

**A Unified or a Fragmented Cooperation? ACP-EU Negotiations
within the Cotonou Partnership Agreement**

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The end of the Lomé Conventions has led to a new era of negotiations between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of seventy-seven developing countries. The widespread disillusionment with the record of the four Lomé Conventions left many observers speculating that there would be no continuation of agreements once Lomé IV expired in February 2000. However, perhaps for more political and psychological reasons than economic ones, there was consensus that a new agreement should be negotiated. After several years of discussions, representatives of the EU and ACP came together in Cotonou, Benin, and signed a Partnership Agreement on 23 June 2000 to further promote development cooperation between the two blocs of states that has been continuing in some form of other since the late 1950s. Much work has still to be done in finalizing the actual details of the “economic partnerships” prior to their full implementation in January 2008, though most of the benefits of Lomé IV will be maintained until 2008. This paper, along with others in the project on *The Future of the EU-ACP Relationship* headed by Olufemi Babarinde and Gerrit Faber, promotes a discussion of the likely strategies and negotiations in hammering out the terms of this agreement.

The specific focus of this paper is whether the ongoing negotiations will bring about a unified or a fragmented stance by the ACP states, or perhaps more significantly, whether EU negotiators will demand fragmentation or differentiation of the ACP group of states. The 1996 Green Paper essentially spelled out the strong preference of the EU in stating that, “Not all ACP States are at present capable of embarking on a standard political and economic partnership with the EU... For reasons of effectiveness, differentiated cooperation policies and procedures have become essential.”¹ The Green Paper went on to state four possible options for the future ACP-EU agreement: the status quo, with differentiated procedures; a new agreement supplemented by bilateral agreements; the break-up of Lomé into regional agreements; and finally, an agreement for only the least developed members of the ACP.² There is widespread agreement that the negotiating position of the ACP group is relatively weak, and that the agenda of Europe is crowded with bigger and more consuming issues than development policy. So how will these negotiations unfold? How will the myth of sovereign equality be maintained? What new conditionalities will the EU seek to enforce on the ACP? What will the net benefits and gains likely to be for both parties? How will these new partnerships fit within the tightening restrictions of the World Trade Organization? Will the ACP be better off with individualized and/or regionalized agreements, or will they prefer the previous model of “one-size-fits-all” development?

At this stage, much of what can be written about the negotiations must be speculative, and this paper attempts to develop the ground rules by which our collective crystal balls will be utilized. In addition to offering reasoned argument about the likely negotiation scenarios, different theoretical approaches are drawn upon to highlight possible outcomes of the negotiations. Prior to those discussions, it is important first to briefly set out the context of ACP-EU relations within which negotiations are to be held. Second, the main characteristics of the two groups of states will be discussed, and third, we will draw lessons from previous negotiations between the two groups, which might illuminate the likely paths of this impending dialogue. The final section will draw from

international relations theories to see what assistance they might offer in terms of predicting the outcome of these negotiations.

The Context for Negotiations

There may need to be more than a simple change of name from Lomé to Cotonou to strengthen development cooperation between the EU states and the ACP group. The fact that there is to be no Lomé V is indicative of the disillusionment held on both sides about the poor performance of the Lomé agreements. More specifically, it points to the desire by the EU to reconfigure the structures and parameters of its global development policy, including that toward the ACP group. A change of name is likely not just to be symbolic, but reflects a hardening of attitude by most policy-makers within Europe.³ A brief overview of the current context within which negotiations will occur is perhaps helpful in order to offer insights into likely negotiation outcomes. For organizational purposes, three themes are selected: globalization; neoliberalism; and regionalism.

Globalization

The current restructuring of the international system of capitalism, normally referred to as globalization, is consolidating winners and losers in global political economy.⁴ Countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group are candidates for the "loser" category. Their economies are increasingly marginalized from the global economy, unable to compete in the high-tech commerce of today, and relegated to the continuation of primary commodity exports, the prices of which have generally sagged.⁵ Forty years of development cooperation with Europe has done little to break this pattern of relations, a stern indictment itself of Lomé and its predecessor Yaoundé agreement. Back in the 1960s, there was optimism that, "The approach to an African Common Market as a complementary institution to the EEC would make the prospect of integration into a world trading system considerably more feasible and less painful."⁶ For Africa, and the other regions, that has not happened. As Thomas Klak concluded about the Caribbean, it "may be better depicted as a region that is increasingly irrelevant in economic and geographical terms."⁷ The ACP group is becoming increasingly marginalized from the EU, as its share of trade continues to diminish. It probably is not unfair to say that there is a certain resignation that the ACP group has become so weakened economically that it has fallen off the European economic radar screen: perhaps only political guilt has saved it from disappearing completely.

Whatever agreements are hammered out within Cotonou clearly need to address the marginalization of the ACP economies. However, major differences of strategy will most likely emerge as to what policies to pursue. It is likely that the voice of the EU will dominate here.

