of the veranda alone cannot provide prerequisites of statehood: the collection of revenues, exercise of uniform control over territory, guarantee that commands are obeyed and provision a measure of stability and predictability supportive of long-term economic growth. Amidst growing scarcity, clients have become too expensive, drawing resources away from indispensable tasks such as acquiring revenue to pay troops who protect the regime. The end of the Cold War is supposed to spell the end of what Jackson calls 'negative sovereignty', as external support is withdrawn from rulers who will now suffer the fatal consequences of their weak and misguided rule if they continue to buy political support through pay-offs to clients.⁶ Rulers and creditors can agree that 'efficiency', defined as more state control over the distribution of resources, is a worthy goal. Critics accept that variations in the Africa of the air-conditioner are possible, especially where dependent elites are likely to resist a cut-off of pay-outs.

Côte d'Ivoire's Houphuet-Boigny, for example, concluded that effective bureaucracies were the creations of foreigners, and were best left to foreigners to run. But his strategy retained the central role of state institutionalisation through building bureaucratic capacity, at least, as Terray notes, to convey an impression to sceptical populations and increasingly demanding foreign backers.

The end of the Cold War, however, is said to be forcing African rulers to rebuild effective bureaucracies.⁷ A recent volume examining the interplay of external resources and internal politics depicts patrimonial rulers as increasingly 'hemmed in', forced to rely on the Africa of the air-conditioner to retain access to vital external resources and political support.⁸ Creditors insist on a bureaucracy-boosting strategy of 'capacity building' in return for leniency on (over)due loans and as a condition for future loans. Creditors and others press a 'governance' agenda featuring regular elections and mechanisms to force rulers to heed the interests of members of society who support economic efficiency and government accountability. These reforms are designed to end the rent-seeking behaviour of state officials who are blamed for the political logic of the veranda that has done such damage to bureaucracies and economic development.

Yet rulers like Taylor still pursue the logic of the veranda. Though

unquestionably ‘hemmed in’ by bad economies and a less supportive international environment, quite a few incumbent rulers manipulate political openings to manage elite demands. Jennifer Widner notes that some rulers presiding over centralised patron–client networks coordinate rapid political openings and subsequent public condemnation of unwarranted privilege to coopt powerful rivals who could threaten their tenure and their standing among foreign backers.⁹ Political opening takes its place alongside non-merit appointments, periodic corruption investigations and rotations of office as a means of disciplining and weakening potential rivals. Paradoxically, authoritarian leaders may systematically weaken state agencies where costly clients reside to assert their own authority through a purposeful and rational debureaucratisation. The ruler is caught in a delicate game of restraining powerful elites who hold state office to limit their political power, while at the same time allowing sufficient organisation to perform tasks necessary for regime survival.

Viewed in this light, popular demands for democratic ideas and external pressures to allow political openings are variables that may influence rulers’ reshaping of patrimonial government. ‘Effective governance’, however, is defined in many State Houses in terms of physical domination rather than as preconceived notions of ‘effective political exchange relations with societal interests’.¹⁰ The difficulty of placing participants of this political struggle in standard state-society categories demonstrates the encompassing nature of the effort to reassert control. Which of Liberia’s many armed groups represents state power or societal resistance? Further afield, are Mozambique’s RENAMO or Angola’s UNITA leaders state or societal actors? How does one define powerful state officials who use their positions for personal and communal enrichment? Indeed, giving one’s rivals the political space of a ‘civil society’ may prove fatal.

This exploration of intensified veranda strategies also sheds light on the role of violence in the state restructuring process. Surprisingly, violence has been little studied in this regard.¹¹ Where violence does attract attention, it is often regarded as evidence of chaos, of divorce from ‘normal’ state behaviour and the consequence of bad policies. But violence and power are inseparable in the non-bureaucratic state. An alternative project emerges to supplant the weak bureaucratic state with a state more capable of acting directly upon its subjects. In colonial times, the ideology of control through force, of *mise en valeur*, took the place of the absent consent between ruler and ruled and a colonial aversion to costly administration. Like their colonial predecessors, more than a few rulers in Africa view commercial intrusion and force as a way to absorb ‘disengaged peasants’ and tie strongmen to their favour in return for profit. As colonial rulers wrote of *Afrique utile*, or ‘putting the natives to work’, or used tax policy as a way to force subjects into state-defined networks, Charles Taylor advertised his organisation’s motto as ‘Liberty*Justice*Discipline*Work’. Not to be confused with developmentalist urges, the continuity here lies in the connection between domination of societal networks, accumulation and power.

