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# news

from the Nordic Africa Institute

NUMBER 3  
NOVEMBER 2007



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*Cover photo: Rita Hamusokwe, farmer of Chikwela village, Chongwe, Zambia, cultivating her field. Photo by Sean Sprague, Phoenix Bildbyrå.*

# To Our Readers

Photo by Susanne Linderos



After some soul searching we have now taken the difficult decision to bring to an end the production of *News from the Nordic Africa Institute*. This is therefore the last issue of *News* that you will receive – at least in

its present paper format. Last year we launched a new website and we hope to be able to give you more up-to-date news via this channel.

In our last issue we bring you a thematic section on agriculture in the wake of the recent launching of the World Development Report 2008 on 'Agriculture for Development'. The first contribution is a summary of the NAI Policy Dialogue publication *African Agriculture and the World Bank: Development or Impoverishment?* by Prof. Kjell Havnevik et al. The publication was presented at the Swedish launch of the WDR08 in Stockholm on 14 November 2007. In brief the NAI Policy Dialogue questions the World Bank recommendations for large scale agriculture to solve the productivity and equity problems in African agriculture.

The whole issue of property rights is intimately linked to the question about agriculture and development. The contribution by Benjaminsen and Sjaastad on aspects of property rights formalization in Africa draws on recent processes in Mali and Tanzania. A general conclusion is that the formalization of property rights in rural areas is a very complex and problematic issue. There is a high risk of the process being co-opted by officials and a wealthy elite, if necessary provisions are not made.

Finally, Kjell Havnevik draws our attention to the relationship between inequality and climate change. This contribution is based on a presentation he made in Berlin in June 2007.

Decoding the evolving China–Africa relations is the theme of an article written by NAI Research Director Fantu Cheru. He suggests that policies and programmes to deal with the present imbalances between China and Africa require us to revisit and redefine the NEPAD agenda. A regional approach will, in his opinion, help African countries to negotiate from a stronger and better platform. During 2008 researchers at NAI will continue to devote attention to this topic.

In our interview section we present one interview with Martha Qorro, professor in English language, on the question about the language of instruction in Tanzania. She is of the opinion that the best way to teach English is not to use it as the language of instruction. She also responds to the question why the question of language of instruction has become such a sensitive political issue in Tanzania.

In our second interview Jerome Verdier, chairman of the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission, points to the fact that the TRC's part of the conflict resolution is nothing new. Liberia has a history of resolving community conflicts at the round table. But in the past there were no prolonged conflicts, such as the recent 14 year period of massive human rights violation.

In the research section we present the result of a conference which took place at NAI, Uppsala, in September 2007 regarding the ongoing discussions between EU and the ACP countries on Economic Partnership Agreements. The discussion at the conference highlighted the lack of connection between the poverty alleviation goal and the reality of the negotiations, despite numerous political declarations on both the EU and ACP sides. Key decisions on EPAs will soon be made by EU and ACP ministers.

The Africa Europe Group of Interdisciplinary Studies, AEGIS, of which NAI is an active member, is presented through three contributions.


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First, we bring you an interview with the AEGIS Chair, Professor Patrick Chabal of King's College, London. Secondly we provide a summary of ongoing work relating to the evaluation of academic results in African studies in the European countries. Finally there is a report from this year's European Conference on African Studies (ECAS 2) in Leiden.

ECAS 2 was a success in terms of numbers of scholars and also in terms of increased participation from Africa. Now we are looking forward

to ECAS 3 in Leipzig in 2009 and ECAS 4 in Uppsala 2011.

So, a final good-bye. Please continue to read our website [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se), visit our library in Uppsala and read our publications. We will never be far away. ■



*Carin Norberg, November 2007*

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## *Season's Greetings*

*from the Nordic Africa Institute*

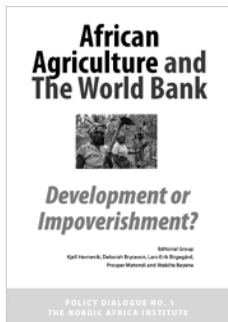


Uppsala Botanical Garden. Photo by Ernst-Heinrich Schiebe.

# African agriculture and the World Bank: Development or impoverishment?

Summary by Atakilte Beyene, researcher at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

African smallholder family farming, the backbone of the continental economy throughout the colonial and early post-colonial period, has been destabilized and eroded over the past thirty years. Despite the World Bank's poverty alleviation concerns, agrarian livelihoods continue to unravel under the impact of economic liberalization and global value chains. Can African smallholders bounce back and compete? *The World Development Report 2008* argues they can and must. How realistic is this given the history of World Bank conditionality in Africa? This article is a brief summary of the recent book *African Agriculture and the World Bank: Development or Impoverishment?* by Havnevik et al., which explores the productivity and welfare concerns of Africa's smallholder farming population in the shadow of the World Bank.



Kjell Havnevik, Deborah Bryceson, Lars-Erik Birgegård, Prosper Matondi and Atakilte Beyene: *African Agriculture and the World Bank: Development or Impoverishment?* The Nordic Africa Institute, 2007, Policy Dialogue no. 1. More information on page 36.

agri-business and supermarkets need to expand. For this to take place, the WDR 2008 advocates a continuation of World Bank rural policies of the last quarter century, namely further liberalisation of national markets. Intensive models of state investments and systems of supporting and targeting smallholder farmers are discounted. These are contradictory objectives that the humanitarian concerns of poverty alleviation clash with a Darwinian market fundamentalism.

Agriculture's dominant role in Sub-Saharan Africa's local, national and regional economies and cultures throughout pre-colonial history has been foundational to 20th century colonial and post-colonial development. No other continent has been so closely identified with smallholder peasant farming. Nonetheless, smallholder farming has been eroding over the last three decades, perpetuating rural poverty and marginalizing remote rural areas. Donors' search for rural 'success stories' merely reinforces this fact. The current role of agriculture and rural development in African national economies and its potential for improving material standards of living and life chances is thus of pressing concern. It is time to

The World Bank's *World Development Report 2008* examines agricultural development worldwide by categorising it into agriculture-based, transforming and urbanised. It compares African agriculture, characterised as agriculture-based, relative to performance in the other continents. It stresses that agriculture has a unique potential to alleviate poverty. This, according to the report, resides in the comparative advantage in agricultural exports in the agriculture-based worlds. To achieve this, large-scale commercial farming and vertical agricultural value chains structured by

ask if agriculture spells welfare enhancement or decline for Africa's rural dwellers.

