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The extraversion of protest: conditions, history and use of the 'international' in Africa[1]

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The growing number of international causes and an intensification in the establishment of transnational networks in Africa are expanding a chain of interdependency which links an ever-larger and more diverse set of actors from North and South. It therefore seems relevant to revisit the debates of the 1990s concerning the dependency of 'African civil society' with regard to the North, through the concept of 'extraversion' within the political spaces of sub-Saharan Africa. First, it is argued that the conditions and effects of this internationalisation of protest actors are contradictory. Access to the international sphere is subject to two forms of competition: social and political. While universally determined by socially selective skills, such access also provides a vehicle for social ascension. Meanwhile, in the specifically African context, it is the object of intense political battles, representing as such both a 'refuge' and a resource, as well as a new source of coercion. Secondly, it is suggested that the specific modalities of relationships between actors from North and South tend to reproduce existing inequalities, with the effect that northern models of protest (in terms of both themes and tools) ultimately win out in African spaces. Finally, similarities in modalities of implementation, in vocabulary, in the skills demanded by internationalised mobilisations, and in the political and economic reforms introduced by external actors, lead to the hypothesis that these transnational mobilisations contribute to a reforming authoritarianism, that is to say to the implementation of reforms which depoliticise social and political issues and reproduce the established order. By repositioning mobilisations with access to the international sphere within the history of African political spaces, the concept of extraversion thus allows consideration of their impact as agent of both emancipation and domination.

Keywords: mobilisation; Cameroon; internationalisation; extraversion; collective action

Analysis of the collective mobilisations of the 1990s has been dominated, and to some extent obscured, by debates over the relevance of the concept of 'civil society' and over the role and practices of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Africa (Hearn 2001, Poncelet and Pirotte 2007). One of the sociological tenets of this debate (which also became a political position) was the existence of a social disconnection between externally oriented NGOs and those in whose name they claimed to speak (Van Rooy 1998). As a result of these criticisms, this particular aspect of the relationships of externally institutionalised protest groups (NGOs, trade unions, confessional groups) underwent a

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transformation which deserves further attention. Often urban and professionalised, these groups sought to reconnect with their 'base' to relegitimise themselves and counter criticisms of social disconnection (Igoe and Kelsall 2005). In so doing, they extended the chain of interdependency linking actors in the North (donors and international NGOs) and the South (from NGOs to small groups of peasants, young people and others). Moreover, the increasing number of transnational advocacy networks and associated forums (particularly the World Social Forum), involving actors from North and South, or the various Souths, again raised questions regarding the relationship between actors, who are clearly unequal in terms of material resources, but who have mobilised around the same 'causes' and are seeking to erase all trace of potential inequalities. The objective of this paper is to revisit, within the African context, the contradictory conditions and effects of this growing internationalisation of protest actors.

The internationalisation of mobilisations in the South has been attributed either to international causes being imported (according to varying sociological principles [Ropp *et al.* 1999, Dezalay and Garth 2002]), or to local organisations seeking out international actors, but limited by their unequal resources (Bob 2001). In both cases, the international relationships of the political spaces under discussion, and *a fortiori* of the mobilisations which animate these spaces, have been insufficiently critiqued, or scarcely adapted, to the sub-Saharan context. Using the concept of the extraversion of African political spaces (Bayart 1999, 2006) provides a way of bypassing the sterile argument between promoters of an international civil society and those critical of the neocolonialist grip of international actors over some African protesters (Pouligny 2001). Revisiting the historical inequality which has characterised exchanges between Africa and the rest of the world, Jean-François Bayart remarks that, 'the dominant actors in sub-Saharan society have tended to compensate for the difficulties they face in achieving self-government and intensifying the exploitation of their dependants by deliberate recourse to extraversion strategies which mobilise the resources procured through their – possibly unequal – external relationships.' This external space was also sought out, in turn, by 'social struggles conducted by subordinate actors' (Bayart 1989).

Three aspects of this 'dependency as mode of action' can be considered as particularly important to an understanding of the external relationships of protest actors. First, access to international space is the object of a struggle between those who hold power and those who contest it. Even beyond the social resources they require to do so, mobilised actors have been obliged historically to fight the powers-that-be for permission to go overseas or return if they are there already (education or exile). The function of gatekeeper (Cooper 2002) exercised by the colonial and post-colonial state, and the fact that the state derives its sovereignty (and in part its legitimacy) from its monopoly of external relationships (Clapham 1996) have defined the frequently uneven relationship between 'counter-elites' and this international space.

Second, the international sphere should not be viewed as external to national political space – it is, in fact, a constituent part of it (Bayart 2006, p. xxvii). In real terms, this means that numerous foreign organisations (embassies, cooperation agencies, international NGOs, religious missions and so on) are present on national territory, and that the various mobilisation organisations (trade unions, confessional associations, NGOs and others) are encouraged to seek regular meetings with these foreign bodies, normally in an urban setting. This superposition of international and local spaces within a single geographical setting makes it possible to observe the disconnection (or not) between spaces normally considered as geographically distant, and the social distance (or not) created by their linkage.

Finally, while emphasising the strategies of actors, the concepts of extraversion presupposes the concept of dependency and inequality: inequality between governments in North and South, but also in the relationships between northern protest movements (or the organisations which support them), whether active in Africa or in Europe/United States, and those of the South. Northern actors bring access to international media, international arenas, material resources and contacts. They determine which techniques of mobilisation will be considered legitimate and effective, and provide training and assistance. Southern actors clearly instrumentalise these unequal relationships; the great value of the concept of extraversion is that it provides a means of 'thinking about dependency without being dependentist', by restoring to dependent actors their capacity for action (Bayart 1999).

