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*Cover photo: Polling station in Burco, Somaliland, September 2005.  
Photo by Anna-Karin Florén, Extract Stockholm.*

# To Our Readers

Photo by Susanne Linderos



We are welcoming a new year, more *News from the Nordic Africa Institute*, and a new image for it. This signifies an opening towards a more interactive bulletin. We aim to continue to present independent research

of vital interest for the interpretation of current development in Africa, and to open up space for alternative views and debate on recurrent issues of importance for understanding what is happening on the African continent. We invite you to be part of this project.

For most countries in Africa the last year has been critical in terms of political, social and economic development. We have seen a more confident Africa growing out of the global claim to the continent's natural resources. We have seen the inflow of much needed financial resources. We have seen competition for resources, sometimes resulting in conflicts and disaster. According to the latest Global Economic Prospects from the World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa experienced in 2006 an average economic growth of 5.3 percent. This is the third year in a row with growth figures above five percent. The forecast for 2007 and 2008 looks relatively good with GDP growth rates of 5.3 percent respectively 5.4 percent. Aid is expected to increase during the period. How will this growth opportunity be translated into benefits for the citizens of the continent?

During the last year we have focused on the debate on rethinking social policy in Africa. We have drawn attention to the challenges of elections and we have touched upon critical issues such as those related to presidential transitions, and the competing claims on urban land. We have presented new poetry.

After six intensive years as Research Director at the Nordic Africa Institute, Dr. Henning Melber is moving on to a new exciting post as Executive Director of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

in Uppsala. As colleagues in the international network of Uppsala we will continue our cooperation on Africa.

In this issue we are continuing the debate on elections and the democratic system and institutions. The Nigerian researcher and activist Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim presents some major challenges facing the future of elections and democracy in Nigeria. The former Swedish ambassador to Kenya, Bo Göransson, comments on the democratic development in Kenya. His contribution has previously been published in *The Nation*. Prof. Jeremy Gould at Helsinki University writes about Zambia's 2006 elections and asks whether these elections signal the ethnicization of Zambian politics. Prof. Heidi Hudson, Stellenbosch University, discusses how the interests of domestic constituencies – such as parliament, political parties, civil society groups and business – impact on foreign policy-making in South Africa.

We have two interviews, one with Prof. Kwame Boafo-Arthur from the University of Ghana and one with Prof. Cheryl Walker, the University of Stellenbosch. In the third section we are presenting two new research programmes at the institute: 'Poor Rural Women Co-Managing Protected Areas in South Africa – a viable option?' by Lisbeth Larsson-Lidén and 'Currencies of Transformation: Changing Resource Regimes in Times of Uncertainty' by Amanda Hammar. We also have a contribution by Emebet Mulugeta, Guest Researcher at the institute in 2006, 'Surviving under Poverty: Women in Addis Ababa'.

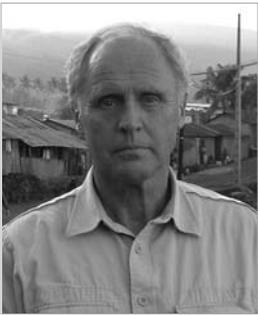
We are presenting reports from two recent conferences. 'Civil Society and African Regional Integration' took place at Aalborg University and 'NAI Media Seminar' was held in Uppsala.

Finally, a tribute to Joseph Ki-Zerbo, who died on 4 December 2006, by Executive Secretary of CODESRIA, Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi. ■

Carin Norberg, 2 January 2007

# Democracy needs parties, not only democrats. And more women!

Bo Göransson recently returned from Kenya where he served as Sweden's ambassador between 2003 and 2005. During this period he was a regular contributor to the Kenyan newspaper *The Daily Nation*. Bo Göransson was the Director General of Sida between 1994 and 2002. This article was published in *The Daily Nation* on 6 September 2006, and on the website of the Swedish embassy in Nairobi. This is the author's original text.



By: Bo  
Göransson  
Swedish Foreign  
Ministry, previously  
Swedish Ambassa-  
dor to Kenya

Looking at 2007 we of course have to use a crystal ball, although we know a lot, or at least we think we know a lot. I am willing to bet that we will see a fast growing economy in 2007. The export sector will continue to lead. The main internal, economic and social problem will continue to be the weak domestic demand, caused by the glaring inequalities and the widespread poverty. Africa will continue with reforms, increased growth, intensified regional collaboration and the spreading of democracy, this is a fair guess. In Kenya, elections will dominate the political scene and debate, we know that.

Will next year's election constitute another leap for democratization? We don't know. Do we get any guidance from looking in the rear-view mirror? I think so.

It is easy to see that Kenyans are increasingly aware of their rights and power to influence politics. The 2002 election was important, a mile-stone, Kenya at the crossroads making a bold decision. But it was the beginning of a transformation, we have to remember that, it was not the trans-

formation. The referendum process represented another step in deepening and fermenting Kenyan democracy. I am not so naïve as to believe that the campaigns in 2002 and 2005 were free from excesses, lies, propaganda and fear factors. Having said that, we did witness discussion at work places, small and "big debates" in the media, civic education of considerable insight and impact. There were local discussions during the referendum campaign about the role or existence of chiefs, about the possibility to get one's voice heard at local and national levels, about the power of the president and about control of land. The by-elections in 2006 seemed to be a step backward; at least there are numerous reports on vote buying and violence.

There is no doubt, however, in my mind that the democratic space has widened. The setbacks we have seen so far seem to backfire on the non-reformers; the effect of the raid on *The Standard*, for instance, increased press activities, not the other way round. Or is that wishful thinking?

But progress has not embraced women, half of the population. Although more women than before were both nominated and elected to parliament in 2002, there are clear backlash tendencies for women.

## The role of women

The referendum process was an alarm signal. One reason for many men to vote No to the proposed constitution seemed to be the fear of women starting to claim land. The right of everybody to inherit land already exists in the Kenyan laws but

it was clearly spelled out in the proposed constitution that these rights also include women. This scared many men. And their No vote was a vote against the rights of women. Quite understandably, women today own only five percent of the land in Kenya.

Women continued to be marginal in major events. Oranges, Bananas (the “no” and “yes” sides in the 2005 referendum) and now Narc Kenya and ODM all organise male parades. The new government of January 2006 digressed rather than progressed as female Cabinet Ministers went from three to two. The new ODM structure is in the same deplorable league: 18 out of 19 leaders are men!

Another alarm signal is the salary hikes awarded by MPs to themselves. No matter what you think of that hike, the effect will be that a seat in parliament is very well paid. As a consequence it will attract more men. Competition will be harder, and the means to get the lucrative nominations will be rougher. There is a risk that the number of women in parliament will go down in 2007. According to a recent study qualified women in urban areas shy away from participating in politics because they do not want to be subject to hooliganism, harassment and deceit. Who can blame them? The system with one MP for each constituency and the winner-takes-all system, rather than a proportional system, has also proved to favour men.

I do not understand how the political parties can fail to see the potential of the female voters and votes. If I were employed as a spin-doctor for any political party in Kenya my main advice would be to actively promote women's participation. Not only would that party gain insight, knowledge and experience, it would show that it has not excluded 50 percent of the people from their affairs – and it would certainly win the next election! But no one will employ me, and to be honest, I think that it is the women in Kenya who should speak up more than they do.

Recently a poll was published on “Perceptions towards gender disparity in Kenya”. It is shocking reading. On women in local government and parliament, the result was that “opinion regarding

these institutions was indicative of high levels of satisfaction with the representation of women in leadership of these institutions”. In other words, people say that it is OK that more than 95 percent of those elected to parliament are men and less than five percent are women. Either they know these facts, and still have their opinion, or they think that women's representation is much higher than it actually is. In either case, women have a job to do.

### The role of political parties

Democracy needs not only democrats, and more women, but also stronger parties. In all likelihood we will see a mushrooming of new parties the coming year. To what extent do present and future political parties base their participation, in coalitions or movements, on programmes and principles, not on personalities and power?

That parties differ is not remarkable, the idea of parties is that they should reflect various opinions and groups. That coalitions break up is not remarkable either. These are well-known twists of democracy when it is not possible to accommodate divergences in wedlock. But for an outside observer, the ease with which politicians move from one group to another is a rather peculiar aspect of Kenyan politics. In most other countries, an individual MP going from the opposition into government would be seen as disregarding democracy. People decided through their votes that parliament should have a certain composition, with a majority and a minority of a certain size. To switch between the blocs, to cross the floor, is seen as not respecting the will of the people. In Kenya, there is not much sign of such a discussion: It is accepted that the results of national elections give way to regional or local interests – an MP is expected to better serve his constituency if elevated to Cabinet.

### Conclusion

This is what I would wish to see happen on the political arena in Kenya during the coming 15 months:

- Public disclosure of assets by candidates. There is no need for a law on this, any party has the

right as part of their party constitution to decide on such an issue: If you want to run on our ticket, declare, and do it public. If one started, wouldn't the others follow? Who would dare to abstain?

- Public disclosure of campaign contributions and transparency in how funds are used. Given the allegations and rumours on irregularities, this would certainly clear the air. And as with private disclosures, if one starts, which party can afford to abstain?
- Actively increase female participation in the political arena. In Nairobi only 40 percent of the women are registered. Women candidates should be nominated and supported by parties, not harassed, aiming at more fair representation.
- An election process, and ultimately election, that has its focus on ideology and issues, and respects the various roles of institutions, players, agents. Free, active and responsible media; independence for institutions overseeing the election process; fair and far-reaching election training and access to information.

I have a final wish: The greatest risk I see for Kenya's future is the division of the people, by its leaders. The risk is obvious, and it is a risk with enormous costs.

During my years in Kenya, I have seen the ugly face of ethnic tension grow stronger and more apparent, become almost accepted. The constitution process, so far, has been a failure in

this respect, it seems to pit various segments of Kenyan society against each other rather than making everybody rally behind a national vision. The coming elections have the potential to make this worse, but they also bring an opportunity to walk another path.

The political parties have a key role in this, if they focus on programmes and politics, not on politicians and personalities. They could use the campaigns to unite Kenya, not further divide it. They can talk about national policies and politics, not only local ones. They can link the national to the local and the local to the national. It is the responsibility of all candidates to talk about the neglected North East or the spread of HIV/Aids in the West, not only candidates from these regions. It is also the obligation of men to talk about domestic violence and female genital mutilation.

Kenyans, like all other people, want democracy. There is no doubt about the will of the people in Africa; two thirds prefer democracy to other forms of government according to a recent survey. There is no doubt that Kenya and Kenyans are forerunners in this.

But to stay in the forefront, Kenya needs not only more democrats but stronger political parties – and more women in politics. On the issue on minimum versus comprehensive review, why not prioritise reforms that guarantee women a better chance in the election process and a higher representation in parliament? ■



Photo by Karim Kerrou

### Research Director Henning Melber moves on

Henning Melber, NAI's Research Director since 2000, left the Institute in November 2006 to take up a position as Executive Director of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala ([www.dhf.uu.se](http://www.dhf.uu.se)). Henning Melber's deep knowledge about Southern Africa, his network in the region, his impressive energy, skills and productivity when it comes to dissemination of research results have been immensely valuable to the Institute.

Those interested in knowing more about Henning Melber's research can find a number of publications, as well as a presentation of his research project Liberation and Democracy in Southern Africa at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se).

# Zambia's 2006 elections: The ethnicization of politics?

By: Jeremy Gould

In this article, Gould argues that the 2006 polls should be seen as a protest election, and that – notwithstanding its failure to capture the presidency – the Patriotic Front is the uncontested winner.



Jeremy Gould is Associate Professor at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland

On 28 September 2006, Zambia went to the polls in its fourth general elections since the restoration of political pluralism in 1991. Like in the previous tripartite elections in 2001, the presidency was heatedly contested, as were parliamentary and local government seats in most constituencies. Thirteen parties participated at some level, and five fielded a presidential candidate. The ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) incumbent, Levy Mwanawasa, retained his seat at State House with 43 percent of the ballot, while his two main opponents, veteran firebrand Michael Sata of the Patriotic Front (PF) and newcomer Hakainde Hichilema of the

United Democratic Alliance\* (UDA) received 29 percent and 25 percent of the vote respectively.

MMD won 73 of the 150 parliamentary seats to be filled by the ballot. It only retains control of the legislature by virtue of eight deputies appointed directly by the president. The ruling party's mandate decreased only little in comparison to its pre-election status, and it avoided the embarrassing implosion predicted by the opposition. Yet, with its razor-slim majority in the National Assembly and a minority President in State House, its legitimacy is a far cry from the three-quarters' quorum it enjoyed throughout the 1990s. Given the frequency of by-elections in Zambia (due to the high mortality of office holders), MMD's parliamentary majority is very tenuous indeed.

