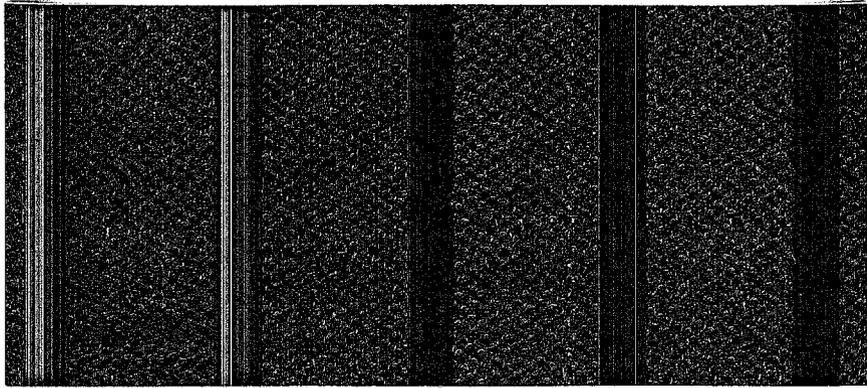


DEMOCRATIZATION



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RESEARCH ON
DEMOCRATIZATION
IN AFRICA

Summary of an Expert Meeting

Sahr J. Kpundeh, Jo L. Husbands, and Laura Bigman, editors

Panel on Issues in Democratization
Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
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RESEARCH ON DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

The experts' meeting on research on African democratization was one of a series of activities organized by the Panel on Issues in Democratization of the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE) for the U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D.). The purpose of the meeting was to bring together scholars who have been studying democratization in Africa with staff from A.I.D.'s Africa Bureau and other government and international agencies to assess the "state of the art" of research on African democratization: in particular, identifying topic for which additional research and information would assist A.I.D. in developing a research agenda to support its democratization programs. Vivian Derryck, director of the African American Institute, and William Zartman, professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, served as cochairs.

Susanne Stoiber, director of CBASSE's Division of Social and Economic Studies, welcomed the participants and noted that the meeting was the formal beginning of a series of activities the panel is undertaking with the Africa Bureau to look at democratization issues on the continent. The major activities will be three workshops in Africa to be held in early 1992. These workshops will bring together African scholars, journalists, government officials, and leaders of private organizations to discuss ideas and research on African democratization. Stoiber also briefly mentioned other panel activities, which include seminars and workshops in the United States to examine issues relating to democratic transitions.

Warren Weinstein, Associate Assistant Administrator for Operations and New Initiatives in the Africa Bureau, and Ann Williams, the Africa Bureau's Senior Advisor for Democracy and Governance, described the Bureau's program and their expectations for the meeting. Williams stressed the degree to which the bureau wants its programs on democracy to be "Africa-based and mission led." Last year the bureau sent a cable to all A.I.D. missions in Africa asking how the agency could best respond to the new political events and changes. On the basis of the responses to that cable and internal discussions, a strategy was developed in which the bureau in Washington will serve largely as a resource and coordinator of information for the field. Paying close attention to African views is another important part of this approach, as is encouraging African initiatives and contacts among African groups interested in fostering democracy.

Weinstein discussed the bureau's interest in assessing how much knowledge was available to assist with policy choices and program planning. A.I.D. and other U.S. government agencies had not anticipated the fast-moving developments in Africa. Many fundamental questions need to be addressed: How durable are the democratic trends sweeping through sub-Saharan Africa? Are there essential elements or strategies for creating sustainable democracies? Are there fundamental preconditions that must be met for democracy to endure? Are there discernable differences in the patterns emerging in various parts of Africa or in different kinds of countries: for example, what

differences, if any, are there among Francophone, Anglophone, and Lusophone countries? What is the relationship between democratization and economic reform? What is the relationship between democratization and improved governance? Weinstein expressed the hope that the meeting would shed light on these questions and also identify topics for which additional research could contribute to greater understanding and to better policy formulation.

The discussions focused on identifying the knowledge base about elements of sustainable democracy and the prospects for democratization in Africa. The participants agreed to define "democracy" in accordance with Robert Dahl's (1971) conception of "polyarchy," as distinguished from "governance": a polyarchy is a political system that is run and legitimated by the people; its essential features include participation, representation, political competition, and liberty. The concept of good governance is newer and as yet there is no generally accepted definition of the concept. Participants agreed to use the definition in World Bank documents, which encompasses rule of law, transparency, and financial accountability.

SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY: ROOTS AND ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Participants discussed a number of key policy problems, reviewing the results of their own and others' research on fundamental relationships and issues affecting the efforts to foster sustainable democracy.

