SSANSE
SMALL STATES AND THE
NEW SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

RESEARCH PROJECT
POLICY BRIEFS

SMALL STATES IN AFRICA AND SECURITY

Ian Taylor | St. Andrews | ict@st-andrews.ac.uk

Policy brief no. 22 | 26 June, 2018

Executive summary

Small states have long been viewed by international organizations as a special category with special problems. The existence of the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States is evidence of this. Interestingly, the UN regards small developing states that are landlocked or islands as being on par with the least developed countries (LDCs). LDCs are those countries with low incomes i.e. states with a 3 year average income per capita of less than $905.

Fourteen countries in Africa are classified as small states. These are: Botswana, Cape Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles and eSwatini (former Swaziland).

The security of small states in Africa is complex. The drivers of insecurity include underdevelopment, poverty, a youth bulge, high levels of unemployment and underemployment, the proliferation of small arms, malgovernance and corruption. The main threat to an African's security is not found in traditional security definitions, such as military threats or conflict, but in the area of human security. Human security here includes economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security and political security.

Analysis

Top three exports (products are reported if they account for more than 4% of total exports)

	Population	**Product I**	**Product II**	**Product III**
Botswana	2.2 million	Diamonds (72.9%)	Processed diamonds (8.0%)	Nickel (6.4%)
Cape Verde	0.5 million	Petroleum (50.1%)	Cocoa (11.4%)	Wood (6.7%)
Comoros	0.8 million	Cloves (53.4%)	Vanilla (14.5%)	Ships for breaking up (12.6%)
Djibouti	0.9 million	Charcoal (16.2%)	Coffee (14.7%)	Sesame (6.5%)
Equatorial Guinea	1.2 million	Petroleum (68.2%)	Natural gas (23.5%)	

NATO OTAN This project is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme

Gabon	1.9 million	Petroleum (81.3%)	Manganese (8.5%)	
Gambia	2 million	Cashews (36.6%)	Wood (27.6%)	Groundnuts (5.0%)
Guinea-Bissau	1.8 million	Cashews (75.0%)	Wood (19.8%)	
Lesotho	2.2 million	Diamonds (40.2%)	Clothes (17.1%)	
Mauritius	1.2 million	Fish (13.8%)	Sugar (9.3%)	Clothes (6.8%)
Namibia	2.6 million	Diamonds (28.0%)	Zinc (13.7%)	Fish (6.8%)
Sao Tome & Principe	71,900	Cocoa (61.2%)	Ships for breaking up (13.3%)	Chemicals (5.6%)
Seychelles	94,000	Tuna (72.9%)		
Swaziland	1.3 million	Drink concentrates (24.3%)	Sugar (15.1%)	Chemicals (10.8%)

Such a dependence on commodities is an existential threat to the security

The economic roots of insecurity

In recent years, a narrative of "Africa Rising" was promoted, based on relatively high GDP growth. Ho(broadly defined) of small African states as 'In the past 30 years, there have been as many price shocks across the range of commodities as there were in the preceding 75 years' (Brown, 2008). 'African economies exhibit very low level of diversification. By all measures and accounts, there has been limited diversification of exports by the African economies. Over the last 25 years or so, there has been very little change towards improved diversification in the African economies in general' (Ben Hammouda et al., no date: 11). What diversification that has occurred has been volatile. This is extremely problematic given that African economies have become more concentrated. In short, African states are extremely vulnerable to external shocks and have very low levels of manufacturing and diversification of their productive base. This dilemma is magnified when we are discussing small African states.

