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news



from the Nordic Africa Institute

Featuring:

Can Sanctions Work? The Case of Angola

Dividends of Democracy in Nigeria



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News from the Nordic Africa Institute

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To Our Readers

In April 2001, the Nordic Africa Institute arranged in Lagos the final dissemination conference of the research programme *The Political and Social Context of Structural Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa*, which terminates a ten year phase in the history of the Institute. The Conference focussed on West Africa in general and on Nigeria in particular, and a number of important conclusions from this research programme were confirmed. The Nigerian experience was i.a. expressed by one of the participants, Professor Jibrin Ibrahim, who in a well formulated keynote speech pointed at the difficulties involved in returning to democracy after many years of authoritarian military rule causing economic, social and political turmoil. This speech is here presented as a commentary, in which Ibrahim—a political scientist and Head of the International Human Rights Law Group in Abuja—offers an insightful account of the problems that Nigeria is presently facing. Although the problems are enormous there is still, in his view, room for some optimism. We can only hope that he is right—otherwise what would be left for that great and rich country in which people have suffered so much for so many years?

The second commentary, written by Ambassador Anders Möllander who for many years worked as a Swedish diplomat in and with Southern Africa, deals with the old and controversial question of whether sanctions can work. He has been closely involved with the case of Angola, among other things as chairman of a UN panel of experts whose task was to trace violations in arms trafficking, oil supplies and the diamond trade, as well as the movement of UNITA funds. The study was unusually frank in its conclusions and recommendations and has been seriously

followed up by the UN and the international community. It seems that this work has had some major impact on the international discourse on sanctions. As he states, “the discussion on the design of sanctions regimes has been influenced by the Angolan case. Smart Sanctions [targeted sanctions] is becoming a recognised and applied discipline”. However, it is extremely important that the international community should make sure that these sanctions are well thought out and carefully implemented.

We are also happy to give an account of the new research programme *Conflict in Africa—Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society* by the programme co-ordinator, Ebrima Sall. During this past spring, the Institute hosted a large number of guests. Two visiting researchers and two special guests from Africa present their work in this issue of *News*, and so does our first guest researcher from Iceland. The special guests were the well-known Ghanaean writer Ama Ata Aidoo and the Zambian economist Oliver Saasa.

Finally, we are proud to present the work and experience of one of the leading experts on child health and nutrition in Africa: Professor Mehari Gebre-Medhin from the Department of Women’s and Children’s Health at Uppsala University. He has made important contributions to his area of research with particular emphasis on the situation in Ethiopia, the country where he grew up, and also in bridging policy and practice, making academic insights available to policy makers.

In this issue, we also welcome Karin Andersson Schiebe, who from now on will be responsible for editing *News*. ■

Lennart Wohlgemuth

Whither the Dividends of Democracy in Nigeria?



By: Jibrin Ibrahim
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On 29 May 2001, the Obasanjo government celebrated two years in power, the mid-term point of the newly democratically elected government. The recurring question in the media and on the lips of most commentators was: What has happened to the dividends of democracy?

The phrase ‘dividends of democracy’ was popularised by President Obasanjo himself when he came back to power in 1999 and promised a brighter future for the nation. It should be recalled that Obasanjo who had been a military head of state had voluntarily left power and handed over to an elected civilian government in 1979. He subsequently joined the ranks of those fighting Abacha’s military dictatorship and almost paid for it with his life. Finally, Obasanjo had been invited to contest for power in 1999 by Northerners who believed that his unquestionable commitment to national unity would be a major asset in the post-Abacha political healing period. President Obasanjo therefore came to power with an enormous amount of goodwill and in the euphoria of the moment promised Nigerians the dividends of democracy. The question that is posed here is: Are there any gains for the Nigerian people from the democratic transition?

Two years after the promise, the overwhelming impression in the country seems to be that the dividends of democracy have not manifested themselves. Nigerians seem to be disappointed that two years on, there are still too many problems that have not been adequately addressed. People have every right to expect a lot of immediate changes but expectations have to be realistic and the sources of blame correctly identified. A lot of the problems facing the government have their roots in the preceding regime and it will take the country a long time to adequately address them. At the same time, for democratic transition to be meaningful, the government must be able to do certain things that will distinguish it from the erstwhile authoritarian regimes so that democracy becomes meaningful to the people. In examining this question, we shall briefly review three aspects of the dividends of democracy that have generated debate in the country—the political, the economic and the human rights situation.

Political dividends

The 12 June 1993 presidential election was an important turning point in Nigerian history. It should be recalled that it was annulled mid-way through the announcement of the results, just at the moment when it had become clear that M. K. O. Abiola, a Yoruba politician, had won a landslide victory over Bashir Tofa, a Kano Hausa. Was the election annulled because the Yorubaman was beating the Hausaman at the polls? For many keen observers of Nigerian politics, the truth of the matter was that Babangida, the then Head of State, was a dictator who wanted to rule for as long as possible. The Yoruba elite, and indeed, the Southern elite, were however convinced that the annulment of the 1993 election was a continuation of a Hausa-Fulani plot to perpetually keep them out of power. Indeed, the election was considered to have been relatively free and fair and a good op-

portunity to start rebuilding confidence in the Nigerian nation-state. The cancellation however led to strong ethnic and regional fears that the Hausa ruling class was not going to allow a Southerner to rule, even if he won a democratic election. The annulment of the election therefore shook confidence in the Nigerian State.

'Power shift' refers to the calls of people from Southern Nigeria that the occupant of Aso Rock, the seat of power, should shift from the North to the South. The 1995 Draft Constitution had stipulated that the Presidency should be rotated between the North and the South, gubernatorial power rotated between the three senatorial districts in each state and the chairmanship of local governments between three zones to be created in each of them. These constitutional proposals were however completely discredited when it became clear that General Abacha had no intention of vacating power. He was planning and plotting to continue as the 'elected President'. Since he was from the North, the implication was that the zoning was therefore going to start from the North, the region that had monopolised power for a long time. The concept of power shift arose therefore to remove the ambiguity associated with zoning and rotation.

The swearing in of President Obasanjo in May 1999 was the realisation of the goal of power shift. A political pact had been worked out by the political class in which Northern politicians, whose constituencies are a numerical majority in the country, agreed not to contest for the Presidency so that a Southerner would emerge as President and political tension in the country would be calmed down. The pact 'allocated' the presidency to the Yoruba of the South West. The two candidates that contested for the Presidency were both Yoruba, and Obasanjo was the winner. And then the problems began. The hardcore Yoruba political elite felt that Obasanjo, although Yoruba, was a Northern candidate who might be subservient to the Northern political machine. They therefore voted en masse for the other Yoruba candidate, Olu Falae who lost. Although Yoruba candidates have been struggling to be elected

into this exalted post for forty years, Obasanjo's victory created anger rather than joy in Yorubaland. Ethnic mobilisation and chauvinism intensified and the Yoruba militia organised in the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) increased its attacks on Nigerians from other ethnic groups living in Yorubaland. Obasanjo's first year in office was therefore incongruous as the main challenge to his rule was from his own 'ethno-regional' base. That challenge however eased in the second year as his Yoruba associates succeeded in splitting the Yoruba opposition to the government and galvanising significant support for him.

The election of President Obasanjo also increased political anger in other parts of the country. The Igbos in the South East saw the election as another manifestation of the political marginalisation they have been suffering since the commencement of the Nigerian civil war in 1966. The Southern ethnic minorities in the South South zone have been equally unhappy with Obasanjo. The country's national revenue, almost exclusively coming from petroleum exploitation, is obtained from their land. They have therefore found Obasanjo's vehement opposition to their demands for resource control very offensive. In the North, the major political problem for the Obasanjo government has been the introduction of the Shari'a legal system. Given the history of tension and conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, this phenomenon raised a lot of fears. Indeed, in February, and again in June 2000, bloody conflicts between Muslims and Christians occurred in Kaduna, in which thousands of people were killed. The government was at a loss as to how to handle the situation and they have basically adopted a wait and see attitude.

In its first two years, the Obasanjo government encountered more political problems than it bargained for. In spite of that fact, however, the level of tension has declined significantly at this second anniversary of the government, compared to the first one. The activities of ethnic militias, and religious zealots have lessened. The political dividends of power shift have been slow in coming. The tensions that have been persisting are due to

problems that have been brewing over a long period. While the government has often appeared overwhelmed by the problems, what is important is that institutional mechanisms for addressing the problems exist and the government is slowly learning how to use them.

Economic dividends

No one expected the numerous problems confronting the Nigerian economy to be resolved within the first two years after Obasanjo's return to power in 1999. Most Nigerians however expected that certain nuts and bolts could be tightened which would ease the terrible conditions of life in the country. Two issues were of particular interest to Nigerians.

The first was the constant absence of petrol from filling stations in a petroleum rich country. There were high expectations that Obasanjo's apparent commitment to the struggle against corruption would lead to an immediate resolution of the problem. And it appeared as if it had. In the first six months of the Administration, fuel queues disappeared from the country. And then, they started coming back gradually, and within a few more months, the country was back to its 'normal' state of petrol and kerosene shortage. While Nigerians were back in the queues struggling to get fuel, the Obasanjo government was busy making the case for an increase in fuel prices, at the insistence of the Bretton Woods Institutions who have been so upset that fuel is 'too cheap' in Nigeria. What they failed to realise was that after two decades of constant decline in the standard of living of the population, reasonably cheap fuel was the last fortress Nigerians had and they were ready to defend it. Nigerians are still at a loss as to why two years into the life of the Obasanjo government, fuel scarcity persists. It is a problem that any serious government should be able to address in two years and this failure is raising grave doubts about the commitment of the government in fixing the nuts and bolts of the economy.

The second problem is that a lot of Nigerians feel the government should have been able to address is that of the epileptic elec-

tricity supply in the country. In a way, the government set itself up on the issue. One year after his inauguration, President Obasanjo admitted that the electricity supply company had failed completely in keeping to their targets. The President took over responsibility for it and set up a technical committee under his direct supervision. After two years in power, the government has failed to significantly improve the electricity supply in spite of the 152.8 billion Naira paid out between 1999 and 2001. The result is that Nigerians remain in darkness. Given the implications of the low power supply in the country for economic activity as well as for people's living conditions, it is disturbing that more efforts have not been put into getting results.

Fundamental questions are being posed on the commitment of the government to reversing the tide of economic decline. The government has admitted that its amateurish attempt to increase employment through providing monthly emoluments to ruling party faithfuls has failed. The campaign they launched to justify the increase in fuel prices collapsed. The policy of abandoning the pursuit of social welfare and the privatisation of virtually all services has caused much consternation. More ominously, the confidence the government has placed on international financial institutions rather than its own people creates doubts as to their commitment to economic development. The question people are asking the government is the following: Does globalisation mean complete capitulation to the whims and caprices of the West?

Human rights

During the first year of the government, two gruesome incidents of gross human rights violations were reported to have occurred. The first was the massacre of the inhabitants of Odi and the destruction of the town following the killing of some policemen in the vicinity. The second was the gang raping of a number of women in Choba by members of the security forces. The incidents were however isolated and the human rights condition in the country has clearly improved. Police roadblocks have been removed. Soldiers have returned to their barracks. State terrorism has

subsided. The surveillance and harassment of the public by the dreaded State Security Service have been toned down. Actually, it is easy to demonstrate that there are indeed democracy dividends that are being reaped in Nigeria today. This achievement is easy to record. The level of repression, state terrorism, corruption, ethno-regional discrimination and de-institutionalisation of the polity under the Abacha regime was so high that almost any government cannot but be better. The real question that is posed is that of hope for the deepening of democracy in the country. Democracy is never a static situation but a dynamic process in which there is movement between the expansive and repressive ends of the continuum depending on the relative strength of the forces at play. Clearly, the forces of democracy are on the ascendancy so there is hope in the country.

The Presidency has tried to impose its might on the National Assembly but the parliamentarians have been able to resist and the country today can boast of the most inde-

pendent National Assembly in its history. Civil society remains very active and vigilant and is able to constructively engage with the government. The military and security forces have so far kept to their promise of not interfering with the political process. In spite of the numerous problems facing the country, the possibilities for the construction of democracy remain high. Democracy offers social groups an opportunity to defend social gains by having a say on how broad decisions are made and by providing a framework for rules and institutions to be periodically tested and upgraded without resorting to violence. The possibility of institution building is higher under democratic rule than under conditions of authoritarianism. At the end of the day, the greatest dividend of democracy is the possibility for the expansion of political freedom, political participation and institution building. As we reflect on two years of the return of democracy to Nigeria, much as serious problems continue to confront the polity, there is still some room for optimism. ■

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Can Sanctions Work? The Case of Angola



By: Anders Möllander
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The war in Angola is one of Africa's most long-standing violent conflicts. After the war of liberation against Portuguese colonialism ended in 1974, the three rebel movements failed to agree on the governance of the country. An internal war ensued between MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), backed by the Soviet bloc and Cuba, and FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), backed by China, USA and apartheid South Africa. After the end of the cold war, an agreement was reached in Bicesse in Portugal in 1991 between the main parties. The agreement led to multiparty elections in 1992. UNITA, however, resumed the war after the elections. The Security Council decided on a comprehensive regime of sanction measures directed against UNITA's war effort, beginning in 1993.

