

news

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To Our Readers

In April 2004 ten years have passed since two events of major significance for Africa took place. On the one hand we celebrate ten years of relatively successful development in South Africa after its first free and fair election, marking the end of the dark apartheid area in that country. Many activities are currently honouring this important fact (see for example the conference report on p. 30). On the other hand we commemorate the tragedy of the Rwandan genocide.

In the first commentary of this issue, Gerald Caplan – the editor of the report on the genocide and its aftermath prepared by the OAU Panel of Eminent Persons (*Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*) and at present the coordinator of the ‘Remembering Rwanda Network’ – reminds us of what happened during the 100 days following the shooting down of the aircraft carrying the Rwandan and Burundian presidents on April 6, 1994. He emphasises that we all have the responsibility to remember this tragedy, both for the sake of the victims but also in order to avoid similar events in the future. Many activities took place all over the world on April 7 and immediately thereafter to honour the victims of the genocide. The Nordic Africa Institute participated by arranging seminars and providing background information.

The second commentary, a result of our engagement in West Africa, is written by Jibrin Ibrahim and Toure Kazah-Toure. Their research findings on ethno-religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria show how the return to democracy has unleashed long-standing conflicts rooted in the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural character of Nigerian society. The country has enormous potential for economic, social and democratic development. Authoritarian leadership, an over-centralised state, elite manipulation, irresponsible mass media, corruption and prolonged conflict, have so far blocked this potential. The possibilities for a future positive development lie in the turning around of these negative trends.

The third commentary by Carlos Lopes, a renowned researcher from Guinea Bissau and at

present UNDP resident representative in Brazil, discusses the current discourse on the issue of capacity and capacity development (building). It is inspired by the recent UNDP review, in which he played a major role. He argues that capacity development is an endogenous process, which makes it necessary to rethink the meaning of capacity. It must come with individuals, organisations and societies and can thus not be imprinted or provided from outside. Two more articles discuss this new way of looking at capacity development. Heather Baser of the European Centre for Development Policy Management summarises some conclusions drawn in research implemented by a research network on capacity building coordinated by her. Ingemar Gustafsson, policy adviser at Sida, Sweden, elaborates on the fact that the concept of capacity is becoming dissociated from the world of development cooperation and draws conclusions on how aid agencies should tackle this question.

We are also pleased to present some of the major traits of a research programme implemented by the Network for Woman’s Studies in Nigeria on the important topic of sexual harassment and sexual violence in Nigerian universities. The coordinator of that network, Charmaine Pereira, has just completed a state of the art overview of available research on sexual harassment in secondary schools and universities in Africa. The overview is not very happy reading and we hope this intervention will provoke policy changes within school systems in Africa. We hope to come back to this matter in a later issue of *News*. Mats Utas presents the research project which he has brought to our Institute on youth and the Liberian civil war. Finally we are proud to present the work and experience of Professor Karen Tranberg Hansen, a prominent Danish scholar and researcher who has devoted most of her life to urban studies in Africa and who for many years has been a close associate of the Institute. ■

Lennart Wohlgenuth

Why we must never forget the Rwanda genocide



By: Gerald Caplan

Coordinator of the Remembering Rwanda network and author of 'Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide', the report of the International Panel of Eminent Persons appointed by the OAU to investigate the genocide.

"It is time the Rwanda genocide is treated with the concern and attention it so grievously earned", Gerald Caplan concludes this commentary, in which he explains why we all have the responsibility to remember the 1994 genocide.

Those of us who are preoccupied with commemorating in 2004 the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide are often taken aback when we are asked questions on the genocide. It is my strong conviction that memorializing the genocide in Rwanda is not taken for granted by most bystanders in the same way as other disasters, let alone the Holocaust of the Second World War.

Isn't it already ancient history? Aren't there all kinds of human catastrophes that no one much bothers with? Didn't it take place in faraway Africa, in a country few people could find on a map. Wasn't it just another case of Africans killing Africans? What does it have to do with us, anyway?

These questions deserve answers, not least because some are entirely legitimate. Above all, it is fundamentally true that there would have been no genocide had some Rwandans not decided for their own selfish reasons to exterminate many other Rwandans. But once this truth is acknowledged, a powerful case for remembering Rwanda remains, and needs to be made.

The responsibility to remember

First, Rwanda was not just another ugly event in human history. Virtually all students of the subject agree that what happened over 100 days from April to July 1994 constituted one of the purest manifestations of genocide in our time, meeting all the criteria set down in the 1948 Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Genocide experts debate whether Cambodia or Srebrenica or Burundi were 'authentic' genocides; like the Holocaust and (except for the Turkish government) the Armenian genocide of 1915, no one disagrees about Rwanda. And since genocide is universally seen as the crime of crimes, an attack not just on the actual victims but also on all humanity, by definition it needs to be remembered and memorialized.

Second, it was not just another case of Africans killing Africans, or, as some clueless reporters enjoyed writing, of Hutu killing Tutsi and Tutsi killing Hutu. The Rwanda genocide was a deliberate conspiratorial operation planned, organized and executed by a small, sophisticated, highly organized group of Hutu extremists who believed their self-interest would be enhanced if every one of Rwanda's close to one million Tutsi were annihilated. They came frighteningly close to total success.

Third, the west has played a central role in Rwanda over the past century. Just as no person is an island and there is no such thing as a self-made man, so every nation is the synthesis of internal and external influences. This is particularly true of nations that have been colonies, where imperial forces have played a defining role. To its everlasting misfortune, Rwanda is the quintessential example of this reality. The central dynamic of Rwandan history for the past 80 years, the characteristic that allowed the genocide to be carried out, was the bitter division between Hutu and Tutsi.

Yet this division was to a large extent an artifact created by the Roman Catholic Church and the Belgian colonizers. Instead of trying to unite all the people they met in Rwanda 100 years ago, Catholic missionaries invented an entire pedigree that irreconcilably divided Rwandans into superior Tutsi and inferior Hutu. When the Belgians were given control of the country following World War One, this contrived hierarchy served their interests well, and they proceeded to institutionalize what amounted to a racist ideology. At independence in the early 1960s, this pyramid was turned on its head, and for the next 40 years Rwanda was run as a racist Hutu dictatorship.

The culprits

Last, but hardly least, the 1994 genocide could have been prevented in whole or in part by some of the same external forces that shaped the country's tragic destiny. This conclusion has been drawn in a number of studies made on the Rwandan genocide during the 1990s. But without exception, every outside agency with the capacity to intervene failed to do so. My own list of culprits, in order of responsibility, is as follows:

- the government of France
- the Roman Catholic Church
- the government of the United States
- the government of Belgium
- the government of Britain
- the UN Secretariat.

I name the French and the Church first since they both had the influence to deter the genocide plotters from launching the genocide in the first place. Rwanda was the most Christianized country in Africa and the Roman Catholics were the largest Christian denomination. Catholic officials had enormous influence at both the elite and the grassroots level, which they consistently failed to use to protest against the government's overtly racist policies and practices. Indeed, the Church gave the government moral authority. Once the genocide began, Catholic leaders in the main refused to condemn the government, never used the word genocide, and many individual priests and nuns actually aided the genocidaires.

Rwanda was a French-speaking country, and France replaced Belgium as the key foreign presence. When the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group of English-speaking Tutsi refugees from Uganda, invaded Rwanda in 1990, the French military flew in to save the day for the Hutu government. For the following several years, right to the very moment the genocide began, French officials had enormous influence with both the Rwandan government and army. They failed completely to use that leverage to insist that the government curtail its racist policies and propaganda, stop the increasing massacres, end the widespread human rights abuses, and disband the death squads and death lists. Two months after the genocide began, a French intervention force created a safe haven in the south-west of the country through which they allowed genocidaire leaders and killers, fleeing from the advancing RPF, to escape across the border into Zaire. From Zaire they began an insurgency back into Rwanda with the purpose of 'finishing the job'. Eventually this led to the Rwandans invading Zaire/Congo to suppress the insurgency, which in turn soon led to the vicious wars in the Congo and the subsequent appalling cost in human lives throughout Congo in general and eastern Congo in particular.

Once the genocide was launched after April 6, 1994, the American government, steadfastly backed by the British government, were primarily responsible for the failure of the UN Security Council to reinforce its puny mission to Rwanda. Under no circumstances were these governments prepared to budge. The Commander of the UN force – UNAMIR – repeatedly pleaded for reinforcements, and was repeatedly turned down. Two weeks into the genocide, the Security Council voted to reduce UNAMIR from 2,500 to 270 men – an act almost impossible to believe ten years later. Six weeks into the genocide, as credible reports of hundreds of thousands of deaths became commonplace and the reality of a full-blown genocide became undeniable, the Security Council finally voted to send some 4,500 troops to Rwanda. Several contingents of African troops were put on standby, but deliberate stalling tactics by the USA and Britain meant that by the end of the genocide,

when the Tutsi-led rebels were sworn in as the new government on July 19, not a single reinforcement of soldiers or materiel had reached Rwanda.

As for Belgium, their contingent was the backbone of UNAMIR. When ten Belgian soldiers were murdered by Rwandan government troops on the very first morning of the genocide, the Brussels government immediately decided to withdraw the remainder of its forces and to lobby the Security Council to suspend the entire Rwandan mission. Its motive was simple: They did not want to be seen as the sole party undermining UNAMIR. At the Security Council, of course, it found eager allies.

The role of the UN Secretariat is somewhat ambiguous. To a large extent, its failure to support the pleas of its own UNAMIR Force Commander reflected its lack of capacity to cope with yet another crisis combined with its understanding that the US and Britain would not alter their intransigent positions. Still, there were many occasions when the Secretariat failed to convey to the full Security Council the dire situation in Rwanda, and many opportunities when it failed to speak up publicly in the hope of influencing world opinion. This is well documented in an investigation on the issue under the leadership of former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson.

A multitude of betrayals

It is not far-fetched to say that the world has betrayed Rwanda countless times since its first confrontation with Europeans in the late 19th century. This account has previously presented several of these betrayals before and during the genocide: by the Catholic Church, by the Belgian colonial power, by the French neo-colonial power, by the international community.

To exacerbate further this shameful record, we need to look at the past decade. First, the concept that the world owed serious reparations to a devastated Rwanda for its failure to prevent the genocide has been a non-starter. Second, there

has been precious little accountability by the international community for its failure to prevent the genocide. The French government and the Roman Catholic Church have to this moment refused to acknowledge the slightest responsibility for their roles or to apologize for any of their gross errors of commission or omission. President Bill Clinton and Secretary-General Kofi Annan have both apologized for their failure to offer protection, but have both blamed insufficient information; in fact what was lacking was not knowledge – the situation was universally understood – but political will and sufficient national interest. No one has ever quit their jobs in protest against their government's or their organization's failure to intervene to save close to one million innocent civilian lives.