This paper will use the concept of extraversion, and examples from Cameroon and Kenya, to revisit the political and social effects of the internationalisation of protest actors in Africa. Internationalisation is the product of specific historical trajectories but is not simply reducible to the hazards of individual histories. This article presents the hypothesis that, in both North and South, the extraversion of mobilisations produces (and reproduces) inequalities in the relationships of mobilised actors. Extraversion also has contradictory social and political effects. International mobilisations use the same tools and demand the same set of skills as the political and economic reforms promoted by international donors, and in so doing participate indirectly in the creation of a reforming authoritarianism (Dabène *et al.* 2008). Moreover, by allowing changes in some social hierarchies, this same internationalisation also plays its part in significant local transformations.

To explore these contradictions, the paper will begin by recalling the varying intensity and historical diversity of the relationships of extraversion characteristic of those sub-Saharan political spaces considered here. It will then observe the concrete relationships which actually developed between French and Cameroonian protesters working in the same cooperation project. Working from the hypothesis that these transnational relationships were structured by inequalities, the paper will concentrate on the mechanisms adopted to address these inequalities and associated issues. It suggests that this particular mobilisation reproduced the relationship schemas typical of relationships in the 'development' world, and that its outputs became depoliticised. Finally, the paper will attempt to show how the concept of extraversion can be used to understand the interactions between international mobilisations and transformations in both state power and society.

The historicity and specificity of extraversions

The internationalisation of mobilisations in Africa is not new (Cooper 2001). However, it is important to go beyond the historical roots of this phenomenon and examine the particular historicity of the external relationships of contemporary protest actors: in effect, relationships of extraversion were constructed historically and differed according to region, thus structuring spaces of international mobilisation which are far from homogeneous throughout the continent.

History and geography of extraversion in sub-Saharan Africa

The origins of the extraversion of African countries clearly do not lie in colonial rule,[2] yet the political spaces created in colonial times have developed and maintained a privileged – and unequal – relationship with the colonial power or *métropole*, and later the former colonial power. The last 20 years have been marked by a more intense extraversion of the continent which, according to region, has either created possibilities of external access for protest actors and/or forced these possibilities upon them (Bayart 2006).

Colonial authorities in Europe and Africa formed the target of political and trade union action – often led by African actors temporarily resident in the heart of empire, occasionally supported by 'metropolitan' organisations receptive to the cause of colonial emancipation (Donnat 1986, Derrick 2008). Some anti-colonial movements turned towards the new international decision-making spaces like the United Nations (mandate and tutelage cases: see Smouts 1979 on Cameroon and Togo); or, in the early 1960s, towards certain 'Third World' and/or socialist regimes (for example, Ghana, Egypt and Guinea) which welcomed opponents of the colonial powers and of their newly independent successors. Even after independence, some activists kept the former colonial power in their sights: accusations of neocolonialism, especially in the space of francophone Africa, were supplemented by the writings of *tiers-mondiste* intellectuals condemning power structures still directed largely from overseas. The former colonial powers remain a target today, in the form of demands for a 'second independence' (for example, among the *Jeunes patriotes* in Côte d'Ivoire), and of legal actions brought against African and/or European authorities both for recent crimes and those committed in the colonial past.[3]

Within their own frontiers, African rulers did their best to monopolise external relationships and were often successful in doing so. However, in the mid-1980s or at the turn of the 1990s, according to country, ruling elites increasingly became less able to control these links. National actors recovered their freedom of movement, the range of contacts between Africa and the rest of the world grew, and interventions by international actors (bilateral and international donors) increased in number. The availability of international actors intervening both economically and politically in African states had two important consequences for mobilisations. These actors provided campaigners with new targets who could take some of the blame for contemporary social ills – especially given the austerity programmes they imposed. But they also provided individual campaigners and campaign groups with a new resource, notably over promised government reforms concerning 'democratisation' and 'good governance'.

These international actors destroyed the simple two-way relationship between former colonial powers and their colonies, opening the way for new networks of ideas, personnel and know-how. Intervention by American groups (foundations, NGOs and others) – notably around the promotion of democracy (Guilhot 2005) – introduced competition between international actors, allowing African organisations some leeway to impose their own conditions upon projects and grants. The range of international actors operating in Africa distinguished the continent from other political spaces marked by overdependence on the United States. The multiple 'centres of gravity' inhabited by its relationships of extraversion (Saunier 2004) reduced Africa's dependency on the rest of the world, while also making that dependency more complex.

The range of international actors operating in Africa grew not only in nationality but also identity. Religious actors have always played a role in transnational mobilisations; now, however, the increasing prevalence of new Pentecostalist-influenced transnational exchanges offered novel opportunities for external contacts which some movements were able to utilise, in particular in 'moral crusades' against anti-HIV and AIDS policies (Dilger 2009). Trade unions and northern-based international solidarity associations also internationalised and politicised their activities from the 1990s onwards, within the logics of internal competition in the international solidarity field and the framework of the developing anti-globalisation space (Agrikoliansky and Sommier 2005, Bretonnière 2009). These northern actors offered services (funding, technical know-how, inter-personal skills) to their 'partners'. Setting aside for one moment the effects of homogenisation and alienation engendered by this massive – and forced – exposure to the international world in

the very heart of national space, it is important to emphasise some of its other results: compromising the monopoly of international relationships enjoyed by ruling powers; challenging direct relationships with former colonial powers and customary partner organisations; and encouraging a new balance of power between international actors, rulers and local non-state actors.