In the following, efforts to strengthen the implementation of the sanctions regime against UNITA will be described. It will be argued that these efforts have had important effects, both in relation to UNITA's war effort and to the respect for UN Security Council decisions on sanctions and, indeed, for the UN in general. It will further be argued that so called "smart sanctions" without negative humanitarian effects, can be made to

work. Methods to achieve this will be described.

Prior to 1999 the general feeling about sanctions against Angola in the corridors of the UN high-rise in New York was one of *malaise*. The rebel movement UNITA under the leadership of Jonas Savimbi had resumed waging war after the elections in 1992. The Security Council had reacted with unanimous decisions on sanctions directed against the war effort of UNITA to try to bring it back to the democratic, political process. In 1993 sanctions related to the procurement of arms, military equipment and fuel were adopted. Following the signing of the Lusaka Protocol on 20 November 1994, an uneasy peace ensued. However, UNITA's failure to comply with its obligations under the protocol soon prompted the Security Council to threaten and then, in 1997, to impose additional sanctions. These included freezing of bank accounts, prohibition of travel by senior officials and closing of UNITA offices abroad. In 1998 the purchase of diamonds from UNITA controlled territory was prohibited.

The *malaise* felt in New York related to the apparent impunity with which UNITA was able to circumvent the sanctions regime. Apart from encouraging the movement to continue its war effort, the lack of follow-up reflected badly on the ability of the Security Council, the UN secretariat and, indeed, the international community to enforce its decisions. This was especially so as the decisions of the council had been taken with reference to the situation as a threat to international peace and security. Continued and increasing human suffering in Angola as a result of the war underlined the urgency of the situation.

Canada had in January 1999 taken over the responsibility in the Security Council for chairing the Sanctions Committee on Angola and the Canadian UN envoy, Ambassador Robert Fowler, embarked on an ambitious consultation and fact-finding mission which

resulted in two reports to the council. The reports contained a total of 19 recommendations aimed at strengthening the implementation of the decisions taken by the council.

Panel of experts

In February 1999 the council supported a recommendation that there should be studies “to trace violations in arms trafficking, oil supplies and the diamond trade, as well as the movement of UNITA funds”. In May a panel of experts was established under my chairmanship to carry out this task. The panel consisted of ten international experts and was given a six months’ mandate.

Common wisdom at the time was that little could be expected of the panel’s work. It was considered next to impossible to establish how weapons were bought and brought into the conflict area and equally, if not more, difficult to ascertain how diamonds were exported to finance arms purchases. As it turned out, the panel was able to report with some detail on these matters. We were greatly helped by the fact that the government of Angola during the latter half of 1999 managed to oust UNITA’s forces from their strongholds Andulo and Bailundo on the Angolan High Plateau. Defectors were coming over to the government side, and some soldiers were captured. These, as well as some captured material, were eventually made available to the panel and were useful in corroborating information received from other sources.

Through interviews with some key officers who had left Savimbi and through discussion with experts in the field, the panel was able to piece together a picture of the diamonds-for-arms business of the movement. The panel could thus in its report of 10 March 2000 (S/2000/203) present a credible account of how UNITA had procured arms and military material. It had apparently worked mainly through international brokers who were supplied with end-user certificates acquired from friendly governments, notably Togo and Burkina Faso in West Africa, which also gave refuge to UNITA officials and their families. In exchange, the heads of state in these countries received diamonds and funds.

The arms brokers had apparently mainly procured arms in or through Bulgaria. The government of Bulgaria decided to co-operate with the panel in investigating the deals.

The diamonds were mined in areas controlled by UNITA using local labour or workers brought from neighbouring Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). The diamonds were used mainly to pay for the purchase of arms and other goods. Diamond brokers would be engaged to evaluate packages needed for the purchases of goods. A major operator of cargo flights in African countries was identified as the main transporter of goods to UNITA territory.

Results and follow-up

As a result of the work of the panel it appears that the culture of impunity has been broken. Many reports point to the fact that it has been made more difficult and less profitable for UNITA to sell its diamonds and more difficult and costly to acquire arms. A follow-up mechanism has been working on leads established but not fully investigated by the panel (Reports: S/2000/1225 and S/2001/363). The mechanism’s findings have corroborated those of the panel. Other panels have followed in the footsteps of the Angola panel, notably on Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where illegal exploitation of natural resources is also funding the activities of rebel groups. An international diamond certification scheme is being prepared by an international working group called after its first meeting place in South Africa, the Kimberley group. The work of the group is based on a resolution in the UN General Assembly. It aims at identifying diamonds legally mined and exported, through a system of certification and controls, thus isolating illegal export and import of diamonds.

A discussion is taking place at the UN in New York on the strengthening of the capacity of the council and the secretariat to follow up on the council’s decisions on sanctions. It should finally be noted that the design of the sanctions regime against UNITA has not been questioned during the process and that the sanctions, and efforts to render them more effective, continue to enjoy unanimous

support within the Council. The sanctions are clearly defined to target the military capacity of UNITA under Jonas Savimbi and are largely without negative humanitarian effects. Humanitarian aid to victims of the war has thus not been affected by the sanctions decisions or their implementation.

Conclusion

The effect of the work of the panel of experts has thus been inter alia increased awareness of the sanctions regime directed against the war effort of UNITA in Angola. It has apparently also affected UNITA's capacity to continue the war. At the same time, it has contributed to the strengthening of the capacity of the UN to also follow up other decisions by the Security Council on sanctions. The methods used—panel of experts which

reports to the sanctions committee, 'naming and shaming', and follow-up through a so called follow-up mechanism—have already been widely copied to good effect. The discussion on the design of sanctions regimes has been influenced by the Angola case. 'Smart sanctions' is becoming a recognized and applied discipline.

To try to end the war in Angola and to alleviate the long-standing suffering of the Angolan population has long been an imperative for the UN and for most of its member states, including Sweden. For someone who has visited, as I did in 1993, two cities, Malanje and Kuito, which had then been recently besieged, and seen aid-workers having to sort starving children into possible survivors and hopeless cases, the motivation to work towards these ends is strong. ■

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Conflict in Africa—Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society



By: Ebrima Sall

Co-ordinator of the research programme "Conflict in Africa—Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society"

There is something of a paradox in the rise in the number of violent conflicts, despite the huge body of literature on conflict, and the many conflict prevention, management and resolution programmes. There is therefore a need for some rethinking, both from a scholarly point of view and from that of policy.

This new research programme was launched in February 2001, with a view to initiating studies on conflict and post-conflict transition, and to providing a framework for a scholarly conversation on conflict in Africa.

As many as 20 countries in Africa have experienced civil wars or other forms of violent conflict in the past two decades. The Rwandan genocide was an exceptionally tragic episode. The conflicts have had devastating impacts on the economies, the institutions of the state and of civil society, cultures and values, social relations, representations of Africa, and on the perceptions that certain groups have of themselves. How Africa has become so conflict-ridden, what is causing and/or fuelling the conflicts, what characterises them, how they are dealt with, how they impact on social and political relations, on economies, on institutions, on cultures etc. are still important questions for research.

As in other regions of the world, most of the conflicts are intra-, rather than inter-state. However, almost all conflicts have regional dimensions. Besides the involvement

of neighbouring states, informal networks of arms, drugs, precious mineral and primary agricultural commodity traders also span the region. The humanitarian problems associated with these conflicts are enormous.

African societies and states have also invented several ways of managing, resolving and living beyond conflict. Consequently, while the spread and deepening of conflict is going on in some areas, a number of others are in a post-conflict transition. However, not enough attention has been paid to post-conflict transition in the academic literature. Under this programme, the emphasis will be these post-conflict transition, reconciliation and reconstruction processes.

The identification of research themes and priorities for the programme is in itself a process involving the research community. Following consultations with scholars based in Nordic and African institutions, some twenty-five scholars and a few representatives of Nordic humanitarian and funding agencies participated in a brainstorming workshop on conflict and post-conflict transition in Africa, held in Uppsala on 28-29 May 2001. Participants came with 'think pieces' based on their many years of engagement with issues related to conflict and post-conflict transition. Although the discussion was not really on what causes or sustains conflict, there was a convergence of views on the importance, today, of a number of issues for research and policy.

Conflict

Contradictions are part of social life, and social conflict is actually something of a 'cultural universal'. What is at issue is violent conflict, part of which is the result of challenges to the nation-state and the breakdown of state-centred regulatory mechanisms. Where the state is still strong, the problem might be how it is organised or how it deals with issues involving certain groups, communities or regions.

Each conflict has its own specificity. It is therefore more accurate to talk about conflicts, that ought to be historicized (Abdullah). Although some of the conflicts in Africa have been going on for several decades, the fall of the Berlin Wall signalled a major change in the nature of conflicts and in the attitudes and motivations of the actors involved. The root causes of the violence associated with the conflicts might not always be the same as the mechanisms that sustain a given conflict. It is also important to identify trigger factors and factors of escalation or de-escalation of each conflict. There are a number of actors who have an interest in perpetuating the wars.

The nature of conflict and how it is viewed determines to a large extent the solutions proposed. There are several kinds of classifications of conflicts and insurgencies. These include 'liberation insurgencies' or 'intra-state conflicts over control of government and state power'; 'centralist conflicts' and 'regionalist conflicts'; 'wars of secession', also called 'state-formation conflicts', or 'separatist insurgencies'.

Most conflicts of the late eighties and nineties were diagnosed as 'ethnic', regional, or religious conflicts. As a result, the post-conflict political formulae and institutional arrangements proposed tended to be some form of a transition regime, or an all-inclusive 'consociational democracy' in which power is shared among the contending groups of elites claiming to represent the various ethnic groups. In a few rare cases, internal boundaries have actually been re-drawn as part of a new federal arrangement.

Both the diagnosis and the proposed solutions are however the subject of intense scholarly debates. Ethnicity is a social construct. Power-sharing arrangements have been critiqued for being premised on a conception that takes ethnic identities as the main lines of cleavage, thus minimising social/class inequalities, and for their potential for reifying differences. Besides, we need to know where power-sharing arrangements have really worked in Africa.

Nowadays, it is increasingly a question of what has been characterised by some as 'resource wars', that are said to be driven prima-

rily by economic agendas. Access to rents, particularly mineral resources, is often cited as an important factor in the outbreak of, and in what sustains, post-Cold War conflicts. The criminal activities such as looting, rape, torture and murder and the illegal sale of arms and minerals, and the sale of drugs associated with the conflicts make them very messy. 'Resource wars' are also said to be 'post-nation-state wars', brought about by a range of factors related to the end of the Cold War, globalisation and the crisis of the state, etc.

However, most civil wars seem to be a result of a breakdown in politics or, as Thomas Ohlson said, of "normal politics gone bad". Others have also argued that civil wars signify failed political systems that could not perform essential governance functions. The rational choice explanations have therefore been challenged by a number of scholars who offer alternative explanations, with an emphasis on the political factors.

Post-conflict transition

For the purposes of this programme, countries and societies considered to be in a 'post-conflict' state are those undergoing what Göran Hydén has called "a simultaneous reconstruction and reconciliation". These processes often go on over a fairly extended period of time. War and peace are not always totally distinct moments. Peace does not necessarily mean the end of the violent conflict. This is particularly true of transitions, some of which (e.g. democratic transitions), are in themselves conflictual processes. A 'transition' is an interval, and a phase in a process of change from one state to another, in this case from conflict to post-conflict. Post-conflict transitions entail a certain amount of uncertainty, insecurity and volatility, a fluidity of rules, a fragility of institutions, problems of legitimacy etc. Transitions go through various stages, and the risk of reversal may remain for a long time.

The actors involved in post-conflict transition include the parties to the conflict as well as other actors who come in as mediators, facilitators, brokers, sponsors or guarantors who may be the UN, the OAU or the EU, or a neighbouring country, a regional

power, or one of the industrialised countries.

In studying post-conflict transition, there is therefore a need to look at the forces on the ground, both the ones who may willingly or unwillingly fuel what is left of the conflict, or contribute to re-igniting it, and those who are trying to resolve it or who could help in resolving it. The 'strategic' actors may include the state as well as civil society organisations, such as trade unions, whose very nature ought to predispose them to downplaying horizontal differences along ethnic and religious lines that tend to be exacerbated in times of conflict (Beckman). Both the state and civil society organisations could however be parties to the conflicts. Both are also key actors in the transition and reconstruction processes.

The agency of actors such as those sometimes identified as 'vulnerable groups', such as women and children, ought to be recognised. Research should pay attention to the more subjective factors as well as to the structural ones.

There is also a need to identify other 'strategic' actors, such as the local intellectuals. Some of the movements involved in the civil wars have had a strong appeal to provincial intellectuals, such as schoolteachers, and to school children (Wilson). More generally, the intelligentsia, by virtue of the fact that they are strategically located in the societies, often play roles that ought to be better understood. They offer explanations of what happened, argue for or against certain options for negotiation, and may have an impact on the attitudes of people. What is important is not the quality of the discourse, but the social location of those who take on the responsibility, claim the authority to speak for others; to understand what kinds of flows of ideas there are, how they translate them, etc. in the particular realms where they operate; they are cultural brokers in many ways (Wilson).

