

news

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FROM THE CONTENTS

- **Congo-Brazzaville** Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo
- **Youth in African cities** Amin Y. Kamete
- **Interview with Muhammad Kabir Isa**



Contents no. 3/2005

To Our Readers	1	<i>Lennart Wohlgemuth</i>
Urban youth	3	Youth in African cities <i>Amin Y. Kamete</i>
	6	Organisations working with youth in Africa
	7	Urban youth and livelihoods in Zimbabwe <i>Penny Hlupo</i>
	10	Mohammad Kabir Isa in focus
Commentaries	12	Congo-Brazzaville: Multipartyism or illiberal democracy? <i>Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo</i>
Research	16	Post-conflict transition, the state and civil society in Africa <i>Cyril I. Obi</i>
	19	Collaborative research on African trade <i>Olu Ajakaiye</i>
	22	Images of wilderness landscapes <i>Shirley Brooks</i>
	24	The culture(s) of the ANC <i>Raymond Suttner</i>
Debate	26	Waste management in Uganda <i>Proscovia Svärd</i>
Conference reports	29	Conferences and meetings
Publishing	34	Recent publications
	36	Forthcoming

Editor-in-Chief: Lennart Wohlgemuth

Co-Editor: Susanne Linderos

Co-Editor of this issue: Amin Y. Kamete

Editorial Secretary: Karin Andersson Schiebe

Language checking: Elaine Almén

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To Our Readers



Photo by Karl Vilhjálmsón

This issue of *News from the Nordic Africa Institute* concentrates on the subject of Youth in African Cities with a commentary by Amin Y. Kamete, researcher at NAI, an article by Penny Hlupo from Harare, Zimbabwe

and an interview with Mohammad Kabir Isa from Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. The subject is extremely topical but has been surprisingly under researched and little discussed. But as is stated in the commentary by Kamete, although Africa's urban youth are to a great extent the future of Africa their present predicaments must receive the attention that they deserve.

In the other commentary a country in deep trouble is presented, which at present is undergoing new challenges and difficulties, namely Congo-Brazzaville. The author Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo from DRC and at present at Cornell University discusses the democratic transition process in the country asking himself whether Congo Brazzaville is en route toward multiparty democracy or a reversal to authoritarianism.

Time flies. It has now come to the point where I will bid farewell to all our readers as my term as Director of the Nordic Africa Institute comes to an end after more than 12 years. It has been a life-time experience both being a representative of five countries as head of a Nordic institute, and to work for, and with Africa. Africa's richness, both as regards interesting achievements, problems and challenges, and the people with whom I have worked and interacted – researchers, policymakers as well as activists – have become

extremely important to me. As I stated in the first issue of *News* in early 1994, the Institute is a small but very effective entity that is well adapted to achieve its aims. With its rich library, interesting research and the many and relevant publications it produces, it has all the prerequisites to reach an important part of public opinion with information on Africa, and to support and develop the interest that is already there. There already existed a good foundation and I have done my best to further develop and expand the activities of the Institute.

Above all, my focus has been to make the Institute accessible to as many people as possible. It has also been my desire that all those in the Nordic countries who are interested in Africa should feel that they belong to and would like to use the services the Institute offers. The Nordic identity should therefore permeate all its activities and programmes and I have tried very hard to make this possible.

This attempt of the Institute to further reinforce its Nordic identity has however under no circumstances obscured the picture of the Nordic Africa Institute as an institution that works for and with Africa. Engagement in the developments in Africa and disseminating what is happening there, remain the foundation of its work. Thus the Institute has through collaborative research between Nordic and African researchers, seminars and publications taken up relevant and topical subjects from Africa with the intention of being an important participant in the current and future positive developments in Africa. In that respect the Institute has also acted as a meeting place for Africanists from the whole world and participated effectively in the discourse on Africa in the Nordic countries.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues at NAI, Nordic and African researchers, policy-makers and activists with whom I

have interacted during my years at NAI. I will of course not end my engagement in Africa and its development after leaving NAI but continue to study and teach on matters related to African development and make all possible efforts to continue to contribute to keeping Africa high on the agenda in the Nordic countries.

Finally I wish to welcome Carin Norberg, who will join the Institute as its Director and my successor from 1 January 2006. I think that the Institute and its partners are fortunate that she, with her special background and all her experience, has been chosen as its new Director. ■

Lennart Wohlgemuth



Carin Norberg has worked with and in Africa most of her life mainly with Sida, with a spell of 12 years as Assistant Director General, but also three years as adviser to the UN Commissioner for Namibia in New York. She spent many years in Southern Africa during the strong Swedish involvement in the struggle for liberation in the region and against apartheid in South Africa. At present she works for Transparency International in Berlin, Germany.

Two long-serving staff members retired with pension on 1 October 2005



Karl Eric Ericson (left), Deputy Director and head of the publications department, joined the Institute in 1967.

Kristina Rylander (right), librarian, has been a member of the Institute's staff since 1968.

Youth in African cities



By: Amin Y. Kamete

Programme co-ordinator of the research programme 'Gender and Age in African Cities' at the Nordic Africa Institute

Youth dominate the demographic landscape of many African cities. They cannot be put aside with phrases like "youth are the future", but must be taken as partners in social change and development that are taking place in the present.

Even in modern urban Africa, age as a biological attribute and as a social construct still matters. The truth of this statement becomes particularly significant when we remind ourselves that African cities are 'youthful' cities – in some cases youth make up more than half of the urbanites, making African cities some of the most youthful in the world. With no perceived let up in the rate, character and demographic nature of urbanisation, the characterisation of African cities as 'youthful' appears to be here to stay. Obviously, this demographic feature has implications in society, culture, the economy, politics and everyday life. It brings in a special set of problems, and makes available an interesting package of opportunities.

Beyond the stereotype

While it is acknowledged that the present and future of Africa is decided on and played out in cities, urban African youthfulness is a rarely tackled phenomenon in scholarly circles, unless of course it has something to do with gangsterism,

violence, delinquency and other forms of social deviance. However, there is still a sizeable amount of interesting and mind-opening work on youths in cities and towns of Africa. This work has teased out the role of African urban youths as agents in their own right. This is a welcome departure from the normal conceptualisation of African urban youth as uncultured problem generators in need of containment, or undeveloped human beings always in need of some restraining, guiding and/or helping hand to save them from themselves and also from society, and conversely to save society from elements of these youths.

It is now an incontrovertible fact that youth are as ubiquitous as 'adults' in the workings of urban Africa and that in this they play – and can therefore rightfully claim – as prominent a role as the privileged social and demographic groups. It now goes without saying that in all sectors of African urban life, youth are actively engaged. Be it in the arts, politics, making a livelihood and everyday life, youth are there in the thick of things, playing a constructive or destructive role; actively participating in the production and reproduction of their respective societies; changing the terrain, and in the process being changed themselves; becoming victims and acting as villains; being included and excluded, while themselves including and excluding. In all aspects of social change and development, one finds boys and girls, young men and women making their own significant contributions, good or bad, welcome or unwelcome.

Which is not to claim that African urban youth are some kind of a homogenous entity wherever and whenever they are found. Far from it! The youth, like any other age group, make up micro-societies with their own microphysics, politics, cultures, perspectives and dynamics. There are differences in age (yes age), gender, social standing, political affiliations, cultural back-

ground and viewpoints, to mention just a few. We have seen these differences play themselves out again and again in many parts of urban Africa. Thus, be it in the militant ethnic movements in Nigeria (see the interview with Muhammad Kabir Isa), the palpably polarised political landscape in Zimbabwe, the housing scene in Blantyre, Malawi, and the making of livelihoods in Nairobi, Kenya, we repeatedly witness experiences that confirm that these 'intra-youth' differences matter. This is what makes the study of youth in African cities so exciting. In these experiences we see confirmed the truth that the youth 'belong' somewhere – that they are situated in particular positions, hold distinctive perspectives, as well as act and behave from these positions based on these perspectives.

Furthermore, whatever malady it is that afflicts the conspicuous 'adult' world also invariably messes up the world of the youth; be it urban poverty, unemployment, unsatisfactory services, homelessness, bad governance, corruption or HIV/AIDS. Perhaps they are hit more, seeing as they lack the wisdom, experience and resilience of 'adults'. Maybe this helps explain the unrelenting phenomenon of street children in many large urban centres of Africa; the dominance of youth among the ranks of the hardcore criminals, drug traffickers and users, hustlers and the underclass; the existence of child-headed households; the abuse of youth as political pawns, and hired thugs; and the prominence of youth in unrest, protests, and attendant looting sprees. When hit by adversities, enticed by temptations, haunted by grievances, or taunted by confusing questions, youth do not have the vast resources and accumulated experience of their adult counterparts. To make matters worse, patronising adults acting as benefactors, seem to infuse within the youth the demeaningly patronising idea that they (the youth) have not yet attained 'human' status and are therefore in need of someone to think for them, act for them, do things for them, speak for them.

In addition, urban youth do not belong to a tight-knit community with clearly recognised and unified institutions, structures, norms, leadership

and guidelines like their rural counterparts. This, coupled with the differences discussed above bestows upon the youth a certain degree of agency and autonomy not common in the rural sphere. More importantly it gives rise to a kind of variety that is unheard of in rural areas. The resultant temporal and spatial diversity contributes to the inexhaustibility of excitingly informative studies of African urban youth.

African urban youth in action

While it cannot be said that research into youth in African cities has reached – and should reach – a turning point, there are clear signs that agency and autonomy are increasingly coming out as fruitful insights into the lives, perspectives, activities and conditions of youth in urban Africa.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of this aspect comes from youth in militant ethnic movements in Nigeria. Here we observe youth as active social and political agents. The picture of docile youths is shattered by the illuminating insights coming from scholars in Nigeria, one of whom is featured in this issue of *News*. Here, we see vividly portrayed youth as substantive agents with grievances, ambitions, plans and strategies. This type of agency and autonomy is a far cry from the portrayal of youths as helpless pawns as in the case of the quintessential child soldier in countries such as Sierra Leone.

Similarly, in matters of creativity, youths have long proved themselves in the arts and culture. In music and theatre we have been granted insights into the creative world of youth in East Africa churning out distinctive musical flavours in the urban centres of Kenya and Tanzania. We have also heard of youth actively tackling HIV/AIDS in community theatre in Uganda. In this part of urban Africa, we witness youth taking on social issues and penning them into popular dramas and hit songs.

In matters of livelihood, many African urban youth do not wait – and in fact cannot afford – to be taken care of, to be fed when the chips are down, as they often are. The afflicted boys and girls take on the seemingly permanent challenge

of making a living in a hostile environment. In the face of unfriendly planning systems, under-performing economic systems, and aggressive but spectacularly incompetent institutions, as well as confused, confusing and constantly wavering political commitments, the youth struggle to make it in the cities. This they do by navigating numerous adversities to live another day. Stories that confirm this are common in countries as diverse as Ethiopia, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

When it comes to the political terrain, youth in Africa's cities have proved to be as much an intractable and aggrieved part of the governed as any political constituency. Democratisation, political conflict, electoral contests and political violence are some of the 'projects' youth play an integral part in, a part that is not too difficult to figure out, since here the youth almost always dominate. The wave of democratisation that swept through much of Africa at the beginning of the closing decade of the last millennium bears irrefutable testimony to this assertion. The prominent role of youth, in particular among the student ranks, in political conflict in Kenya and Zimbabwe easily comes to mind in showing that oftentimes, young men and women do have a mind of their own, a voice that speaks for them, about them and through them.