This brief history of the various layers of extraversion which have accumulated on African soil requires a more detailed comparison of national spaces, and even of regional spaces within a single national entity. Some spaces form exceptions: South Africa, for example, and to a lesser degree Nigeria. Anglophone Africa is covered by a variety of transnational networks which in general provide more channels of external access than are available in the francophone space. For example, Scandinavian and American cooperation agencies were attracted to anglophone East Africa very soon after independence. Opening up this anglophone space to horizons wider than those of a single relationship with the former British Empire undoubtedly created, or at least supported, new possibilities for mobilisation. Another differentiating factor is that some countries – for example, Sierra Leone, or the Democratic Republic of Congo – experienced sudden and massive exposure to external intervention, notably in post-conflict contexts.

The histories of external relations also range widely within a single national space: for example, micro-spaces such as parish churches and missions enjoy privileged relationships with their counterparts in the North capable of influencing the success of particular movements. On a different scale, some regions enjoy privileged relationships with international actors which can affect potential mobilisations and their modalities. Two examples from Cameroon indicate the possibilities of links based on linguistic or historical affinities: unknown in most of the country, George Soros' Open Society Initiative for West Africa until recently operated only in the South-West province, while a number of small American confessional organisations are active only in the North-West province.

However, historical links certainly do not all share equal prominence, and still less equal legitimacy, in the contemporary national space. Mobilised actors can find it hard to justify their external relationships when these become controversial between governments and their opponents. While international access can represent a path to emancipation and recognition, it can also be a stigmatising factor: a great deal depends upon the balance of power between government and opposition, on the profile of the external actors, and the type of link concerned. International recognition, such as the award of a prize, is viewed positively;[4] so too are appeals to the international arena (for example, Ruben Um Nyobé arguing his case before the United Nations Assembly General [Mbembe 1985]). In contrast, seeking refuge overseas (exile) or enjoying financial benefits from abroad can be a disadvantage to African actors, by turning too harsh a spotlight on their dependency on their overseas counterparts.

These general remarks highlight the necessity of clarifying exactly what is at stake in particular spaces of mobilisation. While all extraversion relationships are unequal, they do not comprise the same actors or practices; nor do they share the same meaning. To examine them further, it therefore becomes necessary to address the particular trajectories of specific mobilisation spaces.

The individuality of transnational spaces for mobilisation

In constructing case studies of some transnational spaces, this paper will first outline the way specific links developed between North and South, and describe who and what moved between them (Siméant 2010). It will also detail the inequalities (in material

resources, information, personal relationships and inter-personal skills) which structured these spaces, producing dependency but also a margin for manoeuvre. Two comparisons will be used to show that inequalities underlying these transnational spaces expressed themselves in a variety of ways, and that some actors are able to use these inequalities to their own advantage. The first examines a single cause (that of human rights) in two different national spaces (Kenya and Cameroon); the second looks at two different types of mobilisation (human rights and food sovereignty) within a single national space (Cameroon).

While human rights was 'queen' among causes within transnational spaces during the 1990s, its success (in the sense of individual actors and mobilised groups obtaining a hearing from the authorities and attracting international attention to the issue) was not universal. Everywhere, rulers came under heavy pressure from their overseas partners on this issue, at least at the level of discourse and conditionalities. The conditions underlying the emergence and take-off of human rights activism in Kenya and Cameroon can only be understood through the relatively recent development of linkages between local and international actors. From independence until the early 1980s, human rights – as a group of norms universalist in vocation and sanctioned by international law – were seldom mentioned in either of these countries.[5] In the case of Cameroon, two groups attempted to mobilise selectively behind this banner: the Catholic Church (within the country); and individuals 'exiled' (often voluntarily) in France, who were supported by left-wing political groups and associations. But while the national church tempered its criticisms from the early 1970s on, links between the 'exiles' and human rights organisations in the West became problematic. This is illustrated by the case of author and essayist Mongo Béti, who was expelled from the French section of Amnesty International after describing some of its members as 'agents infected by French imperialism'.

Politicised Cameroonians in France, closely linked to the Communist Party, used the language of ideology to take control of a protest impossible in Cameroon itself, something which clashed with the 'neutral' register adopted by Amnesty International and the *Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme* (FIDH), and later by Human Rights Watch. In Kenya, Amnesty preferred to collaborate with lawyers and churches, who were more measured in their language and who possessed skills demanded by international organisations (for example, the gathering of accurate information and the use of legal language). The presence in Kenya of Scandinavian and American donors whose cooperation policies were linked to human rights also highlighted the issue there. By the early 1990s therefore, the concept of human rights had developed differently in the political spaces of Kenya and Cameroon, both in legitimacy and in meaning, because the concept was used by different socio-professional groups in the two countries. These separate historical trajectories in part explain the unequal contribution made from the 1990s onward by the Kenyan and Cameroonian human rights movements, not just to the international space, but also to the development of their respective political spaces of protest.