The report *African Agriculture and the World Bank: Development or Impoverishment?* by Havnevik *et al* (2007) offers a critical reflection of the World Development Report 2008's portrayal of world agriculture with respect to Africa. It presents an overview of African land, labour and capital market dynamics since the oil crises of the 1970s, contextualising the current institutional state of play. Examining three decades of agricultural decline in Sub-Saharan Africa, it also highlights the roles of major policies imposed on Africa by international institutions, such as World Bank, in determining the relative roles of the state and private sector and agricultural output trends. Farmers' economic and social choices are highlighted before probing the central issue facing Africa's rural dwellers, namely the increasing displacement of their agrarian labour. The question is what are the implications of the World Development Report 2008's recommendations for the survival of smallholder farmers? The book by Havnevik *et al* suggests measures to raise agricultural productivity and reduce rural poverty in order to invigorate, rather than marginalize, African family farming.

To be effective, the approach to African agricultural development has to be based on a thorough understanding of local smallholder rural institutional settings, including the gender and inter-generational relationships, and rural-urban interconnections. This implies that the social, cultural and political dimensions of agrarian change, including state-smallholder relationships, cannot be ignored. Further, efforts have to be open to timely measures to subsidize and protect smallholder farmers and their organisations to give them the economic

means, motivation and self-esteem to produce for national staple food markets and to compete more fairly with capitalized farmers elsewhere. These measures have to be individually tailored to the many agricultural and food production systems of the continent.

Considerable investment is required to reinvigorate smallholder African agriculture. This is critical not only to smallholder welfare but to national economic development – providing the necessary foundation for occupational self-esteem and work identities as well as political stability and a sense of basic security upon which a strong non-agrarian future can be built.

Key areas in which timely action is needed:

- Productive investments in research, extension, infrastructure, rural finance and mutual learning and knowledge developments.
- Trade and marketing improvements that gradually strengthen the knowledge and capacity of the farmers.
- Support to rural entrepreneurship, formation of independent local organisations and networks.
- Understanding of rural institutional settings, including gender, inter-generational and rural-urban relationships.
- Dimensions of agrarian change, including the state-smallholder relations and the role of the state.
- Promotion of policies that lay foundations for occupational self-esteem, work identities and a sense of basic security.

Unless this comes about, African agriculture and rural areas will constitute a vast 'holding ground' of immense social and economic misery with potential dramatic impacts on global politics, migration, environment and climate. ■

The World Development Report 2008, and a lot of related material, is available on the World Bank website: <http://go.worldbank.org/ZJIAOSUFU0>

# Property rights formalisation in Africa

By: Tor A. Benjaminsen and Espen Sjaastad



Espen Sjaastad is Associate Professor at the Dept of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric), Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

*In the dynamic zones of rapidly expanding urban centres, non-formalisation of property rights is not a choice, whereas formalisation in rural areas is more complex and problematic. In this article, Benjaminsen and Sjaastad explains some aspects of property rights formalisation, with examples from Mali and Tanzania.*



Tor A. Benjaminsen is Associate Professor at the Dept of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric), Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

Tenure security is an overarching concern in debates about land and land rights in Africa. Much of the security debate today centres around the question of whether and how to formalise rights. In part this is the continuation of an old debate, begun during colonial times, about the costs and benefits of introducing title deeds in rural areas. But it has also been animated and enriched by research into 'informal formalisation' of property in Africa (see Benjaminsen and Lund, 2003), the ideas presented in *The Mystery of Capital* by Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto (2000), the establishment of an international Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor, and a recent flurry of formalisation programmes of very different types and scopes across the African continent.

Formalisation can broadly be defined as the provision of state-sanctioned property representations, in the form of e.g. title deeds. The goals of formalisation seem mostly admirable and uncontroversial: providing poor land holders

with the security needed for credit access and the incentive to invest, making people accountable, facilitating the collation and utilisation of information, and bridging the often considerable gap between state and local institutions. Against this, however, critics have raised a number of reservations that attach to both the formalisation process and to its outcomes. Among these are the risk of further marginalisation of weak groups (the poor, herders, women), the lack of discernible benefits associated with title deeds in Africa in the past, the often weak state presence in rural areas, limited government resources for effective reform, and the danger throughout much of rural Africa of destroying effective and locally embedded institutions (see e.g. Platteau 2000, Benjaminsen 2002, Benda-Beckmann 2003, Cousins et al. 2005).

In this short article, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive review of the issues at stake. Instead, we take a brief look at how the specific issues of timing, speed, and flexibility relate to



the formalisation process, drawing in particular on recent processes in Mali and Tanzania.

### Mali: Timing and speed

Rapidly expanding urban zones are probably the most dynamic places in the world. Parallel to an increasing population density processes are often found related to changes in physical infrastructure, cultural composition, social relations, legal jurisdiction, political constituency, trade, and natural resources.

The two major towns in the Malian cotton zone, Koutiala and Sikasso, experienced rapid growth in the 1990s, subsequent to a boom in cotton farming and exports in the region. Around the urban periphery of these towns, land was undergoing rapid transformation with respect to use, value, ownership, and legal status (see Benjaminsen and Sjaastad, 2002, for more on this case study).

Prior to transformation, these lands were mainly used for grain cultivation and as grazing lands by local farmers. With a growing urban demand for land, an informal land market emerged. Transactions were often attended by quasi-legal documents, with descriptions or rough sketches signed by witnesses or stamped by local government officials. Townspeople purchased land mainly for the purpose of engaging in small-scale fruit production and agriculture. At some point, however, most of these lands were expropriated by government, primarily for the purpose of developing residential areas. At the end of the process, lands would therefore be occupied by urban dwellers with residential occupancy permits. Within this market chain, there is also frequently a role for middlemen and at least one large-scale speculator.