More critically, perhaps, MMD has been completely marginalized in the major municipal councils along the line of rail. The Patriotic Front has hegemonic control of local government institutions in Lusaka, in the influential Copperbelt towns and in Kasama in the populous Northern Province. The UDA controls Livingstone. In principle, local political institutions are in opposition hands in all of the main population centers of the country.

\*) The UDA represents an ad hoc electoral coalition of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) and the United Party for National Development (UPND). UDA was initially assembled as a united oppositional front against the MMD, but Michael Sata's Patriotic Front refused to join.

Local and international monitors generally hailed the elections as free and fair, albeit not without their share of technical problems. The turnout was a respectable 71 percent and the actual polling proceeded peacefully without major incident. All in all, it would seem that basic democratic procedures are becoming routine in Zambia. This overall impression was marred by a brief flare-up of mob violence in Lusaka, the national capital, as frustrated supporters of unsuccessful presidential aspirant Michael Sata took to the streets, accusing the ruling MMD of election fraud.

### The Sata factor

Notwithstanding its failure to capture the presidency, the uncontested victor of the elections was the Patriotic Front under the leadership of sixty-nine-year-old veteran politician Michael Sata. Increasing its share to a walloping 43 seats, up from a mere two in the previous parliament, PF's success was most striking in influential urban centers where it swept both parliamentary and local government seats.

PF's explosion into the major league of Zambian politics came as a surprise to most Zambians. As little as ten months before these elections it was difficult to muster even lukewarm support for Sata among Lusaka's political *illuminati*. Just days before the elections, the independent and influential *Post* newspaper – considered a mouthpiece for the progressive middle-class, and definitely no friend of the ruling MMD – ran a scathing attack on Sata. For once, it seems no-one was reading *The Post*.

Sata began his career as a political lieutenant to founding president Kenneth Kaunda in the heyday of his United National Independence Party's (UNIP) 'one-party participatory democracy'. Nick-named 'King Cobra' by friends and detractors alike, Sata soon carved out a distinctive niche for himself as an aggressive, rough-mouthed muscleman, incessantly poised to attack dissidents within the ruling party. It was a role he subsequently sequelled at the elbow of Kaunda's usurper, President Frederick Chiluba of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy.

Swept into power in 1991 by throngs of near-ecstatic citizens fed up with Kaunda, UNIP and incessant economic decline, Chiluba espoused the rhetoric of liberalism and democracy. Once in power, however, the MMD gradually sank into a morass of corruption and abuse. In 1994, then Vice-President (and current State House incumbent) Levy Mwanawasa quit government in protest over growing corruption in the MMD. Mwanawasa's resignation was in direct reaction to a shady deal he attributed to Sata. A very personal animosity between the two men has continued to the present day.

Sata remained adamantly loyal to Chiluba almost up until the end. Chiluba was constitutionally obliged to step aside in 2001, having served the maximum two terms at State House. Sata clearly expected to be anointed as his successor. But Chiluba procrastinated in declaring his intentions, and in doing so incited popular mobilization against an alleged Third Term bid by the president. The nation-wide 'Green Ribbon' campaign, spearheaded by the activist Oasis Forum (a loose alliance of all major Christian church bodies, the women's movement and the Law Association of Zambia), proved incontrovertibly that the Zambian people would not countenance another five years of Chiluba.

As time ran out, Chiluba sidelined the unpredictable Sata and identified ex-Vice-President, lawyer Levy Mwanawasa, as his heir apparent. It was a surprising and unconventional move that Chiluba lived to regret. After several years of barely concealed abuse of public assets, Chiluba needed desperately to ensure that his successor would protect him against accusations of financial impropriety. His choice of Mwanawasa demonstrated a serious failure of character assessment on Chiluba's part. Apparently he believed that Mwanawasa – estranged from MMD inner circles and who, it was rumored, had never fully recovered from a head injury in the early 1990s – would be easy to control. As it turned out he was mistaken.

Be that as it may, Sata was visibly shaken by this unexpected turn of events and left the MMD with doors banging. He quickly formed the Pa-

triotic Front along with Guy Scott, an offspring of Zambia's numerically insignificant troupe of white settlers. The hastily assembled PF did poorly in 2001, nor was its performance in subsequent by-elections impressive. On the eve of the 2006 polls PF held only two parliamentary seats, in contrast to main opposition party UPND's 49. For the first time in his political career, Sata was on the outside looking in and he didn't like it.

It is hard to link Sata to any clear ideological platform. He is known as a fixer and a hard worker. While District Governor for Lusaka in the late eighties, for example, he provided affordable housing to many urban residents and achieved the Herculean feat of cleaning up a decade of accumulated rubbish on the city's streets. He can also work a crowd better than any contemporary Zambian politician. His defining trademark is gravelly populist rant, never far from the gutter, that revels in hyperbole and political taunt. When explosives were discharged in July 2005 at Konkola Copper Mines, in connection with worker-instigated protests against a privatization scheme, Sata rushed to the scene to claim complicity in the bombing. (As a result he was arrested on sedition charges, a case that is still pending.) And on the eve of the recent elections, he praised Robert Mugabe's violent land seizures in troubled Zimbabwe, while in the same breath threatening alien (Asian and Lebanese) businessmen in Zambia with deportation.

Such brutal demagoguery is rare in Zambian political society. Yet, Sata's campaign maintained a counter-intuitive upward swing as the 2006 elections approached. PF rallies pulled large, buoyant crowds wherever he spoke. Major opposition politicians like former UPND Vice-President Sakwiba Sikota and firebrand Given Lubinda defected from their mother party to join the PF bandwagon. The diplomatic corps was nervous. Murmurings about the 'Zambian Mugabe' circulated in the capital with increasing anxiety.

Come election day, PF went to the polls confident of victory. Amazed citizens stayed glued to their radios and TVs as the preliminary count pointed to a PF landslide. Early returns from urban constituencies had Sata leading

Mwanawasa almost 2:1. In the final count, PF swept Lusaka and the mining towns of the Copperbelt, and garnered substantial support in the 'Bembaphone' northeast. Elsewhere – with the exception of the Tonga-speaking Southern Province, where UDA candidates harvested all but one seat – MMD prevailed. Since the Copperbelt population is also predominantly ciBemba speaking, one might argue that PF's victory is evidence of the 'ethnicization' of Zambian politics. The fact that the UDA's electoral success was limited to one, ethnically homogenous region also lends credence to such an interpretation. Closer inspection, however suggests that the ethnic explanation may be too simplistic. I return to this point further on.

It is probably fair to say that PF's success at the polls was to a large part due to pre-election fumbles by both MMD and UPND/UDA. MMD's main liability is Mwanawasa himself. Zambians have little genuine affection for, much less fear of, 'Levy'. Once a successful Copperbelt lawyer, Mwanawasa's public persona exudes impulsiveness and arrogance, coupled with a propensity for alienating legalese. He also suffers from periodically debilitating health problems. Hot on the heels of his 2001 victory, Mwanawasa won some popular sympathy by bringing his mentor Chiluba to trial on corruption charges. He nevertheless quickly squandered this windfall popularity through inconsistent policies, nepotism and petty squabbles with civil society groups like the Oasis Forum.

Mwanawasa is also out of touch with popular demands for delimiting presidential powers and expanding socio-economic rights. After vowing to honor the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Commission he appointed in 2003, Mwanawasa distanced himself from the draft constitution they produced which, among other things, required that the President win more than half of the popular vote. Having squeaked through on a (highly contested) 29 percent plurality in 2001, Mwanawasa was understandably uneasy about his chances for re-election in 2006 under such a provision. Through filibustering and political manipulation, MMD stalled con-

stitutional reforms with the result that the 2006 elections were held under the simple majority clause introduced by Chiluba in 1996. From the MMD's perspective this was a prudent tactical move. It is anybody's guess how Mwanawasa would have fared against Sata had the recent elections gone into a second round.

### Mazoka's ghost

PF's dramatic advance benefited directly from the collapse of the hitherto most credible opposition force, the United Party for National Development. In 2001, UPND founding president, ex-Anglo-American executive Anderson Mazoka lost to Mwanawasa by less than two percent of the popular vote. In reality, Mazoka probably had the greater share of popular support, but was deftly out-manoeuvred by the MMD which ruthlessly exploited its control of state resources during the campaign period. (The Supreme Court ruled against UPND's petition to overturn Mwanawasa's 2001 election on the grounds of unfair practices, yet the protracted hearings brought forward massive evidence of MMD manipulation as well as rigging by all parties.) Mazoka fell seriously ill soon after his defeat and spent much of Mwanawasa's first term of office under intensive care in South Africa. He returned to Zambia in 2005 and resumed leadership of UPND. Despite his evident frailty he succeeded in suppressing efforts to replace him by divisive factions within the party.

After Mazoka's death in May 2006 at age 63 things fell apart, and UPND split over a secession crisis that had two debilitating consequences. One, the sidelining of senior UPND stalwarts in favor of political novice Hakainde Hichilema as party president reaffirmed popular conceptions of UPND as an ethnically-grounded Tonga party. Second, the split saw the defection of popular UPND mainstays Sakwiba Sikota and Given Lubinda into an alliance with PF. Although Hichilema's 25 percent share of the presidential vote is a respectable achievement for a political unknown, UPND's share of seats in the new parliament decreased by almost two-thirds. All of its current

seats are in the Tonga-speaking constituencies of the Southern Province.

### Primordialism resurgent?

All in all, the technical quality of these elections was a clear improvement on previous multiparty polls. This time around, the MMD government made a concerted effort to allay accusations of pre-election machinations. Cabinet was dissolved well ahead of time and Ministers were not permitted to use government resources for their campaigns. There are 20-odd court petitions pending in contest of constituency-level results but given the technical complexities involved in an exercise of this scope, this is hardly unusual.

Did these elections signal the ethnicization of Zambian politics? 'Tribalism' is a register generally eschewed in public political discourse in Zambia. The fact that UNIP managed to rule for 27 years with few or no signs of ethnic tension is still considered an unmitigated virtue in Kaunda's complex political legacy. That said, some observers are convinced that ethnic identity and rivalry simmer ominously beneath the surface of Zambian politics (e.g. Posner 2005). The fact that more than half of the popular vote went to candidates with strong ties to Bemba or Tonga constituencies would appear to lend support to this claim.

While deepening political pluralism is bound to enhance the currency of many sorts of 'primordial' identities – of race, gender, religion as well as of birth-place and language – I doubt that ethnicity was a decisive factor in the electoral outcome. Both Mazoka's untimely exit and Sata's last-minute upward leap are primarily contingent as against tendential, structural factors. In some parts of the country – in Loziland to the West and Ngoniland to the East, for example – ethnic alignment in electoral politics seems to be, if anything, on the decline. What is indeed striking about PF's campaign was not so much its 'ethnic' character but its brash contrarianism, and the appeal of such demagogic radicalism to members of the urban underclass across ethno-linguistic boundaries. For all his populist bravado, Michael Sata has

brought real *issues* of concern to the urban poor into the political arena.

Given the strong role of contingent factors in the election results it is unusually hard to project far-reaching trends. It is clear, however, that a sea change of sorts is underway. In a conventionally winner-takes-all political culture, the nominal winner, the MMD, lost more than it won. Two sites of struggle emerge: one, the politically volatile urban councils, where PF has an unprecedented opportunity to institutionalize its grassroots support through improved performance in water, sanitation and housing—the main demands of the

urban poor; and two, parliament itself, where a united opposition can force the government's hand on, among other things, constitutional reform.

At root, the 2006 polls should be seen as a protest election and not a retreat into primordial politics. Sata's uncanny avalanche was a clear message to the political class in general and Mwansa in particular. 'We wanted to rub salt in the wound', as one Sata supporter put it. Deepening social and economic disparities are generating anger and frustration. Zambians want leadership, not excuses. ■

*Lusaka, November 2006*

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## Lecture series on Darfur, Spring 2007

The series consists of three public lectures (Thursdays 18.00–19.30: 1 Feb, 15 Feb, 1 March) and a panel debate (Saturday 17 March at 13.00–14.30). It is co-organised by ABF Stockholm, Life and Peace Institute and the Nordic Africa Institute.

Venue: ABF-huset, Sveavägen 41, Stockholm. Free entrance.

Further information at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se) (under Events/Lectures).

# Prospects for credible elections in Nigeria

By: Jibrin Ibrahim

Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development, Abuja, Nigeria

In this article, the author discusses the challenges facing the up-coming elections in Nigeria, but also the capacity of Nigerians to organise and protect their mandate.

As the 2007 elections approach, tensions and anxieties grow about the future of democracy in Nigeria. This is perfectly normal as Nigerian elections are periods of self-doubt about the reality of the two great pillars of belief in Nigerian politics that almost all actors claim to be committed to – democracy and federalism. The historically lived realities of violent campaigns, primordial claims to power and electoral fraud make elections moments of anguish and frustration to most citizens of the country.

