COVID-19 and the Making of a South African Democratic Developmental State: Prospects and Pitfalls Amid a Pandemic

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Abstract

This article assesses the impact of untraditional security threats on the origin and institutional configuration of existing and prospective developmental states in Africa. It adopts a case study research methodological approach which interrogates the effect of internal and global security threats on the formation of 21st-century African developmental states through the presence of four developmental state features: Development-Oriented Political Leadership; Presence of a Pilot Agency; Private Sector and/or Broad-Based Developmental Coalitions; and Popular Mobilisation through a Developmentalist Ideology. The case studies under review include four existing (Botswana, Mauritius, Ethiopia, and Rwanda) and one prospective (South Africa) African developmental states. This article finds that intense ethnic rivalries and domestic development imperatives were sufficient factors triggering the construction of developmental states in Botswana, Mauritius, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. Furthermore, the outbreak of COVID-19 has served as a global threat which precipitated developmental state project in South Africa.

Keywords

Cold War Geopolitics; COVID-19; East Asian Tigers; Ethnic Rivalries; External, Internal and Global Security Threats; Democratic Developmental State; Developmental State; South Africa

Introduction¹

Developmental states historically arose during times of great instability, uncertainty and resource constraints. The presence of grave external security threats has commonly been flagged as a precipitative factor provoking a unique institutional response within these states. This, in effect, has enabled them to engage in large-scale capacity building and resource mobilisation. As such, the institutional arrangements which underpinned the East Asian developmental states did not occur spontaneously or at random. Neither did they emerge solely in response to a nationalist desire to develop. Rather, these states arose within a particular time period, characterised by unique prevailing external security threats which provoked a complex institutional response. This response found its expression in the construction of economic bureaucracies with strong state-private sector links, all embedded within a national developmentalist ideology (Johnson 1999).

The notion of what constitutes a viable security risk, severe enough to threaten the survival of a regime and prompt leaders to construct effective developmental institutions has changed since the initial 20th-century East Asian developmental states up until the latter 21st-century African developmental states. For Cold War East Asian developmental states, the threat of communism posed 'an unusual degree of external [security] threat' (Öniş 1991, 116). The direct threat of communism and military invasion precipitated the speedy formation of strong economic institutions given the thinking at the time that, 'economic growth [was] indispensable to military security' and therefore to the regime survival of East Asian states (Woo-Cumings 1998, 332).

However, contrary to predictions made by Jeffrey Herbst (1990), which linked Africa's lack of developmental institutions to an absence of inter-state war on the continent, the African continent has witnessed the emergence of democratic and non-democratic developmental states during the 21st century. Botswana, Mauritius, Ethiopia, and Rwanda have all constructed developmental states, despite there being no threat of external military invasion driving them to do so. This is not to say that there were no other non-traditional security imperatives at play that have been previously ignored by scholars in the origins of four mentioned African examples.

As such, during and, more so, in the aftermath of the Cold War, the nature of conflicts together with what constitutes a grave security threat changed, particularly for

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emerging developmental states on the African continent. The change in the nature of conflicts from inter- to intra-state conflicts saw security threats, which challenged regime survival, emerge from within African state borders. This has most notably appeared in the form of intense ethnic rivalries. Moreover, this shift in the nature of conflict together with increased popular pressure for democratic governance, following the third wave of democratisation, also necessitated a redefinition in the concept of security; which places less emphasis on the traditional state-centric aspect of security and greater emphasis on its human aspect. Together, these factors have also advanced the emergence of the democratic developmental state model with its distinct institutional arrangements which gives credence to popular participation and inclusive socio-economic development (Akokpari 2021). Underpinning all these shifts and changes in Africa was the great promise, expectation and domestic imperative of development, which was to be pursued by African governments and its leaders in the post-independence period.

The 21st century has also brought about a globalised world order in which our increased interconnectivity has brought to the fore an emergence of global security threats which are not constrained and confined to territorial boundaries. The outbreak of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic represents one such security threat which threatens both lives and livelihoods and requires a strong, well-coordinated interventionist state response. It brings to the fore the significant role played by the state in mobilising resources in response to a crisis. For the South African aspirational democratic developmental state, the pandemic has the potential to activate the necessary process of institutional capacity building, effective centralised economic and development planning, as well as the formation of solid and lasting broad-based coalitions: This is because the outbreak of the virus worldwide and its arrival within South Africa's national borders has exacerbated the country's increasingly growing constrained socio-economic and political environment to the extent that the only manner in which the ruling African National Congress (ANC) regime may survive, and indeed thrive during this time period, would be under the strong leadership of a democratic developmental state.

For this reason, this article explores the emergence and formation of existing and aspirational 21st-century African developmental states in the absence of external security threats. The remainder of the article is divided into six sections: The first section provides a literature review which serves a basis for the study. Secondly, the article defines the concepts of the non-democratic and democratic developmental states and its accompanying theories. The third section outlines the research design and methodology employed within this article.

The fourth section assesses the effect which internal security threats and domestic imperatives has had on the developmental institutional configurations of four 21st-century African developmental states: Botswana, Mauritius, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. The fifth section analyses the manner in which the global security imperative of COVID-19 has already begun to prompt a developmental state response in South Africa and highlights potential prospects and challenges in this regard. The sixth, concluding section sums up the findings made within the research article and offers a brief final word on the need for South Africa to genuinely embark on its democratic developmental project in the time of COVID-19.

