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Umoja means solidarity, unity, and oneness in Swahili, an East African language widely spoken as a lingua franca.

Elections and Voting Behavior: The Case of the 2005 Liberian Elections

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Abstract

This study seeks to address the issue of the determinants of voting behavior in Liberia's 2005 presidential and legislative elections. Participant observation and archival research methods were used to collect the data. According to the findings, the Liberian electorate's voting behavior was conditioned by a confluence of factors: 1) rent-seeking; 2) the obsession with prominent family names; 3) myopia; 4) masochism; 5) the celebrity syndrome; and 6) the perception that the international community preferred particular candidates. The conditioning factors were by products of the multifaceted crises of democracy engendered by the neo-colonial Liberian State.

Key words: Voting behavior, elections, Liberia, rent-seeking, masochistic, myopic, neo-colonial state

Introduction

Democratic elections are indispensable to the establishment and maintenance of political democracy. This is because they, *inter alia*, provide legitimation for the state and its custodians. In developed liberal and social democracies such as the United States and many European states, elections have been institutionalized as the *deus ex machina* for fostering competitive party politics, taking stock of the performance of leaders at various levels of the polity—national, state, regional, provincial, county and municipal—and ensuring the smooth and orderly transfer of the reins of power. Since the emergence of the “third wave of democratization” in the 1990s, the transitional states of the former Soviet Union, East and Central Europe and those in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been attempting to make democratic elections the cornerstone of their emerging political democratization projects. Reichley (1987: 1) provides the following summation of the

centrality of democratic elections to political democracy and democratization:

Elections are fundamental to any political system based on principles of democracy and republican form of government. Under democracy, elections in which all eligible voters may participate are the ultimate source of governmental authority.

Although the outcomes of elections are important, the determination of the factors that condition voters' preferences is even more critical. The reason, using McDonald and Samples' (2006) characterization of elections as the marketplace of democracy, is that the voters—as the “buyers” of the various “goods” (the ideas) that are “sold” by political parties and independent candidates (the “sellers”)—ultimately determine the dividends to be accrued by the various sellers (the political parties and independent candidates).

Against this background, using the 2005 Liberian presidential and legislative elections as a case study, this article examines the factors that conditioned the voting preferences of the electorate. In other words, what factors determined the voting behavior of the voters during the 2005 national elections in Liberia?

Theories of Voting Behavior

The scholarly literature on political behavior indicates that voting behavior is conditioned by a range of attitudes, values, desires and beliefs.¹ Over the years, scholars have endeavored to study the contents of the range of attitudes, values and desires and the consequent impact on voting behavior. These efforts have produced a voluminous body of literature employing a variety of methodological (qualitative, quantitative and mixed) and theoretical approaches (ideological, issues-based, party identification, rational choice, etc.). However, one of the major lacunae of the scholarly literature on voting behavior is that the focus has been primarily on voting behavior in the United States and Europe. Voting behavior in countries of the Third World has not received much scholarly attention. One of the major reasons for the gap in the literature is that the holding of competitive elections in the Third World is, by and large, a post-Cold War phenomenon.

Given the expansiveness of the literature on voting behavior, it is clearly not possible to conduct a comprehensive review of all of the theoretical frameworks. As Eldersveld (1951:70) correctly observes, “Any survey of the literature on voting behavior is difficult. Even the job of cataloging is forbidding since, for at least four decades now, students of the election process have been turning out specific studies.” So, in heeding Eldersveld’s (1951) admonition, I will attempt to summarize the major tenets

of four of the major theories of voting behavior: the ideological, issues-based, party identification, and rational choice theories. Although these theoretical frameworks were developed in the contexts of elections in advanced liberal and social democracies, it would be important to determine their relevance to explaining voting behavior in Liberia.

The Ideological Theory is based on several assumptions. The basic premise is that all individuals have ideological orientations that can be classified as liberal, moderate, conservative and their respective variants. As voters, people choose candidates according to their ideology. As Miller and Shanks (1996: 288) note, “Voting is influenced by ideological orientations.” The application of voters’ ideological orientation to the electoral process covers a broad spectrum: some voters are strongly liberal across the board; others are strongly conservative; and still others are moderate in most areas. Some may tend to be liberal in one area, such as social issues, but conservative in another, such as economic issues (Prysbly and Scavo 2005).

The second major theory of voting behavior is the Issues-Based Model. At the core of this theory is the postulation that voting behavior is ultimately determined by the policy preferences of voters on a variety of issues. Accordingly, voters will cast their votes for those political parties and candidates, who advocate policies on the various issues that the voters prefer. As a consequence, according to this line of reasoning, campaigns tend to frame the issues in ways that appeal to the voters. This is possible because political parties and independent candidates have a general sense through polling data of the issues that are important to the electorate. Ultimately, the theory asserts that electoral outcomes follow

the problem concerns of the voters. This is because the individual voter is significantly influenced by these problem concerns above and beyond the effects of the standard predictors (Petrocik 1996: 825).

The Party Identification Theory, the third theory of political behavior to be reviewed in the present paper, is the outcome of the pioneering study conducted by Campbell et al. (1960). Referred to as the “Michigan Model,” the party identification theory is based on several major pillars. First, voters identify with the two major political parties in the United States: the Democratic and Republican parties. In other words, the majority of the electorate in the United States is either identified as a Democrat or a Republican. Importantly, these party identifications are usually acquired from parents. In turn, partisan loyalties are the determinants of voting behavior (Bartels 2000: 35).

In the fourth theory of political behavior, the Rational Choice Theory, the electoral arena is depicted as a “market place” (Evans 2004: 70). The voters are on the “demand side” and the political parties are on the “supply side” (Evans 2004: 70). Against this backdrop, each voter engages in a cost-benefit analysis in which he or she calculates the payoffs—costs and benefits—of the various electoral choices presented by the political parties and independent candidates. The “process of calculation” is guided by each voter’s interests and motives. In turn, as Fiorina (2001: 1) asserts, “Voting behavior [then becomes] purposeful.” Finally, the voter chooses the electoral outcome that he or she believes will yield the most personal benefits—the height of rationality. In sum, drawing from the theory’s base in economics, Downs (1957: 5) posits that rationality entails “man [moving] towards his goals in a way which,

to the best of his knowledge, uses the least possible input of scarce resources per unit of valued output.”

Can any of these four major theoretical frameworks be used to explain voting behavior during the 2005 presidential and legislative elections in Liberia? No, none of the four models would serve as a useful analytical framework. However, some aspects of the rational choice theory could be useful, if incorporated into an alternative multivariate theory. The present study employs an integrative theory to examine voting behavior during Liberia’s 2005 presidential and legislative elections. The basis of the model is that voting behavior in Liberia is conditioned by what Kieh (1997) calls “crises of democracy.” The crises are consequences of the failure of the neo-colonial Liberian State and its peripheral capitalist political economy to address and meet the cultural, economic, political, security and social needs of the majority of Liberians. The resultant failure of the state precipitated the development of a “WASP political culture.” In turn, the “political culture” engendered mass attitudes, beliefs and orientations that have traditionally conditioned political participation. Drawing from the ancient Liberian political culture, a confluence of factors, for example, rent seeking, myopia, the “celebrity syndrome,” mass subservience to the True Whig Party-based old ruling class, the masochistic habit, anti-intellectualism, and gender, can be used to analyze and explain the voting behavior of the electorate. Fundamentally, given the prevalence of abject poverty, voters viewed the elections as opportunities to extract “rent” from the various presidential and legislative candidates. Specifically, voters made explicit demands for “rents,” money, food and other material goods, from the various presidential and legislative candidates as *quid pro quo* for their votes.

As Thomas Jefferson aptly observes in *Notes on Virginia*, “Mankind soon learns to make interesting uses of every right and power which they possess or may assume....” (Jefferson 1784: 1). Another major contour of the theory is collective myopia. Voters are consumed by short-term material gains at the expense of their own and their country’s long-term interests. Voters are obsessed with celebrities and soccer: They assume, perhaps, that the celebrities can transfer the mastery of their respective spheres of entertainment to the province of governance and the management of the public sector. Like the “celebrity syndrome,” voters are enamored with the so-called “traditional big family names:” elements of the ruling elite. This orientation is a function of the process of political socialization that engendered in the minds of the mass public the idea that running the affairs of the state is the exclusive province of the members of the ruling class and their families. Another element of the theory is a proclivity for mass masochism. That is, Liberian voters celebrate, revere and reward those who have inflicted economic, military, and political pain on them. Anti-intellectualism is another major contour of the framework. At the center of this orientation is the belief that the intellectuals are responsible for society’s problems, consequently, political power should be given to uneducated candidates because they, in contrast to the intellectuals, would have a much better practical understanding of social problems and have more empathy for the lower strata of society. Another tenet is that since men have historically dominated the political sphere without delivering many benefits to the people, it is time to shift power to the female candidates for all public offices.

Methodology

Data and Data Sources

The study uses both primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained from participant observation and the secondary data from archival sources. The primary data were collected from July to October, 2005, during the election season in Liberia. The author of this study participated as a presidential candidate in the election. The observations were made during his campaign trips to various regions, counties, districts, cities, towns and villages throughout Liberia. The author feels that one of the strengths of the present study is the fact that he was one of the candidates in the Liberian Presidential election and has had a unique perspective from which to observe and understand the electoral process.

Other data were collected from the reports of the National Elections Commission of Liberia on the 2005 Presidential and Legislative Elections, the platforms and biographies of the various presidential candidates and the archives of the *Analyst*, *News*, and *Concord Times* newspapers and the *Perspective* magazine.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the use of the participant observation method were coded into various categories reflecting the voting behavior of the Liberian electorate. Using descriptive statistics such as percentages and mode, the various dominant factors that conditioned the voting behavior of the Liberian electorate were determined.

A taxonomy and coding system was devised to understand and record the various attributes of the presidential candidates—educational background, family background, political orientation and roles in the struggle for democratization in Liberia. Those traits and features that were recurrent were then

designated as the dominant factors for each attribute.

Results

In this part of the paper, the focus will be on the examination of the factors that conditioned the voting behavior of the electorate in the 2005 Liberian Presidential and Legislative Elections. The section begins with a discussion of Liberia's perennial "crises of democracy" to provide the context in which the elections took place, and within which voters made choices. Next, the profiles of the various political parties and candidates and the composition of the Liberian electorate are examined. This is followed by an analysis of the election results. Finally, using the discussions in the preceding sections as a backdrop, the nature and the dynamics of the factors that determined the voting behavior of the Liberian electorate during the 2005 national elections are examined.

The Crises of Democracy: The Context of the 2005 Liberian Elections

All elections take place within a political and socio-economic context. Understanding the electoral context is the *sine qua non* for comprehending electoral outcomes, especially voting behavior. In the case of Liberia, the 2005 national elections took place in the context of the multifaceted "crises of democracy" (Kieh 1997). The "crises," which consist of cultural, economic, political, security and social dimensions, have been attributed to many factors. The ethnic model, the dominant framework, blames primordial antagonisms and rivalries between and among the country's ethnic groups—Americo-Liberians vs. the indigenes; the Krahn vs. the Mano and Gio; the Krahn and the Mandingo vs. the Mano and Gio; and the Krahn vs. the other indigenous ethnic groups—as the primary source of the crises

(Liebenow 1970; Sherman 2006). The "spiritual deficit" model places the responsibility for the crisis at the doorsteps of mass spiritual deprivation and bankruptcy (Ellis 1999). The elite pathology model blames the pantomimes of the state managers as the sources of the crisis (Sawyer 1992; Dolo 1996; Sawyer 2006).