Service provision is one of the areas that have haunted urban Africa from the beginning of modern urbanisation. Many a time we have been told that where there is a deficit, a vacuum, where the city authorities have failed to meet demand or to even provide the minimally required level of services, urban residents step in to provide for themselves. Of late we have heard that youth are a vital cog in the provision of such services as water, sanitation and security. They are also instrumental in providing accommodation as well as infrastructural and community facilities, however crude, however illegal.

The above snapshots serve to demonstrate that the youth are active agents in African cities.

And that they deserve this tag and have earned it, for better or for worse. It is good to note that some studies from a variety of disciplines continue to bring us insights into the lives of the young members of African urban communities. This is a useful complement to the picture we get from vested interests and activists, who, by their very mandate, need to foreground the helplessness, uselessness, and cluelessness of Africa's urban majority, thereby laying the groundwork for resource mobilisation for charitable interventions to improve the lot of the youth who would by this stage have been packaged into irresistible objects of charity.

Conclusion

That youth are rightful residents of Africa's beleaguered and ever-expanding urban settlements should be incontestable. That they dominate the demographic landscape is a reality that has far-reaching consequences, especially given the fact that the context that they operate in, aided and abetted by other urban residents and sometimes misguided good Samaritans, is anything but conducive to their growth and development. It is in this regard that such annoyingly condescending statements that youth are the future, the leaders of tomorrow, need to be re-qualified by the realisation that having future implications is not a curse and does not confer on a demographic and social group a hibernation, some form of deferred life, an indefinite waiting stupor, where all the key decisions, resources and activities – in fact the present life – are the preserve of those who have earned their qualification into a privileged cohort, by virtue of passing some demographic barrier, a legally stipulated milestone or social criteria. Africa's urban youth are indeed the future, but they live in the present. It is here in the present that they create the kind of future they will live and would like to live. The sooner they are taken as partners in social change and development, the better that future will be. ■

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Organisations working with youth in Africa

Haatso Youth Club is affiliated to the National Youth Council and strives to work with youth in current and relevant issues in Ghana.

Kibera Community Youth Program is a local community-based organization formed and run by youth in Kibera slums and its environs of Nairobi. It works for the advancement and well-being of youth in Kibera and for promoting proactive participation in community development. www.kcyp.kabissa.org

Mgbala Agwa Youths Forum, located in Imo State, Nigeria, has as its mission to engage in advocacy to fight hunger, HIV/AIDS, poverty and other social and health challenges.

National Students' Union for the Control of AIDS has as a principal objective the fighting of HIV infection amongst students and youth in Cameroon. Its activities include establishing an AIDS center in Yaounde, organizing public awareness campaigns, holding conferences with youth and government officials, and working with youth in rural areas. www.sidacameroun.org/Lieux/Lieuxf_d.php?codeu_lieu=15

Tanzania Youth Vision Association works to empower youth, address gender issues, and provide capacity building and networking skills to youth organizations.

Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV/AIDS provides information and life skills to young people in Uganda.

Vision and Hope Foundation works to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, provide training and education for youth, and include entire communities in Zimbabwe in community development projects.

Youth Activists Organisation is a Zambian NGO that specializes in peer education and outreach programs targeting youth. Its mission is to empower youth using various youth-friendly interventions that include civic, economic, health and environmental education. www.youthactivists.org

Youth Association for Dissemination of Development Information, based in Butare, Rwanda, works in collaboration with development organizations to strengthen the capacity of youth organizations in Rwanda.

Youth Education Network–Kenya works in youth development by increasing access to vocation training to empower youth in their community. www.geocities.com/kenyayen

Source: African Regional Youth Initiative (www.aryi.interconnection.org)

Urban youth and livelihoods in Zimbabwe

By: Penny Hlupo

Youth worker and activist working in Harare, who for over a decade has worked with youth on the streets of urban areas with a focus on their economic and social rights.

Every Zimbabwean has been touched by the deteriorating economic and political situation in the country. Urban areas have been affected just as much as rural areas. But the former do not have the same cushioning social systems as the latter, which increases vulnerability for the urbanites. This article will try and look at the ways the urban youths have been affected and how they have responded to the multiple adversities facing them.

The problems

Beginning in 2000, Zimbabwe's urban youths have been victims of a devastating cocktail of social, economic and political adversities. With the shrinking of industry in the thick of a declining economy, there are no jobs to talk about, which means that those dropping out of the school system, have very slim prospects of ever earning a salary in the formal sector, which is itself in the throes of survival struggles that are proving worse as each day passes.

Looking at the available alternatives left for the youths, one finds that the atmosphere is pretty unfriendly. Zimbabwe adheres to very strict urban planning standards that strongly focus on the physical aspects of cities. Because the formalised system needs official approval for most, if not all, economic ventures available to the youth, the youth, who as mentioned above fail to make it into the ever-dwindling job markets, are left with no option but to break the law or violate some standing regulation put in place by central government or local municipalities. A quarter of a century after independence, it appears there is no independence in carrying out activities that are designed to secure a livelihood for the practitioners.

Despite the fact that the problems facing the country, including the cities, are common knowledge there has not been a conscious effort to liberate the planning of activities in the cities. And there has been no decrease in the intolerance from both central and local government. Where the law is not observed, the authorities are sure to descend heavily on the so-called perpetrators. This comes in the form of so-called 'clean-up campaigns', which are designed to return the cities to their purported colonial grandeur. The ultimate phase of the clean-up campaign came in the form of Operation Murambatsvina (Drive out Filth), a massive city and town cleansing exercise resulting in poor people losing their homes and livelihoods.

Even before the operation, talking to the troubled youths one got the feeling that they knew that their livelihood practices were clearly doomed right from the start. But deprived of any viable alternatives the urban youths have no option but to take the chance and face the consequences. Even after the notorious operation, one still gets the feeling that the youths are fully prepared to face the music again and again because there is simply no survival option. As they say in the vernacular Shona: "*Kusiri kufa ndekupi?*" (literally, "Which way is not death?") meaning whatever alternative they take, they will always come out the eventual big losers. In other words, if they do not carry out the forbidden practices they starve to death; if they practise them, the law deals with them ruthlessly.

Negotiating the adversity

But the youth are not as hopeless as it may seem. Over the years (before the notorious Operation Murambatsvina), they have come up with skills

and strategies that have made sure that they get their way in the cities and towns. In the last six years they have perfected these skills and strategies to a level where survival is now guaranteed in a hostile environment.

The first strategy is *clientelism*. The practice is characterized by “patron-client” relationships. In such places, politically powerful and rich “patrons” are approached to provide the powerless and poor youths (their ‘clients’) protection and other benefits in exchange for other forms of loyalty, including votes and some forms of political support, including thuggery. The patrons are mainly politically and economically well-connected individuals in the ruling party or local authorities who calculate that one day they will have to call on the services of the youth, who will then have the opportunity to repay the debts. In this way, the youth are promised that the authorities will not disrupt their businesses as long as they meet their part of the bargain in delivering votes, voices and muscle when the patrons decide it is time for payback.

The second strategy is *bribery*. In the notoriously corrupt society that Zimbabwe is increasingly turning into, youth find it easy to pay some officials to look the other way as the youth continue to break the law and ignore some regulations. This is very easy for the youth as some of them actually make more money from their ventures than a lot of the council and government officials, especially the police, earn. The fact that the low paid officials are the ones who are supposed to enforce the law on the ground makes the job of the youths easy.

The third strategy is *blackmail*. Once an official has been paid, that official is perpetually ‘in the pockets’ of the youths as they threaten to spill the beans if he or she does not deliver protection. Some youths are known to snoop into the lives of some officials and pick up some misdemeanours that they then use to force the officials to do as they (the youths) want. This writer is aware of at least four cases concerning adultery, theft, corruption and political affiliation that the youths have used to drive away and silence officials who have been

harassing them. Because of the fear of exposure the officials try hard not to harass the youth. They also work hard to convince their colleagues not to make the lives of the youths harder.

The fourth strategy is *violence, intimidation and vengeance*. The ominous expression, “*richaonana*” (“we will meet”), is indicative of what the youths are capable of doing. When they feel they have been unjustly treated, say by official raids, they single out some soft targets among council or government employees who confiscated their property or chased them away from their stands and plots. By the use of overt violence and acts of intimidation and vengeance, the youth promise to avenge their losses by inflicting harm on those responsible. And they get vengeance eventually. This makes some officials really careful when they are dealing with the youths, as the consequences can be dangerous.

Operation Murambatsvina and after

In May 2005, the government launched the controversial ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ (“Drive out filth”) also known as ‘Operation Restore Order’. This was reportedly intended to restore order and sanity to the cities and towns of Zimbabwe. This in itself stands as testimony to how far the youth had entrenched themselves in the extra-legal and illegal operations in the urban areas. Most of the illegal uses of land, among which were vending, black market trading, selling of curios and some repairs of vehicles and appliances, were the preserve of youths.

When the operation came, there was no way of stopping it or avoiding it. This is so, because rather than dealing with individuals within the system, the youth found themselves as victims of the entire system, that is, central government with the full blessing of the ruling party’s supreme decision-making body. The youths’ crude tactics could not work this time round. The operation was faceless and impersonal and there was no way of negotiating with and around it. The operation could not be threatened, bribed, or petitioned.

By the beginning of July, the youth were no longer the kings and queens of places they did

not own and which they did not use legally. They were no longer making a living by flouting the law and silencing individuals. They were simply swept away. To be sure, they do come out occasionally to try to make a living, but the ruthless hand of the operation, urged on by the official media, always catches up with them and sweeps them away again and again.

Conclusion

The youth in urban Zimbabwe have long been victims of a declining economy, ineffective systems of governance, as well as local and central government institutions and legal and regulatory instruments

that are anything but friendly to alternative ways of making a living. For some time the youths did manage to live a life outside the formal systems. This is a precarious life that was prolonged by crude tactics and methods that relied on softening up individuals within the system. But then Operation Restore Order came suddenly. It was a strange challenge that the youths could not handle because, instead of breaching weak links in the system, the youth were now faced with the whole determined system. The youths have yet to come up with strategies that tackle the new challenge. Judging from history, it is only a matter of time before they discover that working formula. ■

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Travel Scholarships for researchers in the Nordic countries

Next deadline for applications: 15 January 2006

The Nordic Africa Institute, which encourages research and studies on Africa in the Nordic countries, invites applications for a number of travel scholarships for research or preparation of research projects in Africa. The research activity should concern development issues in Africa and emphasis is placed on the social sciences and closely related fields (anthropology, history, economics, human geography etc). Scholarships are not granted for study visits, excursions, language studies or participation in conferences.

More information at www.nai.uu.se

Muhammad Kabir Isa in focus

Muhammad Kabir Isa is currently employed as a member of the teaching staff of the Department of Local Government Studies, Faculty of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, and at the same time is pursuing his PhD dissertation in the area of State Management of Ethnic Conflict. He is a political scientist with a Bachelor and Masters Degree from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. In the recent past, Isa has been involved in international and national research in several areas. His main areas of focus are ethnic and identity politics, management of ethnic conflict, youths and age inclusion and exclusion politics in Nigeria, as well as local government administration in Nigeria. He has written several papers and articles in books and journals in these areas.

Amin Y. Kamete (AK), researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute: Which aspects of urban youth do you study, and which parts of Nigeria/Africa do you specialise in?

Muhammad Kabir Isa (MKI): My research focus is on the polarization of the youth along ethnic lines, militating against their ability to fight for accountability, democracy, empowerment, the provision of basic needs, and good governance, as well as the problem of ethnic militias and the youth crisis in Nigeria that appear to be intractable due largely to the failure of the state.