As it will be demonstrated in the next section, much has been written on in the literature of the role of external security imperatives in the emergence of classical developmental states in post-war East Asia. Yet, little attention has been given to the evolving nature and broadened understanding of security imperatives and the role of untraditional threats. More so, the impact which it has on institution building within existing and aspirational 21st century developmental states in the Global South and Africa, in particular. The arguments and research presented in this article is significant in that it seeks to contribute to the literature on the 21st century African developmental state. It does so by challenging the former state-centric security approach by incorporating previously overlooked unconventional security threats in its analysis of developmental institution-building.

East Asian Developmental States and Cold War Geopolitical Insecurities: A Review of the Literature

External security imperatives have been flagged within developmental state literature as one of the main key factors which prompted the emergence of classical East Asian developmental states in the initial post-World War Two period (Öniş 1991; Stubbs 2018; Haggard 2018; Wade 2018; Lee 2019; Keating 2015; Routley 2012; Woo-Cumings 1999).

As previously noted, developmental states initially emerged during the period of the Cold War: Japan was the first of these particular states to emerge in the 1950s, followed by South Korea and Taiwan in the early 1960s and thereafter their Southeast Asian counterparts (Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia) towards the late 1960s and early 1970s (Haggard 2018, 28). According to Stephan Haggard (2018, 6), 'the high-growth Asian countries emerged at a propitious moment, tied by alliances to an American hegemon that was leading a liberalisation of world economy on which they could free ride.'

Ziya Öniş (1991, 116) explains that it was precisely the constant external threat of nearby communist states which served as an 'extraordinary security threat' for East Asian states. This, in turn, compelled its leaders to erect strong institutional structures which would

promote rapid economic growth through industrialisation. Similarly, Doner, Ritchie and Slater (2005) maintain that while the institutional capacity to bring effect to the construction of developmental state may not be present at the onset, political elites were driven to erect these institutional structures when they faced 'extraordinary constrained political environments.' This was brought about by a significant external security threat or what they refer to as the precondition of 'systemic vulnerability' (Doner, Ritchie and Slater 2005). In this regard, 'Communist China and North Korea were perceived to be the most radical and aggressive adversaries in the international Communist movement: They possessed an extraordinary will and capacity for invasion, economic coercion, psychological intimidation, and subversion' (Lee 2019, 3). The achievement of national economic growth was regarded as indispensable to the maintenance and improvement of military capabilities. This all served to secure the regime against any external military attacks from close communist countries.

Robert Wade (2018, 530) remarks that the constant external security threat of communism assisted in limiting predatory behaviour by ensuring that political and bureaucratic elites acted in line with national objectives. East Asian states were put in a position whereby they had to legitimise their respective regimes against the competing communist regimes and ideology (Öniş 1991, 116). They did so by adopting a nationalist ideology of developmentalism and committing themselves to the pursuit of long-term structural economic transformation (Öniş 1991, 116).

Meredith Woo-Cumings (1999, 23) observes that this ideology developmentalism was sourced by "harnessing very real fears of war and instability toward a remarkable developmental energy, which in turn could become a binding agent for growth." This was done through popular mobilisation, which required citizens to make short-term sacrifices in order for the state to achieve its long-term developmental goals (Johnson 1999). It is for this reason that scholars such as Chalmers Johnson (1999) identify authoritarian states as better suited to rallying the masses around a developmental project. In sum, then, the arrival of the Cold War in East Asia, together with the proximity of communist states within the region, precipitated elite solidarity and popular legitimacy within these developmental states (Wade 2018, 530).

This constrained political environment brought about by the direct threat of communism also advanced the formation of coalitions, notably between the state and the private sector. For example, during their respective high growth phases, both South Korea and Japan formed close relationships with a number of family-controlled conglomerates, famously referred to as 'Korea and Japan Inc.' (Evans 1995).

From an International Relations' perspective, the outbreak of the Cold War warmed relations between the United States (US) and East Asia. As part of its containment strategy, the US formed an alliance with East Asia and deepened its economic ties within the region through supplying financial, technical and military aid (Wade 2018, 530). Due to their budding relationship, it is argued that the US overlooked East Asia's interventionist policies and allowed the region to free-ride on its post-war hegemony. Hence, East Asian developmental states were able to erect protectionist trade barriers while simultaneously dumping its products in the US' open markets (Keating 2015, 99).

James Lee (2019) goes further in arguing that the geopolitics inherent during the Cold War era, and the US in particular, not only favoured state-led economic growth within East Asia but also played a more intrinsic role in the creation of developmental institutions. As part of their 'grand strategy' in response to the perceived threat of communism, Lee notes that the US went a step further to actively advocate state-led industrialisation within East Asia as a means of safeguarding its allies from proximate and encroaching communist powers (Lee 2019). While other authors, as touched upon above, briefly mention the US' economic aid given to its East Asian allies, little is spoken about the extent to which the aid and technical assistance influenced the process of institution building and centralised economic planning within emerging East Asian developmental states (Lee 2019).

Nevertheless, East Asian states were fortunate to be able to practice state intervention strategies prior to the ascendency of the neoliberal orthodoxy coupled with the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the spread of free-trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties all skewed in favour of the West (Wade 2018, 531). Closely linked to this point, the East Asian developmental states industrialised prior to the 'global political awakening' which demanded the incorporation of public participation within public policy (Wade 2018, 531). For this reason, East Asian developmental states did not have to succumb to global democratic pressures which may have restricted their autonomy during their take-off years.