Three major challenges face the future of elections and democracy in Nigeria as we move towards the 2007 elections. The first challenge is that of the vast knowledge and repertoire of the techniques of electoral fraud and electoral violence at the disposal of the political class which they have used to frustrate the rights of Nigerians to elect their leadership. The second is the will and capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security forces to prepare adequately a level playing-field for free and fair elections. The third is the growing tensions within the political class, ethno-regional zones and within political parties which are threatening the political stability of the country. These challenges are however not insurmountable and indeed Nigerians are showing an increasing capacity to organise to protect their mandate. We shall start by stressing the importance of the 2007 elections.

## Importance of the 2007 elections

The 2007 elections are very critical to the future

of Nigerian democracy for a number of reasons. This election would be the first time there has been a third consecutive election in the country. Both the First and Second Republics were overthrown by the military after heavily rigged and acrimonious second consecutive elections in 1966 and 1983 respectively. The Third Republic under General Ibrahim Babangida was stillborn as he annulled the 1993 first round elections. Nigeria therefore has a history of problematic second round elections but has never tried a third round. The Nigerian Constitution imposes a two-term limit on the President and State Governors. Over the past two years, both the President and many State Governors have repeatedly tried to review the Constitution to seek to prolong their stay in office. Their attempts have failed so far. Given this background, the 2007 elections are taking place in a very acrimonious context in which the President and his deputy are involved in a titanic battle in which each has been trying to block the capacity of the other to be in power in 2007.

One fundamental question all Nigerians are posing is the following – given President Obasanjo's determination to determine the occupant of Aso Rock, the seat of power, in 2007 as a minimum agenda, is there an impartial arbiter for the elections? Will democracy not be a victim of this titanic battle of President Obasanjo to make the political choice Nigerians have the right to make?

## Moving towards programmed failure?

Following the extensive reviews of the 2003 elections and the stakeholder meetings organised by INEC in December 2003 and February 2004, it was agreed that four critical issues on the road map to free and fair elections in 2007 needed to be resolved by 2005.

The first was that the Constitution should be reviewed to provide real autonomy to INEC, all of whose officers – Chairman, National Com-

missioners and Resident State Electoral Officers – are appointed by the President. There was a consensus that such powers should be removed from the hands of the President. In addition, it was agreed that INEC should be financed directly from the consolidated Revenue Fund so that the Executive cannot starve the Commission of necessary funds. The Constitutional Review Process was sabotaged by the Third Term agenda and has been jettisoned.

Secondly, the revised Electoral Bill which has some improvements relative to the Electoral Act 2002 should be revised and passed into law. The most significant improvement is the imposition of limits on campaign expenditure by political parties. This law was finally enacted in June 2006.

Thirdly, the process of the registration of voters for the 2003 elections was done in an incomplete and inept manner and so many citizens are not on the voters' roll. INEC has consistently refused to obey the provisions of the Electoral Act which requires continuous registration of voters. It has also refused to update the roll by registering those who have come of age since 2003 or were missed out in the last registration. As happened previously, INEC seems to be waiting for time to run out so that the registration can be organised in a hurried and botched manner. INEC has announced voter registration will start on 7 October but many indicators show that they are not ready – insufficient cameras, delays in release of funds, ad hoc staff not yet trained etc.

Fourthly, INEC is yet to commence working with the issue of new voter identity cards with embossed photographs and biometric features. Nobody understands the delay especially as we all know that three years after the national identity card process was started, most people have not yet been issued theirs. When will INEC start the process for the new voter ID card? Are they waiting until it's too late so that they can mess it up again?

Very clearly, most of the essential signposts on the road map to free and fair elections in 2007 are not being addressed in a timely manner by INEC. It seems that there is an unfolding design to produce failed or no elections in 2007.

### Power shift and ethno-regional tensions

The language of Nigerian politics is often expressed within the syndrome of ethno-regional domination. It is a language whose grammar is defined by two elements. The first is the control of political power and its instruments such as the armed forces and the judiciary. The second is the control of economic power and resources. Both are powerful instruments that are used to influence the authoritative allocation of resources to groups and individuals. The current Nigerian solution to ethno-regional domination is defined as power shift.

The concept of power shift arose to remove the ambiguity associated with zoning and rotation when General Abacha seemed to have assumed that zoning in the post-Babangida era would start from himself a Northerner, rather than from the South. The idea was to focus on what was presented as the essential issue of a Southerner taking over power. Nor surprisingly, the concept has been an emotionally charged one.

The transition in 1999 when power was said to have shifted to the South was a pacted one. It is widely claimed that the pact involved Southern assurance that after President Obasanjo's tenure, power would shift back to the North and a process of north-south alternation would commence. As we move towards the 2007 elections, this expectation of a shift to the North has become acrimonious. Many southern politicians are currently arguing that the North has held power for thirty-nine years while the South would have held power for only fifteen years at the end of Obasanjo's tenure in 2007.

The population census issue is lurking in the corner as we move towards the 2007 elections. The 2006 census results will be announced before the elections and the figures are expected to be used in distributing constituencies. Whether or not the relative north-south population distributions change, the figures are bound to generate controversy and political tension.

### The death of the third term agenda

General Obasanjo came to power in 1999 in a groundswell of optimism that Nigerian leaders

had learnt their lessons and would henceforth respect the desire of the Nigerian people for the respect of the rule of law, democracy and federalism. Obasanjo had three important strengths in his curriculum vitae. His war record had demonstrated his nationalist credentials. Secondly, his hand-over to the elected Shehu Shagari regime in 1979 portrayed his capacity to bow to democratic demands for a Second Republic. Finally, his engagement in civil society with the Africa Leadership Forum and Transparency International had shown a track record of democratic struggle and commitment to combat corruption that led Nigerians to believe that this President would not be like the other military leaders who tried to manipulate the country to perpetuate their self-rule and loot the treasury.

Nigerians were wrong. Obasanjo failed to resist the temptation of believing that because he enjoys ruling, he is the only one who can rule. Over the past three years, he has deployed various stratagems to prolong his rule including the organisation of a huge National Political Reform Conference as a springboard for self-perpetuation.

In spite of the rather negative tone in our comments so far, it is unwise to give up on a relatively positive outcome of the 2007 elections and indeed the deepening of Nigerian democracy. The outcome of President Obasanjo's attempt to prolong his rule is a case in point.

On 16 and 17 May 2006 the Upper and Lower Chambers of the National Assembly threw out constitutional reform proposals designed to allow President Obasanjo to have a third term of office against the letter and spirit of the 1999 Constitution. Obasanjo is already Nigeria's longest serving ruler; he had been a military dictator and is now in his eight year as "democratically" elected President. Indications started emerging immediately he began his second term of office in 2003 that there were plans to prolong his rule beyond the constitutionally determined tenure of 29 May 2007. The major argument was that the President was engaged in a successful process of economic reform and struggle against corruption and needed more time to institutionalise the reforms and make them irreversible. Numerous forces in the country were however opposed to

the prolongation agenda and fought against it leading to the defeat of the prolongation agenda on 16 May. It was an intense and titanic battle in which vast resources were deployed and networks of actors activated.

At the heart of the struggle were different perspectives about the future of Nigerian democracy and economic development. The third term struggle was indeed a political framework through which Nigerians sought to define and act for a democratic future. Precisely because of this larger dimension of the struggle, it is useful to end this report by pointing to the potentials it suggests of the rising agency in the construction of democratic citizenship in the country.

The President's men had developed an elaborate plan for the prolongation agenda. It was first put in place at the level of the National Political Reform Conference. The idea was to use the strength of State Governors to push through the prolongation plan. Most delegates to the Conference were appointed by Governors and a Constitution was surreptitiously introduced to the Conference which had a prolongation plan. The delegates however rejected the proposal in spite of great pressure from their Governors and the Presidency.

Following that set back, additional forces were marshalled to push through the plan at the level of the National Assembly. The forces included the top political fixers in the country, the business community organised in a forum known as Corporate Nigeria which provided both finance and economic justification for the prolongation. Security agencies under the leadership of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission were brought in to engage in selective prosecution of actors who opposed Obasanjo's self-perpetuation plan. In addition, assuming that every Nigerian has a price, huge amounts in bribes, apparently, up to a million dollars per legislator were offered to those who supported the plan. The party machine was also brought into play. All those who resisted the prolongation plan were threatened with expulsion while supporters were assured of automatic re-nomination for the 2007 elections. And yet they failed.

The basis for failure was that although Nigerian

political parties and most of the political class have an anti-democratic political culture, the Nigerian people have a resilient commitment to democracy which was for example demonstrated during the struggle against the annulment of the June 1993 elections. In the case of the battle against the third term, civil society played a major role. The National Civil Society Coalition against the Third Term, the Transition Monitoring Group and the United Action for Democracy, amongst others, played a major role. The political opposition, including the Vice President, some Governors and political parties were also active. In the National Assembly, a small group of legislators known as the 2007 Movement opposed the move and their numbers and strength grew as more Nigerians rose to oppose the third term agenda. Even religious leaders joined the fray as many of them openly and vigorously condemned the third term agenda. Even bankers played a major role by phoning and informing journalists about amounts and recipients of bribes passing through their banks.

The mass media, especially the private television stations and newspapers, became the vanguard of the struggle and they ran a very effective name and shame campaign against legislators supporting the third term agenda. Even musicians came in with songs and poems condemning the third term plotters. Street kids were the final arbiters. They started beating up legislators from their constituencies who were supporting the third term agenda. At the end of the day, legislators realised

that supporting the third term agenda was not in their interest and the whole plan collapsed. The important element in the narrative is that in the process of this struggle, considerable agency in the construction of democratic citizenship has been generated. The question before all democratic forces in Nigeria today is that as we move towards the 2007 elections, can this agency be sustained to ensure that the elections are not sabotaged?

In our study (Ibrahim and Egwu, 2005) we emphasised that the 2003 elections were not rigged everywhere in the country. In many places, citizens and opposition politicians were able to organise and protect their mandate. Currently, there is a new consciousness rising in the country that people must organise to defend their franchise. This is a positive sign. Nigerians are no longer assuming that their votes count, they are planning how to ensure that they vote and that their votes are counted. During the struggle against the third term, many communities initiated procedures for the recall of the representatives who were supporting the third term agenda. People now know that they can recall, or attempt to recall, their legislators and that such action empowers them to demand for accountability. The import of this rising consciousness is that if indeed there is a plan for a programmed failure of the 2007 elections, Nigerians will combat that plan and try to salvage the elections. The degree of their success is the outcome we are waiting to see. ■

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# Social movements and the democratisation of South African foreign policy

The value of the influence by social movements on the foreign policy-making process lies in how the pressure from below collectively challenges elite views and sets the agenda for public debate.



By: Heidi Hudson

Professor of Political Science, University of the Free State, Bloemfontain, South Africa, and guest researcher at NAI in late 2006.

The Mandela era (1994-1999) was characterised by a strong moral orientation, but implementing such a policy proved difficult in the face of traditional notions of state sovereignty and opposition against interference. Increasingly, economic imperatives driven by the globalisation project began to override the moral dimension. Ambiguities regarding South Africa's position on, amongst other things, HIV/AIDS and the war in Iraq and its 'quiet' diplomacy in Zimbabwe have exposed the fault lines in South Africa's foreign policy with respect to the balance between a normative (human rights-driven) and a realist (interest-driven) approach to global politics.

In theory the interests of domestic constituencies - such as parliament, political parties, civil society groups and business - impact significantly on foreign policy-making. However, even in established democracies, foreign policy-making is notoriously undemocratic and elitist in nature. In post-apartheid South Africa parliament is struggling to maintain its watchdog role and business

and think tanks have little to show in terms of impact on foreign policy-making. Any attempt at fostering a democratic foreign policy therefore has to overcome deep-rooted bias towards the intrusion of public opinion in foreign policy-making. In the face of such opposition pressure groups often respond in a pragmatist way. Practice thus shows that idea and interest should not be viewed as mutually exclusive.

It is morally indefensible that governments see citizens' value only in terms of how they can block internationally negotiated positions and not as a rights-based expression of the national will. In the post-Cold War era, the foreign policy agenda includes issues on which members of the public may hold strong views opposing the 'wisdom' of government's position. For instance, by promoting input on Zimbabwe, the South African government may be better able to frame a credible stance on the humanitarian crisis and justify the controversial policy of 'quiet' diplomacy. By giving citizen groups some degree of sovereignty, domestic support for certain controversial policy decisions may be generated without coercion. In that sense citizen participation could become a crucial resource for states in the pursuit of goals at the regional and international level.

There are indeed limits to what domestic groups can achieve in foreign policy-making. The test is that those who wish to be heard should be able to influence government policy without fear of being branded as unpatriotic or racist. Not everybody is interested in foreign policy, but opportunities for participation must exist for foreign policy to be truly democratic.