It is important to understand the short-term issues such as the dynamics surrounding the negotiations towards and the signing of peace accords, the factors that account for the successes or failures of these accords, the demobilisation of ex-combatants (including child ex-combatants) (Laakso; Utas), the re-

constitution of police and armed forces, the repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced people etc. The medium and longer term issues include long-term peace building, how communities deal with the immediate and distant past, healing and reconciliation, problems of post-conflict justice, both at the level of the state and at the level of communities, the re-building of infrastructure, institutions of the state and civil society, and the building of democratic polities and development.

Violent conflict almost invariably impacts on values and on the humanity of people. One of the 'think pieces' looked at the role of religion and discourses of religious organisations in times of conflict, especially in terms of representations of the 'good' and the 'evil'. It was suggested that researchers look not only into these transformations in values and ethics, but also into the ways civil society and other actors are dealing with issues such as etiquette and trying to create or re-create democratic civic values (Ibrahim).

The issue of economic reform, not necessarily as understood and is being single-mindedly pushed by the Bretton Woods institutions, but as part of the process of democratic transformation and development, and the fiscal and other instruments required for that, is also posed in post-conflict transitions in very acute ways (Addison). The mix of legitimate and 'criminal' economic activities makes reform and development in a post-war context a very complex affair (Mwanasali). Some demobilised (child) soldiers, for instance, are hard pressed not only to acquire new skills, but also to live by, and support families with incomes that are nowhere close to being as important as the gains they used to get from looting and extortion.

Research should look into both the distant and the immediate past, rather than looking for the causes of conflict only in the recent past, and into the ways in which these pasts are being dealt with (memories, investigations of past abuses etc, but also portraits of heroes and heroines of the struggles, etc) and into ways that the future is imagined. We also need to interrogate the political culture, which according to Fox "comprises individual and collective orientations towards political

life [that] are expressed through patterns of actions and attitudes over time”.

Methodological issues

The study of a broad range of localised conflicts as well as those with a broad scope and a far reaching impact will help in identifying patterns, trends and cross-cutting issues.

Some participants actually called for more cross-regional comparative research (Beckman). Conflict and post-conflict transition ought to be seen in the context of the larger processes, such as globalisation and informalisation, which partly over-determine them.

Both good datasets and long-term research are needed. The former allows for statistical analysis, leading to the identification of patterns and correlations, whereas the latter makes it possible for us to interrogate narratives, such as the stories of ex-combatants, which tend to be quite similar, and for in-depth analyses (Utas, Coulter).

In the reconstruction of society what is people’s vision of rightness, correctness etc is dictated by various factors, such as religion, a realm where room for disagreement is limited. This is a problem in the search for a return to civility. Why is religion so prominent in Africa? People live in situations of utter powerlessness, and even notions of salvation are partly realised in terms of power (Ibrahim; Pohjolainen Yap). New forms of indoctrination make living together difficult. For instance, following a series of pogroms that occurred in communal conflicts over a few years, the city of Kaduna, in Nigeria, is being reconstituted along religious lines: Muslims live with Muslims in one sector, and Christians with Christians in another. People are told that those on the other side are the expression of evil. The research question is: How can one begin to approach such a difficult terrain in which the categories of the ‘Holy Ghost’ are more important than the others? (Ibrahim; Beckman)

Mamdani’s suggestion that the metaphor of ‘victims’ and ‘violators’ is not appropriate in Rwanda and in South Africa, was discussed extensively. In both Rwanda and South Africa, very few actual people were violators of human rights. South Africa

should therefore be looked at in a victim and beneficiary perspective: the white minority benefited from apartheid. This raises the issue of systematic justice, which is a requirement for genuine reconciliation (Hendricks). The extension of the franchise in South Africa in 1994 was an enormous achievement; so is the bill of rights. There has therefore been a major transformation politically. However, economically, not much has changed for the vast majority of South Africans. Instead, people feel that democracy does not mean much in a material sense. This is a problem for the legitimacy of the state. Research should also focus on the policies of the EU, the UN, African regional organisations (Laakso; Mwanasali); African armies and how they are being ‘right-sized’ (Møller); the challenges of mediation (Ridaeus); human security concerns (Anyimadu); new forms of civic engagement, post-conflict democratisation (Mnali, Rudebeck); accommodating difference and protecting rights (Tronvoll); and the construction of a post-patrimonial state (Bøås).

In conclusion, post-conflict transition is not a question of going back to the pre-conflict order. That is hardly ever possible because conflict transforms social relations (including the relations between generations, and gender relations), economies, institutions, cultures and perceptions. Instead, the research question is that of how societies are trying to move on to a different state of affairs, and the ways in which the demands for democracy, better lives, dignity and respect for the citizenship rights of the victims of poverty and various forms of exclusion and oppression are being addressed in a post-conflict situation. The workshop actually began and ended with two important reminders: that many of the issues that were on the African agenda in the early sixties (liberation, democracy, development...) are still unresolved; and that then, as now, one of the key words is *ownership*—by Africans of the processes of political transformation and development. ■

(For further details on the Programme, consult the programme leaflet or the Institute’s website. References of the works of authors cited and titles of ‘think pieces’ presented at the workshop are available on request.)

Aid and Poverty Reduction in Zambia: Mission Unaccomplished



By: Oliver S. Saasa

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Zambia, a once prosperous African country, now has 73 per cent of its people below the poverty line. Since the early 1990s, the country is on the UN General Assembly's list of least developed countries. With crippling indebtedness amidst poor economic performance, Zambia is presently one of the world's most heavily indebted low-income countries. And poverty continues to take its toll with the province housing the capital city registering the highest increase in poverty over the 1996 to 1998 period. This means that, although rural areas still have the highest poverty levels, Zambian urban centres are fast catching up. With help from donors, poverty reduction is at the centre stage in Zambia's development agenda, after almost two decades of externally prescribed experiments with adjustment and stabilisation as a panacea to welfare improvement. But despite significant aid volumes and structural reforms, the country is getting deeper and deeper into poverty. What is the missing link between aid and positive change? Is the problem mainly that the volume of aid is not sufficient and, as is often heard, more of it would make a difference? Is the sluggish social and economic progress in Zambia appropriately diagnosed and correct remedies and strategies prescribed?

As a product of a much larger research initiative, and in order to answer some of the above challenges, the Nordic Africa Institute

collaborated with the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR) at the University of Zambia to undertake a study on aid effectiveness in Zambia. Case studies of nine European aid projects were undertaken to serve as a basis against which the effectiveness of aid could be meaningfully evaluated. Myself and the late Ass. Prof. Jerker Carlsson were the principal researchers from INESOR and the Nordic Africa Institute, respectively. The study was conducted in three phases. The first phase, running from mid-1997 till late 1998, focused on (a) a critical review of the poverty situation in the country; (b) policies, strategies, and attitudes towards poverty reduction in the country; (c) local perceptions of poverty reduction as a government priority; and (d) policies and practices of European donors in Zambia in the field of poverty reduction, covering the nine case studies and drawing cross-cutting lessons from them. The second phase, which was covered during 1999 and which was primary data-based, zeroed in on household-level perceptions of poverty and poverty reduction and how this phenomenon ought to be addressed. Research assistants were used to collect household level data.

The third and last phase of the study, running over a nine-month period from September 2000 to May 2001, focused mainly on the analysis of the collected data and production of a book manuscript. This phase also entailed the examination of the definitional issues regarding poverty, economic growth and the role of donors; review of the nature, magnitude, and impact of poverty in Zambia; and the re-examination of government and donor policy responses to poverty in Zambia up to early 2001. The magnitude and composition of the aid flow to Zambia; how decentralisation could improve the involvement of people in poverty-reducing interventions; and charting out the way forward regarding how the effectiveness of aid could be improved all constituted part of this last phase. I was as-

signed by the Nordic Africa Institute to undertake this task following the death of Jerker Carlsson in September 2000. I spent part of my sabbatical leave from the University of Zambia undertaking additional work and preparing the book manuscript. I did much of the work while in Zambia but visited the Nordic Africa Institute from early April to mid-May 2001 to finalise the manuscript. It is expected that the book, *Aid and Poverty Reduction in Zambia: Mission Unaccomplished*, will be published by the Nordic Africa Institute by the end of 2001.

The analysis of the study data came up with a number of conclusions and a few of them are worth highlighting. Firstly, the nature and measurement of poverty matter when poverty is addressed. Income and asset inequality negatively affect the income growth of a given society's poorest people and it is increasingly becoming evident that income poverty is the principal factor that explains the plight of Africa's poor communities. The enhancement of poor people's capacity to earn an income that is capable of meeting their basic needs is, therefore, strategic for poverty reduction. The development of the agricultural sector, to the extent that it forms the basis of the livelihood of the majority of the poor, should be among the top priorities in any meaningful effort towards poverty reduction. In this regard, livelihood-based approaches that focus on increasing the poor people's income and assets are more effective in addressing the problems that poverty brings about than the consumption-based interventions that tend to merely alleviate rather than reduce poverty.

Secondly, economic growth matters but growth must be pro-poor. A pro-poor development policy or strategy that gives priority to targeting the poorest groups in its investments is better placed to have a positive impact on poverty reduction. In this regard, it is not enough to register positive economic growth without a conscious effort to streamline poverty reduction into the developmental agenda.

Thirdly, the quality of aid governance and aid relationship matters. It is clear that one of the most important pre-requisites for effective aid is a functional and thought-out na-

tional institutional framework within which external resources are mobilised and finally utilised in a way that recognises the recipients' priorities. It is in this context that the sector-wide approach to external assistance holds more promise than the traditional project approaches. But to improve the quality of aid management structure, donors should also invest in the development of their own human capital, capacities, and institutional structures in a manner that enables them to better conceptualise their roles in poverty reduction.

Fourthly, local ownership matters for aid effectiveness. To guarantee local ownership, initiatives towards poverty reduction must not be supply-driven but determined by client demand. This has two implications. First, the beneficiaries, particularly those at the grassroots level, must be allowed to have a direct say in the definition of poverty, *who* is poor, and *how* they want poverty to be addressed. Second, donors should avoid the 'top down' approach to project design and implementation and strive to operate within the existing national and/or local organisational framework. Related to this, there should be a deliberate policy by donors to reduce the number of foreign experts, particularly those that fall under long-term technical assistance. Simultaneously, the government and donors alike should appreciate and utilise local talent whenever it exists.

Lastly, if the poor people who support a given intervention are not convinced of its poverty-reducing relevance, the probability is quite high that they will frustrate its implementation. The poor seem to be less supportive of projects whose direct benefits are not apparent in the short-term. Thus, the longer it takes to reap benefits from a project, the less likely are the poor beneficiaries to be inclined to exhibit signs of continued commitment towards, and involvement in its implementation. In this regard, the degree to which a project or policy receives the much needed co-operation from the beneficiaries is fundamentally dependent on the planners' ability to factor in short-term rewards to the community, even when the anticipated and more lasting goals are to be realised in a much longer period. ■

Representations of WoDaaBe in Historical and Political Contexts



By: Kristín Loftsdóttir

Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Iceland, Nordic Guest Researcher at the Institute, May–June 2001.

WoDaaBe pastoral nomads in Niger have, as many other pastoral people, become increasingly involved in migrant labor. Droughts in combination with various political and historical factors led to a massive loss of livestock in Niger in the 1960s, 1970s and then again in the 1980s. In the Tchín-Tabaraden area in the northern part of Niger, where I conducted a part of my research, increased poverty had led to a growing rate of migration work among WoDaaBe, especially younger people. The WoDaaBe experiences of growing marginality can be seen as materialising partly in losses of productive resources, animals and access to good pastoral land. Interestingly, at the same time as WoDaaBe have experienced growing marginalisation, they became increasingly popular as the subjects of the commercial mass-produced press, their images being reproduced in high profile magazines and coffee-table books. Some WoDaaBe migrant workers in Niamey take advantage of this interest of Westerners by making and selling jewelry in addition to selling various other identity related products.

This recent interest in WoDaaBe has to be understood within a broader framework of Western conceptualisation of culture and ethnicity. Even though anthropologists have in recent decades criticised and deconstructed the culture concept due to its emphasis on

stability and hard-edged borders, the mass produced commercial Western press has taken a growing interest in people considered as “having” culture, thus essentialising and reifying the concept. This interest is not merely limited to the consumption of narratives but takes place beside the growing commercialisation of culture and ethnicity of certain non-Western populations. My project focuses on the images of WoDaaBe produced in the Western media, analysing their continuities and discontinuities historically, as well as how WoDaaBe artisanry producers take advantage of the interest cultivated by these images. The project focuses on various expressions of these relationships, based on ethnographic fieldwork in Niger, as well as contextualising the images within broader theorising in Western hegemonic scholarship on culture, ethnicity and race.