Alternatively, the present study argues that such explanations address the manifestations rather than the source of Liberia's perennial crises of democracy. I argue that Liberia's neo-colonial state is at the epicenter of the democratic crises that have bedeviled the country since its founding in 1847. In its early history as a settler colony and later a neo-colonial construct, the nature of the Liberian State does not reflect the historical experiences and objective conditions of the country. Instead, the state's nature is a product of the experiences gained by repatriated African-Americans settlers from their disadvantaged position as slaves. That is, the African-Americans in the early Liberian settler-colony attempted to replicate the American State in Liberia. For example, the Liberian Constitution of 1847² was formulated by copying sections and provisions from the United States' Constitution and the constitutions of some of the states in the union (Burrowes 1998). Additionally, Simon Greenleaf, a Professor of Law at Harvard University, was the principal architect of the 1847 constitution. Ironically, the repatriated African-Americans did not have a fundamental understanding of the constitutions from which they so liberally borrowed. Moreover, the repatriated African-Americans were oblivious to the historical-cultural context of the country to which the borrowed constitutional architecture was to be applied. Similarly, the mission of the Liberian State was (and still is) to create an environment that is conducive to the profit-seeking and

exploitative activities of metropolitan-based multinational corporations from the United States, Japan and European States; and to enable the members of the local Liberian ruling elite—state managers and others, their relatives and friends—to privately accumulate capital and wealth by plundering and pillaging public resources. In terms of its character, the Liberian State is akin to a chameleon. That is, the Liberian State has multiple characters: repressive, exploitative, criminalized, privatized, prebendal, neo-patrimonial, absolutist and negligent, among others. Like other neo-colonial states in Africa, a particular character may be ascendant at a particular juncture (Agbese 2006). In terms of values, they include the conduct of the state's affairs on the basis of whims and caprices rather than a system; using public offices as the fastest and cheapest way to get rich; the use of governmental positions to dispense favors; the lack of respect for state properties; the lack of a work ethic in the public sector; the use of patronage and personal connections as the bases of employment and promotion in the public sector; and the fostering of inequities in wealth and income as a way of maintaining the hegemony of the ruling class. In terms of the institutions, some of them were duplicative and redundant. As a composite, state institutions were inefficient, ineffective and negligent. As for the rules as enshrined in the constitution—the embodiment of the norms of governance—they were virtually never applied. Instead, the “imperial presidency” determined the political norms of the society. In effect, there was a constitution without constitutionalism. In terms of the processes, they included a corrupt form of the “due process of law” under which an individual was deemed guilty until proven innocent; the lack of “checks and balances” due to the suzerainty of the “imperial presidency;” and the application of the law only to the poor

and powerless. State policies in the cultural, economic, political, security and social sectors were fundamentally designed to maintain the dominant position of the ruling class and its external patrons.

Significantly, the fissures that had been forming within the body politic as consequences of the failure of the neo-colonial Liberian state became apparent with the April 12, 1980, military coup. Unfortunately, the coup makers, led by Master-Sergeant Doe, failed to shepherd the process of deconstructing, rethinking and democratically reconstituting the failed neo-colonial state. Instead, the coup simply represented a change of regime while the state and its peripheral capitalist political economy remained intact. The continual failure of the state occasioned the start of the first Liberian civil war on December 24, 1989. The war was the outcome of an armed insurgency led by Charles Taylor under the banner of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Subsequently, several armed factions mushroomed: the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), two factions of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy for Liberia (ULIMO-K, ULIMO-J), the Liberian Peace Council (LPC) and the Lofa Defense Force (LDF). After almost seven years of an internecine war and its attendant death and destruction, Charles Taylor was elected President in July 1997, in a multi-party election that was contested by two other warlords and the supporters of the various militias. After acquiring state power, the Taylor regime failed to democratically reconstitute the state. This allowed him to continue his warlordist rule based on, *inter alia*, the cult of the warlord, plunder and pillage, repression, and the routine use of violence as the primary instrument for dealing with societal problems. Consequently, in 1999, Liberia degenerated

into a second civil war waged by an amalgam of former warlords and their supporters, disaffected supporters of Charles Taylor, ethnic entrepreneurs and a coterie of bounty seekers masquerading as freedom fighters and liberators. Some of those who were candidates during the 2005 national elections supported the Liberians United for Reconstruction and Democracy (LURD) or the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), the two principal rebel outfits. After almost four years of mayhem, the second civil war ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord, also called the Accra Peace Accord, in August 2003. Subsequently, an interim government of national unity was organized under the leadership of Charles Gyude Bryant. During its two-year tenure, the transitional government failed to set into motion the modalities for deconstructing, rethinking and democratically reconstituting the failed neo-colonial Liberian state. Instead, the Bryant regime embarked upon a conscious campaign of plunder and pillage (ECOWAS 2006). The disappointing performance of the Bryant regime exacerbated the country's perennial crises of democracy. As a consequence, the crises of democracy and its exacerbation of human development in Liberia constituted the crucible in which the 2005 national elections were held.

As Table 1 shows, Liberia's poverty rate (those living on less than \$1 per day) stood at a troubling 76.2% of the population in 2005. The rate of extreme poverty (those living on less than \$0.50 per day) was 52.0%—more than half of the population of Liberia. These human development indicators are some of the very lowest in Africa.

Table 1. Liberia's Human development indicators, 2005.

Indicator	Value
Poverty Rate (percent)	76.2
Extreme Poverty (percent)	52.0
Life Expectancy (years)	47.7
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000 population)	578
Death Rate per 1,000 Population	231
Population with access to health services	69.4
Population with access to safe drinking water (percent)	26.0
Population with access to acceptable sanitation (percent)	45.0
Adult Literacy Rate (percent)	38.0

Source: United Nations Development Program (2006).

The Profiles of the Political Parties and Candidates

As Table 2 shows, there were 22 candidates for the Liberian presidency in 2005: 19 candidates representing individual political parties; 3 candidates representing coalitions of political parties; and 1 independent candidate. In addition, there were 205 candidates for the 30 seats in the Senate (192 candidates representing individual political parties and coalitions of political parties; and 13 independent candidates), and 513 candidates for the House of Representatives. Four hundred and eighty-eight candidates were nominated by political parties and coalitions of political parties and 25 were independent candidates. In terms of gender, 185 men were nominated as candidates for the Senate and 460 for the House of Representatives (National Elections Commission, 2005a). Twenty women were nominated for the Senate and 53 for the House of Representatives (National Elections Commission, 2005a).

Table 2. Number of candidates by political party who were qualified by the national elections to contest the 2005 presidential and legislative elections.

Political Party	Presidency	Senate	House of Representatives
All Liberian Coalition Party (ALCOP)	1	3	13
Alliance for Peace and Democracy (ADP)	1	13	24
Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia (COTOL)	1	29	61
Congress for Democratic Change (CDC)	1	25	58
Free Democratic Party (FDP)	1	0	12
Freedom Alliance Party of Liberia (FAPL)	1	5	16
Independent Candidates	1	13	25
Labor Party of Liberia (LPL)	1	1	9
Liberia Destiny Party (LDP)	1	3	8
Liberia Equal Rights Party	1	0	3
Liberty Party	1	29	62
National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL)	1	16	28
National Party of Liberia (NPL)	1	0	1
National Patriotic Party (NPP)	1	20	50
National Reformation Party (NRP)	1	4	24
National Vision Party of Liberia (NATVPOL)	1	0	2
New DEAL Movement (NDM)	1	3	21
Progressive Democratic Party (PRODEM)	1	5	12
Reform United Liberia Party (RULP)	1	4	8
Union of Liberian Democrats (ULD)	1	1	9
United Democratic Alliance (UDA)	1	4	9
Unity Party (UP)	1	27	58
Total	22	205	513

Source: National Elections Commission of Liberia (2005b).

In terms of the ideological divide, one party, the New DEAL Movement, espoused a social democratic ideology based, *inter alia*, on holistic democracy (economic, political, social, etc.) within the framework of a mixed economic system. The Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) articulated a populist ideology. Three of the parties had liberal ideologies, five had centrist and twelve conservative (Table 3). In essence, most of the political parties that contested the elections were conservative.

Table 3. The Ideological Profiles of the Political Parties, 2005 Liberian National Elections.

Political Party	Ideological Orientation
ALCOP	Conservative
ADP	Liberal
COTOL	Conservative
CDC	Populist
FDP	Conservative
FAPL	Conservative
LPL	Conservative
LDP	Centrist
LERP	Liberal
LP	Conservative
NDPL	Conservative
NPL	Centrist
NPP	Conservative
NRP	Conservative
NAVPOL	Conservative
NDM	Social Democratic
PRODEMP	Conservative
RULP	Conservative
ULD	Centrist
UDA	Centrist
Unity Party	Centrist

Source: Developed by the author from the publications and other pronouncements of the various political parties.

The profiles of the 22 presidential candidates (Table 4) can be analyzed in terms of several major markers. Eleven of the candidates had served in previous regimes—from Tubman to Doe. Some had served in one regime, while others have held positions in two or more administrations. In terms of the repressive old oligarchy, ten of the candidates had links to the traditional ruling elite that has been dominated by the True Whig party. The True Whig elite includes the so-called circle of prominent families that has fuelled the crises of democracy in the past by its poor governance. Two of the flag bearers were warlords: one during the first civil war and the other during the second one. Only two of the candidates have records of working in the pro-democracy movement. Finally, one of the candidates acquired celebrity status as a soccer player. On balance, the presidential candidates can be classified into three major clusters in terms of their roles in the struggle for democratization in Liberia: 1) those who have a record of involvement in the struggle for democratization in Liberia; 2) those who did not participate in the struggle for democracy; and 3) those who were supporters of the previous authoritarian regimes.

Table 4. Summary profiles of the presidential candidates for the 2005 Liberian elections.

Candidate	Political Party	Brief Biographical Sketch	Role in Democratization movement*
Nathaniel Barnes	LDP	Former Minister of Finance during the Taylor regime; comes from a prominent family.	3
Charles Brumskine	LP	Former President Pro Tempore of the Liberian Senate during the early years of the Taylor regime; comes from a prominent family.	3
Sekou Damate Conneh	PRODEMP	Warlord and leader of the Liberians United for Reconstruction and Democracy (LURD), the militia that started Liberia's second civil war.	2
Sam Divine	Independent	The only independent presidential candidate; a technocrat, who worked in the state-owned Agriculture Development Bank during the Doe era; he became a businessman during the Taylor regime.	2
David Farhart	FDP	Served in various capacities during the Tolbert and Doe regimes.	3
Armah Jallah	NPL	Former Senator during the Taylor era.	3
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	UP	Served in various government positions during the Tubman and Tolbert eras. She also worked for the World Bank and the United Nations. She was imprisoned during the Doe era for calling President Doe a "fool." A member of the old oligarchy that ruled Liberia until the 1980 military coup.	3
George Kiadii	NAVPOL	A free-lance preacher.	2
George Klay Kieh, Jr.	NDM	An academic and long-time political activist in Liberia, who was a political prisoner in 1979 and 1984.	1
Joseph Korto	LERP	An academic. He served as chief education officer for Nimba County, one of the fifteen counties (political sub-divisions) of Liberia.	2
Robert Kpoto	ULD	A medical doctor with a thriving practice in Liberia.	2
Alhaji Kromah	ALCOP	Warlord and leader of ULIMO-K, one of the militias during the first Liberian civil war. He served in various capacities during the Tolbert and Doe regimes.	3
Roland Massaquoi	NPP	Confidante of Charles Taylor. He served as Minister of Agriculture and Planning during the Taylor era	3
John Morlu	UDA	Technocrat with long years of service in the public financial sector.	2
Alfred Reeves	NRP	A bishop.	3
Varney Sherman	COTOL	A prominent lawyer for multinational corporations and other foreign-owned business. He comes from a prominent family.	3
Togba Nah Tipoteh	ADP	Prominent economist and former university professor. He first came to prominence in Liberia as the president of the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), a populist-oriented reform organization that was highly respected in the 1970s.	1
Margaret Thompson	FAPL	Trained in Biblical Studies.	2
William V.S. Tubman, Jr.	RULP	Former Senator during the Tubman and Tolbert eras; son of the late President Tubman, who ruled Liberia for 27 years. He comes from the prominent Tubman family.	3
Winston Tubman	NDPL	He served in the Tolbert and Doe regimes. He also worked for the United Nations. He is the nephew of the late President Tubman; he comes from the prominent Tubman family.	3
George Weah	CDC	Soccer legend, who rose from the ranks of Liberia's lumpenproletariat class.	2
Joseph Woah-Tee	LPL	An educator.	2

Sources: Constructed by the author from the candidates' biographies, campaign manifestos, newspapers and magazines on their political record. *1 represents a candidate who was involved in the struggle for democratization in Liberia; 2 represents a candidate who did not participate in the struggle for democratization; and 3 represents a candidate who supported one or more of Liberia's previous authoritarian regimes.

