
Original Article

African agency? Africa, South Africa and the BRICS

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Abstract African states, economies and societies are increasingly ambivalent about Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS), especially their latest, fifth member, South Africa, as economic growth comes with costs, shorter- and longer-term, from social to ecological. ‘Emerging’ economies, powers and societies may claim to be ‘developmental’ but they still confront challenges of governance, especially of their non-renewable natural resources. Symbolic of the price of growth is continuing migration into South Africa, uneven scores on a range of indicators – African Capacity Building Indicators (ACBI), Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Human Development Index (HDI), Fragile States, Ibrahim Index and so on – and the West African Commission on Drugs (WACD). The African Mining Vision (AMV) remains problematic despite or because of the BRICS.

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Since 2001, Africa’s GDP has expanded more quickly each year than the global average. In the past decade, only the bloc of developing Asian economies, led by China, has grown faster than Africa ...

... even as China slows, there is enough momentum for Africa’s GDP to grow by around 5.5 per cent in 2014, the average of the past decade – faster than any other region in the world, according to the EIU. (O’Sullivan, 2014, p. 73)

Divergence in rates of development between the North and the South may increase as the global South grows and challenges the dominance of the North, now beset by problems such as ageing populations, climate change and the Eurozone. The range of security strategies, as discussed by Lobell, Williams and Jesse (2015) that apply in other regions like South America may not resonate in Africa because of its distinctive

informal, transnational cross-border relations, many small states and economies and the constraints on South Africa's role (Flemes, 2010; Shaw *et al.*, 2011; Fanta *et al.*, 2013). South Africa may be *primus inter pares* but hardly dominates the other 54 countries of the continent (55 or 56 and counting if Puntland, Reunion, Western Sahara and so on are recognized). Yet to date, Africa has lacked the strong secondary and tertiary powers which Brazil faces in South America as discussed by Daniel Flemes and Leslie Wehner (cf Merke, 2015). For instance, Nigeria and Egypt continue to face major political, social and economic stresses and its aspiring developmental states are largely quite modest in size and scale (Alden and Schoeman, 2013). Already several developmental states (for example, Botswana, Mauritius and Seychelles) and non-developmental states (for example, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon) have higher purchasing power parity (PPP) scores (cf. Alden and Schoeman, 2015).

Because of its history and political culture/economy, South Africa may project at least two foreign policies which hardly connect because of its inheritance of apartheid: state and non-state. So in terms of non-state foreign policy, transnational corporate and civil society relations, including fast-food/finance/hotel/supermarket and other franchises, media like cell-phone brands like MTN and satellite TV like DSTV, sports like soccer and rugby, supply chains, and technologies, even private security companies, do not impact official diplomacy. Hosting the Africa Cup of Nations or FIFA World Cup or running the continent's largest airline do not lead to regional hegemony. South Africa's soft power is separate from its inter-state status, two solitudes with historical roots. But South Africa as host to millions of Africans in their diasporas does impact inter-state affairs, generating some soft balancing and even binding as the continued flow of remittances is crucial for some national budgets (for example, Lesotho, Zimbabwe); in short, given ubiquitous transnational ties, continental relations are characterized by endless, fluid coalitions and tensions around complex interdependence of a distinctive variety. As the gap between South Africa and the continent's developmental states narrows so the latter can increasingly resist any pressures from the former. The rest of this article proceeds from the continent's new growth trajectory leading to possibilities of more African 'agency', especially around burgeoning forms of regionalisms, which demand innovative analysis as well as policy.

I turn from noting the continent's unprecedented growth in the present century to its new ability to maximize policy choices, including articulating ambivalence towards South Africa as one of the BRICS.

Africa's Economic Growth: Sustainable After 2015?

'African agency' in the second decade of the 21st century is the collective economic and foreign policy mantra of the continent's 'developmental states', the continent's



initial definition of contestation. Africa's economic agencies such as the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) along with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and African Union (AU) plus UN Development Programme (UNDP, 2013) came to advocate the adoption of policies leading towards developmental states (Singh and Bourgooin, 2013) a decade after Mkandawire (2001) first advanced the concept; the interim decade of the first 10 years of the 21st century was that of the BRICs then BRICS, leading to unprecedented growth on the continent (Economist, 2013). The most concrete or advanced articulation of such agency to date is the AMV (AMV, 2009) (www.africaminingvision.org). This constitutes one example of norm-setting by 'rising powers' which is an embryonic form of soft-balancing in which South Africa plays an ambivalent role as the latest, tenuous member of the BRICS' coalition.

