Poverty, relative deprivation and political exclusion as drivers of violent conflict in Sub Saharan Africa

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During the post-colonial period, the Sub Saharan region has witnessed a substantial number of violent conflicts, mostly within states between contending ethno-political entities manipulated by rivaling political elite groups. The problems within these so-called fragile or failed states are closely related to a lack of a 'social contract' between incumbent elite groups and constituent ethnic communities, which leads to political fragmentation, exacerbated by the interaction of diverse social, ethnic and resource exploitation-related issues. Inter-group violence in Sub Saharan Africa is therefore likely to be the outcome of a political process whereby some local groups take on other groups living in the same region, mostly as a proxy war for conflicts resulting from the uneven impact of state policies concerning resource exploitation. The cases of Niger and Senegal are presented as illustrative examples of this process of intra-state conflict escalation. It is concluded that the state in Sub Saharan Africa needs to reinvent itself; the incumbent state elite hould adopt a long-term perspective based on solidarity.

Within the effort to identify and formulate an entire gamut of new challenges to human security [1], and in the process of considering new clusters of causality, the interplay between different causes of conflict should not be overlooked. In Sub Saharan Africa the combination of the political exclusion of specific communities and ethnic groups in relation to a shared group perception of deprivation that results from political decision making has become an explosive cocktail that underlies many violent conflicts in the continent.

Most present day political regimes are based on narrowly defined constituencies that support for – and are looked after by – political leaders of the day. Within a global economic context in which poor countries are relegated to the position of resource providers, the internal standoff between political elite groups and their respective constituencies is defined by the capacity of these states to distribute income to the various constituent groups. In most cases there is not enough to distribute among all groups and citizens. This results in a political

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scramble for state-controlled resources that leads to violent conflict and generally ends in 'winner takes all' scenarios which elevate regimes to monopolistic power positions that are extremely fragile to internal violent opposition based on clashes between marginalised groups. The problems of so-called fragile or failed states relates closely to a lack of a 'social contract' between incumbent elite groups and constituent ethnic communities leading to political fragmentation. In the present day situation, political entrepreneurs can easily mobilise large groups of mostly idle and poor youths, which in combination with free flowing small arms, leads to the formation of a conflict-prone environment in which raw power struggles thrive at the cost of humanitarian fallout and a perpetuation of cyclical exclusion of those who are associated with the losers of the various rounds of internal violence.

In this short article, some examples of state versus internal opposition are highlighted. It is demonstrated that the lack of political discourse between protagonist elite groups ultimately leads to forms of violent resistance against the state. The challenge for incumbent regimes in Africa remains to engage in a peaceful political dialogue based on the principle of inclusiveness and equality of all communities living within a given state's territory.

Poverty and inequality in the contemporary political context

Poverty is a widespread and persistent characteristic of all Sub Saharan African countries. Within most states there is a huge gap between a small elite group, an embryonic middle class and an impoverished mass of peasants and urban poor. In the wake of the political independence of many African States, the former colonisers and other so-called advanced or developed states have initiated activities and programmes targeting the most deprived and poor segments of these societies. Although some improvements have been accomplished in the fields of health care, education as well as economic development, the material well-being of the vast majority of Africans has not improved substantially over this period. In fact, poverty remains the most pervasive feature of livelihood of Africans, urban and rural dwellers alike.

During the post-colonial period, the Sub Saharan region witnessed a substantial number of violent conflicts, mostly within states between contending ethno-political entities manipulated by rivaling political elite groups. Regardless of the ideological facade of a given regime, the principles of co-optation and exclusion formed the basis of the prevailing political system. Political leaders in Sub Saharan Africa have held on to power, time and again, by mobilising client groups through the distribution of goods and services in order defend their interests in the face of resistance from contending elite groups or against incursions of outsiders. Behind the current crises and political disarray in many African States lies the complex interaction between various stakeholders with regards to the access to and struggle over the control of scarce economic resources. In many cases, poverty and inequality are perceived as the blatant and conscious result of purposeful policies of exclusion and discrimination initiated by the incumbent power elite of a particular ethnic, religious or linguistic group.

Rural and urban poverty

Sub Saharan Africa, despite a rapid urbanisation trend, currently remains overwhelmingly rural in character. Living conditions of the majority of people are harsh and largely dependent on climatic, physical natural conditions and a complex pattern of on-and-off farm activities involving different members of extended families seasonally employed in a whole range of

activities. In Sub Saharan Africa, furthermore, the prevailing agricultural techniques and livelihood strategies have remained virtually unchanged for a substantial period.