The Composition of the Electorate

There were 1.3 million registered voters for the 2005 national elections. Of this number, women accounted for 676,390 and men 676,340; about 50% each (National Elections Commission 2005c). People between the ages of 18-27 accounted for 38% of the total number of registered voters (National Elections Commission 2005d).

The Results of the Presidential and Legislative Elections

Table 5 provides the results of the presidential election. According to the results, George Weah, the soccer legend and presidential candidate of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), garnered the highest percentage, 28.3%, of the votes cast in the October 11, 2005 elections. Ellen

Johnson Sirleaf, the former official of the Liberian Government during the Tubman and Tolbert eras and former international civil servant and flag bearer of the Unity Party (UP), was second with 19.8% of the vote. Since no candidate received the required absolute majority of over 50%, a run-off election was held on November 8, 2005, between George Weah and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. According to the National Elections Commission of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won the second round with 478,526 votes or 59.4% of the votes to 327,046 or 40.6% of the votes for George Weah (Elections Commission 2005c). Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the candidate of the Unity Party (UP) was declared the winner of the presidential election.

Table 5. The Results of the October 11, 2005, Liberian Presidential Elections.

Candidate	Political Party	Total Votes	Percentage
George Weah	CDC	275,265	28.3
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	UP	192,326	19.8
Charles Brumskine	LP	135,093	13.9
Winston Tubman	NDPL	89,623	9.2
Varney Sherman	COTOL	76,403	7.8
Roland Massaquoi	NPP	40,361	4.1
Joseph Korto	LERP	31,814	3.3
Alhaji Kromah	ALCOP	27,141	2.6
Togba Nah Tipoteh	APD	22,766	2.3
William V.S. Tubman	RULP	15,115	1.6
John Morlu	UDA	12,068	1.2
Nathaniel Barnes	LDP	9,325	1.0
Margaret Thompson	FAPL	8,418	0.9
Joseph Woah-Tee	LPL	5,948	0.6
Sekou Damate Conneh	PRODEM	5,499	0.6
David Farhat	FDP	4,497	0.5
George Klay Kieh, Jr.	NDM	4,476	0.5
Armah Jallah	NPL	3,837	0.4
Robert Kpoto	ULD	3,825	0.4
George Kiadii	NAVPOL	3,646	0.4
Samuel Divine	Independent	3,156	0.3
Alfred Reeves	NRP	3,156	0.3

Source: National Elections Commission. (2005e).

However, George Weah and his political party refused to accept the results. Their disagreement revolved around the contention that the election was rigged in favor of Ellen Johnson Sirelaf. After weeks of “tugs and pulls,” including violent demonstrations by partisans and supporters of George Weah and the Congress for Democratic Change, Weah and the CDC accepted the results.

As Table 6 indicates, no political party won the majority of the seats either in the Senate or the House of Representatives. In the Senate, with the exception of the 7 seats won by the Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia (COTOL), the rest of the 23 seats were roughly divided on an even basis among 7 political parties. In the House of Representatives, the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) won 15 seats. Of the remaining 49 seats, 37 were divided among six political parties. In terms of gender, 25 men and 5 women won seats in the Senate respectively (National Elections Commission 2005f). In the House of Representatives, 56 males and 8 females won their races (National Elections Commission 2005f).

Table 6. The Results of the 2005 Liberian Legislative Elections.

Political Party	Seats in the Senate	Seats in the House
COTOL	7	8
UP	4	8
APD	3	5
CDC	3	15
Independents	3	7
LP	3	9
NPP	3	4
NDPL	2	1
ALCOP	1	2
NRP	1	1
NDM	0	3
UDA	0	1

Source: National Elections Commission. (2005f).

The Determinants of Voting Behavior

The voting behavior of the Liberian electorate was determined by several factors. In some cases, depending on the circumstances of the individual voters, one or more factors were more important than others in determining voting behavior. Nevertheless, “rent-seeking” was a pervasive determinant of voting behavior across varieties of cases and circumstances. Given the burgeoning rate of mass abject poverty and the failure of various regimes to address the country’s perennial crises of democracy, voters viewed the elections as an opportunity to collect “rents”: food, money, and tuition for children, the payment of medical bills, etc. from presidential and legislative candidates in exchange for their votes. Importantly, voters had reached the conclusion that when politicians get elected they do not address the needs of the people. Thus, the electoral season was seen by the voters as opportunities to extract as many material benefits from candidates as possible. In the local Liberian parlance, the electoral season was referred to as “chopping time.”

Realizing the centrality of rents as major determinants of voters’ electoral choices, the preponderant majority of the presidential and legislative candidates concentrated on addressing the short-term materials needs of the voters. For example, some of the candidates opened feeding centers that provided meals to voters on a daily basis. Other candidates combined the provision of meals with entertainment: musical concerts, soccer matches, etc.

In addition, during the campaign period, it was commonplace for voters to ignore the speeches of candidates and demand resources outright. In other cases, voters would wait for candidates to complete their campaign speeches and then pose the

famous question: “What will we be eating until the ‘dog meat’ gets dried?” The translation is: “What material benefits—food, money, etc.—can you provide us in order to survive while we wait for your ‘great ideas and plans’ to be implemented?”

Ultimately, those candidates who provided individual voters with the greatest amount of rent were the ones who got the votes. Particularly, those candidates who used the provision of daily meals to voters as their payment were advantageously positioned to get the votes. This is because food, of all the alternatives, was the most valued resource.

Another major factor was myopia. By and large, voters were more interested in short-term gratification than in long-term issues. Hence, for example, voters were not interested in the discussion of issues such as education, health care, etc. Instead, their primary focus was on the immediate present.

The celebrity factor was the decisive determinant in the behavior of a significant segment of the supporters of George Weah and the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC). These voters’ support was premised on the belief that since George Weah had earned a reputation as a soccer legend, he could therefore transfer the skills to the management of the affairs of the Liberian state as president. In other words, the celebrity factor was based on a simplistic and flawed view that soccer and political skills and abilities are interchangeable.

At the core of the masochistic syndrome is the traditional tendency of the Liberian electorate to reward with votes those who have inflicted pain and harm of all sorts on them. For example, Charles Taylor, who played a major role in visiting death and destruction on Liberians, won a landslide victory during the 1997 elections. The

famous chorus, “Taylor killed my father and mother; but, I will still vote for him,” accentuated how deeply ingrained masochism was in the general psychology of the Liberian populace, including the electorate. During the 2005 elections, voters displayed the same attitude by voting for presidential and legislative candidates who were warlords and supporters of warlordism. Clearly, the masochistic syndrome has played a pivotal role in the nurturing a culture of impunity.

Another major factor was Liberians’ traditional obeisance to the old True Whig Party-dominated ruling class and its associated prominent families. Over the years, Liberians have been socialized to accept the myth that the members of the ruling class and their children were the ones, who had the right to manage the affairs of state. Conversely, those who are not members of the ruling class and its prominent families should not seek public offices, especially the presidency. Clearly, some voters’ choices were determined by the connections the various presidential and legislative candidates had to Liberia’s traditional ruling elite. Based on their socialization, this group of voters cast their votes for candidates primarily on the basis of the candidate’s name and family connections.

The gender of the candidate was the key determining factor of the electoral choices for some women voters. Prior to the holding of the elections, there was an emergent view among Liberian women that the men have dominated the political landscape since the founding of the country and that they have mismanaged the affairs of state, plunging the country into two civil wars. Accordingly, the 2005 presidential and legislative elections provided a golden opportunity for a shift in political power away from the men

to the women. Women made the determination that the power shift could be made a reality through their solidarity with female candidates. Based on the results of the elections, gender played a greater role in conditioning the voting behavior of women in the presidential race than in the legislative ones. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf would neither have come in second in the first leg of the presidential race nor won the run-off election and the presidency without the votes of women. Although women made some modest gains in the legislature (5 women in the Senate and 8 in the House of Representatives), the impact of the women's vote was much more apparent in the presidential race.

The perception among voters that the United States, the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, Nigeria and the rest of the international community were supporting Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the presidency helped to condition the voting behavior of a significant number of voters, especially during the run-off election with George Weah. The perception was anchored in the widespread belief that the members of the international community had made their financial and material support for post-conflict peace-building in Liberia conditional on Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf winning the presidency. Moreover, given Liberia's historic patron-client relationship with the United States the perception that the United States was supporting Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for the presidency was the most important dimension of the external factor. Given the high rates of poverty in Liberia, voters developed the belief that Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had the requisite ties and contacts with the United States and other members of the international community to such a degree that her election as president would herald the massive influx

of American economic and logistical assistance. It is not possible to determine whether the United States and the other members of the international community preferred Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the President of Liberia. This is because even if the international community did prefer Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, they would not go on record and admit it. Nevertheless, the perception and belief became prevalent among the Liberian electorate and was a pivotal factor in making voters cast their ballots for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, especially during the November 8, 2005, run-off election.

Finally, the anti-intellectual factor benefited the candidacy of George Weah and those legislative candidates who possessed minimum levels of formal education. Given the fact that Liberia was plagued by two civil wars over a period of almost 15 years, there is a large reservoir of ex-combatants, mainly young people, who spent their formative years fighting in the various armed militias. During this period, these young people never went to school. Additionally, within this expanding class of *lumpens* are disaffected youths who also never went to school. These young people make their living primarily by engaging in an assortment of criminal activities. Over the years, warlords and others have led these young people to believe that education was not important and that they could become rich by fighting in warlordist militias. The effect was that these young people, mainly child soldiers, became strongly anti-intellectual. Their anti-intellectualism was exacerbated by the belief that the intellectuals were responsible for all of Liberia's problems, including those that bedeviled the members of the *lumpen* class. Given Mr. Weah's own limited formal education and deep roots in the *lumpen* class (despite his later rise to the elite through the income he earned from playing soccer in

Europe), George Weah and his Congress for Democratic Change seized the opportunity to become the party championing the cause of the *lumpens*. Ultimately, the *lumpens* perceived George Weah as their hero. Moreover, in their minds, the presidential race was a contest between George Weah, their hero, and the intellectuals. Moreover, the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) was portrayed by the *lumpens* as the political vehicle for the actualization of their aspirations and hopes. So, the *lumpens* supported George Weah and the CDC fully and completely. For example, the *lumpens*' votes were critical to George Weah's win in the first round of the presidential election. Also, the *lumpens*' votes played critical roles in helping the CDC win the majority of the seats in the House of Representatives.

Conclusion

This article has examined the factors that determined the voting behavior of the Liberian electorate during the country's recent national elections. The findings of the study indicate that a confluence of factors determined voting behavior during the presidential and legislative elections. The study points out that these factors were nurtured in the bowels of Liberia's neo-colonial state and its attendant multifaceted crises of democracy. The factors are: elections as opportunities for the voters to collect rent from the candidates; myopia; masochism; mass subservience to the old ruling class, including its so-called prominent families; the celebrity syndrome; gender, especially the centrality of the women's vote in enabling Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to place second in the first round of the presidential race, and to come first and win the run-off election; the perception among voters that the United States and the rest of the international community were supporting Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; and anti-intellectualism within a major sector of the

electorate—the former combatants, disaffected youths and the totality of the *lumpens*, who supported George Weah.

Finally, this study has two major implications for the general study of voting behavior. First, the study of voting behavior needs to transcend the realms of the United States and Europe and include other regions and countries of the world. Such an approach would help to expand the ambit of the literature on voting behavior. Second, the use of a larger corpus of cases would help to test and refine existing methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks and develop new ones. Clearly, theoretical frameworks that have wider applicability and generalizability would be much more useful to the knowledge-building enterprise than those that have limited application and utility.

Notes

*I am grateful to my colleague Don Zinman, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Grand Valley State University, for his assistance in the identification of major works from the large corpus of scholarly literature on voting behavior.

¹For a comprehensive review of the literature on voting behavior, see Jocelyn Evans' book, *Voters and Voting: An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004.