In turning the Africa, Jeffrey Herbst (1990) commented at the onset of the 1990s that it is precisely the absence of external security threats coupled with its abundance of natural resources, which has prevented African states from engaging in the necessary institution building required for the construction of developmental states. However, the advent of the 21st century has witnessed various developmental and, more notably, democratic developmental states crop up across the continent all in the absence of inter-state war. This article, therefore, seeks to contribute to the African developmental state debate by

breaking away from the traditional conception of external security imperatives (defined in military terms). It delves into the untraditional internal and global security threats and its affect within existing and prospective African developmental states.

Unpacking the (Democratic) Developmental State: Conceptual and Theoretical Definitions

The concept of the developmental state was coined by Chalmers Johnson (1982) to refer to the interventionist role which the strong and efficient Japanese bureaucracy assumed in its pursuit and achievement of rapid economic growth and development through industrialisation. Since the 1980s, the concept of the developmental state has evolved, alongside the fall of communism in 1989 and the rise of neoliberalism as the dominant global politico-economic orthodoxy which incorporated a democratic component. As such, the concept of the developmental state is used within this article as an umbrella term which encompasses both non-democratic developmental states and democratic developmental states.

Defining the Non-Democratic Developmental State

Developmental states can be defined as, 'organizational complexes in which expert and coherent bureaucratic agencies collaborate with organized private sectors to spur national economic transformation' (Doner et al. 2005, 328). The developmental state has as its primary objective the pursuit of rapid economic growth through industrialisation (Johnson 1999). The concept is based on the assumption of a mutually beneficial relationship between the bureaucracy and private sector firms where the state intervenes within the market to foster economic growth and pursue its developmental objectives (Woo-Cumings 1999).

The developmental state concept and accompanying theory is positioned between a liberal open market economy and a centrally-planned model. Its unique position suggests that it is neither capitalist nor socialist in nature, but rather brings together private capital with state supervision (Woo-Cumings 1999, 2). Developmental state theory argues that these states were able to rapidly industrialise and grow their economies precisely because they ignored neoliberal policy prescriptions. Instead, they redirected capital into selective business industries, thereby distorting the relative prices.

Developmental state theory also highlights the significant role which key institutions play in rapid economic growth and development. These particular set of institutions within developmental states have been the economic bureaucracies and are regarded as the core centres of strategic economic development (Leftwich 1995, 412). The economic bureaucracy

is characterised by; a pilot agency, highly skilled and technically competent economic bureaucrats who are insulated from external pressures and recruited and compensated on the basis of merit, and 'embedded autonomy'. For Johnson, one of the core features of an economic bureaucracy is a pilot agency. Pilot agencies are regarded as being small, inexpensive, professional and very efficient institutions that are bestowed with high degrees of prestige, legitimacy and authority which allows them to pursue development policies (Johnson 1982, 49). Pilot agencies are also tasked with the overall economic responsibilities of planning, directing and coordinating industrial policies. Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has been widely cited as the classic example of a strong and effective pilot agency.

Although the developmental state acts autonomously in its pursuit of economic growth and development, it is not entirely divorced from society. Peter Evans (1995) refers to this concept as 'embedded autonomy' which implies that while political and bureaucratic elites are able to withstand the pressures of rent-seeking groups in their execution of national policies; their activities are embroiled in a close-knit social network that positions them in close proximity with dominant actors, notably from the private sector, within civil society. These close ties formed enables the developmental state to better articulate and negotiate the implementation of developmental policies with key business actors within society.

Developmental states are not static; as will be shown directly below, shifts in global economic and political factors may precipitate further alterations in the original concept and model of the developmental state.

Defining the Democratic Developmental State

The concept of the democratic developmental state was initially introduced to incorporate elements of democracy into the original developmental state model (Robinson and White 1998, 5). Unlike East Asian developmental states, which were characterised as being inherently autocratic, democratic developmental states are grounded in principles of democratic governance (Edigheji 2010).

A democratic developmental state is defined as one which aims to not only pursue rapid economic growth, but one which also seeks to uplift its citizens out of poverty through the formulation and implementation of pro-poor policies (Robinson and White 1998, 6). It seeks to first and foremost address the basic needs of the most impoverished and marginalised groups within society. The introduction of the democratic developmental state, thus, signals a sharp departure from traditional notions of the developmental state in which

the state remained oppressive and unresponsive to its citizenry, in spite of its claims of reducing poverty and increasing living standards (Robinson and White 1998, 6).

Democratic developmental states function in such a manner as to allow for the active participation and involvement of non-state actors within the developmental agenda-setting phase and democratisation process (Matlosa 2005, 2). As such, state-society relations in democratic developmental states differ from that found in East Asian developmental states in that they are not restricted to government-private sector alliances (Edigheji 2005). Within the parameters of the democratic developmental state, the concept of 'embedded autonomy' associated with the classical developmental state is broadened to accommodate not only the interests and views of the private sector, but also that of other key social actors (Edigheji 2005; Green 2012, 41). Gordon White (1998) refers to this concept as 'inclusive embeddedness' and argues that it is the ability of the democratic developmental state to promote 'broad-based developmental coalitions.' It does so by establishing horizontal relationships between the state and society, elected officials and the electorate and political parties and its supporters. In order for a developmental state to be regarded as truly democratic, it ought to incorporate the values, interests and aspirations of the majority of its citizens within its developmental policies (Robinson and White 1998, 6).