Consequently, in the rural setting, poverty initially was not perceived as the outcome of power struggles between stakeholders in society since climatic and other structural factors had a more decisive impact on living conditions. Poverty in absolute terms therefore appears to relate to the predominant strategies of livelihood of different population groups and reflects the current state of development. Nevertheless, the ongoing process commonly referred to as 'land pressure', due to steady growth of population and cattle, has led to increased scarcity and has shifted attention to political decision making in the rural context. Gradually, the struggle for access to natural resources (notably land, grazing areas and water) has emerged as a crucial issue in multiple parts of the Sub Saharan Region. Various stakeholders are involved in these struggles, including absentee owners of land and cattle who compete with local user groups for these scarce resources. If local users are confronted with powerful outsider elite groups closely linked to the state, violent conflicts will emerge more likely, as local elite groups will try to mobilise these constituencies into organised resistance movements.

In the urban context, conditions are rapidly changing and traditional patterns of social networks tend to loose out to modern anonymous market relations between individuals. In this setting, poverty is personalised and hence individuals are more vulnerable to changes in their own livelihood opportunities. So-called power-brokers, emerging from among the ranks of disenfranchised politicians, opposition leaders or traditional leaders fearing loss of power, will try to capitalise upon the discontent of such urban poor.

Resource competition

Additionally, precious resources such as minerals or oil have become sources for intense political struggle between elite groups in most Sub Saharan States. These groups have repeatedly manipulated the existing ethnic diversity in order to enforce a military victory on adversaries, resulting in a proliferation of intrastate warfare. This process has emerged as a structural underpinning of some of the recent violent intrastate conflicts in the region (Liberia and Sierra Leone, to name two).

In some cases, protagonist groups successfully try to take on the state in order to legitimise their claims on such precious resources. Such insurgencies can easily feed on the processes of marginalisation and deprivation of both rural and urban constituencies. In other cases the incumbent state elite manages to effectively protect its interests by using military force to repress the population and competing elite groups. In the latter case, the disenfranchised citizens have few options to survive in the formal economy, turning either to migration, to self-sufficiency in agriculture or to an activity from among a proliferation of alternative survival strategies (black marketeering, informal economy, smuggling). Moreover, control over the gains of economic exploitation of available natural resources as well as over the state apparatus itself tends to reinforce continuity in power for the elite group. Hence, efforts aimed at change, such as the recent democratisation trend, have met with strong resistance from the incumbent regimes in the various African states.

The impact of democratisation

The democratisation trend in Sub Saharan Africa has sometimes resulted in power transfers but in many cases led to increased polarisation between population groups and to the emergence of violent conflicts. In this political context, states cannot live up to the expectations nor fulfill mandates that have emerged in the contemporary political landscape of the Western World. With the state actor neutralised as a potential mediator to sooth the inequality issue within the continent, the outcome of the poverty issue has become linked to that of the political power struggle itself. The prevailing mode of distribution of income and resources leaves little perspective for structural change in the short term. The question of inclusive governance has become crucial if the poverty issue is to be tackled effectively.

Structural factors thus determine the impact of recent demographic and socioeconomic developments in the rural and the urban setting, which have progressively led to situations of scarcity in which stakeholders groups are confronting each other directly in a zero-sum confrontation. Mineral resources have added an extra dimension to this struggle as the incumbent state elite depends on the revenues from such resources to survive. The competition for access to such sources of income takes place at various levels; between stakeholders groups at the local level; between local groups and the state; and between competing elite groups at the state level. The following section highlights two examples of these different levels of conflict and aims to clarify a number of context-specific linkages between the different socioeconomic factors involved. The examples deal with the Tamajaq rebellion in Niger ad the Jola insurgency ni the Casamance region of Senegal.

Two examples: Niger and Senegal

The Tamajaq rebellion in Niger

Root causes

In Niger, at the end of the 1980s, a minority nomadic group, the Tamajaq, rebelled openly against the state in a bid for a more equitable resource distribution. Structural factors in this conflict were the historical formation of the state of Niger, whereby the erstwhile powerful Tamajaq groups had been militarily defeated at the beginning of the century by the French followed by the abolishment of slavery destroying the backbone of their political economy. The former rulers were thus marginalised in the process, reinforced during the independence when representatives from the southern Sub-Saharan peoples within the Niger territory took control of the newly emerging state.