Taylor’s ‘Greater Liberia’ demonstrates this pronounced strengthening of the logic of the veranda. Those like Taylor use external commercial networks as tools to control internal networks, and to discipline and play external supporters off one another. This they do to garner resources to expand their realms in ways

that would not have been feasible in the Cold War era's material support for the custodians of the Africa of the air-conditioner. External actors, particularly foreign commercial networks, also link patrimonial rulers with non-African states and economies. Yes, rulers continue to rely upon existing alliances with local strongmen whom they allow to exploit local economic opportunities. Yet greater reliance on foreign firms and intermediaries represents a significant departure from patrimonial dependence on decaying state institutions for political resources.

This political accommodation with foreigners allows 'veranda rulers' to forego building strong bureaucratic institutions. In some instances, rulers then loot the assets of their own state's bureaucracies and destroy them to deny a base of support to potential or real political rivals. Indispensable tasks such as revenue collection and control of unruly populations are pursued with the assistance of foreign firms and experts interested in exploiting local opportunities, joining an accommodation with rulers that formerly had been more uniformly African in composition. Paradoxically, marginalisation of the 'air-conditioner state' prompts rulers to apply veranda strategies to outsiders. This development also suggests that the organic state-society discordance that is the focus of the 'governance' school of reform is in fact bounded within a more encompassing elite control that includes overseas people and organisations. The logic of the veranda diverges starkly from prescriptions holding that state power is achievable only through strong, autonomous bureaucracies. On the contrary, to attract some foreign collaborators, rulers may convince prospective partners that they can profit from non-enforcement of regulations and benefit from private uses of state power.

This transformed patrimonial logic—the breakdown of legal and territorial boundaries of African states and the changing role of 'private' commercial networks—shows us a 'hemmed in' ruler who manages his crisis of authority with unexpectedly diverse strategies. The case demonstrates that the patrimonial logic of the veranda, far from receding, plays a central role in this process of transformation. This and similar cases elsewhere in Africa support concluding observations regarding the increasingly apparent transience of the logic of the air-conditioner. Those like Taylor that the media call 'warlords' reserve a special role for violence, reproducing aspects of the logic of the veranda. Their methods are situated in a *longue durée* that resumes many of the strategies of late pre-colonial and colonial rule in parts of Africa.

'Greater Liberia'—a state of commercial networks

As head of the NPFL, Charles Taylor launched a Christmas Eve invasion of Liberia in 1989. Since then, the forces he created have controlled significant portions of Old Liberia and at times, the eastern periphery of Sierra Leone. At his zenith in 1992, Taylor, a fugitive from Boston, MA's Plymouth Corrections Institute,¹² claimed most of Liberia, parts of Guinea and about a quarter of Sierra Leone as 'Greater Liberia' from his base at the provincial centre of Gbarnga. Taylor's case illuminates key features of how a patrimonial ruler expands his

authority beyond recognised borders and commands force to counter external threats without recourse to bureaucratic institutionalisation of his rule.

Taylor's territory boasts its own currency and banking system, television and radio network, airfields and, until 1993, a deepwater port. Taylor's associates still preside over an export trade in diamonds, timber, gold and agricultural products.¹³ Taylor pioneered a network of foreign firms to exploit and market these resources, to finance military conquests and to control economically useful territory. Meanwhile, the writ of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and its 1994 successor, the Liberian National Transition Government (LNTG) remains limited to the Monrovia area, and this only with the backing of a multinational military force of African troops under United Nations command.

Taylor found that the absence of internationally recognised sovereignty also removed constraints on collection and use of revenues that creditors demand of debtor states. The LNTG enclave, for example, faces legal entanglements and creditor demands arising from unpaid arrears on an inherited \$4 billion debt. Ironically, Taylor's freedom from creditors and his access to foreign firms put him in a better position to generate foreign exchange quickly than the Monrovia enclave, with its international recognition. Consequently, Taylor was able to finance control of his political networks through almost entirely non-institutional channels.