Associated with these changes in use, ownership, and legal status, was a huge increase in the value of land, with more than an 18-fold multiplication of its net value on average. Two factors were particularly important in terms of to whom this increase in value accrued. First, titled land was protected from expropriation, and holders of titles could, upon partitioning of the land, capture the whole rent increase. But titles could

only be obtained at the regional office, after a long and tiresome process, at prices (including bribes) that were beyond the means of most smallholders. Second, compensation for untitled land was uncertain, inadequate, and was sometimes calculated according to a formula that awarded compensation only for the first 3.5 hectares of any given plot. The result was an extreme version of a buyer's market. And while the original land holders could not even realise the productive value of their land, rent was instead captured by the government (central and municipal), its officials, and the speculator.

### *Main lessons from Mali*

First, it is clear that there was a grassroots demand for formal title to land on the urban periphery. This demand was expressed both through the 'informal formalisation' observed in the creation of quasi-legal documents and through the long line of people who waited, mostly in vain, for the government to award provisional and full titles. Poor people have, however, little access to the titling process, due to the high costs involved in terms of fees and bribes and the need to be able to read and write French. Hence, they become the losers of a status quo, while corrupt bureaucrats and other urban elites are the winners. This underscores the need to introduce a flexible, low-cost, decentralised and open approach to formalisation, which can adapt to various local circumstances. This is not a technical issue, and the solutions are not technical. It is a political issue involving issues of corruption and good governance.

Second, a growing economy and an associated demand for new residential areas made formalisation inevitable. It was, therefore, not a question of whether, but of when and how formalisation should take place, and who should benefit. For original holders to benefit from the increase in land values, formalisation would need to take place prior to, rather than subsequent to, expropriation of their land, and formal rights would need to provide just compensation when land is expropriated.

### Tanzania: Blueprinting development?

Recently, the approach to formalisation of property rights advocated by the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto and his Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD) has become increasingly influential. According to de Soto (2000), the main cause of poverty is the continuing lack of access to formal property rights among poor people in poor countries. More than 90 percent of people in developing countries hold their land and businesses as 'dead capital' under informal arrangements, outside the 'bell jar' of the formal economy. If the poor majority are to gain access to the benefits of capitalism, this dead capital must be registered and integrated into national, unified property systems and countrywide formalisation programmes must be implemented. To establish such programmes, ILD has developed a universal model including four stages that a country must go through if the aim is to take the big leap from informality to formal property rights and the rule of law. The ILD website gives the impression that this model has been implemented in 20–30 countries, but in reality no single country has gone through the four stages.

This blueprint to development has, however, attracted the attention of many top politicians and officials in the international development industry. In Tanzania, former President Benjamin Mkapa managed in 2004 to get the Norwegian government, which also included several de Soto fans, to fund the first two stages of such a formalisation programme. It appears that the ILD had hoped that Tanzania would become a demonstration country for the virtues of the model proposed. Instead it became a demonstration of how ILD consultants exhaust most of the allocated budget, and of their lack of engagement with the administrative system in the country and with related programmes.

In addition, the methodology of the programme has recently been tested in the Handeni District. The test showed an increased conflict level among local people. It also resulted in land grabbing by people with resources and information about the process, while more marginal groups such as herders and women lost out.

A countrywide implementation of such a programme would most certainly result in an

increase in the number of landless people and a concentration of land ownership. But the biggest risk of blueprint formalisation programmes including rural areas is related to an increased level of conflicts. In most of Africa, rural areas are dominated by overlapping and communal use. A 'clarification' of rights in such circumstances would be highly risky and might end up increasing the conflict level in the country. This happened in Côte d'Ivoire, where the government supported by French aid and the World Bank implemented a new rural land law in the late 1990s that played a role in the outbreak of civil war in the country. The law requires the registration of all rural land. In the process of clarification of land rights, secondary users lost access. Several thousand Burkinabé were expelled from their farms in western Côte d'Ivoire, which further fuelled an explosive situation. One of the demands of the rebels has also been a modification of the land law that currently prohibits 'foreigners' from inheriting land (see Bassett et al., 2007).

### Conclusions

In certain high pressure areas where there is a clear demand for formalisation, governments should facilitate poor people's access to the process. In the dynamic zones of rapidly expanding urban centres, where governments possess key responsibilities towards residential development, non-formalisation is not a choice. Instead, the timing, speed, and manner of formalisation will largely determine the distribution of the windfalls that invariably attend rapid increases in land scarcity. If governments fail to allocate sufficient resources to such a formalisation process and to make it generally accessible by ordinary people, it will inevitably be co-opted by officials and wealthy elites.

Formalisation of property rights in rural areas, however, is more complex and problematic. Blueprint countrywide approaches to formalisation, such as the one promoted by the ILD, imply large risks, the most serious of which is the possibility of an increased number and intensity of land use conflicts. ■

References, see page 10.

# The relationship between inequality and climate change



By Kjell Havnevik  
Senior researcher at the  
Nordic Africa Institute

Inequalities of wealth, region, gender and ethnicity are bad not only for growth, democracy and social cohesion. Kjell Havnevik argues that they also have a negative impact on climate change.

The article is a summary of a presentation given at an EU conference on Sustainable Development in Africa which took place in Berlin in June 2007.

Deep inequalities of wealth, region, gender and ethnicity are bad for growth, democracy and social cohesion. Furthermore, globalisation, through the increased flow of information, the ICT revolution, contacts and tourism, is revealing more and more the inequality gaps and the unfairness of the existing global distribution. But do such inequalities matter for climate change and what are the relationships to the African countryside?

The existence of inequalities is not contested, but their size may be and they are of different types. One analysis by Davies et al (UNU-Wider, 2006) concludes that the *Gini value* for global wealth is 89 percent, which could be illustrated by one person in a group of ten taking 99 percent of a pie and the other nine sharing the remaining 1 percent. Another analysis by Milanovic (World Bank, 2006) shows that each of the richest five percent earns in 48 hours as much as each of

the five percent poorest does in a year. North America, Europe and high income Asia-Pacific together account for almost 90 percent of global wealth.