Research Design

By adopting a case study research methodology approach, this article interrogates the effect which untraditional (internal and global) security threats has on the construction of developmental states in five African countries: Botswana, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and South Africa. It does so by specifically assessing the effect which internal and global threats have shaped the presence of four key developmental state features: Development-Oriented Political Leadership; Presence of a Pilot Agency; Private Sector and/or Broad-Based Developmental Coalitions; and Popular Mobilisation through a Developmentalist Ideology.

The decision to restrict the case study selection to the African region is in direct response to the statement made by Herbst (1990) which links the absence of external military threats to the failure of developmental institution building in Africa. As such, all five African states have embarked on their individual developmental projects without the impetus of inter-state war: Botswana and Mauritius have been chosen for their strong democratic credentials; while Ethiopia and Rwanda, by virtue of their authoritarian features, have been selected as non-democratic developmental state cases. South Africa, regarded as an aspirational developmental state for having not fully realised its developmental project, serves as the outlier. The broad range of 21st century African developmental states provides the

research with a holistic overview of how unconventional threats can give rise to both democratic and non-democratic developmental states. Moreover, the inclusion of South Africa enables the research to experiment with ways in which the developmental state model is prompted by the threat of a global pandemic. More importantly, it serves as an illustrative example of the continued relevance of the developmental state model within an increasing globalised world amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

21st Century African Developmental States: Internal Insecurities and Domestic Imperatives

As indicated above, 21st century African developmental states were met with security threats and imperatives of a different kind: This not only brought about their emergence, but also altered the nature and breadth of its coalitions and structure of its institutional arrangements. As such, internal security risks (presented most commonly in the form of intense ethnic rivalries) coupled with political and development imperatives prompted its leaders to pursue an interventionist state model as a means of spring-boarding their societies out of the endless cycle of poverty and underdevelopment pervasive within its post-independence period – and will be illustrated in the four case studies below.

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1966, Botswana has been highlighted within the literature as a successful African democratic developmental state (Routely 2012, 11). The origins of Botswana's democratic developmental state can be traced back to its independence from Britain in 1966 and the political imperative of the post-independent elites to secure socio-economic development and uplift its citizens out of poverty. Botswana's post-independent political leaders, such as, Seretse Khama (the first President 1965 – 80), Quett Masire (Vice President 1965 – 80 and second President 1980 – 98), Festus Mogae (third President 1998 – 2008), were already wealthy by the time they entered office – owing to their vast amount of cattle (Sebudubudu and Botlhomilwe 2011, 29). They used their positions, not to further their individual self-interest, but rather, to pursue the national goal of inclusive socio-economic development. This effectively limited corruption and predatory behaviour akin to many other African states. Botswana's founding political elites are said to have had, 'acquired a developmental orientation' (Tsie 1996, 601). During the 1970s and 1980s, Khama used his position to appeal to the citizens to make short-term sacrifices for the state's developmental project: For example, in his address to trade unions in 1980, Khama urged them not to bargain for higher wages until the economy had achieved 'greater selfsufficiency' (Carter and Morgan 1980, 327 – 328). He noted that citizenry had a collective

responsibility in assisting in the development of the economy which should take precedence all else (ibid.).

The political elites undertook a dual strategy of democratisation and economic development which allowed the country to achieve exceptional economic growth within the first 30 years of independence. Between 1965 and 1995, Botswana was regarded as 'the fastest growing country in the world' for the period 1965 - 1995 (Beaulier 2003, 231). Botswana's per capita income, for example, rose from US\$ 60 to US\$ 2583 per year between 1966 and 1999 (Meyns 2010, 44). Botswana's post-independent political and bureaucratic elites set about stamping out corruption within the bureaucracy; centralising economic planning within its pilot agency, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP); and improved transparency, enhanced good governance and strengthened participatory democracy through the decentralisation of powers and responsibilities from central to local government (Nagar 2015). The use of participatory development planning in Botswana assisted in the formation of broad-based developmental coalitions by mobilising citizens around the state's developmental project (ibid.). The construction of Botswana's democratic developmental state, arguably, enabled it to effectively manage its natural resource wealth and prevent it from falling prey to the 'resource curse' which has befallen many other African countries.

The same can be said for the Mauritian democratic developmental state, which was instrumental in bringing about structural transformation and diversification within its economy since the 1970s (Nagar 2019). During the 1980s, Mauritius succeeded in effectively reversing the direction of its development; while much of the African continent experienced economic recession and stagnation associates with its 'lost decade of development' (Easterly 2001). Between 1970 and 2010, Mauritius had achieved an average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of 5.4 percent, when much of Africa stood at 1 percent (Frankel 2010). Similarly to the case of Botswana, the origins of the Mauritian democratic developmental state can be traced back to the precarious economic position which the post-independent Mauritian government found itself in 1968 and summarised in the 1961 Meade report which, 'famously predicted a dismal future for Mauritius because of its vulnerabilities to weather and price shocks and lack of job opportunities outside the sugar sector' (Zafar 2011, 91).