WoDaaBe in the cities

WoDaaBe views of the bush (*ladde*) are somewhat contradictory, in some contexts drawing a binary opposition of the city and the bush, of cultivation and pastoralism, but in other contexts seeing towns as a part of the bush, and agriculture and pastoralism as integrated. An exchange relationship with agricultural communities has not only been important to WoDaaBe pastoralism but WoDaaBe have also historically retreated temporarily to agriculture to reconstruct their herds during times of difficulties. Shortage of good agricultural land in the 1970s made this increasingly difficult, leading to migrant work gaining a growing importance. WoDaaBe migrant workers generally conceptualise migrant work in the city as a form of diversification strategy during times of difficulties, thus emphasising mobility instead of focusing on the sedentary aspects of their occupation in the city and their non-involvement with animals. The migrant workers themselves generally state that they engage in migrant work

due to necessity, expressing a desire to rebuild their herd and return to their extended families in the bush. Studies have, however, shown that migrant work has in the long term not been an efficient way for WoDaaBe to reconstruct herds, most migrant workers not being able to earn enough to buy new animals, because a great part of their income is spent on their own subsistence and the frequent trips to the bush. Migrant work is still important for the pastoral economy because it allows the remaining population to subsist on the herd without selling reproductive animals for corn or other necessities. The few animals of the migrant workers continue reproducing, thus possibly slowly constituting a new herd.

The migrant workers in Niamey are engaged in various kinds of occupations, the artisanry only constituting a part of the total range of activities, often being combined with other kinds of occupations. The artisanry makers sell their products to either middlemen who export them to Western countries, or to tourists in Niger. The association of items with specific identity can be seen as part of a general trend of transformation of so-called indigenous people into commodities highly valued in the Western world; native names and images being used for various products to attract people to buy them. The popular representations of WoDaaBe in the West can be seen as informing these relationships, in addition to contributing towards an increased interest in WoDaaBe objects. The ambiguities of WoDaaBe artisanry makers and the Western purchasers of these products are expressed in various ways but become further underlined when looking at the Western representations of WoDaaBe in a historical context, although their analysis shows a cer-

tain continuity of present day representations of WoDaaBe with the early twentieth century images of Fulani. Both emphasise WoDaaBe separation from their neighboring communities, in addition to celebrating cultural and typological purity. These representations, generally, emphasise a static conception of WoDaaBe culture, as traditional and outside historical processes.

Studies of representations

Studies of representations and images are important in understanding the production of some of the key concepts that have historically been used to understand difference, materialising in ideas of culture, ethnicity and race. Representations of WoDaaBe and Fulani constitute threads in such discourses, both drawing from and informing hegemonic representations of the world. It is also important to focus on the connection of discourses to people's lives as active agents, and thus how such representations are used and conceptualised by WoDaaBe themselves. WoDaaBe use the interest that these representations cultivate in their artefacts, thus finding new strategies of subsistence during times of difficulties. Their own views of these relations demonstrate competing ideas of modernity, as well as underlining the various contradictions of identity and subsistence in the contemporary world.

It is ironic that this growing interest in WoDaaBe, often focusing on them as being isolated and traditional, thus as existing somehow "outside modernity", is taking place at the same time as WoDaaBe have become increasingly marginalised, experiencing as many other groups a loss of resources and self-determination. ■

Biblical Mythology in Andre Brink's Anti-Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Fiction



**By: Isidore
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My research at the Nordic Africa Institute has been primarily concerned with examining Andre Brink's interrogation of the Afrikaner establishment's exploitation of realms of human value other than the overtly political, such as theology, to create a doctrinal nationalistic mythology of Afrikanerdom as a chosen race. Repeatedly, Brink draws attention to the characteristic Afrikaner reduction of the Bible to a white mythology that complemented the materiality of apartheid and constantly explores the Afrikaner establishment's appropriation of the Bible to create a highly consumable and self-justifying mythology of Afrikanerdom as the second Israel.

Central in this scheme is the ideological misconception of the Old Testament myth of the sons of Canaan as a divine injunction on the black's eternal servitude. Conflated with a colonialist and racist notion of European humanism which projected Europe's Others as sub-human and thus excluded them from the ethical prescriptions of humanism, theology becomes a species of myth-making, annexed into the formidable machinery specifically created to empower the Afrikaner establishment through the presentation of an authorised version of reality. If the "Christianization" of apartheid and the appropriation of religion were to the Afrikaner establishment the ultimate temptation, the reason is obvi-

ous: the projection of Afrikaner imperialism onto the revealed word of God as divine ordinance, in Afrikaner consciousness, gave apartheid the final legitimacy. Thus the Bible is distorted to a justification of a racist ideology.

Renouncing Afrikaner Christianity, Brink sought to valorise the New Testament myth of the self-sacrificing saviour as the obverse to the Old Testament myth of the chosen race. Thus he explores the Bible to retrieve the vital Christian ideal of self-renunciation and self-sacrifice of which Christ himself is the pre-eminent model. Similarly, he negotiates African humanism (epitomised in *Ubuntu*—a Xhosa concept suggesting compassion, love, humanity etc) both as a counter-hegemonic valence and as a possible paradigm for the reformulation of Western humanism to embrace all humankind.

But I have been equally fascinated by the limitations of authorial intentionality as well as by the abiding danger of the implication of counter-hegemonic writing in the discursive structure it opposes, given its inhibition by hegemonic pressures and limits.

Thus I have also attempted a critique of Brink's retention of the rhetoric of redemptive Christian suffering by noting how his descriptions of torture as purgatorial fire (in such novels as *Looking on Darkness*, *A Dry White Season*, and *A Chain of Voices*) had the subconscious ideological implication of reifying the apartheid power structure by ascribing legitimacy to torture as a form of spiritual boon and empowerment. Brink's theologizing of torture (by his constant inscription of it within a mystical, religious tradition) excludes it from history as a human production with obvious ideological implications and immerses it in a system not apprehensible in human terms. This projection of torture onto an artificial ahistorical continuum distances the reader from the history of apartheid by its happy, palatable resolution

of the horror of torture in apocalyptic time. Similarly, Brink's paradoxical critique and affirmation of the Western intellectual traditions with which he is deeply affiliated are interrogated.

Conducted primarily in the discourse of postcolonialism, this research work explores the Afrikaner/ Black confrontation as archetypal, corresponding, for instance, to the confrontation of the 'English Israel' with Australian Aborigines and American Indians; it also investigates the historical role of the Christian churches in apartheid South Africa in both black and white communities, and considers the relevance of theology to politically relevant fiction. Bringing into focus all of Brink's politically relevant fiction, and

making necessary comparisons with his contemporaries (especially J.M.Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer) this research project also draws immensely from contemporary South African history, politics, and religion, thus stressing all through the worldliness of texts; and arguing, moreover, that, given Brink's peculiar mode of treating the theme of politics, his work remains central and valid for post-apartheid South Africa, and for all human societies genuinely engaged in a dialogue of cultures.

But how do Andre Brink's most recent novels fictionalize post-apartheid South Africa? Answering that question is my preoccupation at the moment in my still on-going research project. ■

Urban Youth Violence As a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon in Nigeria



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As the number of violent crimes committed by young people has increased in recent years, the problem of youth violence has become an issue of national concern. One visible blight of urban life in Nigeria today, es-

pecially in the wake of the country's newborn democratic experience is the re-emergence of violence and the lawlessness of the youth. In virtually all parts of the country, urban centres have become sites of violence, by bands of fire-spitting youth gangs waging "turf wars", ethnic religious militias, motor park touts, armed bandits, etc, leaving tears, blood and sorrow in their tracks. These groups and gangs, daily make violence their statements.

As incidents of violence involving youths have increased, public demands for effective measures aimed at limiting youth violence have grown commensurately. At the state and national levels, the response from policy makers to the surge in urban youth violence has primarily come in the form of "get tough" measures, including substantial increases in

funding for law enforcement agencies (recruitment, retraining and improved pay), and poverty alleviation. However, the government's efforts have achieved limited success.

Youth violence as a socio-cultural phenomenon

Violence among young people must be understood as more than just an expression of aggressive individual behaviour. It must be seen as part of a larger social and cultural phenomenon, one that is inextricably woven into the history and social fabric of our society. Though we may be repulsed by certain forms of violence, we must acknowledge that our society glorifies and is entertained by violence. We may react strongly to child abuse or crimes against women, but in our culture we honour and heap admiration upon individuals in sport or the military whose capacity for violence enables them to overcome their enemies. Violence and violent images are pervasive, infiltrating our language through metaphors and helping to define our collective sense of who we are as a people.

Violence is also a learned behaviour. It may be consciously and unconsciously reinforced by families through child-rearing practices and indoctrination or promoted by the media and other expressions of popular culture through subtle and blatant images. Even our collective response to the threat of violence often manifests itself through some other form of violence: killing people while quelling riots, we sanction the killing of killers, and many of us seek justice for violence through some other form of violence.

Certain forms of violence (i.e. hired assassinations) are more likely to be exhibited in specific contexts or by certain groups of people. However, even in our stratified and segregated communities, increasingly violence knows no limits or bounds. There is substantial evidence that violence is pervasive and not constrained by ethnic, religious, class, gender, or geographic location.

If we accept the view of violence as a social and cultural phenomenon, one that is embedded in our collective history, reinforced by the media, and practised or glorified in almost every sector of our society, then we

must accept the reality that we cannot respond to it by isolating or incapacitating some number of violent individuals or targeting particular groups. Yet most of the focus of current research and policymakers has concentrated on the violent behaviour of a particular group – the young, the low-income socially excluded and powerless. Popular images of violence in our society have become intimately associated with the young and marginalised in urban areas. This is due both to the rate at which the incidence of violence occurs in the cities and among this segment of the population, and also because of perceptions and stereotypes that are rooted in our history of suppression and discrimination. It is sensible to concentrate research on, and develop interventions for, those segments of the population that have been most likely to exhibit or become victims of violence; however, by overlooking the broader cultural manifestations of violence, we not only add to the marginalisation and stigmatisation of the targeted group, but also ignore the host of factors that contribute to the persistence of this problem throughout our urban centres.

Conclusion

Given the failure of current policies aimed at reducing and preventing youth violence, policymakers must encourage and support schools, institutions and communities in devising alternative strategies that address the cultural conditions which normalise violent behaviour. While there may be no blueprint or single approach that can be adopted or applied uniformly across cities, community-based initiatives should be given priority.

Finding ways to challenge the cultural norms that support violent behaviour must become the central issue of violence-prevention initiatives. The cultural forces that legitimise and condone violent behaviour must find ways to replace those norms with others that affirm respect for life and non-violence. We can do a better job of preventing youth violence in our cities, but to do so we must begin by acknowledging our collective responsibility for challenging the cultural influences and social and economic conditions that foster and promote violence. ■

A Final Contribution from the Southern Africa Programme

The Southern Africa Programme* at the Institute was formally closed in March 1998. This does not exclude that a new book is being published by Palgrave, originating from a workshop in Cape Town, jointly organised by the Programme and the Centre for Southern African Studies, University of Western Cape. The title is *Theory, Change and Southern Africa's Future*, and it is edited by Peter Vale, Larry A. Swatuk and Bertil Odén. Since the workshop, the original papers have been revised and some contributions have been added in order to make the collection complete.

In the book, scholars of both international relations and Southern Africa present a wide variety of thoughts on the future of the region and the place of theory in helping to understand the array of events characterising the region in the early twenty-first century world.

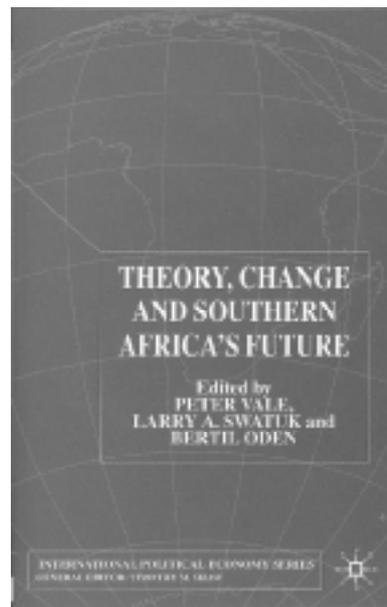
What do specific theories have to say about Southern Africa and its futures? And what do the findings say about the theories? From constructivism, feminism, environmentalism and realism to hegemonic stability, regimes and development economics, the book puts theory theorists and the region to the test.

The collection covers the chief strands of, and underpinnings in, recent theoretical thinking on the region's future. It is primarily aimed at students of sociology, political science, international studies and international economics. Hopefully it will also be able to bridge the existing gap between policymaking and recent international theory and therefore

also be of use to practitioners in the Southern Africa region and internationally. The contributors are Andre du Pisani, Björn Hettne, Merle Holden, Anthony Leysens, Michael Niemann, Hussein Solomon, Lisa Thompson, Balefi Tsie and the three editors.

For the Nordic Africa Institute and its Southern Africa Programme it is a privilege to contribute to a process in which the end product will be part of social science academic education in Southern Africa. ■

Bertil Odén



**) The Southern Africa Programme was a Sida-financed, multi-disciplinary research programme focusing on the role of South Africa in the Southern Africa region and on strategies for regionalisation in Southern Africa. The programme, co-ordinated by Bertil Odén, was based at the Nordic Africa Institute between 1988 and 1998.*

“The Search for a Long and Good Life”

Interview with Mehari Gebre-Medhin

Mehari Gebre-Medhin is Professor of International Child Health at the Department of Women’s and Children’s Health, Uppsala University. His research on nutrition and children’s health has played an important role in the Horn of Africa as well as in Sweden, and he is a source of inspiration to many researchers in the Nordic countries.