Preconditions for Democracy

Carol Lancaster cited two schools of thought to open the discussion about whether there are preconditions for democracy. One large, relatively older body of literature generally extrapolates from the experience of Western Europe and North America to argue that democracy presupposes a certain level of material and social development (see Lipset, Kyoung-Ryung, and Torres, 1991). The other, generally newer body of research, typified by the work of Philippe Schmitter and his colleagues (see National Research Council, 1991; Guillermo, Schmitter, and Whitehead, 1986) suggests that such characteristics as threshold levels of income levels, literacy, a strong civil society, and a relatively sizable middle class are themselves the fruits of a democratic society, not its preconditions. Such material and social development make fostering democracy easier, although their absence is not necessarily an insurmountable obstacle.

The issue of preconditions is an ongoing debate among scholars of democratization, and this debate was reflected in the meeting. Several participants expressed concern for establishing fundamental values before democracy could take firm hold. Some participants said that the research on Latin American and Asian experience indicates that African countries must make long-term structural economic changes in order to create basic fundamentals for broad-based democracy. In addition, the extreme poverty of many African countries, combined with their limited experience with

democratic forms of government, reinforces this conclusion for them. However, most participants argued that economic and social change were more relevant as necessary elements to sustain democracy in Africa than as preconditions.

Larry Diamond suggested that, if not precisely preconditions, there are facilitating or obstructing variables to democratization in Africa. Participants hypothesized that democratization might proceed more rapidly and effectively in countries with several characteristics:

- more discretionary income (e.g., oil producers and exporters);
- developed mechanisms for managing ethnic conflict, such as federalism;
- a larger bourgeoisie, a larger middle class, and a more developed market economy;
- a vibrant civil society with greater number of nongovernmental organizations, in particular, chambers of commerce and employers' and manufacturers' associations.

One essential precondition for the transition away from authoritarian rule may be an agreement among political elites on the sequence of the path to democratization, similar to "elite pacts" that have been made in Spain and Latin America. Research on transitions suggests that such pacts are a common feature of the recent movements toward democracy, but it is not clear how well this research, largely from Southern Europe and Latin America, translates to Africa. This observation led participants to suggest that understanding the "national conference" phenomenon as a uniquely African contribution to the creation of much broader pacts deserves further study.

Some participants expressed concern, however, about whether political elites can negotiate a peaceful transition without first neutralizing antidemocratic forces. Specifically, it may be necessary to strike deals with current or former military leaders. When a military regime is being asked to give up power, Claude Welch said his research suggests providing a "cushion of time" during the transition to ensure that active-duty officers retire so they will no longer have men under their control who could potentially mount a coup.

Welch also pointed out that the conditions for transition are not necessarily conditions for democratization. In other words, what leads to or encourages the collapse of authoritarian governments may not necessarily be a sufficient basis on which to construct a sustainable democratic system. His research suggests that current democratization movements in Africa are coalitions of discontent, similar to the discontent that marked the terminal phase of colonialism. Far more is known about the process of transition, for which there is a rich comparative literature, than about the process of consolidating new democratic governments. Research on the latter question is limited, and most of the conclusions are preliminary (National Research Council, 1992). African cases need to be regularly included in the comparative analysis of both the transition to and consolidation of democracy.

Economic Failure and the "Delegitimization" of the State

Most of the participants agreed that the roots of the current pressures for democratization in Africa lie in the failure of postcolonial states to provide for the material needs of their citizens. Carol Lancaster suggested that the problems growing out of structural adjustment and austerity programs of the 1980s had delegitimized African countries a second time. The first loss of legitimacy had occurred after independence, when the new African governments failed to keep their promises of improving living standards. Many argued that both history and recent events suggest that the ability of democratic governments to stay in power will depend on being able to provide for their people's basic needs.

One major reason that many Africans hold the state responsible for their economic hardships is because of the widespread corruption in official circles. Larry Diamond argued that his research suggests that controlling corruption is the single greatest challenge to the future of democracy in Africa. Claude Ake noted that, paradoxically, state corruption has fostered democratization by forcing groups in civil society to take matters into their hands in order to survive. New regimes will meet popular resistance if they cannot convince their citizens they are making inroads on corruption. Ake also suggested that one way external forces can help support democracy in Africa is by vehemently opposing corruption. Donor programs on both democratization and governance thus have an interest in major efforts to address corruption.