The Mauritian government was operating within a constrained political environment at the start of independence compounded by intense ethnic rivalry between the Hindu- and Franco-Mauritians: The Independence Party (a coalition three of political parties who were all pro-independence comprising of the Mauritius Labour Party [MLP], the Independent

Forward Block, and the Muslim Action Committee [CAM]) had won the first general elections by a slim margin, receiving 55.1 percent of the votes casted, while the *Parti mauricien social démocrate* (PMSD) received 43.1 percent (Nagar 2019). The marginal victory by the Hindu-dominated MLP effectively broke the Franco-Mauritian political domination that had characterised colonial Mauritian politics. Consequently, not only were the MLP-led coalitional government faced with the pressing imperative of socio-economic development, but also with entrenching and legitimising their narrow victory and building upon their newly acquired political power. The survival of the MLP-led coalitional regime ultimately rested on its ability to bring about accelerated and inclusive economic growth and increased job opportunities.

The Mauritian democratic developmental state set about structurally transforming its mono-crop economy, solely reliant on sugar, into a diversified economy with rising manufacturing, financial and tourism sectors (ibid.). To this end, it created an insulated and efficient bureaucracy led by its pilot agency, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) (ibid.). Similarly to Botswana, workers within the country's main growth engine – the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) – were made to sacrifice their freedom to join and participate in trade unions (ibid., 166). In its place, the Mauritian government regularly intervened in collective bargaining to enforce speedy resolutions (ibid.). This was all done to prevent labour disputes from disrupting the EPZs' activities (ibid., 167).

Ultimately, the Hindu political elite (the MLP) formed an alliance with the Franco-Mauritian economic elite: This was established a corporatist arrangement that connects the state with business and labour within the Joint Economic Council (JEC) (ibid., 162). The Mauritian democratic developmental state formed broad-based developmental coalitions with its citizens by including them within the development and economic policy process. This was achieved through participatory budgeting and participatory governance structures such as the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) (ibid., 162).

While their democratic credentials are somewhat debatable, the Ethiopian and Rwandan states both played pivotal developmental roles within their respective countries: Rwanda, in the aftermath of its 1994 genocide, and in Ethiopia, beginning in 2002 (Nagar 2019). In the initial aftermath of the genocide in 1995, Rwanda's economy grew at 3.6 percent (Crowley 2000). Rwanda's GDP growth rate for the period 2001 – 2015 averaged at an annual 8 percent (World Bank 2017). Equally impressive has been the economic growth of Ethiopia which has, since 2004 and for more than a decade, maintained an annual GDP growth rate

averaging between 8 and 11 percent, making it one of the five fastest growing economies among the 188 International Monetary Fund (IMF) member countries (ibid.).

The origins of both developmental states can be traced to the presence of pressing internal security threats – in the form of intense ethnic rivalry – which posed a significant challenge to the survival of each respective regime. For Rwanda, the history of rife contestations for political power between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, as a legacy of German and Belgian colonial rule which culminated in the 1994 genocide, prompted the construction of a strong, centralised and development-oriented state by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) government. Under the leadership of President Paul Kagame, Rwanda's economic growth and development trajectory in the wake of the violent civil war and genocide has been intrinsically linked to its process of 'state (re)formation' (Mann and Berry 2016, 138). Beginning in 2000, the origins of the Rwandan democratic developmental state was founded on the assumption that the state has a pivotal role to play in reconciling past ethnic divisions and tensions, which have historically been the root of political instability, by promoting economic and social development and providing all Rwandans with access to public goods (Nagar 2019). The RPF Rwandan government reasons that if it can bring about rapid economic and social development through the construction of a developmental state, the ensuing generations will not readily associate and place themselves into past ethnic categories and challenge the RPF regime for political dominance.

Rwanda, has also exhibited notable developmental features such as development-oriented political leadership; a highly effective bureaucracy led by its super-ministry, the Rwandan Development Board (RDB); and a close linkages between the state and private sector which are both geared to the creation of an entrepreneurial society. The Rwandan case study has also been characterised by the centralisation of economic rents though its 'party-statals'. 'Party-statals' is a term used by Nilgün Gökgür (2012) to refer to large enterprises closely associated with and fully or partially owned by the ruling party. Through the operations of these enterprises (notably, Tri-Star Investments [TSI]/Crystal Venture [CVL], Horizon Group and Rwanda Investment Group [RIG]), Rwanda's ruling party has been able to channel economic rents towards long-term socio-economic development.

Similarly in Ethiopia, given the country's vast composition of 13 different ethnic groups, ethnicity has played a key factor in the enduring conflict over political rule. The post-1991 Tigray-dominated Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) pursued rapid economic growth and poverty reduction through the construction of a developmental state as a means of warding off any potential ethnic-based political

contenders. Following the failure of the IMF and the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to bring about poverty alleviation in Ethiopia, the then President Meles Zenawi announced in 2002 that the country would adopt the developmental state model. The ideology of developmentalism constituted the ruling party's main source of legitimacy as well as the Ethiopian state's *raison d'être*: 'The motive and source of legitimacy of developmental states is the single-minded pursuit of accelerated development' (Zenawi 2012, 169).

Similarly to Rwanda, the Ethiopian state has also directed economic growth and development within its economy through the centralisation of rents that have been channelled into massive infrastructural and education investments. In this regard, it has also established strong private sector alliances with two key party-affiliated companies: The Endowment Fund for Tigray (EFFORT) and the MIDROC Investment Group. Additionally, through its pilot agency, the National Planning Commission (NPC), the Ethiopian state has taken a decisive role in industrial policy. Ethiopia has actively pursued an agriculture commercialisation strategy through its Agriculture Development Led Industrialisation (ADLI) policy (Melke 2013).