Whether globalisation and economic liberalisation increase inequalities or not is subject to discussion. The effect will, according to some, depend on the position of the populous countries at a point in time. Others claim that liberalisation tends to be followed by increases in inequality, but that the causality is doubtful. A globalisation model described by Kremer and Maskin (Harvard, 2006) assuming one rich and one poor country and only one consumption item, shows efficiency gains through cross-border production and that inequality increases or remains the same in the poor country. Outcomes depend on the assumption made and how the globalisation model is specified.

Although the Millennium Development Goals relate to ideas about global justice and human rights, they do not address distribution or inequality directly. Poor people are being left behind in spite of acceptable national aggregates. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest share of poverty, nearly 50 percent, and it is not decreasing. Rural people struggle for survival through expanding agriculture and diversifying incomes. Deforestation takes place in developing countries, mainly in Africa and parts of Asia. Globally 13 million ha of tropical forest are degraded or disappear annually. Agriculture and deforestation account for between 25 and 45 percent of the total green-house gas emissions (GHG), according to Watson et al. (IPCC, 2000). The major part comes from developing countries. African rural poverty, in a context of subsistence and survival, thus contributes considerably to GHG emissions.

By far the largest GHG source globally is energy. It accounts for more than 60 percent of total GHG emissions, of which about 80 percent occur in rich countries. In these countries, tourism is estimated to double by 2020 implying a massive increase in air traffic and GHG emissions. Likewise the production and consumption patterns among the rich in the rich and poor countries show no trends towards reduction of GHG emissions. The notion of delinking consumption in the north from poverty in the south is also spreading (for example 'product Red' campaigned for by global celebrities). The ways poverty, consumption and climate change are addressed, tend to blur historical, structural and power features underlying global inequalities. This allows for a focus on market forces, e.g. carbon trading, to resolve the problems. This will not suffice and at best delay a real solution which subsequently will have to be developed in a situation of more acute global social injustice and possibly deeper conflicts.

#### Bio-fuel colonisation of rural African lands

Rather than reducing global inequalities and resolving the problem of GHG emissions and climate change through reduction in use of fossil fuels at the source, a grand design has emerged to develop liquid bio-fuels, in particular ethanol and bio-diesel. The objective is to reduce fossil fuel consumption, in particular in the transport sector. The most determining aspect in bio-fuel production is the feed-stock factor, e.g. sugar cane, maize and oil seeds, which account for more than half the production cost. The expansion of bio-fuel production has driven up food prices, e.g. that of maize by two-thirds over the last two years. The competition between energy and food already constitutes a real conflict. However, no developed country, except Brazil, can enhance energy security from domestic feedstock crops, since only a small portion of the demand for transport fuels can be met. For example, within the EU, conversion of about 70 percent of agricultural land would only raise the share of bio-fuels in the domestic consumption of transport fuels to ten percent. First generation technologies,

and in particular manual harvesting, such as in Brazil, also have serious health and environmental impacts. Development of bio-fuel in Africa is currently based on the experiences from Brazil and large and well-watered areas, in particular in river valleys, are being taken into use or requested by investors. Considerable interest in African production of bio-fuels for export has been shown by European companies and donors.

However, the net 'climate outcomes' of e.g. ethanol for bio-fuel are questionable. Firstly it is being developed in large scale commercial farming that often pushes smallholders off their land. This trend is likely to continue in Africa where smallholder land rights are weak. Secondly, sugar cane production will compete with the most fertile food producing areas. Thirdly, as long as the production of feedstock crops leads to deforestation, the contribution of bio-fuels to the reduction of GHG emissions is questionable. Extremely good growth conditions in many African settings may generate large volumes of low cost bio-fuels and investors show keen interest as long as they do not need to 'take care of' the social, health and ecological problems associated with large scale production. This may emerge as a role for donors and the pressure on European aid agencies in this direction already exists. The speed of bio-fuel production in rural Africa is leading to contestation over scarce land and the marginalisation of smallholders and livestock people – a new form of colonisation is emerging.

The argument that significant efficiency gains could result from reallocation of global production to low-cost producers, such as in Africa, does not fully account for the GHG impacts from long haul transports. High petroleum costs may, however, make bio-fuel production economically viable in some oil-importing countries, in particular land-locked, oil importing countries.

#### The role of donors and global governance

Issues related to inequality, energy and climate are of a global character – there is no longer one solution for the south and one for the north. Donor agencies have a particular south focus

which does not allow for an understanding of the complexity of global issues. At the national level new institutions have to be formed for this purpose. Likewise institutions of learning and research have to be reorganised to address real and complex problems and issues. In addition global governance and agreements need to expand and become strengthened and include effective sanc-

tions. Global taxation of the very rich in favour of the many very poor also has to be developed so that global inequality and injustice can be further addressed. Land rights of smallholders in rural Africa have to be strengthened in order to avoid bio-fuel colonisation leading to increased poverty and inequality with negative impacts on the climate. ■

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# Decoding the evolving China–Africa relations

Photo by Susanne Linderos



By: Fantu Cheru  
Research Director,  
the Nordic Africa  
Institute

In the near future, the Nordic Africa Institute plans several activities focusing on the evolving China–Africa relations. In this article, the Institute's new Research Director gives a description and an analysis of the rapidly developing relation between the two.

The year 2005 marked the 50th anniversary of the beginning of China–Africa diplomatic relations and an important milestone in China–Africa relations. For the first time, in January 2006, China also issued the *Africa Policy Paper*, elaborating its policy toward Africa. In the Paper, the Chinese government put forward its proposals for cooperation with Africa in various fields in the coming years and declared its commitment to a new, strategic partnership with Africa in the long term, on the basis of five principles of peaceful coexistence (e.g. respect of African countries' independent choice of development path, mutual benefit and reciprocity; interaction based on equality; and consultation and cooperation in global affairs). Important events such as the first summit of the China–Africa Forum (which took place in November 2006), aim to further boost China's cooperation with Africa.