During the uranium boom of the late 1970s, the military head of state (Kountje) had focused primarily on state building endeavour through the instigation of the so-called 'Société de Développement'. The entire society was divided in political sub-units which had to conform to socialist rhetoric whilst aiming to attain specific productivity levels. However, this ambitious social experiment failed to address the ethno-linguistic diversity of the country as well as the profound differences in livelihood strategies between agriculturists and herdsmen. Furthermore, the state proved incapable to diversify its sources of income and merely spent benefits of the uranium export in the construction of roads and government offices in the capital

Niamey. The successive post-independence governments failed to address the underlying problems of the fragile domestic economy.

Throughout the post colonial period, land pressure within Niger gradually led to the disappearance of the buffer area between traditional agricultural and pastoral lands: the so-called agricultural boundary had shifted northwards. This resulted in marginal agriculture in fragile ecological settings, in turn provoking land degradation, erosion and desertification. The traditional annual movements of cattle over large distances had become more hazardous as agriculturists over time had become agro-pastoralists, reserving harvest residues and other fodder for their own cattle, hence limiting possibilities for the transhumance movements [2]. The traditional nomadic livelihood strategy became endangered in this changing socioeconomic setting.

The effects of ecological crises

The main triggering event for the Tamajaq rebellion was doubtless the deteriorating socioeconomic position of the nomadic peoples in general and the failure of the government to address grievances and to provide adequate emergency and follow up assistance in the aftermath of the consecutive draughts. The nomadic peoples had suffered greatly from the impact of the successive droughts in the early 1970s and 1984/1985 and large numbers fled to neighbouring countries, notably Algeria and Libya. The Nigerien head of state, Ali Saibou, who succeeded military dictator Kountje in 1987, promised a safe return to the Tamajaq refugees and reintegration into society, among other things, by offering resettlements fees, distribution of food and a number of cattle per family to enable restoration of stocking rates prior to the environmental calamities. The state proved incapable to fulfill these promises when the Tamajaq started to return in numbers, greatly increasing their ordeal. The ensuing frustrations provoked extremist activities in turn leading to some violent incidents whereby Tamajaq elements looted public facilities, pillaged village stores and public markets. These incidents were part of a broadly supported protest movement to which the government turned a deaf ear. Instead, the national army was used to repress Tamajaq discontent leading to incidents in which civilians were killed.

The Tamajaq rebellion

Under a strong military repressive state the differences between ethnic groups were somewhat dissimulated to resurface when the political climate allowed for the expression of divergent political opinions. This destabilised the fragile national unity of Niger leading to proliferating factionalism in an atmosphere of distrust towards the national army. During the National Conference, held in the second half of 1991, community leaders from the Tamajaq appealed for rehabilitation of their community but were humiliated instead. This triggered the outbreak of the rebellion, resulting in the launching of the 'Front de la Libération de l'Air et de L'Azawak' (FLAA). The National Conference, dominated by representatives of the student movement and sedentary ethnic communities, failed to take into account the feelings of frustration and marginalisation amongst the nomadic peoples.

Within the Tamajaq community there was no unified strategy with a common goal. Various factions independently engaged security forces in different areas, making for a fragmented guerrilla war which the understaffed and badly armed national army could barely

contain. There were groups who favoured independence or far reaching autonomy whereas others claimed greater representation in the political domain as well as a fair share of resources. Disputes about the relative demographic weight of the Tamajaq as well as the demarcation of their homelands blocked a peaceful solution for a long period of time.

Conclusion

The major underlying factor of this political crisis was provoked by the livelihood crisis that confronted this erstwhile nomadic people. In the colonial setting in-built response mechanisms to crisis situations had gradually eroded and created a setting in which the Tamajaq had become vulnerable to climatic hazards. The combination of ecological crises, land pressure, loss of response mechanisms and the desire to maintain a proper cultural identity within a fragile national context of a state that failed to provide adequate support when it mattered, resulted in the Tamajaq quagmire.