In sum, the occurrence of ethnic civil conflict in the cases of Ethiopia (1974 – 1991) and Rwanda (1990 – 1994) culminated in the formation of highly centralised anocratic regimes. This is due to the fact that the victors of the conflict (the Rwandan Hutus and the Ethiopian Tigrayans) have suppressed any form of dissent or opposition in an effort to retain political hegemony. Ethnic conflict has thus had negative repercussions for democratisation by state formation in these two instances. In contrast to the democratic developmental states of Mauritius and Botswana, Ethiopia and Rwanda have not engaged in the formation of broad-based developmental coalitions with a view to genuinely incorporate their populations within the developmental process. Their citizenry are not encouraged to make sacrifices for a greater developmental good. Rather, they are subject to sacrifice basic human rights (such as the freedom of speech and association) in order to entrench the ruling party's political dominance. For the Ethiopian and Rwandan elites, the survival of the political ruling class remains paramount.

Realising a South African Democratic Developmental State in the Time of COVID-19: A Grave Global Security Imperative

In contrast to Botswana and Mauritius, the ever-present internal threat of growing poverty coupled with increasing socio-economic inequality and marginalisation within South Africa have not been sufficient factors to prompt the emergence of a strong, interventionist

state in driving its democratic developmental agenda. On the contrary, and particularly during former President Jacob Zuma's term in office (2008 – 2018), the South African state has been crippled by corruption, scandal, state capture, political patronage and the persistent practice of cadre deployment which has brought its bureaucratic state structures to its knees.

Thus, South Africa faces three glaring deficiencies in its full implementation of the democratic developmental state model (Nagar 2015). Firstly, since Nelson Mandela's term in office, South Africa has been unable to produce development-oriented political leaders needed to spearhead its developmental project. Secondly, South Africa lacks the necessary institutional capacity to carry out its democratic developmental project. South Africa's economic bureaucracy lacks institutional coherence and is highly politicised. While the country's National Planning Commission (NPC) has been flagged as the 'pilot agency' - it has not been equipped the sufficient power and authority to take the lead in development. South Africa's bureaucracy remains highly fragmented lacking clear guidance and coordination. Coupled with this, has been the persistence of cadre deployments within South Africa's civil service. This has led to a highly politicised bureaucracy where ANC party affiliations and loyalty trumps technical and administrative competency in the recruitment of public officials. Thirdly, South Africa's popular participation mechanisms suffer from limitations which impedes on the country's ability to form broad-based developmental coalitions. In sum, then, the referral to South Africa as a democratic developmental state on the part of ruling party has at best been a ploy at politicking to bolster its developmental currency and credentials.

Within South Africa, the outbreak of COVID-19 has exposed the country's deeply entrenched and persistent inequalities and brought to the fore its pervasive dual economy, 26 years after the advent of its democracy (Allan and Hesse, 2020). Experiences from other parts of the world that were affected earlier by the virus, such as the US and the United Kingdom, show that poorer communities with less access to healthcare are most at risk of being infected and succumbing to the virus (ibid.). They are also most adversely impacted by the negative socio-economic consequences associated with the pandemic. Compounding the situation in South Africa has been its failing healthcare system, systemic unemployment and rampant poverty, which places additional strain on the state's already limited capacity to address the needs of its most vulnerable.

Since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, calls have been made for South Africa to abandon its developmental state project and relinquish its developmental function to the private sector in rebuilding the South African economy (Bernstein 2020). Scholars and

political commentators, such as Ann Bernstein (2020), too hastily dismiss the South African democratic developmental state as a strictly interventionist state which will inevitably produce and result in market inefficiencies via its activities and role in the economy. However, they fail to see the manner in which COVID-19 has represented a grave global security threat potent enough to spark an institutional response which deeply resembles the making of a democratic developmental state model in South Africa.

Firstly, the outbreak of COVID-19 has brought to the fore the calibre of development-oriented leadership in Ramaphosa that was last seen during Mandela as president. The credibility of the ruling ANC party suffered from moral degeneration under President Jacob Zuma's decade in power. However, Ramaphosa has been internationally commended for showing formidable leadership by decisively ushering in one of the most stringent 21-day national lockdowns worldwide beginning on 26 March 2020. Following the worsening of the global coronavirus pandemic, Ramaphosa was further applauded for his decision to extend the initial lockdown period on 9 April 2020 a further 14 days as well as formulating a COVID-19 response which reconciles human rights and economic imperatives by prioritising 'both lives and livelihoods' (The Presidency 2020). The decision of the president and his ministers to donate a third of their salaries to the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund was also met with admiration by the public.

Linked to the above point, development-oriented leadership is also measured by its ability to eradicate all forms of corruption and predatory behaviour by the state. Under Ramaphosa's administration, there has been a steady increase in anti-Ramaphosa sentiment following his inability to fully tackle corruption since assuming office. Therefore, the success of the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), empowered by the Presidency, in bringing to book all those 'covidpreneurs' who have looted billions Rands in relief funds may be what is needed in bringing back the 'Ramaphoria' felt by South Africans in the wake of Ramaphosa's presidential appointment in 2018. Curbing all forms of pervasive corruption within government is a necessary step towards the construction of a democratic developmental state.