²The Liberian Constitution of 1847 was in force until the military coup of April 12, 1980. The military regime suspended and subsequently abrogated the 1847 constitution. A new constitution was drafted and promulgated in 1986. However, during the transitional periods of the country's two civil wars (1989-1997) and (2003-2005) portions of the 1986 constitution were suspended, so as to accommodate the exigencies of the various interregnums. On

January 16, 2006, the inauguration of the new post-second civil war government led by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the 1986 constitution gain went into full force.

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Land Use Dynamics in Bieha District, Sissili Province, southern Burkina Faso, West Africa

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Abstract

Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (RS/GIS) tools were used to detect land use dynamics in Bieha District, Burkina Faso. Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM and ETM) data for two dates, 1986 and 2002, were used for the analysis of change. Results indicate that over the 16-year period, important changes occurred on the main geographical units of land use of the area, namely farming fields, shrubby and wooded savannas, and gallery forest. The farming area increased approximately ten-fold from 3,400 to 33,700 hectares and the shrubby savanna decreased from 67,400 to 35,800 hectares. The wooded savanna and gallery forest remained unchanged in terms of area but spatially, every one of the four land use/land cover units underwent profound changes. The deforestation caused by farming activities, brought on by the high in-migration of people, was about 1,800 hectares annually. Wood extraction and bushfires contributed to a loss of 2,110 hectares of forest per annum, calling into question the long term sustainability of the natural resources in the area.

Key words: land use change, satellite imagery, deforestation, Burkina Faso

Introduction

Burkina Faso is a Sahelian country where agriculture and livestock breeding constitute the mainstay of the economy. These two activities account for 90% of employment in the country and contribute about 35% to the gross domestic product (GDP) (CONAGESS 1998; Ganemtore and Aboubacar 2002). These activities are carried out in a rudimentary and spatially extensive way, with a low level of intensification: they are labor rather than capital-intensive activities. These economic activities are believed to

contribute to degradation of the environment (Howorth and O'Keefe 1999; MEE 1999). Indeed, at both the national and sub-regional levels, the government has initiated programs (PNGT, PSSA, PSB, and CILSS) to fight environmental degradation.

The eastern and south-western parts of the country, where population density is low, possess the largest forest reserve of the country (MECV 2004). During the last two decades, the natural resources in these areas have been subjected to pressure

principally linked to agricultural and pastoral migrations, domestic energy requirements, and periodic bush fires (MEE 1996; Henry, Boyle, and Lambin 2003).

Population migration is an issue in Sissili province in southern Burkina Faso. In 1985, 11,945 migrants arrived in the province which contributed to a rise in the immigration rate to 4.88% (Henry, Boyle, and Lambin 2003). This number seems to be rising considerably not only due to the current increase in cotton and yam cultivation in the province, the expansion of agro-businesses, and the return migration of Burkinabe citizens pushed out of Côte d'Ivoire by political instability, but also, and especially, due to the high birth rate of 50.1 per thousand population in the province, which has been the highest in the country (INSD 1996) and indeed, one of the highest in the world.

Agrotechnik (1991) has suggested that Sissili province could only support 30 persons per km² without irreparable damage and IBS (1994) forecasted that some 43% of the Sissili area would be deforested by 2010 due to land-use activities. The conclusions of these estimations, based on five-year interval studies, seem to have been over-generalized from a small sample. Nevertheless, in order to understand the real situation with regard to the state of the natural resources, two questions need to be answered:

1. To what extent are land use activities such as farming, harvesting of fuelwood and bush burning degrading the environment in Sissili province?
2. If the quality of the land is degrading, is the degradation sufficient enough to

ultimately undermine ecosystem services, human welfare and the long-term sustainability of human welfare?

The general aim of the present study was to assess land use change in Sissili Province from 1986 to 2002. In order to achieve this purpose, four specific objectives were defined: 1) to trace land-use in time series (1986 to 2002) in Sissili province and, in particular, the Bieha District; 2) to assess local activities relying on natural resources and the techniques used in natural resources extraction; 3) to analyze the dynamics of each type of land-use unit in the study area; and 4) to suggest steps towards a more sustainable land use pattern for the province based on the findings of the study.

The Study Area

Bieha is one of the seven districts of Sissili province of Burkina Faso (Figure 1). It covers 1,755 km² and represents 25% of the total area of the province. The District comprises 22 villages. The study area is part of the humid Soudanian climatic zone (Guinko 1984, Fontès and Guinko 1995) characterized by an alternation of a dry season from November to April and a rainy season from May to October. The climate is determined by the movement of the intertropical front (Intertropical Convergence Zone or ITCZ). The intertropical front represents the contact zone between the continental dry air mass of the northeast (the harmattan) and of the southeastern humid air mass (the annual monsoon). The dry season is subdivided in two periods; a dry and cool period from November to February during which the harmattan wind dominates, and a dry and hot period from March that precedes the advent of rains in May-June. The rainy season generally ends in October. The average annual precipitation in the

province is between 800 and 1000 mm (Figure 2) but interannual variability is

high: annual precipitation often goes beyond 1000 mm or below 800 mm.

Figure 1. Map of Bieha District (the study area).

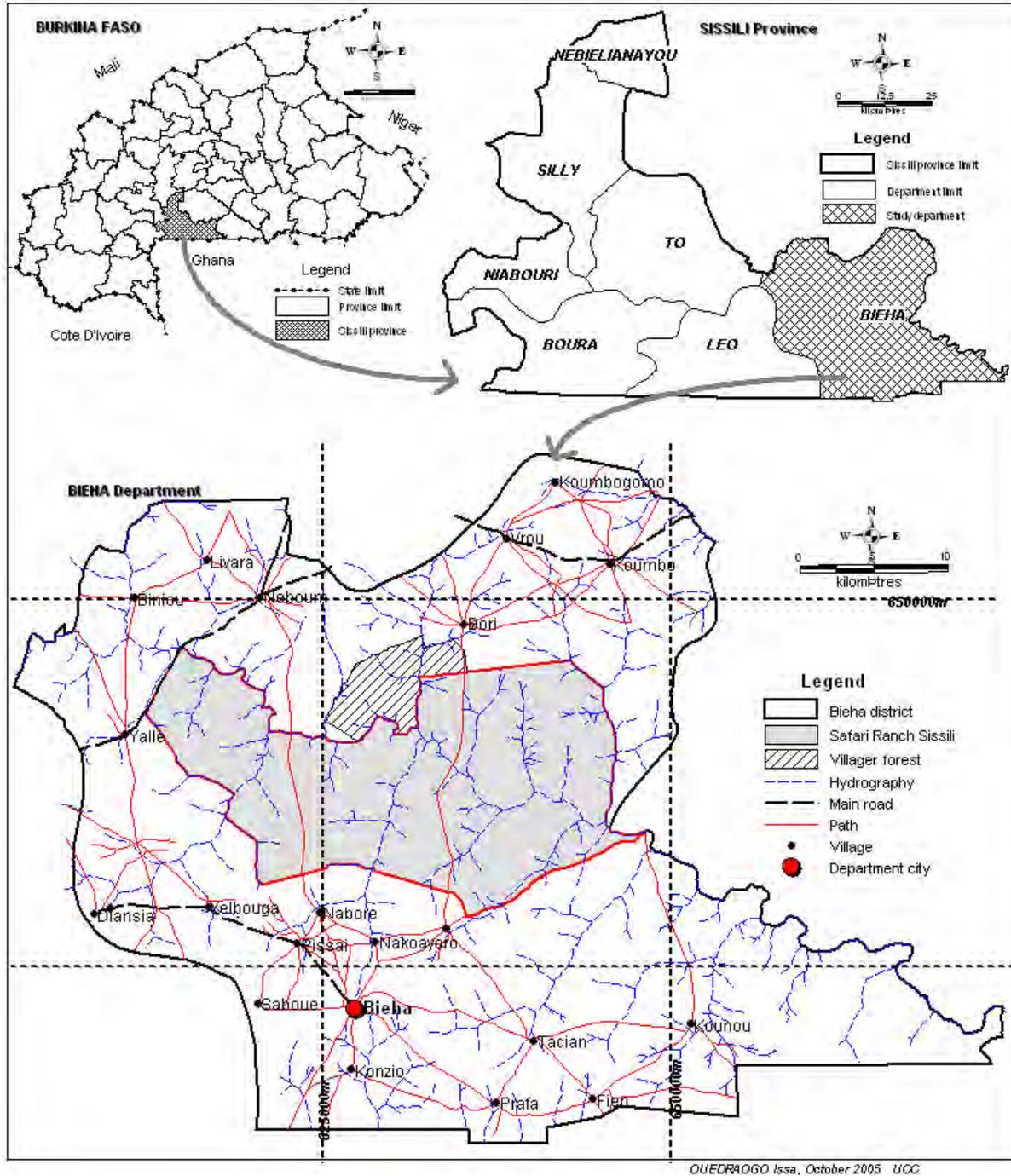
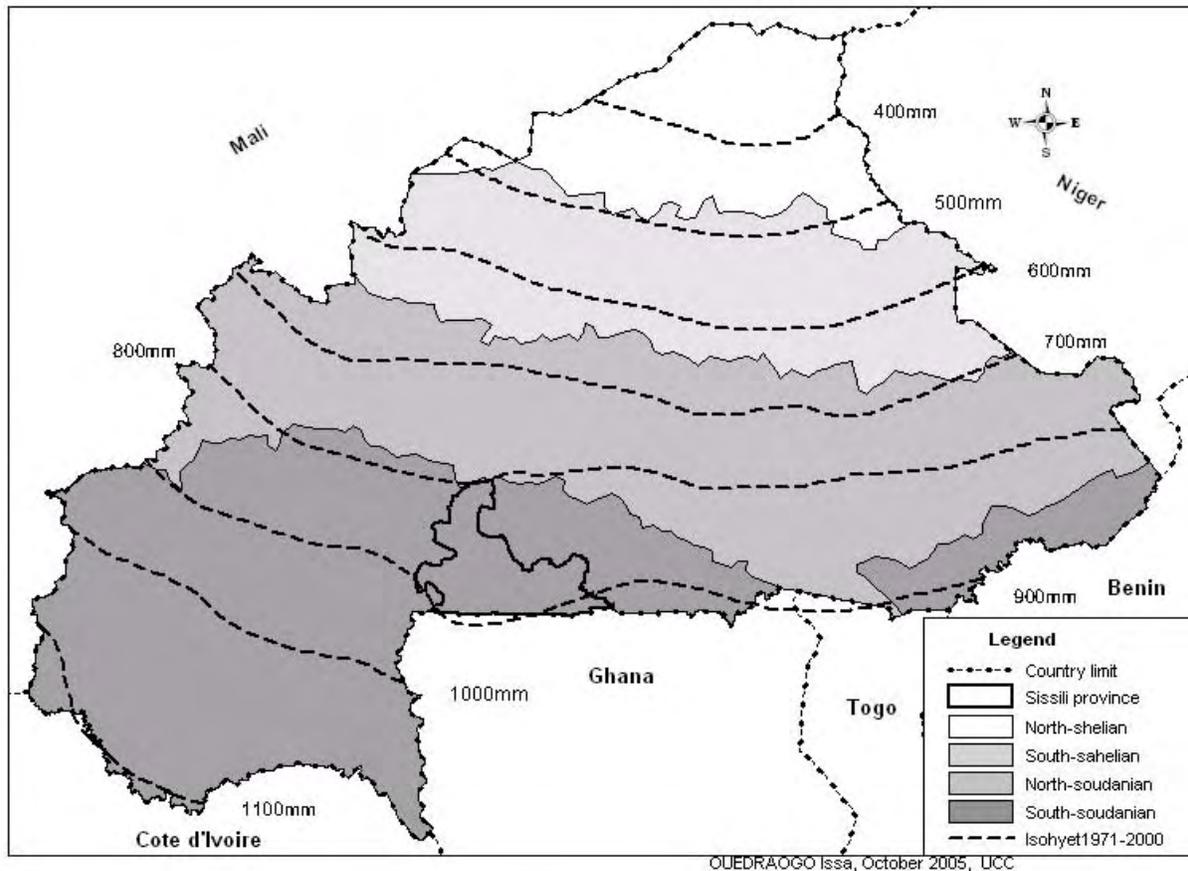


Figure 2. Rainfall isohyets and floristic zones of Burkina Faso



The vegetation of Bieha is termed the Soudano-Guinean type according to the phytogeographical zoning made by Guinko (1984). Vegetation is dominated by shrubby and wooded savannas. The woody vegetation is dominated by *Vitellarea paradoxa*, *Terminalia spp.* and *Combretum spp.* The dominant herbaceous perennials are *Andropogon ascinodis* and *Schizachyrium sanguineum*. The woody species of the valleys are *Anogeissus leiocarpus*, *Daniela oliveri* and *Mitragyna inermis*, associated with *Andropogon gayanus* and *Vitiveria nigriflora* as the dominant herbaceous perennials.