Neoliberalism

It is evident to most observers that neoliberal political and economic strategies will provide the basis of any further agreements between the EU and ACP. The Washington consensus forged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) has spread to the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO), and is the policy of choice within the Brussels establishment. Promotion of free trade and direct foreign investment (FDI), rather than trade preferences and development aid, have

become critical demands for European policy leaders. The Lomé IV agreement was fashioned on a neoliberal agenda, but its lack of success serves only to intensify the demands from the EU to implement such strategies under Cotonou. Equally, the successful restructuring of Central European political economies provides further ammunition to those who wish to push for “meaningful” change in the ACP region. Neoliberalism also calls for the streamlining and skill-sharpening of the bureaucracies of ACP states, especially those in Africa.⁸ But it is clear that FDI has been negligible to the ACP countries, and certainly will not come to the ACP countries in equal amounts. Similarly, most ACP economies are considered too weak to simply open to full free trade, and the espoused benefits of opening borders to trade have been strongly criticized by many.⁹

WTO policy has been especially important in pressurizing change in trade relations between Europe and its ACP partners, most notably in undermining discriminatory and preferential access to the EU market previously allowed under Article XXIV of the GATT agreement. The EU did not negotiate for special dispensation for its Lomé IV in the mid-1990s when the WTO was established, but did apply for a waiver in February 2000 to lapse when/if Cotonou is implemented in 2008.¹⁰ The ACP countries, along with most developing states, already feel disillusioned about the WTO trade regime because they were not part of its development.¹¹ And the inclusion of civil society groups into the Cotonou negotiations is likely to bring increased opposition to the tenets of neoliberalism, and so make agreements more difficult to conclude.

The ongoing trade tensions between the European Union and the United States will help guarantee that there is little or no European slippage in negotiations from promoting a less protectionist foreign economic policy. WTO vigilance will also be significant. There is little to be gained by EU recalcitrance in any case, but the likely impact on ACP trade options could be enormous. And as Raffer points out, WTO pressure can be used to the EU advantage, as “The new WTO regime shaped by the EU and the US will apparently serve to cleanse trade relations from disliked historical obligations.”¹²

Regionalism

Regional organizations have become an integral part of the global landscape since the 1950s, led by the successes of the European Union. Numerous regional organizations exist in the three continents represented by the ACP, although there are few if any stellar cases of achievement. For Africa, Pius Okigbo’s words on integration from 1967 still ring true today in that the difficulties, “are mainly internal – physical geographic bottlenecks, lack of basic infrastructure, paucity of natural endowments and resources, lack of political will and abundance of political rivalries, suspicion and jealousies. It is these, rather than threat from an external group, that make the development of an African common market remote.”¹³ A more recent study of African regional integration lists a variety of problems: lack of sincerity and political commitment; overdependence on foreign donors; foreign countries’ dominance; unrealistic schedules; uneven benefits; and continuing political instability.¹⁴ And one study recently concluded that “deeper integration is more likely to occur as a consequence [of structural adjustment] policies rather than through the efforts of regional and sub-regional entities especially established for this purpose.”¹⁵ And yet Daniel Bach argues that regionalization and “trans-state

integration is stimulated by market distortions as opposed to trade liberalisation, a situation which accounts for the overall failure of the IGO's programmes towards market integration."¹⁶

A similar picture emerges when one looks at integration efforts in the other regions. A study of Caribbean regional integration by Jay Mandle concludes that "such cooperation looks as if it is not realistically on the West Indies agenda." Mandle goes on to say that "it would appear to be a better choice to get on with the modernization effort on a country-by-country basis than to delay until some time in the indefinite future when regional cooperation will become a reality."¹⁷ And Evelyn Colbert was equally pessimistic about the prospects for regionalism within the Pacific Islands, given their very heavy continuing dependence upon external aid and the 20 million square miles that the islands cover.¹⁸

Regional integration and the promotion of intra-regional trade have long been touted as likely ingredients for assisting economic development, and it is probable that EU negotiators will emphasize development on a regional level utilizing existing organizations. The EU's Green Paper argued that, "The path of regional cooperation and integration seems advisable not only because of the generally inadequate economic size of many ACP countries but also because such an option can encourage political leaders to adopt a more strategic approach to developing their economies."¹⁹ How this relationship will be used is unclear at present. Will regionalism be used to promote collective self-reliance, or simply to tie more deeply these economies into the EU trade orbit? This debate hinges upon how one perceives regionalism. Björn Hettne sees the "new regionalism" as focusing upon political and economic factors, reflecting the post-hegemonic multi-polar world order, where pressures for regionalism come from above and below, from inside and outside the state. In this perception, regionalism and globalism are both contradictory and complementary elements, making regional "strategy" difficult to pinpoint.²⁰