The Jola insurgency in the Casamance region of Senegal

Root causes

In the Casamance area of Senegal, a long standing dispute between the Jola and the Senegalese state has resulted in a protracted internal violent conflict that has lasted for over ten years. Structural factors underlying the conflict seem to be the nature of the mechanisms employed by the state to penetrate local society and to exercise political control. As the nature of political allegiance was brokered through a hierarchy of formal and informal elites (mostly Muslim marabouts), the Jola, who stand out as a rather egalitarian and socially unstratified society, were not effectively integrated in the national polity. The application of the new constitution, transferring previous communal land rights to the state, has had a profound impact on local customs and resource management in the Casamance region. Another outstanding feature of the Jola is their attachment to land (notably rice paddies) as they rely on a precarious ecosystem in the low coastal areas of the Casamance river estuarium allowing for a combination of rice cultivation, marginal fishing and cash-crop production of peanuts and cotton. Furthermore, the region is commonly seen as the breadbasket of the country so it can therefore hardly be labeled as poor if compared with other regions in Senegal. Within the region itself the Jola majority seems to be poorer than other ethnic groups residing in the Casamance area. This, however, can be partly attributed to traditional livelihood strategies reflecting Jola culture. A number of socioeconomic developments have resulted in the mobilisation of Jolas in violent opposition to the dominant Wolof ethnic group and to their 'cronies' residing in the Jola homeland, the Casamance region. The pivotal factors to be highlighted are the loss of control over important resources, the lay-offs in the public sector affecting Jola intellectuals, the fear of losing Jola cultural identity and the repression by the state.

Loss of control over important resources

The selective exploitation of fishery resources by foreign ethnic groups is resented by the Jola community. As a cumulative result of climatic deterioration and out-migration fishing, the Casamance river and the Atlantic Ocean have become a way to overcome the farming systems

crises. Although the indigenous fishermen are far more numerous than the immigrant Serer and Toucouleur fishermen who control large-scale specialised fishery and the distribution channels, they play only a marginal role in this type of fishery. The Senegalese State earns foreign currency with the export of shrimps and deep-sea fish. The Jola thus compete for the same resources. The result of this has been resentment between the Jola and Toucouleur communities. The Jola feel that other ethnic groups should have consulted with them prior to the exploitation of natural resources in the region as they consider themselves the legitimate owners.

Lay-offs in the public sector

Concurrently, the labour migration of young Jola to Dakar, an alternative livelihood strategy dating back to the 1950s, became hazardous as of the mid 1970s. The limits to the absorption of labour power in the Senegalese public sector and the subsequent lay-off of state personnel also left a large part of young urban Jola unemployed. Disappointment with the state among the educated casamancais led them to withdraw from the state and return to their villages of origin to settle as farmers. The initiative by the Senegalese state to incorporate at least part of this elite after the 1982 incidents was either not encompassing enough or too late.

Fear of losing Jola cultural identity

Then there was also the gradual penetration of the Wolof language and culture (modern music, food and dress) notably among the young Jolas. Since the independence Wolof replaced Creole as a lingua franca in the Casamance. The slow 'Wolofisation' has added to the grievances as in the national media Wolof predominates and regional culture is completely ignored. Perceived neo-colonialism combined with fear of losing one's cultural identity in view of the ongoing 'Wolofisation' of the youth has angered most Jola.

State repression and violent conflict

After the bloody confrontations of 1982 and 1983, in which over a hundred people died, the Senegalese state took an ambiguous stand towards the region. In order to counter the attraction of the newly emerging resistance movement MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance), the central government appointed several young casamancais in the local bureaucracy while simultaneously setting up a committee of wise men to address the underlying causes of the conflict. On the socioeconomic dimension, the establishment of development projects and agencies were an important priority for the State and the external donors to counter some of the underlying grievances. On the other hand, however, the state divided the Casamance region into two constituent entities, the smallest being the Jola inhabited Lower Casamance, effectively thwarting the MFDC independence movement's claim to the entire region. Furthermore a campaign of repression was unleashed selectively against suspected supporters of the MFDC within the Jola community. As the local society is profoundly unranked in nature, the soothing effect of appointing some elements to positions within the administration was limited. They as well as other Jolas working on behalf of the central government were described as traitors by the MFDC movement. The repressive measures resulted in further support among the Jola for the MFDC cause. When in 1989 the

state of Senegal was confronted with internal and external threats [3], the MFDC chose to take on the state militarily. From that moment on, several rounds of hostilities have taken place. However, the civil war has caused enormous damage to the economic infrastructure of the region. Tourism consequently has diminished and even stopped completely for some years (1991-1992, 1992-1993).