African agency constitutes a determined response by the continent's developmental states to the gains rather than costs of the discovery of Africa's potential by the BRICS, especially China. After a decade of 'renaissance', its leaders are increasingly selective about overtures from the BRICS, now including the latest, fifth member, South Africa. The latter may be the most marginal of the BRICS but on the continent its presence is ubiquitous so scepticism about South African intentions gets projected onto the BRICS as a whole. Meanwhile, African states, which have suffered a series of promising 'new African' leaders for them only to overstay and age in office – hence the difficulty of Mo Ibrahim awarding his African Leadership prize each year – have undertaken minimal soft rather than hard balancing even at regional levels as they contrive means to gain from rather than challenge RSA, especially as the lustre of the 'rainbow nation' is wearing thin, symbolized by the passing of Nelson Mandela before Xmas 2013.

African foreign policy has always been distinctive because more informal and transnational and is now getting the attention it deserves as a contribution to comparative inter-regional analysis (Flemes, 2010). Symptomatically, at the turn of the decade, a new introduction to African international relations was published (Cornelissen *et al*, 2012) and an earlier collection by Dunn and Shaw (2001) was reissued, after more than a decade, in a Classics paperback edition with a new overview as well as translated into Chinese – if not rising powers, certainly not in decline. As Kevin Dunn suggests in his new Preface (Dunn and Shaw, 2001, p. xxv), it is decreasingly axiomatic that:

1. Africa is politically and economically marginalized within the practice of world politics, and
2. Africa is ignored or marginalized by theorists of world politics.

The increasing salience of the continent – soft if not hard balancing – was marked by a set of articles in *International Affairs* from Chatham House at the start of 2013, including a review of the field by Harman and Brown (2013) which focused on two

contrasting case studies: China in Africa and HIV/AIDS. The ‘drivers’ are no longer extra-continental, whether from the old North or new South.

The balance between developmental and fragile or failed states is shifting as the number of the former increases; see states at top and bottom in a series of rankings for the continent from ACBF, EITI, HDI, Ibrahim Index, UNECA and so on. So, for example, the top trio on the continent in terms of HDI according to the UNDP is Mauritius, Botswana and South Africa; the last 16 states at the bottom of the UNDP HDI in 2013 are all African except for Afghanistan. The synthetic Ibrahim Index of African Governance for 2012 ranks at the top, Mauritius, Cape Verde, Botswana, Seychelles, South Africa, Namibia and Ghana with, at the bottom, Somalia (#52), DRC, Chad, Eritrea, CAR and Zimbabwe. And *Foreign Policy*’s ‘Failed States Index’ in 2013 has Somalia, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Chad at the bottom. Such states hardly relate to RSA as one of the BRICS let alone engage in sophisticated, sustained binding/bonding strategies towards it.

Moreover, at least some political economies on the continent are moving away from commodities to services:

The region already has a group of fast-growing export-oriented economies that do not rely on the production of commodities. Some of the continent’s biggest economies, such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, are in this category (O’Sullivan, 2014).

Given the legacy of a decade of the BRICS, Africa anticipates post-2015 development agendas without the shadow of dependency, anticipating AMV advocacy and adoption by emerging non-state as well as state actors by the middle of this decade both on and off the continent. Enlightened by Lucy Corkin’s (2013) analysis of Angola’s leverage over China’s EXIM Bank, I relate to the emerging ‘agency’ versus ‘dependency’ debate (Brown, 2012; Brown and Harman, 2013; Harman and Brown, 2013; Lorenz and Rempe, 2013) as an unexpected correlate of the continent’s recent unprecedented growth. This sets it apart from continuing economic difficulties and setbacks in much of the established North of the OECD, especially the PIIGS and Cyprus of the Eurozone. And while China and the other BRICS may be slowing, the former is still expected to grow at more than 7 per cent in 2014. As O’Sullivan (2014, p. 73) suggests:

As China’s economy evolves so will Africa’s ... with fewer challengers from Asia’s tigers, the IMF predicts that four of the world’s six fastest-growing economies in 2014 will be in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