The current relationship between China and Africa is very much dominated by trade,

investment and economic cooperation. China's trade with Africa has tripled since 2002, reaching approximately 40 billion USD in 2005, fuelled mainly by the rise in Chinese textile exports and China's increasing import of African oil and minerals to diversify its import sources to feed its fast-growing economy. Early in 2005, Angola became China's top oil supplier, passing Saudi Arabia. While securing energy resources may be important for China's increasing engagement with Africa, China is also strengthening trade, investment and aid ties with Africa through various bilateral and multilateral forums such as the *Asia-Africa Summit*, *China-Africa Cooperation Forum* and *China–Africa Business Council*. This is part of a wider effort to create a paradigm of globalization that favours China.

## Recolonization by invitation!

Though China's rise poses a number of challenges, the opportunities should outweigh the threats if managed correctly. Regrettably, missing from the new China–Africa cooperation arrangement is a clear and coordinated policy strategy by African leaders on how to engage China constructively. While China knows what it wants from Africa, African countries have yet to develop a common framework on how to negotiate with China from a stronger and better-informed platform.

The *New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)*, which is supposed to provide a coordinated African framework for regional and sub-regional development in Africa, has offered no viable alternative on how to slow down the Chinese economic onslaught. This decided lack of an alternative strategy is partly explained by NEPAD's failure to grasp the organizing principles of the current global order and its subsequent subscription to the dominant policies of unhindered market integration into the global economy

which it regards as the only salvation for Africa. In so doing, the NEPAD programme induces states to opt for being instruments of competition, rather than being instruments of development. This decided lack of collective African response towards China poses a number of risks: security risks; environmental risks; governance risks; and economic threats. It is, therefore, hypocritical for African leaders to complain about unfair advantages for China when their own collective blueprint for development is explicitly committed to creating a conducive environment for unrestricted and unchecked operation of market forces.

The lack of progress in building the key institutional foundations for democratic governance further compounds the problem of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between China and Africa. Much of the Chinese onslaught on Africa is being facilitated with the explicit consent of parasitic and unaccountable African elites. At the moment, the scramble for resources passes over the doorsteps of governing African elites where concessions are sold and royalties are collected. Chinese companies have therefore been able to thrive in African countries where the legal and regulatory frameworks (i.e. environmental and labour standards) are very weak or non-existent. I call this “*recolonization by invitation*”.

#### A strategy for engaging China: Regional cooperation as a survival imperative

Much of the current discourse on China–Africa relations has been characterized by paranoia. While China’s rise poses a number of challenges, the opportunities should outweigh the threats if correctly managed. Unfortunately, the current discourse tends to be one-sided, putting all the blame on Chinese authorities, and offering little in the way of a roadmap on how African countries can harness the new relationship to their own advantage.

Clearly, policies and programmes to deal effectively with the economic imbalances between China and Africa have to be comprehensive, collectively created and implemented, and thus have

to be located within a very different paradigm. Given the size of individual African markets and the nature of their economies, a sub-regional problem-solving approach is an economic imperative – not just a political imperative, whether African countries deal with China or the rest of the western world. Selective strategic engagement with global forces (among which China is the latest force) from positions of greater collective economic and political strength within regional groupings is critical in order to improve gains and minimize disadvantages.

This brings us face to face with the need to revisit and redefine the NEPAD agenda and its constituent parts. What NEPAD should embrace is a “development integration” approach which gives priority to the integration of systems of investment, production and trade, including promoting freer trade. A regional approach will help African countries to negotiate with China from a stronger and better informed platform. This might include:

- *Common regional framework on industrialization*: directing Chinese expansion into areas of national/sub-regional interest; technology and management skills transfer, etc.
- *Common framework on natural resource exploration*: and social and environmental responsibilities
- *Common framework on trade* as opposed to bilateral EPAs that can only help fragment the continent and weaken the capacity of individual African countries to negotiate with China from a strong platform
- *Common regional regulations on investment*: which might include requirements for local inputs into Chinese ventures; encouraging the creation of backward and forward linkages to existing or newly stimulated local companies; labour rights and labour training.

#### Africa needs to become a pro-active risk manager

Clearly, policies and programmes to deal effectively with the economic imbalances between China and Africa have to be comprehensive, col-

lectively created and implemented, and thus have to be located within a very different paradigm to the neo-liberal assumptions which currently dominate the NEPAD project.

Over the next year or two, the Nordic Africa Institute plans to organize a series of seminars and conferences on the evolving China–Africa relations, and produce a number of critical and timely

policy briefs. A key aspect of the research strategy will be to engage a number of Africa-based African researchers to capture the complexities of China–Africa relations on the ground. We hope to provide a forum for structured dialogues between Nordic, African and Chinese researchers and policy makers. ■

## Suggested reading

Lee, Margaret, H. Melber, S. Naidu and I. Taylor, *China in Africa*. The Nordic Africa Institute, 2007, Current African Issues no. 35.

le Pere, Garth (ed.), *China in Africa: Mercantilist predator, or partner in development?*. Institute for

Global Dialogue and the South African Institute of International Affairs, 2006.

Manji, Firoze and Stephen Marks (eds), *African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Nairobi and Oxford: Fahamu, 2007.

## Scholarships

### Travel scholarships

Under this scheme some 30–40 scholars associated with Nordic universities, colleges and research institutions are sponsored annually for research trips to Africa.

**Next application deadline: 15 January 2008**

### African Guest Researchers' Scholarship Programme

This scholarship programme is directed at scholars in Africa, engaged in research on the African continent. Female researchers are especially encouraged to apply for these scholarships.

**Next application deadline: 1 April 2008**



## Martha Qorro on the language of instruction issue in Tanzania

“The best way to teach English is *not to use it as the language of instruction*” claims Prof. Martha Qorro of the University of Dar es Salaam. Find out why in this interview carried out by Lennart Wohlgemuth.

On 25 May Halima Mwinsheikhe from Tanzania successfully defended her PhD thesis *Revisiting the Language of Instruction Policy in Tanzanian Secondary Schools: A Comparative Study of Biology Classes Taught in Kiswahili and English*. The thesis is one of many achievements of the ‘Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa’ (LOITASA) project led by Birgit Broch-Utne of Oslo University. As one of the two opponents of the thesis I got to know the other opponent Martha Qorro well and learned to respect her deep knowledge and great courage. Below follows an interview with her pointing to her devotion to the language of instruction problems of Tanzania followed by some comments by Birgit Brock-Utne putting the LOITASA project in focus.