Nicolas van de Walle commented that corruption is a difficult subject to study. The literature is limited although it is growing quickly. He advocated systematic, country-based research on corruption to provide information on its macroeconomic impact. Others suggested that in-depth studies of particular countries, of which few currently exist, could enrich the comparative analysis and provide a basis for tailoring programs to address the needs of individual countries. Since endemic corruption has long been recognized as a fundamental barrier to political and economic development, analyses of past failures to combat it could provide useful lessons for current policy.¹

Support for Elections and Participatory Institutions

Pressures for democratization have already culminated in multiparty elections in some African countries, and many aid donors are encouraging elections as a fundamental first step. The participants' discussion assumed that democracy implies periodic, free and fair elections. Among other things, elections provide for government accountability, which enhances both democracy and better governance. Some

¹Some research is being conducted, both on specific countries and on control measures: *Corruption and Reform: An International Journal*, coedited since 1986 by Stephen Riley and Michael Johnston (Colgate University, New York) and published in The Netherlands by Martinus Nijhoff, contains examples of both; see also Klitgaard (1988) and several articles in the *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Fall 1991.

participants also commented that the electoral process, in and of itself, provides a civic education that helps create the political culture necessary to sustain democracy.

Although recognizing the importance of multiparty elections to democratization, several participants cautioned against equating the occurrence of elections with democracy. William Zartman pointed out that democracy is more than a "rendezvous of elections," and during election campaigns there has to be a debate of ideas and programs so that the best, or at least the preferred, may win. Additional research on the practical problems of developing strong and effective issue-based political parties and viable party systems was suggested.

The credibility of African elections suffers from a long history of fraud and manipulation. John Holm argued that, even with honest intentions, inexperience at the beginning of democratic politics will inevitably lead to irregularities. It is nonetheless important that elections be as free and fair as possible, and he suggested that a civilian institution to investigate election irregularities be functioning during and after elections. He and others suggested that more research on the electoral process in Africa is needed to determine how it can best serve as a channel for openly expressing tensions in society.

In discussing ways to make elections more meaningful, participants emphasized that freedom of information and organization are as basic to the electoral process as they are to democratization in general. Studies of democratization suggest that high priority should be given to breaking the state monopoly on information dissemination, in part by supporting private and alternative media. Larry Diamond suggested that there was a role for training and improvements in technology, and donor countries should think seriously about making grants to private African media for larger and more modern presses to help the print media improve and operate more efficiently. Giving all political parties access to the media is one means to help promote an informed electorate. This approach requires special consideration in Africa, however, where most countries have only limited channels of communication and high rates of illiteracy.

Information dissemination and education also depend on adequate communication and transportation facilities. Several participants linked meaningful elections with more effective government at the local level. Support for local governments could mitigate the campaign irregularities and voter fraud that one participant predicted are likely to accompany multiparty elections.

Several participants spoke of the need for supporting participatory institutions. A strong national legislature and an independent judiciary were singled out as particularly important. There was a suggestion that the national conferences that have been convened in several Francophone countries may continue to serve as vehicles of national participation, representation, accountability, and consensus. Although some participants believe such conferences have already served their purpose, Georges Nzongola said they can be seen as an ongoing, genuinely African form of struggle for democracy, a contemporary form of the traditional palaver, and worthy of significant support. Understanding the role and contributions of national conferences is an obvious candidate for research, although participants did not agree on whether this was a matter of primarily academic or policy relevance because of their varying views of the future of national conferences as a model for transitions in other countries.

Strengthening Civil Society

Between elections, democracy must be sustained by groups that operate between the citizenry and the state, such as unions, civic and other associations, interest groups, and political parties. The bulk of research on democratization suggests that a strong civil society helps ensure that government is both responsive and accountable. However, Robert Fatton cautioned against trying to juxtapose a "good" civil society against the "bad" authoritarian state that has failed economically and is riddled with corruption. Fatton pointed out that the two overlap, and the same people who are agents of the state may simultaneously be actors in civil society.

Several meeting participants suggested special potential in strengthening business and professional associations. They cited evidence that business groups, such as chambers of commerce and associations of manufacturers, are emerging and learning to negotiate with their governments in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. The members of such associations, it was noted, were likely to be in favor of structural adjustment policies and improved governance and can provide support for continuing economic as well as democratic reform. Ernest Wilson speculated that such groups may leverage their authority by becoming involved with universities, the media, or political parties.

Larry Diamond suggested priority be given to identifying groups that may emerge to monitor the integrity of the democratic process, similar to the League of Women Voters or Common Cause in the United States. Supporting groups of this type, along with human rights organizations, Diamond maintained, can help create the political culture in which people believe they can make a difference by joining and working in organizations, voting, and taking part in other political activities. Since at present there is relatively little knowledge of civil society in Africa, comparative research on such organizations could provide both detailed knowledge of particular countries in which to support democratization programs and the basis for a broader understanding of the roles they may play.

Empowering the Rural Citizens

In strengthening civil society, participants cited the need to make a special effort to reach out to rural areas. The postcolonial state in Africa has had a strong urban bias and, in addition, recent democratization efforts have been almost entirely limited to urban groups. It was noted that African societies are still fundamentally peasant societies and that the patron-client relations in such societies cannot be easily wished away.