Those we must not forget

Finally, the very existence of the genocide has to a large extent disappeared from the public and media's consciousness. This is the latest betrayal. Marginalized during the genocide, Rwanda's calamity is now largely forgotten except for Rwandans themselves and small clusters of non-Rwandans who have had some connection with the country or specialize in genocide prevention. That is why the Remembering Rwanda movement was founded in July of 2001 setting up four targets for remembering: the innocent victims; the survivors, many of whom live in deplorable conditions with few resources to tend to their physical or psychological needs; the perpetrators, most of whom remain free and unrepentant scattered around Africa, Europe and parts of North America; and the so-called 'bystanders', the sextet named earlier. Rather than being passive witnesses, as the word 'bystander' implies, most were active in their failure to intervene to stop the massacres, and all remain unaccountable to this day. It is time the Rwanda genocide is treated with the concern and attention it so grievously earned. ■

Suggested topical reading on page 12!

Ethno-religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria

Photo by Susanne Linderos



By: Jibrin Ibrahim and Toure Kazah-Toure

Ibrahim (left) is the Nigeria country director of Global Rights (formerly International Human Rights Law Group) based in Abuja, Nigeria. Previously, he was an associate professor of political science at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Kazah-Toure (right) is researcher at the department of history, Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. Both were guest researchers at the Nordic Africa Institute in late 2003.



Photo by Mai Palmberg

Since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, there has been a rapid increase of political and religious conflicts in the country. As the level of violence grows, the locations of these conflicts become more provincial and, as a consequence, political, ethnic and religious tolerance has declined. The authors of this commentary analyse this development, with particular focus on Northern Nigeria.

This presentation aims to deal with an important part of the story of Nigerian nationalism, especially as it relates to Northern Nigeria. It is a story that has always been told against a background of strong ethno-regionalism. Ethno-regional identities in Nigeria have developed along a tri-tangential trajectory. The first is the North/South divide that emerged at the beginning of the colonial period. The second is the tripolar framework related to the three colonial regions and the majority groups that dominated each region. The third and maybe the most important tendency in Nigerian politics is a persistent multi-polarity governed by micro-nationalism of the numerous minority ethnic groups in the country. Ethno-regionalism in Nigeria has always been played out alongside ethno-religious politics and this dimension makes the story more complex.

Precisely because of this political background, the story of Nigerian nationalism has been expressed in the discursive language of federalism. Fears of domination of one region or ethnic group or religion over the others have played a central role in convincing politicians of the necessity of a federal solution for the First Republic. The First Republic which operated essentially as an equilib-

rium of regional tyrannies was however characterised by the domination of each region by a majority ethnic group and the repression of regional minorities.

One of the most important questions informing political mobilisation in Nigeria has been the conquest of federal power at the centre. The logic of political mobilisation has developed along the lines of a zero-sum game. This means that groups are obliged to block the access of others or displace those who already have access if they are to eat from the national cake. That process of a permanent strategy of blockage has amplified the expression of fissiparous tendencies because all those who are not inside are outside.

The lived story is one of a widespread perception of ethno-religious domination. The story is first and foremost one of the control of political power and its instruments such as the armed forces and the judiciary. The second is the control of economic power and resources. Both are powerful instruments that are used to influence the authoritative allocation of resources to groups and individuals. Nigeria was amalgamated into a single political community only in 1914. The event, which was not a nationalist act, had limited

objectives – the amalgamation of some aspects of separate colonial administrative mechanisms rather than a political unification of the peoples. Twenty-five years later, in 1939, regional autonomy was reinforced with the division of the country into three regions and the appointment of chief commissioners. Since then, Nigerian politics has had a very strong ethno-regional character and the political class have always sought to exploit it for their political ends, leading to a disastrous civil war in 1967–70.

The current story has become even more intense. The boundaries within which, and the discourses being expressed, over why and how Nigerians should and could stay together, are expanding. Basic issues in defining the Nigerian State such as secularity versus support for religious laws or federation versus confederation are still being debated. Various modalities for debate and decision-making such as a national conference or a conference of nationalities are being proposed. The power elite is worried that such a debate can have disastrous consequences for national unity. The proponents of these positions are confident that it is the only path to assuring a federal and democratic future for the country. Here we wish to tell the story from the perspective of building a federal and democratic future for Nigeria.

The paradox of the return to democracy

There has been an explosion of political and religious conflicts in Nigeria since the return to democratic rule in May 1999. The expectations that the departure of military rule would reduce arbitrary rule, allay fears of ethnic and religious persecution, and consequently reduce political tension and conflict have not happened yet. On the contrary, the number of conflicts has been increasing and their spread has been widening. As the level of violence grows, their locations are becoming more provincial and the consequence is that political, ethnic and religious tolerance has been declining dramatically.

The usual explanation for the growth of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria is that one majority group or the other is monopolising power. A closer appreciation of the political situation in the

country will however reveal that it is simplistic to continue to assume that the steady decline of political and religious tolerance in the country is a direct result of the political domination of the country by one, or even three hegemon. The Nigerian political elite has been involved in an intense struggle to have access to what has been called the national cake. In that process, patterns of political domination are constantly being transformed. It is this constantly changing pattern of domination that is producing the fears and anxieties that underlie increasing conflict and intolerance. Our intention is to outline a number of underlying factors that account for this process.

It is generally accepted that Nigeria is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society with enormous potential for economic, social and democratic development. Authoritarian leadership, the emergence of an over-centralised state, elite manipulation, irresponsible mass media, corruption and prolonged conflict, have so far blocked this potential. In the process, Nigerians have been losing their freedom, their resources and the good relations they have hitherto enjoyed with their neighbours. The development of the Nigerian project would therefore require the deepening of democracy and increased commitment to what we call 'true' federalism. The development of democratic culture is dependent on the existence of a modern state that can protect the rights of its citizens and extract duties from them. Modern states are characterised by the practice of equity, the rule of law and the search for legitimacy. The legitimacy of the state is linked to its capacity to present itself as a provider of necessary public goods and more important, a neutral arbiter that guarantees the security of all sections of society. When the state is generally perceived as serving the particularistic interests of one group, it starts losing its legitimacy, and indeed, its authority. As state capacity declines, fear of 'the other' rises and inhabitants of the state resort to other levels of solidarity such as the religious, ethnic and regional forms in search of security. It is in this context that the two major issues of ethnic and religious identity and mobilisation have become so central to the resolution of the Nigerian project.

The first is the transformations in the country's ethnic equation linked to the dynamics of the majority/minority divide. During the First Republic, Nigeria had three majority ethnic groups, each of which dominated the minority groups in its region. Following thirty years of a fissiparous process of state creation, the political map of majorities and minorities has been complexified by the creation of numerous new majorities and minorities. This has been made possible by an active process of proving that your neighbours are historically, ethnically, linguistically, culturally and religiously different from you, which is the basis for your demand for a separate state of local government. Effective mobilisation, involving the writing and rewriting of history, was carried out. As campaigns developed, hitherto peace-loving neighbours in the state or local government had to be portrayed as the terrible/aggressive/settler 'other' who must be separated from 'our people' in the interest of peace, stability, good government and development. As this type of dynamics unfolds, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms break down and ethno-regional political actors feel obliged to take maximalist positions and treat both their neighbours and the spirit of compromise with disdain. In the process, each group develops a reading of Nigerian history in which they discover that they have had the worst deal in the political equation.

The second issue relates to the impact of the rise of religiosity on democratic political culture. The most significant sociological variable in Nigeria over the past twenty years is the astronomical growth of the level of religiosity in society. Growth is expressed both in the intensity of belief and in the expansion of time, resources and efforts devoted to religious practice. Religious practices have not surprisingly, as is popularly assumed, been excessively subjected to political instrumentalisation by the political elite. The Nigerian religious sphere is developing in a specific cultural context. The norms and practices of the growing number of religious movements and their activism is characterised by norms that are often anti-theoretical to democratic ones. They include unquestioning faith in religious leaders, sectarianism

and exclusiveness, intolerance and a propensity to hate free speech and undemocratic organisational practices. Not surprisingly, the relationship between the trajectories of religious pluralism and democratic culture in Nigeria have tended to work against each other.

In spite of the two factors outlined above, our main contention would however be that Nigeria is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, which accepts differences among its peoples and has a fairly large consensus of agreeing to live together. Out of this flows what we can call the Nigerian project. The Nigerian project is the discovery that if we are to live peacefully together in spite of our differences, we must develop federalism and democracy in our society. It is not an easy project to execute. The project is constantly threatened by ethnic and religious conflicts. The story of the Nigerian State is one of complex and multiple processes of subjugation and marginalisation. As we have argued above, there has been a process of constant creation of majority groups who seek to dominate their minority neighbours. This process has undermined the long-held assumptions about a Hausa-Fulani oligarchy that has been ruling and ruining Nigeria.

End of the regional hegemons?

A lot of the literature analysing the failure of the Nigerian project has traced the crisis of democracy and the causes of ethno-religious conflicts to misrule by the three regionally based elites – Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, (WAZOBIA in Nigerian language parlance). The argument is that this elite has devised effective methods for subjugating the minorities to their hegemonic hold. Some of the most vociferous critics of these oligarchies are the intellectuals from the Middle Belt who complain about the hegemonic stranglehold of the Hausa-Fulani elite over them. The usual arguments are: 1) The political problem of Northern Nigeria is that the majority Hausa-Fulani ruling class has maintained its hegemonic hold over the ethnic minorities of the Middle Belt. 2) In so doing, it has used effective administrative structures to maintain this hegemony. 3) The effect of this history of domination is that the

people of the Middle Belt have been deprived of access to political power and they have been constantly threatened with the violation of their religious rights by attempts to impose Islam and the Shariah on them.

Similar arguments have been made concerning the ruling oligarchies of the other two majority groups. Analysts and pundits continue to make these arguments although they describe a reality that has significantly changed over the years. Since the creation of states in 1967, the structural basis for political domination by the majority groups has been eroded and multiple power elites from both majority and minority groups have been jostling for power using numerous and constantly changing ethno-religious combinations. In the process, a new reality has emerged in which former minorities are emerging as new majority groups. Indeed, a more accurate depiction of the current political situation is that we are witnessing the subjugation of minorities by other larger minorities who have become 'majorities': 1) The process of state creation has produced new majority groups out of former minority groups who have created new patterns of hegemonies over their smaller neighbours. The category of subjugation then becomes that of 'marginal minorities'.

2) This process has created a mentality that favours the constant search for hegemonic possibilities among dominated minorities who seek to transform themselves into majorities vis-à-vis their 'marginal minority' neighbours.

This new reality can be presented in the form of three theses about Nigeria's political trajectory: 1) The categories majority/minority are fluid and constantly changing. Nigeria is a country in which constantly changing minorities have been the majority of the population and their numbers as distinct groups are increasing while their population sizes are reducing. 2) The character of the Nigerian State and society is such that there is a constant attempt by emerging majorities to suppress created minorities and throw them further into the margins. 3) This process of a fissiparous tendency in the creation of political and administrative units is multiplying rather than reducing the problem of political domination.