This article juxtaposes two dominant interrelated strands in the political economy of today’s continent: the impact of the BRICS, especially China (Xing and Farah, 2013), and the return of a commodities boom, this time with a focus on energy and minerals but, in future to include food, land and water. So, how to maximize balancing and networking given an unprecedented decade at the start of the new



century (Africa Progress Panel, 2012), especially as the continent's economies as well as leaderships rise and fall, symbolized by the historic contests between two sets of neighbours, *Cote d'Ivoire* and Ghana, Zambia and Zimbabwe: a decade ago, no one would have anticipated that Ghana and Zambia would be in the lead!?

Half of the dozen fastest growing countries identified in the *Economist's* 'World in 2011' (note just 5/12 in 2014 (*Economist*, 2014)) were African (*Economist*, 2010), from Ghana, the best-case example of democratic development, to Angola, the new 'oil giant' (Corkin, 2013) as reinforced by the expansion of the African middle class (AfDB, 2011). Such growth and associated changes in the nature of 'governance' inside and around the continent may expand the possibility and reach of 'agency' of African countries and communities (Brown, 2012; Brown and Harman, 2013; Lorenz and Rempe, 2013); the ability of a range of African state and non-state actors to impact decisions and directions at a variety of levels by expanding their room for manoeuvre (Africa Progress Panel, 2012), or to maximise reach of balancing/norm setting: they can increasingly balance old influences from the EU and OECD with new, such as the BRICS and other emerging economies/powers. This unanticipated possibility is not just a function of continuing growth courtesy of the BRICS, especially China (Xing and Farah, 2013). In short, established assumptions about inherited 'dependency' on the supposedly ubiquitous 'external' need to be reconsidered, especially if the latter now includes burgeoning transnational diasporas from the former (Ratha *et al*, 2011; World Bank, 2011).

Varieties of African Agency Post-2015?

I base this analysis on five major developments in agency especially at the regional level (see next section below) that suggest above all that, after the BRICS' decade, the character of development is very much in flux on the continent (Shaw, 2012; *Economist*, 2013). These developments suggest that the continent's 53 states need to undertake little soft-balancing let alone binding as South Africa is decreasingly dominant (cf. Merke, 2015 on Brazil and LA).

First, with particular relevance for this analysis, African stakeholders have been central to a set of innovations in transnational governance including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), however problematic, from Kimberley Process (KP) at the end of the 20th century to Publish What You Pay (PWYP)/Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) at the turn of the century and now onto Dodd-Frank in the new decade (www.enoughproject.org). Second, African regions have generated a series of innovations, from Maputo Corridor to trans-frontier peace parks or the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement (T-FTA) between the Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC) (Hansohm, 2013) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (Hartzenberg *et al*, 2012). Third, South Africa has been elevated and recognized as

the fifth member of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), however justified (Sandrey *et al*, 2013). This raises questions about the emphasis or priority of the biggest economy on the continent and its leadership aspirations at the regional, continental and global levels (Jordaan, 2003; Flandes, 2010; Nel and Nolte, 2010; Nel *et al*, 2012). Fourth, if we expand our purview from the continent itself to its diasporas concentrated in Europe and North America, agency through remittances is likely to become even more influential in the years ahead (Ratha *et al*, 2011) (www.au.int/pages/remittance/about).

And finally, albeit controversially, if we go beyond the ‘formal and legal’ to ‘gangs and guns’, we can discover novel forms of African agency particularly in de facto regional conflict zones like the Great Lakes, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel and in the energy and minerals sectors (Besada, 2010; Bagayoko, 2012; Klare, 2012; Nathan, 2012). The most notable form of such agency in response to global drugs supply chains moving to West Africa is the preemptive WACD (www.wacommissionondrugs.org) supported by the Kofi Annan Foundation. In short, we need not only to appreciate and to include such agency, we need to redefine it to reflect Africa in the new millennium as a burgeoning part of the global South (UNECA, 2011, 2012; UNDP, 2013), increasingly able to engage in ‘contestation’.