Power play amongst the ruling elites and their manipulation of the youths to fan the embers of ethnic chauvinism to foster their class interest has further deepened the youth crisis. The state institutional forces deal with the crisis per se without identifying the real actors in the crisis who are almost never identified, largely because the ruling elites control the state.

The main area and scope of focus is Nigeria, with great attention to Northern Nigeria.

AK: What motivated you to focus on those areas, both in terms of the aspects and the geographical focus?

MKI: First, Nigeria's population is mainly young, and the youth are not a homogeneous category. They represent the most active, the most volatile, and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population socio-economically, emotionally and in other respects. Secondly, the profile of the youth in Nigeria, as projected within the official

Population Census, puts Nigeria's population at 88.9 million as at 1991. At an annual growth rate of 2.8 percent per annum, the population was projected to reach 115 million by 2000. The country's population is mainly young; six out of ten Nigerians are under the age of 25. Thirdly, and most importantly, the youth in Nigeria are forced to contend with dwindling funding of education at all levels, severe down-turn in their fortune due largely to the fallouts of the structurally adjusted economy and the intensive privatisation and commercialisation of the economy.

AK: In your writings and those that you have been involved in we learn that militias have emerged within the four main ethnic groups: Arewa People's Congress (Hausa-Fulani), Oodua People's Congress (Yoruba), Bakassi Boys (Igbo), and Egbesu Boys (Ijaw). Would you classify the youth as victims or villains?

MKI: The youths in Nigeria are content at playing ethnic, identity nationalism and geo-politics, foisted on their consciousness by the manipulating ruling elites of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria and/or religious leadership. This is quite unlike the youths who fought for independent Nigeria, such as the Lagos Youth Movement and the Nigeria Youth Movement, and unlike the youths of Indonesia or Sri Lanka, particularly the student movements, who championed the cause of democracy against autocratic and dictatorial regimes, to ensure accountability and good

governance. Given the current situation, one can safely argue that the youths are subjected to the politics of manipulation.

AK: As argued in one of your publications each of these militias purports to fight for the rights of their ethnic groups and in particular, to rectify perceived exclusion, political domination and injustice, limited access to economic resources and social services, among other things. If I may ask a mischievous question: Your study area is clearly value-laden with particular positions presenting themselves. Do you sometimes find yourself taking sides?

MKI: As a researcher, who by coincidence of history, happens to belong to a particular region, principles or ideology, in a country as diverse as Nigeria, with a current population of about 130 million people, with well over 400 ethnic groups, and several religious inclinations, it is sometimes difficult to abstract oneself from one's social reality and attempt to be objective. However, since we are often guided by the main frame and fundamentals of research, one attempts to be as objective as possible in conducting studies such as that which was mentioned.

AK: Is it really possible to remain neutral when studying movements?

MKI: It is very possible, in as much as one is guided by one's focus, problems, framework and the issues that one seeks to investigate in a study.

AK: Some commentators argue that the emergence of youth militias poses a major threat to peaceful coexistence and democracy and that they are a threat to the new democratic dispensation. Do you think they have a point?

MKI: The position is only true to the extent that the youth subject themselves to the manipulation of the ruling elites in their quest to carve a niche for themselves, using and waving the ethnic card to compete for political and public space in a highly plural society. However, by and large for the youths of the Niger Delta, it is not just the issue of being a threat, but rather of generating attention and focus on the teeming poverty and environmental degradation in the area.



AK: What do you think is the future of the ethnic militias and democracy in Nigeria?

MKI: They will surely die a natural death, because more often than not their leaders are actually championing exclusive politics rather than inclusive in a sharply divided plural society. What is more, they do not actually enjoy majority support because of the element of violence embedded in their principles and the extra-judicial killings that they engage in, particularly those in areas other than the Niger Delta. However the ethnic militias in the Niger Delta may actually persist, because their cause is a just one, especially the fight against the environmental degradation and poverty created in the area as a result of pollution and oil exploration.

AK: Do you make use of your research findings to initiate policy dialogue?

MKI: The primary purpose of most research I have engaged in is essentially to initiate policy dialogue.

AK: What are you currently researching on?

'Social Change and Identity in Muslim Societies'. I am paying particular attention to 'Identity Transformation and Identity Politics in Contemporary Nigeria: The Islamic Shariah as a Religious Revivalism and/or Politics of Masquerading'.

AK: Any future plans?

MKI: At the end of the above research, I intend to zero it on the study of youth manipulation and the youth role as standing armies for religious revivalism and the politics of masquerading in Northern Nigeria. ■

Congo-Brazzaville: Multipartyism or illiberal democracy?



**By: Tukumbi
Lumumba-
Kasongo**

Professor of political science, Wells College; visiting scholar at Cornell University; and director of Panafrican Studies and Research Center in International Relations and Education for Development (CEPARRED)

The political development of the Republic of Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville, is in a sensitive phase after the civil war. Peace is uneasy, and the question is whether the country is en route to multiparty democracy or if a regression to authoritarianism is actually taking place.

In recent times media reports and scholarly articles have tended to focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where violent conflict has raged since 1998 in what has been described as Africa's World War. This pre-occupation with the DRC has tended to eclipse the developments in its neighbouring state, the Republic of Congo or Congo-Brazzaville, where violent conflict – though formally ended by a peace agreement between the government and rebels in 2001 – has given way to an uneasy peace and a lingering humanitarian crisis in parts of the country. The victory of Denis Sassou-Nguesso – who seized power in 1992 and 1997 – in the 2002 elections has been violently contested by rebel groups allegedly loyal to former President Pascal Lissouba, who won the 1992 elections, and the Ninja militia active in the Pool region of the country. This occurs in spite of the March 2003 Peace Agreement, and other initiatives to achieve post-conflict democratization

and reconstruction. Although an elected government and parliament are in place, the country is still being buffeted by sporadic violent conflict, poverty and a humanitarian crisis. At the heart of the current impasse is the challenge of transforming the situation in Congo from war to peace. The outcome will depend on the democratization of Congolese society.

The relevant question remains if Congo-Brazzaville since 2002 has been *en route* to multiparty democracy or de facto regressing to authoritarianism? Recently, the evidence suggests that there have been signals of activism within civil society and a demonstrated willingness by the Congolese government to respond to the demands for multiparty democracy.

Congo-Brazzaville, like many other countries in Africa, bowed to the waves of multiparty democracy that engulfed the continent in the 1990s. However, not too long after the return to multipartyism in 1992, it was overturned by violent means by a former military ruler, Sassou-Nguesso, who has since tried to legitimize his rule, by organizing subsequent multiparty elections (that he has won), and by seeking the inclusion of some of his erstwhile political opponents in his government. This effort has been complicated by the resistance of private militia groups and politicians fighting against Sassou-Nguesso's government, which they insist seized power illegitimately. Thus, parts of southern Congo have witnessed continued militia activity, in spite of several peace agreements between the government and rebel groups. The result has been the widespread destruction of property and lives, and the displacement of close to a hundred thousand Congolese, thus further complicating a situation in which Congo itself hosts almost a hundred thousand refugees who fled the horrors of war in neighbouring states such

as the DRC and Rwanda. Some Congolese are also refugees in neighbouring states. The reality that some of the militia groups reflect regional and ethnic identities and interests has also undermined national stability and cohesion and worsened the humanitarian crisis in the country.

Background to the crisis

It is important to sketch the background to the present crisis in the Congo. Congo gained its independence on August 15, 1960, after a period of nationalist struggle led by its elite. Independence was achieved through negotiation within the French African Federation and Charles de Gaulle's approach of gradualism and integration into the broader French community. Prior to independence, in 1959, ethnic politics also exploded after the 1958 referendum in which the Congolese voted yes to the new French Constitution.

However, despite some ideological efforts to challenge the domination of France, including at some point the adoption of socialism, the Congolese state has gravitated within the French orbit of power. The nature of Congo-France relations has mainly been determined by the discovery of petroleum off the Congolese coast. The French petroleum parastatal TotalFinaElf has managed the production of oil on the basis of an unequal partnership investment with the Congolese state and power elite. Congo is therefore a rentier monocultural economy, in which oil accounts for 95 percent of export earnings, 60 percent of GDP, and approximately 75 percent of tax revenue. The exploitation and control of Congolese oil by French interests, has had direct implications for violent politics in the country, as these external interests provide resources with which the Congolese state wages war against its opponents.

At the end of the Cold War, Congo was under pressure from internal demands for democracy, and an external environment in support of multipartyism. The process of re-defining Congolese state power after the National Conference, which took place in 1991, reflected a slow phasing out or decay of institutions, and a growing privatization of violence. This contributed to the transformation of the party in power, and some opposition

parties into militias, and the de facto partitioning of the country by the various armed factions. Furthermore, access to the remnants of state power was largely dependent on the Machiavellian behaviour of the political leadership, and complex alliances and conflicts that reflected strong ethnic and regional solidarities or cleavages. Under these conditions, the state in Congo was confronted by a crisis of legitimacy, which led to violent factional struggles for power and further challenges to the state's claim to authority, undermining any real social stability and blocking the prospects for sustainable peace and development.

The manipulation of ethnic identities and regional differences by major political figures, coupled with the interventionist role of external oil interests contributed to the outbreak of a bloody civil war in the 1990s.

Ideological trends in Congolese politics

Congolese politics since the country's independence has been dominated by various state ideologies. For instance, Fulbert Youlou, the first president of Congo-Brazzaville, was pro-French and pro-West; while Alphonse Massamba-Débat in 1964 declared the first Marxist-Leninist political party and Marxist regime in Africa. Marien Ngouabi in 1968 created his own Marxist-Leninist party, the Congolese Workers' Party, and declared the Congo a People's Republic. Despite the totalitarian tendencies of the past regimes, Congo has never produced political absolutism similar to that of Mobutu in Zaire/DRC, of Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, or that of Bokassa in the Central African Republic.

On February 5, 1979, General Sassou-Nguesso seized power and maintained the inherited one-party rule as the head of the Congolese Labour Party until the Sovereign National Conference of 1991. After he was stripped of all powers by the resolutions of the National Conference, like Yhomby-Opango in different circumstances in 1979, he was reduced to only being a symbol of the state. However, with military support from Angola and backing from France, which had strategic and economic (oil) interests to protect, he built a private army in his native northern

Congo and forcibly re-took power and declared himself the president in October 1997 after four months of war against the duly elected President, the socialist and pan-Africanist Pascal Lissouba. After seizing power, Sassou-Nguesso turned round and called for “peace agreements” and created the forum for reconciliation in 1999. His opponent – the overthrown President-elect Lissouba, has in turn sought to return to power, this time by violent means. In seeking to reinforce his legitimacy, Sassou-Nguesso has organized a transition process resulting in peace agreements, elections and a process of Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration for the various Congolese militias and their combatants. But the post-war transitions initiated by the Congolese government have not been accepted by all the armed militias and political groups, nor have they led to any meaningful sharing of power.

The reasons for the problems besetting the Congolese transition lie partly in the fact that the regime in power embodies elements both of multipartyism and an illiberal democracy. With the new constitution adopted by referendum in January 2002, a multiparty democracy with wide-ranging powers was established, at least on paper. Sassou-Nguesso perceives himself as a “prophet of peace” in accepting constitutionalism despite the extreme violence he used to re-capture power in Congo and maintain himself in state power. Despite the allegations of electoral irregularities, he was declared the winner of the March 2002 presidential elections gaining 89 percent of the votes cast, and returned for a seven-year term in office. After this contested victory, he embarked on another peace process leading up to the 2003 peace agreement with the Ninja militia, which appears to be only partly effective. Thus, the current regime’s claim to multiparty democracy is limited by it only being tolerated to the extent that it does not challenge Sassou-Nguesso’s grip on power over Congo. This political construct could be described as “a kind of illiberal democracy where formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal authority, but rulers violate the rules so strikingly that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards

The Republic of Congo in brief

Area: 342,000 sq. km

Population (2004): 3.0 million

Capital: Brazzaville

Urbanisation: 70% of the population lives in Brazzaville

Ethnic groups: 15 major ethnic groups, which are subdivided into 75 smaller sub-ethnic groups. The Bakongo is the largest group (48% of the total population). Other major groups are Sangha, Teke and M'Bochi.