The force of Taylor's political authority lay in his ability to manipulate foreign firms to secure foreign exchange, weapons and political support and to use them as tools to manage various internal conflicts in his favour. A bureaucratic strategy of state-building was rendered difficult, since 'Greater Liberia' inherited an already decrepit bureaucracy. Warfare drove most old regime officials out of areas under Taylor's control by mid 1990. From the conception of his regime, Taylor and his allies have used force to ensure loyalty and obedience to decisions and to control resources of interest to foreign firms. Lack of international recognition, the intervention of foreign soldiers and the need to raise money quickly to pay for weapons reinforced Taylor's preoccupation with establishing unhindered personal control as the basis of his rule.

Taylor retained Swindler & Berlin, a United States public relations firm representing the Liberian Mining Corporation, to represent his 'movement'.¹⁴ He has claimed 'warm ties' to former US president Jimmy Carter and cites what he alleged was Carter's support for his NPFL after Carter voiced criticism of foreign troops during a visit to Liberia.¹⁵ Taylor's displays of authority changed as the 'Liberia of the air-conditioner' became more marginal in the post-Cold War balance of power. Taylor the rebel leader and those like him do not seek or need immediate formal recognition as members of international society. They do need intermediaries who can be used to help exploit resources and gain access to international commercial networks. Taylor's associations were intended to create an impression among internal rivals and potential rivals. He publicised his actions through *The Patriot*, his 'official' newspaper of high technical quality, possibly produced with the help of foreign associates. Tee-shirts and placards with pictures of Carter and Taylor and the words 'Ghankay is OK' conveyed Taylor's associations to common people and aspiring individuals. He

communicated with publicists, overseas associates and representatives through a facsimile and satellite telephone hook-up.¹⁶

Taylor began financing his operations with the plunder and sale of mining machinery from the abandoned German-operated Bong Iron Ore Company. Charles' brother Gbatu Taylor directed sales of this machinery overseas and used this income as the nucleus of the NPFL's 'official' financial agency for dealing with overseas associates, the Bong Bank.¹⁷ Charles Taylor then discovered the profits and political benefits of cooperation with Firestone Tire and Rubber. The manager of Firestone's plantation, long central to Liberia's export orientated economy, allegedly reached an accord with Taylor in 1991 to cooperate in rubber production and marketing. Taylor is accused of using his 'G-2' security force to help organise rubber workers.¹⁸ In return, Firestone allegedly provided communications facilities and a supply base for 'Operation Octopus', the NPFL's October 1992 attack on Monrovia.¹⁹

Taylor and his successors also swap timber for arms, continuing a practice of Liberia's former President Doe.²⁰ Taylor channeled sales through a 'Forestry Development Authority' linked to his brother's Bong Bank to collect cash for timber licenses and to tax rough log exports.²¹ This trade attracts French firms and Lebanese-owned enterprises in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire,²² such that 'Greater Liberia' was France's third largest source of tropical timber in 1991.²³ This access to foreign exchange left Taylor free to take advantage of good prices from arms vendors peddling cheap weapons in the wake of post-Cold War disarmament. The timber trade also provided Taylor with an instrument to absorb elements of the old Americo-Liberian elite network based in Monrovia and along the coast. Collaborating timber operations, Hawk Logging and International Timber Incorporated, for example, allegedly include members of politically eminent Monrovia families. Taylor's absorption of these networks, which had collaborated with the Doe government in the 1980s, ensured that anti-NPFL coalitions would be weaker and more divided than would otherwise be the case.

Taylor's best prospect for financing and protecting his NPFL briefly centred on a planned joint venture astride the Liberia-Guinea border. Nimba Mining Company (NIMCO), a consortium of North American, European and Japanese mining firms, made plans to dig iron ore in Liberia's Nimba County in 1989.²⁴ More interesting, however, was NIMCO's member firms' willingness to deal directly with Taylor's NPFL. The Liberian American Swedish Minerals Company (LAMCO) was to provide management services to the Liberian Mining Corporation, and the firm employs the same representation as Taylor in Washington, DC. LAMCO's local general manager allegedly returned to 'Greater Liberia' to oversee the consortium's interests.²⁵ Gencor Corporation, a South African firm, has become the latest to join the project, slated to cost about half a billion dollars.²⁶ Independence day greetings bearing some joint venture participants' names appear in Taylor's *Patriot* newspaper.²⁷