Conclusion

Overall, the interplay between various socioeconomic factors plays an important role at the background of this violent conflict. The impact of the new constitution on land distribution, the expansion of modern economic activities (fisheries and tourism) mainly by immigrants ignoring local entitlements, the incapacity of the state sector to absorb newcomers on the labour market or to accommodate the casamancais otherwise combined with a longstanding perception of being slowly colonised, as exemplified by the penetration of Wolof culture, fuelled a strong sense of marginalisation and facilitated political mobilisation of Jolas by disenfranchised Jola intellectuals escalating into civil war. Again, poverty in and by itself does not account for the outbreak of conflict in the case of the Casamance region in Senegal. This case clearly demonstrates the interplay between the various levels of conflict present in Sub Saharan Africa.

Assessing the role of poverty with regard to the outbreak of violent conflict

With regard to poverty as an independent contributing factor to the outbreak of violent conflict, one needs to take the predominant structural characteristics of resource allocation and wealth accumulation within states into account. The level of poverty in absolute terms can not be directly related to the emergence of violent conflict within these societies. However, once group identity and poverty are linked, or a perception of discriminatory treatment can be discerned, the propensity towards violent opposition to the state or other groups becomes apparent, as can be inferred from the Tamajaq and Jola cases. In general terms poverty can be labeled as a possible mobilising factor on condition that it overlaps with group identity. Especially, if poverty is conceived as the end result of a conscious political process by which specific groups are marginalised or deprived of their resource base its mobilising capacity increases manifold. In the next section the focus lies with the relationship between the selective nature of some state policies resulting in the promotion of inter group inequality, feeding discontent among disenfranchised population groups.

The impact of state policies on inter-group inequality

Inter-group inequality

In West African states there has always been a structural inequality between the administrative and industrial centres and the countryside in which a subsistence economy predominates. Within this spatial dichotomy the selectively imposed cash-crop production has created a dependent peasantry that mostly did not receive adequate compensation from the benefits reaped from the export of these products. Instead, the existing spatial inequality was reinforced by the deliberate marginalisation of these population groups by the political and economic elite

living in the urban areas. The redistribution of various social services to the rural areas was only implemented haphazardly and mostly as a direct outcome of patronage networks linking elite members to their respective constituencies. In the urban setting, state elites have relied for a long time on subsidies on staple foods to co-opt urban constituencies. As a result of the IMF and Worldbank imposed austerity programmes most of these subsidies have been abandoned, occasionally resulting in widespread urban unrest. Inequality between different groups in the rural and urban settings therefore have become more exacerbated, in turn providing a fertile recruitment ground for local power brokers, in their quest to wrestle power from the incumbent political elite.

Selective resource exploitation

Inequality between groups in West African societies has a stronger conflict potential than absolute poverty as such. In the Casamance region the selective procedures of land expropriation by the state combined with aquatic resource exploitation by non-indigenous groups has strengthened the perception among the Jolas that they are systematically exploited by the dominant Wolof ethno-linguistic group, as they control state bureaucracy. Although the provision of social services by the central government clearly does not disfavour the region in comparison to other regions in Senegal, there is a widespread image among the Jola that the state fails to deliver services and investments. The Jola represent quite a confusing example of deprivation as they deliberately hang on to subsistence practices as a central feature of their culture while rejecting the market-oriented productive practices of other groups thus depriving themselves of cash-earning activities. Clearly, therefore, socioeconomic factors cannot solely account for the Jola insurgency. The negative impact of state policies regarding local resources, without taking Jola interests into account, has jeopardised legitimacy of the Senegalese state. The state exploits a resource rich area (tourism, fishery, groundnuts, and cotton) but fails to compensate its traditional inhabitants adequately.

In Niger, the division between agriculturists and pastoralists is crucial as specific ethno-linguistic divides coincide with this dichotomy. Fulani, Arabs, Toubous and Tamajaq are all ethno-linguistic groups primarily engaged in the livestock sector. The relative decline of this sector due to a breakdown of traditional coping strategies following the droughts that ravaged the Sahel in the seventies and eighties has impacted strongly on livelihood strategies for these groups. Over the last decades, more and more peasants have become agro-pastoralists blurring the rigid boundary between both livelihood strategies. However the Fulani, Toubous and Tamajaq remain largely dependent on the livestock sector for survival. As a result Tamajaq have attacked sedentary groups in a desperate bid to stem the tide. Moreover, the socioeconomic situation of the nomadic ethnic groups has created a structural dependency on state resources. As the state proved to be incapable to provide enough relief assistance to these communities their hostility towards the central state increased. The state has already exploited the resources (uranium) of the Tamajaq heartland in the past, but has never reinvested in the area, presently failing to provide compensation for the traditional inhabitants.