The patchy history of the human rights cause in Cameroon does not imply that any form of movement with external links (in aims, themes, methods, and so on) was doomed to failure. The successful campaign against the import of frozen chicken in 2004 and 2005 illustrates the conditions of extraversion and its specific effects within each space for mobilisation. This campaign took members of Cameroon's *Association citoyenne de défense des intérêts collectifs* (ACDIC) to the European Commission, the German parliament and the headquarters of the World Trade Organisation. Its 'success' (the Cameroon government took action to reduce imports) was partly due to its theme, the issue of 'food sovereignty'. This gave the campaign a nationalistic appeal which brought it a ready hearing, and grounded it in an economic and agricultural expertise

with few overt political overtones. But two other factors may also have contributed to its success: a historically wide range of external relationships, which allowed the movement to create space for manoeuvre important to the conduct of its campaign, and its capacity to mobilise local actors.

The campaign was launched by ACDIC, an organisation created as the 'political arm' of the *Service d'appui aux initiatives locales de développement* (SAILD), one of four 'historic' development NGOs in Cameroon (Interview, senior ACDIC official, Nairobi, 22 January 2007). Although based in Cameroon, SAILD is actually a Swiss legal NGO which from the start enabled ACDIC to link up with a number of overseas partners – *Fédération genevoise de coopération*, Oxfam France–*Agir ici*, the German Protestant *Evangelische Entwicklungsdienst* (EED) and the Belgian *SOS-Faim* – so providing it with a wide range of resources in terms of funding and contacts. While ACDIC has placed particular emphasis on its international activities (participation in the World Social Forum and the ruling council of the African Social Forum, in addition to the partnerships cited above), it has not neglected its work with local contacts. A SAILD official gave an account of ACDIC's work with members of Cameroon's National Assembly, which demonstrates the importance of circulating repertoires of action; ACDIC organises dinners for members of the Cameroon parliament in the same way that it did for European parliamentarians. However, his account also highlights the role played by local networks and some practices (paying an official acting as go-between, for example) which oil the wheels of relationships between actors (parliamentary and associative) who would otherwise seldom come into contact.

It should be noted that the spaces for mobilisation formed by northern and southern actors do not all allow the 'dominated' party the same margin for manoeuvre. Nevertheless, the structure of these relationships tends toward the reproduction of inequalities.

Inequality in practice

The article will now consider a recent Franco-Cameroonian project; designed to 'strengthen civil society' and the 'counter-powers' in Cameroon, a project that links non-state actors in France and Cameroon with the French ministry of foreign affairs (MAE), which funded it. This project can be considered an extreme case and as such is of interest for two particular reasons. It brought together unequal, and sometimes antagonistic, actors: on one side, trade unions and associations, both Cameroonian and French; on the other, a French state often viewed as a major supporter of the Cameroonian regime. Yet, at the same time, it sought to overcome these inequalities by setting up decision-making mechanisms which greatly advantaged the Cameroonian 'partners'. Looking beyond the stated aims and the premature closure of this project (after serious accusations of personal enrichment on one side and paternalism on the other), it is worth examining more closely how cooperation between militant actors from North and South worked on the ground, and thereby identify the mechanisms which reproduce inequalities.

The history of a pilot programme of cooperation between French and Cameroonian activists[6]

With only two presidents in 50 years of independence, Cameroon's political stability makes it an attractive place for international cooperation agencies (bilateral and multilateral) and non-state actors from the international solidarity movement (religious or secular). Colonised by three empires (Germany, France and Great Britain) and officially bilingual,

the country maintains privileged relationships with a wide range of international actors, who use it as their regional headquarters or as a place to experiment with different types of reform and cooperation. Through debt relief programmes, cooperation agencies play a significant role in defining political and economic reforms, and thus by extension the issues which lead non-state actors, both local and international, to mobilise. This applies particularly to the French MAE. As part of its *Contrat développement désendettement* (C2D), the MAE took the decision (unprecedented in light of its traditional statist approach) to support counter-powers in Cameroon (Otayek 2004). After preliminary studies and a pilot phase, the *Programme concerté pluri-acteurs* (PCPA) started work in 2006, bringing together French and Cameroonian non-state actors (international solidarity associations and trade unions).

This self-consciously 'innovative' programme reflected a combination of separate interests, French and Cameroonian. The change in approach by the MAE resulted in part from pressure exerted by French associations and trade unions, seeking to change French cooperation policies while simultaneously strengthening their 'partnership' with African groups. For the *Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement* (CCFD), the leading French non-state actor in this project, this reflected a dynamic established in the 1990s; French trade unions, meanwhile, wanted to revive their historic relationships with their southern counterparts (Wagner 2003). The *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT), for example, had developed strong alliances with nationalist actors in Cameroon (and many other countries) during the 1940s, but these relationships had weakened over the years. Today, the trade unions are seeking instead to develop their international activity via cooperation with NGOs, to restore their legitimacy and insert themselves in the anti-globalisation movement.