In turn, Taylor used NIMCO interest in territory he controlled to raise money and limit external interference in his affairs. British-owned NIMCO partner African Mining Company of Liberia (AMCL) handled iron ore shipments in NPFL territory to keep a railroad to Buchanan open when Taylor controlled that port

city until 1993. In return for NPFL iron ore and cooperation, consortium participants allegedly paid Taylor \$10 million a month.²⁸ Sollac, a French supplier of iron ore to French state-owned Usinor steel mills allegedly purchased ore shipments from Taylor in 1991.²⁹ This foreign firm presence complicated the Monrovia enclave's struggle to cut off Taylor's financial and arms networks since commercial benefits from Taylor's operations undermined foreign government opposition to the NPFL. For example, Taylor exploited concerns in Paris that Nigeria's role in ECOMOG, a multilateral military force represented Nigerian interference in areas of historic French commercial dominance.³⁰ French failure to back United Nations criticism of the environmental consequences of the NIMCO project signalled French commercial interests' strength in resisting IGNU efforts to scupper Taylor's business deals.³¹

Within this framework of rivalry, Taylor exploited external networks to protect and extend his commercial contacts. To this end, Taylor allegedly subcontracted Buchanan's port operations and customs collections to the Associated Development Corporation (ADC), a private operation, 'because of its expected infusion of investment capital'.³² ADC provided little capital. More importantly, however, the firm attracted United States and Lebanese middlemen interested in Taylor's agricultural products and timber. In this case, overseas business networks brought contact with several other foreign firms that could find more markets for 'Greater Liberian' products. Taylor's ties to Lebanese families with business between Buchanan and Côte d'Ivoire also suggests that Ivoirian state officials shared in the profits of Taylor's operations.

The perceptions of officials in other states that their rivals are gaining influence in Liberia allow Taylor and those like him to translate these commercial operations into informal diplomatic leverage. US diplomatic cables leaked to the press highlighted the aggressive military tactics of a large Nigerian contingent's operations against Taylor. This in turn made more plausible Taylor's claims to domestic and foreign audiences that Nigerian forces are actually foreign invaders bent on occupying Liberia. Meanwhile, despite State Department knowledge that Taylor stockpiled weapons, US officials' unwillingness to do anything about these leaks made clear to Taylor that the USA was reluctant to intervene in Liberia to back the rival Monrovia government directly.³³

France's foreign policy establishment saw the Nigerian intervention in the light of Nigerian claims on disputed territory with Cameroon in the French sphere of influence. By extension, Nigerian military dominance of the multinational operation in Liberia, and suspicions that Nigerian forces sell weapons and provide logistical support to anti-NPFL combatants,³⁴ led French policy makers to see possibilities for advancing their interests through covert assistance to Taylor's forces.³⁵ The government of 'Greater Liberia's' pro-French neighbour, Côte d'Ivoire, shares French concern over the Nigerian presence in the military campaign against Taylor. Côte d'Ivoire's leaders thus tolerated shipments of arms to Taylor from former Warsaw Pact countries via his and Burkina Faso's territory.³⁶

These private commercial arrangements and informal contacts with other states bolstered Taylor's capacity to exercise political authority. Taylor used access to foreign exchange and weapons to help underwrite a rebel invasion and

occupation of eastern Sierra Leone. Naming former Sierra Leone Army Corporal Foday Sankoh to the office of 'Governor of Sierra Leone', Taylor incorporated conquered territories into his alternative state's commercial network.³⁷ In 1991 and 1992 the most economically viable parts of Sierra Leone—the diamond fields and export agricultural lands—briefly became part of the NPFL-associated commercial empire.³⁸ This fluidity of NPFL territorial control still provides a means of rewarding fighters. Since NPFL fighters are not paid, they are promised opportunities to loot conquered areas. Taylor's use of force against the Sierra Leonean regime in turn created in Freetown a more urgent need for revenue and weapons that hastened the abandonment of costly bureaucratic efforts there in an effort to meet the immediate threat of the invasion.

More recently, Taylor has incorporated other networks into his pursuit of resources and political influence. For example, an armed group in northwest Liberia called the Lofa Defence Force has collaborated with Taylor's organisation and its Sierra Leonean associates in combat against anti-NPFL forces in the area. In return, the group's head and his gunmen share in the proceeds of trade in captured diamond and agricultural booty. In this way, Taylor has tied some ethnic Kissi interests to his own as they used association with Taylor as a means to defend themselves against (anti-Taylor) Mandingo ethnic and commercial rivals.