This reading of transformations in the ethnic equation has serious consequences for the Nigerian project. It represents a call for a more analytical approach rather than a focus on discrete ethnic groups in understanding the country's political trajectory and the process of conflict generation. ■

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Confronting the challenges of leadership

Photo by Bergthor Sigurdsson



By: Carlos Lopes

(PhD in history)
UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Brazil

Using the examples of Guinea Bissau and Zimbabwe, Lopes argues that the relationship between ownership and leadership is the key driver for sustainable capacity development. The following two articles (pp. 13–17) also discuss capacity development.

In a book recently published by Thomas Theisohn and myself (*Ownership, Leadership and Transformation. Can we do better for Capacity development?*, New York/London: UNDP/Earthscan, 2003) we make the case for a renewed interest on the links between ownership, leadership and the perennial dilemmas of capacity development. Today there is a rich body of literature on capacity development. A difficulty remains, however, on how to pin down what it actually implies in practical terms. Our definition is quite simple: it is the ability of people, institutions and society – the three layers involved in capacity development – to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives.

There are several ways capacity can be developed and sustained. But in general they are all premised in a sense of ownership and the existence of transformative leadership. We believe an owner is not necessarily a leader, who must possess certain skills, personal commitment and the abil-

ity to carry out concrete action. From the highest national authorities to those at community levels, leaders are most effective when they are inclusive and proactive, and ensure allocation of adequate domestic resources. Leaders make transformation happen when they have the courage to take risks, expand implementation, overcome obstacles and empower others.

It is common sense to say there are no leaders without followers. The real issue is how we define a leader. Is it someone who has personal ambitious goals detached from the common public good? Certainly there are such leaders in abundance. Hence the need for transformation became central to the call for a leadership. That is the element that distinguishes an autocrat of egocentric personality with public appeal or following from engaged visionaries and individuals capable of mobilizing for the common good.

An interesting way to engage in this debate is to remember Antonio Gramsci's proposals on the role of the organic intellectual. The premises presented by Gramsci could be interpreted as a definition of transformative leadership. Management theories are just discovering what some intellectuals had understood from a popular mobilization imperative. This is particularly relevant when assessing the African liberation struggle. The most attuned to the need for interpreting the colonial phenomena, from a cultural perspective were probably Amilcar and Frantz Fanon. They end up using the elements of Gramsci's organic intellectual approach: the need for an intellectual to act as a catalyst for societal mobilization, consciousness and struggle for rights. This is better illustrated through examples. I would like to dwell on two countries I know well – Guinea Bissau and Zimbabwe – to explain the main thrust of what our new book explores: the relationship between ownership and leadership as the key driver for capacity development.

The case of Guinea Bissau

The structural adjustment programme initiated in Guinea Bissau in the early eighties followed the usual recipe of economic liberalization and de-regulation, privatization and fiscal balance. This was done under the assumption that a more stable macro-economic environment would entice foreign direct investment as well as create domestic incentives for growth. These intentions were well received then. There was a genuine, albeit naïve, belief that the newly independent country would be a very attractive destination for investments. This belief was reinforced by the generous development aid received, which could easily be misinterpreted as having strategic intentions. The climate provoked by the Cold War rivalry reinforced this impression. The limited experience of the professional cadre made them vulnerable to what looked like well crafted external advice, coming from influential institutions such as the World Bank.

It has become obvious that countries such as Guinea Bissau had little to offer to foreign direct investors, unless such investors wanted to make a quick buck and get out. Likewise privatizing State assets in a country without an entrepreneurial class and savings capacity was tantamount to perverting the system and expanding corruption. The alienation of State assets did not increase the role of a productive private sector but rather facilitated a quick change in attitudes, including profiteering and patrimonial use of public goods.

The structural adjustment programme's failure to produce results, combined with increased external debt created the conditions for a very fragile socio-economic situation. A country with the characteristics of Guinea Bissau had not yet consolidated its nationhood when it was already facing centrifugal pressure to change the composition of its class structure and economic reproduction. None of these shifts was subject to proper internal debate and certainly none was owned by the majority of the population. By introducing a new development model without ownership the entire leadership of the country started losing its grip on society and the fragility of the national consensus was broken.

The imperatives of a quick institutional move towards superficial democracy (reduced to more or less organizing supervised elections and not much else), generated a further destabilizing element. It is not difficult to imagine the confusing political developments in the later part of the eighties. Instead of a natural evolution of the liberation movement towards advanced forms of participatory democracy, transparent practices and human rights expansion, preference was given to representative democracy, without the safeguards that would increase real democratic practice. The end result has been a succession of military coups and political crises that instead of being eliminated by the new 'democratic order' following the first UN supervised elections in 1988, have since – in fact – experienced a boost.

Under the circumstances the little institutional capacity created in the country after independence became quite vulnerable to human security concerns. Each conflict could provoke a migration of a few hundred highly educated families. After three major coups and a civil war the equivalent of a middle class has just disappeared. It is plausible to accept that the evaporation of the country's management capacity was to a large extent influenced by externally-induced policies that did not take into account the imperatives of leadership.

The example of Guinea Bissau demonstrates that a country with only 14 university graduates at the time of independence in 1973 could climb the ladder and establish a minimum managerial capacity. It was centred on State functions; it was fragile and dependant on a particular political order. The way Guinea Bissau was managed in the first decade after independence was not corrupt and leadership had the vision to invest in capacity development. This situation started to change with the imperatives of structural adjustment which created illusive prospects of economic progress that did not materialize.

The case of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe was for at least the first 15 years of independence a beacon of pragmatism, reconciliation and aggressive social policies. The results of

these conciliatory policies surprised the world. The country was then considered an example of responsible leadership. However the social indicators performance, particularly health and education, was not matched with political liberalization. The country had unresolved issues that made it vulnerable to tensions. Land access pressures, the unresolved dilemma of Zimbabwean history remained present in the national debate but very little progress was actually made towards implementing a land reform.

Economic performance and strong social policies protected the government from open criticism and challenge, both internally and externally. This situation changed when Zimbabwe started to face pressures for the implementation of a structural adjustment programme. A home grown reform initiative, promoted by government in 1992, tried to create enough space for Zimbabwe not to have a course of action dictated to it. This proud country was very sensitive to ownership dimensions. Leadership was exercised at its best. But the unique situation that transformed Zimbabwe into a success story was about to change dramatically.

After a devastating historical drought in the same year the new economic reform plan was supposed to be implemented Zimbabwe was battered and had little to show. The external pressures for reform increased further and the government stepped up efforts for the implementation of sweeping changes in the financial and industrial sector as well as privatization of public assets, through a deliberate policy of indigenization. As tempting as the comparisons with Guinea Bissau might be at this point, the two countries are very different. Zimbabwe has (still) the best education record in the continent, was then the second most industrialized economy, and had a large entrepreneurial cadre and a sizeable middle class.

These factors reinforced the challenge to leadership under the stressful conditions provoked by two droughts (1992 and 1995) and declining macro-economic stability. External pressures for political reform started in fact in 1996 after a series of public service strikes demonstrated the fragility

of an apparent national consensus. Zimbabweans started to ask for more participation, more democracy. It was therefore not surprising that as soon as civil society organizations and social movements increased their space government structures reacted defensively. Zimbabwe's quasi one party system became hostage to a conflicting and polarized society. Even though Zimbabwe could count on a large middle class and well educated population, these factors could not impede a slide in the economic and social situation provoked by poor leadership in managing a fast changing environment.

Since 1998 Zimbabwe has entered into a sliding crisis which has transformed the country into an international pariah, showing the worst economic results for any country not directly engaged in a civil war. Again the role leadership plays in capacity development is clearly demonstrated. Educated Zimbabweans, from highly skilled doctors to industrial workers, are fleeing the country in large numbers, quickly eroding the continental record the country had for educational and capacity attainment.

Important elements to take into account

Capacity development is about creating conditions that allow and support the right people to take up the right roles in effective decision-action processes. It is both a means of goal realization and an end in itself. It is an umbrella concept that has evolved to encompass – institution building, institutional/organizational development, human resource development, and more recently, policy formulation. This umbrella provides a framework that links previous approaches to a coherent strategy with a long-term perspective and harnesses it to the goal of sustainable development. Since it is not a static concept it encompasses building, effective utilization, updating/upgrading and retention of capacity, thus going beyond the first step of building or creating capacity.

The debate about rethinking technical cooperation to centre it on capacity development, highlights fundamental elements that must be taken into account. First, human skills enhancement is always good. Second, there is a need to

balance external input and ownership. Third, capacity development, like development itself, requires a long-term frame. Fourth, ownership is premised in self-confidence. Fifth, ownership is better exercised within a clear accountability system. Sixth, the development industry is undermining harmonization. Seventh, technical cooperation costs introduce wrong incentives. And,

eighth, the political dimension of development has to take central stage.

These elements were either not respected by leaders or ignored by partners in the two examples briefly presented above. These are just examples of the need for a further debate on these issues. Understanding leadership is essential for that purpose. ■

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What is capacity?

Going beyond the conventional wisdom

By: Heather Baser

Programme Coordinator, European Centre for Development Policy Management

For the past year, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) has led a research project on capacity issues under the aegis of the Network on Governance (Govnet) of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris. Its purpose is to analyze how effective organizations and systems, mainly in low-income countries, go about building their capacity for performance. Our focus is on endogenous efforts rather than donor interventions. About half of the projected twenty field case studies have now been completed. We would emphasize here that our research continues on these and other issues. Our final conclusions will be summarized in a report later this year.

This brief article is intended to give readers some initial sense of some of our findings, particularly as they relate to the issues of supply and demand and how they support or undermine capacity. First though, let us look at the issue of capacity.

The nature of capacity

Much of the international development literature treats capacity as a general ability to perform. Our purpose in this study is to unbundle the term and to understand better how it is composed, how it develops and what can be done to sustain it. Is capacity a package of resources or a state of mind or set of skills or a pattern of behavior or all of these attributes? What do various groups and organizations who work at the field level understand by the use of this term? If international funding agencies are helping to build or develop or enhance capacity, what is it that they think we are helping to

create? Can the 'right' capacity be 'selected' and deliberately built as part of a conscious process of organizational design or does it simply emerge organically?

We have not answered these questions yet but four patterns seem to be emerging.

- Most of the effective organizations we have studied think in terms of different elements of capacity, mainly technical, logistical and organizational. At the risk of attracting criticism for introducing more jargon into the development literature, we are calling these elements *capabilities* to distinguish them from the broader capacity of an organization. Successful organizations find ways to connect these different capabilities in a way that is mutually reinforcing. This internal integration of various capabilities seems to matter a great deal.
- These organizations see themselves as organic creations that need to be crafted and nurtured through complex processes of change including that of leadership. They are intent on producing results but in a way that helps to build their own capacity.
- They go beyond strategies, workplans, results projections and other technocratic approaches to develop and adhere to a set of values and principles that shapes their identity and gives them character and confidence. This latter process gets little attention in development cooperation but it seems to be a critical one for many of the organizations we have studied.