Bieha District is endowed with a classified forest (Safari Ranch, Sissili) with a surface area of 353 km² and a local forest (35 km²) at Bori (Figure 1). Vegetation is especially

dense in these forests because they are protected from cutting, picking, and animal grazing.

The District of Bieha is composed of 22 villages inhabited by three main ethnic groups: the Nuni, the Mossi, and the Fulani. The actual population (January 2006) was 25,634 people with a crude density of 14.6 inhabitants per square kilometer. The Nuni are autochthonous agriculturalists; the Mossi are migrant farmers, forced from the northern and central region of the country by the scarcity of arable land, pasture, and water; and the Fulani are agropastoralists and have recently come to Sissili, although some came earlier to herd the cattle of the Nuni. In total, 7% of the Fulani arrived more than 20 years ago, the remaining, 93% have arrived in the last 15 years (Howorth and

O’Keefe 1999). The main reason behind their immigration was resource degradation in the north and a consequent lack of pasture and dry season watering points.

Agriculture and livestock breeding constitute the main economic activities of the district. Crops grown include yam, maize, red and white sorghum, millet, groundnut, sweet potato, cowpea, black-eyed peas, and cotton. The stock farming involves bovine, ovine, goats and donkeys.

Methodology

Land use refers to the purposes for which humans exploit the land (Fresco 1994). Land cover is defined as the layer of soils and biomass, including natural vegetation, crops and human structures that cover the land surface. Land cover change is the complete replacement of one cover type by another, while land use dynamics also include the modification of land cover type including intensification of agricultural use, without changing its overall classification (Turner, Ross, and Skole 1993).

Land use is determined by the interaction in space and time of biophysical factors (constraints) such as soils, climate, topography, and human factors like

population, technology, and economic conditions (Veldkamp and Fresco 1996). To assess land use dynamics, a framework based on three critical dimensions is proposed for summarizing models of human-environmental dynamics. Time and space are the first two dimensions and provide a common setting in which all biophysical and human processes operate (Chetan, Glen, Morgan, and Tom 2002). In other words, models of biophysical and/or human processes operate either in a temporal context or a spatial context or both. To operationalize the model, two types of data were collected. These quantitative data were generated through the processing of satellite imagery and from sample surveys administered in the study area.

Image processing

Remote sensing and geographic information system (RS/GIS) tools were used to identify and map out the different land use units and their respective areas. The principal data used in the research included Landsat Thematic Mapper satellite images of 1986 and 2002 (Table 1). Digital topographic data with a contour interval of 10 m produced by the Geographic Institute of Burkina Faso (IGB) were also used.

Table 1. Satellite images used for land use detection of Sissili.

Satellite type	Sensor	Image number	Number of bands	Pixel spacing	Observation date
Landsat	TM	195/52	7	30 x 30	18 Nov. 1986
Landsat	TM	195/52	7	30 x 30	21 Oct. 2002

Source: Landsat database.

The TM images were provided by the Institute for Environmental and Agronomic Research (INERA) of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Both images were acquired within the same season (end of the rainy season) and are both at the same resolution of 30 meters. The two

dates have the same vegetation conditions reflecting the climate of the area. According to the farming practices, October and November are the harvesting periods during which precocious bush fires occur. As a consequence, there is a lot of haze in the images which distorts the

reflectance of vegetation. To cope with this limitation of the data, similar nomenclatures were set up based on the physical characteristics of land use.

The ground-truth information required for the classification and accuracy assessment of the images was collected from the field in January 2006 using a training sample protocol. In addition, a self-designed survey format was used to collect field information on vegetation types, the condition and history of land use provided by the local people, and direct observation in the field.

Subsets of satellite images were rectified first for their inherent geometric errors using digital topographic maps in the Modified Universal Transverse Mercator coordinate system. The imagery was registered to the digital topographic maps using distinctive features such as road intersections and stream confluences that are also clearly visible in the image.

The supervised Maximum Likelihood Classification method was used for the classification of the images. Training areas corresponding to each classification item were chosen from among the training samples collected from the field.

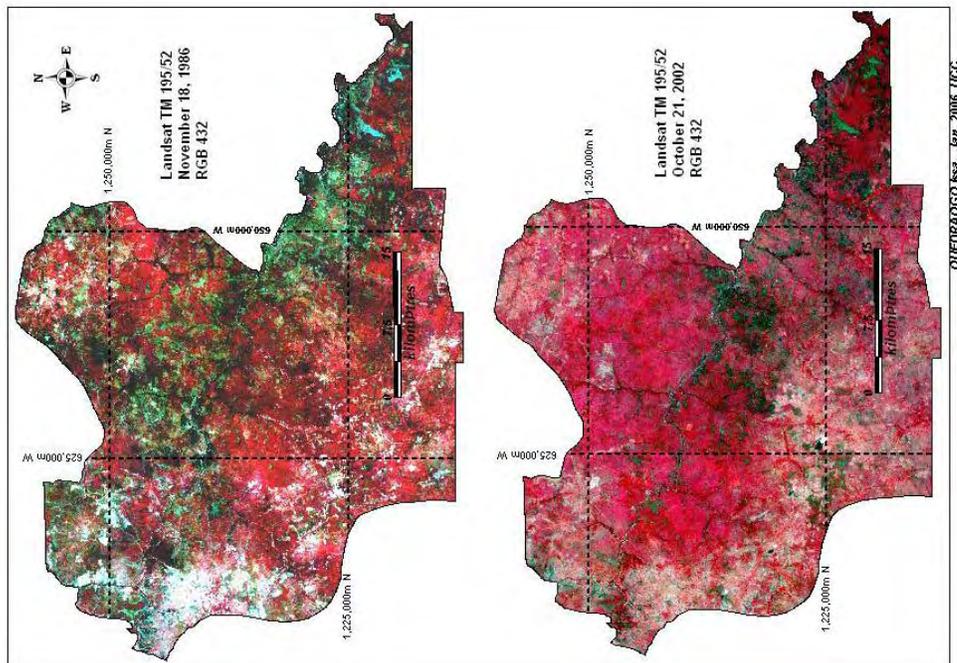
To produce land use maps of 1986 and 2002 and to investigate changes that occurred between these periods, the following four land use classes were considered in image classification: gallery forest, wooded savanna, shrubby savanna, and farm fields. The choice of these land use classes was guided by: 1) the objective of the research, 2) the expected degree of accuracy in image classification, and 3) the ease of identifying classes on false color composites of the images and the ground.

The Winships program was used to convert the images from geotif format to Idrisi raster images. Landsat bands 2, 3 and 4 were used for the image classification because they are especially responsive to the amount of vegetation biomass present in the images. For each image, a 432/RGB false color composite was produced (Figure 3).

After selectively combining classes, classified images were filtered before producing the final output (Figure 4). A 3x3 median filter was applied to smooth the classified images. All activities related to image processing were performed with Idrisi 32.

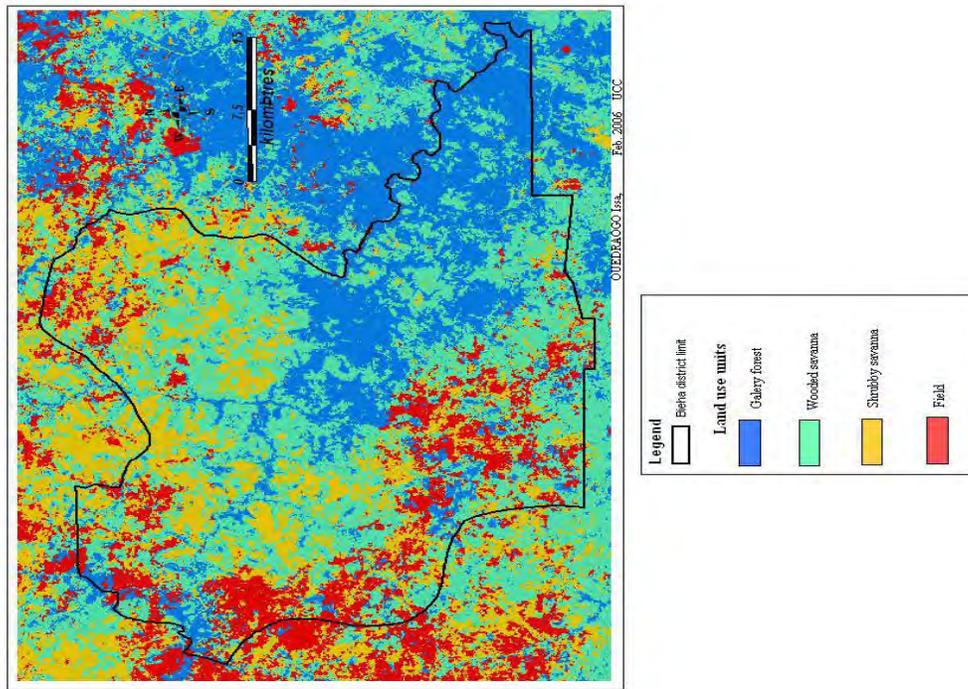
Classified images were converted into vector format, and then exported to ArcView GIS 3.2 from Idrisi. In the ArcView environment, the polygons for each year were clipped to the bounds of the study area and closed. The land use polygon themes for 1986 and 2002 were converted into MapInfo format with the “universal translator” module. Land use units computing and the finishing of the maps were done with MapInfo. The data base was exported to Microsoft Excel in dbf format for further analysis.

Figure 3. False color composites of satellite imagery.



Source: Landsat TM image and author's design.

Figure 4. Supervised classification of Landsat image of Bieha district in 2002.



Source: Landsat image processing.

It was difficult to separate fallow from the other land use/cover units since it appeared very similar to farm fields, shrubby savanna, or wooded savanna in accordance with the length of time since the last cultivation. Presence of clouds in parts of the TM image was the second major problem encountered during image classification. The clouds were classified as separate classes and later combined with their respective adjacent land use classes with the help of ground-truth information. The third and last problem concerned the bushfire detection. It was quite difficult to map the bushfires due to the fact that the early-fires do not completely destroy the grasses since they were still green. Immediately after the fire, grasses and leaves regrew and affected the detection of the impact of the fire in the ground by the satellite.

Population interviews

A survey instrument comprised of closed-ended questions divided into sixteen sections was administered to a sample of local residents to collect data on perceptions of vegetation, animals, soil, water, arable land, and migration dynamics in the district. The target population was the total population (male and female) of 25,634 in Bieha district who were 40 years old or more and who have been living in the district for at least 20 years. The assumption was that people who satisfied these two conditions were old enough and possessed enough experience to provide accurate recall information related to the sixteen sub-themes of the survey instrument in 1986, 1996, and 2006. The fieldwork began on March 18 and ended on March 28, 2006. In each of the selected villages, the survey was administered using the snowball method.

Results

The results of the image processing (Figure 5) show that in 1986 Bieha district was dominated by flourishing natural vegetation composed of shrubby savanna (38%), wooded savanna (32%), and by gallery forest (27%). The land devoted to farming activities represented only 2% of the district. However, by 2002, the farm fields had increased in size and occupied 19% of the district. The shrubby savanna dropped by nearly 50% but the wooded savanna and gallery forest kept nearly their original size over the 16-year period (Table 2 and Figure 6).