Gross Domestic Product (2003): USD 2.186 billion

Per capita income (2003): USD 700 per year

Life expectancy (2004): 49.51 years

of democracy” (S. Levitsky and L.A. Way: ‘The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism’ in *Journal of Democracy*, 13.2 [2002]). In this connection, the brand of democracy practised by the President has not led to any real reconciliation with the major opposition groups represented by Pascal Lissouba, Bernard Kolelas, and Joachim Yhomby-Opango and their supporters. More importantly, it has not led to the transfer of power to the people nor led to peace and stability in the troubled republic.

Since the outbreak of civil war between the government forces and militia groups in the 1990s, there have been gross violations of human rights. More recently, human rights groups have charged that some 353 people, who disappeared in the Beach border area between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Congo-Brazzaville, were killed with the alleged direct complicity of the Congolese government. In July 2005, the trial of the 16 highest-ranking government security officials, accused of murdering Congolese returnees suspected of being opposed to President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, opened in Brazzaville with a fanfare. However, the subsequent acquittal of the accused, on August 18, 2005, has further angered the victims’ families despite the courts ruling that the sum of 10 million CFA be awarded to around 100 victims’ families. It would appear that the ruling was largely “political”, and directed at providing the government with some legitimacy, without providing justice for the victims of the excesses of the state’s security force. While Sassou-Nguesso has been hard-pressed to project himself as a “new democrat” who respects the rule of law and

constitutional rights of the citizens, some of the government's policies have continued to contradict the processes of post-conflict reconciliation and reintegration that are so important to peace and development in the Congo. It would appear that the legacy of long years of military and one party rule has continued to suffocate and subvert the march of the Congo to full-fledged multiparty democratic rule.

Concluding remarks

In spite of the broad picture of an "illiberal democracy" in Congo-Brazzaville, there have been some modest improvements under multipartyism. These can be found in some sections of civil society that, however, remains weak and lacks real autonomy from the state. Such developments include the rise of independent media, the diversity of political parties, and some respect for basic human rights and freedoms. The government's direct censorship has been relatively limited in the media and professional associations. Academic freedom is also tolerated in research-oriented activities. The separation of powers between the various arms of government has also been partially respected. However, the centralization of power and excessive control of the national oil resources by executive power, and the fact that the mechanisms for sharing these resources are used on the basis of personal loyalty, have slowed down any efforts at democratization. The resistance to an equitable power-sharing arrangement and lack of transparency in public

policies remain important elements of Congolese politics that reinforce illiberal democracy. Thus the dominant tendency has been towards (multiparty) autocratic and patrimonial tendencies centred on personification of power.

In its relations with France, Congo has remained a prisoner of its history. A more decisive advancement of its democracy will require diversifying its foreign investment base and trade relations, reviving its leftist/progressive legacies, and adapting them into the new global imperatives.

Inter-ethnic conflicts should be dealt with, not through the lenses of the forum of "psycho-moral" reconciliation – like in South Africa, where economic power is still in the hands of the minority – but through the setting up of a new policy of equitable re-distribution of resources on the basis of decentralized and democratic political arrangements. Since the Congolese political elite has had some exposure to progressive and trade unionist traditions, the premise of "each person according to her/his need" can better guide its policy with respect to social justice, democratization, reconciliation and post-war reconstruction in Congo. The establishment of post-war democracy in the republic of Congo requires a return to the popular constitution that emerged out of the discourse of the Sovereign National Conference, and a commitment by all national actors, regional players and the international community, including France, to respect the wishes and collective interests of the Congolese people. ■

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Post-conflict transition, the state and civil society in Africa



By: Cyril I. Obi
Programme co-ordinator of the research programme 'Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society in Africa' at the Nordic Africa Institute

This programme, originally launched in February 2001 and subsequently re-launched in February 2005, is to debate, and critically examine the transition from violent conflict or civil wars to post-conflict peace and development. This is partly informed by the concerns to understand the nature of these transitions with a view to reducing the risks of a regression to violence or war, and consolidate the processes of peace and growth. It therefore seeks new perspectives or explanations for violent conflict, especially the role played by various actors and institutions, at the local, national, regional and international levels. In real terms therefore it responds in a critical manner to the frameworks, assumptions and explanations that underpin research and policy in the areas of post-war reconstruction or peace building and development.

It is expected that the production of knowledge in this programme will involve, and be of relevance to scholars, civil society groups and policy makers in both the Nordic countries and West Africa. The main programme activities are designed to facilitate the building of research networks along Nordic-Africa, West Africa lines. The aim is to promote collaboration between Nordic

and African researchers, activists and policymakers, building the capacity of younger researchers, and providing opportunities through seminars and conferences for the dissemination of research results. It is also expected that research findings found to be of high quality after going through a peer-review process will be published.

Research agenda

The background to the programme lies in post-Cold War civil wars (that crossed borders and became regionalized) in West Africa, that have only recently ended as in the cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau. It can also be seen in the fragile peace that obtains in a divided post-civil war Côte d'Ivoire, once envied across the region as a haven of peace and prosperity. More recently the combination of ecological stresses, socio-economic problems, identity politics and pressures for democracy has provoked episodes of unrest, low intensity conflict and political violence in Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Togo and Mauritania. The imperative of understanding the dynamics of politics in the region, and the roles of various actors within and across borders have direct implications for potential conflict either in the pre-conflict or post-conflict phases. The programme also directs attention to the roles of the state and civil society as actors in the transition from conflict to peace, and the challenges they face as they respond to the serious challenges posed by the demands of post-war reconstruction, peace and development. This is clearly important given the ways both actors fit into the overall project of democratization and development in West Africa. Apart from the need to generate innovative ideas about the nature of state and civil society, there is the urgent need to capture how

they respond differentially to local, regional and international pressures, and the impact this has for peace in the region.

The programme also deals with the conceptual and methodological challenges that confront research in the field of post-conflict transitions. The strategies of dealing with such issues are of necessity multi-disciplinary and involve both theoretical rigour as well as empirical fieldwork. Another challenge that has to be confronted is the contextualization of post-conflict transitions, given the rather problematic issue of providing a standard definition. The ideological underpinnings of post-conflict transitions suggest that peace and development begin where wars end. This however is not borne out in real situations, where the end of war may be the beginning of another war, or where the process of post war reconstruction is conflict-ridden. A good example of this is the favourite exit strategy of the international community – elections, which are used to legitimize the peace process and the end of war. In most cases, the elections are conflictual, or the outcomes lead to violent conflict, particularly when the winner takes all, or once in power, spurns the terms of the transition process. This underscores the need to study on a case-by-case basis, the post-conflict elections in West Africa, their timing and nature, and how they have advanced, or indeed threatened the transition to peace and development.

Another critical issue for research is the trend towards framing policies for the economic reconstruction of post-war societies on the basis of neo-liberal or market-based reforms. Yet the question remains whether West Africa's war-torn countries, with completely destroyed infrastructure, shortage of skilled personnel, weak institutions and mass poverty can respond to the 'trickle-down' effect of market growth in ways that address the need for employment, equitable distribution of wealth, reconciliation, reconstruction and national healing. While national interests and the literature on the economic explanations of war have largely influenced post-conflict transition policy particularly on the part of the international community, there is clearly the need to recognize

the centrality of the people traumatized by conflict in generating the local initiatives and energies needed for real democracy, peace and development in the region.

It is also important to re-evaluate the roles of state, multilateral/bilateral/regional institutions and civil society (local, regional and external) in national reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and the extent to which they have effectively promoted peace. Yet focus must be centred on the people, particularly the youth, women and children both as actors, and as victims, that constitute a critical focus of post-war reconstruction. By the same logic, the research seeks to capture the role of trans-territorial actors and neighbouring states in conflict, and the eventual success or otherwise of the transitions to peace.

In the final analysis, the programme scope spans across the architecture of conflict and post-war reconstruction, peace, human security and development in West Africa. At the heart of this lies the challenge of examining the options that can promote the institutionalization of participatory democracy in West Africa, through which the people by means of the control of power can ensure that the transition from violent conflict to development will primarily serve their interests.

Research strategies

The studies are structured around individual experts, Nordic–Africa research networks, regional teams, country teams and NGOs. It is expected that these will provide both the depth and breadth expected from multi-disciplinary perspectives dealing with identified themes and critical issues. Part of the strategy will involve capacity building for post-graduate students, junior and middle level academics and activists in universities, research institutes and civil society organisations.

Workshop

A first brainstorming workshop within the programme was held in Uppsala on 4 June 2005. It had the title *Post-Conflict Transitions in West Africa* and gathered 23 participants – researchers, policy

makers and civil society activists – from Nordic and West African countries. Discussions at the workshop revolved around the key areas and challenges, and the strategies that would best promote research and policy inputs into the transitions from conflict to peace and development in West Africa. The presentations and discussions were organized along the following thematic areas: 1) Conceptual and methodological issues; 2) Critical issues and actors in post-conflict transitions in West Africa; 3) Prioritizing research themes and strategies.

Conceptual and Methodological Issues. The discussions centred on the need to produce knowledge that could bridge the research-policy gap, the importance of multi-disciplinary perspectives, research strategies, and the need for an operationalization of the term “Post-Conflict”. The need to question assumptions about the nature of the state and civil society was emphasized as a way of overcoming distortions and simplistic generalizations. Attention was also drawn to the connection between post-conflict transitions and development, and the need to understand the type of solutions/packages that the international community were promoting in West Africa, their ideological and strategic underpinnings, and how these could not deliver the type of development needed for conflict transformation.

Critical Issues and Actors in Post-Conflict Transitions in West Africa. The discussions revolved around the contradictions inherent in international intervention in conflict and post-conflict situations, the critical issues in truth and

reconciliation processes and the role of youth as foot soldiers in conflicts across West Africa. State, non-state actors, youth, women, and children were noted as important actors in post-war reconstruction. The understanding of the local, national, regional and international roots and dynamics of violent conflict was identified as being very critical to post-conflict transitions. It was noted that donors in some contexts pursued policies and imposed solutions that were contradictory, and there were suggestions that local initiatives in reconciliation and peace building would strengthen the prospects for future peace and development.

Prioritizing Research Themes and Strategies. In prioritizing research themes and strategies, the discussions emphasized the need to systematize and contextualize post-conflict transitions, pay close attention to regional dynamics, new actors, the politics of international interventionism and post-war aid, and the need for policy-relevant research. Part of the process would include the selection of relevant research themes, building research networks and capacities, and the dissemination of research results. On methodology, the importance of posing integrating questions from inter-disciplinary perspectives and the promotion of debates on why post-conflict arrangements in West Africa appeared to be so endangered was highlighted. It was also agreed that the crucial nexus between Conflict, Democracy and Development would form a useful systematic framework in generating issues and research questions for the programme. ■



Collaborative research on African trade

By: Olu Ajakaiye

Director of Research, the African Economic Research Consortium, AERC

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), established in 1988, is a public not-for-profit organization whose primary objective is to develop, strengthen, retain and utilize local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous research into problems pertinent to the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa. To achieve these objectives, AERC has developed research and graduate training programmes in economics both of which are designed to maximize the synergy, efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. The research programme has two main components, namely thematic and collaborative research. The thematic research and its associated technical workshops are the basic strategies for capacity development and enhancement. The collaborative research and its associated special studies are designed to encourage the retention of such capacity and its application in contemporary policy context. All of these are grounded in the conviction that sound economic management facilitated by well trained and locally based professional economists is a necessary condition for sustained economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa.