The fourth emerging trend is seeing capacity almost as ecology. Organizations are part of a complex network of other actors – a capacity

ecosystem. Their ability to develop their own capacity is determined, in part, by their role in these complex networks and the health of the interdependencies that exist in that system. Capacity in many ways is about interdependency.

Resilience and sustainability

A particular capability that has caught our attention is that of resilience or the ability to persevere and contribute amidst difficult, and at times even truly horrendous, circumstances (the best example is the Lacor Hospital in Gulu District, Uganda, which has overcome civil war, renegade armies and the Ebola virus). We are still unclear about how and why some organizations wither away after an initial burst of performance, how some sustain themselves but produce little of value and how and why a certain few organizations manage to persevere and keep building their capacity to perform. But we suspect it has something to do with the following factors. They can control their own operating space. They have the flexibility to improvise and adapt. They again have a value system that acts as a shield during difficult times. And finally, they have earned legitimacy with those they are serving. Citizens or clients or partnering groups try to protect and support them in ways that make a crucial difference to their capacity and performance.

Balancing demand and supply

More attention is now being given to the 'demand' side of capacity development. According to this view, capacity is induced through a combination of incentives, performance demands, an emphasis on transparency of information, improved governance and accountability and various other institutional and organizational arrangements. Capacity is thought to emerge in response to a set of external pressures.

Our research suggests that this view is only part of the story. What appears to be important is the capability of effective organizations and systems to balance and connect demand and supply. These actors have the ability and the willingness to reach out and connect with their clients and supporters. They have an 'outside-in' mentality

even in conditions where external pressure and demand is weak. Most of these organizations press their staff to focus outwards. They gain legitimacy and credibility with those they are trying to serve (for example, the recent World Bank Institute work on rapid-results uses this approach). In effect, their targeted supply leads to an increased demand or, in some cases, a constituency for change. They begin to create a self-reinforcing cycle in which demand and supply react to each other in a positive way. The supply side is used in many cases as an entry point. The demand side is critical to sustain activities.

Equipping international funding agencies to support capacity development

Our study does not focus in great detail on the capacity development practices of international funding agencies but, nonetheless, they are part of the study. One theme that has emerged is the need for multiple perspectives on capacity issues. We can find in our research no 'one best way' to guide external interventions. What seems to matter is the ability of funding agencies to bring multiple perspectives or frameworks of thinking to their capacity work. The emphasis of these approaches varies as follows:

- *Process* including organizational development, training, facilitation, organizational learning and empowerment,
- *Implementation, performance and results* with capacity as an instrument toward higher-order development results. Donors and their partners agree on program goals and priorities. More attention to capacity development and enhancement is then mainstreamed into sectoral plans, PRSPs and MDGs. Most participants using this perspective end up focusing on capacity constraints, gaps, deficits and dysfunctions.
- *Macro organizational and institutional strategies*, especially promoting macro change such as local government reform, decentralization, and public sector reform. From this perspective, the issue of capacity is a sort of generic objective that can be achieved by working on the above approaches.

- *Governance and politics* with a focus on access to – or the retention of – formal authority, informal power and influence and resources. Participants are not likely to be swayed by the technical rationality of reform proposals. The issue for many will be who gets what? Who wins? Who loses? Capacity development from this perspective has to do with power, conflict and the mediation of different organizational and personal interests. Capacity development is thus part of the political dynamics of a particular situation, both internal and external to an organization or system.
- *A systems perspective* to capacity issues which looks at complex networks of actors and institutions. The ecology issue discussed above is part of that viewpoint.

Learning, monitoring and measuring capacity

One of the key factors leading to capacity development is learning, at the individual, organizational and even the national levels. Capacity development, is, in part, about adaptation, personal mastery, intergroup collaboration and the perceived relationship between effort and outcome. We are

currently trying to understand more about how different organizations and systems in different settings learn to be more capable. We have also been struck by the minimal contribution to learning that comes out of formal monitoring and measuring systems. Most are put in place by international funding agencies for symbolic or accountability reasons. Few actually focus on capacity by itself. And even fewer are designed to support endogenous learning systems.

Conclusions

We end this brief article on a positive note. Much of the capacity literature coming out of the development community deals with dysfunction and gaps and constraints. And it is obviously not hard to find many examples of institutional and organizational decay. But we have been struck in our research by the fact that reversing the search – that is looking for examples of effective, imaginative capacity development – is equally productive. People everywhere can create amazing organizations if they have access to some resources, a protected operating space, some encouragement and the chance to create some meaning in their lives and those of others. ■

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

The European Centre for Development Policy Management, based in Maastricht, The Netherlands, works with EU-ACP relations. It works with the ACP countries to ensure more effective use of the development policies and instruments offered by the EU and its Member States. The ECDPM has two long term objectives:

- To enhance the capacity of public and private actors in ACP and other low-income countries.
- To improve cooperation between development partners in Europe and the ACP region.

To achieve these objectives, the ECDPM focuses on four interconnected themes:

- EU-ACP Trade Relations
- Political Dimensions of Partnership
- Actors of Partnership
- Donor Reform

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The need to rethink the meaning of capacity

By: Ingemar Gustafsson

Policy Adviser, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

This is a personal reflection after reading Carlos Lopes' article on the subject. Like his article, it is inspired by the recent UNDP review and my own work on this dimension of development cooperation.

Terms such as capacity, capacity building and in more recent years, capacity development have been used by development cooperation agencies for a long time but their meaning in practice has shifted. For a long time they equalled provision of external experts. Hence, it is not by coincidence that the first synthesis report of the UNDP review was entitled "Rethinking technical cooperation". The final report is entitled "Ownership, leadership and transformation: Can we do better for Capacity Development?" The intriguing part of the title is the *we*. Who are the we who can do better?

The interesting thing about the report which makes it necessary to rethink the meaning of capacity is that it argues that capacity development is an endogenous process. Capacity is something that must come from within individuals, organizations and societies. It cannot be imported or provided from outside. This means in principle that the concept of capacity becomes dissociated from the world of development cooperation. This is not to say that agencies should not have anything to do with capacity development, just that the first question to ask should be more generic. What is it that makes it possible for individuals to take control over their own lives? How has it been possible for societies to build the pyramids, to trade and to make a living without formal education and without modern technology? There must be more to it than knowledge and technology in the modern sense.

Some of this debate has also come into the world of development cooperation and prompted some agencies to rethink their policies and modalities of capacity development. The *we* of the UNDP-report however, applies to individuals, organizations and nations wherever they are. This is the challenge.

Therefore, the report also reflects two different perspectives. The first says that capacity exists everywhere. People know how to survive. The problem is that they are prevented from using it to the full. On the contrary, they are stopped very effectively by unjust and authoritarian regimes, suppressive laws and cultural patterns.

Capacity development for poverty means to unleash what exists by removing barriers to social interaction and to democracy. At the international level, this takes the analysis and meaning of capacity into the political arena. Lopes' article is a good example of this way of reasoning which underlies much of the UNDP report. At the individual level it takes us into the pedagogical arena and Paulo Freire's thoughts about education for liberation. Essentially, his notion of capacity is the same. Poor people have the potential, and education is a way to liberate the mind. This is the power of reflection on and analysis of your own social and economic reality. The same thoughts have formed the basis for much of Swedish adult education (*folkbildning*).

The other perspective, which also figures in the UNDP report but not in the short article by Lopes is more traditional. It is based on the notion that capacity building means to fill a gap, usually consisting of lack of technology, knowledge and skills; management or other professional skills.

Hence, capacity can be built up, through training, education and import of technology. What is new here in the UNDP report is the emphasis on ownership. No efforts will last unless they are owned by the countries of cooperation, by the organization whose capacity should be built or the individual whose education and training is not sufficient for the task. As a result of this analysis, the *we* i.e. the agencies ought to rethink their modalities and reform technical cooperation.

The experience of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is that this is possible. Sida has shifted from a way of working which meant to recruit Swedish experts for projects that were run by Swedes (early 1970s) to a model of twinning between professional organizations, be they national bureaus of statistics, museums or universities. The meaning of capacity development then is about learning and sometimes restructuring. It is about management, about professional skills and about proce-

dures. But above all, capacity development is about the relationship between the different partners. The question to ask is how they can find a way of working that is based on trust and mutual respect. The two UNDP synthesis reports which discuss these issues are very clear on this point.

But what if *we* were to take the more radical view embedded in the first perspective? Capacity is to unleash what already exists, to remove barriers rather than to export technology, encourage professional networks and to recruit consultants.

What role is there for external agencies? What role can agencies play as agents of social change? These are the kind of questions that the UNDP asks. What do *we* have to do with broader governance issues in countries of cooperation? This is not, in the first instance, to challenge agencies to rethink the modalities of technical cooperation which some have done but to pose a much broader question. ■

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Interview with Karen Tranberg Hansen

Karen Tranberg Hansen is Professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University in the US. Of Danish origin, she has been collaborating with several researchers at the Nordic Africa Institute and co-edited (together with Mariken Vaa) a recent publication: *Reconsidering Informality. Perspectives from Urban Africa*. Tranberg Hansen's academic background comprises a *Magisterkonferens* in ethnography from Aarhus University (1973) and a PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of Washington in Seattle (1979). She remained in the US for job reasons, teaching at the Department of African-American and African Studies at the University of Minnesota before moving in 1982 to the Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University, where she has remained since then. Although based in the US, Tranberg Hansen plays an important role for Nordic research within her field. This interview was carried out by the Institute's information manager, Susanne Linderos.

What prompted your interest in studying Africa?

The focus was on British social anthropology when I studied at Aarhus University in the late 1960s. We read a lot about Africa. We were also inspired by more advanced students who had carried out research in Africa. My first undergraduate fieldwork project was in southwestern Kenya where I went in 1969 to study social organization and collect everyday artifacts for a UNESCO sponsored project that brought the world into Danish classrooms by way of material culture. But rural life did not engage me sufficiently. I began reading about labor migration and urbanization and was intrigued by the path-breaking work carried out in the towns of Zambia during the late colonial period. For my thesis research for the *Magisterkonferens* I went to Lusaka, Zambia's capital, where I examined women's small-scale trade and household dynamics in one of the rapidly growing peri-urban settlements. This experience shaped the development of my subsequent research interests in many ways and above all kept me focused on urban Zambia. Although I have traveled widely in Africa, I have not felt sufficiently challenged to shift that focus.

What have been the major areas of your research and what are you working on at the moment?