The Cameroonian actors involved in the PCPA also had a variety of interests in the programme. Caritas Cameroon or the *Bureau d'action socio-caritative* (BASC), the development arm of the National Episcopal Conference, was the project coordinator in the country. BASC had been reorienting its activities since the mid-1990s, adding the influence of public policy to its original development work. The increasing involvement of its *Service Justice et Paix* in 'political' activity and of some of its officials in the transnational networks campaigning for debt reduction contributed to policy changes within the Episcopal Conference. In addition to BASC, there were other Cameroonian actors with a prior involvement in international collaborations – albeit limited in some cases. Some human rights, AIDS and anti-corruption organisations, for example, saw this project as a way of strengthening their international engagement and securing funding. Others, notably *CGT-Liberté* and the *Centrale des services publics* (CSP), the two union groupings involved, saw the programme as a unique opportunity to access effective means of action. Because both of these are two minority groupings – the first is the product of splits in the old trade union linked to the ruling party, and the other is a collection of new public service unions – they had been effectively excluded from existing clientelist networks.[7]

The PCPA was thus something of an innovation in Cameroon, where donors regularly complained how difficult it was to find 'credible interlocutors' within 'civil society', because it intervened at the point where the interests of engaged actors converged. It did not amount simply to the imposition of a northern programme on the South, or of a donor on a group of beneficiaries. Its internal decision-making mechanisms – and the tensions these produced – reflected issues surrounding the submission of South to North, a reversal in power relationships that was agreed so as to seek to overcome perceived inequalities, and from the instrumentalisation of those inequalities.

Conflict between French and Cameroonians over questions of project governance began as soon as plans for the PCPA were finalised. According to the latter, it set them against all the French participants (NGOs, unions and the ministry). Adopting a familiar rhetoric condemning French paternalism,[8] the Cameroonian actors eventually gained control of the PCPA and its concrete implementation. They negotiated the modalities step by step – and in the end these differed from similar mechanisms adopted elsewhere (for example, the PCPA in Guinea). The eventual failure of the PCPA in Cameroon was later attributed by some French actors to their removal from the decision-making structure. They argued that the 'ownership' of the project – a concept nevertheless fundamental to the language of cooperation – was ultimately harmful to it. The EU-financed *Programme d'appui à la structuration de la société civile au Cameroun* (PASOC), which succeeded the PCPA in 2009, has returned to a type of decision making closer to the usual model of North–South cooperation: the project owner is Cameroon's *Ministre de l'economie, de la planification et de l'aménagement du territoire* (MINEPAT), and the project leader is a French consultant.

Bureaucratisation and choice of campaigns

As a publicly funded body, the PCPA had to establish systems of 'governance' and decision making, allowing it to select mobilisation projects and ensure effective financial management. These mechanisms also had to accommodate a desire to involve the largest possible number of 'civil society' actors. As it proved difficult to establish satisfactory criteria for representativeness, the mechanisms eventually selected were based on the position of 'broker' already occupied by certain actors (see below). The aim of the PCPA was to support any Cameroonian organisation wishing to speak on political, economic and social matters – not just those involved in setting up the project. However, some of the original participants assumed positions as brokers or intermediaries, acting effectively as gatekeepers to the project, and the decision-making mechanisms initially adopted by the PCPA simply reinforced their role (Olivier de Sardan 1995). Rationalising the mechanisms of participation in this way tended to facilitate an efficient approval process rather than promoting new initiatives; it also shaped the modalities of protest.

Similarly, membership of the PCPA's governance structure was not determined by election at the annual general meeting – the representativeness of which could also be questioned. Instead participants who had demonstrated their interest and engagement 'naturally' found themselves offered a place. Similar concern can be found over the legitimacy of those members of 'civil society' involved in the steering committee of PASOC. The programme identifies three components of 'civil society':[9] trade unions, associations and confessional groups. As far as the unions are concerned, a network of smaller unions, run by officials with experience of donor relationships, was selected as the most 'representative'. For the associations space, the criterion used was 'informal approval' by a majority of partners. Both experiences testify to the closed nature of circles of recruitment within 'transnational networks'.

While the aim of PCPA was to support Cameroonian organisations in their mobilisation, it was not itself an actor in those mobilisations. It therefore needed mechanisms to select the campaigns it would finance or support. Two contradictory types of requirement underlay these systems of selection – management-related (the need to control finances) and political (the wish to involve a wide range of mobilised actors) – and, in short, these considerably reduced the freedom of action available to actors. The main campaigning themes had been determined upstream of the programme at the time of the initial fact-finding study, and these

repeated the established concerns of transnational collective action: AIDS, human rights, debt and corruption. The choice of actions conducted around the ‘human rights’ issue reveals how the PCPA operated, using bureaucratic mechanisms and a smokescreen of consultation to impose modalities of protest. The leader of the group, a long-time partner of CCFD, suggested creating a human rights ‘observatory’; the decision went in his favour, sweeping aside the many doubts expressed during consultative meetings by actors who favoured more direct action, or who were anxious not to place artificial limits on the areas where they might intervene. An exploratory mission was despatched to meet with 40 organisations in four different provinces, but the project as finally implemented closely resembled that originally proposed.[10] The dictating of themes and the general orientation of activities is a constant feature of externally generated projects (Van Rooy 1998). Participatory mechanisms neither prevent nor mask such logics.

The repertoire of advocacy privileged by ‘transnational networks’ reveals even more clearly the logic underlying the process whereby issues and modes of activism are imposed. Defined as an ‘alternative expertise’, advocacy is considered vital in ensuring credibility in the eyes of the authorities and has become essential to southern organisations. By establishing advocacy as the only valid means of mobilisation, northern organisations have created a real instrument of control over their southern counterparts. In addition, as is made evident below, mastery of this repertoire has become a criterion used by the authorities to decide whether or not to accept requests. For donors, international organisations and the state, it has become a primary instrument of selection. The current PASOC programme only finances (and therefore heavily promotes the organisation of) meetings and training designed to develop ‘expertise’. PASOC’s own documents repeatedly emphasise that this ‘expertise’ is expected to be ‘alternative’ and should not set itself up ‘against’ official expertise (European Union–Government of Cameroon [EU-GOC] 2009). In defining advocacy, PASOC draws an explicit contrast with ‘militant activism’:

> Far from simple grassroots activism, advocacy is first and foremost a capacity whose deployment requires a real alternative expertise based on rigorous thinking and the identification of best practice in CSO [civil society organisation]-led development. (PASOC 2010)

However, in a contradictory logic, the projects studied here wished to encourage a professionalised advocacy that was nevertheless founded on an ethos of grassroots activism and morally motivated voluntarism.

