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African Studies Review, Volume 48, Number 1, April 2005, pp. 109-126 (Article)

Published by Cambridge University Press
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2005.0047

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[3.128.203.143] Project MUSE (2024-04-26 06:10 GMT)

Citizens and Foreigners: Democratization and the Politics of Exclusion in Africa

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Abstract: In the ongoing context of political liberalization, many African leaders have adopted the rhetoric of democracy while at the same time devising ways to limit political competition. This article focuses on one such strategy: the effort to disqualify or discredit political opponents based on challenges to their citizenship. In recent years, several African leaders have initiated court cases and produced evidence to question the right of opposition candidates and other critics to participate in the political process. By examining specific examples in Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, and elsewhere, the article explores the implications of this strategy. While citizenship rights are clearly important in any democracy, their explicit manipulation for the ruling party's political purposes is a risky approach that threatens to slow or even reverse the process of democratization. In the end, a tactic initially designed to exclude specific individuals from the political process has the potential of fueling broader xenophobic sentiments and legitimizing exclusionary nation-building strategies. At best, the resulting widening of social cleavages reduces the likelihood of democratic consolidation. At worst, it plants the seeds for future political conflict and possibly even war.

Résumé: Dans le contexte présent de libéralisme politique grandissant, bien des leaders africains ont adopté un discours démocratique tout en cherchant les moyens de limiter la compétition politique. Cet article traite principalement de la stratégie adoptée consistant à discréditer ou disqualifier les opposants politiques sur des attaques liées à leur citoyenneté. Depuis quelques années, plusieurs leaders africains ont initié des procès et montré des pièces à conviction destinés à mettre en question le droit de participation à la scène politique de certains candidats

African Studies Review, Volume 48, Number 1 (April 2005), pp. 109–26

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de l'opposition ou d'autres critiques. A travers l'analyse d'exemples spécifiques en Côte d'Ivoire, Zambie, et ailleurs, cet article explore les implications d'une telle stratégie. Bien que les droits de citoyenneté ont une importance certaine dans toute démocratie, toute manipulation de ceux-ci par le parti au pouvoir pour des objectifs politiques constitue une approche risquée, menaçant de ralentir ou même d'entraver le processus de démocratisation. Au final, une tactique initialement prévue pour exclure des individus spécifiques de la scène politique a le potentiel d'encourager des sentiments xénophobes plus larges et de légitimer des stratégies nationalistes exclusives. Au mieux, l'élargissement résultant des clivages sociaux limitera la possibilité de consolidation démocratique. Au pire, cette stratégie plante les racines de conflits politiques futurs et possiblement d'une guerre.

THE REINTRODUCTION OF multiparty competition in Africa in recent years has generated optimism and some changes, but there continue to be serious doubts about whether it represents a genuine transition toward democracy. Many leaders have adopted the rhetoric of democracy while devising creative ways to limit political competition.[1] They may seek to reduce the number of opposition candidates, for example, by imposing residency requirements, calling for health certifications, or restricting eligibility to those with a certain level of education and experience. Although these measures often are aimed at specific individuals, they are generally enacted through constitutional amendments and other legal methods that give them legitimacy and allow leaders to be seen as embracing the rule of law. The strategies may raise doubts about leaders' commitment to democracy, but they are not inherently undemocratic.

One such strategy presents greater risk than others to the process of democratic consolidation because it involves the touchy issue of citizenship. This matter is in flux in many countries as people transition from being subjects of an authoritarian state to citizens of a democracy. In this already complicated context, incumbents in several countries have tried to disqualify or discredit political opponents based on challenges to their citizenship. They have initiated court cases and produced evidence to question the right of specific candidates to participate in the political process. While citizenship rights are clearly important in any democracy, their explicit manipulation for the ruling party's political purposes is a risky strategy that threatens to slow or even reverse the process of democratization.

This article examines the most recent examples of the use of this strategy in Africa, especially in Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia. The following section reviews some literature on democratization and citizenship and proposes a model of the implications of the strategy. The individual cases are then presented, followed by an exploration of the rise of antiforeigner sentiment in these countries. In the end, I argue that a tactic designed initially to

exclude specific individuals from the political process fuels broader xenophobic sentiments and legitimizes calls for the exclusion of whole groups. At best, the resulting widening of social cleavages significantly reduces the likelihood of democratic consolidation. At worst, it plants the seeds for future political conflict and possibly even war.

Democratization and Citizenship

Democratization is often regarded as more difficult in multinational contexts than in countries where people share a common identity. Indeed, there is a large body of literature on the challenges of institutionalizing democracy in diverse countries. Some studies highlight the potentially violent outcome of the process of democratization itself (i.e., Snyder 2000), while others advocate specific institutional arrangements and sequencing patterns to reduce the chances of conflict (e.g., Horowitz 1991; Lijphart 1977; Linz & Stepan 1992). Despite the challenges, Przeworski et al. (1995) argue against the thesis of democratic instability in heterogeneous societies. Theoretically, they say, this thesis assumes wrongly that ethnic identities are primordial. Empirically, it fails to account for the large number of established democracies that are multinational. In addition, the mobilization of ethnic identities results not from the process of democratization but from the weakness of the central state. States that are unable to uniformly enforce both the rights and obligations of citizenship prompt competing interests to organize along identity lines.

While democratization is certainly possible in multinational polities, therefore, it comes with special challenges and risks. In this context, the literature suggests that elite discourse and strategies are especially important. In countries where leaders willingly enter into consociational or other arrangements, ethnic differences can be managed and their political importance reduced. But when elites take advantage of the changing political context to mobilize their constituencies along ethnic lines, the chances of conflict and violence increase. Drawing on Brubaker (1995), Linz and Stepan (1996) distinguish between "nationalizing" policies through which leaders try to enforce cultural homogeneity and "democratizing" policies that foster a broad and inclusive society. In the end, they and others argue, the likelihood of democratic consolidation increases with elite policies that are inclusive of diverse groups in a multinational setting.

The issue of citizenship is particularly important in such situations. During democratic transitions, the relationship between the *polis* and the *demos* is brought into question (Linz & Stepan 1996). There is often significant debate over which groups should share the rights and obligations of citizenship. Some countries have adopted a relatively inclusive approach, while others have been more restrictive. A growing number of countries have developed democratic institutions without effective citizenship for

large portions of the population, raising serious doubts about whether they are democracies "in any meaningful sense of the term" (Przeworski et al. 1995:39). Based on his examination of this issue in Africa, Herbst (1998) argues that exclusive citizenship laws can lead to extreme alienation among groups that are not included in the operation of the state. If the situation continues and these groups have no other means through which to assert their demands, they often resort to violence.

The question under examination here is what happens when exclusive citizenship is applied individually rather than collectively. It is clear that the exclusion of full groups can lead to alienation and ultimately conflict, but it seems reasonable to assume that the exclusion of one or two individuals from the rights of citizenship would be much less risky. In the cases discussed below, the primary intent of the incumbents was to limit the pool of competition, not to exclude full groups from the political process. And indeed, in most cases, the outcome of this strategy was not violent. Nevertheless, the intensity of the violence in one case (Côte d'Ivoire) suggests that the application of exclusive citizenship to individuals is not without risks. In addition, the effort to limit competition and the manipulation of citizenship rights to do so raises larger questions about the chances of democratic consolidation in these countries.

The comparative analysis presented below suggests a rough model of the conditions under which the use of the individual exclusion strategy can result in conflict. In situations of underlying xenophobia, elite application of exclusive citizenship policies—even against just one individual—can legitimize calls for the exclusion of full groups, thus widening social cleavages. If the group whose member is targeted by this strategy is sufficiently large and alienated, the situation is likely to deteriorate into instability and even war. While this hypothesis is obviously based on a limited number of cases, it is useful to consider as more and more countries adopt democratic institutions and grapple with issues of citizenship. Several African countries already have developed exclusive strategies in this regard, including very strict rules on eligibility for political office. In the context of multinational societies, as most in Africa are, elite strategies ultimately will go a long way toward determining the prospects for democratic consolidation.

The "Foreigner" Label as a Political Strategy

Incumbent leaders in several African countries have tried to exclude political opponents by raising questions about their citizenship. In most cases, the targets of such accusations have previously held senior positions within the government or ruling party, but their nationalities were not an issue at the time. With the spread of multiparty competition, however, these same political figures have often abandoned earlier alliances and formed new parties. In doing so, they suddenly have found their political loyalties ques-

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tioned. The most recent and publicized examples have been in Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia, where the strategy had radically different outcomes, but it also was used years ago in Botswana and Nigeria. Recently, the government in Tanzania has hinted at the adoption of similar tactics.

In Côte d'Ivoire, successive leaders have fought for years to disqualify Alassane Ouattara, a popular northern opposition figure, from competing in elections based on the charge that he is a foreigner. The issue first emerged after the death of longtime president Félix Houphouët-Boigny in 1993. Article 11 of the constitution, which had been reinstated just two years earlier, designated the National Assembly leader, Henri Konan Bédié, as his successor. Bédié knew that the issue of succession was contested, particularly by then Prime Minister Ouattara, and he moved quickly to consolidate his power. He introduced the ultranationalist policy of *Ivoirité* and limited elected office to people whose parents were native born. Bédié's government then declared that Ouattara was not Ivorian, based on the claim that one of his parents was from Burkina Faso, thus making him ineligible for presidential elections in 1995. Bédié easily won those elections, which were boycotted by several opposition groups.

After Bédié was overthrown in 1999, the leader of the coup, General Robert Gueï, adopted a similar approach. Under widespread pressure to return the country to civilian rule, Gueï announced elections for late 2000. In July 2000, he held a referendum on a new constitution, which included a provision requiring that both parents of a presidential candidate be Ivorian. The referendum passed with 87 percent of the vote; Ouattara encouraged his supporters to vote "yes" under the assumption that the citizenship matter would be sorted out later in court. When he was selected as his party's candidate, however, Gueï made sure that the court ruled Ouattara ineligible. Interestingly, in the same ruling, the court also disqualified thirteen other candidates, including six from the former ruling party, based on other eligibility requirements in the new constitution. The election was thus limited to just five presidential candidates.

The election was held in October 2000. After a tumultuous three-day period during which Gueï initially refused to recognize the results and thousands of Ivorians took to the streets, the winning candidate, Laurent Gbagbo, was sworn in as president. Despite widespread pressure to conduct a new election in which more candidates (including Ouattara) would be allowed to compete, Gbagbo maintained that Ouattara was a foreigner and a new election was not warranted.[2] Although he tried subsequently to smooth things over, the damage had already been done. In September 2002, soldiers from the north launched a rebellion demanding Gbagbo's resignation and new elections. They tapped into simmering discontent among northern Muslims, and the violence quickly escalated while other rebel groups emerged. Regional and international pressure led to a power-sharing arrangement in March 2003, but its terms have yet to be implemented. The situation remains tenuous, as peacekeepers enforce an uncer-

tain cease-fire between rebels in the north and the government in the south.

In contrast to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, where several leaders pinned the "foreigner" label on one individual, in Zambia a single leader used the same strategy against many opponents. As soon as he came to power in 1991, President Frederick Chiluba and his Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) started investigating the nationalities of prominent opposition leaders. The inquiries led to the deportation in late 1994 of two senior members of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the party of the previous president. William Banda, a former district governor, and John Chinula, a former central committee member, were both deported to Malawi, which the government claimed was their birthplace (Amnesty International 1997).

Chiluba's government subsequently turned its attention to the former president, Kenneth Kaunda, who was launching a political comeback. Kaunda was born in Zambia to parents from what is now Malawi. In 1995 the government announced plans to deport Kaunda as an illegal alien, but he fought the decision in the courts. In early 1996, the constitution was changed to require that both parents of presidential candidates be Zambian by birth or descent.[3] The move prevented Kaunda from running in that year's elections, which were boycotted by the opposition and won by Chiluba, though the legal battle continued. Finally, in 1999, the High Court ruled that the man who had been president from 1964 to 1991 was not a Zambian citizen. Because he had renounced his Malawian citizenship long ago, Kaunda was effectively stateless (*New York Times,* April 1, 1999).

Ironically, just before the 1996 election, several opposition parties (including UNIP) gave Chiluba a taste of his own medicine.[4] Their court petition alleged that Chiluba was born in the Congo and was not eligible to be president. Though the election was not affected, the case worked its way through the courts, complicated by apparent inconsistencies in Chiluba's name and questions about his paternity.[5] In 1998 the Supreme Court ruled that Chiluba was a Zambian citizen and constitutionally qualified to be president. Interestingly, the court's finding was based in part on the idea that anyone who was a formal resident of Northern Rhodesia at the time of independence in 1964 automatically became a Zambian citizen (*Post* [Lusaka], December 10, 2001). If this were the case, of course, a similar logic should have applied to Kaunda.

Apparently undeterred by the court ruling, Chiluba continued to use the strategy against his opponents. In early 2000 a prominent Asian businessman, Majid Ticklay, was deported after criticizing the government (Panafrican News Agency, January 6, 2000). In 2001 Chiluba's bid to change the constitution in order to seek a third term was opposed by some within his own party, including Vice President Christon Tembo. They left the MMD and created the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD). Soon thereafter, Dipak Patel, an outspoken member of parliament from

this group, was almost deported. The government waged a high-profile campaign questioning the citizenship of Tembo, who became the FDD presidential candidate. In the run-up to elections, rumors also circulated about the nationality of four leading MMD candidates, including the ultimate winner, Levy Mwanawasa.

As a result of Chiluba's repeated manipulation of the citizenship question throughout his ten years in office, there emerged "a tendency in MMD circles to treat all critics of government... as foreigners" (*Post* [Lusaka], April 2, 2001). Perhaps in an effort to halt this trend (and rather than pursuing it further, like successive Ivorian leaders), the new President Mwanawasa unconditionally revoked the deportations of Banda and Ticklay and both returned to Zambia.[6] This move satisfied a 1999 ruling by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights that Zambia had violated seven articles of the associated charter when it deported Banda and Chinula. For now, with Chiluba no longer in office, it appears that citizenship challenges are a strategy of the past, but one can never be sure.

While these are the most recent uses of the "foreigner" label against political opponents in Africa, the strategy is not new. It has been used before to disqualify opposition figures at lower levels. In 1978, the opposition politician John Modise was deported from Botswana to South Africa, where his statelessness landed him in prison (*Mmegi* [Gaborone], May 31, 2002).[7] Two years later in Nigeria, political opponents of Alhaji Shugaba, the majority leader of a state assembly, had him declared an alien and deported because his father was not Nigerian (Herbst 1998).[8] At the time of these incidents, Botswana and Nigeria had political systems with some degree of multiparty competition. This also has been true of the more recent examples, suggesting that politicians are more likely to challenge their opponents' citizenship when they feel somewhat vulnerable. As multiparty systems become common throughout Africa, it is possible that more leaders will embrace this strategy to limit political competition.

In fact, Tanzania has demonstrated recently that it may not be above using a similar strategy against its critics. In 2001 the government declared four political figures noncitizens but gave them the option of applying for naturalization.[9] The most prominent of the group was Jenerali Ulimwengu, who had worked his way up the ruling party ranks since the 1970s, holding positions such as district commissioner, director of sports, and eventually member of parliament. At the time he was declared a noncitizen, Ulimwengu was chair of a private media corporation that publishes five major newspapers. In this capacity he had become an outspoken critic of the government, using his pen to attack bureaucratic red tape, corruption, and draconian media laws (Panafrican News Agency, February 3, 2001).

Ulimwengu was particularly critical during the 2000 presidential election, which he described as a "boxing match with only one contender" (Integrated Regional Information Network, October 19, 2000).[10] When there were irregularities in some areas in Zanzibar, Ulimwengu publicly

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advocated for rerunning the election in all fifty constituencies rather than in the sixteen proposed by the government (*East African*, November 15, 2000). Thus in February 2002, when it was announced that Ulimwengu's citizenship application was denied, many doubted the government's claim that the decision had nothing to do with politics. In response, academics, journalists, and nongovernmental organizations launched a campaign for the government to reverse its decision (*East African*, February 25, 2002). In a pertinent comparison, one observer wrote that President Benjamin Mkapa "has sunk to the intellectual and moral abyss of many a Frederick Chiluba" (Ocheing' 2001).[11]

The "foreigner" label is thus a tactical approach that has been used in the context of multiparty competition to limit participation in the political process. The strategy has proven tempting to African leaders for a variety of reasons. First, the long and complicated history of migration in the region has made it relatively easy for politicians to accuse their opponents of being noncitizens. These countries have historically attracted migrants and refugees, and the population of each country includes many people who trace their roots to other countries. In Zambia, for example, roughly one million people have family names that are also found in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Congo (Amnesty International 1997). In Côte d'Ivoire, the government estimates that foreigners represent roughly one-quarter of the population.

Interestingly, in most cases the legal arguments about the citizenship of a political candidate focus on the nationalities of the parents. All of the recent targets of the "foreigner" charge were born during or before the 1940s, making it likely that their parents were born before most colonial borders were demarcated. The relevant borders existed only on paper at the time, making it difficult to determine present-day nationalities. In addition, the candidates themselves were born before independence; there were no citizens of Côte d'Ivoire or Zambia in the 1940s. As a result of these historical factors, it is difficult to provide proof of citizenship. Few records were kept during the colonial period, so accused noncitizens cannot rely on birth certificates or school records in their own defense. Instead, such cases often come down to conflicting testimony from witnesses and documents that are questionable at best.[12] African leaders thus accuse their opponents of being foreign in part because they easily can get the "foreigner" label to stick. Ironically, the effect of this strategy is to impose retroactively borders that in actuality were not yet defined or were relatively porous during the time in question.

A second reason African leaders are tempted by this strategy is that they find it difficult to run on their disappointing policy records. Debates about the nationality of opposition figures thus serve to divert voter attention from the substantive issues and focus it instead on questions of loyalty, patriotism, and the essence of what it means to be a citizen. In Zambia, for example, Chiluba's strategy changed the focus of political debate from the

economy and unemployment to the appropriateness of the "citizenship clause" in the constitution. In Côte d'Ivoire, attention shifted from privatization and slumping cocoa prices to the question of where Ouattara's parents were born. Similarly, in Tanzania, the debate about Ulimwengu's citizenship distracted people from the very issues for which he had criticized the government in the first place.

Third, although criticized by human rights groups, citizenship challenges targeted at political opponents are relatively low on the priority lists of major international actors. Unless the situation reaches a level of significant upheaval, as in Côte d'Ivoire, there is unlikely to be widespread international reaction. This point is obvious when one compares the amount of attention given to the December 2001 election in Zambia and the March 2002 election in Zimbabwe. Despite many irregularities in the Zambian election, including numerous citizenship challenges raised during the campaign, the event hardly caused a blip on the international radar screen. In contrast, the violence and insecurity associated with the Zimbabwean election attracted widespread coverage and ultimately prompted the imposition of international sanctions.

The strategy of accusing political opponents of being noncitizens thus works well for African leaders who want to appear as if they are embracing democratic reforms and at the same time keep a firm hold on power. But the strategy can have consequences beyond its initial intent. In seeking to target specific opponents, leaders can fuel broader antiforeigner sentiments, even in countries traditionally known for their hospitality, and legitimize calls for the exclusion of full groups. The results in at least one case have been tragic. The manipulation of citizenship rights for the ruling party's political gain must therefore be examined within the context of broader social attitudes. These are the focus of the following section.

From Political Strategy to the Politics of Exclusion and Beyond

In labeling their political opponents as foreigners, African leaders are appealing to a climate of growing xenophobia in their countries. The economic and political reforms of the 1980s and 1990s have meant that leaders are less able than they were before to distribute state resources and other forms of patronage in exchange for political loyalty. They must find alternative ways to mobilize supporters. Antiforeigner rhetoric has proven effective in this regard, playing as it does on people's concerns about the economic, social, and security implications of immigrant and refugee communities. There have been frequent reports in recent years of growing xenophobia in countries such as Botswana, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, among others.

Antiforeigner sentiment has become a particular problem in South Africa, where immigration is perceived as having increased since the demo-

cratic transition in 1994. During the apartheid era, immigration was strictly controlled and was geared primarily toward providing cheap labor to the country's industries. Restrictive pass laws also limited the internal flow of migrants. With the end of apartheid, control measures shifted to prevent the influx of large numbers of Africans seeking better economic opportunities under a democratic government (Handmaker & Parsley 2001). The process of nation-building has sought to find common bonds among diverse population groups, in part by excluding others. Thus "the state's new sense of nation has developed not only in opposition to those whom it tries to prevent from entering South Africa, but also in opposition to the large numbers of foreign-born people within South Africa" (Reilly 2001:10). Increasing xenophobia and several violent incidents led to the launch in 1998 of the "Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign," but it remains to be seen if that effort will be successful.

The use of xenophobic rhetoric to build national identity is not new. In Gabon since independence, for example, xenophobia has been fostered as a way of cultivating citizenship (Gray 1998). The Gabonese government under Omar Bongo has repeatedly diverted attention from economic and political problems by targeting foreign workers in the country. The result has been a series of violent attacks and mass expulsions. By stirring up xenophobic attitudes, the government has used foreigners "to not only deepen the idea of Gabonese citizenship but also to divert ethnic tensions that might otherwise have led to incidents of intra-Gabonese violence" (Gray 1998:395). Similarly, mass expulsions in Uganda, Ghana, and Nigeria over the years can be seen to some extent as part of exclusionary nation-building processes.

Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, and Tanzania have also witnessed increasing levels of antiforeigner sentiment in recent years. Interestingly, both previously enjoyed international reputations for their hospitality toward foreigners. Côte d'Ivoire recruited people from Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Guinea to provide labor for the cocoa and coffee plantations that fueled the country's economy. It has also hosted refugees from Liberia and elsewhere.[13] Zambia has long welcomed refugees from many countries, especially Angola, and currently is considering a law that would allow refugees who have been in the country for thirty years to apply for citizenship. Tanzania also has a long record of hospitality, having hosted refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Mozambique, and elsewhere. As islands of stability within their respective regions, these countries have traditionally provided safe haven and new opportunities to many noncitizens.

Despite these histories of hospitality, there has been a climate of growing xenophobia in recent years. The crackdown on foreigners has included people other than opposition political figures. In Zambia, citizens and government officials have become increasingly hostile toward refugees, often blaming them for resource shortages and a rise in crime. An editorial in the *Times of Zambia* called for stricter immigration laws and suggested that the country's traditional hospitality was "a sign of weakness" (March

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16, 2002). In Tanzania, refugee policy has changed markedly, most notably with the forced repatriation of half a million Rwandans in 1996 (Whitaker 1999). Recent citizenship debates have been targeted primarily at the country's Asian community, which is seen as having benefited disproportionately from economic liberalization (Heilman 1998; Tripp 1997). One politician has gained widespread support for his promotion of *uzawa* (indigenization), a policy that would shift control of the economy from "non-indigenous Tanzanians" to "African Tanzanians" (Simba 2003). Plans are under way to issue national identity cards in an effort to more easily distinguish Tanzanians from noncitizens.

Growing antiforeigner sentiment in Zambia and Tanzania, however, is minimal compared to the full-blown xenophobia that has taken hold in Côte d'Ivoire.[14] As General Gueï stepped up his rhetoric before the 2000 elections, foreigners fled the country in fear that violence would erupt. When President Gbagbo refused to hold new elections, fighting broke out between his mainly southern Christian supporters and Ouattara's mostly northern Muslim supporters. After Ouattara was declared ineligible to compete in subsequent parliamentary elections, there was more violence between the two sides. In early 2001, the government blamed an alleged coup attempt on Ouattara's supporters, sparking a "witch-hunt for foreigners" (Daddieh 2001:18). In the ensuing months, frequent attacks on refugees and migrants caused many to flee or seek international protection. The situation worsened after September 2002, when a developing rebel movement was identified by the government as foreign-run. This stance effectively condoned a new round of attacks on noncitizens, who are at particular risk in the current political climate.

The underlying question is why countries with such strong traditions of hospitality toward noncitizens would suddenly change their attitudes and policies so markedly. In a review of literature about xenophobia, particularly in Europe, Wimmer (1997) argues that xenophobia emerges when a crisis threatens a nation's social compact, generating a struggle over which groups are entitled to the state's collective goods. In this context, people are receptive to the exclusionary discourse used by political elites in their efforts to gain or maintain power, which further deepens antiforeigner views. According to Wimmer, frequent complaints about foreigners' taking citizens' jobs and failing to integrate into the host society are more perceived than real; despite evidence to the contrary, people see foreigners as competition in the face of uncertain negotiations with the state over the distribution of collective goods.

Indeed, the twin processes of political and economic liberalization in Africa in recent years have created a fertile ground for the emergence and cultivation of antiforeigner attitudes. With the transition to multiparty competition, political incentives for integrating foreigners into the system are less clear than they once were. During the era of one-party rule, noncitizens in many countries were actively involved in politics. In Tanzania, for

example, refugees from Burundi and Rwanda often received party membership cards and voted in elections.[15] Similarly, under Houphouët-Boigny, many foreign workers in Côte d'Ivoire were permitted to vote. Because candidates faced limited competition under the single-party system, the participation of foreigners was not a threat; noncitizens' votes simply increased the numbers supporting the ruling party. With the introduction of competition, however, votes matter. The participation of noncitizens is no longer guaranteed to help incumbents, and may in fact hurt them in the polls. While Tanzanian and Ivorian politicians have dealt with this uncertainty by excluding foreigners from politics, elites in countries such as Kenya and Malawi have sought instead to win their votes.[16] Despite these different approaches, the ongoing process of democratization has generated debates over which groups should benefit from voting and other rights associated with citizenship.

In recent years, there also have been fewer economic incentives for integrating noncitizens. Migrants were seen as sources of production during growth periods in the 1960s and 1970s, but they quickly became sources of competition during the decline of the 1980s and thereafter. With ample copper reserves, Zambia's economy was able to absorb migrants in the early years, but the 1970s oil shocks and crash of copper prices caused economic crisis by the 1980s. As one observer notes, "it is precisely during this period… that the pace of refugee influx into Zambia … stepped up" (*Times of Zambia*, December 27, 1999).[17] The Ivorian economy faced a similar decline after commodity prices plummeted in 1978–79. While foreigners continued to provide labor for coffee and cocoa production, there were increasing tensions and inequalities associated with the slump (Daddieh 2001). In Tanzania, the end of government marketing boards and structural adjustment reforms have meant that refugee settlements no longer enhance government revenues through their production of cash crops.

Another reason for the escalation of xenophobia in many African countries has been the change in migration patterns themselves. In southern Africa in particular, refugees were for many years perceived as victims of the liberation struggle. While people were willing to endure the burdens and risks of hosting freedom fighters, they are less sympathetic to the current crop of foreigners. Refugees are no longer perceived as victims of conflict, but instead as active participants. Many refugee communities are heavily armed and are organizing returns to their home countries by force. Increasingly, refugees and other migrants are viewed as a burden on a country's economic resources and a possible security threat. Of course, such views are not limited to Africa. They have been on the rise in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, especially since September 11, 2001. Recognizing this trend, African leaders who seek power by playing on the xenophobia of their own populations do so knowing that their Western counterparts have little right to criticize.

It is in this context of growing xenophobia, therefore, that African leaders have manipulated citizenship rights for their own benefit. They have accused political opponents of being noncitizens, knowing that such charges will find support among their populations. In so doing, however, they also have legitimized, and even encouraged, a narrowing of the definition of citizenship. In the worst-case scenario, as Herbst (1998) argues, exclusive citizenship laws can lead to extreme alienation and ultimately generate conflict. This is what occurred in Côte d'Ivoire, where repeated challenges to Ouattara's citizenship were part of a broader mobilization around the concept of *Ivoirité*. That definition of the Ivorian identity privileged Christians and southerners to the exclusion of Muslims and northerners, including most visibly Ouattara. Eventually the alienation became so great that populations in the north rebelled. Although the political strategy to disqualify Ouattara was not the cause of the violence, it did provide fuel to a rapidly growing fire of xenophobia that eventually tore the country apart.

Why was the outcome in Côte d'Ivoire so violent compared to Zambia and elsewhere? Leaders in several countries also challenged the citizenship of opponents in the context of growing xenophobia, but the political situation remained stable. In Zambia, Chiluba's successor distanced himself from that strategy and revoked the deportations of several of its targets. Civil society groups in Tanzania pressed the government to reverse its decision and grant Ulimwengu citizenship. Clearly this exclusionary strategy does not result in political instability in all—or even most—cases.

There are several factors that contributed to the escalation of violence in the Ivorian situation. The proportion of foreigners to the total population is much higher there than in most African countries. According to the U.N. Population Division (2003), foreigners represented 14.8 percent of the population in Côte d'Ivoire in 2000. This compares to 3.6 percent in Zambia, 2.6 percent in Tanzania, and 2.05 percent in Africa as a whole. It is likely that the sheer number of foreigners in Côte d'Ivoire contributed to the higher level of xenophobia. In addition, large numbers of foreigners were economic migrants rather than refugees, which increased the sense of competition among citizens. In Côte d'Ivoire, roughly 5 percent of foreigners were refugees, as compared to more than 60 percent in Zambia and Tanzania. Finally, in Côte d'Ivoire there was a clear association between the person targeted by the political strategy and the broader xenophobia. Antiforeigner sentiment was directed primarily at economic migrants from Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Guinea, many of whom are Muslim and live in the north; Ouattara is a northern Muslim with possible Burkinabe parentage. Thus the use of the "foreigner" label against him tapped into deeper resentment against the whole community. In the other countries, this link was much less clear.

In the end, a strategy designed primarily to prevent the political participation of certain opponents has the potential of tapping into deeper

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xenophobic sentiments within society and legitimizing a broader politics of exclusion. This can result in alienation and ultimately conflict. Such an outcome seems particularly likely when the political opponent in question is affiliated in some way with the targeted social group. Although the same "foreigner" strategy has been employed in several African countries without fueling widespread tension and violence, it is hard to know what will happen if the exclusionary trend continues. Some African leaders may continue to find the strategy useful as a way of limiting the circle of political elites; others may seek less risky ways to disqualify their opponents.

Conclusion

African leaders' use of the "foreigner" label to disqualify or discredit political opponents allows them to appear as if they are embracing democratic reforms while at the same time limiting competition. The strategy is relatively easy, given historic migration patterns, and it distracts voters from substantive issues without attracting too much international attention. Nationalist rhetoric also resonates with increasingly xenophobic populations, thus providing an alternative way for elites to mobilize supporters in the face of declining patronage resources. Perhaps not surprisingly, the strategy has been used most prominently in countries that were previously known for their hospitality toward foreigners. This history both increased the number of noncitizens participating in the political life of each country and fueled a sense of competition during times of economic and political transition.

While the appeal of this strategy is obvious, its potential consequences are perhaps less so. The effort to disqualify opponents based on challenges to their citizenship can tap into an underlying wave of antiforeigner sentiment in society. In such situations, court cases and charges against specific individuals may serve to legitimize and even encourage broader xenophobic tendencies, potentially fueling campaigns to exclude from the political process whole groups perceived as noncitizens. As people become mobilized along these lines and conflicts emerge over which groups should benefit from the rights of citizenship, social cleavages widen and the likelihood of instability increases. Depending upon the context, therefore, the strategy of labeling political opponents as foreigners can have widespread consequences well beyond the initial aim of reducing the circle of political elites. Exclusionary approaches even at the individual level can threaten the process of democratic consolidation in heterogeneous societies.

These findings have several implications. First, the patterns described above suggest that a similar strategy might be used in other countries that have a history of welcoming foreigners, face pressure to implement democratic reforms, and are experiencing xenophobia. In fact, African countries already have some of the most restrictive criteria for who can run for office.

Citizenship requirements for candidates are common worldwide, but it is rare for those requirements to extend to the candidates' parents (Pinto-Duschinsky 1999). An examination of the constitutions of forty-one sub-Saharan African countries found seven that require one or both parents of presidential candidates to be citizens: Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Zambia.[18] Two of these countries—Burkina Faso and Gabon—have significant foreign populations, much like Côte d'Ivoire.[19] If exclusive citizenship criteria were to be used to disqualify opposition candidates in either of these countries, conditions would exist for possible instability and conflict, particularly in Gabon, where xenophobia has been a recurring problem. Both Burkina Faso and Gabon are due to hold elections in 2005.

Second, these findings highlight the importance of elite discourse and strategies in determining political outcomes. Although xenophobia is a growing problem in many African countries, particularly in the southern part of the continent, in most cases it has not led to widespread violence as it did in Côte d'Ivoire. Even in South Africa, where there have been isolated attacks against foreigners, the situation has not even come close to the point of possible civil war. In many ways, it is the strategies of elites that determine what will happen in these situations. While successive Ivorian leaders adopted exclusionary nation-building tactics that fueled anti-foreigner sentiments and heightened conflicts, officials in South Africa have developed programs and adopted rhetoric meant to reduce the tensions. The escalation of xenophobia within a population is not itself enough to generate violence; instead, the trigger for conflict comes from elite strategies that intensify the politics of exclusion.

Finally, it is clear that political elites can develop strategies that do not necessarily violate democratic norms but nevertheless reduce the chances of democratic consolidation (Linz & Stepan 1996). Exclusionary or "nationalizing" policies are one such approach in multinational contexts. In theory, it seems perfectly reasonable for a state to limit political participation to its citizens; democracies around the world do just that. In practice, however, the use of overly restrictive criteria to exclude certain individuals and groups from the rights of citizenship creates conditions that can undermine democracy itself. Unless and until these leaders embrace not just the rhetoric of democracy but also the spirit of competition that goes with it, it seems unlikely that we will witness a genuine move toward democratic consolidation on the African continent.