Mehari Gebre-Medhin, born in Addis Ababa in 1937 of Eritrean parents, has his MD from Lund University in Sweden. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, he worked for eight years as a research assistant at, and later as Director of, the Ethiopian Nutrition Institute. In 1972, Gebre-Medhin received his Masters at Harvard University and in 1977 his PhD in nutrition and physiology at Uppsala University. Then followed 17 years of clinical practice as a pediatrician at Uppsala University Children’s Hospital, with responsibility for infection and nutrition problems. During this period, Gebre-Medhin also carried out a lot of research on women’s and children’s health. In 1994, he was appointed professor, and today he is the leader of a research group on International Child Health at the Department of Women’s and Children’s Health, Uppsala University. He has gradually withdrawn from clinical work and devoted himself more to global issues such as food supply systems and development of methods for the assessment of the nutritional status of the community, still with a special focus on women and children.

Karin Andersson Schiebe (KAS): Tell me about the research that you carried out in Ethiopia!

During the 1950s and 60s, Sweden intensified its involvement in health and nutrition issues in Ethiopia, with particular focus on the situation of children and the food supply system in the country. Through my mentor, the great Professor Bo Vahlquist, I got the opportunity to participate in a project where the Swedish International Development Co-

operation Agency (Sida) supported the building-up of an Ethio-Swedish Pediatric Hospital in Addis Ababa, with training of staff and research. At that time, Ethiopia had a huge problem (unfortunately still has) with infant and childhood malnutrition, and it was further felt that it was important to look at the nutrition problem in the country by establishing a Children’s Nutrition Unit. This Unit did very good work in creating a basis for the understanding of the quality of the local foods and the ways in which these can be used in the preparation of baby foods. It was a major contribution to the understanding of childhood malnutrition and a very good foundation for intervention programmes to improve the situation of children.

In many developing countries, children are trapped in the transition period between breastfeeding and the family food, which often does not meet the requirements of the child. Their weights go down and the mortality rates increase. In this context, the Swedish–Ethiopian co-operation produced the famous complementary baby-food *Faffa*, a type of gruel or porridge based on cereals and milk, enriched with minerals and vitamins. *Faffa* became a symbol of the relation between food and health, and food and development. During the famines in Ethiopia in the 1970s and 1980s, *Faffa* was tremendously important in the relief activities, and it is still a popular product in the country, although it has now been commercialised. The pedagogic benefits of *Faffa* are much greater than the amount of food produced and sold,

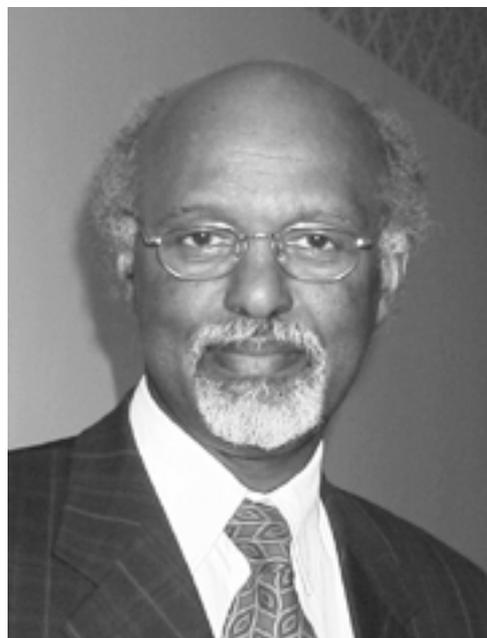
interview

because *Faffa* raised the concept of food and nutrition on the daily agenda in Ethiopia.

KAS: What is your present research focus?

The overriding topic of my research group is “The search for the long and good life”. This title might sound presumptuous, but I feel it is very important, because in the year 2001, children are still dying of apparently banal diseases such as diarrhoea! One of the great international challenges now, is how this unacceptably and unnecessarily high mortality rate among children can be reduced quickly. Although mortality in young children is slowly decreasing generally, in some areas it is increasing. So, we are looking for ways to reduce infant mortality rates—the search for a long life—using experience from Europe and elsewhere. Here, we are working mainly on the interaction between malnutrition (vitamin A, iron and iodine deficiencies) and infections (such as measles, diarrhoea, malaria, respiratory infections). Most deaths among children in low-income countries are caused by the interaction between infection and malnutrition, and our research is focused on how to avoid these deaths. The results from our research on iodine, vitamin A and iron deficiencies are being used as a basis for health policy and programmes all over the world. And we do see the impact of this, for example the mental retardation caused by iodine deficiency is going down drastically in the world today, because some of the methods and programmes that our research group developed are being used, i.e. more efficient and sustainable forms of iodine supplementation.

The other part of our research pertains to the search for the ‘good life’. A couple of our PhD students are looking at the quality of life of children—it is not enough to survive or even be healthy, children also need care. Not only is the average African child sick most of the time, but there is a lack of infrastructure for children, such as kindergartens and playgrounds for early education and care. Further, the environment is often very unhealthy and unsuitable for them. Our group carries out research in this area: the quality of life, based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



We have very good formalised co-operation in this area with Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Sudan and China, and we are also starting up co-operation with Eritrea. The projects are located in these countries, and PhD students supervised by my group carry out studies in their own countries.

KAS: It is important to make research available to policy-makers. How is this done?

We do research because we want to investigate and learn about ourselves and our surroundings. The major scientific discoveries were not made for policy purposes, they were the results of imaginative and inquisitive minds. It is important—in Africa as well as in the rest of the world—that the essence of research is protected, promoted and supported. At the same time, researchers have a responsibility to society—if for nothing else at least for the fact that research is often funded by tax money, so it is not unreasonable to ask whether society benefits from the research results. Here, the task of science is at least twofold: it should provide an evidence-based foundation for policies, decisions and programmes, but also investigate whether policy- and decision-makers use this evidence in the

right way to do the right things. Part of our task is to responsibly and with scientific stringency analyse policy and interventions.

KAS: Do policy-makers listen to researchers?

Yes, I think they do. An example is my own research experience in the area of public health and nutrition. Our findings have had very concrete implications on health policies and policy-makers have faithfully followed our recommendations. But many times as well they do not. Then, scientists must continue to ask why. There must be a mechanism to scrutinise political decisions and their consequences, and we as scientists must have the freedom to do so. However, policy-makers have to take other than purely scientific aspects into consideration, which scientists many times do not have to worry about. Real life is complex. The dialogue between scientists and policy-makers is important. Training people to think critically and independently with freedom of expression is the basis of democracy.

KAS: I heard that you recently gave a highly appreciated lecture with the title "Who cares about Africa?" Tell me about your ideas on that subject!

First of all, I was fascinated by the title: Is it a question or a statement? If it is a question, then we should ask ourselves: "Who should care about Africa?", "Who is caring about Africa?" and also "Who is caring about Africa who should not be doing it?", "Who should be caring about Africa but is not doing so?"

I grew up under privileged circumstances but in a society with abject poverty. When I was a child, beggars would come to our house almost every day and they were given a piece of bread with a little relish and water. I remember vividly asking my parents why beggars have no food. My mother would say "Because nobody cares about them", whereas my father would answer "Because they are deprived of their property". So I grew up with the concept of poverty being an expression of not being taken care of, and being deprived, in the sense that your rights have been taken away from you.

This basically became my perception and definition of poverty. Without trying to be

pretentious, we could subsequently convincingly prove in a series of rather daring publications during the great Ethiopian famines that this perception and definition was true. Ethiopia was exporting food at the height of the devastating famine that caused death, disruption and the fall of an ancient regime. Incidentally, this perception and definition of poverty coincides with that of Amartya Sen, the great philosopher and economist, who generously used most of the material we published in his monumental works.

Let me get back to the question of who should be caring about Africa. Colonialism has done tremendous damage, its effects are incalculable, exist at all levels, and are almost chronic. That cannot be denied. In spite of that, my answer is: It is Africans who must take care of each other and of themselves. We now have ample evidence that interference by others has been harmful. Humanitarian, emergency help is another matter, but from a long-term development perspective, aid has been harmful. I put the blame for this very much on us Africans. We must begin to care for our own people, and stop depriving them of their rights.

KAS: Does this mean that you are against development assistance?

Not at all. Development is not possible without international co-operation, even support and aid. It is the way in which this support is given that is at stake. It has to be part of a welfare-system, a development programme within and by the country itself. No country is so poor that it cannot provide bread, water or vaccination programmes for its people. This means that poverty is a form of human rights abuse. One of the greatest human rights abuses is high mortality rates among children. Those countries that have high mortality rates among children have governments and systems that are not taking care of their people. And this cannot be solved by aid. The solution must come from within.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of business in aid. Aid has its own logic, which of course defends aid. This is tragic, and it is even more tragic that there is a tendency to criticise, even demonise, countries who strive to stand

interview

on their own feet, the donor attitude being “beggars are not choosers”. Fortunately, there is now a change in attitude among aid agencies. There is a call for development dialogue, where both sides come with an open mind.

KAS: My last question concerns your relationship with Eritrea today.

Eritrea is my parents’ origin and identity, memories of them and my childhood, the name of my longing. I visit Eritrea once or twice every year, and my research group is beginning to co-operate with Asmara University and the health ministry. I find that Eritrea has a very interesting development paradigm, which has evolved during years of bitter struggle for self-reliance and sovereignty. Certainly, there is poverty in Eritrea, but practically no one goes to bed with an empty stomach, there are almost no street-

children or beggars, because it is not accepted by the society. Eritrea has a strong development paradigm, which says “You must stand on your own feet, you must take care of your own people”. This is also expressed in the care of the environment and of the historical sites. So, I am very involved in and stimulated by this development. And I am proud of Uppsala University, which has a successful, Sida-supported university programme with Eritrea, co-operation that is to the benefit of both.

Eritrea is not against aid, for which it has sometimes been wrongly criticised, it only believes in self-reliance. Some even seem irritated by Eritrea’s attitude, but there is also a lot of change. One aid organisation after the other is saying: “This is exactly what we want!” Obviously, I am a little biased, but I think that Eritrea’s development paradigm is very interesting—let’s give it a chance! ■

Grants and Scholarships

The Nordic Africa Institute invites applications for:

Travel grants

Deadline: 16 September 2002

Study grants

Deadline: 1 November 2001

Nordic guest researchers’ scholarships

Deadline: 1 April 2002

African guest researchers’ scholarships

Deadline: 17 May 2002

For more information, see the website:

www.nai.uu.se

The Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh

The Centre of African Studies (CAS) in Edinburgh, Scotland, founded almost 40 years ago in 1963, remains one of the more visible and active centres for the study of Africa both in the UK and in Europe more generally. It is located in a city and in a country with an enormously rich historical and contemporary set of relationships with Africa. In Scotland's 16 universities there is a very wide range of expertise on Africa, but this is especially so in the University of Edinburgh where almost 100 staff would claim a major research interest in one or more countries of Africa. (See on the CAS website, a link to the Directory of Expertise on Africa in Scottish Universities. The address is below.)

Staff and teaching

The Centre originally had just six disciplines at its core, with dedicated staff in politics, anthropology, history, economics, geography and education. Since the early 1980s that pattern has been abandoned in favour of the Centre networking and co-ordinating a much larger group of staff who are based primarily in their 17 different departments, but who are regarded as 'Teaching Members' of the Centre, and who play a variety of roles in its intellectual life. The range of staff interests is captured annually in the *African Studies Newsletter*.

The Centre of African Studies mounts its own Masters Degrees (MSc in African Studies; and MSc by Research in African Studies), and it has its own Doctoral Programme. Both of the two Masters Degrees are formally recognised as advanced courses by Britain's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Indeed, over the last five years, the ESRC has annually allocated no less than four Quota Awards (Scholarships) to the CAS. Its Doctoral Programme is also approved by the ESRC, and over the years there has been a growing number of doctoral

candidates working in relation to the CAS. This particular year, no less than three of the Centre's MSc students have been allocated three year PhD scholarships by the ESRC to continue to work at the Centre.

Seminars and publications

The Centre organises major weekly seminars for 16 to 20 weeks of the autumn and spring terms. Individual scholars of distinction from the UK, Europe and Africa are invited to these. They are invariably well attended, both from within the University, and from NGOs, community organisations, and from the many societies in Scotland that are linked to particular African countries.

Each year the Centre organises one major international conference on Africa. There has been an unbroken record of such conferences right back to 1963. In fact the most recent one—in May this year—on *Africa's Young Majority*, was the 40th conference the Centre has run. All of these conferences are turned into an edited published book of proceedings. They draw an audience of a hundred or more participants, and at least half the invited speakers are normally from Africa.

The Centre also publishes a rich series of Occasional Papers, including work from staff and from its own best students. For complete lists of publications, see the CAS website.

Research projects and networking

Although Members of the Centre usually carry out their research projects through their disciplinary departments, there have also been a series of major projects funded directly to the CAS. One of these, which ended in 1999, was on Education, Training and Enterprise in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa. (See the CAS website for a whole series of papers associated with the project.) Currently, the Centre is engaged in a substantial analysis of the sources of policy and the uses

institution

of knowledge in development agencies, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Department for International Development (DFID), and the World Bank. The Centre website contains a link to this project and its occasional papers, but a mid-term product of this research was an international seminar in Bonn in April 2001, the edited proceedings of which will be launched at Oxford under the following title: Gmelin, King, and McGrath (Eds.) *Knowledge, Research and International Co-operation*, CAS, Edinburgh.