In a series of reports in the present decade (www.africaprogresspanel.org), the Center for Global Development (CGD) in DC now suggests that 17 African countries are ‘leading the way’ (Radelet, 2010) (www.cgdev.org); McKinsey (2010) lauds the continent’s ‘lion kings’ (www.mckinsey.com); the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (2010) has identified 40 African corporations as global ‘challengers’ (www.bcg.com); and Central and Eastern European Development Institute identifies a dozen ‘cheetahs’, from Botswana to Zambia): and *The Economist* (2013) now recognizes the continent to be hopeful rather than hopeless.

This article has three interrelated concerns which stake out paths to a brighter future for the continent centered on its regional innovations, including its myriad diasporas. First, the growing articulation in the present century of ‘new multilateralisms’ or ‘transnational governance’ with African dimensions – African agency. These are dynamic and span several emerging sectors from International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and Ottawa Process through Kimberley Process with Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) and Global Witness (GW) to EITI (www.eiti.org). In terms of human security, they include the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and Arms Trade Treaty (ATT); yet coalitions over Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and children/women’s security have been stalled because of US vetoes: more/less soft balancing.

Second, the focus of a pair of recent collections (Brown and Harman, 2013; Lorenz and Rempe, 2013), Africa has generated an innovative range of ‘new regionalisms’ involving a range of non-state actors: from Maputo Corridor and Kgalagadi trans-frontier peace-park to Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)/Dialogue; and from International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to corporate



supply chains and now onto the grand scheme for the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement (Hartzenberg *et al*, 2012). Alex Warleigh-Lack *et al* (2011) have begun to recognize the relevance of such new regional relationships for comparative studies of the EU especially as it confronts its own financial crisis around the euro (Acharya, 2012; Fioramonti, 2012).

And finally, third, what implications of this pair of novel directions and players – African agency – for our analyses and policies, state and non-state: who are the ‘drivers’ or agents, innovators and animators in African development in addition to RSA and what security strategies – human as well as national and continental? – have they adopted? Who conceived of the WACD (www.wacommissionondrugs.org) as preemptive diplomacy at the start of the second decade of the 21st century when developmental and fragile states alike were threatened by transnational drug/gun/gang supply chains being routed through West Africa?

Informed by contemporary international relations (Dunn and Shaw, 2001 and 2013; Cornelissen *et al*, 2012) and development studies perspectives, in particular network/regional/transnational approaches, this comparative article identifies emerging opportunities as well as challenges for African agency/norm-setting/coalition-building at the start of the second decade of the 21st century.

As suggested in the final section below, this is a welcome challenge or opportunity facing the continent at the start of its second 50-year period. What has it learned and can it adapt after its first half century given the significantly transformed global context at the turn of the decade? There are divergent regional incidences of and responses to the ‘global’ financial crisis with the global South being much less negatively impacted than the established trans-Atlantic core in both ‘old’ and ‘new’ worlds (Pieterse, 2011). And can African agency seize the opportunity to become primary driver of regional development in the second decade of the 21st century in addition to/instead of RSA and its fleeting advocacy of a New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) (Brown, 2012; Brown and Harman, 2013; Lorenz and Remppe, 2013)?

I turn next to burgeoning varieties of regionalisms now emerging in Africa as the rest of the global South. These constitute a response to the challenges of the BRICS, especially South Africa: collective reaction to both pressure and opportunity. At most this is a very light form of ‘soft-balancing’.

Varieties of ‘New Regionalisms’

Reflective of its more than 50 states, already Africa has been the leading region in the South to advance regional innovations and institutions even if it has received less analytic attention than, say, Asia (Shaw *et al*, 2011). I identify a half-dozen below. But these constitute a form of very soft-balancing as South Africa is important in its own region but hardly in the continent as a meso- or mega-region. Indeed, regional

integration or buffering in the era of apartheid – for example early Southern African Development Cooperation Community (SADCC) – was intended to further isolate/sanction South Africa so it was a latecomer to regional/continental/global institutions, particularly helping to redefine/revise the continent at the turn of the century: from OAU to AU facilitated by South Africa's advocacy of NEPAD.