It is possible that intra-regional trade will be pushed as a boost for development, though it is difficult to comprehend how this could be successful after decades of failure. Intra-regional trade as a percentage of total trade still remains at less than 10 percent for all the regions within the ACP. Alternatively, regions could be converted into free trade areas with the EU and with each other, pursuing the long-term goal in Africa of an African Economic Community. Another possible scenario would see the EU developing differential relations with each of the regional organizations, and/or specified groups of least developed countries (LLDCs) depending upon levels of development, trade, capacity, etc. The European Commission already has these regional organizations broken down into seven sub-groups for the purposes of regional cooperation fund disbursement, and so it would require little extra effort to differentiate more substantially.²¹

The Negotiators

While we should not underestimate the complexity of these negotiations, and the many groups interested in their outcome, for reasons of simplicity we will isolate the main actors into two groups, namely the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states, and the European Union. Overlapping both groups are other organizations, such as the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, launched in October 2000, which is attempting to influence the agenda of negotiations.²²

The ACP group

The ACP group now encompasses seventy-seven developing states, of which the majority is in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite valiant efforts, most states are increasingly impoverished and marginalized, and remain dependent upon the export of primary products. As Jean-Robert Goulongana, the ACP Secretary-General, stated at the end of 2000, "After more than two decades of cooperation and in spite of successive Lomé conventions granting this preferential access, there has been no great increase in ACP produce on the EU market."²³ For most, especially the Pacific Island states, their options are limited. To be competitive in the global economy would require massive changes in technological capability, education, infrastructure, and overall capacity-building that appear difficult to achieve. For many states, particularly in Africa, there remain serious threats to political stability, and uncertainties surround the viability of civil society groups.

The ACP is on record as calling for a unified strategy to negotiations within Cotonou. As an ACP Deputy Secretary-General has remarked, "From an ACP perspective, facing the EU as one rather than three separate regions is probably the best option in terms of the countervailing power it would provide in the context of negotiations."²⁴ This is logical in that greater negotiation potential would appear to be likely from a concerted group position, than having states or regions negotiating separately. Furthermore, the ACP seems likely to want agreements for which all members are to be eligible, rather than divide up agreements for specific states and/or regions. But will a fragmented negotiation strategy automatically be detrimental to ACP interests? Do different regions actually have different objectives? How likely is it that the ACP can forge a common strategy in the face of European insistence on fragmentation? There is, after all, relatively little that binds these continents together besides common poverty and an historical association with Europe. These are very different geographical and cultural regions, with different objectives and levels of development, with a relatively understaffed Secretariat.²⁵ The Commission itself does not really see the ACP as a unified group, and may well pursue that viewpoint in negotiations. The Green Paper stated that "The 'ACP group' is strictly speaking neither a political nor an economic entity. It was established in the framework of relations with the European Union for essentially historical reasons." The Paper goes on to say that ACP development interests "diverge widely because of their very different income levels and living standards, their economic structures and trade strategies and their relative appeal for foreign investment."²⁶ The ACP does, however, possess the power to "embarrass" the EU, and in unity there would be a stronger voice to claim that the EU is "deserting" the group.

In terms of specific strategies, the Green Paper outlined what the Commission considered to be the possible options for the ACP to pursue. These included non-reciprocity, multilateralism, unilateral liberalization, South-South reciprocity, and North-South reciprocity.²⁷ Perhaps the ACP states will push to benefit from currency protection within the Euro zone, though it is difficult to conceive how such protection will be organized. Another possible strategy will be to exclude non-ACP developing countries from the negotiations for fear of diluting further the preferences that they have gained to date under previous agreements.

The European Union

As expected, the critical player(s) in the Cotonou negotiations will be the European Union. Although there are considerable efforts to create a harmonized European development policy, we can envisage likely fracture points between the fifteen member states who continue to hold different perspectives on development policy, as well as between the different institutions of the EU. There is a multi-layered decision-making structure, including Commission, Council, Parliament, NGOs, and individual states, just to name a few. Even within the Commission, arguably the main player in these negotiations, there are likely to be differing preferences as there are currently "five commissioners and four directorates-general [who] have active policy responsibilities for development cooperation in various forms."²⁸

Even within the Europe of Six in the 1950s, it was very difficult to reconcile opinions about the relationship with (former) colonies. As the European Union has expanded to fifteen members, newer members, such as Finland and Sweden, have very strong views on development policy, but do not have the colonial or post-colonial linkages shared by countries such as France or Britain. This divergence of opinion has created difficulties for the Commission in constructing development policy, most notably in constricting national preferences within an overarching European framework. The further enlargement of the EU into uncharted territory in Central Europe and beyond, sometime over the next five years, will place new strains on European cooperation and more important issues on the European agenda, and will clearly detract from any focus on Europe's development strategy. As Femi Babarinde has concluded, "each enlargement of the EU has seen a redefinition and elaboration of the EU's relationship with the South."²⁹

At the level of integration theory, there are further complications for a unified European perspective. Arguments abound about the utility of neofunctionalist approaches, the significance of flexible integration, and the likelihood of multi-polar and multi-speed Europe in the light of agreements forged at the Amsterdam and Nice summits. If there can be alternative policy perspectives over Schengen, common defense and security, and the Euro, why should there be unanimity over development policy? Similarly, the EU perceives that the ACP group is equally fractured and "multi-speed," with states pursuing different agendas.