Respondents drawn from the local population contributed their perceptions of the trend of environmental change. They recognized that the vegetation (both trees and grasses) was decreasing in size, number and species. Respondents also reported a declining trend with regard to wild animals, the availability and the productivity of arable land, and the availability of permanent water in the district.

Figure 5. Land use detected in 1986 and 2002.

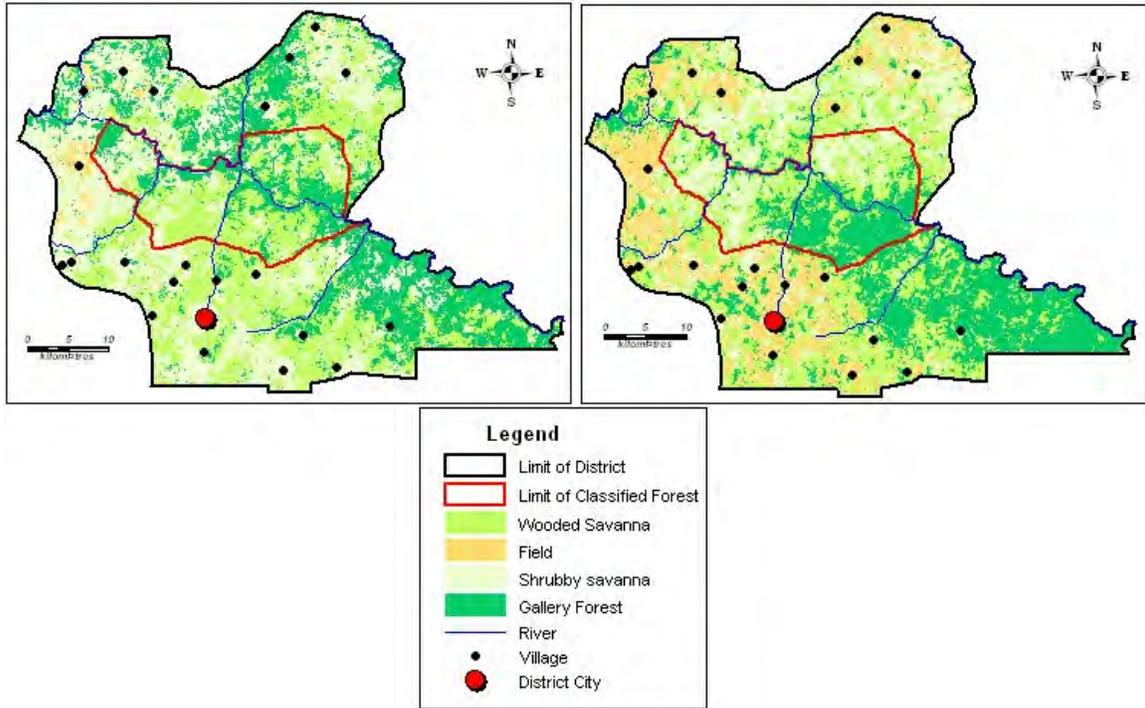
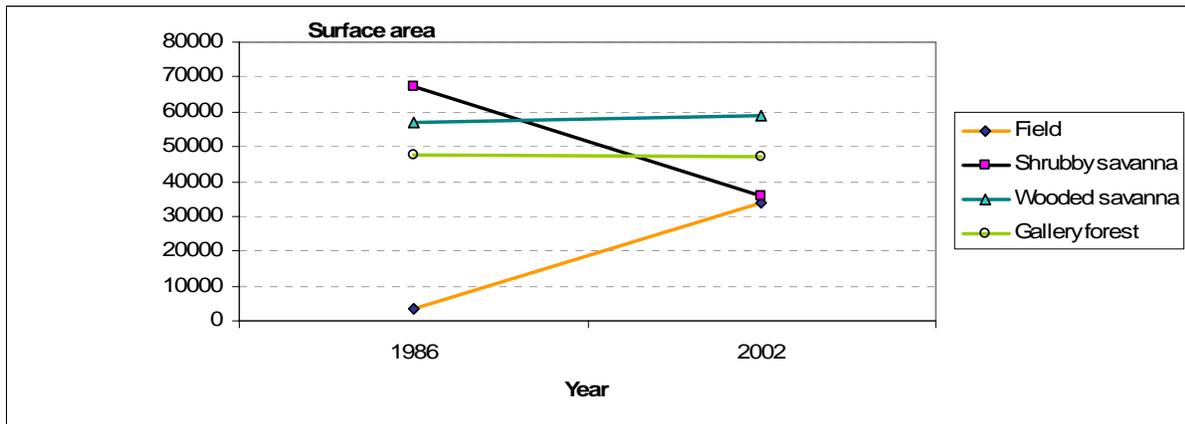


Table 2. Land use types and change from 1986 to 2002 (ha).

Land use types	1986		2002		Land Use Change	
	Area	%	Area	%	Area	%
Farm fields	3,438.69	1.9	33,686.64	19.1	30,247.95	17.2
Shrubby savanna	67,427.46	38.4	35,818.88	20.4	-31,608.58	-18.0
Wooded savanna	56,967.57	32.4	58,714.6	33.4	1,747.03	0.9
Gallery forest	47,634.09	27.1	47,240.36	26.9	-393.73	-0.2
Total	175,467.81	100.0	175,460.48	100.0	-	-

Source: Author's study.

Figure 6. Land use change in study area from 1986 to 2002.



To better understand the changes that were detected during the 16-year period, the time series land use maps were superimposed. To facilitate geoprocessing in ArcView GIS and crosstabulations in Excel, the four land use units previously defined were coded as follows: farm field: Ff; shrubby savanna: Ss; wooded savanna: Ws, and gallery forest: Gf.

From the combination (Table 3) it was observed that 66.8% of the farm field units (i.e. 1.3% of Bieha district), mainly old farm fields, was more than 16 years old, while about 33.2% had been transformed into shrubby savanna, wooded savanna and gallery forest. These were classified as fallows and represented 0.6% of the district. Some areas which were covered by natural vegetation in 1986 were converted into farm fields within the 16-year period. These new farm fields comprised 8% of the gallery forest, 27.8% of the shrubby savanna, and 15.4% of the wooded savanna; representing 18% of the district.

Some areas covered by natural vegetation in 1986 remained intact in 2002. These consisted of 46.9% of the gallery forest,

24.3% of the shrubby savanna, and 38.6% of the wooded savanna; and represented 34.7% of the district.

In the 16-year period, crude deforestation to make way for agricultural activities represented 17% of the district. The net deforestation was calculated by excluding the fallow areas from the crude deforestation. The average annual deforestation rate due to farming activities was 1.025 %. This means that about 1,798.5 hectares were cleared every year to make way for agriculture. The deforestation caused by the other factors in the natural vegetation concerned those areas which lost vegetation cover and hence were transformed into degraded units. These included 7% of wooded savanna which changed into shrubby savanna and 12.2% of gallery forest which changed into wooded savanna and shrubby savanna. That type of deforestation covered 19.2% of the district during the 16 years. The average annual deforestation rate due to agents other than agriculture was 1.2%, which was about 2,105.5 hectares per year.

Table 3. Dynamics of land use units.

Land use change	Area (ha)	General rate (%) in 1986	Change rate per unit (%) in 2002	Observations
Dynamics of the Farm fields				
<i>FfFf</i>	2,287.87	1.3	66.83	Old farm fields
<i>FfGf</i>	204.88	0.1	5.98	Fallow/Afforestation
<i>FfSs</i>	538.01	0.3	15.72	Fallow/Afforestation
<i>FfWs</i>	392.75	0.2	11.47	Fallow/Afforestation
Total	3,423.51	1.9	100.0	-
Dynamics of the Gallery forest				
<i>GfFf</i>	3,810.70	2.2	8.03	New field/Deforestation
<i>GfGf</i>	22,275.66	12.8	46.96	Not disturbed
<i>GfSs</i>	6,501.11	3.7	13.70	Deforestation
<i>GfWs</i>	14,843.01	8.5	31.29	Deforestation
Total	47,430.48	27.2	100.0	-
Dynamics of the Shrubby savanna				
<i>SsFf</i>	18,694.83	10.7	27.85	New field/Deforestation
<i>SsGf</i>	10,787.09	6.2	16.07	Afforestation
<i>SsSs</i>	16,367.74	9.4	24.38	Not disturbed
<i>SsWs</i>	21,285.01	12.2	31.70	Afforestation
Total	67,134.67	38.5	100.0	-
Dynamics of the Wooded savanna				
<i>WsFf</i>	8,746.05	5.0	15.42	New field/Deforestation
<i>WsGf</i>	13,772.86	7.9	24.28	Afforestation
<i>WsSs</i>	12,258.55	7.0	21.61	Deforestation
<i>WsWs</i>	21,944.88	12.5	38.69	Not disturbed
Total	56,722.34	32.3	100.0	-

Source: Author's study.

Some areas did improve their vegetation cover during the 16-year period. These included: fallow, covering 0.6% of the district; gallery forest, covering 7.9% (which changed from wooded savanna); and 12.2% of gallery forest—also from shrubby savanna. The afforestation rate of 26.9% of

the district during the 16-year period covered 2,950 hectares annually. It is worth noting that the afforestation occurred exclusively in the protected areas where vegetation suffered no stress from grazing, fuelwood extraction, or bushfires.

The annual deforestation rate caused by farming activities during the period (1.025%) is much higher than the national deforestation rate caused by agriculture, estimated at 0.2% by the FAO (2000) and 0.34% by Butler (2005). These changes resulted mainly from population pressure, agribusinesses, and poverty in the area.

The population of Bieha was 15,043 in 1985, 20,643 in 2002 (INSD 1996) and 25,634 people in 2006 (INSD 2006). On the basis of the natural growth rate of the population of Burkina Faso, which was estimated at 2.4% in the 1996 census (INSD 2004), the population of Bieha should be roughly 21,983 inhabitants in 2006. The current high population shows the importance of in-migration in the district. In fact, from 1996 to 2006, 3,651 immigrants arrived in the district. Respondents to the present survey reported increasing in-migration as well. The region has become one of the main destinations for migrants from the poor and overexploited lands of the northern and central parts of the country. The migration flow was amplified by the opportunity to cultivate the cash crops cotton and maize in the relatively well-watered south of the country. Following the rapid growth of population through migration, new lands have been brought under cultivation in the district, a move facilitated by the wide diffusion of draught animals in recent years. A shortening of the fallow period and the increasing use of fertilizers are now noticeable tendencies that unmistakably reflect the rising pressure on cultivated land, particularly land suitable for cotton growing.

Under conditions of increased demographic pressure, the most pressing issue for farmers is to change land use practices or land use patterns, or both, to ensure food security and income. The population of Bieha is facing

this reality by increasing farming acreage, intensifying production, reducing the duration of fallow, and even suspending fallow, and using fertilizers and draught animals.

Migration into the area was encouraged by the local land tenure system. Breusers' (2001) study on land and mobility in Burkina Faso reported that mobility was not only made possible by the prevailing land tenure regime but also underpinned its flexibility and allowed the merging and shifting of rights. In Burkina Faso, the land tenure system legally in force is the Land and Agrarian Reforms (RAF), adopted in 1985, which stipulated that the management of urban and rural lands, water, forests, fauna, fisheries and mines belongs to the State. Unfortunately, the RAF has not yet been widely accepted and in most of the villages in the country it is the local land tenure system that is applied. In Sissili province, each village has its own defined territory and history of occupation. Tenure management in Sissili, according to Howorth and O'Keefe (1999) is based on customary law arrangements between the land chief (generally from one of the original families of settlers) and those searching for land to farm (strangers). In this context the population (or migrants) forced out of their northern homelands due to deteriorating physical conditions easily acquired farm land in this region.

The population pressure also increased competition for resources in Bieha and forced some farmers to abandon sustainable farming methods and exploit marginal lands in an effort to secure their incomes and feed their families. Conflict becomes highly likely when this process leads to deepened poverty, widespread food insecurity, large scale in-migration, sharpened social cleavage and weakened institutions.