### List of abbreviations

ARV	anti-retroviral (medicines)
COSATU	the Congress of South African Trade Unions
TAC	the Treatment Action Campaign
WSSD	the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Intense domestic interaction with foreign policy issues took place mainly during the time of the Government of National Unity and Mandela's administration. A good example is the involvement of civil society in the White Paper on South African Participation in Peace Missions and the Discussion Paper on Foreign Policy (1996). A further instance was the role of civil society in getting the government to support the South African Campaign to Ban Landmines. After 1994, the number of independent civil society groups monitoring parliament increased dramatically. Despite that, many commentators have lamented the fact that the vanguard role of civil society has been replaced by a 'post-liberation depression'. Many of the old social movements like the civics and the United Democratic Front were absorbed into the post-apartheid government. With that NGOs have also become more technocratic due to the demands of the donor community. Neighbourhood associations have all but disappeared. So, after the initial honeymoon period their influence gradually waned due to government establishing its own research capacity in specific issue areas and also because the emphasis shifted from policy development to policy implementation and service delivery.

However, the decline stabilised and social organisation is now showing an upward curve with many more mechanisms for influencing policy, e.g. through the media, the courts and the constitution. This became particularly evident during the Mbeki presidency. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) vehemently contested the government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy; the Landless People's

Movement (some 100,000 strong) challenged government's slow pace of land redistribution and the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) tackled government's inadequate response to HIV/AIDS. Other groups, such as the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, the Concerned Citizens Group, and the Anti-Eviction Campaign all focused on issues relating to poor service delivery. In addition movements driving so-called social exclusionary concerns have also come into existence. These cover issues such as xenophobia and identity-related concerns, as seen in the Gay and Lesbian Equality Project. In 2002, a coalition of networks, the Social Movements Indaba, used the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to draw attention to the link between neo-liberalism and local manifestations.

'New' social movements consisting of multiple organisations and networks exist within civil society with the aim of changing one or more aspects of the overarching socio-political and economic system. What makes them important players in the democratisation of foreign policy is the fact that those social movements have been able to mobilise transnationally, connecting the local to the global. For example, Jubilee South Africa was established as a local office of a global movement. The TAC is another case in point, whose activism straddles local, national and global arenas.

### Treatment Action Campaign

The negative publicity surrounding President Mbeki's dissident view on HIV/AIDS has launched HIV/AIDS as a foreign policy issue. The world has witnessed high-profile legal actions of the TAC against the exorbitant costs of Pfizer's brand-name medications and the legal battle to force the government to distribute anti-retroviral (ARV) medicines to people with HIV/AIDS. Government has on occasion accused TAC activists of being unpatriotic, anti-African, and a front for the drug companies and white liberal interests. The most recent incident of exclusion took place at the UN General Assembly's special session on Aids. The TAC and the Aids Law Project were not allowed to attend for fear of them vilifying President Mbeki.

The politics of HIV/AIDS has helped to counter anti-democratic tendencies in post-apartheid South Africa. The most important reason for the TAC's success lies in the kind of relationship they have with the government, using an incrementalist and pragmatic combination of conflict and cooperation by means of which fundamental reform of the system is won – providing a service to people so they know where to access ARVs and how to use them, but also monitoring the 'roll out' of ARVs which means conflict with the government at times. The TAC example thus confirms that the relationship between state and civil society is one of symbiosis or mutual dependence, whatever the degree of conflict between them. TAC's strategy of using the rights and rules of constitutional democracy has the potential of promoting a model for citizens to collectively seek equality, but the model remains of limited application and single-issue-driven.

### Labour movement

Since 1994 there has been a marked decline in the influence of COSATU within the tripartite alliance. With the ANC taking over the seat of formal power and increasingly adopting a more orthodox economic policy, the labour movement has learnt to adapt. It has responded through heightened pragmatism – passing resolutions in support of the alliance in general and the ANC in particular, while still making the 'right' ideological noises. The movement has little choice but to stay within the alliance and try to wring concessions from the ANC to counterbalance the interests of big business.

Since 1994, the labour movement's leftist position has been compromised on numerous occasions. For instance, at the 1999 Seattle talks COSATU decided to side with government and call for the reform of the WTO rather than its abolishment. At the 2002 WSSD trade union officials objected to the anti-government stance of many NGOs and subsequently hosted a meeting of less militant organisations as a result of a deal struck with the ANC. In exchange for inclusivity in policy making, COSATU agreed not to continue with strikes against privatisation.

In 2003, COSATU entered the field of sub-regional foreign policy by openly criticising the Zimbabwean government and the Swazi monarchy for suppressing the rights of labour movements. The movement started interacting with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change, partly as a surrogate for the shrinking space for contestation on the domestic front. Government uses a 'carrot and stick' strategy to control unionists who become too critical, while a patronage system rewards 'good' behaviour. For instance, during the 2001 general strike by COSATU, government placed advertisements in all major newspapers painting a picture of COSATU as spoilers, not caring about workers losing wages. Yet trade unionists such as Shilowa and others were rewarded with high posts in government. COSATU's support for the disgraced Jacob Zuma, the former deputy president, has also been a useful lever to wring more concessions from government on bread and butter issues. Only recently in a meeting between Mbeki and the presidential trade union working group quotas on cheap Chinese imports threatening the clothing, textile and footwear sector were announced – a major victory for labour.

One should not romanticise the influence of social movements on the foreign policy-making process. The value of their contribution lies in how the pressure from below collectively challenges elite views and sets the agenda for public debate. Social movements thus contest the constitutionally grounded view of government that it has been democratically elected by an overwhelming majority and therefore has the right to make policy unhindered by societal demands. Ideally the public contestation helps government to refine its policy, and ultimately to balance idea and interest as multiple positions are filtered through to government. The acid test for South Africa lies in creating an environment in which both government and society become responsive to dialogue and are able to act responsibly. Together they must jealously guard the fragile democracy in the making. ■

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## Invitation to the Nordic Africa Days

to be arranged in Uppsala on 5–7 October 2007

The conference will be structured around lectures given by internationally known scholars, and workshops led by researchers at the Nordic Africa Institute and their networking colleagues.

The invitation is aimed at students and researchers in the Nordic countries. The number of participants will be limited to around 100 and selection will take place on the basis of submitted abstracts of papers to be presented in one of the workshops.

*Deadline of abstracts: 16 March.*

*A detailed call for papers is available at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se) (under Events/Conferences).*

# Kwame Boafo-Arthur: 2006 Claude Ake Visiting Professor

Photo by Susanne Linderos



In late 2006, Prof. Boafo-Arthur spent a few months in Uppsala as holder of the Claude Ake Visiting Chair at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University. He was interviewed by Susanne Linderos, the Nordic Africa Institute.

Kwame Boafo-Arthur is currently Professor of Political Science and Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon. He has been the Head of Department since January 2002. Boafo-Arthur's educational background includes a BA (Hons) in Political Science in 1979 from the University of Ghana and an MA in Political Science from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada in 1983. In 1991, he obtained his PhD from the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana. He went in for a law degree from the Ghana School of Law and was called to the Bar as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Ghana in 1997.

Some of the academic awards and fellowships he has won include the following: Carleton University Scholarship, (1982-1983); University of California-University of Ghana Education Abroad Scholarship for PhD research, (1989-1990); CODESRIA Governance Institute Award (June – Sept 1994); Fulbright African Senior Research Scholar Award (1997-1998); Nordic Africa Institute Guest Researchers' Fellowship (1999); The Netherlands Research Fellowship-African Studies Centre, Leiden (2001); Lawrence Dunbar Scholarship Award for the best article published on Africa in the *Journal of Third World Studies* in 2003. Boafo-Arthur has also carried out a couple of

consultancies for the Frederick Ebert Foundation in Ghana, the Global Coalition for Africa Project, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, UNESCO, CODESRIA, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, the Centre for Foreign Relations in New York, and the International Centre for Transitional Justice, New York.

◆ What has been your research focus in the past and what is it at present?

I am in a teaching department but not a research outfit and this has greatly influenced areas of interest. Every academic knows the significance of research for his personal advancement in the profession and for the benefit of the society in which he finds himself. Being in a teaching department also calls for a broad spectrum of research interests since in most cases these interests over the years have been influenced by the courses assigned to me for teaching as well as other areas I am challenged to examine for publication purposes or because I have been commissioned by a body to carry out research. In this context, my research interests in the past have traversed Africa's international economic relations, conflict and developmental crisis in Africa, chieftaincy and national development, politics in Ghana, democracy, globalisation, and international politics and foreign policy analysis.

It is difficult to state that these were research interests in the past and they have been supplanted by new areas of interests. As I am still teaching at the highest level on some of the areas, I am compelled as and when necessary to go back to these areas to conduct in depth research on some aspects of the areas apart from teaching the courses involved. For instance, I am currently looking at the transformation of traditional leadership in a democratic setting. This could qualify as both past and present research interest because the issues involved in traditional leadership are still relevant for national development, especially given the power traditional authorities wield in our set-up and the challenges confronting them on account of the dwindling resource base. More importantly, given the demands of democratic governance which have made it difficult for traditional rulers to openly associate with political parties, one has to always reflect on societal demands and their interface with both traditional and modern concepts of governance. How to make the two levels of governance co-habit to foster national development is very important for most African countries with well structured traditional modes of governance.

In Ghana, one cannot so easily dismiss the influence of chiefs on partisan politics. Even though the 1992 Constitution of Ghana barred chiefs from engaging in partisan politics, the political leaders always canvass for their support during elections. In the northern parts of the country, for instance, the political affiliation of the traditional ruler tends to influence political choices by many of his subjects and this makes it mandatory for politicians to woo chiefs to their side on campaign trails. This has been the case because of the huge influence of the chiefs on their subjects. It appears that this infringes the 1992 Constitution but it is an unavoidable situation in our national politics. The reality then is to see how best to direct the energies and local influence of traditional rulers to facilitate development. One cannot therefore set a time frame and so research in that area cannot be outdated in any way since the institution is still vibrant and recognised in the political set-up. In the District Assemblies at the local level, the government of the day nominates 30 of the

assembly members in consultation with the chief or traditional ruler. The implication is the direct recognition of the influence and role of chiefs on day-to-day political activities in the locality.

Research on topics related to politics in Ghana is of immense interest to me and the reasons are not far-fetched. I still live in the country and teach political science at the university so researching into Ghanaian politics is basic and it cannot be a past or present research interest. It is ever present in what I do on a daily basis back in Ghana. Secondly, foreigners who readily get funding to come to spend few days and start calling themselves 'experts' on the politics of various African countries compel some of us to constantly look at the politics of our countries in various aspects so as to be on a solid footing. It is not a question of competing with foreign researchers and academics. It is an issue of knowing your own country very well to be able to comment on issues with authority and also be of assistance to those who may want information on your country. More often than not, issues of salience to us are left for foreign researchers to explore because of the vast resources at their disposal. Our continued commitment to the politics of our individual countries in Africa is crucial in the sense that it at the same time gives us the opportunity to advise various ministries when the need arises. For effective teaching at the highest level both in Ghana and elsewhere, unending commitment to research on Ghanaian politics is called for. For me in particular, my interest in international politics and foreign policy analysis makes it imperative to know a lot about domestic politics. This is because one cannot effectively analyze the foreign policy of a country without intimate knowledge of local political processes. Domestic politics and international politics are interwoven and one influences the other. I cannot effectively comment on or discuss my country's international behaviour or interactions without knowing the domestic economy, politics, cultural orientations, etc.

The rebirth of democracy in Africa after years of civil dictatorship and military authoritarianism has revived interest in democracy. We have to tell our own story to the world. Even though indigenous researchers are handicapped in several

respects because of the cost of data collection, the interest must be sustained to help in the democratic development of the country. The Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon has been highly upbeat in this context since the rebirth of democracy with the foundational elections of November–December 1992. Since then the Department has always managed to get financial support from DANIDA to cover the elections. The Department of Political Science can boast of data and publications on the 1996, 2000, and the 2004 general elections. In all cases, it is ensured that the publications cover both thematic studies and field research based on randomly selected constituencies. The published research works have been ready source material for government officials, political parties and civil society organizations. At the dissemination conferences after each election, various stakeholders are invited by the Department and this helps in publicising our research findings to a wider audience. Copies of the publications are also sent to political parties, libraries and civil society organizations.

Instability in the West African sub-region has been the bane of development. My attention is currently focused on both the democratic process and stability in Ghana as well as in the sub-region. This is because of the conviction that the countries stand to lose in developmental terms if instability continues to dominate politics in the sub-region. Given the relative stability of Ghana, it is pertinent to look at the contributory factors and see how other countries in the sub-region can benefit from

this. It is equally important to reflect on possible factors that could undermine the current relative stability of the country. This is the current research issue I am working on.

◆ What is your experience of making research results available to policy makers?