Demands for the professionalisation of volunteering: the ‘double bind’

The issue of material inequalities and relationships to money in ‘transnational networks’ has seldom been considered in the analysis of the transnationalisation of collective action. Studies of the World Social Forum (WSF) held in Nairobi in 2007 show the importance of the material dependency of African delegates in understanding the logic of their participation in this event, and more generally of their intervention in ‘networks’ of this type (Pommerolle and Siméant 2010). The Nairobi example shows, in particular, how relationships to money could lead to controversy in transnational spaces for mobilisation (Haeringer and Pommerolle 2010). Some members of the WSF international council and ‘radical’ activists flaunted the ethos of voluntary and impartial activism, in contrast to what they characterised as the commercial, if not ‘corrupt’, orientation of some local groups. This idea of an inevitably biased southern activism which needs ridding of corruption (enabling it to conform to northern models of disinterestedness and voluntarism) is clearly expressed in a report on the PASOC project:

> The funding regime for consultative meetings within civil society, and for statutory meetings and campaign meetings within the structures themselves, was decided by ballot. To ensure an ethos of voluntary activism and prevent the pursuit of per diems, PASOC will only meet the costs of transport, secretarial services, room hire and the expertise to be mobilised. It will not pay for accommodation and subsistence. (EU–GOC 2009)

In summary, the requirements of this type of cooperation – building capacity in 'alternative' expertise, while promoting a disinterested, and therefore, voluntary brand of activism – reveal two orders of contradiction. These in essence seem to espouse a logic which is hard to sustain, that activism should be professionalised, but at reduced cost. The first of these contradictions is that expertise, while activist in ethos, should be non-confrontational. The second is that actors should be professional, but materially disinterested. This demand for an activist ethos – based on a suspicion about the motivation of local actors – was concretely expressed by the withdrawal of allowances and/or payments likely to lead to the material and moral destruction of cooperation projects in general.

While blatant material inequalities continue to exist between mobilised actors in North (salaried and volunteer) and South, professionalisation thus has to be implemented, but at a reduced cost. Such inequalities – often implicit – underpin all these relationships. For example, a member of a Cameroonian organisation recalled that, during preliminary studies undertaken prior to the implementation of the European programme, Cameroonian organisations condemned the proposal of a €10,000 monthly salary for its director: whether true or not, this figure, and the opposition to it, reflect the sense of injustice provoked by the flagrant inequalities between northern and southern actors in supposedly 'activist' projects. Always present as a subtext, the issues of material inequalities and demands for voluntarism – amounting to contradictory demands for professionalisation – are vital to understanding why transnational projects of this type find it so difficult to build a long-term future.

Some of these projects of 'transnational activism' display more generally the logics of 'bureaucratic populism'. Vacillating between the opposite poles of participation/membership and bureaucratic rationalisation, 'bureaucratic populism' marked the development projects of the colonial and post-colonial eras (Chauveau 1994). 'Beneficiary' peasant populations, who were then 'asked' to participate in meetings costly to them in terms of time and work lost, resemble today's trade unionists and association members – young people, 'pressurised' officials and freelance journalists – who are forced to attend training events on debt reduction and the techniques of advocacy. Like their predecessors, these actors are forced to demonstrate a kind of loyalty to these controlled activities. The extraversion of mobilisations thus produced spaces for practice similar to those of development projects or state reforms. The similarity between these logics explains why studies of the extraversion of mobilisations can lead to a broader understanding of the modalities of reforming authoritarianism in many African countries.

Reforming authoritarianism and local social dynamics

Encouraged by the exchange of good practice between sectors, this similarity of practice in areas of state reform, development and the strengthening of civil society has also had the paradoxical effect of increasing the influence of government. Governments remain capable of confining reform to predetermined sectors (Dezalay and Garth 2002), and of choosing their interlocutors through the selection, circumvention and censure of mobilised actors.

The issues that are common to state reformers, NGOs and mobilised trade unions – debt, AIDS, corruption and human rights – are chosen so as to allow dialogue. Resultant reforms

in these areas are certainly granted by governments, but these are normally subject to all kinds of trade-off and often fail to meet the original demands of the movements themselves (Bayart 2006, p. xxxviii). Empirical studies of the implementation of administrative reforms, in particular, emphasise the capacity of states to confine institutional changes to 'bureaucratic enclaves', or restrict them to new institutions designed to satisfy the demands of the international community (Eboko 2001, Darbon 2003, Bergamaschi 2009, Samuel 2009). Some non-state actors mobilised in such campaigns help establish such institutions and/or are later recruited to them. The circulation of individuals between NGOs and donor-financed institutions of this type has also helped to create a common set of practices which once again conflates spaces of state control and spaces of protest.