Having made the case for multiple approaches within the EU, there are some clear indications of what strategies the Commission is likely to pursue in the continuing negotiations. These were laid out in a Green Paper in 1996, and many elements found their way into the Cotonou Partnership Agreement signed in June 2000. A key provision of the EU stance is differentiation, namely the breaking up of the ACP into distinct component parts for the basis of negotiations. Another is the emphasis upon regional organizations. A third is the renewed commitment to political conditionalities, notably respect for human rights and democratization. Linked to this is the desire by the EU to engage civil society groups within the ACP in the negotiation process.

Overall, the Green Paper indicated a hardening of attitude toward the ACP group, and barely disguised a wavering commitment to and interest in the developing world. The successes of previous Lomé agreements have been minimal, and so the EU is ready to take a different stance. A complete end to agreements is politically unacceptable, but a new agreement primarily written on EU terms is the likely path for EU negotiators to

follow. Strategies of regionalism, differentiation, and neoliberalism hold the key to the likely outcome.

Lessons from Previous Negotiations

As alluded to above, all previous negotiations have proceeded on the principle of a unified stance and strategy on behalf of the ACP group. The issue, since the 1960s, could be phrased as “How can the weak confront the strong and ‘get something out of them,’ given the power imbalance.”³⁰ Notable exceptions to this group rule, which could provide a model for differentiation or fragmentation today, are negotiations for Nigeria’s trade relations with the EU in the 1960s, and those of South Africa in the 1990s. Both negotiated individually with the EU, and in both cases obtained significant concessions for themselves. One aspect of differentiated negotiations could be either having regional powers, such as Nigeria and South Africa, conducting separate negotiations on behalf of themselves or for their regional groupings. In the negotiations for Lomé I during the early 1970s, Nigeria spearheaded the talks, but on behalf of the whole ACP group.

Although there are similarities running through all these negotiations since 1958, the context of the talks has differed considerably. During the negotiations linked to the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the African actors were colonies, and so had a very limited role in the negotiations. These Association agreements naturally reflected the disparity in strength between the blocs, but also reflected intense differences between the European Six. In the early 1960s, both in response to Britain’s request for EU membership and the independence of most of Britain’s former colonial possessions, fresh negotiations occurred to which there was considerable opposition within the Commonwealth bloc. The reactions quickly changed when Nigeria decided to apply for preferential trade access to Europe, and negotiated a solid partnership.³¹

The ACP group’s strongest leverage was in the early 1970s during the negotiations for the first Lomé Convention. In a competitive Cold War environment, following the collapse of the Bretton Woods free trade era, and with the OPEC oil price revolution picking up in October 1973, the ACP group was able to extract a very positive treaty for themselves. The EU was clearly focused upon maintaining access to raw materials and trade partners within the ACP, and did not wish to forfeit these relations. In addition, John Ravenhill saw other benefits of these negotiations for Europe. These included maintaining the stature of the EU in global development; the maintenance of francophone and anglophone (and later lusophone) connections with the EU; the psychological satisfaction of promoting noblesse oblige and caring for the global poor; the protection of EU investments in Lomé countries; and the assistance to European countries in multilateralizing their markets.³² To some extent, many of these arguments are still valid today in the context of the Cotonou negotiations.

In subsequent rounds of negotiations, the conditions were not quite as propitious for the ACP group, and steadily through Lomé II to IV, the EU clawed back terms of agreement. As Christopher Clapham laconically summed up, “Rhetoric aside, the renegotiations of the Convention from Lomé II onwards essentially consisted in the EC telling the ACP states how much aid they were going to get, and the ACP complaining that it was not enough.”³³ There was little need to be concerned about ACP challenges and defections in the post-Cold War world of the 1990s, and the assumption is that this attitude will carry over to negotiations under Cotonou. One slight pressure for the EU is

the apparent new found interest in Africa after 1998 by the Clinton Administration, and some speculate that this might have tipped the scales in favor of renewing the ACP-EU agreement in some shape or form. However, notwithstanding Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to Africa in May 2001, it is difficult to imagine the administration of President George W. Bush being too preoccupied with the ACP group, or in development policy in general for that matter.

A clear lesson to be learned from all these previous negotiations is that the ACP group is in a stronger position when negotiating collectively. However, this is difficult to achieve. Although there are greater pressures to promote horizontal integration via regional organizations within the respective continents, the ACP group continues to promote vertical integration with the EU. There are obvious benefits to both the ACP and EU of this "collective clientelism," or "vertical integration," where "a group of weak states combine in an effort to exploit the special ties that link them to a more powerful state or group of states."³⁴ Unfortunately, under Cotonou there is dwindling reason for the EU to maintain these ties. For the ACP, differentiation will further diminish what chances these countries have to define the agenda. Economic frailty and weakness across the ACP has a certain diplomatic strength, and this is one lesson that the ACP has learned.