Secondly, the threat of COVID-19 has brought about the emergence of the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) and the arrival of a "listening government" (Tandwa 2020). The NCCC, chaired by the president, consists of cabinet members and experts who collectively deliberate and coordinates the government's response to the pandemic. While it has no decision-making powers, it is reminiscent of the role played by a pilot agency in taking a lead role in guiding the state through a period of uncertainty and

scarcity. Here, the NCCC has made more victories in less than a year since its inception where the NPC has failed in its decade-long existence. On the one hand, this pertains to the ability of the NCCC to serve as an effective coordinating mechanism by bridging the challenges which the NPC faced in terms of departmentalism. On the other hand, the breadth by which Ramaphosa's administration has engaged in lengthy and exhaustive broad consultation and information-sharing prior to undertaking any major decisions affecting the government's COVID-19 response closely reflects the key feature of 'inclusive embeddedness'. Moreover, broad consultations with a wide range of key relevant stakeholders such as business, labour, provincial, local and traditional governments, civil society organisations, and experts is a prerequisite for the formation of broad-based developmental coalitions. It appears that only now within the constrained socio-economic and political environment brought about by the pandemic have such coalitions are coming to fruition.

Thirdly, while South Africa's developmental project has received little public support, the initial outbreak of the virus within South Africa saw numerous political parties, civil society organisations and citizens band together in solidarity in what has been described as a rare moment of national unity. Ramaphosa has repeatedly called on South Africans to show resolve and to make individual short-term sacrifices as part of the lockdown restrictions in an effort to reduce and slow down the rate of infections. His addresses to the nation during lockdown has been deeply personal: In the opening of his fourth address on 9 April 2020, Ramaphosa made reference to "you" South Africans a total of 12 times (du Toit 2020). The manner in which Ramaphosa has been able to encourage South Africans to make concessions and bear the socio-economic burden of the lockdown restrictions has been commended by observers, who have praised the country for its 'ruthlessly efficient fight against the coronavirus' (Harding 2020).

Nevertheless, the steady erosion of public trust and legitimacy experienced by the ruling ANC party has meant that the government could not escape public scrutiny in its decisive and authoritative decision-making from opposition parties and the broader public, alike. This is in stark contrast to East Asian developmental states, such as China and South Korea, whose impressive developmental past records meant that it could act authoritatively and deliberately in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak without much opposition from the public. More concerning has been the South African government's treatment of its most vulnerable groups and instances of police brutality, especially during the initial 21-day lockdown. South Africa's homeless people in Cape Town, for example, were forced into

shelters that resembled 'concentration camps' with little access to basic services (Nowicki and Stent 2020). The police and South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has used excessive force against refugees and South African citizens alike, in its enforcement of the lockdown regulations. As of June 2020, there had been ten reported deaths as a consequence of soldier and police brutality since the beginning of the national shutdown (Harrisberg 2020).

The eminent approach of South Africa's 2021 municipal elections, coupled with the worsening of the South African economy, has undoubtedly witnessed competing political parties and the broader civil society challenge the lockdown decisions and measures implemented by President Ramaphosa alongside the NCCC. These include the ban on alcohol and tobacco sales, the closing of public spaces and the restriction of economic activities. The leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), the main opposition party, John Steenhuisen, described the regulations as 'petty' and 'irrational' (Rumney 2020). The Liberty Fighters Network advocacy group asserted that the lockdown regulations were a clear violation of South Africa's Bill of Rights (Rumney 2020). Moreover, the decision-making powers of the NCCC has been challenged as 'unlawful' and an overreach of dictatorial powers, which severely threatens parliamentary checks and balances within a democratic setting (Manyane 2020).

Another significant decision that has faced public criticism, and equally important to this discussion, has been the US\$ 4.3 billion (R70.7 billion) loan approved to South Africa by the IMF on 27 July 2020 under the Rapid Firing Instrument (RFI). The loan is intended to address South Africa's pressing Balance of Payments (BOP) needs arising from the fiscal pressures brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the criticism levelled at the ANC government from opposition parties surrounding the IMF loan stems from the historical legacy of the SAPs in Africa and the detrimental socio-economic effect which its stringent conditionalities attached had on underdeveloped nations. Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF) spokesperson Vuyo Pambo stated that the party wholeheartedly rejected ANC's decision to solicit funds from the IMF commenting that '[L]oans from the IMF are always neo-liberal and neo-colonial conditionalities and South Africa will not escape from this reality' (Mtshali 2020).

However, granted that RFI falls under one of the IMF's emergency funding options, the loan has been approved to South Africa at a low interest rate of 1.1 percent and without any enforceable conditionalities above the commitments that the South African government has already made in its letter of intent to the IMF. The government intends to reform its

fiscus, improve the governance of its state-owned enterprises (SOEs) by reducing costs and curbing corruption, mismanagement and excessive political interference, and by adopting inclusive growth-enhancing structural measures. According to the National Treasury, the IMF loan will contribute to the country's COVID-19 related interventions and help lessen the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic. More specifically, the funds will be used to, 'support health and frontline workers, protect the most vulnerable, drive job creation, unlock economic growth through reforms, [and] stabilise public debt' (National Treasury 2020). However, in the wake of the billions of Rands worth of relief funds being looted by South Africans and allegations of 'tenderpreneurship' against government officials, analysts and civil society groups have questioned whether the IMF loan will be used for its intended purpose or whether it will be stolen by corrupt politicians and citizens.