African academics have a lot to contribute to the development of the continent. This gives all the more reason for research on various developmental issues. In my view, research findings are rarely consulted by policy makers if the work is not a commissioned one. What policy makers normally make use of is what they have commissioned to be produced. In such a situation, the research becomes manipulated to meet the ends required by the sector that commissioned the study. It could be argued also that no systematic study has been carried out by researchers to find out the extent to which policy makers apply research findings made available to them. This means that any categorical statement on this issue will be in the realm of speculation.

I can state for sure, however, that the Department of Political Science has made its findings available to policy makers over the years. The Department has been in the forefront of studies on Ghana's political development and the outcomes are in the form of books and articles that inform policy makers on flaws in various administrative set-ups and how best to deal with such weaknesses. ■

## Claude Ake Visiting Chair at Uppsala University

This visiting chair at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden, is a collaboration between the department and the Nordic Africa Institute. It is funded by the Swedish government to honour the memory of Professor Claude Ake, prominent African scholar, philosopher and humanist. The Chair is open to senior political scientists at African universities working with issues related to peace, war and conflict resolution on the African continent.

For more information on the Chair, see [www.pcr.uu.se](http://www.pcr.uu.se).

# Cherryl Walker on land reform and women's rights in South Africa



Cherryl Walker is Professor of Sociology at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. Prof. Walker was interviewed by Lisbet Larsson Lidén, researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, in August 2006 when she visited the Institute.

*Please tell us briefly about your personal and academic backgrounds.*

I come from a farming background – my family had a small (and not at all grand) wine farm outside Cape Town and I think that experience was formative in terms of my interest in land issues. For my Masters degree (at the University of Cape Town) I researched women's political organisation in South Africa in the twentieth century, in particular the Federation of South African Women and the anti-pass campaign of the 1950s; that was subsequently published as *Women and Resistance in South Africa*. After that I spent a year (1979) on a rural development project in a very impoverished area of KwaZulu Natal which really opened my eyes to conditions around forced removals, farm evictions, migrant labour etc in the so-called reserves or bantustans. From there I got involved in the establishment of one of the first land rights NGOs in South Africa (AFRA) as well as the Surplus People Project. The latter was a very remarkable collective research project that documented the population relocation policies under apartheid in each of the provinces around the country; I led the KwaZulu

Natal study. After a period in the USA, where I had an affiliation to the Centre for Research on Women at Stanford University and also worked for an environmental NGO, I returned to South Africa and later joined the Sociology Department at the University of Natal in Durban. I then served on the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights as the Regional Land Claims Commissioner for KwaZulu Natal from 1995 to 2000, which was a very challenging experience – trying to set up a new institution and make the policy on land restitution work. After that I worked as an independent researcher, working mainly on land and gender issues, before joining the Human Sciences Research Council for a brief period and finally taking up a position as Professor of Sociology at the University of Stellenbosch at the end of 2005 – which has meant a return to my roots in the Western Cape. I have a DLitt from the University of Natal and currently live with my husband, two sons, a dog and a cat in a very beautiful and challenging place, and am trying to reinvent myself as a university-based academic at an interesting time of change within the university.

*Your list of publications on land reform, land rights and gender in South Africa is impressively long. Could you please summarise the main findings of your research in regard to land reform related issues in the South African context?*

Much of my work has an historical basis to it – I think it is only possible to make sense of the demand for and response to land reform by placing it in context historically, not only nationally but also at the local level, where the issues play themselves out in very specific ways. It is just not possible to apply a national template to them. So one of the issues I have been highlighting in recent work is the gap between national and local expectations of and demands for land reform which I think needs to be factored into the analysis far more carefully than it usually is. There is also a difficult tension that has to be managed between showing evidence of delivery at the national (political) level and working effectively with groups and communities at the local level, which is time-consuming and requires attention to process. This is especially the case if one wants to involve women in projects. Much of my work has focused on restitution and there I am interested in understanding how and when the symbolic and the material dimensions to land claims link or operate independently of each other.

*You also have experience from working as a Regional Land Claims Commissioner in KwaZulu-Natal for the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights. This experience covers a five year period which ended in 2000. What is the most outstanding constraint you came across during that period?*

It is hard to isolate one single outstanding constraint – I think much of my experience of that time was of being caught in a dense web of constraints which collectively made it very hard to move effectively in any direction. A major constraint was lack of resources at the very beginning, which meant that a lot of time was spent trying to get staff and budgets etc in place and one was always working within a mode of crisis management and under immense pressure

to show results as quickly as possible – which we failed to do. Information management systems were non-existent and the bureaucracy was very cumbersome. An enormous amount of time was spent trying to get systems etc in place and laying the foundations for subsequent settlements. Prioritising work was extremely difficult; there were constant political pressures across all levels. We also started without operational policies in place that could assist us to translate the broad constitutional principles that underpinned the programme into consistent, equitable, implementable settlements at the claimant level, for instance how to calculate the value of very different types of historical land rights or how to determine the ‘public interest’ when there was a clash between land claims and housing development projects. There was a lack of strong leadership at the centre to manage the process of developing these policies across the regions and also communicate politically what we could and could not do in the time available to us. Too much of the assessment of what we were doing was based on very crude numerical indicators that measured quantity rather than quality – how many claims were “settled” overall in a given period, for instance. We were also unprepared for the volume of urban claims which posed very different types of challenges from rural claims, given the nature of urban development, and unfortunately urban and rural claims ended up being dealt with as if they were in competition with each other, rather than different components of a broad programme of redress that should not be understood as simply about land and agrarian reform.

*In your view what would be the key challenges for the South African state in overcoming some of the main constraints as regards securing tenure and land rights for women?*

I have written about the weaknesses of the gender policy that has been developed around land reform but civil society has an important responsibility here as well; the state cannot drive a major process of social change in terms of the status of women although it can do a lot to set

up an enabling environment. A major problem is around the enforcement of rights that women may be granted through legislation or constitutional court rulings, and this requires putting in place responsive local structures that women can access, as well as strong and principled policing, for instance, in the case of the enforcement of legislation on domestic violence, child support etc. With regard to rights in communal areas, a serious problem is that the state has not been willing to bypass the traditional leadership structures such as local land administration bodies and these tend to be the custodians of strongly patriarchal values and practices.

*Why is it so important that the role of women is acknowledged?*

There are several reasons. The importance of women is often put in instrumentalist terms – invest in women because they are more likely to invest in their children’s well-being, and there is a major truth to this. However, the primary reason is simply because they are – or ought to be – full citizens, with rights and responsibilities and opportunities for full participation in and contribution to society. One of the biggest challenges facing our society is to acknowledge, address and eradicate the scourge of violence against women that is undermining the very fabric of our social and economic life in the post-apartheid era. The statistics are horrific, but they do not convey the full impact in terms of wasted lives and families and communities being torn apart.

*What are the most immediate goals you would like to achieve as Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University? What would be your long term commitments?*

My immediate goal is to survive the adjustment to academic life and to running a department! There are a number of departmental level goals, including exploring ways that the two sister disciplines of sociology and social anthropology can interact more creatively within the department, in our research and teaching and thinking about the society in which we live. I want to work with colleagues to strengthen our postgraduate programmes so that we produce really strong, critically aware researchers. I am interested in the location of the university, which is in a small university town that is located within a farming district characterized by immense disparities between rich and poor, close to a major metropolitan region, with a hinterland that is rural and poor and isolated, and in exploring how we can ground the research we do and the questions we ask in this context, but without becoming too parochial again. I also want to support the moves to make the university a much more inclusive and heterogeneous institution than it currently is. There are many challenges here, including around language and institutional culture.

*In your view what would be the most beneficial way to cooperate internationally to enhance the understandings of the complexities that surround land reform in South Africa today?*

I think South Africans tend to be rather parochial in the way in which we look at land reform and we could benefit enormously by looking at the South African experience more comparatively. There are many different ways of cooperating, all of which could be beneficial – in joint research projects, in networks, through fund-raising, in exchange programmes, in disseminating research and publications. ■

# Rural women co-managing protected areas

The case of the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



Photo by Susanne Linderos

By: Lisbet  
Larsson Lidén  
Researcher,  
the Nordic Africa  
Institute.

This research project was established in 2006 and is funded by Sida/Sarec. The aim of it is to analyse processes of land claims, restitution and settlement in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, GSLWP, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The park was declared a World Heritage Site in December 1999 and as such falls under the legislative tools of the World Heritage Convention Act and the Constitution of South Africa. It is situated 245 kilometers north of Durban, bordering to the Indian Ocean in the east, stretching from the Mkuzi plain in the north to the Lake St Lucia Estuary in the south.

The intention by government and park authorities is to combine conservation and development goals while introducing an integrated management model in accordance with the World Heritage Convention Act of South Africa. According to the Act social and development needs of local residents and citizens should be considered at the same time as the country's World Heritage Sites are protected, conserved and presented (UNESCO, 2003). The park is in this respect

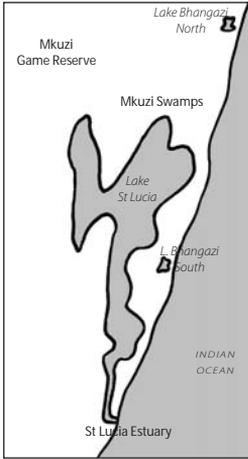
subject to policy prescriptions at the international, national and local levels. The success or failure to introduce new management practices will depend on local people's participation in decision-making and their willingness or reluctance to adhere to the regulations. The study focuses on poor rural women as natural resource users trying to assess women's impact on the environment and their access to resources as a means to sustain livelihood options and well-being. What are the prerequisites for poor local people, and in particular women, to participate and secure their rights to resources within the Park? Will an integrated management model allow them to become co-managers? A comparative two case study will be conducted on land claims, settlement and outcomes. Participatory research methods will be used for the involvement of women in the research process with an aim to enable them to influence future decisions and management of the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park.

## Objectives

Research will be undertaken with three main objectives:

- to investigate processes of land claims, restitution and settlement in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park. Issues to be raised are if restitution serves the broader goals of alleviating poverty and developing rural areas, and if so, what are the prerequisites for local people to participate and to secure their land rights?
- to find out if restored land rights meet criteria of sustainability addressing environmental and rural livelihood goals.

Greater St Lucia Wetland Park



- to draw out the gender dynamics in these settlements and to assess to what extent women are included in the settlement negotiations and the benefits accruing from them, as well as in co-management structures.

### Theoretical framework

There is empirical evidence of conflicts evolving around present resource use and management within the park and adjacent areas. Researchers are concerned about conservation authorities enforcing regulations, which have not been negotiated and agreed with local communities. UN conventions on democracy and human rights, economic, social and cultural rights, and good governance are applicable to the management of the park. Evidently democratic decision making structures are still missing on the ground, a main constraint towards sustainable development (Andrén, 2001; Brooks, 2005; Dahlberg, 2005; Walker 2005). One basic assumption for the research is that the commons and protected areas play a key role for the improvement of poor rural peoples' livelihoods. It raises issues on and a need to further analyse local institutions, power relations and networks. Are there democratically elected representatives and decentralised decision-making on the ground which local people find trustworthy

and reliable? The historical and cultural settings in which those institutions operate are equally important. A society featuring patriarchal and hierarchical power relations and networks may have an impact on how management decisions are made, e.g. the willingness to include and give poor rural women a voice (Walker, 2002). Can a distinction be made between democratically elected leaders and traditional leaders as agents for poor rural peoples' interests, the interests of poor rural women etc? Based on findings from previous research the project assumes that local peoples' civic associations in favourable cases may contribute to the empowerment of poor people and their influence on how to manage and use the natural resources within the park. Furthermore, it will explore to what extent such associations exist, their membership structures, constitution and agenda. It is believed that civic organisations may foster democratic ideas and practices essential for the formation of social capital, a key to poor peoples' knowledge of how to empower themselves and how to behave as collective agents. The prevalence of civic organisations at the local level in turn depends on the overall institutional arrangements at that level. Are citizens allowed to practice democratic rights and are they aware of their rights? The ability to practice those rights is an important prerequisite for development and for combating poverty (*A Democracy and Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation*, 2001; Larsson Lidén, 2006).

### Methods

Land claims and post-settlement processes, restitution and co-management of protected areas will be analysed within the above theoretical framework. The role of local level associations, for example the role of environmentalists, traditional and state decision making institutions, park authorities and private tourist interests etc will be assessed from the perspective of the community members and their interests. Related questions pertain to the practices of democratic rights and the processes for the appointment of community members' representation and participation in

decisions and management of the park. Besides questionnaires with a mixture of structured and open-ended questions, Participatory Rapid Appraisal methods will be used, including transects walks, wealth ranking and well-being ranking, social maps, conflict matrices on natural resource

use, direct observation, focused group discussions, key informants etc. Men and women will be split into separate groups in anticipation that a gender mix with both men and women in the same groups will inhibit women from speaking freely. ■

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## Scholarships

1 April 2007 is the application deadline for some of NAI's scholarships:

*African Guest Researchers' Scholarships* are directed at scholars in Africa, engaged in research on the African continent.