◆ Please tell us a little about your background and your career.

I was born in Dareda, a small village in Babati District, where I attended lower primary school. I then went to Mbulu Girls’ School for upper primary school. Both at the lower and upper primary school levels the language of instruction was Kiswahili. We started learning English as a subject in the third year of lower primary school. At the upper primary school we were the first class (in 1965) to use Kiswahili as the language of instruction. At that time none of the English textbooks had yet been translated to Kiswahili. Thus, although we were taught in Kiswahili, we used the same English textbooks that the students ahead of us had used.

In 1968 I joined Machame Girls’ Secondary School for ‘Ordinary’ level secondary education. This was the year I first encountered English as the language of instruction. At ‘Ordinary’ level I

studied science subjects and graduated in 1971. I then joined Korogwe Girls’ High School in 1972 for ‘Advanced’ level secondary education where I studied History, Kiswahili and Literature in English. Then I continued to the University of Dar es Salaam in 1974 for an undergraduate degree where I studied Literature in English, English Language and Linguistics, and Kiswahili. I graduated in 1977 with a B.A. (Education) and was employed by the Ministry of Education as a secondary school language teacher, teaching Kiswahili, English and Literature.

My first three years were spent at Karatu Secondary School in Arusha Region, then I was transferred to Jangwani Secondary School in Dar es Salaam to teach the same subjects. In 1981 I received a British Council scholarship to study for a Masters degree at the University of Bangor, North Wales. Shortly after completion of the Masters and my return to Dar I was offered an appointment at UDSM in the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics where I’ve been teaching Communication Skills in English up to now.

In 1994 I registered to study for a PhD at the University of Dar es Salaam and graduated in 1999. The topic for my PhD study was: *The teaching of writing in Tanzania secondary schools and how it relates to the writing requirements of tertiary education*. The PhD study was of a sandwich nature that enabled me to spend six months in 1995 at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands and another six months in 1997 at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

The research topics that I have been mainly involved in are: language in education, language policy and academic writing skills.

♦ Being a professor in the English language, what is the reason for your deep engagement in favour of making Kiswahili the language of instruction in Tanzania?

Before I went for Masters studies, I had believed that using English as the language of instruction helped students to learn English; it sounded logical, straightforward and simple: the more students get exposed to English, the better their English will become. Over time experience has shown that it is not that straightforward and simple logic. I have



Martha Qorro (upper left) together with Amund Vonen, Lennart Wohlgemuth, Tone Kvernbekk, Halina Mwinshikhe and Birgit Brock-Utne at the occasion of Mwinshikhe's disputation in Oslo, May 2007.

come to learn that using English as the language of instruction not only bars students from acquiring the knowledge of subject content, but it also bars students from learning the English language itself. The important question is what kind of English are students exposed to? Since most of our teachers do not master English language well, when required by policy to teach in English, they are bound to use the little English they know, which is mostly incorrect in terms of grammar and usage.

Assuming that for every class there is one English language teacher, and up to nine teachers of other subjects such as: History, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Literature, etc., using English as the language of instruction means that students will listen to proper English from the one English language teacher and incorrect or broken English from, at least, nine different teachers of other subjects, for all the six years of secondary education. By the time students complete secondary education they will have familiarised themselves so well with the bad/incor-

rect English that they cannot tell any more the difference between good and bad English.

One cannot blame these students for not having learnt English. It is impossible to learn proper English in an environment where most of what the students hear is bad English. They have no choice except to learn the kind of English that most of the teachers use. As if that is not bad enough, however, what is worse is that some of these students eventually become teachers. They pass on to their students the bad English that they have picked in the course of their secondary education. That is when the bad English is re-circled into the school system. Even those who opt to specialise in English to become English language teachers end up not learning English properly. This is because the two or three years they spend in college or at university respectively, is not sufficient for them to unlearn the incorrect English that they have learnt, and to learn afresh good/proper English. That is why over time the level of English language proficiency has kept on going down and down even among English language teachers.

What we are witnessing in the schools is the outcome of our over-anxiety to teach/learn English by requiring all teachers in secondary schools to "help" teach English by using it as the language of instruction; not knowing that by so doing, we are actually messing up the efforts of the English language teachers! That is why, as an English language teacher, I am opposed to using English as the language of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools. I now see more clearly than ever before that using English as the language of instruction does not help students to learn English, at least in the way it is being used in Tanzania. That is why researchers (like e.g. Mlama and Mattered 1977, Tume ya Rais 1982, Roy-Campbell and Qorro 1997, Rubagumya et al 1998, Brock-Utne 2003, 2005, Galabawa and Lwaitama 2004, Qorro 2005, Mwinsheikhe 2007) are arguing for the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction and the effective teaching of English as a second or foreign language. I believe it is impossible to teach English effectively when most teachers use it incorrectly while using it as language of instruction. So the best way to teach English is *not to use it* as the language of instruction (to avoid the negative exposure to

English), but to leave it to the English language teachers (specialists) to teach it effectively.

♦ In view of the strong research evidence for making Kiswahili the language of instruction all through the school system in Tanzania, why has the question of language of instruction become such a sensitive political issue in Tanzania?

My initial reaction to this question was: policy-makers have to answer this question. They know better why they want English as the language of instruction (LOI) while research findings point in a different direction. They should be asked this question. Later on I thought it was important that I said something. I believe that most of our politicians have vested interests in English; that probably explains why, despite the strong research evidence for making Kiswahili the language of instruction, politicians insist on using English.