Over the years, African policy makers have been confronted with problems of macroeconomic instability, low growth and pervasive poverty. In recognition of the importance of evidence based and well managed trade policy in the quest for initiating broad-based sustainable growth and poverty reduction, AERC embarked on a series of collaborative research on African trade in 1993. So far, three major collaborative research projects have been completed. These are: Trade Liberalization and Regional Integration; Africa and the World Trading System; and African Imperatives in the New World Trade Order.

The first two projects dealt with market access issues. The third addressed the issues of effective participation in and strategic articulation and protection of the interests of African countries in a series of separate but inter-related regional and multilateral trade negotiations. These are the World Trade Organisation (WTO)-based negotiations under the work programme of the Doha Development Agenda, the negotiation of the trade component of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP)-European Union (EU) Partnership Agreement, and the expected negotiations that will bring about the second phase of the proposed US-Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) partnership agreement embedded in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). AERC considers it crucial to address these issues essentially because each of these trade negotiations is likely to truncate the non-reciprocal preferential trade relationships that had existed between them and their trading partners. As some degree of reciprocity is brought into these relationships, SSA countries will confront the following challenges:

1. How binding agreements emanating from trade negotiations may affect each country's overall development strategy;
2. How to align African regulatory systems with those implied by multilateral trade rules while minimizing the costs associated with the implementation of the agreements; and,
3. How to enhance the effectiveness of African participation in the negotiations.

These issues formed the core of the research questions that this project addressed.

Components of the study

It is, perhaps, pertinent to briefly describe the three key components of this research project,

namely, research, policy advisory and dissemination activities. The *research* component of the project was implemented through a set of country case studies focusing on: agriculture; food security; manufacturing; services; and the trade policy process.

The case studies examined these issues in-depth across 15 countries in order to establish the variations in how substantive trade negotiations relate to them, how national regulatory systems are affected by multilateral trade rules, what options exist for regional harmonization and coordination of African trade policy, and which sectors and negotiating issues are amenable to regional coordination. The countries involved were: Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda.

In addition, a set of cross-cutting issue papers examined such topics as external tariff and non-tariff barriers facing African exports, preferences and African trade, African participation in the WTO process, policy space and trade negotiations, commodity issues in trade negotiations, and technical assistance and trade capacity building in Africa. In total, there were forty six country case studies involving about ninety researchers.

The *policy advisory* component of the research project was designed to ensure that the results of these studies inform policy making in the broad area of trade policy as well as the more focused concerns for effective participation in trade negotiations. This component was aimed at assisting African countries to prepare for and participate effectively in the WTO multilateral trade negotiations and the bilateral negotiations associated with the trade component of the ACP/EU Partnership Agreement or the USA's AGOA. For this purpose, the results of this study were presented in a variety of easily accessible formats including executive summaries, policy briefs and policy memoranda thereby giving the African trade officials and negotiators the background materials they needed on various aspects of the negotiations. This way, the project made a significant contribution to Africa's effective par-

ticipation by providing the African delegates to the WTO Cancun talks with such materials.

The third component is *dissemination*. Clearly, the impact and effectiveness of Africa's participation in these negotiations would depend on the quality of the research findings and their timely dissemination to African policy makers especially since this research is concerned with a rapidly unfolding process of negotiations. Therefore, several workshops for negotiators were organized to present and discuss the research results with the relevant constituencies at the national and regional levels. In order to broaden the information base of all stakeholders in trade and trade negotiations, a major dissemination workshop was organized bringing together researchers; policy makers; experts from international organizations including the African Union, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union and WTO; representatives of private sector organizations such as chambers of commerce, exporters' associations, cooperative societies, farmers' organizations; and civil society organizations. This provided an opportunity for the researchers to present highlights of their findings and the policy implications to this distinguished audience for their deliberation. As was the case with the earlier two projects, participants at this workshop strongly advised that the next AERC collaborative research on African Trade should focus on the issue of export supply response capacity constraints in Africa which have made it difficult for Africa to take maximum advantage of the various market access and other preferential trade arrangements that have existed hitherto and which may be secured in the on-going trade negotiations.

Export supply response constraints

In response, AERC is embarking on rigorous and comprehensive research entitled *Behind the Border Issues in Export Supply Response Constraints in Africa*. It is pertinent to conduct research on this aspect of African trade if trade is to contribute to broad-based growth

and poverty reduction both of which are critical to the achievement of the millennium development goals in Africa. The study is also urgent in order to reverse the continuing marginalization of Africa in world trade as evidenced by:

- Low and declining share of Africa in world trade which fell from 6 percent in 1980 to 2.3 percent in 2003 while that of China rose from 0.9 percent in 1980 to 5.9 percent in 2003;
- Low share of manufactures in total export of virtually all SSA countries with the exception of South Africa and Mauritius;
- Loss of international competitiveness as reflected in the declining UNIDO industrial competitiveness index for virtually all SSA countries including South Africa and Mauritius.

The outcome of this study should help Africa to take maximum advantage of the market access, special and preferential treatment, longer implementation period, etc which African countries and other low developed countries are actively negotiating in the WTO and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Accordingly, this study will address the following key research issues, among others;

- fuller understanding of the nature and variety of export supply response capacity constraints faced by African countries in their bid to diversify production and export base;
- the magnitude, incidence and impact of these constraints;
- the policy and institutional reform options which may be relevant and feasible for their reduction and/or elimination; and
- the complementary regional and sub-regional initiatives for dealing with export supply response capacity constraints.

In summary, this study should enhance our understanding of major constraints that are confronting efforts to diversify Africa's production and export at the country and regional levels thereby providing useful guides to the articulation of appropriate policy measures and initiatives to deal with them. Therefore, analysis of national level variations is quite important, given that most of the factors influencing a country's export

supply response capacity reflect specific country policies and characteristics. On the basis of this country-level research, it should be possible to determine the types of behind-the-border measures that will enhance the country's export supply response capacity. The study should, therefore, help in identifying and distilling country experience which is vital for determining whether, when and how to apply particular measures as means of eliminating export supply response capacity constraints taking due cognizance of the regional dimensions of such measures.

It is important to point out that studies such as this that combine cross-country studies with in-depth country case studies are likely to yield more policy relevant findings than those that rely exclusively on cross-country studies. Exclusive reliance on cross-country studies tends to encourage a one-size-fits-all policy syndrome which has not succeeded in many developing countries, certainly not in Africa. It is hoped that the findings of this study will, therefore, encourage Africa's development partners to adopt a more nuanced approach to their development assistance, not only in the area of diversification of exports but in all other areas of development concerns. ■

African Economic Research Consortium

The African Economic Research Consortium, AERC, was established in 1988 and is based in Nairobi. It is a public not-for-profit organisation devoted to advanced policy research and training in economics. Its principle objective is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into problems pertinent to the management of economies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

More information on www.aercafrica.org.

Images of wilderness landscapes



Photo by Mai Palmberg

By: Shirley Brooks

Researcher and lecturer at School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and guest researcher at the Institute, spring 2005

Images of wilderness landscapes are an important way in which African ‘otherness’ is constructed and consumed in the west. This research project aims to look critically at images of Africa that emphasise African ‘wildness’, and to examine the history and social effects of these. In the modern world, such images are largely created and circulated by the global tourism industry. In films and nature documentaries, on websites and in other forms of tourism marketing, Africa is viewed as a vast wilderness populated by spectacular wildlife. African landscapes are regularly described as timeless, primeval, or primordial - an impression that is reinforced by images of lands populated by impressive wild animals, in particular the ‘big five’ (elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo and leopard). Nostalgia for a ‘lost Eden’, especially on the part of westerners, is a key aspect of the emotions these images are intended to evoke.

However if notions of ‘nature’ and ‘wilderness’ are viewed as social constructions, then this opens up interesting questions about culture - and of course power. One compelling interpretation is that tamed (urbanised) landscapes inevitably require their counterpart: that is, untamed spaces of nature (in this case ‘wild Africa’). The argument is that such images and representations of ‘primi-

tive’ space are in fact the product of modernity and are necessary to it: wilderness landscapes can be understood as modernity’s other face.

Such an understanding raises questions about how these processes actually work. If ‘nature’ or ‘wilderness’ landscapes are socially constructed and actively maintained through a range of social and cultural practices, then it perhaps becomes possible to rescue them (through careful historical research) from the ‘timeless’ images of the tourism brochures. The aim of this project is thus to tease out *histories* of wildness in both the colonial and postcolonial period – that is, to understand how images of primitive wilderness were and are created.

Another important goal is to begin to understand the effects this has had for African people. How do Africans fit into ‘wilderness’? Should we not be concerned when cultural villages featuring ‘wild’, ‘primitive’ or ‘traditional’ Zulu or Maasai people are embraced by tourists as part of the wilderness experience (and become substantial money-spinners for private enterprise)? Or when local people are deprived of land resources, or encouraged by international conservation organisations to tie their livelihoods more directly to wildlife, sometimes with disastrous consequences?

In the context of these broader questions, this project explores the way in which these processes took hold - and have been contested - in one particular context. The geographical focus of the project is the Zululand region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Currently, ecotourism and the wilderness adventure are presented as a major opportunity for residents of the region. ‘Wilderness’ landscapes in the form of game farms, safari lodges and accompanying cultural villages are springing up everywhere. But looked at historically, one can see that this is actually a far longer

process. My aim is to trace how Zululand has been reinvented as a 'wild' space for urban consumption, a process that goes back to the 1930s. Just two avenues of research are mentioned here.

First, some clues emerge from a little-known travel book, *Zulu Journey*, published in 1937. In this book, the journalist Carel Birkby encourages his readers to explore the 'wilder, more primitive region' of Zululand and recounts his own adventures in the territory. It is crucial to remember that only thirty years before, Zululand was still being subjected to processes of colonial conquest. But by the 1930s, as Birkby baldly put it, 'the savage tribes that Dingaan and Cetywayo led against the white man have settled down happily to be the white man's servants and to keep his laws'. Zululand could now safely be reworked as a 'wild' space nostalgically reminiscent of frontier days, where the 'primitive' still existed for the enjoyment of adventurous tourists. One is essentially looking at a landscape being tamed, in the post-

conquest period, by being made a subject for tourist consumption.

In succeeding decades, a key factor in this process of creating wilderness was the marketing and publicizing of the Zululand game reserves (in particular, Hluhluwe and Umfolozi), and the mythologies created by the men who worked in these spaces. Of particular importance are the accounts of white game rangers who as young men in the 1950s and 1960s dedicated themselves to 'saving' the Zululand wilderness from factors that were seen to threaten it, including the actions of Zulu people in the neighbouring 'tribal reserves'. Ian Player, the well-known conservationist, was one of these men. In 1973, Player wrote about how Zululand's white rhino – that symbol of wildness – was 'saved' at the Umfolozi game reserve (*The White Rhino Saga*). As an older man, he has written another book reflecting on his life experience. Significantly, the title is *Zululand Wilderness: Shadow and Soul* (1997). ■

online database

Africanists in the Nordic Countries

'**Africanists in the Nordic Countries**' is an **online database** provided and managed by the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden. The data is supplied by researchers based in the Nordic countries and with a clear research focus on Africa.