The Centre's longstanding focus on the analysis of aid is illustrated by the fact that the Aid Policy Bulletin entitled *NORRAG NEWS* has been published in association with the Centre for the last 15 years. This bulletin will shortly be available in CD-ROM format as well as on-line.

Other professional networking associated with the Centre is linked to the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI). Through one of the Working Groups of EADI, the Centre is responsible with the Institute for Develop-

ment Studies in Geneva (IUED) for energising the Group for Cooperation in Development and Area Studies Training. One result of this collaboration has been a pilot project for closer co-operation amongst CAS, IUED, and Institute of Social Studies in The Hague; and another has been the formation of a Directory of comparative advantage in development and area studies training in Europe.

The Centre has had active linkages with Africanists in Leiden and in Copenhagen through the EU programmes ERASMUS and SOCRATES.

Exhibitions and culture

One thread of the Centre has also been its longstanding concerns with the awareness of Africa in Scotland, and the role of culture and art in the study of Africa. For this reason, CAS hosted the year long Scotland - Africa '97 series of over one hundred cultural and artistic events across Scotland, and there is now a new project which will develop exhibitions of basketmaking from Botswana, Japan, India and Scotland. ■

Kenneth King

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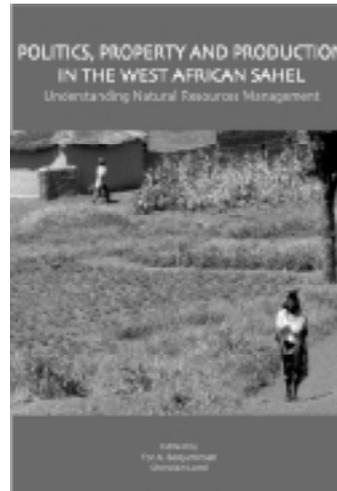
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Now published

Tor A. Benjaminsen and Christian Lund
Politics, Property and Production in the West African Sahel. Understanding Natural Resources Management
 ISBN 91-7106-476-1, 335 pp, 280 SEK, 18.95 GBP, 29.95 USD

Understanding natural resources management requires an interdisciplinary approach. Through case studies from the West African Sahel, this book links and explores natural resources management from the perspectives of three distinct but interrelated spheres (politics, property and production) and within a broad and empirically based political ecology. The prospects for African and Sahelian production systems and their influences on the environment are also contested.

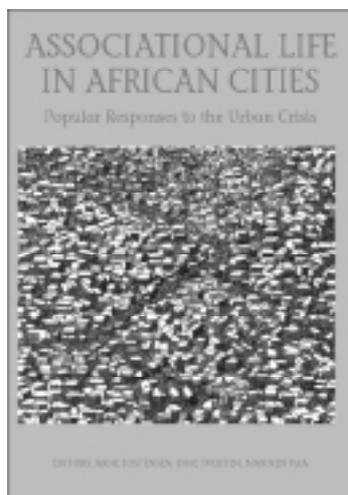


Arne Bigsten and Anders Danielson
Tanzania: Is the Ugly Duckling Finally Growing Up?
 Research Report Nr 120
 ISBN 91-7106-474-5, 116 pp, 100 SEK, 9.95 GBP, 16.95 USD

The title of this report is inspired by the great Danish author Hans Christian Andersen who in the child's tale "Den Grimme Ælling" ("The Ugly Duckling") tells the story of a particularly ugly duckling. She is so ugly, in fact, that she is despised and disliked by all other ducks and ducklings. After a long and painful period of time, however, she grows up—but not to become an ugly duck. Instead she becomes a beautiful white swan, admired by all. So Andersen's tale has a happy ending—at least as far as the ugly duckling goes. The major question tackled in this report is whether a similar fate is awaiting Tanzania. Having been something of an enfant terrible since the deep crisis in the early 1980s, economic progress since 1995 provides some hope that the duckling period in Tanzania is finally over.

Mai Palmberg
Encounter Images in the Meetings between Africa and Europe
 ISBN 91-7106-478-8, 290 pp, 280 SEK, 19.95 GBP, 29.95 USD

Saying that the image of Africa in the West is negative is stating the obvious but explaining nothing. This book is about understanding how the images have evolved in the encounters between Africa and Europe over time. It shows a greater variety than is usually assumed on the two basic European themes of romanticising "the primitive" and looking down on "the backward". The contributions to this book have been produced within the research project "Cultural Images in and of Africa" at the Nordic Africa Institute and deal with history, music, missionary writing, development aid discourse, commercial handicraft, popular literature, and travel writing. Also included are two special interviews with scholars who have made an important impact on the debate, Terence Ranger and Valentin Y. Mudimbe, and the text of an address on Africa images in European literature given by the Zimbabwean author Yvonne Vera.

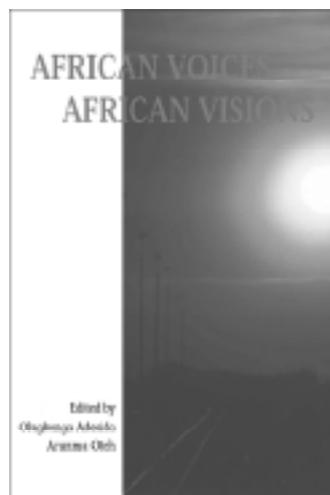


Arne Tostensen, Inge Tvedten and Mariken Vaa (Eds)

Associational Life in African Cities: Popular Responses to the Urban Crisis

ISBN 91-7106-465-6, 320 pp, 250 SEK, 16.95 GBP, 24.95 USD

The book contains 17 chapters with material from 13 African countries, from Egypt to Swaziland and from Senegal to Kenya. Most of the authors are young African academics. The focus of the volume is the multitude of voluntary associations that has emerged in African cities in recent years. After an introductory chapter by the editors: "The African Urban Crisis, Governance and Associational Life", the contributions are grouped into the following sections: 1) Coping through Informal Networks, 2) Religion and identity, 3) Land and Housing, 4) Services, 5) Emerging initiatives. Recurrent themes are under what circumstances and in what contexts people have organised themselves and what areas of social service provision new urban associations cater for. How already established associations or organisations expand their bases of activity in efforts to grapple with the urban crisis, and how this affects their following and original purpose is discussed.



Olugbenga Adesida and Arunma Oteh (Eds)

African Voices—African Visions

ISBN 91-7106-472-9, 215 pp, 220 SEK, 16.95 GBP, 27.95 USD

Does Africa have a future? What are the visions, hopes, ambitions and fears of young Africans for the future of the world, the continent, their nation, and their communities? How do they envisage this world and their roles within it? In this book, the voices of a new generation of Africa are heard exploring the future from personal and diverse perspectives. The authors have enumerated the ills of Africa, analyzed the problems and explored the opportunities. Remarkably, despite the daunting nature of the challenges, they were all hopeful about the future. They provided their visions of the future, suggested numerous ideas on how to build a new Africa, and implored Africans to take responsibility for the transformation of the continent. Given the current emphasis on African renaissance and union, the ideas presented here could become the basis for a truly shared vision for the continent.

Sidsel Saugestad

The Inconvenient Indigenous. Remote Area Development in Botswana, Donor Assistance and the First People of the Kalahari

ISBN 91-7106-475-3, 230 pp, 220 SEK, 16.95 GBP, 27.95 USD

The main topic of the book is the relationship between the Government of Botswana and its indigenous minority, variously known as Bushmen, San, Basarwa or more recently N/oakwe. The analysis shows how Botswana's culture-neutral welfare approach, identifying the target group only by negative criteria (e.g. lack of resources, lack of organized leadership, lack of mainstream skills) also becomes culture-blind, creates clients instead of contributing to stated objectives of community involvement and empowerment. The last section of the book describes the emerging indigenous consciousness, and presents the agenda of new organisations that seek to go beyond the symptoms of poverty and to address the underlying causes of marginalisation. This process of change did not emerge from within the government's development programme, but is seen as part of a global process, with links to international organisations.

Maria Erikson Baaz and Mai Palmberg

Same and Other. Negotiating African Identity in Cultural Production

ISBN 91-7106-477-X, 200 pp, SEK 220, GBP 16.95, USD 27.95

The idea of African Otherness has occupied a central role in discourses on cultural production in Africa, whether film, literature, music or the arts. The claim to African Otherness is gaining new strength in the wake of globalisation, but it is also increasingly challenged by a number of contemporary artists. This book deals with the question of relevance and meaning of the signifier in various fields of contemporary cultural production in Africa: literature, film, sculpture, music, popular drama.

Lars Rudebeck

Colapso e Reconstrução Política na Guiné-Bissau 1998–2000. Um estudo de democratização difícil

ISBN 91-7106-482-6, 124 pp, 150 SEK, 12.95 GBP, 18.95 USD

(in Portuguese) In this study of recent developments in Guinea Bissau, Lars Rudebeck seeks to investigate how democratic rule emerges and functions in real life. His analysis extends far beyond the multi-party system and election procedures as he discusses contrasts in people's perceptions of democracy. He assesses their access to influential structures, the roles of civil and political society, of the military, and of international assistance and argues that complex power structures need to be addressed if democracy is to be consolidated.

Henning Melber and Christopher Saunders

Transition in Southern Africa —Comparative Aspects. Two Lectures

Discussion paper nr 10

ISBN 91-7106-480-X, 28 pp, 80 SEK, 5.95 GBP, 8.95 USD

The 1990s completed a process of transition in Namibia and South Africa that brought formal decolonisation in Africa to an end. These two contributions review some aspects of the transformation and complement each other. They take stock of the transformation in a historical, comparative perspective and investigate the experiences and prospects of democratisation under sovereign, legitimate political rule.

Forthcoming

Tor Sellström

Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa. Volume II: A Concerned Partnership (1970–1994)

ISBN 91-7106-448-6, 720 pp, 2001, 590 SEK, 49.95 GBP, 79.95 USD

Conferences

Seminar on Development Knowledge, National Research and International Cooperation, 3–5 April 2001, Bonn, Germany

There is a new element in the discourse on capacity development. It takes the form of development agencies, notably the World Bank, beginning to present themselves as “knowledge institutions” in addition to their more traditional role of financing institutions. Some five years ago, James Wolfenson began to describe the World Bank as a centre of knowledge about development. The same tendency can be seen within British Department for International Development and Japan International Cooperation Agency. The logic of the argument is that agencies have built up and generate a massive base of knowledge within their respective areas of competence. The techniques for the sharing of these experiences are labelled knowledge management. What happens when this new role is linked to one of the traditional roles of agencies, which is to build research and other professional capacity in countries of cooperation? Is it problematic or can it only reinforce and improve what is being done already?

This was the theme of a seminar in Bonn, organised by the German Foundation for International Development and the Northern Policy Research Review Advisory Network on Education and Training. A publication from the seminar will be out soon.

Three days of intensive discussions threw new light on some of the classic issues of the relationship between research and policy making. For example, are there solutions representing some best practice that can be transferred to different contexts? Does the new trend of knowledge management reinforce a notion of capacity development as a question of transfer of knowledge, rather than as a process of mutual learning and sharing of experience between equals? Does it matter that this knowledge is associated with the power of financing institutions?

Seminars like this do not provide ready answers, nor was this the intention. The seminar was important in that it tried to capture a trend within some development agencies and linked it with the age-old agenda of capacity development in countries of cooperation.

Lennart Wohlgemuth (Director of the Nordic Africa Institute) and Ingemar Gustafsson (Ph.D., Head of Methods Development Unit, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida) participated from the Nordic countries. Lennart Wohlgemuth reflected on a recent publication by the Expert Group on Development Issues, EGDI entitled “Learning in Development Cooperation” and Ingemar Gustafsson commented upon Sida’s new policy for Capacity Development.

Ingemar Gustafsson

**Africa in the New Millennium,
14 May 2001, Stockholm, Sweden**

The initiative to this seminar was taken by the African Heads of Mission based in Stockholm. The Nordic Africa Institute was asked to co-host the seminar and assist with the practical arrangements, while funding was provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The seminar, which took place at the National Museum of Ethnography (Etnografiska Muséet) in Stockholm, was attended by some 90 scholars, policy makers, diplomats and NGO representatives.

The aim of the seminar was to examine some of the main questions relating to Africa. Two key speakers were invited to provide input to the discussion: Dr. Yusuf Bangura of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and Prof. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, professor emeritus of African studies at Howard University and senior adviser on governance with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Abuja, Nigeria.

After opening addresses by the hosts, H.E. Raymond Suttner, Ambassador of South Africa, and Lennart Wohlgemuth, Director of the Nordic Africa Institute, Prof. Nzongola-Ntalaja gave his view on the subject "Political Reforms and Conflict Management in the African Democratic Transition". Dr. Adebayo Olukoshi, Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) in Dakar, acted as discussant. Nzongola-Ntalaja's presentation touched upon issues such as limitations to democratic reforms, the national question, and poverty. On democratisation he particularly emphasised the recent increased incidents to change constitutions to allow present leaders to extend their terms in office. The national question included the issue of citizenship, which seems to be increasingly questioned in many countries in Africa today. Also the alienation of youth was emphasised. He further argued that the crucial

matter is not what the state *provides* in terms of housing, education, health care etc., but what the state *controls*, and he even sees this as a condition for democracy.