I am an urban and economic anthropologist with interests in gender relations and colonial culture. In one way or another, all my research has been about the material, social, and cultural dimensions of urban livelihoods in the context of historical, regional, and global dynamics. These interests were shaped by my early research experience in Lusaka and are demonstrated in publications on gender and household dynamics, sexuality, the informal economy of work and housing, and the cultural and economic dynamics of the secondhand clothing trade. My work on secondhand clothing opened up a rich research engagement with consumption and dress as is evident in my recent publications. I began this research in an effort to examine how the secondhand clothing trade worked, from the point of clothing donation in the West to the point of consumption in Zambia. In the process, I became intrigued by how people in Zambia dealt with these garments and what happened as they were incorporated into a different clothing universe where they became 'localized'. My growing interest in questions about the dressed body

have culminated in an article I recently completed on clothing for the 2004 issue of *Annual Reviews of Anthropology*, entitled, 'The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture'. My ongoing research comprises a collaborative, interdisciplinary, multi-site, multi-year project, *Youth and the City: Skills, Knowledge, and Social Reproduction* (funded by RUF/DANIDA 2001–05) which is being conducted in three rapidly growing cities; Recife in Brazil, Hanoi in Vietnam, and Lusaka in Zambia. In formulating this project, I was inspired by observations from my long-term work in Lusaka where, particularly in the 1990s, after the opening up of the economy in the wake of the demise of the one-party system, I noted how young people seemed to be trapped, in the sense that their opportunities to grow into adulthood were much more restricted than those available to the generation of their parents. If they completed secondary school, there were no jobs for them. And development approaches to dealing with the rapidly growing urban youth population left much to be desired, focusing mainly on technical and vocational skills provision in the same subjects as in the 1970s. Our project seeks to identify young people's own plans and desires as they strive to position themselves as active agents in making urban society more inclusive. Aside from being the principal investigator of the project, I am responsible for the Lusaka part in collaboration with Dr. Chileshe Mulenga, a geographer and urban planner, from the Institute for Economic and Social Research at the University of Zambia. So far, I have only published a couple of short papers from this work but I am particularly looking forward to collaborating with my Danish, Brazilian, Vietnamese, and Zambian col-



Photo by Mai Palmberg

leagues on a book with a comparative scope on urban youth.

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

I see myself primarily as a scholar, teacher, and provider of knowledge. In the United States where I live and work most of the time, academics are far less involved in consultancy work than in Scandinavia, perhaps because 'development research' is barely, or not at all, institutionalized within American universities. I enjoy teaching undergraduate students about Africa in an attempt to make them critical observers, and I feel privileged to provide Africa-related advice to graduate students who turn towards many professional walks of life. I like collaborating, and I have published articles together with both graduate students and colleagues, most recently with Mariken Vaa who actively drew me into her research program on big cities in Africa. ■

Sexual harassment and sexual violence in Nigerian universities



By: Charmaine Pereira

Independent researcher based in Abuja, Nigeria, and coordinator of the Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria. She recently completed a study on gender and the Nigerian university system.

If you listen closely to female students and female staff in Nigerian universities, you will hear stories about sexual harassment and sexual violence, perpetrated by male students and more disturbingly, by male lecturers and other staff. If you listen to male lecturers, you will hear stories about female students who 'harass' lecturers by their provocative dress and behaviour. You may even be led to believe that these female students are the root of the problem, whatever the problem may be said to be. After all, many male and female students, as well as female lecturers, like their male counterparts, seem to think that there is a serious problem with the way some female students dress and if only this could be changed, then sexual harassment and sexual violence on campus would be curtailed. If you listened to Vice Chancellors (who are in almost all cases male) – and especially if you listened to those Vice Chancellors hoping to raise funds for beleaguered public universities starved of funds by the federal government – you would not even hear a whisper about the possibility of sexual harassment on university campuses, much less sexual violence.

Why, you may be asking yourself, is the way a woman dresses more important or even as important as the fact of sexual harassment or sexual violence? Is anyone actively denying that sexual violence and sexual harassment take place? And if they are not actively denying this, then why are sexual violence and sexual harassment not seen as the problem? These are good questions, but then asking the interesting questions is as much part of the art of expanding understanding through research as any effort to come up with answers. After all, the reason that authoritarian regimes the world over, spend so much energy on stopping people from daring to ask 'Why?' is because this is absolutely necessary to perpetuate the status quo and prevent people from imagining alternatives. It is only when we understand how we arrived where we are, and what we desire instead, that we can be moved to change. Knowledge, put to such ends, is fundamentally subversive.

Pilot project

It is knowledge of this kind that the Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria (NWSN) has been seeking through its planning/pilot project on sexual harassment and violence in Nigerian universities, as a prelude to a more intensive action-research project on the subject. This is the first time that research on sexual harassment and sexual violence in the Nigerian context is being carried out in a collective manner. The research that has so far been carried out in this area, has been carried out on an individual basis. It is difficult for individuals, however, to take up the results of such research and use these to push for change. The issues of legitimacy, institutional

politics and status all have to be contended with, quite apart from more research-oriented matters such as appropriate methodologies, scope of coverage and so on.

The Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria is based in 17 institutions of higher education and has 126 persons registered, of whom 49 are paid-up members. There are a number of reasons why NWSN decided to carry out a collective planning/pilot study on sexual harassment and sexual violence in universities, reflecting a convergence of several dimensions. The first is NWSN's concern with the study and understanding of women's realities and their lives. Starting from where most members are located, that is in universities, the ways in which these institutions affect women through institutional cultures that foster sexual harassment and sexual violence is of critical interest. At the same time, women's efforts, in this context, to change their institutions are of considerable significance. Secondly, NWSN is of the view that women's studies should challenge and reconstruct orthodox knowledge production, particularly on issues that have not previously been considered worthy of serious research attention, such as sexual harassment and sexual violence. Thirdly, the institutions in which most NWSN members are located – universities – are institutions whose core business ideally is to promote knowledge development. Universities should not constitute sites for the erosion of female students' education potential through harassment and violence that is sexualised.

The process of deciding on the overall focus and mode of approach for the research has involved consultations and discussions at various levels of the Network. The first forum at which planning took place was the NWSN training workshop on 'The Gender Politics of Violence', held in Jos in April 2002. Subsequently, a Strategic Planning Meeting was held in March 2003 in Lokoja, with members of the Working Group and the Chairs of all the NWSN Committees. This was followed up by email and telephone communications with the above members.

Particular attention was paid to how the research network would be constituted from the

larger membership of NWSN. The following criteria were agreed upon to determine the choice of universities in which the research would be carried out: universities where there were NWSN members with expertise in the field or connections to individuals with such expertise; individuals with commitment to gender and women's studies; geographical spread. On this basis, six universities from across the different geopolitical zones of the federation were selected. They include Usman dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; and the University of Abuja, all located in the north. The other universities are the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; the University of Benin; and Lagos State University (LASU), all located in southern states. LASU is the only state university, funded by the state government. The other five institutions are all federal universities, funded by the federal government.

The challenges NWSN has faced in carrying out the planning/pilot study so far have tended to manifest themselves in the form of delays, either in starting the project or in its completion. The reasons for these are varied. They include the closure of universities either due to strikes or other internal problems; communication difficulties either between the national co-ordinator and university co-ordinators, or within individual universities; and balancing the existing commitments of co-ordinators with the demands of the planning/pilot study. Other challenges took a different form. In one case, the co-ordinator experienced consistent problems in being allocated a room in which to hold the group discussions, held separately with female and male students, and female and male academics. It was not clear at the time whether she was being blocked by university officials; it remains to be seen whether the pattern will recur or not in future sessions.

Findings of the study

Some of the findings of the planning/pilot study are reflected in the different understandings of the issues expressed by members of the different constituencies involved: female students, male

students, female academics, male academics. One of the most striking findings, meriting closer attention in the action research project to come, is the difficulty that many students and staff, male and female alike, seem to have in distinguishing rape from sexual harassment. Indeed, many refer to 'forced sex' or having sex without a woman's consent, without viewing this as rape. Clearly, this fuzziness around the category 'rape' fosters its entrenchment in social relations. The second clear finding is the extent to which female students' dressing, as referred to earlier, is viewed as a cause (not even an effect) of pervasive sexual harassment and violence. When asked if measures had been taken in their university to curb sexual harassment and violence, the one most often mentioned was the introduction of a dress code. This typically stipulates the form of dress considered appropriate for the institution and is generally targeted at female, rather than male, students.

Dealing with the issue

To date, the most courageous steps taken to address sexual harassment and sexual violence in universities have come from feminist activists working in the area. In Nigeria, sexual harassment was first spoken about publicly within a university setting (Ahmadu Bello University) two decades ago. Those brave enough to touch this fraught subject were female members of the country's then foremost autonomous women-centred organization, Women in Nigeria (WIN). They were talking about female students' experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence, talks that took place in the halls of female student hostels – public spaces yet behind closed doors. No female student would have dared to speak if male lecturers or male students had been present.

Even behind the relative security of closed doors, the young women concerned could not bring themselves to acknowledge that these terrible, mind-numbing acts of violence and soul-destroying acts of harassment had actually been carried out on them. Women would start speaking about how they knew of someone, a friend, who had had this kind of experience and in the course of the telling, they would often forget and then refer to themselves, reliving the event, tearfully, very painfully.

Another example of the pioneering work carried out by activists comes from southern Africa, where the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town began building a network of institutions addressing sexual harassment as part of their work on gender equity, in 1996. Since then, the Network of Southern African Higher Educational Institutions Challenging Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence has been formed with member institutions located in South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe. In the late 1990s, the Network began a Sexual Harassment Resource Audit Project aimed at assessing the resources available in tertiary institutions in the sub-region to assist them with strategies to combat campus incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence. One of the outputs of the project was a very useful handbook of resources, designed to support those working in this very challenging area (Bennett, J., *Southern African Higher Educational Institutions Challenging Sexual Violence/Sexual Harassment: A Handbook of Resources*. Cape Town: African Gender Institute, University of Cape Town, 2002). The combination of networking, activism and collective research in this initiative has inspired the Network for Women's Studies in Nigeria to use this example for its work in West Africa. ■

The violent logic of marginality: Youth and the Liberian civil war



By: Mats Utas

Researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute and a post-doctoral research fellow at the Department of Sociology, Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone.

In the summer of 2003 western news media were flooded by images from Liberia portraying child and youth soldiers. The question arises why it is almost exclusively children and youth that appear in the media from the Liberian civil war (1989–96 and 2000–to date). A partial explanation is that images of child and youth soldiers are easier to sell. It is a matter of fact that a large number of the soldiers in the Liberian civil war have been children and youth. A rough estimate is that during the 1989–1996 war there were about 20,000 soldiers under 18 years, out of a total of approximately 60,000 troops. A high estimate from the second part of the war argues that there were as many as 15,000 underage soldiers (figures from the UN Special Humanitarian Coordinator for Liberia).