*Nordic Guest Researchers' Scholarships* are aimed at senior researchers in the Nordic countries. The duration of the stay is two months, but a shorter or a longer stay can be considered.

*Study scholarships* are aimed at students in the Nordic countries. The scholarship covers a one month stay at the Institute to use its library resources.

*More information, application forms etc., at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se).*

# Currencies of transformation in Africa: Changing resource regimes in times of uncertainty

Photo by Susanne Linderos



By: Amanda  
Hammar  
Programme  
Coordinator at  
the Nordic Africa  
Institute

Uncertainty, displacement and dispossession constitute part of Africa's long, varied and interweaving histories, alongside its continuities, consolidations and reinventions. Significant for many such processes and politics are a range of complex, unequal and shifting relationships to and uses of both material and symbolic resources. (Material resources may include 'things' such as land, cattle, minerals or money, and symbolic-discursive resources include i.a. history, identity and cultural status.) This Programme, which began in March 2006, is concerned with the dynamic and largely unpredictable relationship between severe uncertainty (especially created by various forms of forced displacement), different resource regimes, and social, political and economic transformations occurring on and across multiple scales. More specifically, the Programme aims to investigate when, why and how and with what effects, in times of uncertainty and displacement, do material and symbolic 'economies' – operating in and across official/formal domains and unofficial/informal ones – get altered. Within this, it intends to explore the paradox of simultaneous exclusions and inclusions, dissipation and creativity, occurring both during and in the transitions between rupture and recovery. While the Programme will

eventually extend to other parts of the continent, in the first phase it will focus on the southern Africa region under the framework: Political Economies of Displacement in Southern Africa.

## Mapping uncertainties and displacement

Uncertainties across Africa are not new. Nor are they evenly distributed or universally manifested in time and space. Novelists and social scientists alike, from different persuasions and perspectives, have been writing about such phenomena for decades, often couched in a generic if misleading language of 'crisis' that tends to imply a certain inevitability to 'failed states' and 'the politics of disorder' on the continent (see Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Where particularly severe or sudden uncertainties emerge (as compared to chronic crises), these need to be examined within their historical and spatial specificities. The Programme distances itself from generic notions of 'the African crisis' and blanket representations of 'Africa' as always inevitably being a space of crises, failures and violence.

At the same time, it is fair to acknowledge general and chronic uncertainties in many African countries arising from a combination of external and internal conditions. Among others, these include: the intensification of globalisation and liberalisation, and increased marginalisation within the global economy; burgeoning national debt and new dynamics of personal debt and obligation at local levels; declining levels of production and growing deregulation of economies; unequal resource distribution patterns, new dynamics of differentiation and deepening poverty; intensification of political crises and violent conflicts primarily within rather than between countries; both growing authoritarianism and crumbling state structures; and increasing numbers of people forcibly dislocated, both internally and externally.

All of this is exacerbated by the growing rates of HIV/AIDS across Africa.

Times of severe uncertainty tend to intensify confusion and vulnerability, undermining or even permanently destroying familiar spaces, structures, systems and relationships that provide the more usual basis for security, livelihoods and belonging. They may also freeze certain institutions or practices in defensive and instrumental ways. Paradoxically, uncertainty also opens up new if highly uneven spaces of possibility. In such times, both ordinary African citizens and various state and non-state authorities are having to find ways to make sense of and overcome the continuous and often violent disjunctures between how one actually lives and what means are available to explain – but also to transform – one's existence. Equally, there are disjunctures between how people and things are governed, and the means available to explain, conduct and possibly transform the modes of governing.

There are many different ways in which deep uncertainty and vulnerability are produced and experienced, and possible responses to this, let alone solutions, are far from simple. For those who are forcibly displaced – that is, those facing situations of dramatic rather than just 'normal' uncertainty which currently confronts increasing numbers of people on the continent – the disjunctures are even more intense, and the limits of what is possible greater. Nonetheless, states, other authorities and citizens are constantly engaged in creative, if not always legal, recorded or transparent ways of mobilising, distributing and exchanging both material and non-material/symbolic resources to sustain their survival (materially, socially, politically) or even to prosper. In times of political or economic turmoil, competition between different 'resource mobilisation' projects can become exaggerated and precipitate further violence and both corporeal and psychological displacement, as the case of post-2000 Zimbabwe demonstrates.

*What the Programme hopes to explore, through historically and empirically grounded case studies, are such questions as the following:* In the face of severe uncertainty and displacement, how do different actors reconfigure the conditions of their lives and

livelihoods, be this in official or unofficial spaces, both within a particular country and across its borders? How do different urban and rural spaces – and the relationships between them – get reconstituted in/through particular places and times of crisis and displacement? How do regimes of accumulation change under such conditions; in other words, in what new ways are assets and their value generated, accumulated and (re)distributed? How do both literal and metaphorical currencies and their modes of exchange get altered, and with what effects? What kinds of alternative (informal/underground) 'economies' – both material and symbolic – emerge or get reshaped and how do these articulate with changing official/formal ones under conditions of severe uncertainty, crisis and displacement? What happens to forms and practices of authority, sovereignty and citizenship when bodies, things and ideas get displaced, and 'the economy' gets redefined in new ways? How does politics get redefined and conducted in these times?

### A regional focus on Southern Africa

The Programme will adopt a regional perspective, with an initial focus on southern Africa. Despite unique national histories, as Guyer (1995) notes, "there is a certain unity to regional history". More significantly, as much of the literature suggests, economic and political crises or armed conflicts, even if mainly occurring within national boundaries, continue to have far-reaching and varied effects for different groups, not only in immediately neighbouring states but in the region as a whole. Forced displacement and migration within southern Africa, both historically and in more recent years, has been altering the region's demographic, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental landscapes in significant ways. In the process, not only are resources – including bodies, goods, monies and politics – moving across borders (legally and illegally), but border zones themselves are becoming key sites of both displacement and transformation. The Programme Coordinator's own individual research project within this Programme has both a regional and cross-border perspective. She is exploring the

various processes and multiple effects of the migration of evicted Zimbabwean commercial farmers into Manica Province in Mozambique since 2000.

With the above in mind, the Programme has begun to develop contact with a network of both established and new scholars undertaking relevant research in/on southern Africa, so far including Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, but intending to expand to other countries in the region. These contacts will be – and are being – developed further into more concrete research collaborations around focused ‘sub-projects’, the first of which will be a country-oriented research project on Zimbabwe as outlined briefly below, to be co-convened by the Nordic Africa Institute and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in South Africa.

### Political economies of displacement in post-2000 Zimbabwe

Since 2000, associated with its complex, persistent and continuously mutating crisis, Zimbabwe’s physical and social landscapes have been marked by multiple forms of violent displacement: of people from farms, factories, informal urban housing settlements and businesses, local council offices, schools, churches; but also the displacement of ideas, discourses, and boundaries of belonging. Much of what has unfolded has either been precipitated by or has itself precipitated intense struggles over different kinds of material and symbolic resources.

In much popular and scholarly commentary about the crisis, there are constant warnings of the country’s imminent ‘collapse’. Certainly the now commonly cited indicators are convincing: over 1000 percent inflation, over 70 percent unemployment, persistent fuel and foreign currency shortages, the decay in health and other social services and infrastructure, the fall in life expectancy to 36, a dramatic drop in agricultural production and wide-scale food insecurity, massive (mostly illegal) migration across borders, sustained repressive legislation and violent political persecution, and so on. Yet while an extensive range of social, physical, economic and moral-political systems

and practices – and many lives – have been irreparably damaged or destroyed in recent years, paradoxically ‘Zimbabwe’ itself has not actually collapsed. Instead, among other things, new and chillingly effective modes of rule, surveillance, control and accumulation have been instituted by the state; innovative if often risky practices of survival and civil resistance have surfaced; and new forms and spaces of enterprise and exchange have begun to emerge. Within all of these and other distinct yet productively connected spheres of transformation, the boundaries – as well as the relationships – between the official and the unofficial, the legal and illegal, are constantly being redefined. As such, even while conditions of crisis, uncertainty and displacement persist with all their exclusionary and debilitating effects, complex dynamics of survival, adaptation, inventiveness and even prosperity are in progress that challenge simplistic and apocalyptic notions of ‘failed states’.

This country sub-project envisages a collaborative process of grounded investigation, critical reflection and collective knowledge production around the ongoing processes of disruption, dispossession, reinvention and reconstruction occurring at and across multiple levels in contemporary Zimbabwe. It hopes to draw together and draw upon both already-established and new scholarship of/in Zimbabwe, to develop a collective understanding of *how unofficial and official political economies are evolving – simultaneously and in relation to each other – in the current era of crisis and displacement, and what the differential effects and longer term implications will be and for whom.*

### Methodological reflections

Among the numerous challenges facing researchers in Africa especially during times of political or economic uncertainty, is the difficulty of conducting the research itself, not only in terms of resource constraints per se but even in gaining (safe) access to material and/or research sites. At the same time, research on forced displacement in particular (especially related to *unrecorded* or illegally settled displacees) is intrinsically difficult, as is research

into informal or underground economies. Yet despite the dual demands of methodological and ethical rigour under such conditions, it is not impossible to undertake meaningful, relevant and responsible research in such fields (see for example Jacobsen and Landau 2003 with respect to displacement, and MacGaffey 1991 regarding underground economies). Indeed, a great deal of exceptionally bold and valuable research of various kinds within different disciplines continues to be undertaken. Such intellectual commitment to independent witnessing, documenting and analysing of key social, economic and political processes and effects in the making is especially critical when research resources are most under strain, as they are in times of severe uncertainty and displacement.

It is worth considering here the experience of Guyer et al. (2002) in undertaking a collective intellectual project focused on the operation of the popular economy and social life in Southern Nigeria under the 'incoherent conditions' and severe 'monetary instability' that followed the country's first, devastating currency devaluation

in 1986. Facing some similar challenges to those outlined above, they noted the following:

Turbulence at the state level means that local studies – where the data are generated by the researchers themselves – are more or less the sole dependable source of rigorous information about how the social life of the continent is being reshaped... Case studies have to be a source both of data for analysis and of witnessed documentation of the realities of life.

One of the key challenges in this Programme more broadly, as well as within its various 'sub-projects', will be to establish productive ways in which diverse research approaches, disciplines, topics, sites and scales – all refracting through their own theoretical and empirical lenses a commonly agreed set of questions provoked by the programme's conceptual framework – can be woven together productively to *respond* to such questions collectively. The cross-fertilisation provoked by such diversity is expected to generate (rather than avoid) creative tensions and unexpected insights, which are considered highly productive for meaningful research. ■

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# Surviving under poverty: Women in Addis Ababa

Photo by Karim Kerrou



By: Emebet Mulugeta

Center for Research, Training and Information on Women in Development, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and guest researcher at NAI in late 2006. This article is a presentation of Mulugeta's current study.

Until very recently the poverty studies in Ethiopia focused on rural areas. A number of reasons might be given for this one-sided focus. One could be that the majority of the Ethiopian population (82–85 percent) lives in rural areas. The other is that for several decades rural areas in Ethiopia have been victims of natural calamities such as drought and famine, and as a result issues of livelihood securities were considered more relevant to rural areas than urban areas. In addition, the major development strategy of Ethiopia, Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) focuses on rural development. The major objective of this strategy is enhancing the productivity of small farmers and improving food security both in the rural and urban areas.

However, recently the high rate of poverty that is prevalent in urban areas has received attention and a number of studies have been carried out. See for example, Kedir and Andrew McKay 2003, Aelmayehu, Abebe, and Daniel 2006, Mekonnen and Abebe 2005, Bereket, Abebe and Mekonnen 2005. Yet, most of these studies emphasize the methodological measurement of poverty rather than looking at the various ways in which the different groups in the society, such as men, women, children, and the disabled, are experiencing and coping with poverty. Therefore, in many cases they have left the issue of gender and/or women aside.

On the other hand there are some recent studies that directly or indirectly have dealt with the gender dimensions of poverty. These studies have explored the meaning of poverty from the perspectives of women themselves; they have looked at the different types of assets possessed by women in establishing the poverty level of women; some have delved into exploring the economic and socio-cultural constraints that contribute to women's poverty; and others have touched upon the coping strategies (Mulumebet 2002, Meron 2005, and TREG Consult 2005). However, the writer has not come across studies that investigated the vulnerability and poverty of women from the perspectives of livelihood approaches and explored women's coping strategies and their implications for either reducing or perpetuating poverty. Taking this into account, the present study attempts to use both quantitative and qualitative methods to establish the degree of women's poverty within the framework of livelihood approaches and explore their coping strategies.