Due to the colonial experience, Africa was inserted into the global division of labour in a particular fashion. This is well known and the effect has been to generate and reproduce underdevelopment. Underdevelopment has two aspects: 'the basically external, international aspect, which, from the historical point of view of the emergence of the present state, is the primary aspect; and the internal aspect, which from the point of view of future development, is increasingly important' (Szentes, 1971: 163). Historically, global capitalism has generated growth in the centres and peripheries but in different ways. 'Whereas at the centre growth is development—that is, it has an integrating effect—in the periphery growth is not development, for its effect is to disarticulate. Strictly speaking, growth in the periphery, based on integration into the world market, is the development of underdevelopment' (Amin, 1974:18-19)

Given Africa's factor endowments being concentrated in commodities and the export profile and sector concentration being in the same, the raw material corner has been the continent's broad fate. The result has been what Shivji (2009, 59) terms "structural disarticulation", where Africa exhibits a 'disarticulation between the structure of production and the structure of consumption. What is produced is not consumed and what is consumed is not produced'. Ake (1981) has convincingly demonstrated that this disarticulation is a major feature of Africa's political economy and a key factor behind the continent's underdevelopment.

While low commodity prices foster palpable problems, even high commodity prices can generate major problems and fashion a trap of sorts, obliging countries and producers to decide between immediate profits (highly attractive for unstable and predatory regimes) and future long-term sustainability. All of this has serious implications for the human security of small states.

NATO OTAN This project is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme

Poverty and inequality

Poverty and inequality in Africa remains very high, relative to the rest of the world. Although there have been some positive changes in recent years, 'There is evidence that economic disparities in resource-rich countries are rising with economic growth, dampening the potential for poverty reduction' (Africa Progress Panel, 2013: 27). According to one source, three ongoing crises currently exist: Africa is affected via reduced demand and lower prices for their exports, reduced financial flows and falling remittances; climate change remains unchecked; and malnutrition and hunger are on the rise, propelled by the recent inflation in global food prices. Although economic growth in some small states has been robust, there is a pressing requirement to translate this into sustainable development. Investment in health and education and supplying basic public goods to the poorest would arguably enhance the cohesion of societies in small African states. With regard to small states in Africa, the picture is mixed. It is important here to note that in states where the poverty levels are (relatively) lower than in the rest of the country, the Gini coefficient reflecting levels of inequality within the society may be high (a Gini coefficient of zero expresses perfect equality, while a Gini coefficient of 100 expresses maximal inequality):

Percent of population living under 1.90 and 3.10 a day,

	\$1.90	**£3.10**	**GINI co-efficient**
Botswana	18.24	35.74	60.50
Cape Verde	17.57	39.26	47.20
Comoros	13.47	32.26	45.00
Djibouti	18.32	36.98	44.10
Equatorial. Guinea	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gabon	7.97	24.43	41.5
Gambia	45.29	68	47.30
Guinea-Bissau	67.08	83.59	50.70
Lesotho	59.65	77.28	54.20
Mauritius	0.53	2.96	35.80
Namibia	22.6	45.72	61.00
Sao Tome & Principe	33.89	69.24	30.80
Seychelles	0.37	0.97	46.80
Swaziland	42.03	63.12	51.50

The average Gini coefficient for sub-Saharan Africa is 43.00, so from the table above it can be seen that most small states on the continent have above average levels of inequality, with implications for human security. A note needs to be said about Seychelles, which is a clear outlier. It is certainly true that the country has highest per capita GDP on the continent and is it is one of only a few countries in Africa with a high Human Development Index. However, relative poverty is widespread due to high levels of inequality and unequal wealth distribution.

Sustainability and human insecurity

It is well-known that Africa holds plentiful natural resources and that these commodities underpin most African countries' economies. However, the continent is infamous for its major developmental problems. Development if it is to mean anything must meets the requirements of the present without undermining the ability of the next generations to meet their own needs. This necessarily includes intra- and inter-generational equity, a non-declining aggregate output, non-declining utility (consumption), minimum conditions for ecosystem resilience are maintained (this would non-increasing pollution), non-declining aggregate resources (productive base) etc. In other words, do the combined value of all assets remain constant?