Participants did not agree on the lessons of research for the best strategies for involving rural areas in democratization. In the early independence period, there had been research on rural political participation, but the failure of most of the governments of that period means there are now few cases of actual democratic participation to study. Several participants cited the work of Goran Hyden (1980) and others on the "moral economy" of peasants as the best research for understanding the opportunities for encouraging democratization in rural areas.

Several participants linked rural empowerment and rural development and recommended strengthening local government structures. It was also pointed out that more effective local government institutions could help people make their needs known to the state, bring people into the decision-making process and implementing their civil rights on a day-to-day basis. Participants mentioned the need for substantial investment in the social sector, including health care, literacy projects, and infrastructure, but cautioned that there might be a trade-off because more government involvement runs counter to structural adjustment policies aimed at decreasing the role of the state. This is a point at which research on the various forms that "decentralization" can take could make a real contribution.

In response to a statement that rural organizations were motivated by an ethnic agenda, Carol Lancaster pointed to research on peasant-owned cooperatives based on economic interests. She proposed supporting cooperatives and other participatory rural nongovernmental organizations as a way of targeting small cash crop farmers, for example, in Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya. These farmers were described as a natural constituency for structural adjustment policies, but unaccustomed to "playing politics." Joel Barkan countered that rural economic organizations are more likely to be found in prosperous zones and to be run by larger producers. He argued that trying to empower farmers through cooperatives or other nongovernmental organizations might succeed mainly in buttressing existing privileges and exacerbating inequalities within local communities and among rural regions, which would be counter to the intent of democratization. His research suggests that successfully empowering the majority of rural Africans will involve much smaller scale and longer-term projects than most donors have supported in the past.

While African society is still basically rural, participants noted that Africa is the most rapidly urbanizing continent. Policy research focused on ways to build coalitions of rural organizations, on how rural and urban populations are now linked, and on how they can be linked organizationally on either an ad hoc or permanent basis could make a contribution to developing democratization projects and to harmonizing them with rural economic development efforts.

Neutralizing the Military and Promoting Human Rights

Participants addressed two basic challenges to democratization--the depoliticization of the military and the promotion and protection of human rights. There was general agreement that democratization in Africa calls for finding ways to impose effective civilian control of the military because it is doubtful that military leaders will relinquish power and perquisites on their own accord. Participants also expressed concern that military cutbacks associated with structural adjustment may spark military intervention or coups. What can be done to find employment for demobilized troops poses another policy challenge for newly democratizing states.

There has been considerable research on the role of the military in politics in Africa, both comparative and specific country studies (see, e.g., Decalo, 1990; Welch, 1987). There are also a number of African scholars in various parts of the continent who specialize in civil-military relations. Much of their past work has been trying to

understand the dynamics of coups and the military's role in politics. Only some of this work is directly relevant to understanding the problems of democratization. Again, more of that work has been done elsewhere, especially in Latin America and southern Africa, and the research challenge for scholars is to assess its relevance to the rest of the African context. That work suggests various strategies for removing military authorities from politics and keeping them out, although scholars do not agree on all the elements for promoting successful civilian control. As one contribution, Claude Welch recommended that donors support military training that stresses that "politics is not for soldiers." He proposed developing curricula, especially for command and staff colleges for officers, to encourage military professionalism.

Welch also argued that democratization cannot proceed where basic human rights are not promoted and protected. The literature on human rights generally is extensive although relatively limited attention has been given to Africa and to specific policies that could promote respect for basic rights in Africa (see Welch 1989; Welch and Meltzer, 1984). From his own work on promotion strategies, Welch suggested translating major international treaties dealing with human rights, such as the Banjul Charter, into indigenous languages and making them available.² Civil servants can be trained in how to monitor human rights and how to file human rights reports. Protection of human rights can be advanced through fact finding and publicity that draws attention to governments that have fallen short of their own promises. Welch suggested that donors take a closer look at internal nongovernmental organizations that deal with human rights and encourage them to build their own infrastructures so that they can act as "watchdogs" for abuse of human rights by the government. This is an area in which there is already substantial general research, so that the most immediate need is research on specific strategies and applications.

COUNTRY COMPARISONS

The group compared the democratization process taking place in the former French colonies with countries previously ruled by Britain and Portugal. Nicolas van de Walle described the Lusophone countries as having made the most progress toward political and economic change and added that this is no coincidence. He suggested that a research agenda focused on the political culture and process in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau could produce information useful to both Francophone and Anglophone countries.

²The Banjul Charter, officially the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, was signed on 26 June 1981 in Banjul, The Gambia. Under it, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights was set up and came into effect on 21 October 1986, after ratification of the charter by an absolute majority of Organization of African Unity members.