The purpose of the database is both to facilitate networking among researchers and to provide policy-makers, development NGOs, journalists, and others engaged in Africa-related issues with a guide to research on Africa conducted in the Nordic countries.

For further information, see: www.nai.uu.se/africanists/africanistseng.html

You are also welcome to contact:

Inga-Britt Isaksson Faris, research administrator (Inga-Britt.Isaksson_Faris@nai.uu.se)

The culture(s) of the ANC



By: Raymond Suttner

attached to the History Department at the University of South Africa and operating as a social and political analyst

This is a report of a project falling under the NAI research project 'Liberation and Democratisation in Southern Africa'. It was funded by Sida and conducted by Raymond Suttner.

The framing of this project was an investigation of the culture(s) of the African National Congress, ANC. By that I understood the various influences that went to make up the organisation, in the first place those from differing political experiences – exile, underground, prison, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and so on. But also I understood the need to investigate identities that people had prior to joining the organisation.

Although I published material on exile and in relation to the UDF and aspects of the prison experience, my main focus in the project became the underground experience. This was because the subject was neglected in the literature, so much so that a body of knowledge existed in people's minds about these activities whereas there was a silence in the literature. In the history books it was said that after the Rivonia trial ANC ceased to exist inside the country, whereas people immediately set about building the underground in a variety of ways. My work therefore recorded experiences of various individuals in many parts of the country, some rural and relatively inac-

cessible and some in the major cities. It does not represent a comprehensive history and relies primarily on oral sources, although some archival work was done.

But the work also aims at being a sociology of underground organisation, unpacking its special character as an organisational form. In particular, it examines the secrecy, vanguard nature, hierarchies, use of knowledge as power, conspiratorial character. Separately it relates to the gendered nature of underground as an experience of what it meant for the formation of masculinities and femininities and, finally, it relates to the question of the personal, how the personal was ceded to the collective, both in terms of individual judgment where it could be overridden by that of the organisation, but also in relation to interpersonal love as opposed to notions like 'love for the people'. Some of these are phenomena found almost universally, in the writings of Che Guevara for example. The outcome of this is a work called *Rendering Visible*, which I am hoping to publish as a book and presenting a version as a PhD.

Parallel to this process a series of other articles have been published ranging over questions of democratisation, popular power and the UDF, the notion of the intellectual, using Gramsci's theories to apply it to the formation and functioning of intellectuals within the ANC-led alliance, the character of the exile experience. Most recently together with Jeremy Cronin I have completed a new edition of our book on the Freedom Charter, *50 Years of the Freedom Charter* to be published by Unisa Press and Zed Books.

The various experiences I have had in the course of doing my research, opportunities to read and think have impacted on my thinking in a wider way. I am currently doing a similar lecture at various venues e.g. keynote addresses at the University of Cape Town Heritage month

and the National Heritage Council Conference on National Identity, Heritage and the National Question, culminating in the Wolpe Memorial Lecture to be held at three centres in November. I am calling this 'Talking to the Ancestors' where I am trying to grapple with a whole lot of ideas that were not part of my thinking when I started this project, notions found in the Freedom Charter like 'The People', disaggregated into its various component parts, the words 'brotherhood' used in the Charter and the contestation around the world, the most neglected of the three terms in the literature on the French Revolution. Its title relates to two sets of ancestors – Marx, Engels, the authors of the Freedom Charter and so on, but also the parallel cosmology of people who relate to ancestors on a daily basis, whose knowledge system is not acknowledged. I would use 'Talking

to the Ancestors' as a title of a book of essays, which would include my work on democratisation, UDF, exile, intellectuals.

I have annually returned to Sweden to report back on my work to Sida and the Nordic Africa Institute. I have generally given a lecture or participated in a conference and on one occasion also gave a seminar at Stockholm University. I have also given papers at numerous conferences and seminars at South African universities and internationally. The topics covered have included Culture(s) of the ANC, Political parties in Africa, Quality of Democracy in South Africa, History of the underground ANC and SACP, Masculinities and the ANC, Women in the ANC underground.

Below is a list of books and edited works related to the project. A number of articles and book chapters have also been produced. ■

Books and edited works by Raymond Suttner related to the project

Africa in the New Millennium. Edited and with an introduction by Raymond Suttner. The Nordic Africa Institute, 2001.

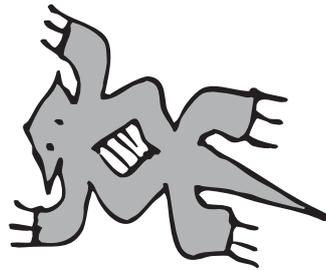
All My Life and All My strength. (Ed.) *Autobiography* by Ray Alexander Simons. Johannesburg: STE publishers, 2004.

'Hidden Histories' Series Editor. Unisa Press. The first book in this series was published in 2005.

Inside Apartheid's prison. Notes and letters of struggle. Melbourne/New York: Ocean Press, and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001.

Transformation of Political Parties in Africa. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Occasional Paper. Johannesburg, 2003.

50 Years of the Freedom Charter with new introduction by Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin. Unisa Press, Hidden Histories Series, 2005 (forthcoming).



Waste management in Uganda



By: Proscovia Svärd

Archivist and research administrator at the Nordic Africa Institute

Saving the environment in order to allow long-term and sustainable development is an ever more important issue world-wide. Some environmental problems are global, while others are local and possible for national decision-makers to act on. One such problem is the use – or misuse – of plastic bags, an issue which has been increasingly observed all over Africa. Here follow some observations from Uganda.

In recent times Uganda, renowned for its lush green vegetation, scenic beauty and picturesque safaris, has been in the news both for its successful campaign against the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the move towards multiparty democracy. Whichever way the recent trends are interpreted, the environment continues to have a central place in a country once referred to by Winston Churchill as the 'Pearl of Africa'. Today part of this captivating scenic and pristine beauty that Uganda was noted for is under a grave threat. Part of this threat revolves around the challenge posed to waste management by rapid urbanization, modernity, changing consumption habits and life styles and socio-economic and political changes. This article focuses on the menace posed by the improper use and disposal of polythene bags and plastics leading to the scarring of the

environment, pollution, filth and the attendant adverse health and social consequences. Littered polythene bags – *buveera* in Luganda – have become an eyesore and a problem in Uganda. This is due to indiscriminate dumping of refuse and solid waste, and the poor state of waste management infrastructure and institutions. A country like Uganda, where about 80 percent of the people survive on agriculture, needs to seriously address the impact of poor waste management on its environment.

Rapid urban population growth has led to overcrowding, poor housing and sanitation. These challenges have exacerbated the problems of waste management and have led to the degradation of the environment. Water drainages are clogged by dumped polythene bags, which cause flooding, creating breeding pools for disease-carrying mosquitoes and waterborne infections. Plastic bags damage soils by hindering water penetration suffocating microorganisms and reducing soil fertility. Grazing animals can ingest them, fall ill and die. Also, the burning of polythene pollutes the air thereby causing respiratory tract infections like coughs, asthma and bronchitis. The solutions to the problems caused by polythene bags will depend on the effectiveness of the policies designed to address them.

Non-effective measures

Although Uganda ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) aimed at promoting an environmentally sustainable development in 1993, it appears that Uganda has not been able to fully implement its commitments under the Convention. This is due to problems of inadequate planning, resources/capacities, and a weak political will. In 2002, the writer met with the then Minister of the Environment Dr. Ruhakana

Rugunda and shared views as a concerned citizen about what should be done to curb the problems caused by the improper disposal of polythene bags. The minister emphasized that the government had taken measures such as the imposition of a 50 percent excise duty to curb the widespread use and littering of polythene bags. In spite of this and other measures, polythene bags have remained a menace to the environment.

However, the measures taken to regulate the use of polythene bags in Uganda have not been effective. Indeed, polythene bags are now being smuggled into the country. Traders continue to distribute free polythene bags to their customers. In 2003, Greenwatch, a leading environmental NGO, through the courts sought a total ban on the production of polythene bags. The National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and Uganda's Attorney General contended that Greenwatch's case was not backed by research that showed how destructive the plastic bags were and wanted the case dismissed. Justice Lameck Mukasa ruled that the case should proceed since Greenwatch was acting in the interests of the public. It is however well known that the polythene bags that are used in Uganda are not biodegradable. Once dumped, they remain in the soil or bodies of water and degrade the environment.

Modernity or cultural imperialism?

Traditionally Ugandans have used hand-woven bags and baskets made of natural materials. When disposed of, these decompose. The imported plastic bags are clearly products of modernity and changing production and consumption habits and pose serious challenges to the Ugandan people and their environment. Industrialization and globalisation have impacted on the behaviour and tastes of people across the world, and Uganda is no exception. While Western countries strive to preserve their traditions, there is a growing tendency in Uganda to consume the products of foreign cultures without addressing possible negative impacts. There is a need to preserve the knowledge of how to weave

the *bikapos* (traditionally woven bags used to carry purchases home) by at least encouraging their production. Also, local institutions and scientists need to face up to the challenge of providing environmentally-friendly technologies and packaging material that can resolve the menace that *buveera* pose to the health and daily lives of Ugandans.

Education is important in raising public awareness and empowering people to protect their environment. However, experience shows that education, information and knowledge, must be accompanied by well-funded and equipped waste management institutions, good governance and a political will to conserve the natural environment. We can only talk about sustainable development if we can maintain the environment for future generations. It is of paramount importance for poor countries like Uganda to try and live up to what is contained in the Convention for Biological Diversity because of the dire consequences of the mismanagement of waste. The current government is commended for the economic growth that Uganda has achieved, and should strive harder to protect the environment.

Conclusion and suggestions

Laws governing the disposal of plastic bags should be put in place and education and information campaigns to the masses, schools and industries should be immediately embarked on. A 'keep Uganda clean' day should be encouraged where every citizen is engaged in the cleaning up of what we have already deposited in the environment. The government should require the companies manufacturing the polythene bags to take responsibility for the recycling of the non-biodegradable products that they produce. There are about 15 plastics manufacturing industries in Uganda. These companies should be in a position to start up a recycling programme and an information campaign to the masses. People who commit petty crimes should be sentenced to community services like the digging up of the plastic bags that have buried themselves in the

soil. The government, institutions, industries and non-governmental organizations should collaborate in order to put in place a system that will ensure better management of waste like polythene bags. The banning of polythene bags could be the ultimate solution in order to save the environment. Rwanda for example has banned plastics less than 100 microns thick and has backed the ban with public awareness campaigns. In 2003, South Africa banned plastic

bags thinner than 30 microns and introduced a plastics levy some of which goes to a plastic bag recycling company. Kenya has proposed a seven-point plan for tackling plastic bags. The government of Uganda should invest in a proper waste management infrastructure. Uganda can win the battle against the improper disposal of plastics and polythene bags. It is the only way to preserve the natural heritage of the 'Pearl of Africa'. ■

Selected reading

Final Report, ICS-UNIDO International Workshop Plastics Waste Management and Development of Environmentally Degradable Plastics, 24–26 November, 2004, Hotel Africa, Kampala, Uganda.

Greenwatch at www.greenwatch.or.ug/greenwatch_activities_actions.htm

Uganda's National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) at www.nemaug.org.