Yet the fact that these reforms and institutions are articulated in a shared language does not necessarily mean that the actors concerned understand them in the same way, or assign the same meanings to them (Vairel 2008). The fight against corruption provides one such example. The travails of the Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority and the former president of the local branch of Transparency International – who became the Kibaki government's anti-corruption 'czar' before finally becoming exiled in Great Britain – reveals a great deal about the nuanced, indeed divergent, expectations and meanings of states, donors and mobilised actors in regard to a particular theme of mobilisation and public action (Lawson 2009, Wrong 2009). The vast anti-corruption operation conducted in Cameroon since 2006 has also been invested with different meanings by the different actors engaged in it (Vallée 2010). Anti-corruption operations are a means of satisfying international requirements and rationalising administrations, but they also provide a way of removing potential political adversaries. These operations have encouraged some associative groups to take action; however, over-enthusiasm for change among such groups beyond the limited reforms permitted by government can thereby make them an object of repression.

The authorities can also call on the techniques used by international actors to prohibit some mobilisations, modify others, and continue to negotiate in a clientelist and/or corporatist mode with mobilisations which are unconnected to these extraverted sectors (for example drivers of taxis that are often owned by politicians) (Eboko 2009). The imposition of advocacy as the only legitimate and effective mode of protest removes other forms of mobilisation from the range of possibilities. In Cameroon, protest meetings, even those of modest size, are rarely permitted. The use of this particular repertoire of protest is historically linked in Cameroon to mass movements – the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) in the 1950s, the multi-party protests and the 'Ghost Town' protests in 1990–91, and the riots of February 2008. It is delegitimised by government – and in turn by associative, trade union and religious actors – as synonymous with violence (most frequently linked with repression). The focus on advocacy and expertise has thus served only to confirm existing restrictions on the repertoire of activism available to campaigners in Cameroon.

International campaigns which do succeed in making themselves heard, like some of the PCPA-supported campaigns, are likely to upset someone in authority – whether public or private – and suffer from indirect destabilisation as a result. The failure of the PCPA is illuminating in this regard. The logic of competition – between associations and trade unions – over the improper solicitation of resources has been suggested as the principal reason for this failure. Nevertheless, it is clear overall that the demise of the PCPA finally allowed the Catholic Church hierarchy to regain its hold over the BASC. Granted autonomy by the PCPA, the BASC had for some years been accumulating resources (mainly financial), as well as providing a focus for campaigning. Some members of staff resigned after

rumours circulated at senior levels within the organisation that they were personally benefiting from these resources. After a prolonged period of pressure, the director of the Catholic *Service Justice et Paix* (which took a close and critical interest in the conduct of elections in its role as a local election observer) also resigned.

When mobilisations achieve a certain size or can no longer be controlled by established means, coercion and intimidation are used on a case-by-case basis (Amnesty International 2009). In Cameroon, this is apparent in the detention and trial of members of ACDIC in 2008–2009, and of a journalist who had taken part in an international 'ill-gotten gains' campaign (FIDH *et al.* 2009). The vulnerability of mobilised actors in Cameroon is compounded by their legal insecurity: nearly 20 years after 'freedom laws' were enacted, the status of associations, NGOs and trade unions remains unsettled. In addition, opponents can be sidelined by the state by their own relationships with external donors. Some local actors, financed by Cameroonian donors, are ultimately considered to be more of a destabilising influence than their external counterparts, who may agree to negotiate more limited reforms. The establishment of an independent electoral observatory in Cameroon is just such an example of these strategies of control: co-opting 'civil society' actors, sidelining those whose views are too extreme, importing a project from outside, and diluting institutional reform through political manoeuvring: after years of local, mostly failed initiatives, an externally funded, independent electoral management body, ELECAM, was created in 2006. Ultimately, 11 of the 12 members of its management board nominated by the President, belong to the ruling elite of the party in power, or are very close to it (Belibi 2008).

Extraversion and local social dynamics

The internationalisation of mobilisation (whether in terms of theme, funding or media coverage) also produces local transformations which provide opportunities for certain social groups. When donors fund salaried positions, the external financing of projects leads to changes in the professional, and therefore social, characteristics of those recruited to these posts. A brief examination of the internationalisation of activist careers shows that this is not a uniquely elitist dynamic; it can also have a marked effect on the career path of some internationalised individuals (Siméant 2007, Latourès 2009). Beyond the dynamics of personal advancement produced by internationalisation, the resultant changes in the social composition of activist recruitment have produced reconfigurations in national and local social hierarchies. Favoured by the voluntarist policies encouraged by donors, women have elevated themselves to the top of a number of NGOs. The case of Kenya's 'human rights or democracy' NGOs makes this clear. In the late 1990s, women were quasi-absent in these organisations or still confined to subordinate posts; since then, they have moved into leadership positions or important positions as administrators or programme officers. Gender politics certainly counts for something here, but the primary cause lies in the career path followed by these women, and their attainment of professional qualifications – in parallel to the process of NGO professionalisation. It is thus not the female 'activists' of the 1980s who dominate this sector, but instead well-qualified women with a previous professional career. They have displaced the actors involved in the various political movements of the 1980s who, at the turn of the 1990s, saw NGO employment as the only opportunity to achieve professional success, given their previous political activism. If the extraversion of mobilisations has effectively favoured certain social groups by allowing their social advancement, it is because it has simultaneously devalued other characteristics and/or skills of those who are consequently demoted in the social scale or when opportunities for promotion present themselves.