Using an index developed to identify poor and vulnerable areas, five districts of Addis Ababa were selected for this study and a total of 665 women were included in the study. The characteristics of the women show that they were in a disadvantageous position in several respects. Though the women are in their prime (the majority within the age range of 30 to 49),

they have large family sizes (6.73 on average), which is much higher than the national average stipulated for urban areas. Although many had lived in their respective places of residence for years, ranging from less than one to over 15, most still face problems. These include housing, lack of employment and lack of social connectedness. Many (40.2 percent) are heads of households, and the data show that they are more disadvantaged in terms of income, housing and other facilities, and psychosocial health compared to women living in male-headed households. The educational status of the study participants shows that 38.5 percent are illiterate and very few (1.2 percent) have education beyond high school. In terms of employment, more than half are unemployed. The rest are engaged in informal jobs, such as petty trading, daily labor, domestic work, and commercial sex work. Only a few (4.1 percent) had formal employment, mainly as janitors.

The women's status of asset ownership in the light of a livelihood approach shows that, in relation to human capital, the women do not have much, except physical well-being, which gives them a potential to work in areas that do not require a high level of education and skills. In terms of financial capital, the women are in a really desperate situation; in fact, financial problems were the one recurring issue in relation to several aspects of their lives, such as inability to create jobs, to pay house rent and to cover school expenses for children. About 74 percent of them earn a monthly income of less than Birr 400 (approximately USD 45), and more than half (63.7 percent) explained that their monthly income was inadequate to cover their food requirements.

Looking at their physical capital, the majority live in houses rented from the government. Among these many have a rent backlog for up to almost two years. The major complaints of those who rented houses from individuals are the inflated rent they had to pay and the apparent lack of security, since they are at the mercy of landlords/landladies who can increase rent any time they want to, or evict them for no understandable reason.

Facilities in these houses are at a bare minimum. More than half buy water from individuals

or communal water points located outside their compound. About 12.0 percent do not have cooking spaces. This is particularly constraining for those women whose livelihood is dependent on selling cooked foods, snacks and home brewed traditional drinks. Regarding access to information, very few of the households have TV and telephone, though the majority own radios. However, the likelihood of women listening to the radio is small, since, as it has been observed, their life situation is very stressful and hectic. This idea is in agreement with the findings of the Demographic Health Survey 2005 that women in Ethiopia have less media exposure compared to men.

The most popular connectedness in relation to social capital is membership in *idirs* (92.1 percent) (*Idir* is a burial association established among neighbors or employees in an organization to raise funds by collecting monthly membership fees that are used during emergencies, such as death within the family.). Membership in formal institutions that may enhance their empowerment and increase their livelihood – such as micro-finance institutions and housing construction associations – is very limited. Therefore, in terms of their membership in formal organizations that would help in improving their life situations, their social capital is quite limited.

In terms of kin and non-kin support, children hold a very important place, followed by partners, for those who are married. Financial support is mostly provided by partners followed by children. Neighbors and friends also play a part in the provision of financial, material, labor and emotional support. Therefore, the women in the study stand in a good position in terms of accessing social support from kin and non-kin alike, which helps them in meeting their material needs as well as contributing to their emotional well-being. However, the pattern of relying on children, though it gives temporary relief, will eventually deprive children of the opportunities for meaningful employment and other better options since their education will be negatively affected.

According to the indices developed using the four categories of assets – human capital, financial

capital, physical capital and social capital—only 9.2 percent of the women stand in a secure position, implying that quite a majority of the women in the study do not have the necessary assets that they can use to achieve a secure livelihood. This figure is the result of a comparison of the women in the study among themselves; comparing the women with middle-class households might have given a very low figure.

In spite of their desire to work hard and improve their life situation, most of the coping strategies that are used by the women are categorized as passive strategies, which take the forms of limiting the size of meals, cutting down on other basic necessities, and utilizing whatever minimal amount of resources they have. They also utilize their social networks in the form of borrowing and acquiring donations from relatives and neighbors. Some combine two or more types of strategies. Using social networks to meet needs is more visible in the case of females heading their households than those living with their partners. This does not mean that the women in the study are passive victims of poverty, incapable of commanding agency. In fact, some of the women have demonstrated agency in their efforts to work hard despite all the constraints, and they resist situations that tend to inhibit their efforts to cope. However, the manifestation of agency requires some conditions, such as the ability

to improve situations, control circumstances, and a vision of changed circumstances. In the absence of these conditions and in a situation where individuals experience misery despite the efforts made to avert it, they tend to give in to a situation called 'learned helplessness', which comes with perceived powerlessness.

The women are in the situation in which they are now because of lack of education, employment, and also as a result of lack of the basic necessities of life. This situation is mostly caused by the gender relationship prevalent in the society in which they have been raised, compounded by the lack of economic development in which Ethiopia finds itself. As adults, they are poor, and it seems the only path out of poverty is creating a situation where they can use whatever assets they have, such as their human capital, in the form of unskilled labor, and social capital, such as using traditional associations, for example, *idir*, to enable them mobilize resources. An intervention strategy also needs to take into account the mental state which the women are in to enable them to strengthen their agency to move forward in their effort to reduce poverty. Furthermore, the various groups of women, such as female heads of households and women with partners, and the different vulnerabilities and strengths they have, need to be considered in the design of any intervention program. ■

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## Nordic research network workshop, November 2006 in Aalborg: Civil society and African regional integration

By: Paul Opoku-Mensah

Associate Professor, Aalborg University, and Convenor of NAI's NGO and Civil Society research network.

The inaugural meeting of the Nordic Africa Institute's NGO and Civil Society research network took place at Aalborg University, Denmark on 6–7 November 2006. Hosted by the University's Centre for Comparative Integration Studies and Research Centre for Development and International Relations, the conference was devoted to the analysis of civil society's role in African integration. Specifically, it sought to 1) historicise the roles of civil society in the formal political processes of African integration; 2) problematise the roles of civil society in the current wave of African integration by interrogating civil society involvement in the formal integration processes of the African Union and NEPAD; 3) theorise an alternative vision of African integration that conceptually shifts the focus away from the formal political processes to a focus on the roles of communities and civil society in the integration processes; 4) engage with the comparative experience of civil society and integration processes elsewhere, with a special emphasis on the European Union; and finally 5) outline a research agenda that is embedded in the African experience and reconciles both the formal and informal integration processes.

The conference was organised around keynote addresses and a number of paper presentations. Keynote speakers included Kwesi Prah, Emeritus Professor and Director, Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, South Africa; Adebayo Olukoshi, Executive Secretary, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa; Poul Nielson, Honorary Professor for European and Development Studies, Aalborg University and Ex-EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid; HE Dolana Msimang, South African Ambassador to Denmark, and Professor Adam Habib, Human Science Research Council, South Africa.



Three of the keynote speakers: Ambassador Dolana Msimang, Prof. Kwesi Prah and Prof. Poul Nielson. (Photo by Paul Opoku-Mensah)

In line with the ambition of the network to promote Nordic research cooperation on the topic, the meeting built on collaboration with a set of Nordic institutions including the Africa Network of Norway; Aalborg University's Centre for Comparative Integration Studies and Research Centre for Development and International Relations; the Norwegian NGO and Civil Society Research Network; and the Danish research network for Governance, Economic Policy and Public Administration (GEPPA). To promote linkages between Africa and the Nordic institutions, the meeting also hosted a CODESRIA roundtable on the prospects and challenges of research linkages between Nordic and African research institutions. The meeting was also used to inaugurate Aalborg University's Centre for Comparative Integration Studies, which is dedicated to the study of regional integration projects worldwide, and within which the study of African integration will be a central component.

The discussions and conclusions at the conference were focused on the theoretical/conceptual, empirical and research challenges related to civil society and African integration.

### Clearing the conceptual space

There was agreement that for it to be successful, the creative heart of the African integration project must move, conceptually and practically, out of the ambit of African states into civil society.

Conceptually, participants agreed that civil society provides a tool to re-imagine and re-envision the African integration project in ways that allow it to be embedded in African peoples and their organizations, formal and informal. Yet in its current usage, the **contested nature of the concept is lost** as civil society is uniformly conceived as a sphere of progressive forces working, in partnership with the institutions of continental governance—in particular the AU and NEPAD – to promote African integration. **Revisiting the vibrant debates** of the late 1980s and 90s on civil society in Africa, the conference argued that civil society cannot, by definitional fiat, be limited to organisations that seek to promote the objectives of African integration. Civil society is not uniformly virtuous and hence any appropriation of the concept for African integration must *necessarily* reflect the diverse understandings, institutional and organisational expressions, and value orientations that, naturally, constitute civil society. Concretely, this implies a conceptual reframing of the debate that reconciles the collaborative-conflictual, integration-disintegration potentials of civil society in African integration.

**Implementing the African integration agenda**  
The next set of discussions related to the actually existing civil society and its roles in the African integration project. The discussions focused on the role of formal and informal organisations; trade unions; the African diaspora and its institutions; the private sector, including business associations; traditional authorities; universities and higher education institutions, among others. The discussions indicated that while a continental civil society is yet to emerge, and despite the paucity of empirical data, there are discernible signs of a gradual scaling up of civil society activity from the national level to also include issues of continental political and economic integration. **In part, this development is facilitated and funded by the institutions of continental governance, in particular, the African Union and NEPAD.** For instance, through NEPAD's Peer Review mechanism, and the AU's Pan African Parliament and ECOSOCC, civil society *can* participate and contribute to the democratisation of these institutions of African regional integration. While these are welcome

developments, they are nevertheless fraught with challenges. But more importantly, the extent to which these formal developments allow for substantive civil society input, and *the diffusion of power*, which is fundamental to the reconstitution of state-society relations **and the establishment of a culture of democratic governance on the continent, remains questionable.** This is because this is a development that is largely framed and controlled by states. Indeed the absence of AU facilitated civil society meeting preceding the Summit in Libya in July 2005 attest to the fragility of these arrangements. This means that until horizontal linkages within civil society are formed across national boundaries in Africa, a civil society conception of African integration remains elusive.

### A research agenda

The research implications relate to the need to theoretically re-articulate civil society's role in the integration process, empirically verify these roles, and normatively facilitate and strengthen civil society's engagement in African integration. This places the role of research, and researchers, at the centre of the process of outlining and promoting a civil society conception of African integration. In response, the conference outlined an agenda for comparative research on civil society and African integration that has four elements, namely a research agenda that 1) is basic in the sense that it addresses the fundamental issues and underlying assumptions of civil society's engagement in African integration; 2) is collaborative in the sense of being embedded in the African experience but involving institutions and researchers from Africa, and outside Africa; 3) is not divorced from the integration process itself but engages policy and policy makers; and 4) is located in the wider comparative experience of regional integration processes elsewhere.

Participants committed themselves to use the conference as a catalyst to establish the basis for this kind of comparative research initiative. ■

#### NORDIC RESEARCH NETWORKS

More information on 'NGOs and Civil Society Roles in African Development' and NAI's other thematic research networks is available at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se).

Media seminar, November 2006 in Uppsala:

## Addressing the new scramble for Africa

Photo by Karin Andersson Schiebe



By: Anne Hege  
Simonsen  
Media researcher

Africa is a global economic player, but ordinary Africans are not part of the game. The new scramble for Africa has a lot in common with older forms of economic and political exploitation.

What are we to make of the ongoing changes in economic Africa? The presence of the Chinese is growing stronger every day, the Americans are sidelining the old European colonial powers and the call for democratic change seems to walk hand in hand with economic liberalism on the continent. African political leaders have been given a political space, but what about the average man and woman?

'Africa as a global economic player' was the main theme when, in November 2006, the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) for the second time since 2003 arranged a seminar aimed at Nordic journalists with a special interest in Africa. The keynote speakers were Henning Melber, executive director at the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and former research director at NAI, Anver Versi, chief editor of the economic magazine *African Business* (see separate article) and Nigerian political scientist and specialist on the political consequences of the petroleum industry in Nigeria, Cyril Obi. South African political scientist Heidi Hudson provided an analysis of the role of the scandal-ridden ANC leader Jacob Zuma in South African politics.

China: The new kid on the block?

China has already been on everybody's lips for some time. In 2006 the interest in African-Chinese relations peaked when an unprecedented number of 48 African leaders assembled in the Chinese capital Beijing for a three day gathering in November. Foreign diplomats and analysts described the event as a "charm offensive", but with a USD six billion investment and more than 800 non-financial investment projects in 49 African countries, others claim that China has taken the lead role in what is called "the new scramble for Africa".

Henning Melber put forward an analysis claiming that the ongoing scramble for Africa is not new, nor is the Chinese interest in Africa. The Chinese presence has, however, opened up room for manoeuvre for African leaders that was closed by the end of the Cold War. Before the structural adjustment programmes and the capitalist mode of production outlived the alternatives in the 1980s and 90s, African leaders could align with either the Western or the Eastern political pole. With the fall of the Berlin wall there was only one gospel left – economic neoliberalism.