Nordic research networks

The Nordic Africa Institute is pleased to launch its new initiative to stimulate further collaboration on contemporary Africa within the Nordic regions. The idea is to support the establishment of narrowly defined thematic networks, which will enhance the infrastructure among researchers working on African and developmental issues within the Nordic countries, and which will hopefully generate long-lasting interaction between researchers involved in emerging fields of research. Each network will be given the financial means to enable them to meet twice in the Nordic regions, within a period of four years. The themes are:

- Islamic Movements in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Media, Communication and Popular Culture in Africa
- NGO-Civil Society Research Network
- State and Society in Nigeria
- Diaspora and State Formation in the Horn of Africa

More information at www.nai.uu.se

Conferences and meetings

Political Continuity and Change in Southern Africa: Zimbabwe and Namibia 2005

19 May 2005, Stockholm, Sweden

The one-day Research Forum was held at International IDEA in Stockholm on Thursday 19 May 2005. It was attended by over 30 people, among whom were academics, activists, diplomats and members of the public. The Research Forum was arranged by the Nordic Africa Institute in co-operation with International IDEA based in Stockholm. The speakers and discussants at the seminar were Amin Kamete, Programme Coordinator at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala; Assis Malaquias, Associate Professor of Government at St Lawrence University, Canton, New York, USA; Henning Melber, Research Director at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala; Joram Rukambe, Senior Programme Officer of Election Processes at International IDEA, Stockholm; and Ozias Tungwarara, Senior Programme Officer of Planning and External Relations at International IDEA, Stockholm.

The main purpose of this one-day Research Forum was to focus a critical gaze on current political trends in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Attention was paid to differences and similarities between the political developments in these two countries after their latest elections. The two countries share a history of armed liberation struggle and the liberation movements of both countries gained international legitimacy as democratically elected governments. ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe and SWAPO in Namibia have remained in power since independence. Both countries recently had elections that were won by the political parties already in power. At the time of the Research Forum the results of these elections had been or were still being disputed by the co-contestants.

Two of questions that formed the critical issues under scrutiny at this research forum were: (1) What are the continuities and changes in the two countries? and (2) What short-term and medium-

term trajectories are the two states likely to take? By isolating and analysing recent political issues of concern in the two countries, the speakers and discussants unravelled developments and contentions in the two southern African countries.

The seminar examined the various dimensions of the socio-political and economic processes in the two countries. The issues looked at included the 'crisis' in Zimbabwe in the wake of the controversial March 2005 elections. The polarisation of the dominant political forces and the complex blame games in the crisis were a source of lively exchanges in the subsequent discussion. The intransigence of major political players, as well as the enduring political stalemate gave rise to long debates, as participants tried to grapple with the situation and the efforts being expended to resolve the situation. The presentation by Amin Kamete, and the analysis of the discussant, Ozias Tungwarara led the discussion into an examination of the Zimbabwean society and how parties mobilise support, the point being to try and understand the so-called rural-urban divide in the political landscape in the country. As happens in discussions of this type, there was no agreement in perspectives on the situation, the explanatory frameworks, as well as propositions for the resolution of the crisis.

The presidential transition in Namibia was examined at length. What came out was the fate of major political actors who happened to have backed a losing horse. Electoral politics as well as the political situation raised a lot of discussion, as did the possibility of Namibia going along the Zimbabwe route, considering the close ties between the two countries. There were glimpses into the short reign of the new president, his cabinet and the utterances of key figures in SWAPO, which could indicate the possible direction the

country and party will take. Poverty, budgets, appointments and land featured prominently in the debates following presentations by Henning Melber and Jorum Rukambe.

Discussed separately in the concluding paper was the regional dimension. This was competently discussed in a paper presented by Assis Malaquias,

Associate Professor of Government at St Lawrence University, Canton, New York, USA. The paper widened the gaze from the two countries to the sub-region in areas such as land, political processes and socio-economic developments.

Amin Y. Kamete

First European Conference of African Studies

29 June – 2 July 2005, London

It has been a long-term ambition of AEGIS* (Africa–Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies) to launch a European conference of African studies to be held every two years. This has taken some time to come into being but finally in the summer of 2005 the first such conference took place in London at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, both of the University of London. The conference was locally organized by the Centre of African Studies of the University of London.

The conference seems to have been long awaited. There were 780 delegates in attendance, of whom 200 were students, and 480 were paper-givers. 275 were from the UK, four from Australia, 26 from Belgium, 19 from Denmark, seven from Finland, 45 from France, 71 from Germany, 36 from Italy, 23 from Portugal, 16 from South Africa, 16 from Sweden, 27 from Switzerland, 75 from the Netherlands, and 60 from the USA. There were 50 delegates from African nations.

Despite the large number of delegates there was no feeling of congestion. The organisers had been nervous about the plenary auditorium

only taking 290 people, and live transmissions to other halls had been arranged. SOAS is situated in Bloomsbury in the centre of London, close to the British Museum, bookshops, pubs and restaurants. This meant there was lots of competition for conference participants' attention, in addition to attraction number one: the other participants. Very wisely tea and coffee breaks were generously timed – half an hour in the morning and afternoon, with good possibilities for networking, chatting and meeting friends.

Not surprisingly most participants in this European conference of African Studies were Europeans, men and women in fairly equal numbers. There were participants from Africa too, but relatively few, due to a lack of specific funding for this purpose. The topics dealt with were diverse, as always in this type of gathering. Going through the book of abstracts it struck one that cultural issues were unusually well represented – in classic studies of literature and visual arts, but also in contexts that emphasize ways in which European ideas of 'modernity' as well as European 'images of Africa' were confronted, appropriated and used in new settings and in ways defying conventional ideas of 'modernity'

*) AEGIS (www.aegis-eu.org) is a network of European African Studies centres and its main goal is to improve understanding about contemporary African societies. AEGIS was set up in 1991 and today close to 20 centres in 13 countries are members of the network. The Nordic Africa Institute has been a member since 1996.

and 'tradition'. In these approaches studies of literature and art merge with anthropological methods in studies of issues such as contemporary music, film, urban culture etc.

Panels with a focus on gender and/or feminism were relatively few. Among a total of 99 panels, only six had words like women/gender/sexualities/masculinity/feminism in the titles. Several papers on gender issues were however integrated in panels on other themes. A number of panels dealt with religious topics, Islam as well as Christianity. The usual political science themes: discussions of state and politics, local governance etc. were represented, but did not dominate. What was generally lacking, however, was a feeling of political involvement in a more overriding sense.

There were seven plenary speeches, a mix of five African and two British: Andrew Jackson (deputy head to the Commission on Africa), Bole Butake (professor, Yaoundé) on the African writer's dilemma, John Lonsdale (Cambridge) on African studies, Adebayo Olukoshi on CODESRIA's experiences of strengthening social science research in Africa, Emmanuel Akyeampong on identity and citizenship in Black Africa, Kay Raseroka (International Federation of Library Associations), and Joyce Nyairo (Moi University, Kenya) on "Jua Kali as a metaphor for African urban ethnicities and cultures". The texts of the papers by Jackson, Butake, Lonsdale, and Nyairo are available on the AEGIS website: www.nomadit.co.uk/~aegis/lectures.htm.

Lonsdale raised questions, which concern all so called "Africanists". To quote his abstract:

"Why is it that, despite all the formal (and real) changes in relationships between Europe and Africa over the last century, popular perceptions of Africa and the West remain at the level of feckless victim and reluctantly heroic rescue service, and what responsibility, if any, do we scholars carry for this sad state of affairs?"

What, for instance, did you do to help the recent 'Blair' Commission for Africa to form its views? Should we all have lobbied more? Do we deserve the right to bemoan the failings if we couldn't be bothered to

engage in the first place? What are you/we now going to do to see to it that our countries and the EU generally adopt and act upon the proposals in the Blair Commission?

Can we be as effective/will we be as ineffective as scholars in the past in urging, not that Europe 'does something' about Africa, but that Europe adopts policies that allow Africans a better chance at doing something themselves?"

One can ask whether the AEGIS conference even attempted to answer these questions, or even put them squarely on the agenda. The conference proceeded the G8 summit in Scotland by a week which in turn was preceded by the giant event, called Live 8, staged by Bob Geldof in several venues world-wide including Hyde Park, where for ten hours 200,000 fans watched old and new stars under the slogan 'Help Africa eradicate poverty'.

It is easy to make cynical remarks about Live 8, abhor the way Bob Geldof was quoted as a wise man on poverty and Africa, and just brush the whole thing off as either naive or speculation in fame or both. Yet one can also ask why we, the supposed knowledgeable ones in Europe when it comes to African developments, why we just sipped our drinks, exchanged business cards, and concluded the first European conference on African studies without a trace of connection to the public stirring about poverty in Africa? Are African studies irrelevant to the core problems? Are scholars just not getting a chance to come into the public debate in the mass media focus on the spectacular? Or are we as scholars not really tuned in to also being participants in the public debate, and both activists and scholars?

This AEGIS conference was the first of its kind. The next time will be in 2007 and the host institution will be the African Studies Centre in Leiden, The Netherlands. One of the lessons learnt this time is that the AEGIS institutions must make more of an effort to secure funding for African participation.

*Susanne Linderos
(thanks also to reports by
Signe Arnfred and Mai Palmberg)*

Tanzania – A Critical Analysis

5–6 September 2005, Uppsala, Sweden

This international seminar took place at the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) in Uppsala. The seminar had 50 participants from the Nordic countries and Tanzania and was co-arranged with the Department of Rural Development Studies, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The seminar was funded by Sida. The practical organising around the seminar was skilfully done by NAI staff under the leadership of Karolina Winbo.

The title of the seminar reflects a wish to inquire into the foundation of the many positive signs of development in Tanzania during the last decade. By many, including the World Bank and donors, Tanzania has been held up as an example to be followed in implementation of economic and political reform. The seminar was organised around three themes, (i) agriculture, natural resources and rural development, (ii) governance and democratisation and (iii) donor relations and reforms. To each session a number of participants had prepared comments that opened for subsequent discussions. Carin Jämtin, the Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation, opened the seminar with reflections on Swedish policies towards globalisation, Africa and Tanzania.

The first theme included an analysis of Tanzanian rural development models in a forty-year perspective (Kjell Havnevik). The argument made was that two distinct development models can be identified, the post-colonial (1960–1980) and the market based model (1985 to present). The content and the qualities of the models were presented and the transition between them (1980–1985). In spite of their qualitatively different character both models aimed at modernisation and economic growth. However, official statistics show that there has been no structural change in the Tanzanian economy across the two models and that labour productivity, after a drastic decline in the 1970s and 1980s, has only marginally recovered during the 1990s, claimed to

be the decade of the turn-around of the economy. In investigating more closely the agricultural development in terms of production, productivity and yields of major food crops, two periods were selected, 1976 to 1986 and 1986 to 1998, the latter synonymous with the period of economic liberalisation (Rune Skarstein). Findings showed, however, that economic liberalisation had not led to any significant change in food production. Compared to the ‘crisis years’ 1970–1984, labour productivity, yields and production per capita of food grains had stagnated or declined during the period of liberalisation.

Two presentations addressed challenges and dynamics related to land and gender (Aida Isinika) and forestry (Gerald Monela). The findings from Njombe and Maswa districts showed that land conflicts were not gender neutral. Court case records and survey data were used to assess whether women would be inclined to take legal action to assert their rights to land. Although women to some extent made use of this opportunity, it varied between areas, with men dominating in this respect. Tenurial rights were still found to be embedded in cultural norms and practices and changing attitudes and transforming of customary law are required to provide a greater space for women. Although Tanzanian policies address the role of forests in growth and poverty reduction, they face immense pressures that have led to adverse impacts and environmental degradation. Lack of management capacity, unsustainable practices, weak education, lack of funding, corruption and illegal forest trading are elements that have contributed to serious forest decline. These developments have threatened the integrity of forest resources and seriously compromised prospects for poverty reduction and the role of forests in improving rural livelihoods.