South Africa's commitment to reforming its SOEs, as stated in its letter of intent to the IMF, therefore, serves as an invitation for the country to finally begin disciplining this sector by drawing on and experimenting with East Asia's 'sticks and carrots' approach in an effort to overcome its chronic deficiencies. At present, some of South Africa's largest and most important SOEs (such as Denel, the South African Broadcasting Corporation [SABC], South African Airways [SAA] and Eskom) suffer from deepening financial and operational crises, excessive political meddling, and major corporate governance failures. South Africa's SOEs pose a grave risk to the economy, accounting for over a third of the government's liabilities – a risk which has been significantly exacerbated amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Skiti 2020). In July 2020, the government released a document titled, 'Post Covid-19: A new inclusive economic future for South Africa,' in which it highlighted the need to rationalise its SOE sector and have it operating according to market principles. The success of the South African government to structurally reform its SOEs so that they thrive within the market will be crucial to its economy's post COVID-19 economic recovery. This is due to the fact that South African SOEs play an indispensable role in providing services and infrastructure which supports private-sector development.

Thus, the idea of a South African democratic developmental state should be viewed as an invitation for much needed institutional and policy innovation and the opportunity to form inclusive and broad-based developmental coalitions in order to arrive at the most appropriate response to the common threat of COVID-19. The construction of a capable South African democratic developmental state may not only be the most appropriate response in dealing with and mitigating the socio-economic implications of the global pandemic, but in the case of the ruling ANC, it may prove indispensable to the survival of

its regime (since coming into power in 1994, the ANC has seen its influence dwindle substantially).

The current pandemic will serve as a momentous occasion for the ANC-led government to renew its social compact with the South African citizens, a commitment made by Ramaphosa in his first State of the Nation Address in 2019. This call has been echoed in a recent public addresses wherein he has stressed the importance of the state working together with the private sector, civil society and social formations to manage resources and unlock growth and employment opportunities. He has also indicated the need for a social compact for South Africa's economic recovery growth. On this score, Ramaphosa appears to be aware of the vital importance of consensus building and in aligning the efforts of government within South Africa's social framework in order to arrive at an appropriate and coordinated response to the pandemic. All of this is encapsulated within the concept of inclusive embeddedness; a key underlying feature of any democratic developmental state. What is yet to be seen is whether the South African government will set out to establish genuine, broad-based developmental coalitions that will bring the poorest and marginalised closer to government in a dense set of networks that will produce inclusive economic growth and development, or whether it will continue to prioritise high and rapid economic growth rates which benefit the minority, as has been the trend up to date.

Conclusion

Contrary to Herbst's (1990) statement concerning the role of external threats in effective state-building, this article has shown that internal and domestic imperatives have been sufficient precipitating factors for the construction of four developmental states on the African continent. For the cases of Botswana and Mauritius, this article has found that the internal domestic imperative of development proved sufficient in sparking (1) the emergence of development-oriented leaders (Botswana's Seretse Khama and the Mauritian Hindu political elite); (2) the construction of pilot agencies (Botswana's MFDP and Mauritius' MOFED); (3) the formation of broad-based developmental coalitions through participatory mechanisms; as well as in soliciting the buy-in and short-term sacrifice of the citizenry within each state's developmentalist ideology. Likewise, in the cases of Ethiopia and Rwanda, internal security threats (in the form of ethnic rivalries) have driven the emergence of development-oriented leaders such as Zenawi and Kagame. They have also prompted the construction of pilot agencies (Ethiopia's NPC and Rwanda's RDB) and a close-knit relationship between both states and their respective party-affiliated companies. However, ethnic civil conflict has culminated in the formation of highly centralised anocratic regimes

in both Rwanda and Ethiopia. Consequently, citizens are subject to sacrifice basic human rights not for long-term developmental goals, but to entrench the political dominance of the RPF and EPRDF.

For the South African aspirational democratic developmental state, where neither external nor internal threats proved adequate, this article has gone further in showing how a global security threat (such as COVID-19) can trigger a developmental state process. The outbreak of COVID-19 has motivated a coordinating institutional response in the NCCC which has arguably succeeded where the ordained pilot agency, the NPC, has failed in overcoming departmentalism. It has also witnessed Ramaphosa step up as development-oriented leader in rallying the nation around the government's COVID-19 response. Moreover, the global threat of COVID-19 has seen the realisation of genuine 'consultative government' where previous mechanisms have been limited in its ability to form broad-based developmental coalitions.

Nevertheless, extraordinary external, internal and global security threats aside, the construction of a (democratic) developmental state will always hinge on the political will of the leaders. Experiences from other parts of the world, and Africa alike, show that the political and bureaucratic elite were able to recognise external and internal risks, not only as threats to regime security, but more importantly, as potential windows of opportunity to exploit and embark on their respective developmental projects. The construction of democratic developmental states requires the formation of broad-based developmental coalitions between the state and society. As history has shown, events and threats which trigger the formation of these social compacts are far and few in between. For South Africa, during the time of COVID-19, the socio-economic stakes have never been higher: all that is left is for Ramaphosa, together with ANC elite, is to seize this window of opportunity and amass the political will to genuinely embark on and realise its democratic developmental project. Failure to do so may see the end of the ANC regime and the underprivileged and marginalised plunged further into deprivation and poverty. As always, institution building and policy adaptions necessary in the construction of these particular states call for intelligent design and statecraft derived through a process of learning and experimentation.

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