In the initial, one-party nationalist period, reflective of jealousy surrounding newly realized independence, these were typically 'old' inter-governmental arrangements. But in the post-bipolar era, such regionalisms became less exclusively state and economic and more inclusive around emerging issues like ecology, energy, security and water (Shaw *et al.*, 2011). And now, regional development is increasingly focused on new resources such as corridors for supplies (SID, 2012) and pipelines and valleys for energy and water (Fanta *et al.*, 2013), symbolized by the new eastern Africa as a rising energy region (*Economist*, 2012). Hence the relevance of Trade-Mark in Southern and East Africa (TMSA and TMEA) (www.trademarka.com, www.trademarksa.org), facilitating regional infrastructures, networks and supply-chains (SID, 2012).

Nevertheless, first, the revived, redefined East African Community is emblematic of 'new' African regionalisms. There are now five rather than the initial trio of members (Hansohm, 2013), with innovative civil society, media, parliamentary and security dimensions (SID, 2012), qualifying as an instance of 'new regionalisms' (Shaw *et al.*, 2011). Given the scale and resilience of regional conflict on the continent, several attempts have been made at regional peace-building, from Dafur to *Cote d'Ivoire*, especially around the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), GLR, and Horn such as the ongoing process around the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, reinforced and publicised by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Section 1502 on conflict metals. These increasingly involve a fluid range of actors in a heterogeneous coalition (Leonard, 2013), from INGOs to MNCs, as such conflicts are always about 'greed' as well as 'grief'; so resource extraction and accumulation proceeding in tandem with violence, all too often targeting women and children as successive UN reports on the Congo have revealed. And as security is increasingly privatized, especially in and around RSA, so such coalitions become ever more problematic. This is particularly so around energy and mineral extraction and supply-chains as their products attract the attention of transnational as well as local criminal networks. Shorter-term peace-making is typically tied to longer-term norm-creation to advance sustainable development by regulating the flow of 3T (tin, tantalum and tungsten) conflict metals and minerals like coltan, diamonds and gold as already indicated above (www.enoughproject.org).

Second, in the new century, regionalisms on the continent have come to cover the spectrum of levels – macro/meso/micro (Soderbaum and Taylor, 2008) – and sectors – civil society, corporate networks, and security. While Export-Processing Zones (EPZs) are associated with Asia and gas pipelines with Central Europe (Kuzemko



et al., 2012), development corridors and peace-parks are largely a function of Southern Africa's distinctive political economy (Ramutsindela, 2011). Similarly, Africa has its share of river valley organizations (for example, Congo, Niger, Nile, Zambezi) and other cross-border more to less formal micro-regions. The Maputo Corridor has advanced growth in Southern Mozambique as well as the eastern Witwatersrand, reinforcing the cross-border dimensions of the Lesotho highlands water project for electricity and water. The latter was informed by the only global commission to be based outside the North – in Cape Town – which also included MNCs as well as NGOs and states in its membership (Khagram, 2004): the World Commission on Dams. Reflective of growing concern for the environment, Southern Africa is the centre of the trans-frontier peace-parks movement which has led to the recognition of several such cross-border parks in the region; these may evolve from designated elephant corridors into multipurpose functional arrangements for renewable energy and water resources.

Third, encouraged by growing recognition of climate change – NB the development of the India, Brazil and South Africa trio (IBSA) into Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) around the annual environmental/climate change Conference of the Parties (COP) 15 in Copenhagen at end-2009 and beyond – the continent's river basins are beginning to receive exponential attention as centres of biodiversity, energy, food and water as well as conflict including the Congo and the Zambezi. The Nile Basin Initiative and Dialogue are arguably the most advanced to date, but, given the Arab Spring, increasingly problematic.

Fourth, symptomatic of emerging tensions and possibilities is the discovery of oil around the rift valley lakes in northwest Uganda along the border with Congo; such oil production may propel Uganda into the ranks of the developmental states but it may endanger some of its environment and wildlife, let alone local communities. And in early 2012, new discoveries of oil and gas were announced in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia and in northern Mozambique and southern Tanzania by a series of global energy players (*Economist*, 2012): an emerging energy exporting region of growing importance for AMV. The first East Africa Oil and Gas Summit was held in Nairobi in November 2012 to discuss pipelines from Juba to Lamu and Mtwara to Dar and Mombasa as well as refinery in northern Uganda: redefinition of African regions? Some of the 50 global energy companies involved in this new Eastern Africa include China's CNPC and CNOOC, US Anadarko and ExxonMobil and BG, ENI, Statoil and Tullow from Europe; already the Indian ONGC is buying access in Mozambique from Anadarko to join Japan's Mitsui *et al.*