Unified or Fragmented Negotiations?

Many of the issues that will influence the outcome of the negotiations have been alluded to already. It is likely that the EU will seek a strategy to differentiate or fragment the ACP countries into regional blocs, or else into developing and least developed categories. The ACP will strive to resist such fragmentation in order to maintain the maximum possible leverage. Leaders such as Nigeria and South Africa will likely spearhead talks, though it is yet unclear whether they will strive for individual gain from such activity.

In this final section, it is worthwhile looking at potential outcomes of the Cotonou partnership agreement not solely through EU or ACP eyes, but through theoretical lenses of the field of international relations. How can different theoretical perspectives help predict possible outcomes of these negotiations? How can theory help define gains of the respective parties? Are there any similar findings across theories that may help to point to the likely outcome of negotiations? For the facilitation of debate, and simply to illuminate various possibilities, I am using five broadly and loosely defined theoretical approaches: normative/idealism, neorealism, postmodernism, rational choice, and dependency. These theories are not elaborated upon here nor are they being tested. They are presented only as brief sketches or characterizations to help us frame some thoughts about possible outcomes of the negotiations.³⁵

Normative/idealism

Though many hardened political scientists pay scant attention to the normative approach, elements of this approach certainly touch on the development debate and envelop the Cotonou agreement. Many can see normative elements in the rhetorical policies of support for development, but find idealism much more difficult to see in the real world of implemented policy. The ideal vision is of a developed world, where peaceful integration abounds and the quality of life improves for all. The EU, as the world's largest trade bloc, has an obligation to help the poor of the developing world – or

at least to be seen trying to help the poor. Regional integration, along with global cooperation through the United Nations, aims for the common good of all.

From this perspective, one will posit that the EU has a genuine commitment to the Cotonou partnership, and will negotiate to everyone's advantage. Certainly, the EU will want to avoid the embarrassment of being shown not to care about the developing world. The EU will recognize that the ACP group has the right to protect its interests in a unified stance. Elements apparently played down from Lomé will be revitalized, such as the increased flow of grants and aid, and the softening of structural adjustment requirements that impact social programs. The realization that everyone in the world is better off when poverty and hunger is eradicated will lead to an unprecedented agreement, helping to stave off the widening of North and South and the advent of "global apartheid" in development. The EU will work to promote social democracy within the ACP group, but will refrain from pursuing the harsher elements of direct intervention in their policies.

Neorealism

The neorealist perspective will emphasize the likely importance of these arrangements to the states themselves. The development of an ACP-EU development "regime" is desirable, where common values and norms link the partners together for mutual benefit. However, given the failure of previous agreements and the absence of a common value system, this is unlikely. Interdependency provides an uncertain balance in the world system, and the hope is that a successful Cotonou agreement will strengthen such linkages. But an analysis will indicate that this ACP-EU relationship is not truly interdependent, but one in which the EU exerts a form of hegemony over the ACP group. The relationship is certainly not of equals.

There appears to be little need to appease the claims of developing states for advantageous access to European markets, and little difficulty in resisting them. The uneasy relationship of the European Union with other major trading centers, such as the United States and Japan, will take precedence in consideration over those with the ACP. New structures of power relations might well influence the thinking of European negotiators, seeking not only to differentiate ACP countries but also to spin off portions into different orbits. The Caribbean would make more sense being linked to Latin America, the Pacific Islands to the Asia-Pacific bloc. Africa and the Mediterranean could be drawn more into the European umbrella. Another scenario will see "soft hegemons" emerging inside the regions, such as Nigeria in West Africa or South Africa in Southern Africa, and these countries will broker arrangements for their regions with the EU. In this way, new balances of power will develop within the Cotonou framework. Under this scenario, the collective voice of the ACP will be demonstratively weakened, and the Europeans will pursue their own agenda without the feeling of constraint. Cotonou will develop according to EU desires and goals, and most likely the ACP will be permanently fragmented.

Postmodernism

Postmodernist perspectives (there cannot be one, and apologies for drawing this approach very broadly, and with some abuse) will deny that such a development debate can occur. Grand theory and global solutions are impossible to define and defend, and simply show underlying power assumptions, in this case the power of the EU to define

the parameters of dialogue and negotiation. Probing further, there can really be no EU or ACP position, as this only masks multiple positions within countries and constituencies. Finding a true common ground between all these groups is impossible. A postmodern interpretation will likely envisage a totally fragmented strategy for all parties, where agreements will be negotiated between individual countries on individual issues. It is impossible to develop a framework of equality without "deconstruction" because the imbalance of power is ingrained. Debates over the meaning of development will essentially derail the negotiations, as participants will want their independent "voices" heard. A meaningful global development strategy is simply impossible.