The 'return to base' of urban NGOs accused of having become disconnected from their constituents (referred to above) is visible principally in the more extensive relationships they have developed with mass-based and local groupings. It is also apparent in their recruitment of 'community' and 'youth' leaders, and of social workers (responsible for social work in disadvantaged parishes, for example), who bring their experience of popular mobilisation to NGOs otherwise run by technical experts and intellectuals. These new policies have considerably extended the pool of recruitment in social terms – even if new career opportunities subsequently bring changes in lifestyle to these new recruits. The international orientation of the youngest recruits (those who joined such organisations at the point when the extraversion of mobilisations intensified its dynamic) has created new categories in local social hierarchies.

This can be seen, for example, in the internationalised careers (in the sociological sense) of young Catholics in the far North of Cameroon, a region dominated politically and socially by the Muslim Peul ethnic group. Christian churches have been trying to convert young people there since the 1940s, principally through development and education projects. At the time of the PCPA, the two leaders of BASC came from this area. Both had started their careers in local church-based development bodies and had benefited from training financed by them. They went on to enjoy startlingly internationalised careers, including several professional trips abroad. First, social advancement of this type did not necessarily encourage the individuals concerned to disconnect with their social origins. One of the BASC leaders set up an *association d'originaires* in Yaoundé to provide education and training for future generations from his particularly isolated region. The localised and ultimately autonomous effects of these internationalised careers must be emphasised. Yet based as they are in individual as well as long-standing social and historical dynamics, these careers are also striking in their fragility. While one of the BASC leaders has since begun a career as an international consultant, the other has been the target of destabilisation campaigns within the church, and has had to resign his post. The dependency of these careers – on donors but also on local power relationships from which donors are not disconnected – should not be ignored.

Conclusion

Thinking about the power relationships between mobilised groups in Africa and their international partners (donors and NGOs) always carries the danger of magnifying the importance of mobilisations led by urbanites, professionals and 'disconnected' intellectuals, and minimising the importance of other types of actors (peasants, the young urban unemployed, mine- and plantation-workers and others). At present, however, the growing number of international causes and an intensification in the establishment of transnational networks in Africa are expanding the chain of interdependency which links an ever larger and more diverse set of actors from North and South. It therefore seems relevant to make use of empirical observation and an approach centred on the concept of extraversion within the political spaces of sub-Saharan Africa to revisit the debates of the 1990s concerning the dependency of 'African civil society' with regard to the North. The uses made of Africa's dependent relationship with the rest of the world – highlighted by the concept of extraversion – encourage the reconsideration of the validity of some of the conclusions suggested by previous studies. First, the conditions and effects of this internationalisation of protest actors are contradictory. Access to the international sphere is subject to two forms of competition: social and political. While universally determined by socially selective skills, such access also provides a vehicle for social advancement. Meanwhile, in the specifically African context, it is the object of intense political battles, representing as such both a 'refuge' and a resource, as

well as a new source of coercion. Second, the concrete modalities of relationships between actors from North and South tend to reproduce existing inequalities, with the effect that northern models of protest (both in themes and tools) ultimately gain ascendancy in African spaces. Finally, similarities in modalities of implementation, in vocabulary, in the skills demanded by internationalised mobilisations, and in the political and economic reforms introduced by external actors, lead to the hypothesis that transnational mobilisations contribute to a reforming authoritarianism (Dabène *et al.* 2008), i.e. to the implementation of reforms which depoliticise social and political issues and reproduce the established order (Ferguson 1990). By repositioning mobilisations with access to the international sphere within the history of African political spaces, the concept of extraversion thus allows consideration of their impact as agent of both emancipation and domination.

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Notes

1. This article was translated for *ROAPE* from the original French text by Margaret Sumner. Email: maggie.sumner@googlemail.com
2. The slave trade offered some elites a privileged opportunity to capture the external resources they needed to guarantee their internal power (Thornton 1998).
3. See for example the action brought by former Mau Mau fighters, victims of torture, against the British state; or the affair of the 'ill-gotten gains' denouncing the assets of the presidents of Gabon, Congo and Equatorial Guinea, especially in France.
4. Even if such recognition might encompass certain contradictions; for example, a young Kenyan human rights activist, claiming links with the Mau Mau movement and using its revolutionary arguments, receiving the Reebok Human Rights Award, a prize awarded by the American multinational.
5. Anti-colonial mobilisations which expressed demands for political emancipation in vernacular language, relying sometimes on international law (notably the case with some of the discourses of the *Union des populations du Cameroun* in the 1950s), are not discussed here.
6. An insider's view of the programme was gained during the first semester of 2006 through participation in some *Programme concerté pluri-acteurs* (PCPA) activities in Cameroon. Informal conversations have since been held with some of its officials, Cameroonian and French.
7. Interviews on 21 December 2005 and 25 January 2006 with the leader of each of these union *centrales*, Yaoundé.
8. To a Cameroonian, it was obvious that the principles of partnership had been flouted: 'a (French) trade unionist used an unfortunate turn of phrase in this regard: "We did it for your own good." We replied as follows: "Without us is against us." ... We're extremely sensitive to issues of equality in relationships' (Interview with one of the Cameroonian PCPA officials, Yaoundé, 27 February 2006).
9. Available at http://www.pasoc-cameroun.org/index.php?file=Page&name=Comite_de_pilotage [Accessed 8 July 2010].
10. This observation does not call into question the work of the Observatory which, in particular, produced a report on the riots of February 2008 and their suppression (*Observatoire national des droits de l'homme* [ONDHC] 2009).

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