As to trends in corruption in Tanzania (Brian Cooksey) it was stated that the efforts of the present government (Mkapa: 1995–2005) to

eliminate the worst short-sighted plunder that characterised the former regime (Mwinyi: 1985–1995), had not done away with the underlying governance weaknesses. They continue to overwhelm government/donor attempts to reform. The Mkapa regime's record on governance and corruption was claimed to be much less impressive than portrayed at the end of his reign. This contributed to the assessment that there is limited or no empirical basis (i.e. the development in Tanzanian governance indicators over the period 1998–2004) to suggest that further increases in aid to Tanzania will improve the country's chances of attaining significant poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth.

Two presentations on democratisation processes, for the mainland (Jonas Ewald) and Zanzibar (Mohammed Bakari), were presented. The contrast in relation to these processes stands out, they are positive on the mainland and fragile and tense in Zanzibar. The fear arising is that possible new election rigging in Zanzibar could spill over to the mainland and seriously affect national political stability. The paper on the Zanzibar process provided empirical material showing a build up of tension in the pre-election process. It is strongly underlined that a free and fair electoral process should determine the outcome of the Zanzibari election and that political stakes should be reduced by an agreement on power sharing to avoid a winner-takes-all system of government that can cement tension in the future.

The session on donor relations and reforms included a historical overview on the Norwegian and Nordic/Tanzanian donor relations (Jarle Simensen). Attempts at furthering the successful close Nordic development co-operation with Tanzania in the 1960s failed, each Nordic country going it alone. However, all the Nordic countries came over time to stand out as staunch supporters of Nyerere's socially based model for development, until aid fatigue appeared in the 1980s. In particular it is argued that macro-economic considerations were missing in the aid relationship, allowing the pursuance of unrealistic and unviable

projects. The situation did not improve through a shift to programme aid and direct budget support under the Mwinyi regime. Both partners in the aid relationship seemed to be blinded by the "sovereignty fallacy" which made them unable to acknowledge that Tanzania had become a client state of a very special historical nature.

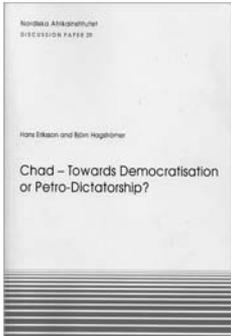
The historical account of the aid relationship stands in contrast to the recent changes in aid modalities and Tanzanian development assistance partnerships (Samuel Wangwe). The argument put forward is that fundamental changes in the aid relationship have taken place since the mid-1990s. An independent commission put the Tanzania-donor relationship on a constructive path which has been followed up by further initiatives and refinements in order for Tanzania to have firm ownership of its own policies and strategies including the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Tanzanian Assistance Strategy. A Joint Assistance Strategy is planned to take national ownership of the development process to a higher level. The initiatives and responses of the Tanzanian government as regards economic and political reform have led to very positive assessments by international agencies and donors.

In conclusion, however, this praise has not yet been reflected in structural changes in the economy, labour productivity and yield improvements, and the linking of the national policy process to the dynamics unfolding in the rural areas. The question was thus raised, relating to the title of the seminar, whether the dynamics seen in the rural areas are of a survival character and not of a type that can promote change and generation of an agricultural surplus that promote broad based, poverty reducing, economic development.

A book, edited by Kjell Havnevik and Aida Isinika, where the presentations to the seminar will appear, is planned for spring 2006.

Kjell Havnevik, researcher, the Nordic Africa Institute and Adjunct Professor, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Recent publications



Hans Eriksson and Björn Hagströmer

Chad – Towards Democratisation or Petro-Dictatorship?

ISBN: 91-7106-549-0, 81 pp, 110 SEK (appr. 11 euro), Discussion Papers no. 29

This study provides a background of the socio-political situation in Chad and the oil project, and analyses how the two will develop and interact in the future. A key feature is an analysis of the incentives in the oil project and their possible future changes. Chad is currently undergoing two processes of significant importance for its future development – political democratisation and transformation into an oil economy. For a country plagued with civil war for decades until 1990, and known as one of the poorest and most corrupt states in the world, this is a real challenge.

The oil export started in late 2003, and boosted the economy in 2004. To avoid the disastrous experiences of most poor African oil states, unique oil management, control mechanisms and other conditionalities have been imposed by the World Bank – much thanks to pressure from the civil society and the international community. If implemented well, Chad may become a model for how a poor resource-rich country is able to promote socio-economic development and poverty reduction. However, this demands a close and coordinated cooperation between the Chadian government and the civil society, based on accountability and good governance, and with continuous support of the World Bank and the international community. The situation is fragile and progress is uncertain. If a broader economic development is achieved, conditions for an improved democratisation can be created in the long term. The Chadian oil project deserves continued close attention and monitoring.

Hans Eriksson is an Economist and Political Scientist at Stockholm School of Economics, Stockholm University. *Björn Hagströmer* is a Graduate Student of International Economics and Politics at Jönköping International Business School.



Mai Palmberg and Ranka Primorac (Eds)

Skinning the Skunk – Facing Zimbabwean Futures

ISBN: 91-7106-552-0, 40 pp, 90 SEK (appr. 9 euro), Discussion Papers no. 30

“Skinning the skunk” refers to a Shona saying, *kuwhiya kadembo*. The Zimbabwean writer Stanley Nyamfukudza uses it here to illustrate how important problems, like the legacy of violence, are avoided in Zimbabwean public discussion. Terence Ranger writes on the new policy of rewriting the history of Zimbabwe, in the name of “patriotic history”, through which the Zanu-PF government tries to assert hegemony and achieve “a total change of the mindset”. To talk about Zimbabwe today also means to talk of the large diaspora. Beacon Mbiba presents a study on what is colloquially called “Harare North”, that is London (and the rest of the UK).

Mai Palmberg is a political scientist from Finland, and works at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala. *Ranka Primorac* has degrees from the Universities of Zagreb, Harare and Nottingham Trent.

Kaniye S.A. Ebeku

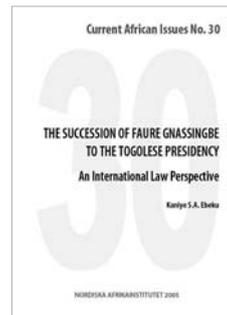
**The Succession of Faure Gnassingbe to the Togolese Presidency.
An International Law Perspective**

ISBN: 91-7106-554-7, 32 pp, 90 SEK (appr. 9 euro), Current African Issues no. 30

The African renaissance – the renewal of the continent – effectively started in the last decade of the second millennium. A critical element is the increasing and widespread democratic awakening in all parts of Africa since the early 1990s as evidenced by the number of multi-party elections. Demonstrating their commitment to democracy, African leaders, under the auspices of regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), have increasingly made a number of treaties, declarations and other political commitments in the field of democracy and good governance.

Significantly, the recent politico-constitutional crisis in Togo, occasioned by the sudden death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema in early February 2005, after he had ruled the country with an iron-fist for 38 years, and the interim succession of his son, Faure Gnassingbe, to the presidency, raised issues of democracy and good governance and provided an opportunity for African countries to test the effectiveness of the various democracy-related instruments. Adopting a legal-jurisprudential perspective, the author skillfully examines the contradictions between the regional-international legal instruments that permit interference in the internal affairs of a member state of ECOWAS and AU and the principles of international law that provide for sovereign equality of states and non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

Dr Kaniye S.A. Ebeku is an Associate Professor of Law and the current Head of the Department of Law at Intercollege, Nicosia, Cyprus.



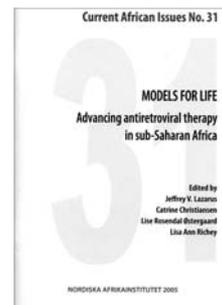
J.V. Lazarus, C. Christiansen, L.R. Østergaard, L.A. Richey (Eds)

Models for Life. Advancing antiretroviral therapy in sub-Saharan Africa

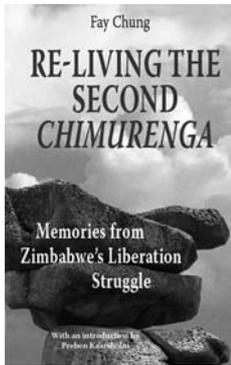
ISBN: 91-7106-556-3, 35 pp, 90 SEK (appr. 9 euro), Current African Issues no. 31

Models for Life: Advancing antiretroviral therapy in sub-Saharan Africa is based on two conferences that were held in Copenhagen and Uppsala, in September 2004. The events brought together more than 70 key actors from Denmark, Sweden and Uganda in the field of HIV/AIDS and its treatment: antiretroviral therapy. The conferences were unique in that each panel and the subsequent discussion brought together researchers, donors and representatives from non-governmental organisations, in order to link theory, operations research and practice. The working paper covers a wide range of the issues that were brought up at the conferences, but focuses on the following three main topics: Access to antiretroviral therapy; Holistic approaches to providing antiretroviral therapy, prevention and support; Antiretroviral therapy and public health services.

Catrine Christiansen is a researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute and an anthropologist from Copenhagen University, where she is also a lecturer. *Jeffrey V. Lazarus* is the advocacy and community relations officer in the Sexually Transmitted Infections/HIV/AIDS Programme at WHO/Europe. He is also a public health PhD student at Lund University, Sweden. *Lisa Ann Richey*, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Department of Geography and International Development Studies, Roskilde University. *Lise Rosendal Østergaard* is the coordinator of the Danish NGO Network on AIDS and Development (Aidsnet), a network of 19 NGOs and two research institutions.



Forthcoming



Fay Chung

Re-Living the Second Chimurenga.

Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle

ISBN: 91-7106-551-2, 320 pp, 280 SEK (appr. 28 euro), December 2005

Fay Chung grew up in the rare circumstances of a Chinese family in Rhodesia in the 1950s and 1960s. She studied education and literature at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and later in the United Kingdom, and became a lecturer at the University of Zambia in the early 1970s. In Zambia, she joined the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and experienced at first hand the radicalisation of the nationalist rising, which led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

The memoirs of Fay Chung are of unique interest in giving an inside view of the politics and divisions within ZANU at the height of the armed struggle during the late 1970s. She was close to the events, which brought down the old nationalist leadership of Ndabaningi Sithole and saw Robert Mugabe emerge as the new leader, experienced the tensions between politicians and military leaders – such as Josiah Tongogara in particular – and was a witness to the failed efforts in 1976 of the vashandi movement of young officers to change the direction of ZANU politics in a more socialist direction.

Within the nationalist movement in exile, Fay Chung played a prominent role in preparing educational reform, and after independence in 1980 worked for the Zimbabwean ministry of education and culture – eventually as minister. In her memoirs she describes the efforts to extend access to education and to bring “education-with-production’ principles into school curricula” as well as the obstacles such policies ran into with the adoption of structural adjustment in Zimbabwe from the early 1990s.

In the concluding chapters of her book, Fay Chung reflects on current political events in Zimbabwe. While regretting the violence, which has surrounded clashes between the ZANU(PF) government and the new democratic opposition, she supports Robert Mugabe's so-called ‘Third Chimurenga’ as a return to the radical objectives of land reform and economic justice, which Fay Chung sees as the “heartblood” of the nationalist movement as it originally was in the 1970s. This is an account, which will be certain to provoke many readers, and which will stimulate discussions both within Zimbabwe and abroad.

For this edition of Fay Chung's memoirs Preben Kaarsholm has written an introduction, which situates her narrative and reflections in the context of debates around Zimbabwe's modern history and current political and economic crisis.

Fay Chung, worked in the 1980s in various capacities in the Zimbabwean ministry of education. She worked as chief of the education cluster at UNICEF 1993–98 and then as first director of the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (1998–2003).

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