The second factor that contributed to the rapid change in farmed areas is the increase in agribusinesses in the area of study. There used to be large-scale farms in Bieha involving individuals and mostly government ministers, directors of services and traders. These officers and traders tended to be absentee farmers mostly based in the capital city, Ouagadougou, and employing casual laborers. Such labor was not surveyed during the field work since the target populations in this study were the permanent residents of the district. However the information on the large-scale farms was demanded from key informants such as the land chiefs since the absentee farmers formally come to the land chiefs to obtain farm land. According to the local authorities, each agribusiness farm covers 40 to 100 hectares of land for cotton and maize growing and/or for cashew plantation. Once the absentees obtain the land from the chiefs, they quickly go back to Ouagadougou or Leo (a provincial center) to register the land. With the use of tractors and other machinery, and sometimes irrigation, such farming activities have contributed to the immense change in land use in Bieha district in particular and in Sissili province in general.

The third factor is poverty. Haberg (2000) reported that migration in Burkina Faso seems to be a strategy used by households to reduce poverty. Poverty usually drives those affected to rely more on natural resources for survival. The survey showed that the population of Bieha was comprised of farmers and/or livestock breeders, deeply dependant on natural resources for survival. The focus of these people was more on resources for their immediate needs rather than on those whose benefits may materialize only in the long term. Furthermore, there is lack of relevant resources, reducing options available for

proper conservation practices, resulting in the inappropriate use of land and degradation.

The immediate consequence of the increased farming is land degradation. Land degradation is the aggregate reduction of the productivity potential of the land, including its major uses (arable, irrigated, forest, etc.) and its value as an economic resource (Stocking and Murnaghan 2001). Land has been degrading in Bieha but differentially depending upon the use. The degradation was observed from the decrease in crop production, the decrease in soil fertility and the increasing food shortage. It was also worsened by the non-availability of water in the rivers immediately after the rains. Farmers have had to resort to the application of chemical fertilizer and animal dung to replenish exhausted soils. A related long-term consequence of the degradation may be conflicts linked to competition for land between indigenous people and the migrants.

The dynamics of the forests (shrubby savanna, wooded savanna and gallery forest), beside the farming activities are caused by fuel wood extraction, overgrazing, and bush fires. Fuel wood constitutes the principal source of energy not only in Bieha district but also in the whole of Burkina Faso. In the district, wood was cut for making charcoal for sale or sale directly as fuel wood. Several locations of charcoal making and places of wood and charcoal selling were identified during the field work. In the district, two offices of foresters were in operation: one based in Bieha village and the other at Neboun. These two posts were charged to plan the wood cutting in the district, to give licenses for cutting, and to collect taxes from cutting, selling and transporting wood or charcoal. Nevertheless, some people operated

clandestinely and escaped the foresters' patrols.

Grazing was allowed beyond the protected zones in the district. As grasses were nearly always abundant and green, the area attracted several stock breeders locally from around Sissili province and from other, more distant provinces. There is no document which provides the exact number of domestic animals in the district due to their constant mobility through the countryside, but the 900,000 animals reported for the whole of Sissili province in 2003 was substantial (Direction des Etudes et de la Planification 2003). There was no form of stabling or fodder cultivation for animals and, worst of all, the project on grazing zone management in the district was suspended due to the resistance of the villagers. During dry seasons, the breeders frequently cut *Azelia Africana*, *Andansonia digitata*, and other palatable species whose leaves remain green, to feed their animals. The effects of animals on vegetation are numerous (Middleton 1997; Middleton and Thomas 1997; Chikamai and Kigomo 2003). On one hand, they destroy young trees by grazing and stamping and, on the other hand, their stamping compacts the soil and reduces the infiltration of water.

Bushfire is one of the more important factors that causes deforestation and loss of species in most of Sub-Saharan Africa (Aubreville 1949; Kambou and Poussi 1997; Yameogo 2005). Most of the population of Bieha was not unaware of the negative effect of bushfires on vegetation and wildlife: 58.6% of the respondents recognized the destructive effects of the fires on the vegetation. Respondents also reported that the low number of foresters (two for the whole district) rendered fire control ineffective. During the field work conducted as part of the present research, aside from

the protected zones and the bush around the villages of Biniou and Livara (which had not yet been burnt), it was observed that the entire district had suffered from bushfire at least once. Three types of bushfires are practiced in the area: namely early fire, intermediate fire, and late fire. The early fire takes place about a month after the last rains (December). The effects of this fire on the vegetation are negligible at that time because grasses and leaves of the trees are still green and only the dry grasses are consumed. The early fires are used by the foresters in the national parks to stimulate the sprouting of grasses for wild animals. The intermediate fires come at a time when half of the grasses are dry (January-February). The late fires occur in March-April, when grasses are completely dry, causing severe effects on the vegetation and killing a large number of trees each year. In addition, the productivity of the trees is reduced because these dates correspond to the flowering period of *Vitellaria paradoxa*, *Bombax costatum*, *Sclerocarya birrea*, *Adansonia digitata*, *Lanea microcarpa*, *Lanea acida*, *Parkia biglobosa*, *Saba senegalensis*, *Detarium microcarpum*, etc.

People who light bushfires may be punished by the government (MECV 2004) but up to the present no culprit has been found. Accusations are leveled against stock breeders (Fulani, hunters, cigar smokers, etc.) but obviously there is lack of clear political will to fight bushfires in the area.

The degradation of the vegetation cover in Sissili, if not checked, will lead to negative consequences which may be physical, demographic, and/or economic. Physical consequences of forest depletion concern soil degradation, desertification, and food insecurity. According to Pedro (1997), trees have a different impact on soil properties than annual crops because they remain in the

soil longer, have longer biomass accumulation, and longer-lasting, more extensive root systems. Smaling (1993) reported that losses caused by surface runoff, erosion and leaching account for about half of the Nitrogen (N) Phosphate (P) and Potassium (K) depletion in Africa. When forest is depleted all these properties are lost giving rise to soil degradation which leads in turn to desertification, defined by Grouzis (1981), Thiombiano (2000), and Ouédraogo (2002) as “the loss of the biological productivity of the soils which progressively transform to desert or to skeletal, irreparable soil.” The forest of Bieha was home to hundreds of plant species and thousands of animal species. Forest degradation is causing the loss of its biological diversity in terms of genetic, species diversity, and ecological losses.

Once a soil becomes degraded, food production declines, food insecurity increases, and conflicts may arise that in turn may lead to the movement of the population to other areas. Most of the people in the district depend on crop, wood and charcoal production for their incomes. Furthermore, the women of the district make their livelihood from non-timber forest products such as shea nut harvesting. The shea nut, a product of the *Vitellaria paradoxa* tree, is locally processed and the shea butter is consumed locally and sold in the global marketplace to be exported to Europe and North America. Women also use the fruit of *Parkia biglobosa* (African locust bean) to produce sumbala, a condiment widely consumed across Burkina Faso and the rest of West Africa. Fruits of *Saba senegalensis*, *Detarium microcarpum* and *Ziziphus mauritiana* are also commercialized by the women. Loss of forest thus means loss of economic resources for women.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine land use trends from 1986 to 2002 in a southern province of Burkina Faso. The sixteen-year time span considered in this study is a short increment of time in a long history of land use dynamics. This time period was chosen based upon the availability of current and compatible satellite imagery for classification and change detection. This period also coincides with a period of substantial increase in agricultural activity in the area due to the interest given to maize and cotton cultivation and cashew and mango plantations.

It is important to consider this time period in the grand scheme of land use and land cover characteristics in Sissili province. The province was mostly forested before migrant Fulani and Mossi settlement arrived in the 1980s following the drought of 1970s.

Bieha District, which constitutes 25% of the area of Sissili province and was home for 11% of the population of the province in 2002, may represent conditions throughout the province. The findings from this study in Bieha District may reflect the real state of the natural resources in the whole of Sissili province. Natural resources are degrading at a considerable pace in the province due mostly to human activities, namely agriculture, grazing, fuel wood extraction, hunting and bushfires. Further research is recommended in order to extend the analysis geographically. It is also recommended that additional imagery be acquired to extend the time series data backward in time.

Natural resource conservation and restoration strategies in Sissili province must focus on reducing the influx of environmental refugees, encouraging the intensification rather than extensification of

crop production, reducing the impact of livestock on annual and perennial vegetation, combating bushfires, and researching the development of new energy sources.

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Skepticism over the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership

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On October 26, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, a London-based organization, formally launched a new prize for achievement in African leadership. The prize—the world’s biggest—will recognize African former Heads of State or Government who have demonstrated exemplary leadership. The winner will get \$5 million over 10 years and \$200,000 annually for life thereafter. There will also be a further \$200,000 a year made available for good causes espoused by the leader. The Foundation plans to announce the first winner in 2007. Since its announcement, the new prize has generated both a great deal of enthusiasm and skepticism.

Who is Mo Ibrahim and Why the Prize?

The prize is named after Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim, the founder of Celtel International and one of Africa’s most successful and respected business leaders. Born in Sudan 60 years ago, Dr. Mo got an engineering degree and worked for a telecommunications company in Sudan. He immigrated to Britain in 1975 and got his Ph.D. in the then obscure field of mobile telecommunications. After working for British Telecom (BT) just as it was beginning to use new telecom technologies, Dr. Mo set up his own company, Mobile Systems International (MSI), which designed mobile phone networks all over the world. A few years later, he sold MSI for \$900 million and started Celtel whose goal was to develop and bring mobile phone services to Africa. This business venture turned out to be Dr. Mo’s stroke of genius,

an idea rooted in his faith in the potential of the continent. Against the dominant afro-pessimism of the time, which did not think that Africans could make the technological leap to wireless technology and thus overlooked some fundamental parameters, Dr. Mo saw only a great potential. In point of fact, even Dr. Mo had underestimated African demand and exceptional adaptability. Between 1999 and 2004, there was a tenfold increase in mobile phones users on the continent, from 7.5 million to 76.8 million. By far, this is the fastest growing telecommunications market in the world. Africans have jumped from no phone to the era of cell phone. From taxi drivers to market women, from government officials to fisherman, from university students to nomads, the mobile phone revolution has changed the way people communicate and do business. This technological boom clearly shows that the demand was not only at the top, but also at the bottom at the society. The mobile phone has brought a new dynamism in many countries lacking effective forms of transport or communication. Dr. Mo sold Celtel to a Kuwaiti company, MIC, in 2005 for \$6 billion. He made a personal profit of \$640 million and is now allocating \$100 million of his profit to fund the Prize for Achievement in African Leadership. What has motivated him to do so?

Dr. Mo’s generous philanthropic initiative is rooted in his business experience in the continent, which has convinced him, among others, of the following:

1. “Nothing is as important as good governance in ensuring development and reducing poverty.” There is a growing consensus on this point. Dr. Mo hopes that the new prize will promote good governance by encouraging African leaders to consider a fourth option in addition to those they currently face when nearing the end of their term: relative poverty, term extension, or corruption. The prize is intended to put wind in the sails of the positive trends already occurring in Africa. Still, almost half of the 53 current African presidents have been in power for more than 10 years and 15 have been in power for more than 15 years. There are fewer ex-presidents living than presidents ruling. All in all, the idea is to encourage good governance in a continent whose fantastic potential has been sapped by pervasive corruption. The hope is that the prize will serve as a temptation reducer. As one observer of African politics put it:

They (presidents and prime ministers) might even feel competitive pressure to demonstrate clean hands. In retirement, they will also have the financial independence to keep speaking out and setting a good example—a likely attraction for African leaders who haven’t been able to make money by lecturing or writing memoirs. (McAllister 2006).

2. “Foreign Aid provides bandages and doesn’t solve the fundamental problems.” For decades, international donors have been trying to use aid in bringing about change in governance in Africa. Although some progress has been made, there is no evidence to suggest that this approach has been successful. Africa’s endemic corruption, as measured by Transparency International’s Perceptions Corruption Index, is a clear indication of a failed strategy. Against this background, Dr. Mo thinks that a more

direct approach based on positive financial reward could make the difference.

The Mo prize has two main goals: to celebrate achievement of successful leaders and to stimulate debate and attention to the idea of good governance. The Mo prize is backed by a handful of political personalities and celebrities ranging from Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Bono, Koffi Annan, Mary Robinson and Nelson Mandela. The latter has said that the prize will contribute to the political and economic rebirth of Africa. However that may be, not everyone is convinced.