Francophone Countries

Turning to the former French colonies, van de Walle cited several recurrent features in the wave of democratization. First, the domestic initiative for democratization has come from urban-based groups protesting cutbacks in salaries, fellowships, housing allowances, and other subsidies. These cutbacks were the only way in which the former French colonies could satisfy requirements for economic stabilization, since, as members of the franc zone, they could not adjust the exchange rate of their national currencies. Second, at the same time that there has been internal pressure for change, France has been promoting "governance reform from the top." France, which maintains relatively close commercial ties with its former colonies, has promoted policy measures aimed at efficient government rather than participatory democracy. Toward this end, France has supported the emergence of a technocratic political elite. The new leaders of Benin, Gabon, and Congo are all French-trained financial technocrats.

A number of participants referred to the "demonstration effect" of the national conferences in countries such as Benin and Congo on other Francophone countries. Within Francophone Africa, van de Walle pointed out, elites are likely to know each other, follow each other's media, and be more inclined to be influenced by events in other countries. Georges Nzongola also noted that since Catholic church officials have been respected by the population as "neutral" and honest, the church has played a significant role in helping to convene some national conferences.

Anglophone Countries

Stephen Riley suggested the role of leaders already in power in many Anglophone countries has been relatively more significant in initiating reform than in the former French colonies. Riley also pointed out that, although leaders in Francophone countries have taken part in national conferences organized in response to citizen and external pressures, leaders in Anglophone countries have themselves initiated constitutional commissions to debate multiparty policies. They have faced less domestic demand for change, and most of the pressure for such change has been from external forces. Riley maintained there has been an important linkage between the democratization pressure and corruption and waste in government in Anglophone countries. For example, the pressure for democratization in Kenya and Sierra Leone gained momentum as corruption allegations emerged in the one-party system. In Kenya, scandal surrounded the former energy minister and overseas aid contracts, and in Sierra Leone allegations of misconduct were made in connection with agricultural development projects funded by the European Economic Commission.

External intervention has been less pronounced in Anglophone countries because Britain, unlike France, generally has more tenuous commercial and military links with its former colonies. Moreover, exiled groups have played a smaller role than in Francophone countries. Elites in different Anglophone countries do not share the same kinds of relationships as elites in Francophone Africa; thus, leaders in The Gambia are less likely to be affected by what is happening in Zimbabwe than leaders in the Congo

are affected by what is happening in Benin. In short, Riley argued, the contagion effect seen in Francophone countries is far less noticeable in Anglophone Africa. All of these differences have contributed to a slower pace of change in the former British colonies, with countries such as Kenya and Malawi showing substantial resistance to democratization. The outcome of the current liberalization in Kenya is difficult to predict, as some donors are increasingly worried about the ethnic tensions that have been created and the divisions in the democracy movement. Participants suggested that in Malawi, fundamental change would perhaps only come about after the death of the current "life president."

Since the apparent difference between Francophone and Anglophone Africa exist primarily at the national level, some participants suggested research on conditions and processes at the local level to explore the differences and similarities between the two groups of countries.

IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIZATION

This portion of the meeting focused primarily on the what is known and needs to be studied about the relationships between democratization and other policy areas in which A.I.D. has interests.

Expression of Social Tensions

Characterizing the essence of democracy as the "continuous open expression of social tension," John Holm noted that an immediate impact of democratization will be that different types of interest groups surging forward to make demands. He suggested that one reason for the tremendous proliferation of political parties--200 in Zaire, for example--is that groups lack clear ideological or political orientation that creates a basis for uniting. He predicted that, in the short term, democratization can be expected to increase inter-ethnic conflict and suggested looking at Donald Horowitz's (1985) work on conflict management for possible suggestions on how to manage ethnic conflict. There is also need for careful comparative analysis to avoid misapplying lessons from one situation to another. His research suggests, for example, that tactics used in Botswana to counter inter-ethnic tension have not worked in Zaire.

Claude Ake objected to the idea that the existence of different ethnic groups is an obstacle to democracy. He argued there is no conflict between ethnicity and democracy. Rather than promoting social uniformity, democracy provides the framework within which ethnic groups, like other groups in civil society, can negotiate ways to live together. Ake suggested that the ethnic question in Africa is similar to the national question in the former Soviet bloc and should be looked at in that respect. He pointed out that other potential areas of increased tension may be between local regions, when localities make greater demands on central government, and the state, and

between the government and the media, which traditionally have had an adversarial relationship.