The presence of extreme violence in African conflicts, at times with children and youth as the main usurpers, is often explained in the media through theories of societies and cultures as more violent in their origins than ‘our’ western societies. There is little hard evidence that supports such ideas. Quite the contrary, and I will argue that the exercise of violence among children and youth, in Africa as well as in other parts of the world, is the violent expression of a real as well as apprehended logic of the margins of society and culture.

The child soldier image

In recent years, child soldiering as a phenomenon has gained increasing attention in the media as well as among organisations working within humanitarian aid. The stereotypical image of child soldiers is tied to the ruthless rebel commander, who by means of force captures innocent children and incorporates them into his rebel army, subsequently indoctrinating them to become submissive, but merciless, robot-like killers. Forced recruitment does of course take place, but it is highly questionable if it is the most common recruitment path of underage soldiers. Studies concerning child soldiers are often based upon superficial contacts with children. It is quite rare that somewhat older soldiers (16–18 years old) are included in the studies, even though they at the time of their initial enrolment were well within the age range of the ‘child soldier’. Often interviews with child soldiers are limited to a single encounter. In such situations, it is hardly surprising that children swear their way out of all responsibility. The responses to questions about wartime activities are often shaped after a simple mould providing the youthful perpetrators with a victim label. At the onset of my research in Liberia (fieldwork in Monrovia and the rural town of Ganta, from December 1997 to December 1998) I was struck by the absolute conformity of victim responses from one person to the next. In my doctoral thesis (*Sweet battlefields: Youth and the Liberian Civil War*. Uppsala, 2003), I have proposed calling the individual agency of presenting oneself as a victim, *victimcy*.

With long-time participant observation and qualitative interviewing of a smaller group of child and youth soldiers the picture of profound victimhood changes. My experience from Liberia shows that after a few months of acquaintance a

new world opens up in which the individuals offer widely diverse reasons for their participation in the civil war. In fact it is of importance to point out that among the youth I worked with there was not a single person who maintained that he/she had been forcefully recruited.

Certain questions follow from this. What does force and free will mean in a time of war and armed pursuit like the one we find in Liberia? What structures promote and restrict youth participation in a civil war? The agency of any human being is more restricted in war than in a peaceful society. In war, not only instances of direct violence, but also structural violence, intensify; yet we ought not to forget that structural violence already rested heavily on the shoulders of Liberian children and youth prior to the war. In this case it is evident that a large group of Liberian urban and rural youth perceived their lives as marginal, their life forms as outside or bordering on what is conceived as a human being's birthright – trains of thought which are strengthened by globalised regimes of individual human rights.

Modern state – modern warfare

It is absolutely crucial to consider the experiences of marginalized beings within the Liberian state project in order to understand the motives of children's and youths' participation in the war. Contrary to media representations, the civil war in Liberia is situated very far from the popular picture of African 'tribal wars'. The war itself is primarily about the modern state, fought with modern weaponry and between armies, and organised according to western principles (basically structured in a European military tradition). The war is part and parcel of a global world order. Trade with raw materials such as rainforest timber and diamonds, of value mainly within a modern market economy, has proved to be the backbone of the Liberian war. Traditional cultural patterns have of course been important during the war, but many issues that have been identified in western media as exotic and barbaric, have been judged so by most Liberians as well. Without hesitation the civil war is a modern war where violence is an expression of aspirations for power and respect

among persons existing in the shadowlands of the modern state.

Poverty and marginalisation

That a large number of young Liberian men have ended up in both socially and economically marginal situations is quite easy to demonstrate. During the formation of the Liberian state, from 1847 and onwards, young Liberians' desire to urbanise was essential to its success. As the urban centres along the coast grew, young males were hired for employment within trade, shipping, commerce and production. In the process of strengthening and maintaining the Liberian state, young men were also in high demand within the army, police and elsewhere in the civil service. Over time, Liberia developed into a plantation economy (foremost rubber, coffee, sugarcane and cocoa) and yet again young men became the backbone of the labour force. Thus, as expected, the high demands on young men led to new migration patterns where they left rural villages to partake in a national economy based on wage-labour. In this process rural economies were transformed and became increasingly dependent on remittances from migrants.

However, along with the economic decline in Liberia, and all of Africa, during the 1970s, the need for wage labourers dwindled. The Liberian state had less money for salaries, and actual wages for plantation workers decreased. Fewer people could subsist on work within the economy of the modern state, at a time when a cash-based economy had become an imperative for taking part in the modern world. Young men had earlier been able to rely on the income generation of a few years' work on plantations – or similar forms of employment – in order to establish themselves in their home villages by investing their saved income in a farm, a house, wife (or wives) and family. In the context of economic decline it became increasingly difficult to obtain funds and the benefits that followed. They were thus forced, during extended periods of time, to survive on underpaid contracts in towns and plantations. As fewer people could afford sending their children to school, the quality of education was also undermined. Governmental

salaries declined in real terms and were paid with increasing irregularity, thus forcing more and more educated teachers to look for alternative, better-paying jobs. Impoverished youth who awaited their chance in towns and cities increased in numbers, creating a context of chronic poverty. For the great majority, political unrest during the 1980s led to increasing tensions. At the onset of the war, the situation was so hopeless for many, that the war itself became an opportunity to obtain what many youth had failed to access through their initial migration from countryside to city or plantation. Economic prosperity and the sensation of power and respect were immediate and most welcome for a newly initiated member of a rebel army, with the AK 47 becoming the equivalent of a credit card, once again connecting young men to the dreams of the modern world of goods and money.

During a period of many years, the sense of marginality had grown so strong that numerous participants in the war saw nothing immoral in taking up arms. They were of the opinion that for many years a few Liberians had been reaping all the benefits of the state, leading lives in luxury and had thus spent their chance. Now it was time for a new generation to 'eat' – 'eating' not just referring to food, but referring rather broadly to consumption of money, sex and social control.

The violent logic of marginality

It is important to point out, however, that the *experience* of being marginal is just as important as bona fide economic marginality in understanding this situation; subjective sensing of being marginal is as important as real poverty. The marginal subject does not only evolve in opposition to one centre, but rather to several centres. This is obvious in child and youth soldiers' stories about themselves and their compatriots. Their experience of marginality is characterised by, for instance, being black in contrast to white – in many respects the same discourse is found among Afro-Americans in the USA. Marginality is also experienced as geographical, where all of Africa is located in the very margin of the world. From a local perspective, then, many children and youth are

talking about the civil war as a youth revolution. Youth react violently because they have been marginalized by the entire adult generation. The rural is marginalized by the urban and the poor by the rich, and so on.

Western aid workers drive by in their air-conditioned jeeps en route to their air-conditioned offices. They buy their food in supermarkets where ordinary Liberians are hardly allowed entry; pay prices that even distinguished governmental employees have difficulties paying. Among the Liberian folk heroes we find the local aid worker who illegally appropriates resources from the very agency he is employed by. That such a person becomes a hero is of course a commentary on the integral inequalities of post-colonial Africa. Folk heroes are often trickster characters, men and women, with many guises who master the art of taking advantage of every situation. In the same spirit other non-Liberian heroes are Malcolm X and the murdered American rap singer Tupac Shakur, heroes materialising the very concept of marginality. Those who experience feelings of marginality, inferiority, and apprehend a deficient capacity to act individually tend to compensate themselves with thoughts of revenge and retaliation. This human condition is in itself a reaction to 'the other' – to the person in the centre. What they want to accomplish is thus a total reversal of the social power relations.

If we study the upshot of the Liberian civil war we notice how brutal violence reaches refined and premeditated forms. What appears to be senseless violence is often directed towards power elites, on both local and national levels, as well as the symbolic targeting of government institutions such as schools and hospitals. To human beings in the margin of society, violence is thus both natural and potentially advantageous; a tool to acquire power from an elite that they believe have lined their pockets at others' expense. Culture and society are not potentially more violent in Africa than for example Europe. Rather, the violent features of the Liberian civil war are an expression of an experienced marginality paradoxically nourished by the wish to be reborn as a respected human being. ■

Mimesis in education and development



By: Soila Judén-Tupakka

Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Lapland, Finland, and guest researcher at the Institute in late 2003.

Training has been one of the main components in development co-operation. Different organizations have followed the principle of community-oriented and problem-based learning to develop third world countries. Applying educational knowledge acquired from theory and practice entails knowing what kind of theoretical and practical demands and effects the perspective will have in everyday training. There is a big difference if the ideas found suitable for a certain cultural context or situation have been generalized to be applied somewhere else.

Learning and teaching are influenced by the social and cultural context as well as how the knowledge is constructed. Therefore we need to understand the conceptual thinking in a cultural context when local and global constructions of knowledge meet each other. Enculturation is fundamental to human adaptation, culture change and the production and reproduction of culture and society. In spite of that it is rarely seen as an element of educational science in development co-operation projects. I argue that development co-operation training should be seen as an educational event. To plan, carry out, evaluate or develop it, it is essential to have knowledge of educational science. Otherwise it is not possible to analyze the learning and the outcome of the training being practised.

While the global educational system is socialising its members into society the traditional educational system is using an enculturation process to teach its members how to be part of the family or collective community. The aim of formal learning is to socialise people into society, while an enculturation process teaches through informal training the values of the community.

Informal learning can happen in everyday settings. Formal learning usually occurs at schools and universities. Non-learning happens when there is no reflection of the knowledge in practice. Learning can also be seen as a ritual process. I argue that there is also a process of a ritual wrong learning. This takes place when learning turns out to be something completely different than intended because of the ritual thinking and enculturation in the traditional cultural context. Because of the nature of the phenomenon we need to use a concept that deals with ritual and symbolic thinking.

With the help of his/her mimetic ability a person adopts the meaning of objects and forms of representation and action. In a mimetic move, it is possible to build a bridge between worlds. If the person is not able to internalize the knowledge in the training it is possible that she or he will try to do things in the same way through the process of mimesis. The reference to the other is not something to be internalized but is that with which people strive to become similar. The mimetic ability is close to the secret of things, the momentum in aesthetic experiences and the possibilities of living experience. The family and traditional community as a social institution in which mimetic-educational processes are organized for its members upbringing can be seen as training. In addition the training can be seen as enculturation where the mimetic world exists. The mimetic act also involves the intention to manifest a symbolically created world so that it

may be perceived as a concrete world. The starting point for all training is to know exactly at whom it is targeted. That should apply to all cases of training wherever it is carried out but especially in the traditional cultural context. People will construct their knowledge from the bases they have. If the educational planners and

trainers do not know to whom they are offering the training they are not able to take into consideration the actual subject of their training. If they are not aware either of the active process of mimesis and enculturation the training might turn out to be something which was not expected. ■



Bicameralism and democratisation in Africa

By: Manassé Aboya Endong

Senior lecturer at the Department of Public Law and Political Science at the University of Douala, Cameroon, and Executive Director of the Research Group on Parliamentarism and Democracy in Africa (GREPDA). He was a guest researcher at the Institute in early 2004.