These developments highlight the limited analytical utility of notions of state–society dichotomies or expectations of state autonomy necessary for the creation of predictable, efficient bureaucracies. Taylor instead uses commercial networks to deal with difficulties that arise from the absence of a definable and defensible 'state interest' and manipulates conflicts among them to shape internal social relationships. Foreign firms and African military subcontractors discipline subjects and force down the cost of exploitation, and accumulate wealth to pay for expansion. This monopoly of opportunity attracts enterprising individuals. Where it is dominant, those concerned about preserving their own privilege are obliged to join forces with this network, or at least pay protection to it.

This connection between domination of societal networks, accumulation and power makes nonsense of efforts to mark firm distinctions between state and society. Likewise, it is difficult to imagine Taylor's foes as agents of societal resistance and *revanche*. In what category should one place the misleadingly named Liberian Peace Council (LPC), for example? This armed group active in the Buchanan area currently poses the most serious military threat to NPFL forces. The LPC's head, George Boley, once served as a minister in the Doe government in the 1980s.³⁹ Boley then joined the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) to contest areas in the west under Taylor's control. Striking out on his own as head of the LPC, Boley presides over alleged instances of forced labour in copper mining operations and a logging trade enjoying protection from Nigerian military forces stationed in the area.⁴⁰ Like Taylor's operations, this case of extreme patrimonialism shows signs of greater flexibility and adaptation once unbound from the 'Africa of the air-conditioner'.

Boley's successful break with Taylor highlights the limits of this alternative state-building strategy, however. Where political alliances revolve almost exclusively around economic gain, enterprising associates shift allegiances at any sign

of superior opportunity in some other alliance. They may seize opportunities for themselves during momentary weakness or inattention on the part of the leader. Taylor's brand of intense patrimonialism, imperfectly enforced, may prove especially vulnerable to further fragmentation. At the same time, this threat may also motivate those like Taylor to rely even more on outright coercion over subjects and exclusive control over resources as a defensive tactic. In the end, it is these potential and real rivals, those most likely to organise within the bureaucracies of an 'air-conditioner state', who preoccupy leaders like Taylor. Taylor was 'hemmed in', but he dealt with threats to his rule from within this patrimonial milieu.

Violence and the transformation of patrimonialism

To be sure, elites engage in predatory behaviour that destroys legitimacy and bureaucratic institutions which could otherwise mobilise populations. These elites are also logically avoided. But fixations on the collapse of 'Africa of the air-conditioner' misses the connection between power and accumulation in the non-bureaucratic ('non-state') realm. It also misses the international dimensions—commercial networks, cross-border collaborations—that sustain this transformation.

Elites in both cases use these resources to compensate for difficulties encountered in achieving autonomy, bureaucratic control and loss of some sources of external support through intensified exploitation of those under their control. They combine exploitation with a deliberate strategy of extroversion, designed to attract further outside help in mobilising people and resources, gaining access to markets and, in turn, access to foreign exchange to buy more weapons to control more territory, people, and so forth.

This situation demonstrates many similarities to Goody's description of pre-colonial chiefs along Africa's west coast.⁴¹ Foreigners still serve as intermediaries for dependent rentiers who control resources and people. Foreign assistance enables the chief to join together elements of a pared down elite alliance and manipulate subordinate groups through controlled access to economic opportunity in exchange for loyalty. Violence, however, plays an important role that was not as visible in post-colonial patrimonialism. Violence is employed in the service of accumulation, since the ruler can no longer hope to afford to invest in as wide an array of social networks as during the independence period.

The role of violence also recalls colonial notions of *mise en valeur*, or pacification and financing through the agency of concessionaire companies which lack their own political base within the country. Foreigners aid the ruler's effort to redefine social relations and reorder conflict in a manner more supportive of his authority. As those in power try new strategies to control social networks, the definition of 'the state' also shifts to encompass new methods of coercion, surveillance and discipline.