Sustainability is where social welfare does not deteriorate based on the exploitation of non-renewable resources. Genuine Savings or adjusted net savings is a measure that analyses the true rate of savings in an economy, after taking into account investment in human capital, the decline in asset values through the extraction of natural resources and damage caused by pollution. Persistently low or negative GS are indicators that a country's trajectory is unmaintainable, whilst negative adjusted net saving rates in themselves demonstrate that the total wealth of a country is in decline.

Genuine (Adjusted Net) Savings (including Particulate Emissions)

	GDP Growth Rate (%) 2007	Adjusted net savings 2007	GDP Growth Rate (%) 2015	Adjusted net savings 2015	Population growth %
Botswana	8.27	32.1	-1.7	24.5	1.26
Cape Verde	15.17	23.43.	1.06	11.06 (2012)	1.39
Comoros	0.8	-7.16	1.0	1.5 (2012)	1.87
Djibouti	5.1	22.6 (2005)	6.5	--	2.23
Eq. Guinea	15.28	-180 (1996)	-9.12	--	2.54
Gabon	5.65	-2.86 (2004)	3.87	--	1.94
Gambia	3.63	-18.07	4.71	-1.5 (2012)	2.23
Guinea-B	3.20	-13.31	4.79	-18.08 (2012)	1.93
Lesotho	4.80	20.69	5.61	29.20 (2013)	0.34
Mauritius	5.72	12.11	3.46	-7.76	2.26
Namibia	6.61	21.71	5.29	19.20	0.67
Sao Tome & P.	3.25	--	3.97	--	1.89
Seychelles	10.42	--	3.49	--	0.87
Swaziland	4.43	3.71	1.46	14.39	1.14

Source: World Bank - https://data.worldbank.org

For a comparison, note that United Kingdom ANS = 4.30; France ANS = 7.36; United States ANS = 7.41; China ANS = 22.86

It is important to note also that when a country's population is growing, it is on a sustainable path *only* if the percentage change in wealth (ANS as a share of total wealth) exceeds the population growth rate. If the change in wealth is lower than the population growth rate, the country is also "de-capitalizing" or running down its assets on a per capita basis. This would imply that it is on an unsustainable path to an eventual decline in welfare per capita. From the above table it can be seen that a number of Africa's small states are not a sustainable development trajectory and this will inevitably have serious long-term implications for these countries' security situations.

NATO OTAN This project is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme

Malgovernance

In a traditional Weberian patrimonial system, all ruling relationships are personal relationships and the difference between the private and public sphere is non-existent (Weber, 1974). Under a neo-patrimonial system the separation of the public from the private is recognized (even if in practice only on paper) and is certainly publicly displayed through outward manifestations of the rational-bureaucratic state—a flag, borders, a government and bureaucracy etc. However, in practical terms the private and public spheres are habitually not detached and the outward manifestations of statehood are often facades hiding the real workings of the system. In many small African countries, particularly those marked by enclave economies, the official state bureaucracies inherited from the colonial period have become dysfunctional and severely constrained in their official, stated, duties. Many leaders in Africa's small states have relied on control and patronage through capturing power over the economy, rather than through the state in the form of a functioning administration. In some of these, this has degenerated into outright personal dictatorships.

Because access to resources depends upon being inside the state apparatus, patrons reward supporters with sinecures in the government and nationalized industries. The inherited bureaucracies have 'sooner or later [been] transformed into far larger patrimonial-type administrations in which staff [are] less agents of state policy (civil servants) than proprietors, distributors and even major consumers of the authority and resources of the government' (Jackson and Rosberg, 1994: 300). Clientelism is central to neo-patrimonialism, with widespread networks of clients receiving services and resources in return for support. This is well understood and even expected in many small African countries. Indeed, the exercise of personalized exchange, clientelism and corruption is internalized and constitutes an 'essential operating codes for politics' in Africa (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997: 63). This is 'accepted as normal behaviour, condemned only in so far as it benefits someone else rather than oneself' (Clapham, 1985: 49).