Feminists (postmodern or otherwise) also raise objections to the current negotiations and the strategies that have underpinned successive Lomé agreements, and most likely the Cotonou partnership. Women have been outside of the development debate, relegated to gendered exclusion. As Eloise Turner argues about the EU position, "Neither the complexity of roles nor gendered income distribution are fully recognised, and the solutions proposed are thus inappropriate."³⁶ Globalization has increased the marginalization of women and children because of the change of employment opportunities open to them. Low-tech assembly jobs are considered "women's work," and as Cecilia Green concluded succinctly about the Caribbean, "the assumption of male privilege dies hard."³⁷ A more egalitarian negotiation process will have to bring in the voices of women, and this will have a significant impact on the outcomes.

A final area to note here is the emphasis within the Cotonou partnership on civil society groups, especially focusing upon human rights. As Karen Arts has stated, since the early 1990s "in its relations with developing countries, the EU more and more consistently pursues development and human rights simultaneously."³⁸ Given the desire to bring in non-governmental organizations, political parties, trade unions, human rights and grassroots movements, and other civil society groups, postmodernists see a clear result of developing multiple voices and multiple negotiation strategies within each country's delegations. How will such opinions be reconciled in a common platform across the ACP, or even within individual countries for that matter? How will views of differing social classes be brought into Cotonou? How will different societies, at differing levels of civil society development, accomplish these tasks? How can Cotonou empower civil society groups during the negotiations when globalization has tended to marginalize them?³⁹ To postmodernists, this is ample evidence that such goals are impossible to achieve as laid out, and complete differentiation is the only path to follow.

Rational Choice

Rational choice theory continues to make advances in the social sciences for its claimed ability to provide explanatory power to understand actions. Policy decisions are made based on rational calculations of gain by the individual actor. Action is taken to bring the greatest rewards. Negotiations can take place individually, or via the group, but will depend upon a clear articulation of preference hierarchies or choices. Economic gain is normally the primary motivation of decision, with little emphasis placed on moral calculations.⁴⁰ Political incentives are also very high priorities for decisions, such as reelection. Rational choice draws from historical theorists such as Thomas Hobbes and the utilitarians, but more importantly from modern game theory and the enduring capacity of neoclassical economics.

Rational choice will attempt to delineate clear sets of priorities for different groups of actors within the negotiation process, and it will be important to gauge where priorities coincide. It is a difficult task to open the black box of government and unbundle the different roles of individuals. There will most likely be different gains to be made by civil society groups as opposed to government elites, and so it is vital to recognize who has final authority for decisions, something that is unclear under the Cotonou agreement. How will one account for "shadow governments" in Africa or corrupt elites in determining how they weigh their rational choice? And as rational choice emphasizes the importance of electoral considerations in framing choices, how will leaders be swayed by voters in ACP countries (those that have open elections)?

Even at a simplified level, it is clear that the rational gain of the EU decision-makers will be very different to those of ACP leaders. However, identifying the key European decision-makers will be difficult as rational choice theorists perceive "the European Union as a system of countervailing institutions in which actors behave strategically to reach their preferred outcome."⁴¹ Bluntly though, there is little economic gain for the EU from the continuation of Lomé in terms of privileging the ACP, and much to gain by developing a more comprehensive trade stance toward all developing countries within the WTO rules. For the ACP, rational gain is to maximize exclusive economic concessions from the EU, at least in the short term. Game theory suggests that the ACP will wish to make a quick agreement in order to keep out other non-ACP developing states, which could draw economic benefits away from members. Rational choice also posits that both sides have clear political incentives to make an agreement, as the costs of failure are unacceptable. Whether this all means that the EU will deal with the ACP as a unified group or as a fragmented group (each state bargaining for its best deal) is open to interpretation.

Dependency

Despite various ideological challenges, dependency theory still holds some sway in discussions of development. Core-periphery relations can still explain some elements of political economy, even though globalization is affecting such relations in dynamic ways. Dependency perspectives highlight the continuing marginalization of the ACP group under the pressures of globalization and neoliberal strategies, and there is the likelihood that any framework within Cotonou will do little to truly improve the status and economic position of the ACP states. An argument can be made that marginalization diminishes the level of exploitation, as multinational corporations become wary of investing in unstable and excluded regions. Cotonou is likely to be a "no-win" situation from a dependency perspective. Political and economic conditionalities will remain a key requirement of EU support of Cotonou, and from this theoretical standpoint there will be little discretion for the weaker ACP during negotiations. The further intrusion of "policy dialogue," under which the EU demands greater accountability from the ACP in development policy, provides a further mechanism to maintain uneven and dependent relations. The creation under Cotonou of a European conflict protection and settlement policy to help Africans police themselves smacks of a new neo-colonial and paternalistic approach.