Photo by Mai Palmberg

The adoption of the two-chamber system by the new African parliaments is one of the major innovations in the recent institutional reforms

on-going in the African continent. As a legal technique and institutional characteristic of modern democracies, an innovation of this type concerning Africa was unlikely to escape analysis in an endeavour to understand its rationale and question its relevance. This explains the concern which led me to consider this renewal of interest for the two-chamber system which originated in particular in the democratic transitions initiated at the beginning of the 1990s.

At the outset, the African constituent assemblies of the first decades of independence did not yield to the temptation of the two-chamber system to which the Western models exposed them. The few exceptions to this rule were to be found in French-speaking Africa – in particular in the Republic of Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Kingdom of Morocco and Burundi. In contrast, the Republic of Dahomey had set up a consultative chamber whose members were appointed by the Head of State, but

who did not participate in the legislative process. In the same perspective, and during the federal period, Cameroon had retained a peripheral form of two-chamber system. Only the Parliament of the federated State of Western Cameroon had a second chamber known as the 'House of Chiefs' which sat alongside a legislative assembly. This second chamber included the representatives of the traditional chiefs whose influence had remained fairly strong in this part of the country. On the other hand, the federal parliament strangely enough had only one chamber.

When the creation of a second parliamentary chamber was mentioned, the opponents of the two-chamber system frequently advanced reasons of 'excess budgetary costs' to rule it out. In contrast, others evoked reasons of 'parliamentary overload'. In this traditionally sceptical context, what are the varying degrees of legitimisation of the two-chamber system stemming from the new fundamental laws in Africa? This is the rather difficult question which we studied in our research.

Confronted with an unprecedented process of multi-faceted challenges to their political systems, it would appear that the African states saw the adoption of the two-chamber system as a clever way of getting out of the crisis. This is because in Africa the crisis is primarily one of institutions and people in power. In keeping with this rationale, the African states thus organised in various ways the modes of negotiating the question of the two-chamber system with the opposition.

In some instances, this question was included in a broader issue of institutional reform of the State. Consultative bodies were then set up: National Conferences, National Tribunals and National Commissions on the preliminary project for the Constitution, etc. All the 'interested parties' were invited to participate in their various capacities along with other actors, to discuss and decide on the major institutional orientations of the new State, amongst which was the principle of the two-chamber system. In other cases, particu-

larly in the countries in which the demands of the opposition had been foreseen, the governments chose the institutional path and had the reforms voted on by the classical means and procedures already in existence. Thus, our research enabled us to analyse the instrumentalisation of the two-chamber system in this specific context, for it appeared, in particular, to be a sort of *modus vivendi* between hard-pressed governments and the various oppositions for the restoration of civil peace. It enabled the authorities in power to successfully deal with a form of political and social crisis by obtaining *internal appeasement*.

In our work, we thus demonstrate that the adoption of the two-chamber system seems to have been primarily a tool for managing conflicts and only thereafter as an institution with democratic value. These are the main lines of the research which we undertook. The fact is that if the two-chamber system has contributed to pouring oil on the troubled waters of the opposition movements and to obtaining the restoration of social peace, this is one of the fundamental conceptions of the two-chamber system in Africa. By this I mean that it was a perfect fit for a specific conjunctural context which corresponded to the post-conflictual transition. At the outset, this conjunctural context required the institutional management of political conflicts in order to establish civil peace, a necessary condition for the pursuit of democracy. This was effected by the constitutional recognition of the two-chamber system which brought power sharing in its wake – power in Africa being considered as a 'cake' which must be shared amongst the various ethnic groups, be they rivals or not.

Finally, we have also contributed to making it quite clear that this specificity can only be relevant if it is diluted in a democratic conception. This is particularly true concerning the political or technical purpose of the acknowledged attributes of the two-chamber system. Better still, this is the very justification for this purpose in the process of transition at present taking place in Africa. ■

Conferences and meetings

Re-examining liberation in Namibia (public panel debate)

17 March 2004, Windhoek, Namibia

Namibia 2004: Transformation since Independence – experiences and perspectives (consultative workshop)

18 March 2004, Windhoek, Namibia

The research project 'Liberation and Democracy in Southern Africa' (LiDeSA) cooperated with local partners in two related events with the aim to disseminate and discuss research results. It followed an international conference on '(Re)Conceptualising Democracy and Liberation in Southern Africa', which took place in Windhoek during July 2002 (see *News* no. 3/2002). One of the results of this conference was the edited volume 'Re-examining liberation in Namibia', published by the Institute in October 2003. A book launch and a one day consultative workshop were organised during the week preceding Namibia's Independence Day (21 March).

The workshop was organised jointly with the Legal Assistance Centre and the Department of Sociology/the University of Namibia. Some 60 participants from academia, a wide range of public institutions and civil society agencies discussed topical issues in three sessions. Local speakers introduced the themes. The thematic focus was subdivided into 'The land reform process', 'Economic transformation and development' and 'Political culture'. Presenters were from the trade unions, the Bank of Namibia and different advocacy groups. The debates reflected the current spectrum of both critical and affirmative views on Namibia's ongoing process of decolonisation and provided a meaningful exchange between civil society actors committed to social change.

A public book launch the previous evening presented the above mentioned Namibia vol-

ume by means of a panel debate to a wider public and drew more than 120 participants. The event was jointly organised with the Legal Assistance Centre and the Namibia Institute for Democracy. Panellists included Members of Parliament from the two biggest opposition parties Congress of Democrats (CoD) and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). SWAPO of Namibia as the former liberation movement and the party in government did not participate through a party representative. Instead, the deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Namibia and the chairperson of the board of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation contributed with views close to the government's position. The statements were followed by a lively but constructive debate, which despite the forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections was remarkably moderate, factual and balanced.

Furthermore, the events included a separate public lecture at the University of Namibia on



Photo by Nina Klinge-Nygård

An interested crowd turned up for the book launch in Windhoek on 17 March.

‘The Colonial Genocide Revisited: Consequences of 1904 a century later’. It was organised by the Department of Sociology and attended by more than 80 students, who discussed the subject intensively.

A publication, documenting contributions to the panel debate and the workshop, is cur-

rently being considered by the organisers, and will take the form of a locally produced and distributed brochure. The low budget activities could take place thanks to generous financial support from Sida.

Henning Melber

South Africa: Ten Years after Apartheid

24–26 March 2004, Pretoria, South Africa

Academics and political analysts from around the world gathered in Pretoria on 24–26 March 2004 for a conference on the achievements of the first decade of democracy in the country. The event was organized by the Africa Institute of South Africa, a non-governmental organization based in Pretoria, and attracted some 200 delegates.

For the occasion a major review on South Africa 1994–2004 with prospects for the future had been jointly prepared by the government and the research community of South Africa, containing such diverse subjects as political settlement and social transformation, economic development, foreign policy, security policy including the question of the judiciary and crime etc. Other subjects discussed were the Pan-African, Diaspora, Latin American, Asian and European perspectives on South African transition. The discussions were held in an open and critical atmosphere. The participants emphasized that they had not only come to celebrate the achievements so far but also to give their constructive comments.

However, Salim Ahmed Salim, former secretary general of the Organisation of African Unity, expressed in his keynote speech the sentiment of the conference namely that “Post-apartheid has

taught all of us that even those who are made into the worst enemies, creating a relationship in which some are brutalized and dehumanized, can overcome the trauma of such a tragedy and the compulsion towards vengeance through a genuine process of reconciliation”. Even if South Africa is confronted with a plethora of economic problems, some of which have deepened over the past decade, many speakers continued to view the country as Africa’s best ticket out of poverty and marginalization. South Africa should play the role of a locomotive and pull the rest of Africa out of its predicament, said Abdoulaye Bathaly, a member of the Senegalese parliament.

The many participants from other African countries than South Africa made the discussion on South Africa’s role in relation to the rest of Africa particularly interesting, many emphasizing the dual role of South Africa to assist and enable Africa to play an active role in globalization while at the same time avoiding becoming a too dominant force on the continent. South Africa’s important role in the solution of the Zimbabwe problem was discussed widely with, however, very diverse views on how exactly South Africa should act.

Lenhart Wohlgenuth

Futures for Southern Africa Conference

1–3 April 2004, London, UK

This Conference was the second in a series, which started in September 2003 with a meeting in Windhoek/Namibia (see *News* no. 1/2004). Co-organised by the Catholic Institute for International Relations, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, the Nordic Africa Institute and the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, it met this time at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies which was the host institution. The 40 to 50 participants during the three days were mainly scholars and activists from social movements and advocacy groups from Southern African countries and the UK.

The conference took stock of the results from Windhoek (compiled in a report published by the Catholic Institute for International Relations and accessible at www.ciiir.org) and took the debate further in sessions on various topical issues such as regional dynamics, HIV/Aids and gender aspects. Case studies included Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

An emphasis of the discussions was on the (counter-) strategies towards the dominant socio-economic paradigms and political hegemony. South Africa's role in the region was critically reflected upon. The questions debated included if Southern Africa is considered to be a region of states or a region of people. Participants felt that there was still a lack of a common language to discuss certain issues such as gender, masculinity and feminism in an effort to form alliances and enter strategic coalitions in favour of continued struggles for social and political emancipation.

How do the complexity of civil society, social forces and class interests relate to each other, what is the current balance of power and how are the dimensions of class, race and gender interrelated and to be tackled in the efforts to enhance equality and reduce discrimination? Participants largely agreed that the current societies not only

but also in Southern Africa are based on exclusivist patterns of rule. There is a dominance of neo-liberal paradigms and/or patterns of despotic and autocratic patriarchal rule. The continuing structures of oppression and exploitation, with marginalised people being denied the status of citizens and its entitlement in the sense of legitimate basic rights, show the limits of the formal decolonisation processes initiated as the transfer of mainly political power within arrangements of controlled change.

Participants agreed that the network established ought to be carried forward by various means. As a next step, a conference 'Looking at South Africa 10 Years on' is being prepared at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and the School of Oriental and African Studies for September 10–12 in collaboration with the Journal of Southern African Studies, the Review of African Political Economy and the Journal of Contemporary African Studies. Other planned activities include the preparation of a summer school on regional (Southern African) issues at Rhodes University in Grahamstown for late 2005 or early 2006.

As an integral part of the Conference the recently edited volume on *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa. The unfinished business of democratic consolidation*, published by the South African Human Science Research Council in collaboration with the Nordic Africa Institute (see *News* no. 1/2004) was jointly presented with the African Book Centre which is also the London based distributor of other NAI publications. The active role of the Nordic Africa Institute is supported by additional funds allocated from Sida to the project 'Liberation and Democracy in Southern Africa' (LiDeSA).