Inter-group violence in Sub Saharan Africa is likely to be the outcome of a political process whereby some local groups take on other groups living in the same region, mostly as a proxy war for conflicts resulting from the uneven impact of state policies concerning resource exploitation. The rationale behind such violence often can be related to selective resource

exploitation by the state without concomitant compensation for local stakeholder groups concerned. The difference between the Jola and the Tamajaq cases lies in the fact that the Senegalese government still has the option to work out a compromise, since the Casamance area remains a potentially rich region, whereas the government of Niger has little to offer, as the uranium profits have been consumed already, and the Tamajaq areas seem to offer only marginal perspectives for future riches.

Structural limitations to resource extraction

In general, the mobilising capacity of inter-group inequality is omnipresent in the West African context although this does not inevitably lead to violent clashes between contending groups. The state, provided it can generate sufficient resources, can soothe some of such potential conflicts. However, as has been stated earlier, the state itself rarely constitutes an independent entity. Resource availability and extractive capacity through tax collection from the collectivity in this context are pivotal factors in the socioeconomic perspective on the emergence of violent conflict. Economic development to a large extent determines the potential for state extraction of funds to be redistributed through various sectoral budgets. In the case of Africa, the economic performance of individual states has been strongly determined by the fluctuations of the international commodity markets. Other important events include the oil crises of the early 1970s and several climatic disasters such as the recurrent droughts in the Sahel of which those of 1973-1974 and 1984-1985 stand out prominently. The economies of Senegal and Niger, in which the conflict cases elaborated in this paper are situated, are extremely dependent on single products, groundnuts and uranium respectively. Against the backdrop of the structural weaknesses already highlighted this vulnerability has led to budget deficits and external indebtedness. Hence, reliance on external sources of income has become extremely important for regime survival.

The fragility of the state system in Sub Saharan Africa

The ongoing struggle for access to scarce resources in Sub Saharan Africa has led to the proliferation of internal conflicts, in which contending elites aim at capturing the ultimate prerequisite of power: the state. This process has reinforced the process of state disengagement between the state bureaucracy and the inhabitants it is supposed to cater for with the provision of services. The exclusionary policies of selected resource exploitation have aggravated this situation and undermined the remaining credibility of many states. The impact of external meddling aimed at supporting minimal governance conditions through financial support has, at best only temporarily halted the process of state disintegration and power struggle between contending elites. The cumulative impact of cutbacks on government spending, largely caused by external conditions imposed by financial donor institutes, has among others resulted in the lay-off of civil servants, the reversal of subsidies for staple foods and the apparent inability to compensate for loss of income to elite-supporting sectors of the state apparatus. These consequences have undermined the stability of the fragile state bureaucracies in Sub Saharan Africa, in turn triggering discontent and sometimes rebellion of the armed forces or other disgruntled groups such as unemployed intellectuals in West Africa.

As a result, inter-elite competition has worsened and the number of protagonists, involved in internal warfare, has increased.

Conclusion

In Sub Saharan Africa, many states lack the capacity to extract sufficient resources to be able to provide a minimum level of services to the population at large. The economic dependency of many such states has increased because of structural macro-economic limitations. Furthermore, the state has become the prime target for elite competition, effectively crippling its potential for conflict mediation. The elite power struggle has increased the existing division between the state apparatus and the population, annihilating the embryonic legitimacy of the state as an impartial arbiter. Therefore, the state in Sub Saharan Africa needs to reinvent itself in order to try and stem the tide of violent political confrontations. In order to try to solve resource-related problems and the crucial issue of impartiality in resource distribution to all constituent groups in society, the incumbent state elite should adopt a long-term perspective based on cross-cutting solidarity between groups who ultimately share the same geographical space and are forced to make ends meet with whatever resources are to be found within that space.

Notes

1. See Georg Frerks, New security challenges: Broadening the Pugwash agenda?, ISYP Journal on Science and World Affairs 2 (2) (2006) 51-58 (this issue).
2. 'Transhumance' is a term used for nomadism, where livestock move to follow grazing over considerable distances following set seasonal patterns (with the whole family of herders living in temporary shelters which move with the herds all the year round).
3. In 1989 several events coincided: the post elections riots in Dakar in 1989, followed by the Senegal river border conflict between Mauretania and Senegal, the dissolution of the Confederation Senegambie (1981-1989) and the dispute with Guinee Bissau over potential oil reserves on the continental plain off the coast of the Casamance.