Fragmentation of the ACP will be pushed by the EU, as it will be easier to control ACP demands and goals. But even an ACP unified stance means little in the face of the

overwhelming power, both economic and political, that the EU possesses. And there is always the IMF, the WTO, and the WB to continue to act in the name of the Northern developed countries, pushing structural adjustment that continues to debilitate ACP societies. So, from a dependency perspective, there is likely to be little difference in which negotiation strategy the ACP uses, as the end result will be the same. In fact, radical dependency scholars argue for an end to these agreements and a complete change of direction for third world development strategy.⁴²

Conclusion

This paper has addressed some of the main elements of the negotiations within the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and has presented arguments from a variety of perspectives as to whether the ACP group will take a unified or fragmented approach in the negotiations. As we have seen, it is uncertain exactly how unified the EU will be in these negotiations, but definitely the EU holds the dominant hand. There are, of course, many things that can influence the outcome of the negotiations. These can be practical policy issues emanating from the dynamic and changing context of ACP-EU (and global) relations, and we cannot be aware of what international events might take place over the next seven years. Similar problems of prediction can be seen when we turn to our international relations theories to help us decide on possible outcomes. So much for the academy!

Drawing together all possible scenarios, and taking a pragmatic, personal and “balanced” view of likely scenarios, it appears that the most likely one to occur will be a continuation of Lomé in diluted form, with terms harsher than before for the ACP group. Greater emphasis will be made for trade diversification, foreign investment and capacity-building, whereas aid and discriminatory preferences will be downplayed. Despite strong efforts by the ACP group to remain unified, it is most likely that EU insistence on differentiation will win out, and various regional agreements will be brokered rather than a single common agreement. This will be perceived by the EU as in the best interests of itself and the ACP group. However the negotiations turn out, Cotonou is likely to usher in a very different type of “partnership” between the EU and the ACP than what has been witnessed over the past forty years. Unfortunately, there is little evidence at this stage to suggest that the new agreements will bring any more development success to the ACP than previous ones.

¹ European Commission, *Green Paper on Relations between the European Union and the ACP Countries on the Eve of the 21st Century – Challenges and Options for a New Partnership* (Brussels: European Commission, 1996), Chapter IV, p. 5.

² European Commission, *Green Paper*, Chapter IV, p. 7.

³ Richard Gibb, “Post-Lomé: The European Union and the South,” *Third World Quarterly*, 21(3), June 2000, pp. 457-480.

⁴ For comprehensive discussions on how globalization is affecting the developing world see special issues on globalization in *Third World Quarterly*, 21(6), December 2000, and *The Journal of Development Studies*, 37(2), December 2000.

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- ⁵ Nguyuru H.I. Lipumba, "Opportunities and Challenges of Globalisation: Can Sub-Saharan Africa Avoid Marginalisation?" *Background Papers, Volume 2, Human Development Report 1999* (New York: UNDP, 1999), pp. 157-221.
- ⁶ Arnold Rivkin, *Africa and the European Common Market: A Perspective*, Monograph No 2, University of Denver, 1963-64, p. 46.
- ⁷ Thomas Klak, *Globalization and Neoliberalism: The Caribbean Context* (Lanham MD and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), p. 12. See also Jeffrey Herbst, *State and Power in Africa. Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- ⁸ Arthur A. Goldsmith, "Africa's Overgrown State Reconsidered: Bureaucracy and Economic Growth," *World Politics*, 51, July 1999, pp. 520-546.
- ⁹ For example, see Dani Rodrick, "Trading in Illusions," *Foreign Policy*, March-April 2001, pp. 54-62.
- ¹⁰ Mark S. LeClair, *Regional Integration and Global Free Trade: Addressing the Fundamental Conflicts* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1997); J.H.H. Weiler, *The EU, the WTO, and the NAFTA: Towards a Common Law of International Trade?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mary Farrell, *EU and WTO Regulatory Frameworks: Complementarity or Competition* (London: Kogan Page, 1999). GATT stands for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.
- ¹¹ Gerry Helleiner and Ademola Oyejide, "Global Economic Governance, Global Negotiations and the Developing Countries," *Background Papers, Volume 1, Human Development Report 1999* (New York: UNDP, 1999), pp. 109-122.
- ¹² Kunibert Raffer, "Lomé or Not Lomé: The Future of European-ACP Cooperation," in Marjorie Lister (ed.), *New Perspectives on European Union Development Cooperation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), p.132.
- ¹³ P.N.C. Okigbo, *Africa and the Common Market* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 157.
- ¹⁴ Richard E. Mshomba, *Africa in the Global Economy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp. 192-200.
- ¹⁵ Jeffrey Fine and Stephen Yeo, "Regional Integration in Sub-Saharan Africa: Dead End or a Fresh Start," in Ademola Oyejide, Ibrahim Elbadawi, and Paul Collier (eds.), *Regional Integration and Trade Liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Volume 1. Framework, Issues and Methodological Perspectives* (London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's, 1997), p. 429.
- ¹⁶ Daniel C. Bach, "Revisiting a Paradigm," in Daniel C. Bach (ed.), *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Disintegration* (Oxford: James Currey and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 12-13.
- ¹⁷ Jay R. Mandle, *Persistent Underdevelopment: Change and Economic Modernization in the West Indies* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1996), p. 177.
- ¹⁸ Evelyn Colbert, *The Pacific Islands: Paths to the Present* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997). See also Te'o I.J. Fairbairn, Charles E. Morrison, Richard W. Baker, and Sheree A. Groves, *The Pacific Islands: Politics, Economics, and International Relations* (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1991).
- ¹⁹ European Commission, *Green Paper*, Chapter IV, p. 6.