The second presentation, by Dr. Yusuf Bangura, was entitled "Africa and the Challenges of Economic Globalisation". Bangura stated that global inequality increased during the 1990s, and Africa is among the losers in this development. The main reason for this, according to Bangura, is Africa's lack of connectivity with the rest of the world. One of the examples mentioned was the 'digital divide' in as much as only 1 per cent of the internet users in the world are in Africa (whereas Africa has around 12 per cent of the world population). Globalisation of course also allows Africa to develop, but the obstacles and problems must be recognized and taken seriously, both by Africans themselves and by the international community at large. The discussant, Dr. Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, Associate Professor at Göteborg University, raised the question how we should market Africa in the new millennium.

After lunch, the discussions continued in two separate working groups. The final plenary session started with reports from these working groups and a short general discussion. After this, the day was closed with a presentation of Sweden's Africa policy by Gun-Britt Andersson, Swedish Under-Secretary of State, and with a vote of thanks expressed by H.E. Michael Arap Serгон, Ambassador of Kenya.

For many of the participants, this day was a greatly appreciated opportunity to meet with colleagues and others who share an interest in Africa, and discussions were lively, during the sessions as well as during the breaks. One of the participants quoted an old African saying: "If you do not know where you are going, you get where you are headed". Perhaps this day was one step of many to get Africa moving in a better direction.

Karin Andersson Schiebe

Symposium on the Land Issue and Perspectives of Conflict Prevention in Namibia, 17–18 May 2001, Wuppertal, Germany

This Symposium, organised by the Archive and Museum Foundation in collaboration with the United Evangelical Mission, aimed to honour the special German-Namibian history. After all, the currently contested land issue in Namibia is a direct result of the historical processes of colonisation during the late 19th and early 20th century in what then had been euphemistically called “German South West Africa” protectorate under the colonial rule of imperial Germany. The organisers sought to bring together academics and policy makers from both Namibia and Germany for a policy related dialogue. Unfortunately, invited representatives of German policy and aid agencies opted out of the exchange. The suspicion that they were reluctant to expose themselves to any constellation that might require some binding commitments in terms of material support to a policy of land redistribution in Namibia seems not too far-fetched.

The Namibian delegation included several church leaders, among whom Rev. Zephania Kameeta had political weight too: as a Member of Parliament for SWAPO during the first decade of Namibian Independence he had been the Deputy Speaker before leaving the National Assembly in March 2001. He presented an emotional appeal to the mainly German audience, to support the restoration of human rights and dignity by returning the land to the dispossessed. “The violation of the land rights is the violation of the soul of the people but its restoration is the resurrection of the soul of the people and life in abundance” he maintained. “There will be not only life for those whose rights have been restored but also for those who have land, because the threat of conflict will be removed and we all will live together in peace.”

Far more sobering was the empirically based overview presented by Wolfgang Werner, previously the Director of Lands in the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, since the mid-1990s Senior Researcher at the Namibian Economic Policy

Research Unit (NEPRU). His profound insights into the potentials and constraints of a land redistribution in Namibia within the overall legal and environmental framework provided enough evidence to conclude that “we do not have the tools and data to determine whether Namibia is achieving its aims with land reform”. While the redistribution of land and tenure reform will continue, the challenge remains “to ensure that the process is sustainable socially, economically and environmentally”. Hinyangerwa Asheeke, Namibian Ambassador to Germany, made it clear in a response that he was not comfortable with such an analysis.

An overview by Henning Melber (previously Director of NEPRU, currently Research Director at the Nordic Africa Institute) highlighted the different aspects related to the issue of land in Southern Africa and in particular Namibia with the intention of underlining the complexity of the problem. The historical dimension, the socio-economic rationales as well as the different cultural notions, combined with the need for social transformation within a regulated and accepted legal environment result in a situation of constraints, which offers no easy way out. He argued that effective redistribution of wealth and poverty reduction is not identical with land redistribution but might at the same time ease the pressure and reduce the symbolic relevance of land too. Economic growth to the benefit of the majority of the population would make the land issue less emotionally loaded and reduce the danger of being exploited for political manipulation by irresponsible populist rhetoric.

The legal aspects and implications of land possession in Namibia were emphasised in a historical perspective by Harald Sippel from the University of Bayreuth. According to him, redistribution of land has never resulted in a permanent solution and cannot do justice to everyone. He appealed for careful implementation of a process that involves all stakeholders as much as possible. Land reform in Namibia should also be considered as an international challenge and task to compensate at least partially for the injustice rooted in the history and effects of colonial settlement.

Michael Bollig from the University of Cologne challenges the predominant dichotomy on communal and commercial land in Namibia. He based his insights on his own field research among Himba communities in Kaokoland and empirical studies by some of his colleagues undertaken in other Namibian regions. The particular case studies managed to illustrate convincingly that the present patterns of land utilisation are far more differentiated than often perceived from the outside. There are a variety of forms of interaction between individual household levels, inside the communities and between local levels and the state agencies, preventing a simple and generalised approach to the way land is utilised in Namibia.

The variety of contributions were helpful efforts to further sensitise the audience towards the need of reflecting in depth on the issues related to land and its utilisation in a post-colonial society such as Namibia. A final panel debate with some of the presenters as well as representatives of the church emphasised the need for a particular German responsibility to contribute towards the solution of a burning social issue, also the result of a process of colonisation and subjugation in which Germans were decisively involved. The original contributions to the Symposium will be published in a separate volume and thereby made accessible to a wider audience.

Henning Melber

Interrogating the 'New Political Culture' in Southern Africa: Ideas and Institutions, 13–15 June 2001, Harare, Zimbabwe

Co-hosted by the Southern African Regional Institute of Policy Studies (SARIPS) and the Institute of Development Studies of Helsinki University, this conference brought together about 40 researchers and policy-makers from Southern Africa and Europe. The Nordic Africa Institute was represented by the research director Henning Melber and myself. The aim was to critically engage with the rhetoric and reality of democratic reform in Southern Africa, focussing especially on 'culture' both as an explanatory variable and as a resource or impediment in democratisation. The organisers wanted to return social anthropology to the mainstream of Africanist political studies. Though few in number, papers based on anthropological fieldwork gained praise for their detailed rebuttals of culturalisms and essentialisms, serving to dispel obsolete prejudices against the 'colonial science'.

The thematic sessions addressed the conceptualisation of political culture, the political and economic context of the democratic reforms, the role and nature of the state in the

post-authoritarian era, the emergence of various 'local' actors in the current political pluralism, identities and nation-building, church-state relations, gender and households, and the rhetoric of rights. No consensus on the meaning and utility of 'political culture' as an analytical tool was achieved, supporting, inadvertently, some participants' insistence that culture must always be understood as a contested terrain, moulded by competing interests and ideals. Even a common understanding about the very objective of the conference was sometimes at risk as some participants busied themselves with political prescriptions, using 'neoliberalism' as the catch-all rubric for current ills, while others opted for more analytical interventions.

The focus of critical interrogation was not only on various culturalist approaches to politics but also on the issue of novelty in democratic reform. Southern African leaders who have spearheaded political change over the past decade often see themselves as a 'new breed', committed to free markets, pluralism and the rule of law. Several papers at the conference advised wariness with conceited rhetoric. Strong presidentialism continues to prevail, genuine multipartyism is rarer than a dominant-party system, and blind faith in le-

other activities

galism and constitutionalism depoliticises fundamental differences in power and privilege. On a more positive note, some contributions demonstrated the enduring appeal of ideals and strivings for betterment. The 'good state', for example, continues to animate the political imagination, if only through such apparently pathological phenomena as tribalism and regionalism.

Those who came from outside Zimbabwe may have greeted the choice of the host country for this interrogation of the 'new' political culture with some irony. Their sentiments

verged on despair, however, when the sad polarisation of public debates in Zimbabwe became a feature of the conference. Those Zimbabwean intellectuals who had the opportunity to make their voices heard gave ample evidence for the participants to conclude that essentialisms, variously disguising themselves as 'feminism' or 'nationalism', were alive and well, making the task of the more nuanced papers at this conference all the more urgent.

Harri Englund

The UN General Assembly Meeting on HIV/AIDS, 25–27 June 2001, New York

The UN General Assembly held a special session on AIDS in June this year. I attended the session as a part of the Swedish delegation. The following short note is not, however, intended to be a comprehensive report of the whole proceedings—in any case, no one person would have been able to cover the transactions of thousands of delegates from over 185 countries—nor does it reflect an official account of one of the delegates. I write from various perspectives: from that of a concerned citizen of a Nordic country, but also that of an African-born researcher who has spent more than a decade working with HIV/AIDS prevention in Africa. These different, but by no means conflicting identities coloured my experience of the UN meeting, and therefore the slant I give to it.

It was the first time ever the General Assembly had devoted a session to one single disease. The meeting was opened by the Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan. He began by yet again reminding us of the great toll the AIDS pandemic had taken in the world, to date. It was the worst setback to development. AIDS deaths had resulted in over 13 million orphans. He emphasised the need to recognise the pandemic as *our* problem, and *our* priority. The need to mobilise leaders and

followers to make the fight against AIDS their priority. We had to learn from the experience of the NGOs who had been at the forefront of the battle against AIDS. We must all be willing to change our own behaviour, in the public as well as private sectors, and the first step toward this was by not passing any moral judgement on those who are infected. "Every infected person is a fellow human being", he said. The Secretary General then proposed the establishment of a Global AIDS Fund to the amount of seven billion dollars to fight AIDS and other diseases related to it. It was a clear and coherent speech delivered with dignity.

After the Secretary General's speech leader after leader took the floor to deliver a speech, the purpose of which was to ultimately support the proposal for the Fund. African leaders had turned out in force, no doubt to underscore the importance of the occasion as well as to give their support to Mr Annan. As one person observed there seemed to have been more African Presidents and Prime Ministers in the UN on this occasion than any other in the past. Many countries, even some of those with low levels of HIV, also took the floor to pledge support to AIDS prevention and care. Notably absent were some leaders, such as President Mbeki of South Africa and President Museveni of Uganda. The former was represented by the

Minister of Health who dispensed much energy to explain her leader's views on HIV/AIDS, while the latter was cited and lauded by many speakers as a shining example of topmost response to the pandemic that can make a difference.

The Nordic countries turned out in force—Sweden fielded a large delegation led by the Minister for Health and Social Affairs, Mr Lars Engquist, with Ms Maj-Inger Klingvall, Minister of Migration and Development Co-operation, and Ambassador Pierre Schorri, the Swedish Ambassador to the UN as deputies. Sweden holding the presidency of the EU, Mr Engquist spoke on behalf of the European Union. He reviewed all that is known about HIV/AIDS today, and said that to make a difference, we had to “transform our knowledge into concrete action”. A prerequisite for this was courage and vision by national leaders and a tremendous effort by local communities and civil society. “Together we can and will achieve a change!”, he said.

There were also powerful speeches from the other Nordic countries. I was particularly impressed by the Norwegian Minister of International Development, Anne Kristine Sydnes, who outlined a strong commitment of her government to HIV/AIDS prevention by mainstreaming it within the Ministries in Norway, even though like in the other Nordic countries, HIV/AIDS prevalence is rather low in her country.

I sat through protracted speeches, most of which impressed me immensely, others of which left me worried that very little had been done by some countries to combat AIDS even though it is more than two decades since the AIDS virus was identified. Some countries have such poor health services so that even if there were to be a cure or free vaccines available today, these countries lack the infrastructure to get the medicines and vaccines to those who need them most. For such countries, of course, the Global Fund would, they hoped, be for building basic health care services as well as fighting AIDS. This raises the issue of the modalities of using the fund, once it is in place.

Behind the scene of smooth speeches, other battles were being waged even on such

issues as who should be allowed to take part in the round table debates. Some countries wanted organisations such as Gay and Lesbian Groups excluded. But more serious were those who wanted the resolution, that was to be one of the outcomes of the Assembly, to exclude any mention of vulnerable groups in the context of AIDS prevention, such as: ‘women and children’, ‘prostitutes’ or ‘men who have sex with men’. Much tact, hard work and diplomacy must have been expended to produce a final resolution that all UN member countries could accept.

From my own perspective one of the most important parts of the assembly meeting was that of also emphasising the plight of orphans and vulnerable children. Many speakers stressed the plight of orphans. Ms Klingvall, who has been in the forefront of placing the welfare of children in development co-operation on the agenda, sat on a panel with Ms Carol Bellamy of UNICEF, Mr Harry Belafonte, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Dr Abiola of PLAN International, and two young persons who had lost their parents to AIDS. It was an excellent session. Ms Klingvall presented the Swedish government's concern with the overall situation of children in Swedish International Development, and launched the document *Children Affected by HIV and AIDS*, one of a series under production. The special panel was packed with—to hazard an estimate—a couple of hundred, at least, and Ms Bellamy observed that the last time the topic was discussed in the same room, only some twenty or so people turned up.

We all left New York feeling that the big cannons were out at last. Mr Annan had put AIDS on the global agenda. And even if one considered as hyperboles many of the high-flown speeches, and the halting repetitions of the same epidemiological figures, HIV/AIDS had, hopefully, now become highlighted in the minds of the world's leaders as an “insidious and vicious enemy” (to use Secretary of State Colin Powell's words). AIDS is now a global concern; one that—as Dr Michael Merton once observed—does not need a passport.