This transforming state is built from within society. Note the difficulty in determining who is the oppressor, who resists in 'Greater Liberia'. Renewed patrimonialism without the veneer of the 'air-conditioner' relies more heavily upon affiliations of parentage, ethnicity, confession and client networks of

various sorts to shape access to privilege, status and wealth. This englobement of society also points to the difficulty of settling conflict in these areas through political negotiation, since none of the 'movements' discussed in this paper have political platforms or demands, *per se*. Negotiation becomes a zero-sum game as leaders perceive concessions in terms of commercial loss rather than political compromise. This feature of networks no doubt has a role in seemingly bizarre shifts in collaborations, as for example, between ULIMO elements that collaborated with Taylor's NPFL on some fronts while battling Taylor on others.

Is this strategy of what the media call the 'warlord' unique to Africa? No doubt the failure of post-colonial states to develop legitimacy and institutionalised bureaucracies weighs heavily in the transformation that the end of the Cold War has accelerated. It is conceivable, however, that rulers could adapt this strategy of paring and externalising patrimonialism to cooperation with creditors. Creditor preferences for leader 'autonomy' over corrupt bureaucracies and anxiety about payments on debt obligations could be interpreted internally as an opportunity to establish more direct personal control. A recent World Bank report on Ghana, for example, notes that 'East Asia demonstrates what can be achieved with a combination of pragmatic and sensible government policies and a disciplined and hard-working population'.⁴² A ruler is then offered a means of accumulation under more certain political control and proceeds to dismantle bureaucracies harbouring rivals, under the guise of rooting out corruption and balancing budgets.

The hard-pressed ruler is likely to concur with creditors that his part of Africa does not suffer from over-exploitation, but instead from under-exploitation. A basis is then established for absorbing foreign firms and creditor concerns about accumulation and control of cut-off clients into a new elite alliance, albeit one likely to find more constraints on behaviour than Taylor's. The African ruler, the foreign firm and the creditor agree, though for different reasons, that the issue for immediate attention is accumulation.

It remains to be seen whether this transformation of patrimonialism represents state 'dysfunction' or is an alternative means of institutionalising state control along lines that depart from a colonial interlude.⁴³ In any case, one should keep in mind that state-building elsewhere has included elements of the competitive struggle to control resources. Individual rulers have used direct coercion to mobilise resources and people in their fiefs to extend their power in Europe as well as in Africa. Leaders in the Ile de France, for example, did so more efficiently than the rulers of Provence. Thus 'the French' speak the tongue of the Ile de France rather than Provençal. What today's press might call 'warlords' mastered the conversion of economic resources and violence into political power. To its inhabitants, the expanding state appeared more as organised crime, says Tilly, but a state it became.⁴⁴

Likewise, Mohammad Farah Aidid of Somalia, a 'warlord' in the media, mobilises resources—including contributions from Somalis abroad and protection payments from aid organisations.⁴⁵ Aidid financed a war against the United Nations forces, for 'opposing and resisting the colonial policies of UNO-SOM ... waging an unprovoked war on the Somali people and their interests, drafting a charter of its own, setting up regional councils and a judicial system

without the consent of the Somali people and their political leaders'.⁴⁶ Enormous differences exist, however, between the unleashing of violence in the absence of the air-conditioner state and the reinstitutionalisation of violence in a state capable of providing security to its people. But must a political entity provide security to its citizens in order to be a state, or is this simply a particular type of state that most wish to see develop?