Fifth, the continent's pattern of inter-regional relationships (Fawn, 2009) is in flux, from classic, inherited North-South dependencies towards a novel South-East axis around China and India but also Japan and Korea along with athletics, film, music, soccer etc. Symbolically, Africa's regions' reluctance to sign Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU at the turn of the decade despite a mix of pressures and incentives may mark a turning point as global rebalancing continues; Europe of

the eurozone crisis around the PIIGS and Asia of the BRICS transforms policy options and calculations for the continent as suggested in Cheru and Obi (2010), advancing the prospects for African agency. The tone of annual African-China FOCAC palavers (Taylor, 2011) can be contrasted to that at the third EU-Africa summit in Tunis in November 2010. Iberia increasingly relies on investment from and emigration to Angola, Brazil, Mexico and Mozambique.

Finally, sixth, given its numerous land-locked states, Africa has always experienced informal cross-border migration and trade, some now in illegal goods like drugs and small arms. Hence the WACD as preemptive diplomacy as West Africa becomes a hub in the supply chain from LA to EU. And as MNCs, now from China and India as well as South Africa (hence the transition from IBSA to BRICS), have increased their investments in energy and minerals, franchises and shopping malls, so their logistics and supply chains have come to define their own regional networks (Power *et al*, 2012). Exponential infrastructural development will further new regionalisms on the continent in the second decade of the 21st century, symbolized by the mobile phone revolution and the roles of MTN and Celtel/Bharti, including the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. I conclude by posing questions about the implications of developments in finance and regionalisms for African policy post-2015 (*Economist*, 2013): more/less agency? And what relationship between RSA and the other 53 governments given ubiquitous transnational connections (see Flemes and Wehner 2015, in terms of Brazil's relations with burgeoning secondary powers in South America).

Onto Varieties of Innovative Analyses and Policies?

After the BRICS' decade, expanding economies generate burgeoning varieties of governance with implications for policy towards RSA. Are these norm-setting rather than-taking? Regionalisms reinforces the prospect for public, including foreign, policy in and around the continent (Hanson *et al*, 2012): How distinctive is the African developmental state in 2015 (cf. Lobell *et al*, this issue)? They also present challenges to African and related analyses – from dependency to agency (Brown, 2012; Cooper and Shaw, 2013; Brown and Harman, 2013; Corkin, 2013; Lorenz and Rempe, 2013) – as they demand 'innovative' perspectives and policies, both state and non-state; ie civil societies, private companies and/or media. As such they are compatible with comparative notions of soft – balancing (cf. Lobell and Flemes, 2015). And simultaneously the focus of regional development is shifting from older inter-governmental paradigms (Acharya, 2012) around the formal economy to newer technologies and sectors such as brands and supply-chains, energy and water, pipelines and refineries (Shaw *et al*, 2011; Cornelissen *et al*, 2012); increasingly authoritative transnational networks and norms (Flemes and Wehner, 2012).



Africa at the turn of the second decade of the 21st century after 10 years of the BRICs/BRICS is, then, at a crossroads in terms of governance for development (www.africaprogresspanel.org) and aspirations to developmental states. Can it seize its second chance and transcend its somewhat lacklustre first half-century to advance both by transforming itself from norm-taker to -setter (UNECA, 2011, 2012; Flandes and Wehner, 2012)? In turn, can African interests advance inclusive public or network diplomacy of non-state as well as state actors for the most marginalized continent in the global South using new medias/technologies?

Africa's place at the centre of innovative sources of finance and styles of governance leads to optimism (UNECA, 2009; Hanson *et al.*, 2012) while the number of continuing conflicts and persistent fragile/failed states leads to scepticism, even pessimism (Brock *et al.*, 2012): after 2015, what balance by 2020 and beyond? Will the 53 states be benign towards RSA given its own difficulties along with hosting so many migrants from the continent (cf. Alden and Schoeman, this volume) or will the handful of embryonic developmental states or emerging secondary powers begin to challenge its leadership (Jordaan, 2003; Nel and Nolte, 2010; Nel *et al.*, 2012)? In turn, in Africa as elsewhere in the global South (UNDP, 2013), what will be the balance between regional conflict and regional development (Fanta *et al.*, 2013)?

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