Crucially, resources extracted from the state or the economy in this clientelism are deployed as the means to maintain support and legitimacy, with the concomitant effect that the control of the state is equivalent to the control of resources, which in turn is crucial for remaining a Big Man. Control of the state serves the twin purposes of lubricating patronage networks *and* satisfies the selfish desire of elites to self-enrich themselves, in many cases, in a quite spectacular fashion. In a number of small African states, the democratic option is either absent or is not respected by the loser—the stakes simply are too high as once one is out of the loop vis-à-vis access to state resources.

National development and a broad-based productive economy is far less a concern (in fact, might stimulate opposition) to elites within such systems than the continuation of the gainful utilization of resources for the individual advantage of the ruler and his clientelistic networks. At the same time, the bureaucracy has developed its own set of interests (personal survival) and logic as prebendary organizations that further distort their role away from the ideal-type rational–bureaucratic model inherent in the Western representation of developmental agencies and more towards a loose set of skeleton institutions lacking in most capacities other than to act as predators upon the population or gatekeepers to resources. Such an environment further undermines the security of small African states as these systems are often unstable and prone to violence.

Conclusion

It can be asserted that 'poverty [is] not the result of some historical game of chance in which [Africa] happened to be the losers; it [is] the result of a set of economic relationships, rooted in the colonial era, that [has] served to enrich a minority by impoverishing the majority' (Adamson, 2013: 12). The external domination of Africa's economies and the pathologies of dependency that this engenders, constructed during the colonial period, have proven markedly resilient. 'The root dilemma of Africa's economic development has been the asymmetry between the role of the continent in the world and the degree to which that world…has penetrated Africa' (Austen, 1987: 271). Broadly speaking, 'The rigidity of the international division of labour has not allowed African economies to break out of the role of primary producers, for reasons which include lack of access to technology, the comparative advantage of the industrialised nations in manufacturing, and the constraints of the domestic market' (Ake, 1981: 92). Indeed, the economies of small African states are integrated into the very economies of the developed economies in a way that is unfavourable to them and ensures structural dependence. In short, 'the geo-economy of [small states in Africa] depends on two production systems that determine its structures and define its place in the global system: 1) the export of "tropical" agricultural products: coffee, cocoa, cotton, peanuts, fruits, oil palm, *etc*.; and 2) hydrocarbons and minerals: copper, gold, rare metals, diamonds, *etc.*' (Amin, 2002: 30). This has not radically changed since independence. The implications for the security of the small states in Africa is clear.

Adamson, P. (2013) 'A Measure of Progress', *New Internationalist*, no. 460, March.
Africa Progress Panel (2013) *Africa Progress Report 2013: Equity in Extractives: Stewarding Africa's Natural Resources for All* Geneva: Africa Progress Panel Foundation.
Ake, C. (1981) *A Political Economy of Africa* Lagos: Longman Nigeria.
Amin, S. (1974) *Accumulation On a World Scale: A Critique of The Theory of Underdevelopment* New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
Amin, S. (2002) 'Africa: Living on the Fringe', *Monthly Review*, vol. 53, no. 10.
Austen, R. (1987) *Africa in Economic History* Oxford: James Currey.
Ben Hammouda, H., Karingi, S., Njuguna, A. and Jallab, M. (no date) 'Africa's (Mis)-fortunes in Global Trade and the Continent's Diversification Regimes', mimeo.
Bratton, M. and Van de Walle, N. (1997) *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Brown, O. (2008) *From Feast to Famine: After Seven Good Years What Now for Commodity Producers in the Developing World* Regina: International Institute for Sustainable Development.
Clapham, C. (1985) *Third World Politics: An Introduction* London: Croom Helm.
Jackson, R. and C. Rosberg (1994) 'The Political Economy of African Personal Rule' in D. Apter and C. Rosberg (eds.) *Political Development and the New Realism in Sub-Saharan Africa* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
Shivji, I. (2009) *Accumulation in an African Periphery: A Theoretical Framework* Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers.
Szentes, T. (1971) *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
Weber, M. (1971) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* London: Unwin.

NATO OTAN
This project is supported by: The NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme