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To Our Readers



The summer in the Nordic countries was the warmest for decades. Does this mean that we are facing an actual change of climate or was it just the normal ups and downs? There are competing views on the

global effects of weather conditions. What would it mean for African agriculture if there were droughts of the kind we have seen in the last couple of years in combination with very heavy rainfall eroding the dried up land? We will hear more about agriculture in the coming year. The World Development Report 2008 will focus on Agriculture and Development. NAI will follow this process closely. We would also like to see other researchers and research institutes in Africa and elsewhere join in the formulation of alternative views.

In this issue of *News* we are focusing on two important themes which both have a bearing on future policy formulations. In the first contribution Thandika Mkandawire, Director of UNRISD, summarizes the results of a six year long research project on Social Policy in a Developmental Context with special reference to the development agenda for Africa. A previous contribution from the same project was presented by Professor Jimí Adésínà in our January 2006 issue of *News*. We also present an UNRISD report by Shahra Razavi and Shireen Hassim with a focus on gender and social policy in a global context.

A second theme is the competing claim for urban land, which was the subject of the AEGIS conference in Edinburgh in June this year. Professor Paul Jenkins presented a paper which we have been allowed to publish in a shortened version. The theme is extremely topical and reading it a must for everyone who is interested in what is happening right now in African cities. The author

claims that mechanisms to control urban land access are currently being re-instated, primarily benefiting elite groups, which is related to the interests of international capital as well as changing class structure.

We have two interviews. Lennart Wohlgenuth conducted the interview with Professor Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, who participated in a NAI-organised conference on Research and Higher Education for the African Renaissance. The interview brings us close to an African personality dealing not only with higher education and the state of African universities but also with the important question of the role of the African Diaspora. The second interview is with Gavin Simpson. He worked with the Sierra Leonean civil society groups in their advocacy for the implementation of the recommendations of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The third part of this issue is devoted to the presentation of various research projects at NAI including reports from our African guest researchers Akosua Adomako Ampofo and Ogu Sunday Enemaku. Signe Arnfred summarizes her programme on Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa, which is now coming to an end. Knut Myhre took up his position as Norwegian researcher at NAI in March 2006. We also present an external research project on Democracy and the Rule of Law in East Africa by professor Emil Uddhammar, professor Inger Österdahl and Karolina Hultström PhD, Uppsala and Växjö Universities. Finally, an obituary for prof. Chachage Seithy Loth Chachage, who died suddenly in July 2006. Prof. Chachage was a close associate with the Nordic Africa Institute. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carin Norberg'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Carin Norberg, 18 September 2006

Incorporating social policy into the development agenda in Africa



By: Thandika Mkandawire
 Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, UNRISD, Geneva

Social policy is state intervention that directly affects social welfare, social institutions and social relations. It involves overarching concerns with redistribution, production, reproduction and protection, and works in tandem with economic policy in pursuit of national social and economic goals. It should be stressed that social policy does not merely deal with the ‘causalities’ of social changes and processes but also contributes to the welfare of society as a whole.

Social policy may be embedded in economic policy explicitly aimed at direct government provision of social welfare, in part through broad-based social services and subsidies, provision of education and health services, social security and pensions, land reform, incidence of taxation, labour market interventions, redistributive policies and so on.

The African experience

The role and stature of social policy has changed dramatically over the years. In the early post-colonial phase, social policy was a central part of the nation-building project. A number of measures were adopted, the variation in policy tending to exhibit both ‘path dependence’ (the colonial heritage and the adoption of policies and administration practices borrowed from the erstwhile coloniz-

ers) and the ideological and political choices of individual countries.

In settler economies, such as those of Zambia, Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa, the situation was more fraught. The colonial regimes had fairly comprehensive social insurance schemes for the white population, whose jobs were protected from outside competition: pension schemes, free or highly subsidized education and medical services and so on. The post-colonial regimes had to abolish or, at least lessen, the racial divide. Social policy was a major instrument for redressing some of the injustices of the colonial order. The difficult choice has been whether to simply abolish the segmented welfare schemes altogether or to maintain them and make them applicable to everyone. The latter option has, in the case of Zambia, posed severe fiscal challenges.

The political coalitions that had been forged during the colonial period exhibited great variation in terms of social base. Not surprisingly the ideologies behind social policy initiatives ranged from unbridled capitalist ones to idiosyncratic forms of socialism. The authoritarian rule that became the default mode of African governments meant that social policy was top down and highly paternalistic.

Education was given a central position in social policy to further development and nation building. It was supposed not only to contribute to national cohesion but also to produce the necessary ‘manpower’ for both the indigenization of the public sector and the human skills necessary for development. In some countries, land reform and redistribution of assets were central. In addition, most governments intervened in labour markets and introduced social policies that often guaranteed minimum wages and free health services.

Considerable progress was made in the number of social indicators, especially in terms of school enrolment and health. There were, however, a number of problems with social policy in Africa.

The first of these was the segmented nature of some of its key components. While education and health tended to be more universal, a number of social welfare measures applied only to the workers in the formal sector—referred to as ‘the labour aristocracy’ – and failed to address the poverty of the majority in the rural areas and the rapidly swelling ranks of the ‘working poor’ in the informal sector. Second, social policy was not explicitly linked to development, except perhaps through the ‘human capital’ component. Thus, for instance, the ‘forced savings’ from pensions were often used to support the current budgets of governments rather than used for long-term investment. Third, social policies were unable to cope with the rapid social differentiation that took place once the cap on economic opportunities placed on the colonized peoples was removed. In many cases such differentiation led to the undermining of the ‘social pacts’ that had informed social policy thinking in the early years. Fourth, many social policies lacked the fiscal basis for their sustainability as governments engaged in expenditures without taking into account their financial implications. And finally, many social policy initiatives eventually went under, together with the developmental strategies to which they were tethered.

In response to these failures, there was a flurry of social policy initiatives in the 1970s at both the national and international levels. The ILO introduced ‘Basic Needs Strategies’ which had both distributive and employment implications. The strategies also implied that social policy would universalize access to services that would enable citizens to meet their basic needs. The World Bank also proposed ‘growth with equity’ strategies, which were much less explicit as to the underlying social policy, but were focused on rural poverty.

The crises of the late 1970s brought all these initiatives to a sudden halt as stabilization and structural adjustment took ascendancy in policy making and the aid agencies’ agendas. The first vic-

tim of the SAPs were the claims by states that they would intervene in the economy not only to ensure economic performance but also to ensure certain economic outcomes. Together with the disappearance of poverty from the policy agenda came the disappearance of development as something that state policies deliberately pursued beyond simply overseeing the spontaneous market processes. ‘Adjustment’ became the key word. Expenditures were judged entirely in terms of immediate, fiscal or financial needs, while the long-term developmental implications were rejected or downplayed. This in itself would have sufficed to undermine social policy making, which is rooted in the real economy. Earlier developmentalist arguments for social policy as one of the key instruments of development simply vanished. During the adjustment years, many social policies were reversed, deemed guilty by association with the beleaguered development strategies. The new strategies argued for private provision of many services that the state had hitherto provided and urged user charges for any services that the state might provide. These included a whole range of services that African governments had been inclined to provide, albeit not always successfully. The new strategies also clearly spoke against labour market legislation that would distort markets. Most significantly, ‘poverty eradication’ was removed from the policy agenda.

The dethroning of the state as the driver of development led to greater reliance on social provision by social actors. Increasingly, service provision is being transferred to NGOs. Much of the commercialization of service provision is premised on the regulatory capacity of the state, the responses of the bureaucracy to the new religion of adjustment, and the development and performance of the private sector. It also ignored the historical lessons that showed that voluntary service provision would face difficulties in scaling up activities, that may have worked at the micro-level, to national level, and that voluntarism tended to entail inherent institutional limits to coverage.

There were increasing calls for ‘adjustment with a human face’, spearheaded by UNICEF. Within Africa itself there was strong opposition

to the adjustment policies, where social policy was confined to 'safety nets' that were introduced not so much because they addressed issues of poverty but because they provided legitimacy to adjustment policies. This explains the insistence by the Bretton Wood Institutions that they be given a high profile, despite their meagreness. In response to political protests about the negative consequences of adjustment, a number of social policy measures were introduced. These included special social funds or 'social safety nets' and programmes 'targeted' at the poor.

These programmes proved wholly inadequate. By the end of the millennium, new developmental goals were a new 'post-Washington' consensus which suggested a new set of more encompassing programmes. In many African countries, this took the form of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, which were the new social policy component of the post-Washington consensus.

There were a number of problems with these new initiatives, which have been discussed in the literature. One of these was that these programmes were not intended to interrogate the stabilization policies themselves which had contributed to the increased poverty of the 'lost decades'. The programmes thus perpetuated the marginal role assigned to social policy. Social policy should be formulated within a policy regime framework that also includes economic policy and political regimes.

Research issues

Social policy in Africa has to address four basic challenges: the first and single most important one is the eradication of poverty. This is closely related to the second task, namely, the developmental role of social policy. The third challenge is how to create such social policy in a democratic and participatory way at both the national and micro levels and the final one is how to respond to the exigencies of globalization without undermining the intrinsic values of social objectives of equity and well-being.

This brings me to the issue of research. Research on social policy lags behind that on economic policy and political transformation

(governance and democratization). Much of it remains highly descriptive and lacks the conceptual depth of the research on welfare regimes of Europe or the welfare developmental states of Asia. And yet, given the centrality of social policy to both development and democratization, there is a need to understand social policy both in its historical and political economy contexts.

An important determinant of the success of social policies is the recognition of sectoral affinities or complementarities between institutions located in different spheres of the political economy. In such situations, the structure and directions of movements in one sector complement those in the others. One striking point about Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper policy and much of the new discourse on social policy is that it draws very little from the history of the late industrializers of northern Europe or the East Asian developmental states which have achieved remarkable success in reducing poverty, and even less from the earlier African attempts that were zealously dismantled in the name of reform. This is a point that has been raised by Japanese scholars. This, I believe, is a point to which the Nordic countries should add their voice through both politics and research.

This has important implications for research. One such implication is that there is an urgent need to bridge the gap between area studies and other more specialized areas and a need to somehow relate the literature preoccupied with development, that concerned with democratisation and the consolidation of democracy and that with concerns of social inclusion and equity.

In its early years, development studies attracted some of the leading figures in the various fields of social sciences. Since then, in many universities, the study of development has been relegated to specialized institutes of development or area studies. While this may signal the recognition of the specificities of the problems of development or certain geographical areas, development studies has, in a way, lost some of its intellectual moorings by being excessively driven by the development aid establishment. One consequence is that valuable lessons from experiences of developed countries have little resonance in developing countries, and

vice versa. A linear theory of development has neglected the study of the histories of the industrialized countries, presumably on the grounds that analytical tools useful to them are not relevant for the developing countries. But I feel strongly that there are many areas in which the study of these different societies can be mutually rewarding.

With respect to social policy, there is a rich conceptual and theoretical corpus of work on developed welfare regimes that is only now beginning to filter into the world of development studies. One explanation for this is the belief that somehow the welfare state is an endpoint of the development process. However, research at UNRISD clearly suggests that social policy is not something to

engage in only after reaching a certain development threshold; nor is it an exclusive domain of advanced welfare states: social policy is a *key instrument for economic and social development*. Not surprisingly late industrialisers have tended to adopt certain welfare measures at much earlier phases in their development than the pioneers.

It seems to me morally imperative that more researchers be involved in addressing the serious problems of poverty and global inequality. This does not simply mean studying poor countries but also the histories and dynamics of the interlinkages between the rich and poor countries and how they impinge on their social and economic policies to address the issue of poverty. ■

Selected reading

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What is UNRISD?

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an autonomous UN agency engaging in multidisciplinary research on the social dimensions of contemporary problems affecting development. Through its research, UNRISD stimulates dialogue and contributes to policy debates on key issues of social development within and outside the United Nations system.

Since its creation in 1963, UNRISD has engaged exclusively in research on social development and remains an unusually open space for research and dialogue. This provides both an opportunity and an obligation to question prevailing mindsets within the development community and to encourage new thinking. The Institute conducts rigorous comparative research in collaboration with scholars and activists, primarily in the developing world, whose ideas are not sufficiently reflected in current debates. Strong ties to the

global research community combined with proximity to the UN system are the comparative advantages of the Institute and help it to carry out policy-relevant research on issues of social development.

The central UNRISD research theme since 2000 has been Social Policy and Development. A flagship report on Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World was launched in 2005 at the Beijing+10 event in New York, and later in Stockholm and Cape Town. Also current UNRISD research on Corporate Social Responsibility has made important contributions to international debates. Additional current UNRISD research themes are among others: Democracy, Governance and Well-Being; Civil Society and Social Movements; Identities, Conflict and Cohesion.

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Gender and social policy in a global context

By: Shahra Razavi and Shireen Hassim



Shahra Razavi is research coordinator at UNRISD in Geneva.

Shahra Razavi is research coordinator of UNRISD research on Gender and Development. This article sums up the most results of this research, which will soon be published in a volume co-edited with Shireen Hassim: Gender and Social Policy in a Global Context: Uncovering the Gendered Structure of "the Social" (Palgrave, 2006).



Shireen Hassim is professor at the dept of political studies, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa.

The past decade has witnessed a renewed interest in social policies, and some governments have increased social spending to soften the impacts of economic reform. These changes have come in the wake of widespread realization of the failure of the neoliberal economic model to generate economic growth and dynamism, and to reduce poverty. Meanwhile, processes of political liberalization have opened spaces for social movements in many parts of the world to articulate demands for more inclusive social policies to mitigate the effects of market failures and to reduce inequalities. However despite the movement away from the standard neoliberal approach of the 1980s, and the increasing recognition given to 'institutions' and the state, there is little agreement on a number of critical issues, including the scope of social policy and the values underpinning it, as well as the role of the state as regulator and provider.

A gender perspective on social policies in the South (as in the North until quite recently) has remained on the margins of these debates even though in reality social policies are always filtered through social institutions (be it the fam-

ily or community; markets, the care economy or the public sector) that are in turn structured by gender. Three important sets of findings emerge from the research that UNRISD undertook from 2003 to 2005, on the intersections between gender and social policy, covering a wide range of countries from diverse regional contexts. These are highlighted below.

Paid work, unpaid work, and social sector restructuring

Despite the claims to universalism, welfare systems, and in particular social protection programmes, have tended to be stratified rather than inclusive, bringing into their fold only some privileged segments of the workforce (such as the military, state functionaries, or industrial workers). Much of the rural sector as well as the large numbers working in the urban informal economy and in domestic service (a major employer of women) have been left out. Normative assumptions about men's and women's roles (as 'breadwinners' and 'mothers/carers' respectively) have been surprisingly universal and enduring, even where many women engaged in paid work,

sometimes continuously throughout their lives. Yet it would be wrong to assume that women were absent from state social provisioning and protection altogether. Not only did women make up a significant proportion of social security beneficiaries as wives and daughters of male workers, they were also direct beneficiaries of some public services (health, education) as well as being targets of population control programmes as well as so-called maternalist programmes aimed at mothers and their children.

Nevertheless, the small size of the formal economy in most developing countries meant that job security and work-related benefits remained privileges available to a relatively thin stratum of workers, predominantly men. While these benefits could have been extended gradually to other sectors of the population by putting in place new eligibility criteria (underpinned by political coalitions), since the early 1980s there has been a global trend in the opposite direction. Paid work is becoming increasingly informal and casual; workers are either losing their work-related social benefits or will never be able to obtain jobs that will give them such benefits. Existing data show that the informal economy tends to be a larger source of employment for women than for men in most countries, and that women informal workers tend to be over-represented in the more precarious and less remunerative segments of informal work.

If work-related social protection mechanisms are inherently masculinist (because of the gendered construction of paid work), are women faring any better with respect to public services and transfer payments that are supposedly citizenship-based? Social sector reforms (health, education) in many countries have, among other things, entrenched the commercialisation of public services through the imposition of 'user fees' and other charges (e.g. in health), expanded the role of private-for-profit providers, and shifted some of the unmet need for welfare onto families.

A common policy response to the exclusionary effects of 'user fees' has been the promotion of mutual health insurance and social health

insurance (SHI) schemes. Enrolment in the latter is very often employment based. In low income countries some women may be covered in SHI in their own right or as dependants of employed men. However, as income earners, global patterns show that women are less likely than men to be in formal sector employment, and if formally employed tend to be concentrated in low status poorly paid occupations or lower level positions.

In the education sector – the 'jewel in the crown' of neoliberal social policy – while progress in girls' access to primary education has been impressive (though geographically uneven), the logic of 'targeting' which has been promulgated by donors, has prioritised primary education, with some unforeseen implications. Public social expenditure has in some contexts been re-allocated from higher education to primary education, ignoring the systematic inter-connections between different parts of the education system. This has facilitated a greater role for commercial provision at the secondary level which raises questions about affordability and access for both girls and boys from lower-income households, and particular problems for girls in cultural contexts where parents prioritise sons' education. This is unfortunate given the fact that many of the benefits that girls reap from education (access to employment and contraception) materialize at the post-primary level.

The resurgence of interest in 'productivist' or 'developmental' social policy seems to be partly driven by long-standing anxieties about the disincentives that welfare 'handouts' can create for work effort. For many low income countries, governments express concern about the affordability of universal welfare systems, given the high rates of people living in poverty. While it is of utmost importance for public policy to create economic dynamism and employment ('decent' employment, as ILO calls it), a problematic side to the 'productivist' logic is the way in which it undervalues and de-legitimises unpaid forms of work, especially unpaid forms of care work which are essential for human welfare and economic growth. Transfer payments tend to take

on a Cinderella-like status for finance authorities, especially when they compensate women/mothers for their unpaid care work. This has been the fate of family benefits in several countries undergoing transition and reform (e.g. Poland, the Czech Republic). There needs to be a place for cash transfers and non-contributory income supports (such as child allowances, family benefits, and social pensions) – resisting the notion that these are ‘handouts’ for passive clients and highlighting the multiple ways in which they can enhance welfare and security and at times even kick-start some forms of local economic development.

States versus markets? Families, households and communities

Yet resisting the undervaluation of unpaid care work requires addressing the nexus of relationships between states, markets and ‘private’ institutions of families and communities. Existing welfare state models are based on culturally and historically specific conceptions of the divisions between public and private, of the nuclear nature of the family, and of fairly differentiated institutional spaces occupied by the care economy and paid work. In many developing countries diverse family forms and social networks remain important social and economic reservoirs. This kind of social embeddedness is not only a primary source of identity for many; in the relative absence of market or state provided support, it also structures women’s (and men’s) economic entitlements by offering them some access to resources, housing, childcare and social security.

Yet it is also clear that informal social institutions are not always bearers of equality and justice, whether along gender or ethnic/race lines; nor do they operate as a ‘separate sphere’ in the way liberal theorists have suggested. Indeed contemporary state reforms in many contexts have carried enormous implications for what is expected of families. They show how ‘the familial’ can be deployed and naturalized to assist states’ reform of, and sometimes retreat from, social life. The care burden imposed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic has exposed in a dramatic way the inadequacy

of the assumptions about the unlimited coping capacities of ‘families’ and ‘communities’, and the ways in which state withdrawal can entrench gender inequalities.

Reform strategies that seek to decentralise service provision, and to reinforce community agency and ‘self-help’ also have the potential to correspondingly reinforce the power of local traditional authorities and power-brokers. The unintended consequence is that women’s reliance on social networks may restrict their attempts to democratise social relations. Rather than challenging conventional notions about women’s work and responsibilities, the emphasis on families and communities in new social policy both expands their caring work and reinscribes their unequal access to social security.

Democratization, state capacity, and women’s voice

Even with the recognition of the need for a more activist state in global lending institutions and the provision of more comprehensive social protection, in many developing countries the impetus to provide social protection was externally set, as part of the conditionalities of debt relief. The combination of this factor with the weak tax base and small middle class in very poor countries had the effect of removing social policy from the arena of national politics. These factors have consequences for the quality and financial sustainability of social programmes. However, they also impact on the process of building a social consensus and on the political sustainability of social programmes. Building programmes that provide protection beyond the ‘poorest of the poor’ becomes more difficult in the face of the combination of residualism promoted from above by global lending institutions and populist arguments that employed workers represent a ‘labour aristocracy’.

The state is a key institution as an organiser if not necessarily a provider of social protection and provisioning. It is clear that states that are well-institutionalised are better able to translate political commitments into effective social policies and delivery systems. Women clearly have

an interest in making states more responsive and accountable to their citizens. Neoliberal approaches to state reform in developing countries have, however, tended to undermine the capacity of states to be responsive to the needs and interests of women and in particular poor women. The renewed interest in the state (in the governance paradigm) offers some opportunities for the creation of gender-responsive states. But this would require that more attention be paid to developing political accountability to citizens and that women be seen as part of the 'publics' that need to be responded to and served or to whom the state must be accountable.

Related to the above point, there is a need for 'thicker' understandings of democracy that go beyond supporting multipartyism and the numerical increase of women in national parliaments. Both of these are of course important prerequisites for reducing inequalities, but they need to be but-

tressed by deeper levels of political participation. This would include developing the capacity of women's organizations and civil societies in general to interpret and articulate the needs of different constituencies of women in policy terms. It would also include more strategic use of political parties as vehicles of representation by pushing for social policies to become electoral issues.

Last, but not least, women have fought for the state to recognize their needs in various ways (including maternalist demand-making) but not always in ways that challenge the underlying power relations of gender. In some countries the absence of strong feminist lobbies, or allies within political parties, has allowed the adoption of a residualist welfare model that has seriously undermined women's social rights. The difficulties in clearly articulating women's needs in social policy terms, appears to be as much a problem in the South as it is in the North. ■

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African cities: Competing claims on urban land

By: Paul Jenkins

Professor and Director of the Centre for Environment & Human Settlements, School of the Built Environment, Herio-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland

For a long time, urban studies has been one of the cornerstones of NAI research, with research themes like Urban Development in Rural Context in Africa (1989–1996, co-ordinated by Jonathan Baker), Housing in Transition: A Zambian Case Study within GRUPHEL III (1994–2002, co-ordinated by Ann Schlyter), Cities, Governance and Civil Society in Africa (1997–2002, co-ordinated by Mariken Vaa) and the on-going research programme Gender and Age in African Cities, co-ordinated by Amin Kamete (started in 2003). This has, of course, resulted in several NAI publications, for example *The Migration Experience in Africa* (Baker and Akin Aina, 1995), *A Place to Live* (Schlyter, 1996), *Rural-Urban Dynamics in Francophone Africa* (Baker, 1997), *Associational Life in African Cities* (Tostensen, Tvedten and Vaa, 2001), *Governing the Poor in Harare, Zimbabwe* (Kamete, 2002), and *Reconsidering Informality* (Hansen and Vaa, 2004). This article by Prof. Jenkins can be seen in the context of NAI involvement in urban issues.

Many African cities are considered to be in crisis, as measured by the ‘formal’ institutional order of late capitalist modernity, and as such, much of the actual functioning of these cities is considered ‘informal’, a nomenclature inherently based on negative concepts of illegal, un-authorised and non-regulated. However these informal activities are often more socially and culturally legitimate, as well as economically essential, for the majority and hence politically powerful. As African studies have shown for some time, African urban areas in many ways draw on norms and institutions derived from indigenous and often pre-capitalist socio-cultural orders, in which the now dominant ‘Western’ rationalities are likely to have played a limited role. What do we know of these in any detail in the contemporary urban milieu?

Drawing on the author’s three decades of working in African cities (in particular Maputo since 1980), and underpinned by recent research undertaken on urban land issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, this article argues for an approach to urban development that is based on understanding of both the realpolitik of the region as well as the mental models and organizational practices of so-called informal mechanisms. The normative analysis that underpins development approaches to urban physical and economic development (e.g. Devas, 2004) and the separate, largely descriptive, literature on African cities that celebrates socio-cultural reality (e.g. Simone 2004) are not enough. What is needed is an investigative approach that is firmly based on the parameters of contextual analysis as well as understanding ‘perceptions of the possible’. Thus, instead of investigating why African urban areas do not conform to essentially Northern norms, or indigenous rural ‘traditions’, we need to investigate with African urban dwellers how they continue to produce and adapt urban forms within their socio-cultural and political economic realities, and – importantly – consider how this might be realistically enhanced within specific and general contexts.

This article is a shortened version of a paper presented at the UK Development Studies Association, Urban Policy Study Group Meeting, ‘Rights to the city: Citizenship, conflict and representation’ at the London School of Economics (May 2006); and at the Africa-Europe Group for Inter-disciplinary Studies (AEGIS) Thematic Conference ‘African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Space’ at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh (June 2006), and is to be published in full in a book coming from the latter conference.

The main argument of the article is that urban land in Sub-Saharan Africa has been used primarily for elite group benefit from the pre-colonial period all through the colonial period, with different forms of control of access to underpin elite hegemony, many however being based on, or including, forms of social redistribution. In the post-colonial period controls of access to urban land were relaxed in practice although many ruling elites established an anti-urban bias in development, which is arguably just a different form of the same approach. In recent years mechanisms to control urban land access are currently being re-instated, which the article argues will primarily benefit elite groups, with this related to the interests of international capital as well as changing class structure.

As such, the growing competition for urban land is a key element of local political economies, yet remains deeply embedded within cultural and social systems. The assumptions and recent advocacy of titling as the basis for land markets to create wealth, which are increasingly espoused by international agencies, do not take into account the realpolitik and wider context and thus can serve to destabilise an already strained urban equilibrium as urbanisation gains pace across the macro-region. In this context, can a 'rights-based approach' be effectively conceptualised to promote wider benefits of urban citizenship?

The analysis in the original paper is applied to an in-depth historical and contemporary case study of Maputo city, capital of Mozambique, however space does not permit this to be transmitted in this short article, which thus focuses on the more contemporary general situation. It is also stressed that the work is seen as exploratory in that it raises questions as much as responds to these, and thus represents work in progress.

New initiatives in urban land control

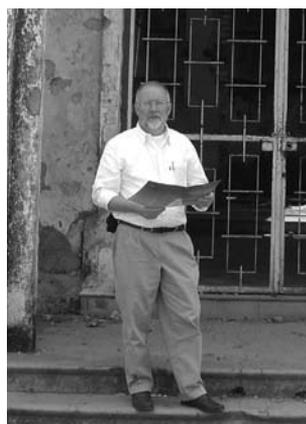
As the Sub-Saharan macro-economy went through generally involuntary structural adjustment in the late 1980s and 1990s, arguably one of the few resources which could be predominantly controlled by national and local elites was land access. Together with rising demand for urban land, and de facto valuation of this through growing

informal market mechanisms, this led firstly to increased land grabbing through the wide range of allocative mechanisms ('traditional', informal and formal) and later to the political desire to adjust the continuing adopted colonial legal

situation to permit formalisation of market values. In countries with formally existing land markets, these legislative changes focused on establishing the exclusive access to land through formal titling, thus permitting the new landowning elite to consolidate their holdings. In countries with post-colonial state allocation systems and no formal land markets, this led to calls for privatisation of land, hotly contested by strong peasant lobbies, with the same general intention of creating and consolidating a landowning elite.

In both contexts, however, a growing force is the emerging middle class, largely excluded from past large scale land allocation, and wanting cheaper access to land, but as yet with limited political clout. This group have either had to accept limited access to state-provided housing, or also invest in the formal sites and services schemes (generally termed 'downward-raiding' as these were targeted officially at low income groups) or the informal sector, as the formal housing markets do not offer them affordable options. They have usually not benefited from the above land-grabbing process, and thus face more expensive access to urban land through the growing legal and other restrictions to informal supply as well as the significant reduction in formal state land development.

Despite the growing evidence from rural development sectors of the lack of success of titling programmes, which tend to dispossess the poorer rural population, recently there has been a major



Paul Jenkins in front of the Huambo Library, Angola.

push from international agencies for titling of land as the basis for kick-starting development of capital. This has been to a greater or lesser extent enthusiastically endorsed by Sub-Saharan governments, ostensibly for its economic development potential. The rationale for titling is that with massive titling programmes the majority can access capital through mortgaging their land. However this is very unlikely as the financial system is weak in many countries in the region, and as such loans based on mortgaged land are unlikely to be forthcoming – especially for the majority who will be perceived as a high risk, high administrative cost lending portfolio. In addition there is limited funding available in domestic savings to fund long-term loans, and hence such loans would have high interest rates making them inaccessible, or unsustainable, for the majority.

Apart from the probable lack of financial supply, the titling programmes are likely to fail in any widespread way due to the generalised lack of institutional and technical capacity to undertake such programmes – i.e. replicate internationally funded pilot projects. Related to this is the lack of sound economic (fiscal) bases for wider programmes as urban elites resist land taxation and the urban poor cannot afford to pay, and the inadequate political will to exact taxation on land as well as enforce repossession on defaulted loans – partly due to these activities undermining the rich speculative opportunities in urban land of the elite. As such any titling programmes are likely to be limited in scope and unsustainable, effectively supporting the on-going process of consolidating urban land holdings. Arguably this is their real interest – that of consolidating a local capitalist sector within the elite, and in this the claim to kick-start capital formation may have some basis.

The current programmes of urban land titling are thus likely to have a limited impact – rather like the previous sites and service schemes – as they are being undertaken for realpolitik objectives which are different from those which are officially espoused. Competing claims to urban land will continue to exist between the political/economic elite, pushing for selective formalisation as part of a (relatively protected) capitalist market system

(which is likely to slowly expand to include an emerging middle class) and the largely uncontrollable demands of the majority who will continue to act ‘informally’ – that is, outside the state and regulated market systems. This is inevitable as the next decades will see rapid and increased urbanisation, but probably still limited economic growth and distribution.

Growing demand and restrictions on supply (legal and access-related) have led to informal access to land becoming increasingly commoditised, including in secondary urban areas, which are the most likely to experience the next surge of urban growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. However given the marginal position of the macro-region in global economic terms, and the proportionally increasing poor majorities in urban areas, the widening of formal urban land development access in socio-economic terms is unlikely. As such informal access to land and/or housing (probably increasingly through rental) is likely to remain the predominant form of urban land access for the foreseeable future. In this scenario, how can competing claims for urban land continue to be resolved and what role can there be for proactive engagement within this on behalf of the less economically established majority, which is the ostensible target for ‘development’?

Reinforcing rights to the city

One of the tenets of more recent development approaches has been a rights-based approach. Such an approach to urban development is, however, fundamentally based on the precepts of liberal capitalist democracy – not the realpolitik of urban areas in Sub-Saharan Africa. African urban areas in many ways draw on norms and institutions derived from indigenous and often pre-capitalist socio-cultural orders, many of which survived under, at times subservient to, colonialism. In these, the now globally dominant ‘Western’ rationalities actually play a limited role. As such the basis for social relations may be more kinship and community-based than individualist or nuclear family-oriented; the basis for political relations may draw more on accepted authoritarianism or negotiated patronage than elected representation;

and the basis for economic relations may draw more on principles of social redistribution or reciprocity than on utilitarian exchange.

Evidence for this exists in the urban land context, where what is considered socially and culturally legitimate is often not legal, and vice versa. Also, even though so-called 'informal' land markets operate commercially, i.e. using monetary exchange, these are often heavily modified by social relations (e.g. differential pricing and information exchange), and often rely on protection of 'informal' authorities (e.g. local 'headmen' and even 'warlords'). In this less clear cut milieu, politicians also often have to present a different position from that in the formal institutional order, and often manipulate the situation to their own benefit and that of the formal economic elite with which they have close relationships. As such, these political 'big men' (and women) not only can be part of the formal order (e.g. get preferential loans from banks) but get free/cheap access to urban land both formally and informally as part of their consolidation process. They then use this largesse to further their power through informal redistribution and reciprocal arrangements. In this context there is little real interest in a formal 'free and fair market' developing, whether from the elite or the majority.

The pressure to democratise and decentralise is leading to a distinction between de jure and de facto governance and this is where a rights-based approach can fail. De jure governance is what is legally adopted, but often not acted on – due as much to weakness in legal and governance systems as political connivance. De facto governance is what maintains the system operational – often in the light of citizen non-engagement this is based on negotiated settlements between powerful elites, with a degree of populism to maintain wider support at key moments (e.g. elections). Arguably this hegemonic situation of regime dominance will only change with changes in wider urban power structures.

Such changes in power structures could potentially include the weakening of economic power

of national elites due to the penetration of foreign capital and the undermining of the economic basis for current regimes, or the more severe alienation of the urban poor majority which leads to forms of political instability. However, current national elites are very careful about the terms on which

“...the growth of a middle class which asserts its rights, is perhaps the greatest challenge to the current renegotiation of rights to urban land.”

they accept foreign capital in this area of reproduction, as opposed to the area of production, where it is largely accepted, and there is limited foreign direct investment in general, with even less being directed at urban development.

There is also a fairly well developed sensitivity for the limits to alienation of the majority, and there are very small skilled working classes, most of which are unorganised. As such the growth of a middle class which asserts its rights, is perhaps the greatest challenge to the current renegotiation of rights to urban land.

Should proactive urban policy thus focus on widening the middle class and not the urban poor? Would titling of urban land assist this process? Or is it more important to secure rights to land for the majority – without expensive titling – and encourage, support and guide wider household residential investment? If the latter, how can this be politically championed in specific contexts? These are questions for debate which require specific contextualisation to be relevant – something there is not room for in this short article.

What is more to the point is the need to base urban development approaches on a sound analysis of the actual institutions which act in controlling access to, as well as use and transfer of, urban land. This has been the initial focus of a series of recent studies of urban land rights and management mechanisms by European and African researchers linked to the Network-Association of European Researchers into Urbanisation in the South, N-AERUS. These studies argue that the current conceptions of urban land use control are largely based on the legal and institutional forms imported during the colonial period, including survey, registry, use definitions, regulatory and fiscal instruments as well as forms of forward planning, but have been adapted to the contextual

reality in ways that need to be understood and supported. This paper argues further that both the continuing 'formal' colonial heritage and the more recent manifestations of urban land reform are imbued with the traditions of capitalist modernity which have never been fully absorbed in the region, even in the late colonial or early neo-colonial periods. This is not to argue however that capitalism in its various forms (mercantile, state-led, 'global' etc.) has not impacted on the mental models and organisational forms that control of urban land is based on. On the contrary these are often adopted partially and adapted to indigenous forms, as is evidenced in the urban fabric itself of Sub-Saharan African cities and towns. Hence it is not just a question of how the 'informal' can be linked to the 'formal' but whether the concept of formal is useful at all.

What is clear is that within the marginal global position of the macro-region, the current

phase of rapid urbanisation will manifest itself in different forms, contextually distinct. To be more effective in facing such issues, urban studies arguably need to base their approaches on a better understanding of the actual form of urbanism which emerges within these broad parameters and – rather than continue to adapt imported normative models – seek to develop responses which are embedded within the real political, economic, social and cultural milieus. This requires a 'new way of seeing' that transcends the current disciplinary boundaries of urban studies, and which a variety of African urbanists are beginning to investigate (e.g. Enwezor et al). This, however, needs to be investigated not only in academic circles, but on the ground with urban governing elites, emerging/growing middle classes, and the wider urban majority, in a move to a collective understanding of 'perceptions of the possible'. ■

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Interview with Paul Tiyambe Zeleza

Paul Tiyambe Zeleza is currently the Liberal Arts Research Professor and Professor of African Studies and History at the Pennsylvania State University. Prior to coming to Penn State in 2003, he served as Director of the Center for African Studies and Professor of History and African Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for eight years. In the early 1990s he taught for five years at Trent University in Canada. He also taught in Kenya, Jamaica and Malawi. He did his undergraduate education at the University of Malawi (1972–76), his MA at the University of London (1977–78), and his doctorate at Dalhousie University in Canada (1978–82). Trained as an economic historian, Zeleza's interests have broadened to several fields including social and intellectual history, development studies, gender studies, diaspora studies, and human rights studies. He also writes fiction and indulges in literary criticism. This interview was carried out on 24 August 2006 by Lennart Wohlgemuth.

◆ You were one of the co-editors of the two-volume study on African Universities in the Twenty-First Century and a major commentator at a conference on that subject in Stockholm in June this year (see p. 37). Can you give a short presentation of your findings and where we are heading now.

This is of course a very large and complicated topic. Let me begin with the book. It is a two-volume study that covers the history and contemporary trends in African higher education. Specifically, Volume 1, subtitled *Liberalization and Internationalization*, examines the impact and implications of globalization and the neo-liberal agenda on African universities as well as the challenges of incorporating information technology and promoting academic exchanges and transnational linkages. The second volume is subtitled *Knowledge and Society* and it analyses, in the first part, the dynamics of knowledge production including debates about endogenization, the disciplinary architecture of knowledge, and the state of scholarly publishing and research libraries. In the second part, the book looks at relations between African universities and the state, industry, the labor market, civil society, and secondary and primary education, as well as the changing nature of student and staff politics and women's participation. The book concludes with an exhaustive list of research topics that my co-editor, Adebayo Olukoshi, and I believe are

crucial for the emerging field of African higher education research.

I was delighted to be invited to the conference in Stockholm that brought together African and Nordic researchers and donor agencies interested in African higher education. My presentation focused on some of the themes emphasized in the book. As a historian I believe it is important to have a long-term perspective of African higher education and to recognize the challenges facing the sector without descending into despair or the affliction we call Afro-pessimism. There are two widespread assumptions about university education in Africa: first that the Europeans introduced it, and second that it has declined since independence. Both are false. Higher education including universities long antedated the establishment of 'western' style universities in the nineteenth century and the post-independence era was a period of unprecedented growth during which the bulk of contemporary Africa's universities were established.

However, we all know that since the 1980s African universities have been, by and large, in a state of crisis even if the higher education sector has continued to expand and to undergo profound transformations characterized, in part, by privatization. The challenges facing African universities deepened with the imposition of dra-

conian structural adjustment programs (SAPs) by the international financial institutions including the World Bank that led to severe government cutbacks in social expenditures, including education, especially for higher education whose rates of social return were deemed by the supporters of neo-liberalism to be lower than for primary education. This crisis was expressed in declining state funding, falling instructional standards, poorly equipped libraries and laboratories, shrinking wages and faculty morale. Academics increasingly resorted to consultancies or they became part of the 'brain drain' as they sought refuge in other sectors at home or universities abroad. The costs on teaching, research, and Africa's capacity to produce highly skilled human capital were predictably high.

Happily, in the last few years there has been growing awareness among African leaders, educators, researchers, and external donors of the need to revitalize African universities. Discourses on knowledge economies and societies have certainly helped in this turnaround; vibrant universities are critical if the continent is to achieve higher rates of growth and development and compete in an increasingly knowledge intensive global economy. While the need to revitalize African universities is increasingly self-evident, serious rethinking is required that goes beyond technical restructuring aimed at immediate problem solving, for bold visions of what the 'African university' ought to be.

The reform agenda has centered on five broad sets of issues, even if expressions of concern have yet to be matched by the provision of adequate resources. First, the need to examine systematically the philosophical foundations of African universities is widely recognized. Included in this context are issues pertaining to the principles underpinning public higher education in an era of privatization, the conception, content and consequences of the reforms currently being undertaken across the continent, and the public-private interface in African higher education systems. The second set of issues center on management, how African universities are grappling with the challenges of quality control, funding, governance, and man-

agement in response to the establishment of new regulatory regimes, growing pressures for finding alternative sources of funding, changing demographics and massification, increasing demands for access and equity for underrepresented groups including women, and the emergence of new forms of student and faculty politics in the face of democratization in the wider society. Third, there are pedagogical and paradigmatic issues, ranging from the languages of tuition in African universities and educational systems as a whole to the dynamics of knowledge production – the societal relevance of the knowledges produced in African higher education systems and how those knowledges are disseminated and consumed by students, scholarly communities, and the wider public.

Fourth, the role of universities in the pursuit of the historic project of Africa nationalism: decolonization, development, democratization, nation-building and regional integration is under scrutiny. Included in this regard are questions of the uneven and changing relations between universities and the state, civil society, and industry, as well as the role of universities in helping to manage and resolve the various crises that confront the African continent from civil conflicts to disease epidemics including HIV/AIDS. Also, the part universities have played and can play in future to promote or undermine the Pan-African project is of great interest as African states, through the African Union, renew their efforts to achieve closer integration within Africa and between Africa and its diasporas. Finally, there is the question of globalization, the impact of trends associated with the new information and communication technologies, the expansion of transborder or transnational provision of higher education, and trade in educational services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) regime. Critical in this context for Africa is the changing role of external donors from the philanthropic foundations to the World Bank and other international financial institutions and multilateral agencies. The impact of these trends on African higher education and vice-versa are of utmost importance and provide one area of

fruitful collaboration between researchers from Africa and other world regions.

◆ You are a very active person and involved in many areas of research and policy discussions. What is your present focus?

My main area of present research focuses on the African diaspora, both the historic and contemporary diasporas, of which I am a part. I am currently undertaking a large project on the subject entitled, 'Africa and Its Diasporas: Linkages and Dispersals'. I embarked on this project partly out of a growing conviction that African history needs to be broadened in its spatial scale to advance beyond the confines of nationalist historiography, not to mention the inanities of Eurocentric historiography that tends to excise Africa from world history and worldly historical significance. Diaspora studies are crucial, in my view, to inscribing Africa's global historical presence; such a rewriting of history helps to provincialize Europe that has monopolized universality and universalize Africa beyond its Eurocentric provincialization. The project seeks to map out the dispersal of African peoples in all the major world regions – Asia, Europe, and the Americas – compare the processes of diaspora formation within and among these regions, and examine the ebbs and flows of linkages – demographic, cultural including religion and music, economic, political and ideological, intellectual and educational, artistic and iconographic – between these diasporas and Africa over time. The sheer volume of literature on the subject has been a source of inestimable intellectual pleasure and some trepidation for me. I spent six weeks this past June and July on my first field visits to Venezuela and Brazil of what will be three years of visits to all the major African diaspora centers across the globe.

A project such as this has immense intellectual and policy relevance: it can help deepen our understanding of the complex histories and constructions of African diasporas and their equally complex and sometimes contradictory and always changing engagements with Africa, which is especially critical at this juncture as the African Union and other continental agencies as

well as national governments seek to build more productive relationships between themselves and their diasporas. Already, Africa's contemporary diasporas, many of them reluctant refugees from SAPs and Africa's vicious postcolonial conflicts, currently remit more than USD 25 billion and in some countries account for larger inflows of foreign exchange and investment than foreign 'aid'. Also, as global African migrations increase the challenges of integrating new African diasporas in the host countries increase as has been seen across Europe (most recently in the uprising in France), and so do the challenges of integrating them into the communities with long-established historic African diasporas as is evident in the Americas (especially the United States). Thus, diaspora studies enable us to insert Africa into global history and rewrite the histories of the various regions to which Africans were dispersed whether voluntarily or by force. The Africans who went to Portugal and Spain and ruled for eight centuries during the Andalusian period did so voluntarily, while those who were shipped to the Americas during the era of the Atlantic slave trade were coerced. Both left an indelible mark on the history of Europe, Africa, and the Americas whose effects are still with us and are central to understanding the history of Euroamerica – the whitened West.

◆ Can you give us a short preview of your upcoming book on Africa Studies which I understand will be a major contribution to the discourse on Regional Studies in the international research community?

The idea for this two-volume book entitled, *The Study of Africa*. Volume 1: *Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Encounters*, Volume 2: *Global and Transnational Engagements* grew out a graduate seminar that I used to run at the University of Illinois on 'The Development of African Studies', which examined the intellectual, institutional, and ideological dynamics in the construction of Africanist knowledges in different disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and international contexts. One year I decided to bring scholars from around the world for intensive and stimulating discussions highlighting new developments and the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical challenges

in African studies within their respective fields and locations. Many of the contributors to the collection participated; others were contacted afterwards to provide much needed input on areas not covered in the original seminar series.

Since the 1970s there have been several English-language assessments of African studies. But many of them are narrowly focused in their disciplinary and regional coverage and they tend to focus on the US. My book was motivated, in part, by the need to capture and demonstrate the diverse and complex configurations of African studies in different world regions, in addition to encompassing and examining African studies on a much wider disciplinary and interdisciplinary canvas than has been attempted thus far. The disciplines covered include Anthropology, Sociology, Literature, Linguistics, History, Political Science, Economics, Geography, and Psychology, while the interdisciplines and interdisciplinary fields include women's and gender studies, art studies, religious studies, public health studies, communications studies, cultural studies postcolonial studies, and globalization and transnational studies. The regions covered include Asia (China, India, Japan, and Australia), Europe (Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, and Russia), and the Americas (the United States, Caribbean, and Brazil), in which leading scholars examine the development of African studies in their respective countries. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that this collection is perhaps the most comprehensive overview of African studies ever published and offers an important interrogation of the disciplines, interdisciplines, and regional studies. The book will be published by CODESRIA and we hope to launch it at the forthcoming Annual Meeting of the US African Studies Association in November.

◆ Can you give us your views on the relationship between research and the policy dialogue related to this research. What have you done to be so successful in that area?

First, let me say, I don't think I have been successful in this regard, for I doubt if policy makers ever read my work! But obviously research is fundamental to policy formulation, or should be. We live in a

very complex world with complex problems, pressures and possibilities in which the importance of informed policy dialogue is more important than ever. For Africa, this raises the question of relations between the academy and the intelligentsia more broadly, and the state and civil society. Clearly, differences exist given Africa's vastness and diverse political and cultural economies and intellectual traditions, but it would be safe to say these relations are fraught for historical and structural reasons having to do with the constructions of the colonial and postcolonial states and intellectuals. Both were products of colonial engineering and are unusually responsive to external sanctions and seductions, whether it be the developmental conditionalities of western governments and donor agencies or the theoretical paradigms of the western epistemological order.

During the brief, exhilarating moment of decolonization, African intellectuals and political leaders shared faith in the emancipatory potential of independence. But the honeymoon between them did not last. It was dissipated by the deepening recessions of development and democracy. The fallout between intellectuals and the state reflected the growing divergence in their respective missions, and the failure to develop an organic intelligentsia, that is intellectuals who were seen as critical to the articulation of the state project. By the 1980s, many of Africa's repressive and strapped structural adjustment states were suspicious and dismissive of their own intellectuals, often seeing them as purveyors of 'foreign ideology', which left little room for the latter to occupy public space or to engage in critical discourse openly. Much African academic research appeared to the state functionaries 'irrelevant', either because it was not 'applied' research, or because African intellectuals were adversarial, or because they blindly followed western research themes that did not address local conditions. Yet, the same governments became increasingly subservient to foreign policy advice and conditionalities. Indeed, the growing reliance on foreign expatriates for development models and research, bankrolled by the donor agencies, enabled African governments to ignore their own intellectuals and to lower the short-term

costs of intellectual repression. This led to the ironical situation whereby these governments could only access their own intellectuals through donor-contracted reports as the latter sought pecuniary and political salvation in consultancies. The transformation of African intellectuals into 'paid native informants' for foreign donors and researchers was a tragic testimony to the collapse of the nationalist project.

In my view, then, the problem in many African countries is not whether research informs public policy, but whose research informs which policies. By and large, researchers in African universities and research networks have played second fiddle to researchers from western institutions and think tanks whose ideas and fantasies often inform the policies of bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. The real challenge is to increase the relevance and receptivity of African research for African policy makers without the mediation of donor driven research and policy priorities. Progress is of course being made, not least because of democratization and the growth of activist academic NGOs, but the road ahead will remain a difficult one. As African intellectuals, we really have no choice but

to continue striving to articulate clear agendas for African societies and peoples, especially as the continent encounters new processes of capitalist globalization and imperial racism and barbarism. In my view, these agendas must be rooted in the unfinished tasks of progressive African nationalism – development, democratization, and self-determination – revised to reflect current contexts and changing circumstances.

◆ What plans do you have for the future?

I have many, many plans, for new research projects both my own and for collaborative research with colleagues in Africa and the diaspora on the burning challenges facing our beloved continent and the Pan-African world more broadly, and for teaching and public service and engagement in the various locations I most identify with, but as always, the challenge is time and resources. One long-term collaborative project I would like to embark on once I am done with the diaspora project is to revisit the question of Africa in world history for Africa is an indispensable part of the human story. In short, I strongly believe we need to globalize Africa and Africanize globalization. ■

Selected publications by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza

- A Modern Economic History of Africa (1993)
- Manufacturing African Studies and Crises (1997)
- Sacred Spaces and Public Quarrels: African Cultural and Economic Landscapes (1999)
- Women in African Studies Scholarly Publishing (2001)
- Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century African History (2002)
- Rethinking Africa's Globalization (2003)
- Science and Technology in Africa (2003)
- Leisure in Urban Africa (2003)
- Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Development in Africa (2004)
- African Universities in the Twenty-First Century (2004)
- New Dictionary of the History of Ideas, associate editor (six volumes, 2005)
- Managing and Resolving African Conflicts (two volumes, forthcoming)
- The Study of Africa (two volumes, forthcoming)



The Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa programme at NAI is closing down

By: Signe Arnfred

Programme co-ordinator of the research programme 'Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa' at the Nordic Africa Institute



Photo by Mai Palmberg

The normal life span of a programme at the Nordic Africa Institute is three plus three years. Time is now up for the *Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa* programme, which started in October 2000. As the coordinator of the programme I have been asked to write an overview. Not quite yet a post-mortem, since there will be a period of winding up and finalization. But the active, out-going life of the programme has come to an end. What has happened during those six years? What has been achieved?

Research programmes at the Nordic Africa Institute are special creations, involving one single researcher at the institute, with collaborators and network participants located in Africa, in the Nordic countries and elsewhere, and with most of the meetings and collaborative activities taking place in cyberspace. In the case of the SexGenSoc programme, networking has been maintained and developed through my own travelling and conference participation, as well as through the

interactive NAI-SexGender e-mail list. The list has as its members more than 300 gender researchers, of whom roughly 140 are located in Africa, 110 in the Nordic countries and 50 in Europe/USA. This list has been a crucial tool in the development of the programme.

Developing spaces for critical discussion

It has been the aim of the programme to promote and enhance conceptual and methodological discussions on issues related to studies of sexuality and gender in Africa, and to encourage research. In this endeavour the NAI-SexGender e-mail list has been very important. Conceptual discussions and methodological awareness are indispensable in this field of studies; there is no such thing as straightforward knowledge production on issues of sexuality and gender in Africa. Questions regarding who creates what kind of knowledge for which purposes have to be dealt with. Conceptual awareness is a hallmark of feminist inquiry and in a context of African studies the need for the researcher to be conceptually alert is even greater. However, in Africa itself the bulk of gender research is carried out as consultancies on donor assignments, following donor agendas and terms of reference, with no possibilities for conceptual questions and queries. In this situation, in the midst of the ongoing 'consultanization' of gender research, there is a need for spaces where critical conceptual awareness can be developed and enhanced.

Such spaces may be developed in cyberspace through e-mail discussions. But they may also be developed in physical space through the convening of workshops and conferences, which often result in publications. This is however not the only reason for taking the trouble to arrange such meetings. The actual physical meeting of persons

is of great importance – impressions, exchanges, friendships, new ideas and new networks are created when people meet face to face. During the years of its existence the SexGenSoc programme has created a number of such encounters – four conferences (three in Africa and one in Sweden, the ones in Africa organized in collaboration with local universities) – and an uncounted number of workshops, panels, seminars and lectures. In addition there has been a four-day PhD course organized in collaboration with Roskilde University, Denmark. Workshops and conferences have been arranged in an open and inclusive and, as a consequence, also very work-and-time-consuming way – with Calls for Papers, circulated through the NAI-SexGender list and other networks, and subsequent selection of abstracts and correspondence with authors. A less work-intensive way would have been to organize workshops with only hand-picked invitees. However, for the development of spaces for critical discussion, the open, inclusive approach makes most sense.

In the African context the NAI SexGenSoc programme has not been alone in striving to create spaces for critical feminist discussions. An institution such as the African Gender Institute (AGI) at the University of Cape Town, to take one example, is working much along similar lines. The AGI and other Centres of Gender and Women's Studies in Africa have been important allies in the work of the programme. The particular contribution of the SexGenSoc programme has been the link between African and Nordic scholarship. The most important publication from the programme, an edited volume titled *Re-thinking Sexualities in Africa* (2004), is authored by six African and six Nordic gender researchers (an outcome of the first conference organized by the programme). This volume has been very well received.

Encouraging research

The programme's efforts to develop spaces for critical reflection have had more impact, I think, in Africa than in the Nordic countries. This may be rooted in the fact that the need for such activity is greater in Africa. As for the second programme aim, to encourage research, this has also had the

largest scope and effect in Africa. Through the programme networks I have come into contact with outstanding African gender researchers, in collaboration with whom several exciting projects on gender and sexuality research have been developed. Funding for these projects has subsequently been solicited from Sida, the Swedish International Development Agency. Three such projects deserve to be mentioned.

The largest one is the action research project on *Sexual Harassment and Gendered Violence in Nigeria*. This project is conducted in the context of the *Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria* (NWSN), which organizes gender researchers at Nigerian universities. The network has been in existence since 1996, and its aims are very similar to the aims of the SexGenSoc programme; the NWSN also struggles to create spaces for critical discussion and research on gender, sexuality and related issues. The investigations regarding sexual harassment take place in six Nigerian universities; they are run by six semi-autonomous research groups organized in a well-functioning network with regular meetings for discussion and exchange. The project coordinator, Charmaine Pereira, has a long record of critical feminist research on sexual harassment. Her book on the subject: *Beneath the Surface* (based on previous research) is forthcoming as a publication from the SexGenSoc programme.

The second associated research project will have as its output a book about sexuality in Senegal. The project is run by a group of women researchers in Dakar, coordinated by Codou Bop, previously acting coordinator of the AAWORD (Association of African Women for Research and Development, founded in 1977) research network, and Fatou Sow, renowned Senegalese gender scholar. The book, written in French, targets a popular readership; it is meant to be accessible for ordinary women. The chapters, based on empirical research, focus on various aspects of sexuality such as 'Images of the Female Body', 'Sexuality and Religion' and 'Issues of Homosexuality in Senegal'. An introductory chapter discusses different conceptualizations of sexuality.

The third associated project has been developed in cooperation with Desiree Lewis, author, editor and feminist researcher at the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies at the University of the Western Cape. The project is about the compilation of an anthology of texts by African gender researchers from the 1970s onwards, in a volume titled *African Perspectives on Gender: Theory, Methodology and Concepts*. The selection includes texts from Francophone and Lusophone African countries, translated into English. The idea of the volume is to make many decades of African contributions to feminist/gender theory and methodology visible and accessible to gender researchers in Africa and beyond.

One Nordic research project in the shape of a PhD grant, co-financed with Roskilde University, Denmark, has been developed in the context of the programme. This is the first time NAI as an institution has been engaged in PhD funding and supervision; hopefully it will not be the last. The research programmes and the whole atmosphere at the Nordic Africa Institute, with a plethora of contacts and a steady inflow of scholars from Africa and elsewhere, constitute a very inspiring environment for PhD research. After an open announcement which resulted in 35 applications, the PhD grant was given to Lene Bull Christiansen for a project on *Negotiations of Hegemonic Masculinity in Zimbabwean 'Identity Politics'*.

Another innovative creation in a Nordic context of research encouragement has been a secondment from Sida to the SexGenSoc programme. For one year Katja Jassey, Sida, was located at NAI, attached to the SexGenSoc programme, working on a project investigating HIV/AIDS, sexuality and gender as possible spaces for change. It was very pleasant during this year to be two researchers at NAI on the programme. It was also very useful for me through this secondment to get a closer insight into the workings of the Swedish development agency.

Sexuality as agency and pleasure

Much has happened in the field of research on sexuality and gender in Africa during the last six years. The SexGenSoc programme has been part

of this development. One initial concern of the programme was to get away from the picture created by much HIV/AIDS and FGM related research (FGM = Female Genital Mutilation) of sexuality as *only* a zone of risk and danger, violence and mutilation, illness and death. A point of the first conference (2002) was to look at sexuality as *also* a zone of agency and pleasure and to explore the issues from the vantage points of African women and men themselves. Similar approaches have over the last few years opened up a whole new field of research regarding the study of same-sex relations in Africa. The official view that homosexuality is foreign to Africa has been effectively debunked, along with emerging insight into ways in which same-sex relations must be differently conceptualized, as practices rather than as identities, in order to grasp African realities. The most recent programme focus on *Postcolonial Sexualities and Masculinities in Africa* captures these concerns.

Also in my own research project on *Sexuality and Power in Northern Mozambique* – a project which has been running as an undercurrent throughout the life of the programme – I look at sexuality as agency, pleasure and power; the project produces data, which question established knowledge regarding universal and generalized female subordination.

African feminism in Nordic contexts

Another concern of the programme has been to make visible contributions to feminist theory provided by African scholarship. A focal point in this context is African feminist critique of the Western notions of universal female subordination and of a stable man/woman dichotomy. African feminist thought opens up for more floating conceptions of gender. At the same time mother–child relationships are drawn into focus; this allows for very different conceptualizations of women and of motherhood as compared to Western feminist ideas. In order to explore these issues, the second programme conference (2003) was convened on the theme of *Debating Motherhood: African and Nordic Perspectives*. Throughout the life of the programme the link between African and Nordic scholarship has been important, and this particu-

lar conference was conceived in a comparative mode. The third programme conference (2003) discussed tensions, challenges and dilemmas, as seen by African feminist academics, under conditions of increasing 'consultanization' of African gender research. The fourth conference: *Writing African Women – Poetics and Politics of African Gender Research* (2004) explored different perceptions – including literary and artistic – of women in Africa. Edited volumes from these conferences are in the pipeline.

I have been keen to introduce African scholarship to Nordic audiences, and particularly to introduce African feminist scholarship in the context of Nordic feminism, as part of an effort to reverse the mainstream flow of knowledge from North to South. In this context I have given

lectures and presentations on African feminism at gender conferences in the Nordic countries, and written on the issue in Nordic publications. An additional way of creating links between African feminist thinking and Nordic gender studies has been to put African Guest Researchers hosted by the programme in touch with Centres for Women's and Gender Studies in the Nordic countries. In this way the many impressive African gender scholars, who over the years have been hosted by the programme, have also contributed to the rooting of African feminism in Nordic contexts. ■

Further information on the Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa programme is to be found at www.nai.uu.se under Research.

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Persons and Property in Kilimanjaro: Claims, Development, and Legal Anthropology



Photo: Susanne Linderos

By: Knut
Christian Myhre
Researcher, the
Nordic Africa
Institute

Property is a strong contender for a universal human phenomenon. It is difficult to imagine a society where property is absent, but the manner in which property holding and transfer is conceptualised and organised varies across time and space. Property is a localised phenomenon, which cannot be taken for granted, but rather must be studied in its specific forms.

Strands within development discourse have recently argued that codified and formalised property rights are preconditions for economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa. These arguments presuppose and aim to introduce notions and practices pertaining to property that involve title deeds, contractual relationships, and monetarised transfers. These strategies seek to export modes of property holding that are familiar from the developed world, and thus try to universalise phenomena that have specific historical and social origins. Moreover, this organisation of property entails a specific social agent – the rights-bearing legal person – whose provenance can be traced to western Enlightenment philosophy.

The research focus

The present project probes the validity of these notions and practices for an African context

through an empirical study of a rural area in Rombo District, Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania. The research focuses on people's claims to different forms of property, and aims to situate these within the local semantic and practical universe. By investigating how people articulate and justify claims to property, and the ways in which these are either recognised or contested, one can obtain knowledge about the vernacular conceptualisations and organisations of property.

One entry to these claims and justifications goes through the inheritance of homesteads, where the person's birth-order is of great importance. Earlier research in the area demonstrates that birth-order intertwines with other social phenomena, such as kinship terminology, modes of marriage, and naming practices that create an alternation of generations. Central to these are extensive and protracted bridewealth exchanges, where the results of everyday production, and the substances that constitute the local diet, become preconditions for legitimate reproduction, and bring the marital homestead into being. The upshot is strong interdependencies between production, reproduction, and consumption, which conjointly constitute the vernacular notion of 'dwelling', and interconnect human relationality, agricultural practices, and animal husbandry.

A relational perspective

By adopting a relational perspective, the project investigates the meaning of property claims and the ways in which they are made, justified, contested, or recognised. For this purpose, the project interrogates how persons are born into a relational web, which extends through their participation in 'dwelling', and enables these claims. Claims to property are thus not based on unequivocal rights that are bestowed at birth, but rather on preced-

ing social relationships, which enable a multitude of potentially conflicting claims. By tracing the networks that make up the basis of these claims and counter-claims, the research brings forth the relational constitution of local agents, as opposed to the rights-bearing individual presupposed by formalised property rights. In this way, the project discloses discrepancies between vernacular conceptions and organisations of property, and the legalistic framework of the nation-state and the development discourse. In combining contem-

porary field material and historical sources, the project investigates the diversified and complex notions of property that co-exist and conflict within a single context. Through a processual approach that allows for social, political, and economic changes, the project enables an historical ethnography that can serve as a corrective to the common presuppositions of development discourses and legal anthropology. ■

The project was established in 2006.

NAI's library named Library of the Year 2006

Library of the Year is a Swedish distinction bestowed by the national trade union DIK. From the jury's motivation: "With the mandates assigned to the Nordic countries, the library has broadened its horizons and made literature and study material available globally, as well as to local schools and an interested public."

The picture shows Åsa Lund Moberg, chief librarian at the Institute, receiving a cheque from DIK president Karin Åström Iko.

For more information and more pictures, see www.nai.uu.se/library



Photo by Jorma Valkonen

Race, othering and gender and sexual identities of foreign women in Ghana



By: Akosua Adomako Ampofo
Professor at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon and guest researcher at the Institute in early 2006 within the programme Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa

In Ghana, while the discourse on ethnicity endures, discussions about race or national origin are barely audible. Ghana remains a relatively homogeneous society in terms of race with indigenous black Africans forming the majority of the population (92 percent according to the Ghana Statistical Services 2002). However, Ghana does have a small minority of 'non-black' citizens, mainly naturalised spouses or business folk. There is also another important non-African presence, albeit a small one, made up of Levantine and Indian business people, European and American expatriates, in recent years doctors from Cuba and some Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia.

Ghana tends to pride herself as being a stable, peaceful country where all people, citizens and non-citizens alike, enjoy freedom from discrimination and equal access to justice. There is, however, little empirical evidence to support or refute such notions. The silence around issues of race in Ghanaian society has meant that the lives and experiences of these racial and ethnic 'others' are largely obscured; both in terms of the privileges they enjoy as well as the disadvantages they may suffer. For example, the legal status of a 'non-Ghanaian' in Ghana has been a contentious issue for a long time and one of the rallying cries of ISAG, the international spouses association. It

was not until February 2000 that legislation was enacted which provides for indefinite residence for so-called 'foreign spouses'. Further, we know almost nothing about the influence the lives of these non-Ghanaians, or non-African citizens has on members of the dominant society in terms of the production and reproduction, or the contestation of social (and racial) inequalities. Since contemporary Ghanaian society is predominantly male-dominated one might also expect that gender relations among inter-ethnic and inter-racial couples would be conflated in distinct and diverse ways that both reinforce and subvert gender norms. All of the above have been areas of socio-political interest to me.

While at NAI in the spring of 2006 I explored the ways in which race, sex, gender and class converge for non-Ghanaian women living in Ghana. My work drew on 20 focused conversations I carried out between 2002 and 2004 with 'black' and 'white' non-Ghanaian women aged between 36 and 82 years at the time of the interview, and who had lived in Ghana for periods ranging from four to over 50 years. I asked the questions: How do these women conceptualise and live race and ethnic difference? What is the salience of race and ethnic difference in the ways in which their sexual identities are constructed by the dominant 'other'? What are their responses to these constructions by the 'dominant other'? And how do they negotiate their diverse cultural contexts?

Why do 'race'?

The historical and racially-inflected cultural dynamics that have shaped this work form an important link to this study and my relationship

to the data. The research is carried out in Ghana and is intimately connected to my life growing up in a so-called 'inter-racial' family; although, while I was clearly aware of so-called racial differences, I did not know I was growing up in an 'inter-racial' family until I was in my early teens. Like Kwame Appiah, my siblings and I grew up straddling two worlds "divided by several thousand miles and an allegedly insuperable cultural distance that never, so far as I can recall, puzzled or perplexed us much" (*In My Father's House*, 1993). The motivation for this study, therefore, comes from my own history and experiences as well as my growing intellectual interest in the politics of identity.

But what, really, is race? Although Herodotus (484–425 BC), who is hailed as the father of modern history made reference to racial differences, and sought to explain why Ethiopians were 'black', it was not until the 19th century that attempts to systematize racial divisions were made. Scientifically it is clear that genetic variations between individuals of the same 'race' can be as great as those between members of different 'races', and that racial characteristics which might once have been distinctive have, with few exceptions, been complicated and obscured by long histories of interbreeding. Terms such as 'black' and 'white' really have little empirical meaning except in the most stereotypical ways. Like gender, we know that race is a social, not a natural category, which people "acquire... through their entry into historically specific and racist social relations" (R. Aziz: 'Feminism and the challenge of racism; Deviance or difference?' in Crowley and Himmelweit [eds.] *Knowing women: Feminism and knowledge*. Open University Press, 1992). Throughout the twentieth century anthropologists and biologists have demonstrated the fallacies inherent in categorising human populations along racial lines, and yet the practice of racing or racialising persists. So I posit that race work is important because:

1) We risk rendering racism invisible when we erase 'colour talk'.

- 2) 'Race' (i.e colour and phenotype) still hold deep meaning and significance for many people. People still base achievement, the lack of it, ability, and so forth, on so-called racial attributes (or lack thereof) – for example the notion that Asians are inherently more intelligent, or that Africans have more rhythm persists. Thus racialised and racialising discourses remain powerful.
- 3) People of colour do not usually have the option to choose their race, or to *do* or *not do* race; for non-white people their colour, and hence race, is less negotiable.

This fits the cultural history (and legislative history in some cases) that constructs whiteness as pure, and thus defines all non-whiteness in relation to a white measure.

Emerging issues and continuing explorations
My preliminary work suggests that femininity, and hence sexuality, is highly racialised. White women, especially younger women who moved to Ghana in the 1980s and after, who choose inter-racial relationships are sometimes constructed as sexually 'loose', although this is deeply mediated by class. Among the white expatriate community interracial relationships are often constructed as transgressing fixed boundaries, as one respondent said, "I think that those [inter-racial relationships] are looked at with horror". Thus they reinforce the notion of race as "a fixed and essential axis of differentiation... and the idea of cultural differences as absolute and tied to 'race' and biological belonging" (R. Frankenberg: *The Social Construction of Whiteness. White women, race matters*. University of Minnesota Press, 1993). At the same time relationships between Ghanaian men and non-Ghanaian black women are also frequently constructed as 'not the real thing' and this is manifested most poignantly in the feeling many non-Ghanaian black women had that Ghanaians felt they could find 'real' (read: Ghanaian) women for their partners. As one 60-something-year-old narrated about a comment she overheard in reference to herself, "she has the ring but I have the man".

The data suggest that both black and white non-Ghanaian women live multiple trajectories, i.e. their identities are not discrete categories, but show the intersection of race, class, gender, national origin, age (and of course other variables that do not always immediately emerge in work on inter-sectionality, such as religion). There is no one single identity that describes who or what a person is, how a person constructs herself or how others construct her. Sometimes these trajectories could be trajectories of freedom – as in the

freedom to ‘escape’ a racialised and racist society, when white skin colour provides privilege – as well as trajectories of oppression such as when black women are expected to fit some model of black authenticity or white women are sexualized because of their skin colour. But for most of the interviewed non-Ghanaian women, white or black, their lives in Ghana have created a context in which they have become more conscious of the racial and class ordering of society. ■

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Communication – a cornerstone in post-conflict transition at Idi Araba, Lagos



By: Ogu Sunday Enemaku

Lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria, and guest researcher at NAI in early 2006 under the theme of Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society in Africa

Since May 1999 when Nigeria returned to the path of democratic governance through the inauguration of a democratically elected civilian government, a number of violent inter-ethnic, inter-religious and inter-communal conflicts have been recorded (Ukiwo 2003, Adebawale 2005, Babawale 2001). For fifteen years (1984–1999) Nigeria had been ruled by different military regimes, and within the period, the wishes, aspirations and desires of the divergent groups that make up Nigeria were suppressed. The re-birth of democracy, therefore, provided an opportunity for the groups to assert their positions, giving rise to various forms of violent confrontation.

An instance of this is the February 2002 violent confrontation between the Yoruba and Hausa, two of Nigeria's largest ethnic groups, at Idi Araba, a suburb of Lagos, Nigeria's economic and industrial capital. The violent confrontation led to the deaths of over a hundred people and the displacement of more than 2,000 people (according to www.ecoi.net).

The cause of the confrontation

There are several accounts of the main cause of the February 2002 ethnic confrontation at Idi Araba, but there is a convergence of opinion on the fact that a Hausa youth defecated at an authorised place and was beaten up by a group of Yoruba youths. The manhandled Hausa youth went to his kinsmen in the community and reported the incident. A group of Hausa youths followed him back to his assailants to 'demand an explanation'. An argument broke out between the two groups of youths – Hausa versus Yoruba. This subsequently degenerated into a violent conflict, leading to arson and the destruction of property in the community, claiming lives and displacing families.

Ethnic suspicion between the Yoruba and Hausa in Nigeria can be traced to several factors, prominent among which are the political dominance of the Hausa and other Northern Nigerian ethnic groups since the nation's independence in 1960; the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election believed to have been won by Chief Moshood Abiola, a Yoruba and the election of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba man who was not acceptable to the Yoruba, but promoted by the North, as president of Nigeria in 1999. Other factors identified by Ukiwo include the birth of democracy, with the attendant opportunity for previously marginalized groups to clamour for their rights; the intricate political alignments and re-alignments that usually characterise democratization, especially after a long period of repressive military rule and several others.

Similarly, Adebawale (2005) attributes this trend to the perceived attempt of the Hausa-Fu-

lani power elite since Nigeria's independence, to emasculate other ethnic nationalities, particularly the Yoruba, using the military. Quoting Gani Adams, a factional leader of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), a Yoruba ethnic militia mentioned in connection with the violent conflict at Idi Araba, Adebani reports: "We of the Oodua People's Congress hereby make it categorically clear to the people of the world that the threat to peace, security and unity (and) the corporate existence of Nigeria today is the handiwork of the Hausa-Fulani oligarchs. Of the 39 years of the existence of Nigeria, the North ruled and dominated other ethnic nationalities for 34 years."

Akinyele (2001) links the rise of ethnic militias in Nigeria to the aggressive pursuit of the principle of self-determination, observing that the birth of the OPC on 24 August 1994, was connected with a feeling of alienation which he says many members of the Yoruba ethnic group had experienced since 1954 when they were allegedly sidelined from the mainstream of Nigerian politics. Following the formation of the OPC, ethnic militias also emerged from some of Nigeria's other ethnic groups. Alubo (2004) has outlined several instances of the OPC's clash with law enforcement agencies, rival factions within the OPC, and the Hausa people in different parts of southwestern Nigeria.

Communication and post-conflict transition

Communication played a critical role in the resolution of the Idi Araba crisis and the subsequent post-conflict transition. Windahl, Signitzer and Olson (1992) identify two broad traditions in the definition of communication. The first, which is pre-occupied with the transmission aspect of the communication process, results in a linear model of definition involving Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver. The second tradition stresses elements such as mutuality and shared perceptions. For example, Rogers and Kincaid (1981) see communication as "a process in which the participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding". This

latter approach is adopted for the present purpose because of its emphasis on mutual understanding, a central issue in this piece.

Communication operates at different levels. McQuail (2005) in his pyramid of communication lists the levels of communication as including intrapersonal, inter-personal, intragroup, intergroup, institutional/organizational and society-wide (mass). Its channels, effects, etc, are also diverse. Communication is widely believed to be the cornerstone of healthy relationships.

Part of the strategy used by stakeholders in resolving the Idi Araba crisis involved the restoration of effective communication between the leaders and members of the various ethnic communities at Idi Araba. This was followed by the setting up of an inter-ethnic forum made up of representatives of the various stakeholders in the community, including civil society, the local government and the ethnic communities, among others. Among other things, the inter-ethnic forum meets regularly to map out strategies for promoting understanding, effective communication, peace and socio-economic development in the community. Recognising the fact that economic empowerment plays a role in checking incessant conflicts, the forum, supported by various stakeholders, commenced the implementation of a number of small-scale youth empowerment projects. It also initiated a 'peace walk', which saw the leaders of the ethnic communities walking hand-in-hand along the main road that traverses the community in the full glare of the media. To cap it all, an annual Idi Araba Day celebration featuring cultural shows and public interaction was instituted as a way of promoting communication, community participation, and interaction among the various groups that make up the community. It is now more than four years since the confrontation, and there is relative peace and tranquillity in the community.

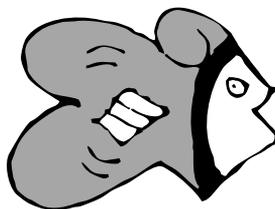
Desirable as the Idi Araba outcome appears to be, it is important to recommend more effective communication among the diverse ethnic groups

that make up the community if a community (in the true sense of the word, implying internal coherence and harmony) is to exist. White (2005) is of the view that communication makes community, implying that without effective communication, a community cannot be said to exist. Regular communication training and re-training for the ethnic leaders, members of the inter-ethnic forum and other community members may also be very necessary. The training should focus on effective use of communication, peacebuilding strategies, economic and social development

and other skills required to ensure that peace and development are secured in the community. External support for the community in its efforts is also advocated, while community ownership of the initiative should be promoted to ensure sustainability. It is also important for more and repeated studies to be carried out on the strategy in use at Idi Araba with a view to determining its strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. That way, the strategy can be properly monitored to ensure that it adapts to the changing needs of the community. ■

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Key political and economic institutions examined in East Africa

By: Emil Uddhammar

Professor of political science, Växjö University, Sweden

The following is a presentation of a research project financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and co-ordinated by three researchers based in Uppsala and Växjö, Sweden. It is meant to be just one example of Africa-related research taking place in the Nordic countries, and our intention is to invite other researchers to submit presentations of similar projects (within the social sciences, Africa-related, and based in the Nordic countries). We will then provide space on NAI's website to publish these presentations. More information will soon be available at www.nai.uu.se/research.

Is the political opposition respected? Are rules changed to the disadvantage of the political opposition before elections? How are judges appointed? On what terms do they serve, what other factors influence the courts? Do the same rules apply to men and women? Does the farmer working his land have a written title? Is there an official land register? Can women and men own and inherit property on equal terms?

These are some of the questions that will be raised within the project 'Democracy and the rule of law in East Africa' by Emil Uddhammar, professor of political science, Växjö University (Sweden), Karolina Hulterström, PhD and researcher in political science, Uppsala University (Sweden), and Inger Österdahl, professor of law, Uppsala University.

In many developing countries, not least sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a discrepancy between what is stated in written constitutions about democratic rights and the rule of law on the one hand, and what happens in actual practice on the other. The countries to be included in this study are the three member states of the

East African Community: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. They have a number of similarities and differences, that are convenient for a study of institutional performance.

The research project will focus on three core processes within democratic governance: political opposition, property rights and the independence of courts. The formal and legal system in each country will first be studied in detail. Secondly, the actual processes and the relevant stakeholders will be studied: their interests, stories and views will form an important part of the study.

Why do we choose the three processes of acquiring land, running an opposition party and defending the independence of courts as our 'test areas'? We consider them to serve as good indicators of institutional performance within the wider social functions of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

This project has been emerging in our minds for some time. I first realised how extremely complex the local notions of political opposition can be, when I did a consultancy around Lake

Victoria a few years ago. The Ugandan driver suddenly explained that he considered Joseph Kony of the ruthless Lord's Resistance Army to be only a very shrewd political player, biding his time for the right moment to return to politics. At first I was taken aback, but since then I have gradually realised that ethnicity, regional politics and political opposition can take very different forms in some African countries.

The need to know more about how East Africans understand the concept of the rule of law became evident to me in the run-up to the last election in Kenya. The draft constitution was debated among several intellectuals, who all were critical of president Moi. Yet I had difficulty realising what they really wanted with the new constitution. I asked several knowledgeable persons, and they all said "the main purpose is to get rid of Moi". Again I was puzzled. The idea, that a constitution should lay down long-term rules that are impartial was obviously not in their minds. The instrumental use of the new constitution was most important.

In this project, we will turn to the formal rules as expressed in legislation in the three countries, but also to the stakeholders within the 'processes on the ground', to ask them if the formal rules are followed locally, or if other norms and institutions come into play. There might be other ways to understand and conceptualise corresponding functions in these societies that we have no knowledge of, and that may render the introduction or function of the institutions we are looking for more complicated.

In the East African countries, the role of the opposition seems more or less remote from the liberal-democratic ideal. A scale with co-optation on one end (partly Kenya, partly Tanzania), formal opposition in the liberal sense in the middle (partly Kenya and also partly Tanzania) and hostile relations or even civil war between

competing political groups (Zanzibar in Tanzania and the northern parts of Uganda) on the other end, describes the real situation more aptly. Opposition forces in these countries will primarily be found in the media, civil society and even in the donor community

Registration and ownership of land have become prime areas of the development discourse. Many aid agencies, including Sida, give assistance to land-surveys and the creation of land registers in developing countries. The core institution here is property, and the idea is that a system of clear and well-defined property rights is a basic prerequisite for a number of vital economic acts, including using property as collateral to get credit and as a secure investment for business location. In turn, this is seen as vital for economic development. Another key issue is whether men and women have equal rights of ownership and inheritance of land and other property.

The independence of the courts is a fundamental characteristic of a state governed by the rule of law. The duty of the African states to guarantee the independence of the courts is laid down in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which binds all African states, with the exception of Morocco. The importance of the courts in general in human rights protection and of independent courts in particular has been strongly emphasized by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which monitors the observance of the Charter by the states parties. Arguably, the independence of the courts is also ultimately important for the creation and maintenance of democracy.

The project is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and will run from 2006 until 2008. Questions and suggestions can be sent to: emil.uddhammar@vxu.se. ■

Gavin Simpson on the documentation of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) have been used in the transformation of countries from war to peace. The Sierra Leone TRC was set up as a result of the Lomé Accord between the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front, which signalled the end to a bloody decade of civil war. The aim of the TRC was to create an impartial record of the war atrocities that were committed against the people, and to give Sierra Leoneans an opportunity to come to terms with a traumatic past and heal the wounds caused by the war. The TRC has completed its work, and the documentation is currently stored at Fouray Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, under conditions that may not enhance its longevity. Gavin Simpson, a human rights campaigner with extensive experience in post-conflict reconstruction and peace building shares his thoughts on the Sierra Leone TRC report as a national heritage and a collective memory of the country, and the challenges facing its faithful implementation. The interview was carried out by Proscovia Svård, archivist and research administrator at the Nordic Africa Institute.

At the time of this interview, Gavin Simpson was employed by the New York-based human rights campaign group WITNESS to work with Sierra Leonean civil society groups in their advocacy for the implementation of the recommendations of the Sierra Leone TRC. From 2003 to 2005, Gavin was a lead researcher of the TRC, which investigated and reported on the causes of the conflict, the nature of the human rights violations and abuses that took place, and the context under which those abuses were committed. He had previously worked in Bosnia and Herzegovina and more recently he took part in the inquiry by the Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee of the Council of Europe, into the alleged illegal detention centres and rendition flights operated in Europe by the CIA, mostly in the context of its “war on terror.”

To what extent did the TRC succeed in establishing an “impartial historical record” of the violations of human rights and international law in Sierra Leone?

I believe that the TRC has established what is so far the most authoritative and comprehensive “impartial historical record” of human rights violations

that took place in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002. The TRC Report contains the most critical or essential commentaries.

How inclusive is the Final Report?

The TRC report contains the voices of over 10,000 Sierra Leoneans. There are approximately 9,000 statements, including statements that were taken in the preparatory phase by the NGO called Campaign for Good Governance. Beyond that, we had 450 witnesses in public hearings, closed hearings and hearings where people were not only telling their individual stories but also commenting on issues of thematic and institutional importance. The TRC also conducted an unspecified number of research interviews, some of them confidential, detailing individuals’ roles, factions’ roles, group roles and the government’s role in the conflict. I think we succeeded in finding a broad range of representative voices.

Could inclusiveness be achieved through community initiatives that would provide a forum for those individuals who did not dare to give their witness during the TRC mission?

Perhaps yes, but I think every individual has a preference for how she or he would like to tell the story. The most important thing is for the victims and perpetrators to get some kind of outlet. I don't think public fora are necessarily always the best, nor is it convenient for everybody to have a more private confessional forum. The TRC tried to adopt an individual centred approach, where the well-being of the victim was prioritised. Victims of sexual violence were for example not made to testify in public unless they expressly requested a public forum. Female commissioners and staff interviewed the female victims of sexual violence in closed sessions, in order to respect their integrity and dignity.

Were all witnesses recorded?

Well, the overwhelming majority were recorded in either written or audio form.

How is the evidential value in the documentation being handled to avoid civil unrest?

It is important that the information that was gathered for restorative purposes is not used towards prosecution. An information-gathering and investigative body should act in good faith. The TRC expressly used its institutional character as an incentive to people to testify. It was not a prosecuting body, nor was it a judicial body. Those who gave the TRC information did so without fear of prejudice, consequence or a punitive judicial process. So, the evidence we gathered was guaranteed a so-called "use-immunity", making it immune from being involved in criminal proceedings.

How sure are we that the restrictions not to use TRC documents in court will be respected?

In reality there is no watertight legal guarantee, just the good faith of prosecutors. This is where the government's role becomes more conspicuous. What protection is there for the TRC archives should a local prosecutor wish to find evidence in a particular case that he is leading in court?

Do you think the TRC archives should have been handed over to an independent body?

Of course, an independent body would be ideal but in practice there is no institution in Sierra Leone that is genuinely independent to perform such a role. The ideal scenario would have been a successor institution to the TRC that was born out of the TRC process.



Photo: Cyril Obi

Proscovia Svård and Gavin Simpson.

How do we protect the integrity of the TRC documentation?

Action has to be taken urgently and decisively. The Sierra Leonean environment is not yet ideal for preserving the documentation. The documentation is not being preserved at good temperatures and securely. The important thing is ensuring that all paper documents are scanned and audio and videocassettes transcribed. Every one of us who has a voice in an international setting, but also in Sierra Leone, should make people aware of the existence of these archives. The archives are not being used for the purpose they were meant for.

How could the TRC documentation be used to educate Sierra Leoneans about the causes of conflict?

There are parts of the TRC documentation, such as the thousands of hours of video footage, which could be used in different ways to send out the message to the Sierra Leoneans. There are record-

ings that were done in local languages. The video version of the TRC report, a film called 'Witness to Truth' produced by WITNESS, is one very powerful means of conveying messages, stories and experiences to a wider audience despite the high illiteracy rate.

You mention WITNESS, what does WITNESS do?

WITNESS is an organisation that works in over a hundred countries around the world, using video and communications technology to advance human rights causes. In Sierra Leone, WITNESS partnered with the TRC in order to produce the world's first official video accompaniment to a TRC Report. We now work with local civil society groups to advocate for the recommendations in the TRC report to be put into practice.

What strategies has the government put in place to ease access to the information that was generated by the TRC?

None. The government has been disappointingly inept in supporting the TRC process.

What do you think the role of the international community should be in ensuring that the investment in the TRC and its documentation does not end up being lost or ignored?

I think it is fair to say that the international community's role has been woefully insufficient. They have provided some funding during the lifespan of the TRC, but all that investment stands in danger of going down the drain if they do not support the follow-up process. I can only say that the international community should ideally step up its engagement. There are some NGOs who have

supported the follow-up process and they should be commended, but it is never their role to take the place of government or of the international community. The TRC mission needs effective follow-up projects.

How are the TRC archives being preserved?

They are currently being stored in a university building at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

What are the challenges of archiving in a post-war context?

One of the key challenges is the lack of infrastructure, funds and the facilities to do archiving. The knowledge is not there because people have not been properly trained and even if they have been trained in theory, they have not had the opportunity to apply what they learnt in practice. That is why I think that any proposed archiving project should have a component of capacity building: trying to train Sierra Leonean archivists and librarians.

Is the database of the statements of atrocities created by the TRC accessible to all Sierra Leoneans?

No, not at the moment. The hard copies of the statements are currently stored at a safe site. The database is also stored electronically, but ownership still lies in the hands of the TRC itself, and yet the TRC no longer exists. Decisive proposals about what should happen to the entire TRC material need to be put forward so that Sierra Leoneans can reclaim ownership over the documentation and, more generally, over this historic national process. ■

Recent NAI conferences

The following conferences have recently been organised or co-organised by the Nordic Africa Institute. Reports from the conferences are available at www.nai.uu.se (under Events/Conferences).

Post-Conflict Elections in West Africa: Challenges for Democracy and Reconstruction. 15–17 May 2006 in Accra, Ghana. Arranged within the framework of the Post-Conflict Transitions, the State and Civil Society programme.

Exploring the African Agenda: Poverty reduction through regional cooperation. 31 May – 1 June 2006, in Johannesburg, Sweden. NAI was tasked by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to organise this consultative workshop with scholars and policy makers.

Research and Higher Education for the African Renaissance: a conference on the breakthrough for African Universities. 1–2 June 2006 in Saltsjöbaden, Stockholm, Sweden. Arranged by NAI on the request of the Nordic international development cooperation institutions.

Documentation: Sharing experiences. 7–8 June 2006 in Helsinki, Finland. Arranged within the framework of the Documentation/Archive project, in cooperation with the Finnish Archives of the Anti-Colonial Resistance and The Liberation Struggle in Namibia.

World Congress of Sociology in Durban

Several researchers from the Nordic Africa Institute (Amin Kamete, Ilda Lourenco-Lindell and Henning Melber) presented papers in various sessions at the XVI World Congress of Sociology organised by the International Sociological Association (ISA) during the end of July in Durban, South Africa.

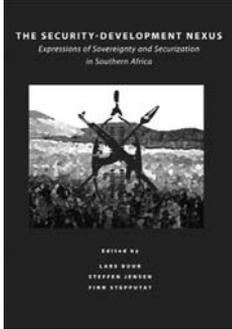
Session 1 of the Research Committee on 'Comparative Sociology' on 24 July focussed on 'The Role and Meaning of Political Opposition in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Sociological Perspective'. Chaired by the Institute's research director, case studies were presented by Karolina Hulterström of Uppsala University on Kenya and Zambia, by Amin Kamete on Zimbabwe and by Henning Melber on Namibia.



Photo: Exhibition Photos

Henning Melber, Amin Kamete and Karolina Hulterström.

Recent publications



Lars Buur, Steffen Jensen and Finn Stepputat (Eds)

The Security-Development Nexus

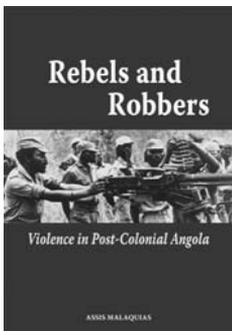
Expressions of Sovereignty and Securitization in Southern Africa

ISBN 91-7106-583-0, 300 pp, SEK 320/USD 45

The link between security and development has been rediscovered after 9/11 by a broad range of scholars. Focussing on Southern Africa, the Security-Development Nexus shows that the much debated linkage is by no means a recent invention. Rather, the security/development linkage has been an important element of the state policies of colonial as well as post-colonial regimes during the Cold War, and it seems to be prospering in new configurations under the present wave of democratic transitions. Contributors focus on a variety of contexts from South

Africa, Mozambique, and Namibia, to Zimbabwe and Democratic Congo; they explore the nexus and our understanding of security and development through the prism of peace-keeping interventions, community policing, human rights, gender, land contests, squatters, nation and state-building, social movements, DDR programmes and the different trajectories democratization has taken in different parts of the region.

Lars Buur and Finn Stepputat are Senior Researchers at the Danish Institute for International Studies. Steffen Jensen is Senior Researcher at the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Survivors and teaches International Development Studies at Roskilde University.



Assis Malaquias

Rebels and Robbers

Violence in Post-Colonial Angola

ISBN 91-7106-580-6, 260 pp, SEK 320/USD 39.95

Rebels and Robbers is about the political economy of violence in post-colonial Angola. This book provides the first comprehensive attempt at analyzing how the military and non-military dynamics of more than four decades of conflict created the structural violence that stubbornly defines Angolan society even in the absence of war. The focus on structural violence enables the author to explore the continuities since colonial times, especially in the ways race, class, ethnicity, and power have been used by governing elites as mechanisms to oppress the powerless. But the

unabashed propensity to capture public resources for personal aggrandizement is purely post-colonial. Angola's opportunity to finally realize its developmental potential will depend on whether the wealth resulting from the exploration of natural resources is directed toward creating the conditions for the citizens' realization of their aspirations for the good life thus ensuring sustainable peace.

Assis Malaquias, PhD, is Associate Dean of International and Intercultural Studies and Associate Professor of Government at St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York.

Hans Erik Stolten (Ed.)

History Making and Present Day Politics

The meaning of collective memory in South Africa

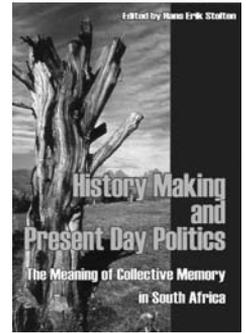
ISBN 91-7106-581-4, 370 pp, SEK 320/USD 39.95

In this collection, some of South Africa's most distinguished historians and social scientists present their views on the importance of history and heritage for the transformation of the South African society. Although popular use of history helped remove apartheid, the study of history lost status during the transition process. Some of the reasons for this, like the nature of the negotiated revolution, social demobilisation, and individualisation, are analysed in this book.

The combination of scholarly work with an active role in changing society has been a central concern in South African history writing. This book warns against the danger of history being caught between reconciliation, commercialisation, and political correctness.

The authors also examine a range of new government and private initiatives in the practical use of history, including the establishment of new historical entertainment parks and the conversion of museums and heritage sites.

Hans Erik Stolten is a Historian working at the Centre of African Studies at the University of Copenhagen.



Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor (Eds)

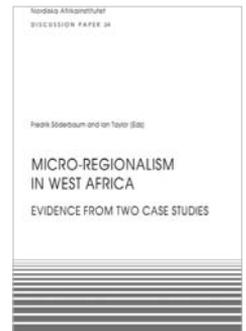
Micro-Regionalism in West Africa

Evidence from Two Case Studies

ISBN 91-7106-584-9, 40 pp, SEK 90/USD 12.95, Series: Discussion Paper no. 34

This collection seeks to complement and advance recent studies on regionalism in Africa and the implications that this has for the continent's development. The two case studies on cross-border micro-regionalism in the borderlands of Mali-Burkina Faso and Niger-Nigeria are part of the work of the West Africa Border Initiative (WABI). Providing a challenge to the considerable number of state-centric, formalistic and not seldom overly idealistic studies in this field, the two cases show quite clearly that formal borders either essentially do not exist in the Westphalian sense, being ignored by local populations and traders, or, are strategically used by (often self-styled) representatives of the state to extract resources and rents.

Fredrik Söderbaum is Associate Professor at the Department of Peace and Development Research (Padrigu), Director for the Centre for African Studies at the School of Global Studies, Goteborg University and Research Fellow at the United Nations University-Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), Bruges, Belgium. Ian Taylor is Senior Researcher at the School of International Relations, University of St. Andrews, Scotland.



Titles published by the Nordic Africa Institute can be ordered via orders@nai.uu.se

Prof. Chachage Seithy Loth Chachage

Man of the People, Scholar of the People, Scholars' Scholar



Photo: CODESRIA

Prof. Chachage Seithy Loth Chachage.

On 9 July 2006 the university community at the University of Dar es Salaam was thunderstruck by the news that one of its most revered members had died suddenly while on a week's retreat with a couple of colleagues to complete an overdue report on the state of the union of Tanzania. Yes, Prof. Chachage Seithy Loth Chachage, affectionately known to all on campus simply as Chachage, had died of a stroke close to midnight in the course of a three-day working marathon. The report had been commissioned by the President's Office. He was cut down literally in his prime at the tender age of 51!

It will not come as a surprise to anyone who knew the late Prof. Chachage that he should be described as a man of the people, scholar of the people and scholars' scholar. Chachage was all those things rolled into one man. It should not surprise anybody either that Chachage died at work. He was such a hard worker that many of us believed that he must have had some hidden reserves of energy. This was particularly the case in the last three years when his failing health seemed to spur him on to work even harder.

I am sure I speak for many when I say that it is almost impossible to think about life at the University of Dar es Salaam in the last decade or so without thinking of Chachage. In spite of his relatively small stature Chachage had an overwhelming physical and intellectual presence. His presence was particularly felt in spaces and situations of struggling for justice. This was not simply at the university campus. Wherever he went

across the country he touched a lot of people who either knew him personally or through his prolific writings, regular radio interviews and TV appearances. His position on campus was attested to by the huge numbers who turned out to pay their last respects. His stature at the national level was affirmed by President Kikwete who, in a very rare gesture for our presidents, drove straight to campus from a foreign trip for the same ceremony.

At the time of his death Chachage was Chairman of the University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly (UDASA) as well as being Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology – a rare and challenging balancing act of combining the roles of academician, trade unionist and university administrator. Chachage was all along the quintessential member of UDASA who never missed a meeting if he was on campus and who served in various capacities. In his role as Chairperson he led an alliance of the academic, non-academic staff and students in a struggle to write a new University Charter that was consistent with the history and traditions of struggling for academic freedom and social justice which are associated with the University of Dar es Salaam.

Prof. Chachage, as I have pointed out was a scholars' scholar. He was thorough, prolific and always provocative in his writing. He published not less than 50 books and papers. He was resilient as a social scientist and never pedantic in his discourse. He collaborated with scholars right across Africa and the world. He was on the executive board of CODESRIA and worked very closely with the Nordic Africa Institute among many other organizations. He will be fondly remembered by many for his humour and ease of spirit even under the most stressful conditions. ■

Mwesiga Baregu, Professor of International Relations, University of Dar es Salaam