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Notes

1. Perhaps this is not surprising, given the efforts of the Democratic Party in the United States to prevent Ralph Nader from getting his name on the 2004 election ballot in key battleground states. Republicans, of course, promoted Nader's candidacy, but they were more interested in diluting the John Kerry vote than in increasing competition.
2. The repeated wrangling over this issue makes one wonder why successive Ivorian leaders have been so focused on Ouattara. While some think it is simply because he would likely win a free election, others suggest it has more to with the belief that he has not paid his political dues (Daddieh 2001).
3. Just to be sure that Kaunda would be ineligible, the newly amended constitution also barred candidates who had already served more than one term as president.
4. According to van Donge (1998), Chiluba's own vulnerability to the foreigner charge suggests that he was not the driving force behind the political use of such accusations. Even if the initiative came from other members of the MMD party, though, the repeated use of this strategy during Chiluba's tenure in office is evidence that he did not block it.
5. Court testimony suggested that as many as three different men could have been Chiluba's father (*Post* [Lusaka], Nov. 11, 1998).
6. He likely also would have revoked the deportation of Chinula, but Chinula died in Malawi in 1998 (*Post* [Lusaka], Aug. 4, 2002).
7. After receiving a ruling in his favor from the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in 2000, Modise decided to seek compensation from the Botswana government in the amount of nearly $1 billion (*Mmegi*, May 31, 2002).
8. Over the years, there were also rumors questioning the nationalities of leaders such as Malawi's Hastings Banda, Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere. In 1992, opponents of Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings were unsuccessful in their effort to bar his candidacy on the grounds that he was not a citizen. Of course, the key difference in these cases was that the "foreigner" in question was in power.
9. Three applied for and were granted Tanzanian citizenship in early 2002 (*East African*, Feb. 25, 2002).
10. Ironically, Ulimwengu was on President Benjamin Mkapa's campaign team for his first election in 1995 (*East African*, Feb. 25, 2002).
11. In March 2003, the Tanzanian government revoked the citizenship of another prominent journalist, Ali Nabwa, and required him to reapply. Critics and media advocates deplored the move and compared it to the experience of Ulimwengu, although in this case the facts suggest that Nabwa had indeed violated Tanzanian immigration law by assuming Comoros citizenship as an adult (*Africa News*, June 26, 2003).
12. In one recent case, documents were in fact introduced in court. At issue was the citizenship of Alassane Ouattara, and specifically the question of whether his parents were Ivorian or Burkinabe. In September 2000, Gueï's lawyers presented a copy of Ouattara's 1966 marriage certificate that listed his father's residence as Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso). Ouattara protested that the document was falsified and produced his own copy, which listed both parents as residents of Africa. In an interesting twist, the document was verifiable because

Ouattara was married in Philadelphia. Reporters from the *Washington Post* obtained a copy of the certificate from court records and found that it matched the one presented by Ouattara (Sept. 27, 2000). Gueï"s lawyers apparently had not counted on American investigative reporting to dig up the original, but it had no effect on the case. The court, which was chaired by Gueï"s former personal attorney (*Economist*, July 29, 2000), ruled Ouattara ineligible to compete in the October 2000 election.

13. Côte d'Ivoire has also expelled large numbers of foreigners on several occasions, including ten thousand Ghanaians in 1985 (Kouamouo 2001). On the whole, though, the expulsion numbers pale in comparison to the total number of foreigners in the country, which reached nearly 3.5 million in 1990 according to the United Nations Population Division.
14. Ironically, the country's national anthem describes it as the "pays de l'hospitalité."
15. This was confirmed through personal interviews with village-level party members during field research in Tanzania from 1996 to 1998.
16. In Malawi, several politicians were accused of actually bringing foreigners in from Zambia and Tanzania to vote in their constituencies in 1999 (Human Rights Observer 2000).
17. Recently Zambia has been trying to restore the idea that refugees can bring economic benefits to the host country. In May 2002 the government launched the Zambia Initiative, which seeks to make refugees "agents of development" by integrating them into the local economy and launching small-scale projects designed to attracting funding from international donors (Integrated Regional Information Network, May 8, 2002).
18. The Democratic Republic of Congo's 1997 constitution and Somalia's 2000 transitional charter included similar provisions, but those documents are being replaced. Most of the remaining thirty-four countries for which constitutions were available require presidential candidates to be citizens by birth or descent, but do not mention their parents. One country (Mali) actually relaxed requirements for presidential candidates with a 2000 law extending eligibility to all citizens, including those who have been naturalized. Of course, international migrants represent less than $^1/_2$ a percent of the total population in that country.
19. According to the U.N. Population Division (2003), foreigners represent 9.44 percent of Burkina Faso's population and 19.84 percent of Gabon's population.