Vivian Derryck suggested that one effect of the conditions under which democratization is taking place in Africa is that a new type of leadership is emerging. She suggested that these emerging leaders are technically competent but do not have firm constituencies in their countries, which hampers the quality of governance and their ability to manage traditional patronage politics. There may be conflicts between the new leaders and the old elites. In addition, in some countries, civil servants resent new-style politicians who are taking a greater interest in policy issues, an area that civil servants have considered to be their domain. Consequently, she suggested a systematic study of the new leaders emerging in Africa to determine their origins. She also suggested analysis to study how donors and outside organizations can assist them in being more effective in making and implementing policy.

Democratization, Structural Adjustment, Development, and Sequencing

The participants next considered how democratization may affect economic development. This is obviously a key question since most countries considering liberalization are severely depressed economically and, in many cases, undergoing difficult structural adjustment programs.

Although democratization and economic change are clearly linked, several participants objected to the idea of putting economic reform before democratization. Claude Ake, for instance, argued that democratization is not a question of rational economic policy, but rather of state legitimacy. He stressed that unless there are substantial democratic reforms, the African "brain drain" to industrialized democracies will continue to prejudice development, as will waste and corruption. In support of the primacy of politics over economics, Georges Nzongola observed that corruption in Zaire had thwarted not only the attempts of European managers in the central bank and customs bureau to improve performance but even the distribution of humanitarian assistance.

There is a large literature on the links between economic and political development, but the results are inconclusive and the subject is the focus of intense debate among scholars and practitioners (see, e.g., Gibbon et al., 1992; Healey and Robinson, 1992; Przeworski, 1991; Inkeles and Sirowy, 1990). The participants generally agreed that there is no clear relationship between political democratization, economic liberalization, development, and structural adjustment. Some participants believe that economic liberalization appears to be synonymous with structural adjustment, and structural adjustment with development. Structural adjustment programs were introduced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to stabilize the economic imbalances of developing countries. These policies were intended to aid countries in adapting policies and economic structures to changes in the world economy. The goals of these programs are to reduce imports and increase exports, lower consumption and government expenditures, and raise investment. Policies include the devaluation of the exchange rate, interest rate increases, government wage restraint, market liberalization, and elimination of price controls.

Nicolas van de Walle characterized democracy as a procedure and structural adjustment as a policy, but only one possible policy to which there may be alternatives. Claude Ake argued that the imposition of structural adjustment is in profound contradiction with democratic procedures, which presupposes open debate and a people's right to make wrong decisions. Robert Fatton said that structural adjustment is antithetical to democracy and is rending the fabric of African society. He cited the Khartoum Declaration (U.N. Economic Commission for Africa, 1988), which acknowledged the need for fundamental economic reforms, but strongly criticized current structural adjustment approaches. Ernest Wilson pointed out that structural adjustment programs have not been as successful in Africa as originally hoped. There was general agreement that, at least in the short run, structural adjustment may pose difficulties for democratization since those groups whose interests are threatened may be expected to be politically active in opposition to these programs.

On the relationship between democracy and development, Larry Diamond suggested that democracy can be a device to promote development and that most research suggests that, in the long run, there is a positive relationship. The causal connections and shorter term relationships are far less well understood, however. He added that democratic regimes are assumed to be better economic managers because they are more transparent and accountable. Carol Lancaster mentioned that the examples of Botswana and Mauritius were reassuring in this regard, although some scholars have suggested that democratic structures alone are not sufficient. William Zartman suggested that the freedom to openly debate ideas gives various experts opportunities to find ways to accelerate economic progress.

Ernest Wilson proposed undertaking historical and cross-national analyses in order to determine not only whether there are sequences for economic and political reforms, but also to analyze the relationship between the two. On the economic side, Wilson suggested that there appears to be a sequence: adjust the exchange rate, reduce the budget, and reallocate investment capital. On the political side, Zartman pointed out he was troubled with both the Carter Center's eight-point sequence for democratization, and the five-point sequence mentioned by Tex Harris (Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State), both of which end with consolidation. He argued that the consolidation of a democracy means only that you have moved from democratization to democracy. The implication in both schemes that consolidation is the last phase gives the impression that once a country gets to that point, the democratic process is complete. But consolidation, Zartman argued, may only be a temporal and specific phase in what is a much longer period of transition and sequencing, and any regime that comes to power goes through a phase of consolidation.

Ernest Wilson raised the question of whether there are economic reforms that are specifically relevant to political considerations, such as building constituencies for change and fostering faith in government. He also asked whether, historically, political changes have been taking place at the same time sound economic policies are being implemented by governments. He suggested that both of these would also be fruitful subjects for research. Although Wilson called the question of sequencing "absolutely the most important issue" in the democratization debate, other participants observed that both economic and political processes are already unfolding simultaneously. Moreover, it was pointed out, data bases in Africa may be too unreliable to provide meaningful analyses of sequencing.

Zartman suggested conducting research on the sequences in the process of overthrowing authoritarian governments, particularly to the immediate steps after the overthrow of nondemocratic regimes and what should be done at each step. He noted it was important that research provide operational answers to such questions.