Notes

- ¹ C Young & T Turner, *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1985, p 399.
- ² K Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, New York: Columbia University, 1959, pp 94–95.
- ³ E Terray, 'Le climatiseur et la véranda', in: *Afrique Plurielle, Afrique Actuelle. Hommage à Georges Balandier*, Paris: Karthala, 1986, pp 37–44.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, p 44.
- ⁵ J-F Bayart, *L'Etat en Afrique*, Paris: Fayard, 1989.
- ⁶ R Jackson, *Quasi-States*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp 164–202.
- ⁷ S David, 'Explaining Third World Alignment', *World Politics* 43(1) 1991, pp 233–256.
- ⁸ T Callaghy & J Ravenhill, (eds), *S Hemmed In*, New York: Columbia University, 1993.
- ⁹ J Widner, 'Political reform in Anglophone and Francophone Africa', in J Widner (ed), *Economic Change and Political Liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1994, pp 49–79.
- ¹⁰ D Rothchild, 'Structuring state–society relations in Africa', in Widner (ed), *Economic Change and Political Liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p 205.
- ¹¹ Exceptions include M Schatzberg, *The Dialectics of Oppression in Zaire*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1988; and A Mbembe, 'Pouvoir, violence et accumulation', *Politique Africaine* (39) 1990, pp 7–24.
- ¹² 'Charles Taylor—the true story', *New African* [London], July 1991, pp 22–23; 'Portrait of a rebel', *African Concord* [Lagos], 24 Feb 1992, pp 26–32; 'Rebel's saga: mass. jail to showdown for power', *Boston Globe*, 31 July 1990; 'Rebels' roots for Liberian coup leaders' mass. connections', *Boston Globe*, 8 June 1990.
- ¹³ 'Liberian rebel leader rules empire of his own design', *New York Times*, 14 April 1992.
- ¹⁴ A Close (ed), *Washington Representatives 1993*, Washington, DC: Columbia Books, 1994, p 463.
- ¹⁵ C Taylor, 'Letter to the people of America', *The Patriot*, 12 March 1992.
- ¹⁶ Telephone interview with Taylor associate in Washington, DC, 18 February 1993.
- ¹⁷ 'Taylor to ECOMOG—Go to Hell', *Newswatch* [Lagos], 2 November 1992, p 38. References to Bong Bank appear in *The Patriot*, 27 July 1992, p 18.
- ¹⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Ghana*, 3rd quarter, 1992, p 38; 'Charles Taylor fait des affaires', *Jeune Afrique* [Paris], 23 April 1992, p 12.
- ¹⁹ 'La compagnie américaine Firestone accusée d'aider le NPFL', *Marchés Tropicaux* [Paris], 19 March 1993, p 763.
- ²⁰ 'Ecological terrorism', *West Africa* [London], 19 Nov 1990, pp 2864–2865.
- ²¹ 'Liberia: sparking fires in West Africa', *Africa Confidential* [London], 17 May 1991, pp 2–4.
- ²² 'Liberia: the battle for Gbarnga', *Africa Confidential*, 28 May 1993.
- ²³ 'Le bois tropical africain', *Marchés Tropicaux*, 12 Feb 1993, pp 436–440.
- ²⁴ Liberian Iron Ore Ltd, 'To shareholders of Liberian Iron Ore Limited', 7 November 1989. Consortium members include Cyprus Minerals (USA), Liberian Iron Ore (Canada), Liberian American Swedish Minerals Company's UK subsidiary, West African Mining Company of Liberia, Sumimoto (Japan) and France's state-owned Bureau des Recherches Géologiques et Minières.
- ²⁵ 'Give LAMCO's \$1.2m to ECOM—Ghankay', *The Patriot*, 4 March 1992.
- ²⁶ EIU, *Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia*, 2nd quarter, 1994, p 15.
- ²⁷ See advertisements in *The Patriot*, 27 July 1992.
- ²⁸ EIU, *Ghana* 4th quarter, 1992, p 32.
- ²⁹ *Figaro* [Paris], 8 Jan 1992.
- ³⁰ 'Le CEDEAO au chevet du Liberia', *Jeune Afrique*, 25 September 1991, pp 24–25.
- ³¹ United Nations General Assembly, '18.51 Protection of Mount Nimba, Guinea', *New Resolutions*, New York: United Nations General Assembly, 1990, p 47.
- ³² 'Takeover attempt at Buchanan port?' *The Patriot*, 20 April 1992.
- ³³ From State Department cables leaked to *West Africa*, 16 November 1992, pp 1966–1967.

- ³⁴ Human Rights Watch/Africa, 'Liberia: human rights abuses by the LPC and the need for international oversight', Washington, DC, 6(3) 17 May 1994.
- ³⁵ Interviews with United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia members, Cotonou, Benin, 28 July and 8 August 1994.
- ³⁶ 'Liberia: back to battle', *Africa Confidential*, 23 October 1992, and 'US recalls envoy to Burkina Faso', *New York Times*, 6 November 1992.
- ³⁷ M Tostevin, 'Sinking to the depth', *Focus on Africa* 4(3) 1993, pp 23–26.
- ³⁸ 'The politics of rebellion', *West Africa*, 21 September 1992, p 1608. See also 'Charles Taylor to annex part of Sierra Leone?' *We Yone* [Freetown], 30 March 1992.
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