New dynamics in Africa

Melber pointed out a number of changes that have taken place in Africa since the Cold War, all contributing to the present economic and political situation. Among them is the new internal dynamic on the continent, marked by the axis between post-Apartheid South Africa and the petroleum giant Nigeria. Together with Senegal and Algeria, the two giants contributed to the establishment of the highly debated New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD is often described as the economic tool of the African Union, but as Melber outlined it, NEPAD started out primarily as a political initiative, for the first time in African political history putting

good governance and political representation as a precondition for development and not the other way round. This made it possible for African countries to ask the main donor countries for a bigger slice of the economic cake, and the move was also popular with the G8 countries because it gave them an opportunity to redefine the post-Washington consensus as a way of “cooperating with Africa on African terms”. The African Union, which replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1999, is the other significant new factor in African politics, in particular because it rejected the longstanding principle of African leaders not going against each other. AU troops are now expected to interfere in cases of genocide and war crimes, something that would have been inconceivable ten years ago.

On the international scene China is one of the main actors redrawing the borders of international interest in Africa. Melber, however, described China’s predatory capacities as “hype”, as China is basically doing the same as everyone else. The Western scramble for Africa has been going on for ages. USA, China and other Western countries need raw materials from Africa and the less talked about frontrunners, India and Brazil, are following suit. For African governments with weak democratic inclinations, these are profitable days. What is new is that China is claiming non-interference. One reason for China’s popularity in Africa is the fact that they did interfere during the Cold War era. China has strong ties to several African liberation movements, not least the ANC. They are also consciously working on their political relations. The Chinese prime minister has visited African countries at least twice a year and African leaders have been addressed at partner level. China does not have the old colonial ties, and they come up with gestures of great symbolic value, like translating former Namibian president Sam Nujoma’s biography into Chinese and inviting the author to the book launch. Relationship building of this kind makes African leaders inclined to forget incidents like the Chinese support for Angolan warlord Jonas Savimbi and UNITA.

Even if China acts as a “natural ally” to African heads of state, Melber pointed out that there is a

growing antipathy to the Chinese on the ground. Chinese delegations are popular with the elites, but Chinese construction workers do not have the same standing with the African work force. Just in Namibia, a country populated by 1.8 million people, there are 44,000 Chinese workers. The Chinese are working mainly in construction and trade and their employment strategies do not include Africans. This leads to an actual de-industrialising of Africa, as well as ethnic friction and racism. Melber’s guess is that China’s so-called non-involvement is an efficient door-opener, but that it will not last.

### Nigeria – oil and politics

Nigeria is the eighth biggest petroleum exporter in the world, but it is not the growing presence of the Chinese that worries the average Nigerian. Political scientist Cyril Obi cut a clear message, pointing out that to the political forces in Nigeria, oil is power and power is oil. Nigeria has produced oil since 1958 and Nigeria’s many dictators have exploited the world’s most valuable resource since independence in 1960. But the oil has also been fuelling the forces of democracy, protest and equality.

96 percent of Nigeria’s revenue comes from oil. The oil industry is vertically integrated in the politics in the country. The Nigerian government owns the oil, but the technology is foreign and there are no linkages with other sectors of the Nigerian economy. Nigeria is thus marked by an enclave economy. Government revenues are not based on taxes, but on an oil industry dominated by multinationals and Chinese interests.

In 2006 the volatile Niger delta region has entered the list of international danger zones. Several international oil workers have been kidnapped, and even if there have been few casualties, the kidnappers are considered a major security threat to the oil production in the area. Obi explained the popular anger in the delta as stemming from how people are feeling cheated of



Cyril Obi, researcher at NAI.

Photo by Mal Palmberg

their birthright. People in the local communities believe the petroleum industry should provide them with welfare, but they do not see signs of change any time soon.

Living conditions in Nigeria have deteriorated partly due to how the highly hierarchical military government structure gradually reduced local government's income from some 50 percent to a slim 1.5 percent in 1990. The percentage has improved somewhat under the present regime, but even if president Olusegun Obasanjo (who has also led a military government) has won two elections, there has been little change in Nigeria's political structure.

### Africa – a global player?

Anver Versi, chief editor of the award winning magazine *African Business*, pointed out Africa's central role in the whole concept of industrialization and globalization – from the slave trade, through colonial times up until today. African resources have played an essential part in developing Western economies, but African populations have been left marginalized. Even today, when some African economies are on the rise, most Africans seem to have sunk into even deeper poverty.

Versi underlined the importance of food production as a major development factor. Without a surplus of food, cultural specialization becomes difficult. In this context it is more than alarming that 80 percent of African farmland is degrading, forcing Africa, as a continent, to use three times as much farmland to produce the same amount of food. He also pointed at the dilemma that Africa is rich on phosphate rock, one of the main ingredients in fertilizers used all over the world, but rarely by African farmers. This complex is highly relevant in relation to the discussion about climate change, but has not been properly addressed by neither African nor international organizations.

### NAI and Nordic journalists

Established in 2003, NAI is at present hosting a network consisting of more than a hundred journalists from all the five Nordic countries. 19 journalists registered for the second media seminar on 24–25 November 2006. The participants expressed an interest in similar events in the future.

NAI provides the journalist network with a newsletter drawing attention to relevant sources on topical events. The newsletter also informs journalists about relevant NAI publications and events. ■



Anver Versi, Chief Editor of *African Business*.  
(Photo by Mai Palmberg)



Photo by Karin Andersson Schiøbe

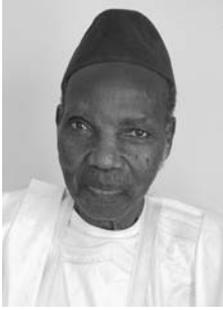
The media seminar also provided an opportunity for journalists to meet researchers. Here, Henning Melber is being interviewed by Anders Wennersten.

### Other recent NAI conferences

Reports from other conferences organised or co-organised by the Nordic Africa Institute are available at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se) (under Events/Conferences).

# Joseph Ki-Zerbo 1922–2006

Photo by Niclas Hallström



On 4 December 2006, one of Africa's most illustrious citizen-intellectuals, the incomparable Joseph Ki-Zerbo, died in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Academic historian of the very first order, life-long pan-Africanist by instinct and by choice,

unrelenting crusader for social change and justice, untiring advocate of African collective self-reliance, teacher to at least three generations of African social researchers, an unflagging source of inspiration to many who were lucky to encounter him.

Born in the area that was known at the time as Upper Volta, Ki-Zerbo was to define an early and unambiguous trajectory for himself as a committed historian with a deep and abiding interest in the twin projects of democracy and development in Africa. As a young academic, he invested himself in the study of the history of Africa, and together with other nationalist historians of the time, he was to build a corpus of literature that came to constitute the core of African History as a field of knowledge, complete with its methods and tools. An important part of that effort was to be synthesized into the UNESCO General History of Africa of which he was a directing editor.

Ki-Zerbo also came to immerse himself as scholar and activist, in the struggles for national liberation, democracy, social justice and development. Thus it was that he was to assume various roles at the same time: prolific university professor, indefatigable activist in various social movements, party leader – mostly in opposition – and, ultimately, conscience of the African nation.

Ki-Zerbo had formal and informal sessions with many of the leaders of the African independence project, including Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Frantz Fanon, Modibo Keita, Amilcar

Cabral, Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, and Julius Nyerere, to cite a few. He shared in all the key debates on the future of pan-Africanism as independence dawned, as well as in the reflections that occurred on the development alternatives that the continent could explore. But through all these experiences, he never sullied his reputation for intellectual integrity and personal honesty. His voice was the voice of authority and throughout his life, as the first generation leaders gave way to succeeding generations, he reserved his right, exercised in his uniquely magisterial manner, to counsel, to remind, to criticize and to condemn as the need arose.

The membership of CODESRIA was fortunate to enjoy glimpses of the rich experience embodied in Ki-Zerbo when he delivered one of the three keynote addresses to mark the grand finale conference of the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Council in December 2003 in Dakar, Senegal. It was also an occasion at which, in recognition of his contribution, he was honoured by the African social research community with a life membership of CODESRIA. But, beyond Africa too, he was celebrated as a rare gift to humanity as evidenced by the many laurels he won, including the Alternative Nobel Prize awarded by grassroots social movements to distinguished world figures.

We can only be grateful as an institution that in the last month of his life, and with the support of his widow, Josephine, and children, CODESRIA was given the privilege of recording interviews with him on his life and his work as part of the Council's initiative documenting the contributions of leading African scholars in a digital format. Ki-Zerbo and his family could not have given the CODESRIA membership and the wider African social research community a better gift to bequeath to the world. ■

*Adebayo Olukoshi,  
Executive Secretary, CODESRIA*

# Recent publications

Matthias Basedau, Gero Erdmann and Andreas Mehler (Eds)

Votes, Money and Violence

*Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa. Conceptual Problems, Empirical Findings and the Road Ahead*

ISBN 91-7106-579-2, 301 pp, 290 SEK/ ca. 31 euro, co-published with Kwazulu-Natal Press, South Africa

Following the (re-)introduction of multiparty systems in Africa in the early 1990s, third and fourth elections in Africa, new democracies and hybrid regimes are now being seen. Although there is a large and growing literature on democracy and elections in Africa, parties and party systems have hitherto not been the focus of research, which may be surprising given their central role in a liberal democracy. The early works from the 1960s and 1970s provide neither a sound conceptual nor empirical basis. Research on political parties and party systems in Africa is still in its infancy.

Various contributions in this volume address the theoretical and conceptual challenges provided by the African parties and party systems with their particular features of weak organisation, informal relationships dominated by 'big men' and clientelism within a neopatrimonial setting. Others raise the crucial question of representation in relation to ethnicity, civil society and gender, or look into the empirical relationship between party systems and democracy. Further chapters ask questions about the appropriate electoral system for the multiethnic context in Africa and deal with the problem of electoral system reform. Finally, there are chapters which focus on the neglected area of electoral violence, and the moral role of money and vote buying is scrutinized through a case study.

An important conclusion is that party research in Africa needs more conceptual clarity as well as empirical research particularly on party organisation, voting behaviour, and the role of ethnicity.

The volume is written for academics and graduate students in Comparative Politics, Party Research, Electoral and African Studies. It will be also useful for professionals dealing with Africa in (political) development assistance.

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Henning Melber (Ed.)  
**On Africa**  
*Scholars and African Studies*

ISBN 978-91-7106-585-8, 68 pp, 110 SEK/ ca. 12 euro, Series: Discussion Paper no. 35

This volume is based on contributions to a seminar which was organised in honour of the Institute's retiring Director Lennart Wohlgenuth in December 2005. African scholars presented their views on 'The Role of Africa in 'African Studies' while Nordic scholars and policy makers responded. The deliberations offer a spectre of relevant approaches on both academic as well as policy oriented research and advisory work in and on Africa.

The contributions aim at bridging the gap between academics and practitioners. They share a common commitment to African affairs and seek to support and promote these in the international context. Contributors include: *Olu Ajakaiye* and *William Lyakurwa*, the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC); *Adebayo Olukoshi*, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA); *Göran Hydén*, University of Florida; *Arne Tostensen*, Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen.

Amadu Sesay

**Does One Size Fit All?**

*The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission Revisited*

ISBN 978-91-7106-586-5, 55 pp, SEK 110/ ca. 12 euro, Series: Discussion Paper no. 36

Societies emerging from protracted conflict and violence face numerous challenges at the individual, community and national levels. Accordingly, a variety of strategies have been suggested for 'healing' the wounds of the past and coping with the future, thereby facilitating national reconciliation and peace building in post conflict societies. One of these approaches is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC, believed to provide a veritable platform for victims and perpetrators alike, to have a voice that would enable them to come to terms with the horrifying past. In Africa, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions as strategies for coming to terms with the past in Africa came into prominence following the example of South Africa after the end of apartheid in 1994. Since then, TRCs have been set up in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, while one has been proposed for Liberia. From such a standpoint it is tempting to argue that there has emerged what we can call a "one size fits all" syndrome, that is, if the TRC "worked" for South Africa, a position that is the subject of intense debate within and outside that country, then it is "good" for Sierra Leone, Liberia or, for that matter, any other African society that is emerging from protracted violent conflict.

The main purpose of this study, therefore, is to draw attention to the TRC phenomenon in Sierra Leone, to stimulate discussion on the diverse questions surrounding its rationale, processes and outcomes, especially its impacts on post conflict reconciliation in the country. Another goal of the project is to document the multiple and conflicting perceptions among various groups in the country of the TRC processes, and how such perceptions were reflected in the Commission's work and recommendations. Finally, it is expected that the study would form the basis for future empirically grounded research and policy analysis, more extensive research and perhaps even collaboration, between the author and those working on innovative but home-grown mechanisms for promoting reconciliation in post war Sierra Leone and elsewhere.

*Amadu Sesay* is professor at the Department of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

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