C. Bawa Yamba

Seminars on Higher Education

After years of marginalisation, higher education in the Third World, and particularly in Africa, has again become an important issue on the development agenda, in the academic world as well as among donor organisations. This is inter alia reflected by a number of major conferences and seminars that are taking place all over the world. The Nordic Africa Institute has been represented at several of these conferences, two of which are reported on below.

African Higher Education: A Research and Capacity Building Initiative, 7–8 June 2001, Accra, Ghana

The heightened attention being paid to African higher education at present provides an opportunity to develop research and research capacity in this important but under-researched area. The production of knowledge and the role of knowledge are changing in a context of sweeping global changes, unfavourable economic conditions and political transformations. There are also changes at the level of both the researchers (the demography: there have been several generations) and the universities (the institutions). The research community involved in the production of scientific knowledge is still largely based in the universities. However, there are new kinds of institutions on the scene, and the pluralisation of higher education and research institutions and economic liberalisation have forced the public universities to adjust to the new realities.

Higher education research is a specialised area of research that, in Africa, is still weak and often quite narrowly 'technical'. To understand the higher education system, we need more than higher education specialists. Social science research can help in understanding both the context and the dynamics of change, policy choices made or available, etc. Two of the main objectives of this planning meeting held in Accra were to identify research priorities and define ways of developing research and research capacity that can contribute to the current processes of transformation of African Higher Education. The meeting was organised by the Association of

African Universities and the Social Science Research Council.

Workshop participants agreed on the importance of paying particular attention to the public universities, without which most of the new private institutions would not be able to survive. The question then is how to identify sources of change in the public universities. 'Success stories' ought to be critically analysed, especially when 'success' is attributed primarily to economic liberalisation. It was agreed that special attention ought to be paid to the universities in distress. There are various forms of distress due to economic crises and civil wars, to the decline in social status of important sections of the elites (e.g. university professors), to poor employment prospects for new graduates, etc. The institutions themselves are suffering from massification and mismatches between growth and institutional capacity, between labour markets and the numbers and kinds of graduates produced, between popular expectations and what universities could be reasonably expected to do. While some participants tended to be in favour of greater responsiveness of the universities to the market, others warned against the dangers of a narrowly 'demand-driven' approach.

Both the institutions and the researchers have also been responding to the crisis in different and sometimes creative and interesting ways. It was noted that for the public universities, to survive as institutions through the crisis required creativity and innovations in management that we need to understand. Certain courses, such as the MBAs offered through correspondence courses, and 'satellite

campuses' have been mushrooming, often as a way of raising funds. For instance, a Lagos-based 'satellite campus' of Bayero University of Kano charged fees that could be up to 20% higher than those charged to students at the main campus in Kano city itself, in Northern Nigeria. Innovations also occurred at the interstices of the academy, of disciplines and departments, but also outside of the academy. Although, the degree-holding taxi driver syndrome is still a reality, it would be wrong to deduce from the unemployment crisis that the universities produce only 'damaged goods' and 'alienated intellectuals', or that the social value of the university degree has gone down to such a level as to discourage students from wanting to acquire a degree. On the contrary, enrolment rates have remained high all through the crisis years. What seems to have happened is a re-rating of courses and disciplines more or less on the basis of their perceived market value.

Universities used to be perceived as 'leaders of development'. These days, the discussions on the 'public role' of universities sometimes conceal a certain 'anti-intellectualism'. There are actually several 'publics', several potential users of research. The universities have also been affected by shifts in paradigms and policies concerning the role of the state in development, and in higher education, especially via the structural adjustment programmes. We need, however, to understand how the different types of state intervention, how different regulatory regimes affect the autonomy of the universities, how changes in the way higher education is financed impact upon autonomy, and how marketisation of public university functions impacts on relevance, quality, and autonomy. At a very basic level, we need to ask what it meant to be

a product of the 'grand university' such as the Makereres, Dakars, Legons or Ibadans of old, and what it means to be a product of these same universities today, in terms of knowledge production.

It is also important for us to know the regional ecologies and the globalising market for higher education. The regional universities and research institutes set up in the latter part of the colonial period and early years of independence have almost all been split into several national institutions. However, regional networks such as CODESRIA were set up to overcome barriers of a national or linguistic nature, with a view to facilitating the building of a regional scientific community. Countries such as South Africa have also become recipients of large numbers of students and lecturers from the region. Globalisation on the other hand presents both constraints and opportunities for higher education. The development of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) has contributed enormously to this emergence of the global market for higher education. ICTs are also a key factor in the partial de-territorialization of higher education, with the creation of virtual universities and the spread of various new forms of distance learning.

The challenge in all this, is to know how the university is trying to maintain its basic functions (teaching, research, public service), while adapting to rapidly changing national, regional and global contexts, and to get them to do what universities can do best.

Finally, the question is also that of what sort of research we need. It was agreed that both 'transformative research', as well as good basic research are needed.

Ebrima Sall

Higher Education in Emerging Economies: Patterns, Policies and Trends into the 21st Century, 7-11 July 2001, Salzburg, Austria

This symposium took place at a castle in Salzburg, owned and run by Salzburg Seminars, on the invitation of four major Ameri-

can Foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie and Henry Luce). These Foundations have all decided to increase emphasis on higher education in their aid programmes and are all grappling with the question of how this should be done in the most efficient manner. For this purpose, they invited

other activities

a group of scholars on higher education from all over the world for an intense four-day discussion.

This symposium aimed at identifying those aspects of higher education in emerging economies necessary to create the basis for systematic analysis and the formulation of sound public policy. The discussion thus focused on how best to develop a strategy to strengthen in-country capacity, both human and institutional, for original research, analysis, and public policy debate.

The discussion took as its point of departure the global forces changing the context in which higher education operates today. It then focused on the broad trends and influences affecting higher education around the world, and the nature of institutional responses to these trends and influences. Key factors included the revolutions in information technology and genomics, increased trade in educational and training services across international borders, new protocols for intellectual property rights, changes in the nature of skill requirements for the labour market, and ideological shifts resulting in new processes of devolution of authority, participation, liberalisation, and decentralisation.

From there, the discussion probed into the national forces affecting the evolution of higher education, such as the emergence of mass systems, institutional finance and national accountability, and labour demands. This was done by examining how such forces are mediated by social, economic and political transformations on the ground that differ by country and region and are in themselves severely affecting the evolution of higher education. Among the most notable are increasing demand for university education with consequent effects on the size and shape of the student pool, government attempts to restrict growth of public funding as higher education reaches a massive scale, and a growing challenge to public institutions to increase private sources of funding, while private suppliers (domestic and international) tap different niches in the expanding educational market.

There was also a presentation of comparative cases of shaping and reforming emerging mass systems and of system-wide challenges as perceived by policy makers and of policy responses. Topics included trade-offs among the multiple roles of higher education, adjusting system size and shape, redefining the nature of quality within international and local contexts, lowering costs through economies of scale, increasing access and gender equity, and positioning higher education as a responsible partner in building democratic society. Among other things, an interesting presentation on the transition of higher education in South Africa was made.

In the panel discussion that followed, an investigation was made of the human and institutional resources now available around the world for systematic analysis of policy issues in higher education, and the type of resources required (and affordable) in the developing nations as we move into the 21st century. Problems of retaining qualified staff and brain drain were emphasised as generic problems and the question of proper incentives for trained staff was deeply probed into. In this context the building of intellectual capital for higher education analysis and policy making was also discussed.

Finally, the questions of the multitude of different and often new actors, the changing roles, approaches, and perspectives of such actors, and communication among them, were examined. Most political and education leaders in developing countries now recognise that the higher education system cannot continue to expand without regard to quality control and social accountability. As they look for solutions, they often find themselves in conversation with a multitude of new institutional actors. The multinational and bilateral agencies are playing ever-larger roles, and many private foundations are returning to higher education as a priority. There are also new actors emerging from an energetic private sector, both non-profit and commercial. In particular the latter phenomenon led to many heated discussions.

Lennart Wohlgemuth

The Nordic Africa Institute at Zimbabwe's International Book Fair 2001

The Nordic Africa Institute attended this year's Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) between August 7 and 11 with its own stand. So far the continent's biggest book related event, this year's ZIBF suffered serious (but hopefully not irreversible) damage from the effects of the country's deteriorating political and economic situation. Many local and foreign exhibitors decided (some at rather short notice) not to participate due to the crisis and the attendance rate was appallingly low. Parts of the exhibition area had empty stands. During the public days, a markedly smaller number of visitors than during previous years came to the show grounds in Harare's town centre.

The presence of NAI was a decision to show commitment to one of the thus far relevant socio-cultural events on the continent, which is under threat of losing its importance due to the government policy of the host country. The ZIBF management welcomed the exhibitors with words of appreciation for their courage and support. According to local reports, trade business in and around the venue of Mayor's Garden was very disappointing and reflected the overall constraints. Pictured is Sue Melber at the NAI stand, trying to satisfy the curiosity of a group of children and their teachers from Fatimah's Zahra Pre-School in Harare. ■



Henning Melber (text and photo)

Report from a Guest Writer

By: Ama Ata Aidoo

Ghanaean writer and guest writer at the Institute within the research project 'Cultural Images in and of Africa', April-June 2001.

By the time I leave Sweden in the early hours of June 21, 2001, I will have lived some of the most unexpectedly active, and wonderful, 86 days I have experienced in a very long time.

Things had turned out 'unexpectedly' because, I had assumed, emphasis on assumed, when I was leaving Ghana, that I was coming to hide somewhere in Uppsala and write. Not that I had had any basis for such an assumption. After all, what I had chanced upon, as a member of the mailing list of Mai Palmberg, researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, was a call to interested African 'research scholars' to apply to be guests of the Institute for a 12-week period. When I have had to define myself, it is first as a writer. So it was courageous of me to apply, and very kind of the Institute to have me. What I got when I arrived here was 'wonderful', since it amounted to, and can be simply and truthfully described as, a great promotion tour. Proceeding, rightly, from the conviction that the parameters of

the programme were already set, Mai had laid out an incredibly solid schedule for a reading/lecture tour for me.

This schedule took me to Finland first. I read and spoke at Åbo Akademi University, at an event that had been jointly organised by the Akademi's Women's Studies Department and the English Department of the University of Turku. A day later I gave a reading followed by some very lively discussions at the University of Helsinki. In Norway, I spoke at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim and the University of Oslo. Back in Sweden, I visited Umeå. My main presentation in Umeå was at the City Library.

My last two engagements were to join the faculty and some graduate students of the English Department at Uppsala University for tea, and to give a presentation at the Solidarity Library in Stockholm. The latter was organised jointly by the library, and the very supportive Birgitta Wallin and Anne Brügge of the literary journal *Karavan*.

Meanwhile, at the Institute itself, there were three separate occasions when my books were the focus of discussions. The first was a 'public conversation' I had with Mai Palm-



Ama Ata Aidoo (middle) with Maria Olausson and Kirsten Holst Petersen at the Research Forum 'Themes and Challenges in the Writings of Ama Ata Aidoo' in Uppsala. Photo: Mai Palmberg.

berg in March, followed by a research forum in May. The theme for that was 'Themes and Challenges in the Writings of Ama Ata Aidoo'. Three scholars known for their work on Post-Colonial Literature gave papers: Stefan Helgesson, Uppsala, Kirsten Holst Petersen, Roskilde University, and Maria Olausson, Åbo Akademi University. Finally in June, I met one of the reading circles at the Institute, which had read my novel, *Changes*, even before I came.

Towards the end of my stay, my daughter came to visit for two weeks. Soon after she arrived, I took her on a cruise ferry to Turku, Finland for the day. Throughout that trip, she kept wondering whether it was all real. In Sweden, my daughter had made daily trips to explore and photograph Stockholm. She seemed to have taken to Sweden and its capital so much, that after a time, I felt myself in competition with them for her attention. Out of all that grew the poem below. ■

Stockholm—for Kinna (XIV)

By the way,
did you notice
Her
the morning she took the train
from miles away
to come and say
Goodbye to
You?

Did you notice My Child?

Or
you softly slept with the
just contentment
Of a Northern city
where problems exist
Only
if they have had no
human, practical
scientific
and
sensible solutions:
—all else figured
-out, made, and
standardised?

Where? Where?
Just you never mind.

May be
You had not bothered yet
to wake up your many island limbs

that fleeting, warm spring day, but
lay dreaming of icy mists,
Darkling trolls and ancient,
pushing aside, for just a little while longer,
the rather contemporary, vexatious matter of whether
to go, or not to go,
Euro?

Between the steamy cocoa farms and those giant cola
trees of
Africa's West, and
the tall grasslands around the valley manyattas of
Africa's East, and
New York, New York,
where do you come in,
Stockholm?

Did you crest your dainty Baltic over
the deeper, wider and more contentious Atlantic
to come and snatch my daughter's heart?

Those who claim to know tell us that even
hell's fire beckons bright, and cool
threatening
no pain or disillusionment
on first time visits.

If she should ever return,
treat her kindly:

You hear?!

*Ama Ata Aidoo,
June 2001*

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