ROLE OF DONORS

The participants discussed the broad question of whether donors should become involved in the process of political democratization, suggested some types of assistance that might be effective if they do, and outlined the policy research necessary to support effective policies. The participants did not agree on whether support for democratization should be made a major feature of donors' assistance to Africa. Some believe that their work on democratization suggests it is critical for fledgling democracies to receive outside support and assistance. Others cited studies of past failures and the limited understanding that research provides of which elements are truly essential to foster democratic development and how they are best supported. The participants who do believe that outside support is necessary tended to agree that, based on their research, there are several crucial areas for support: strengthening civil society; empowering the countryside; developing political infrastructure, such as free and fair elections; and strengthening human rights groups' ability to monitor government performance. Policy research should be directed to developing programs and projects that can support these goals.

Symbolic Gestures, Leverage, and Aid Conditionality

During the period when democratic forces are struggling to gain state power, symbolic gestures might be more effective than material resources, Larry Diamond suggested on the basis of his work. This would be especially true for countries that are genuinely dedicated to economic and political reforms because the gestures can have important demonstration effects for other countries. Diamond argued that diplomatic sanctions and strict conditionalities for aid should be imposed on authoritarian and repressive regimes. He also suggested that issuing statements and presenting awards in recognition of human rights are actions that send powerful signals that can have a moderating influence on national leaders, raise public morale, and strengthen democratic forces.

Georges Nzongola also reiterated the importance of statements, symbolic deeds, and signals from developed countries. He gave the example from his research of Zaire, where statements in 1990 from the governments of Canada and Belgium, denouncing the massacre of students, contributed significantly to making the government aware that international attention was being paid to its domestic policies.

With the installation of a new government, resources from donors become more effective. Larry Diamond pointed out that because of the poverty and lack of resources

in many African countries, a small amount of money can have a significant impact in helping to promote policies towards democratization. He added that case studies suggest that simply furnishing a human rights group with a locked cabinet and a typewriter or a computer can furnish some kind of accountability, thereby helping to promote democratization. Claude Ake also suggested that, in a poor country, providing aid can give donors substantial leverage because conditions can be attached.

On the subject of conditions, Diamond suggested that all aid should be channeled through nongovernmental organizations or essentially curtailed, with the exception of humanitarian aid, unless there is evidence of: (1) accountability--that is, an institutional method in existence or being developed to check corruption and account for major expenditures of public funds, for both local and internationally contributed funds; (2) a relatively free press, because without a free press, one cannot hold government accountable; and (3) basic respect for human rights, including the freedom to organize, protected by due process of law. If these conditions are present in a society and there is preference for multiparty democracy, it will emerge and prevail.

An A.I.D. official commented that, if these were to be the bases for aid, the agency might do well to focus on helping recipients meet these conditions. Claude Ake pointed out it is much easier for donors like the United States to support economic development without routing resources through the state. He argued this could be done much more in the context of civil society, community organizations, and a much more imaginative use of the nongovernmental organizations.

Ake also noted that it is important to think not just of what donors should do, but perhaps even more importantly what donors should not do. He maintained that it is better sometimes to do nothing and that donors should not encourage easy assumptions about Africa.

Ake argued strongly that much of the discussion of democracy in Africa in the meeting had focused on the mistaken assumption that democracy is a function of governments, which was why the participants were concentrating on leaders in power, institutions of the state, and what to do with the military. He argued that only societies can be democratic, not governments. The practical implication of this argument, he noted, is that external donors cannot help advance democracy in Africa by dialogues with tyrants or attempts to lure dictators out by encouraging them to give way. Ake also maintained that the only way to view democracy is through the society and that this shift of consciousness will make a significant difference in policies adopted by the donors. He suggested that the primary research focus should be on developing an exhaustive understanding of the democratic forces in various African societies as the basis for policies to facilitate certain groups' survival strategies and empower them within society.

Several participants expressed reservations about external funding of nongovernmental organizations. It was argued that aid might discourage groups from mobilizing the grass-roots support that comes through consolidating their own constituencies. It was noted, however, that given the absolute poverty of resources in some areas, it is difficult to obtain material support, and nongovernmental organizations do need help from external sources. Larry Diamond cautioned, however, that outside funding directly from governmental donors such as A.I.D. could taint some nongovernmental organizations, undermining their internal legitimacy, and perhaps exposing A.I.D. to problems as well. It is therefore preferable, particularly during the

phase of opposition struggles, to channel funds to nongovernmental organizations through outside organizations.