What Are the Selection Criteria by Which Good Governance will be Assessed?

The Mo Ibrahim prize will be awarded to former executive heads of state or government in Sub-Saharan Africa who have dedicated their constitutional tenure of office to surmounting the development challenges of their country, improving the welfare of their people and consolidating the foundations for sustainable development. To assess good governance, the Mo Foundation has partnered with Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government whose Director of the Program on Conflict and Conflict Resolution, Dr. Robert Rotberg, has developed an operational tool called *The Ibrahim Index for African Governance*, which will guide the Prize Committee in selecting the winner. The Ibrahim Index represents a new and comprehensive ranking of Sub-Saharan African nations according to the following areas of governance quality:

1. Sustainable development.
2. Human development: health and education.
3. Transparency and empowerment of civil society.
4. Democracy and human rights.
5. Rule of law and security.

According to the proponents of the index, the five areas of selection provide a holistic definition of good governance, contrasting sharply with current ranking systems that tend to focus on particular components of governance, such as economic performance or human rights. The Ibrahim Index has been developed in recognition of the need for a more comprehensive, objective and quantifiable method of assessing good governance. It encompasses a broad vision of development, which seeks economic, political, social, as well as environmental progress. The first index and the first winner will be made public in 2007. Based on the five criteria listed above, it seems likely that the prize should go to the leader who has been democratically elected, steps down when the constitution demands and has made life better for his fellow citizens. Meanwhile, the initiative has already attracted a great deal of attention and skepticism.

Who are the skeptics?

Those who are skeptical about the worth of the Mo Prize have expressed concerns which can be organized around the following criticisms, each of which will be dealt with below.

1. The prize reinforces the image of the corrupt African leader.
2. The prize misreads Africa's problems.
3. The prize won't promote good governance.

1. The prize reinforces the image of the corrupt African leader.

These critics argue that, despite the good intentions, the prize will, in fact, fuel the public perception that African leaders are so corrupt they will leave power only when offered a monetary incentive. Some have already called the prize a new "bribe to Africa's leaders." Furthermore, there is the

perception that African leaders are being treated as a special breed, different from other world leaders. Why pay people who do what their constitutional duties require them to do? The money would be better spent building schools and hospitals or training teachers and doctors: in short, on laying the foundations of a more substantive development of the continent.

2. The prize misreads Africa's problems.

Other skeptics have pointed out the fact that "the thinking behind the prize is flawed because it puts the emphasis and responsibility for good governance on one person." They argue that the prize targets individuals and reaffirms the paramount importance of the principle of the "big man," which is exactly one of the key impediments to Africa's development. A feature of African culture that, in some cases, was reinforced by the colonial experience, the big man's paternalism needs to be replaced with the principle of individual and collective responsibility by which the people take ownership of their own destiny. Skeptics to the Mo Prize have argued that it misunderstands the problems of Africa. It misses the point that those who keep governments accountable are ordinary people—not big men—and that accountability to the people needs to be strengthened. Skeptics contend that Dr. Mo should have put his money in building civil society and institutions—parliaments, for example—that can hold the leaders accountable and build on positive trends that are already observable on the continent.

3. The prize won't promote good governance.

Some have issue with the overall goal of the prize. They are convinced that the prize will have little effect in promoting good governance because it emphasizes the power wielded by individual leaders and fails to

recognize the real causes of corruption and abuse of power in Africa. It seems that some African leaders, such as Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, appear to cling to power for power's sake not money, or out of the belief that they are irreplaceable. As Patrick Smith of *African Confidential* put it, "The people who know what to do and have done well are already doing it. The people who are doing badly and are killing their own people or stealing state resources are going to carry on doing that." Good governance is rooted in a fundamental belief in the common good and in leaving a legacy which not measurable in number of luxurious cars, mansions or Swiss bank accounts. This is what is missing in many African leaders.

Despite its flaws and limitations, I support the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership. There is no magic bullet. Promoting good governance requires a multidimensional approach. Everything that can be done to support positive trends in Africa must be encouraged. Awarding a prize in recognition of those who have governed well is just one of many avenues to foster good governance in Africa. Dr. Mo has shown great generosity and his plan is worth a try. Like Alfred Nobel, Cecil Rhodes, or Bill Gates, Dr. Mo has entered the fraternity of capitalist-entrepreneurs turned philanthropist.

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The Mo Ibrahim Foundation offers additional information on the prize at www.Moibrahimfoundation.org.

The Politics of AIDS in Africa

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In *The Politics of AIDS in Africa*, Dr. Patterson, a member of the Department of Political Science at Calvin College, examines the impact of a variety of political variables on HIV/AIDS policy in Africa. The author's writing style is lively and readable although the frequent use of acronyms ("PLWHA" means "people living with HIV/AIDS" while "PMTCT" refers to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS") is sometimes distracting. At the back of the book the author does provide a handy, two-page guide to decipher the acronyms.

The text consists of six chapters comprising a total of 188 pages not counting the front and back matters. The first chapter, "Why study the politics of AIDS?," provides a convincing justification for the study. Chapter two, "The African state and the AIDS pandemic," presents a case study of four countries that explores the four key characteristics of the state hypothesized by the author to be important to its ability to respond to AIDS: centralization, neopatrimonialism, capacity, and security. In a large sense, Chapter two also furnishes justification for a political approach to understanding AIDS in Africa and acts as a device to bring the reader to the deeper treatment in Chapters three through five. These three chapters go beyond the case study to examine many more Sub-Saharan African countries and the impacts of two

political variables, democracy (Chapter 3) and civil society (Chapter 4), and a politico-economic variable, international aid (Chapter 5). The last chapter, Chapter 6: "Beyond politics as usual: Institutionalizing the AIDS struggle," summarizes what has gone before and offers prescriptions for a future where the politics of AIDS will no longer be "politics as usual."

In the remainder of this review, I will present the author's arguments, results, and some discussion of the implications.

In Chapter two, the author admits that she would like to be able to predict HIV/AIDS prevalence in a group or country with reference to the political institutions of that country. But this causal relationship is weakened by the fact that the complicated etiology of HIV/AIDS cannot be reduced to its political dimensions alone—there are many more non-political and more proximate causes. Furthermore, empirically measuring these political dimensions and those related to HIV/AIDS prevalence is far from an exact science. The author acknowledges the complex causality and the difficult task before her. The relationship examined was how four elements of the state (centralization, neopatrimonialism, capacity, stability) affect HIV/AIDS policies in a country. The dependent variable, "Policy to combat HIV/AIDS," was operationalized (measured) with the AIDS

Program Effort Index (API) scores. The API index data, collected by an alphabet soup of international agencies (USAID, UNAIDS, WHO, and the POLICY Project), represents scores in 10 different areas (dimensions) of AIDS-related response and is measured by 167 separate questions (See Appendix C. AIDS Program Effort Index Questionnaire in USAID et al. 2003).

1. Political support.
2. Policy and planning.
3. Organizational structure.
4. Program resources.
5. Evaluation, monitoring, and research.
6. Legal and regulatory environment.
7. Human rights.
8. Prevention programs.
9. Care and treatment services.
10. Mitigation programs.

The API measure looks at particular actions (state prevention programs; how often political leaders have discussed AIDS; how the AIDS bureaucracy is organized; law to protect people against discrimination, etc.) and each country is scored on its actions, institutions, and policies. It is this score that was used as the dependent variable in the author's analysis reported in Chapter 2 of the book.

The conclusion of this particular part of the study is that the critical factor in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the four hard-hit countries of the case studies was the personal leadership of the man in power—President Mbeki in South Africa, King Mswati in Swaziland, President Museveni in Uganda, and President Mugabe in Zimbabwe—and its political context. While leadership does matter, it is not sufficient alone to understand AIDS actions in these countries. Mbeki's actions must be understood in a larger context of a South Africa without truly competitive elections

where power is increasingly centralized in the ANC (African National Congress, the party of Mbeki and the dominant political party since majority rule). Likewise, Museveni's actions in Uganda, while critical, must be understood in the context of a state facing great instability.

The relationship between democracy and AIDS is tackled in Chapter three, "Democratic transitions: A new opportunity to fight AIDS." In this chapter the author examines five questions focused on democracy and HIV/AIDS: 1) citizens want government to prioritize HIV/AIDS; 2) citizens will mobilize through civil society to influence government policy on HIV/AIDS; 3) government will respond to public concerns about HIV/AIDS out of fear of being voted out of office; 4) the presence of democratic institutions provides a venue for citizen participation in the development of government policy on HIV/AIDS; 5) a government will respond to public concern/political pressure about HIV/AIDS by increasing state spending on health. As no data were available on state spending in combating HIV/AIDS the author chose state spending on health as a proxy measure.

The author found that citizens do not see HIV/AIDS as the most pressing problem in their lives and that there are more immediate concerns rooted in bread and butter issues. In addition, most Africans view HIV/AIDS as a problem of others: prostitutes, deviants, and the like. Consequently, there appears to be little fear of being voted out of office by elected officials who, by and large, do not place HIV/AIDS high on the to do agenda. The author reports that African institutions are weak and lack "capacity, professionalism, and formal decision making power" (Patterson 2006: 72). Lastly, there does not appear to be any relationship between political pressure by the public on

state spending on health. Chapter three concludes with the observation that at best, the impact of democracy on AIDS policymaking is weak and inconclusive because of the nascent character of democratic institutions across the continent.

Chapter four, “Civil society’s influence on the politics of AIDS,” commences with the observation that the contribution of civil society organizations to the political discourse on HIV/AIDS is mixed and uneven. The author examines two questions in the chapter: 1) why are some HIV/AIDS organizations internally strong, and 2) what enables some organizations to influence HIV/AIDS policies? Five civil society organizations were examined in this chapter: the Ghana AIDS Treatment Access Group (GATAG); the Ghana HIV/AIDS Network (GHANET); the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA); the Treatment Action Campaign of South Africa (TAC); and the Zimbabwe National Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS (ZNNP).

The author concludes the analysis by observing that civil society groups must go beyond protest politics and to strive to forge a moral consensus on HIV/AIDS to become successful. They must seek to become institutionalized in the policy process. To do so they must wage an uphill struggle against the centralizing tendencies of the African state.

Chapter five, “External donors and political commitments,” looks at two international donor programs for HIV/AIDS: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) and George Bush’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The chapter is focused on the development of these donor organizations and their characteristics as institutions. The

chapter ends with an investigation of the potential of donor organization like GFATM and EPAR to increase the political commitment of African governments to combating HIV/AIDS. The discussion is focused on how well each organization addresses three questions: 1) how to force African leaders to make hard but necessary choices to spend more on fighting HIV/AIDS; 2) how to make African governments accountable to AIDS victims; and 3) how to make African governments accountable for the spending of grant monies given to them.

The last, relatively brief, chapter, “Beyond politics as usual: Institutionalizing the AIDS struggle,” summarizes the findings of the previous chapters and adumbrates elements of a prescription to make the fight against HIV/AIDS part of the institutional fabric of governments in Africa. As it is concerned with what “ought to be,” this chapter is the shortest one of the book since the shortcomings of government, civil society, donor organizations have been dealt with so thoroughly previously.

The Politics of AIDS in Africa, an interesting, informative, and important new book on HIV/AIDS in Africa, is focused on characteristics of the state, civil society, donor organizations and policy development to tackle the HIV/AIDS problem. The book concludes that “the AIDS pandemic provides a window into African politics [and that] politics is crucial for addressing the disease” (2006: 173). While that statement is certainly true, some might argue that it would be equally valid to say that virtually every other healthcare issue in Africa would provide the selfsame window as these problems of development. Perhaps one could say the same thing regarding African agriculture, development of transportation infrastructure, schools, etc. However, while

it may be true that malaria, TB, and other health problems and issues illustrate the limits of African politics, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has some unique attributes that make the link with politics much more salient and revealing. In particular, the linkage of HIV/AIDS to sex (gender), migrants, marginalized communities, and the paramount and sometimes ambiguous role of international actors and international civil society set it apart. Dr. Patterson's book should be required reading for anyone who wants a profound understanding of the political dimensions of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

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