Henning Melber

NAI's networking in Africa: Experiences from Mozambique

By: Karin Andersson Schiebe

Information officer at the Nordic Africa Institute

One of the main tasks of the Nordic Africa Institute is, according to its statutes, "furthering co-operation and contacts between Nordic and African researchers". This is done in many ways, for example through the African guest researchers scholarship programme and of course through the Institute's research programmes and their networks. Within these networks, Nordic and African researchers are brought together in conferences, joint publications etc, and sometimes also in 'electronic networks', fora for mutual exchange of information. Recently, I – a staff member of the unit for information, research support and policy related activities – had the opportunity to take part in a workshop organised in Mozambique by three colleagues from the research unit, which gave me a chance to see how this networking works in reality.

Until quite recently, the Nordic Africa Institute's contacts with researchers from Mozambique were relatively limited – at least partly for language reasons. During the past few years, however, this has changed, to a large extent thanks to new research staff bringing their own networks (and language skills) to the Institute. The latest recruitment, Ilda Lourenço-Lindell, who has held the position as Swedish researcher since January 2004, took the initiative to organise a Nordic–Mozambican workshop in Maputo in order to explore the possibilities of collaboration between Nordic and Mozambican researchers, on the basis of common research interests in the social sciences. The fact that three of the researchers at the Nordic Africa Institute have research

interests in Mozambique opens up possibilities for a closer collaboration with local researchers. Part of the idea was also to facilitate exchanges between Mozambican researchers and their colleagues in the region, as well as between those researchers engaged in 'purely academic' research and the large number who – occasionally or mainly – do consultancy work. Possible avenues for collaboration could be:

Networking: each research programme/project at the Nordic Africa Institute includes an element of developing networks with other researchers around the central themes of the programme/project. Participants in those thematic networks exchange information and together constitute a pool of contacts for joint activities. In the Mozambican context, this also means an opportunity to increase exchange with researchers in other African countries (not least neighbouring South Africa). These exchanges have often been hampered by language barriers, which could be reduced for example by mobilising resources for translation.

Conferences: the Nordic Africa Institute has funds for organising conferences of varying scope – from local to international – with the participation of members of the research networks and others. Nordic and Mozambican researchers could formulate ideas for future conferences together, which could then be jointly organised.

Publications: the Nordic Africa Institute's publications have a wide international distribution, and many of them are available in electronic form. There are possibilities for joint publica-

tions around common research themes, and also for publications resulting from conferences.

The workshop 'Prospects for collaboration between Mozambican and Nordic researchers' was held on 16 March 2004 and hosted by the Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária in Matola, Maputo. It was organised together with researchers from the hosting institution and the Centre for African Studies at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo – particularly



Photo by Karin Andersson Schiebe

Some of the workshop participants outside the conference venue at the Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária in Matola.

Teresa Cruz e Silva and Terezinha da Silva. The invitation was widely distributed to local social scientists, and all the participants were asked to make brief presentations of their current areas of research. The researchers from the Nordic Africa Institute participating in the workshop were Signe Arnfred, co-ordinator of the 'Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa' programme; Lars Buur, co-ordinator of the programme 'State Recuperation, Resource Mobilisation and Conflict: Researching Citizenship and Capacity in African States'; and Ilda Lourenço-Lindell, whose project is entitled 'Collective Organisation of Informal Workers'. Amin Kamete, co-ordinator of the 'Gender and Age in African Cities' programme, had also planned to participate, but had to cancel at the last minute.

The workshop was attended by some 28 participants. After an introduction, where the hosting institution and the Nordic Africa Institute were presented, each participant made a brief presentation of his/her research themes. The range of themes was wide, and included inter alia public administration and local governance; gender relations; survival strategies in urban areas; rural development; HIV/AIDS; and legal reforms. The researchers from the Nordic Africa Institute, in turn, presented their research themes, and possible avenues for future collaboration. The general discussion that followed concerned possibilities to develop collaboration on the basis of already existing common research interests, by creating opportunities for brainstorming and comparison of perspectives and conceptual frameworks. Such an exchange between Nordic and Mozambican colleagues, it was mentioned, might facilitate the joint and 'well situated' construction of key concepts. The discussion also highlighted the importance of avoiding the domination of perspectives from the North in such a collaboration. The communication between the participants will continue, and further ideas and suggestions were welcomed by the organisers.

The days after the workshop, the NAI researchers' networking in Maputo continued, on a more informal and individual basis. It is of course too early to tell what the outcome of a workshop like this will be. It will hopefully lead to increased collaboration in some form between the Institute's researchers and their Mozambican colleagues, and in time possibly include other researchers from the Nordic countries. This far, the workshop has helped to spread information in Mozambique about the Nordic Africa Institute and what resources it can offer to African researchers.

For a more detailed report from the workshop, please contact Ilda Lourenço-Lindell at the Nordic Africa Institute (e-mail: ilda.lindell@nai.uu.se). ■

Recent publications



Ayo Olukotun

Repressive State and Resurgent Media Under Nigeria's Military Dictatorship, 1988-98

Research Report no. 126, ISBN 91-7106-524-5, 136 pp, 100 SEK (appr. 10 Euro)

This study documents a crucial dimension of the resistance of Nigerian civil society to a repressive and monumentally corrupt military state in the late 1980s and 1990s in Nigeria. Employing a neo-Gramscian theoretical framework, the study relates how a section of the media defied censorship laws, outright bans, incarceration and the assassination of opposition figures, to prosecute the struggle for democracy. It captures the tensions and contradictions between a pliant section of the media, which sought to legitimise the

state and a critical section of the same media, which in alliance with radical civil society, invented rebellious outlets to carry on the struggle against dictatorship. The study seeks to make fresh departures by documenting not only the role of the national media in the throes of democratic struggle, but that of the international media whose role was influential in the years studied. Finally the report offers empirical proof of the mechanisms by which a vibrant civil society can curb the ravages of a predatory state in an African country.

Ayo Olukotun is a lecturer in the Department of political science at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. He was formerly the editorial page editor of the Daily Times, Nigeria's oldest, surviving newspaper.



Osita Agbu

Ethnic Militias and the Threat to Democracy in Post-Transition Nigeria

Research Report no. 127, ISBN 91-7106-525-3, 53 pp, 100 SEK (appr. 10 Euro)

The democratic opening presented by Nigeria's successful transition to civil rule (June 1998 to May 1999) unleashed a host of hitherto repressed or dormant political forces. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between genuine demands by these forces on the state and outright criminality and mayhem. Post-transition Nigeria is experiencing the proliferation of ethnic militia movements purportedly representing, and seeking to protect, their ethnic interests in a country, which appears incapable

of providing the basic welfare needs of its citizens.

It is against the background of collective disenchantment with the Nigerian state, and the resurgence of ethnic identity politics that this research interrogates the growing challenge posed by ethnic militias to the Nigerian democracy project. The central thesis is that the over-centralization of power in Nigeria's federal practice and the failure of post-transitional politics in genuinely addressing the 'National Question', has resulted in the emergence of ethnic militias as a specific response to state incapacity. The short- and long-term threats posed by this development to Nigeria's fragile democracy are real, and justify the call for a National Conference that will comprehensively address the demands of the ethnic nationalities.

Osita Agbu is a Senior Research Fellow at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.

Mary Ntukula and Rita Liljeström (eds)

Umleavyo – The Dilemma of Parenting

ISBN 91-7106-522-9, 154 pp, 180 SEK (appr. 18 Euro)

Umleavyo – The Dilemma of Parenting is composed of studies on the gap between the generations and how this gap has widened over the past century. The past serves as the seemingly stable background on which to project currently fluid and ambiguous parent–child relationships. The focus of the studies is often on the different methods and goals for bringing up the next generation. These range from physical punishment, to achieving compliance through fear and reference to supernatural forces, to initiation ceremonies that provide multiple precautions and timely instruction on marriage and procreation, to the emphasis on relations between people as the most crucial experiences and to the encouragement of a sense personal responsibility.

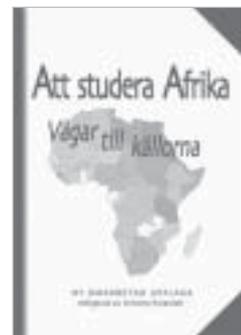
This volume is based on the narratives of the grandparents, parents and youths in the villages of the Pare people in the north and of the initiation leaders in Songea in the south, and on a comparison of the opinions of elders and youths about gender issues among the Nyakyusa. The unwillingness of parents to talk about a topic so delicate that they cannot find the right words is confronted. Parents are handicapped in their efforts to discuss sexual matters with their children by a lack of terms that are sufficiently clear, without being crude. Part of the parents' dilemma arises from societal conditions they cannot control. For a long time, individualisation has been understood as a response to hitherto unknown opportunities opened up by education, science and technology. Currently, there are two main branches of individualism: one involving those who have been able to emancipate themselves and reap some of the benefits of modernisation, and another for those for whom the modern economies have no use – surplus people individualised by force, poverty and eroding social bonds. How should one support youths for whom there is no clear passage to full adulthood? How can one forge links between the plight of families and issues of citizenship and public action? These are some of the questions raised in this book.

New title in Swedish

Kristina Rylander (red.)

Att studera Afrika. Vägar till källorna

ISBN 91-7106-519-9, (3rd edition) 150 pp, 180 SEK



A guide to the information sources in African Studies, useful for students, scholars, librarians, administrators etc. The book is also available electronically, and the electronic version is free of charge. More information about the book is available at www.nai.uu.se. Kristina Rylander is librarian at the Nordic Africa Institute.

Publications received

The following publications have been submitted to the Institute for possible review:

- Amanze, James, *African Traditional Religion in Malawi. The Case of the Bimbi Cult*. Blantyre: Christian Literature Association in Malawi, 2002 (Kachere Monograph no. 17).
- van Breugel, J.W.M., *Chewa Traditional Religion*. Blantyre: Christian Literature Association in Malawi, 2001 (Kachere Monograph no. 13).
- Dukurey, Ibrahim, *The Naure of Supernatural Power*. Almere, The Netherlands, 2003.
- Hansson, Göte, *International Labour Standards – A Conference Report*. Stockholm: Expert Group on Development Issues (EGDI), 2003.
- Holden, Sue, *AIDS on the Agenda. Adapting Development and Humanitarian Programmes to Meet the Challenge of HIV/AIDS*. London: Oxfam/Actionaid/Save the Children, 2003.
- Holmstedt, Leif Birger, *Afrikanske masker*. Copenhagen: Borgen, 2003.
- White, Seodi Venekai-Rudo et al, *Dispossessing the Widow. Gender Based Violence in Malawi*. Blantyre: Christian Literature Association in Malawi, 2002 (Kachere Text no. 14).

Setswana proverbs

The following two proverbs (and the translations) are extracted from *African Wisdom: A personal collection of Setswana proverbs* by Ellen K. Kuzwayo (Roggebaai: Kwela Books, 1998).

Bobedi bo bloaya noga

(‘Two-some kill a snake’ or ‘Unity is strength’)

Lesilo tsamaya le matlhale o tlhalefe

(‘Fool, walk with the wise and be wise’)

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