The arguments given most of the time are that under globalization Tanzania cannot afford to abandon English; that Tanzania is inviting foreign investors who mostly use English; that Tanzanians want to communicate with the outside world, etc. etc. However, these are mere excuses. No researcher has ever argued for abandoning English. We all understand the importance of English as an international language and that all students need to learn it. Equally important is why are issues such as globalization, foreign investors and communication with the outside world raised when addressing the language of instruction? What is the relationship between these issues and education generally or the language of instruction in particular? These issues are not mentioned in

the objectives of secondary education and there are full government ministries that deal with such issues as foreign investors and international relations; so why are they used in arguing for English as the language of instruction? It is such groundless arguments from politicians that force some of us to believe that politicians have vested interests in the continued use of English as language of instruction and that could explain why they pretend not to be aware of research findings. I do believe that English can be taught effectively without using it as the language of instruction just as we do for the teaching of French. I strongly believe that the best way to teach English effectively in Tanzania is not to use it as the language of instruction.

♦ How is the relationship today between research at the University of Dar es Salaam and policymaking in Tanzania?

Policymaking, when taken seriously and done effectively, is informed by research. That has mostly been the relationship between research at UDSM and policymaking in Tanzania. However, policy-makers have a choice of which research they want to inform their decision on policies. Similarly, researchers whether at UDSM or elsewhere have their views, some researchers do not wish to pose questions or argue against policymakers. It is such researchers that policymakers will normally use to defend the policies that are made. Not all researchers at UDSM support Kiswahili as LOI. Even one or two of such researchers are sufficient to influence policymaking as long as there is the will to keep such a policy in place. The language of instruction issue in Tanzania is a case in point. ■

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## Comment by Birgit Brock-Utne

Martha and I have worked together for five years and have had many of the same experiences, done research together and arrived at the same results. I agree totally with her conclusion. It would be the best for Tanzanians to study all through elementary, secondary and tertiary education in Kiswahili, a language they all master well. They should also learn English well, but study it as a subject. This is the way it is done in Norway, Sweden, Finland, in fact all the industrialized countries have an educational system whereby students learn through the language of their immediate surroundings, a language they also use with their friends, a language they hear around them all day. Even on the small island of Iceland with barely 300,000 people Icelandic is used as the language of instruction all through the educational system.

The policy practised in Tanzania now makes the language of instruction used in secondary school and above a barrier to learning of both subject matter, Kiswahili and English. Through the language of instruction in Tanzania and South Africa

(LOITASA) project which started in 2002 (Brock-Utne 2002a, 2002b) we have seen how much better students learn when the teaching takes place in a language they master well. The project has produced a DVD, fourteen master and four Ph.D. candidates, interesting research and experiments both in Tanzania and South Africa and four books (Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro [eds] 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006). We have made a point of publishing in Africa and have also started translating some of the publications into Kiswahili. Another edited volume deals with the language of instruction issue in many African countries (Brock-Utne and Hopson [eds] 2005). We have recently got the LOITASA project prolonged for another five years – until 2012. We have experienced an interesting change of attitude among academics at the University of Dar es Salaam over the last five years. More and more seem to be convinced that a change of language of instruction from English to Kiswahili would be of great benefit for the university students. Students learn better when they understand what the teacher is saying.

# Jerome Verdier on the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Counsellor Jerome J. Verdier is the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Accounting and Economics (1988) from the University of Liberia and a Bachelor of Law Degree from its Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law. Apart from working both in the private and public sectors as Senior Accountant, Comptroller and Executive Director, he has been a leading human rights and civil society activist. He has played leadership roles in Liberia Democracy Watch; the National Human Rights Centre of Liberia, the Foundation for International Dignity; the Association of Environmental Lawyers (Green Advocates); and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. The interview was conducted in Uppsala in April 2007 by Proscovia Svård, research administrator for the NAI research programme 'Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society'.

*How are you going to implement the findings of the Liberian TRC for the benefit of Liberians?*

This part of the TRC work is still a little bit more than a year away, but our strategy for getting the TRC to work to the maximum benefit of Liberians is to popularise the process. To get Liberians of all walks of life, in Liberia, in the Diaspora and in the sub-region to be involved and to engage in a comprehensive dialogue process where everyone feels a part of the process, so that the outcome and recommendations can reflect the aspirations of the Liberian people.

*Drawing upon the experience of the Sierra Leonean TRC process, no follow-up institution was put in place to conclude some of the pending issues due to lack of funds. You mentioned during the public lecture that some members of the international community have promised funding but have not actually delivered. How sure are you that they will live up to their promises?*

This is a serious concern of the Liberia TRC because without adequate resources we cannot do good quality work. It was with this consideration in mind that we had to postpone public hearings because we thought that additional funding was needed to continue with the awareness

programme. We thought that once the hearings commence they should be on a sustainable basis upon which we can guarantee that we shall continue to the end. Definitely there are problems and we have raised a number of complaints asking our partners to fulfil their promises and we now have a working group comprising ourselves i.e. the TRC and the international donor community to work on these issues so that the concerns raised can be addressed and hopefully funding for the Liberian TRC can be raised and co-ordinated.

*How is the documentation and the dissemination process going to be taken care of and what is your strategy for disseminating the TRC findings, which is so important especially to the rural communities and among non-literate citizens?*

The documentation and archiving of the TRC findings is still in its preliminary stages. In terms of a dissemination strategy, we have laid out a comprehensive information and dissemination strategy that embraces the experiences of the past, the culture and current socio-economic conditions in the country. Our outreach programme has an objective of reaching out to every Liberian possible. We do door to door campaigns and as such we envisage that the recommendations of



Proscovia Svärd and Jerome Verdier at the occasion of Verdier's lecture which was held at the Nordic Africa Institute in April 2007.

the TRC will be disseminated in such a way that the messages contained in those reports will reach out to each and everyone. Added to that we have considered that it would be very useful if transitional justice processes are taught in Liberian schools and I imagine it is going to be based upon the findings and recommendations of the TRC. The archiving of the process and all the different theses involved should be taught in schools so that people get to realise that part of the objective of the TRC is to cultivate a new culture of human rights, democracy and respect for governance. The country has suffered a lot because of the massive human rights violations and corruption. We hope that the TRC process, once people are educated, will enhance a new culture, new thinking and a new orientation. So, unlike the case of other countries, we do not intend to shelve the TRC report as our comprehensive two-year strategy plan has a component for disseminating the final report of the TRC process.