Supporting African Solutions Through Training and Education

Several participants argued strongly that donors should restrain from trying to impose models or assume that African institutions are the equivalent of Western institutions. Rather, alternative models and options should be available, and Africans should be provided with what is needed to make their own choices. One way this can be done, Diamond suggested, is "to put democrats in the continent": that is, to put African democratic leaders, activists, and intellectuals in Africa in touch with one another and with others in the developing world. He suggested bringing African delegations to Botswana or Costa Rica to see models of political reform.

Throughout the meeting, participants stressed the importance of education and training. Administrative skills are needed for governance, justice, and elections. Literacy is key to promoting a strong civil society and empowering the peasantry. Some suggested that the lack of expertise in neoclassical economics at the university level has hampered Africans in coming up with an African alternative to structural adjustment.

Vivian Derryck noted the importance of human resources in Africa and suggested that one way to support its development is by maintaining and building contacts with African academics and universities. Georges Nzongola suggested that supporting the publishing industry in Africa could be one way of helping to educate the populace. In addition, the lack of foreign exchange in some African countries makes it difficult for most libraries, universities, and colleges to get current publications. A.I.D. might help stimulate African research by funding nongovernmental organizations and think tanks, and by maintaining and building contacts with African academics and universities.

The question of support for political parties was not addressed as a separate topic, although the subject came up several times during the meeting. The possibilities of helping build effective parties was linked with training in leadership and administrative skills. Party leaders and workers need funds in order to travel throughout their countries to present their programs, and it was also suggested that one way to support parties indirectly is through assistance to certain constituents in the media. But Ernest Wilson cautioned that groups that are opposed to structural adjustment policies might try to increase their influence by linking their activities with those of political parties. The entire subject is extremely sensitive, and many in A.I.D. have serious reservations about intervening so directly in politics.

Recognizing African Successes

Vivian Derryck emphasized the symbolic importance of recognizing African successes. She argued that it is important for donors to help African countries committed to democratization and to use them as demonstrations to encourage other countries. Larry Diamond also suggested rewarding countries that are genuinely

dedicated to economic and political reforms. He argued that rewarding a country like Benin is symbolically important because it held the first national conference. Therefore, making a major financial commitment in Benin may have a real impact on what happens in the country. Other participants suggested giving priority to countries with a growing business sector or middle class, a more developed market economy, and those countries with a greater chance for succeeding with structural adjustment.

SUMMARY: NEEDED RESEARCH

The meeting revealed that, primarily because the phenomenon is so new, research on the general impact of democratization in Africa, especially with regards to immediate and long-term effects, is only now emerging or getting under way (see Lancaster, 1991; Riley, 1991; Diamond, Lipset, and Linz, 1988). There is a particular need for the kind of systematic comparative work that has been done in other regions, such as Latin America, especially, some participants stressed, since the special conditions prevailing in Africa that make generalizing the theory developed from other cases difficult. Despite the extensive research done on other areas, the results are still ambiguous about the relationship between political and economic change, and the trade-offs that will have to be made in the movement towards democratization.

If some of the broadest questions cannot be answered clearly, there is considerable research, both general and Africa based, that can be applied in developing policy. There are also a number of topic for which research is needed and could significantly assist the development of policy. The participants identified four key research topics:

- (1) systematic, country-based comparative research, perhaps as part of country assessments, to provide a knowledge base for policy on:
 - corruption, to provide information on its macroeconomic impact as well as analyses of past failures to combat it;
 - civil society, in particular on the range and patterns of organizational life in different countries;
 - new leaders in Africa, to determine the origins of that leadership;
 - conditions and processes at the local level to explore the differences and similarities among Anglophone, Lusophone, and Francophone countries;
- (2) policy research to identify specific programs, projects, and strategies on:
 - the practical problems of developing strong and effective issue-based political parties and viable party systems;

- making the electoral process serve as a channel for openly expressing tensions in society;
 - various forms of decentralization;
 - ways to build coalitions of rural organizations, on how rural and urban populations are now linked, and how they can be linked organizationally on either an ad hoc or permanent basis;
 - how to apply lessons from other areas where attempts have been made to develop better civilian control of the military and to limit their intervention in politics;
 - supporting human rights, particularly public awareness and human rights organizations;
 - managing ethnic conflict to avoid misapplying lessons from one situation to another;
 - assisting the emerging new African leaders in being more effective in making and implementing policy;
- (3) research to understand the national conference as a uniquely African contribution to the phenomenon of transitions;
- (4) research on three areas of the relationship between economic reform and democratization:
- historical and cross-national analyses, in order to determine not only whether there are sequences for economic and political reforms, but also to analyze the relationship between the two;
 - studies to determine whether there are economic reforms that are specifically relevant to political considerations, such as building constituencies for change and fostering faith in government;
 - research to assess whether, historically, political changes have been taking place at the same time effective economic policies are being implemented by governments.

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