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- ²⁰ Björn Hettne, "The Regional Factor in the Formation of a New World Order," in Yoshikazo Sakamoto (ed.), *Global Transformation: Challenges to the State System* (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1994), pp. 134-166.
- ²¹ Walter Kennes, "African Regional Economic Integration and the European Union," in Bach, *Regionalisation in Africa*, pp. 27-40. These seven regions are Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Indian Ocean, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific.
- ²² Kenneth Karl, "ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Launched," *The Courier*, 184, January-February 2001, pp. 6-9.
- ²³ Jean-Robert Goulongana, "We Must Not Trivialise the ACP-EU Partnership," *The Courier*, 183, October-November 2000, p. 2.
- ²⁴ Carl B. Greenidge, "Return to Colonialism? The New Orientation of European Development Assistance," in Lister, *New Perspectives on European Union Development Cooperation*, p. 119.
- ²⁵ John Ravenhill, "When Weakness is Strength: The Lomé IV Negotiations," in I. William Zartman (ed.), *Europe and Africa: The New Phase* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), pp. 41-61.
- ²⁶ European Commission, *Green Paper*, Chapter IV, p. 6.
- ²⁷ European Commission, *Green Paper*, Chapter III, p. 10.
- ²⁸ Carol Cosgrove-Sachs, "Globalization: The EU and Developing Countries," in Carol Cosgrove-Sachs (ed.), *The European Union and Developing Countries: The Challenges of Globalization* (London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's, 1999), p. 352.
- ²⁹ Olufemi Babarinde, "The European Union's Relations with the South: A Commitment to Development," in Carolyn Rhodes (ed.), *The European Union in the World Community* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), p. 140. For broader discussions of EU policy, see James A. Caporaso, *The European Union: Dilemmas of Regional Integration* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000); and Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).
- ³⁰ I. William Zartman, *The Politics of Trade Negotiations between Africa and the European Economic Community: The Weak Confront the Strong* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 5.
- ³¹ See Okigbo, *Africa and the Common Market*; and Zartman, *The Politics of Trade Negotiations*.
- ³² John Ravenhill, *Collective Clientelism: The Lomé Convention and North-South Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 35.
- ³³ Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 101. See also Pierre-Henri Laurent, "Europe and Africa: Towards Lomé III," *The World Today*, September 1983, pp. 324-327.
- ³⁴ Ravenhill, *Collective Clientelism*, p. 18. See also Ellen Frey-Wouters, *The European Community and the Third World: The Lomé Convention and Its Impact* (New York: Praeger, 1980).
- ³⁵ For a previous, and much more thorough, theoretical examination of ACP-EU negotiations, see Jeffrey Herbst, "Theories of International Cooperation: The Case of the Lomé Convention," *Polity*, 19, 1987, pp. 637-659.

³⁶ Eloise Turner, "The EU's Development Policy and Gender," in Lister, *New Perspectives on European Union Development Cooperation*, p. 33.

³⁷ Cecilia Green, "Historical and Contemporary Restructuring and Women in Production in the Caribbean," in Hilbourne A. Watson (ed.), *The Caribbean in the Global Political Economy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994), p. 171. For a more general discussion of these issues at a global level, see Süle Özler, "Globalization, Employment and Gender," in *Human Development Report 1999*, pp. 223-234.

³⁸ Karen Arts, "Development Cooperation and Human Rights: Turbulent Times for EU Policy," in Lister, *New Perspectives on European Union Development Cooperation*, p. 8.

³⁹ Francis Adams, Satya Der Gupta, Kidane Megisteab (eds.), *Globalization and the Dilemmas of the State in the South* (London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's, 1999).

⁴⁰ James B. Rule, *Theory and Progress in Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 79-81. See also Barbara Geddes, "Uses and Limitations of Rational Choice," in Peter H. Smith (ed.) *Latin America in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches to Methods and Analysis* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 81-108.

⁴¹ Peter Moser and Gerald Schneider, "Rational Choice and the Governance Structure of the European Union: An Introduction," in Peter Moser, Gerald Schneider, and Gebhard Kirchgässner (eds.), *Decision Rules in the European Union: A Rational Choice Perspective* (London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's, 2000), p. 3.

⁴² For example, increasing "disorder" in developing societies helps prevent the incorporation into western models of development, as argued by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey/International Africa Institute, 1999):