*Historically Africa has had traditional ways of resolving conflicts. How come these traditional justice mechanisms are no longer capable of addressing conflict?*

In the context of Liberia the TRC's part of conflict resolution is nothing new. We have a history of resolving community conflicts at the round

table, what we call in Liberia the Palava Hut, where everybody gathers and discusses and the elders take the leadership. You can see the elders in this case as the nine TRC commissioners who are to gather all that has transpired and make recommendations, which should have a healing effect on the nation. But taking it another step further, our experience is that we have had a massive violation of human rights during the war, which lasted for 14 years. This is an experience we haven't had in our traditional history. People do not just wake up and wage war in a united society where you have a common body politic. People just do not get up and commit massive human rights violations. In the case of what we are experiencing in modern times, there is a sense of a whole new dynamics that are different from what our traditions have been able to address in the past. The context under which traditional methods have been employed to address conflict and reach a resolution has been different. When it comes to reintegration and resolution of conflicts that are often not of a high criminal level, our traditional practices are very useful. They are also useful in enhancing cohesion and in building national reconciliation. As you know the TRC is not a prosecuting body and as such prosecution will not be one of those things the TRC will be implementing, rather it will make recommendations.

*Women and children in particular have been targeted during times of civil wars in addition to being the marginalized groups. What is the status of women in Liberia? What measures will the TRC take to bring about gender equality in Liberia?*

The experiences of women in Liberia are not much different from the experiences of women in other war situations outside Liberia. They were obvious targets during the war. Women were very brave and had to go out and look for food and that made them very vulnerable and because of that they were direct targets of the various fighting groups involved in the conflict. Having said that, the TRC has authorised a mandated commissioner to give special considera-

tion to the situation of women. And as such we adopted a serious gender mainstreaming policy during employment. We are now developing a programme on gender, which will evaluate the protection status of women before the crisis, during the crisis, and after the crisis, in the hope that recommendations can be made for the long-term protection of women and their interests. In Liberia, civil society organisations including the government have been instrumental in trying to bridge the gap between men and women. Most of the laws that have been discriminatory against women have been reviewed especially in the case of inheritance, the rights of the girl-child and early marriages. A new law has been passed in Liberia to address these concerns, and so much progress has been made since the end of the war. Being a long-term political activist now in authority, I am confident that speedy reforms in the gender sector will be achieved in the coming years.

*Experience from the Sierra Leonean TRC shows that the government has not been willing to act on the recommendations of the TRC. What are your hopes for the Liberian TRC?*

Well, those are the shortfalls of all the TRC processes that took place before the Liberian one and that is why this TRC is building constituencies and structures in communities, in the Diaspora

and also trying to forge strong linkages with the international community. All of these structures and linkages enhance the legitimacy of the TRC process and popularise it and promote a sense of ownership. The Liberians are the owners of this TRC process. The objective is to ensure that after the work of the TRC is completed, there will be structures or institutions to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented and beyond that, the civil society organisations have to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented. A Human Rights Institution will be put in place. The President gave us a special mandate as a way of monitoring and scrutinising us to report to the Liberian people every quarter, on the progress of the TRC recommendations to ensure that they are implemented and that is why we take the task very seriously. We don't want to do it alone without the vast majority of our people because we realise the importance of the TRC process. ■

Find more facts on the Liberian TRC  
at [www.trcofliberia.org](http://www.trcofliberia.org)

### New scholarship: African Guest Writer

The research/network programme 'Cultural Images in and of Africa' invites applications and nominations for a three-month grant as African guest writer at the Nordic Africa Institute in 2008.

Deadline for applications and nominations: 31 December 2007.

More information on NAI's scholarships at [www.nai.uu.se/scholarships](http://www.nai.uu.se/scholarships).

# “The EU market is open to you – but we are not going to let you in!”

Photo by Susanne Linderos



**By: Yenkong Ngangjoh Hodu**  
 Researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, Coordinator of the programme Global Trade and Regional Integration

Researchers, who gathered in Uppsala in September at a conference on global trade, challenged the promised benefits of the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. This article was published as a press release at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se) on 11 September 2007.

The Economic Partnership Agreements that are taking place between the European Union and 76 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), are reaching a critical point. With only a few months to run, researchers meeting at the Nordic Africa Institute over the weekend challenge the promised benefits of EU-ACP Economic Partnership agreement.

There are still major divergences between EU and the ACP countries on critical issues. In particular, there appear to be fundamental differences between the EU and the ACP on the meaning of development and the nature of the agreement needed.

Thirteen papers were presented at the conference. The discussions highlighted the disconnection between the poverty alleviation goal and the reality of the negotiations, despite the numerous

political declarations both on the EU and ACP sides. In concrete terms, EPAs are in real danger of running incongruently with other key development commitments that the EU had made since 2000, including the EU-Africa Strategy. In short, the European Union is not living up to its commitments in this regard.

It is not clear that the current EPA proposals on market access will work for development. Access to the European Union market has long been constrained by onerous rules of origin and strict standards. Experts presented options for structuring the Rules of Origin (RoO) in a development-friendly way, and the forty-eight African countries as their Pacific and Caribbean partners have made clear requests in this regard. However, at present key questions remain unanswered as to the nature of the rules of origin that the EU would place on African exports under the EPAs. This makes it very difficult for ACP negotiators to evaluate the EU market access offer.

EPAs are to introduce reciprocal trade liberalization which would open up ACP economies to increased levels of imports from the EU. While the potential benefits of such liberalization are recognized on both sides, it requires careful sequencing. The Tanzanian case study presented at the workshop showed the challenges of liberalizing in an agrarian economy, taking into account food security and livelihoods, and emphasized the need for retaining policy space. A paper drawing from the WTO debate suggests that there are many lessons that urgently need to be brought into the EPA negotiations regarding special safeguards measures to protect ACP countries against import surges.

New areas of negotiations such as intellectual property have the potential to support development, but need to be weighed carefully. For this



to happen, there is a need for assertiveness by African countries, as demonstrated in the recent case of the Ethiopian coffee producers and Starbucks saga.

While there were many different perspectives amongst the workshop participants, there was a common understanding that development considerations should remain paramount as the deadline approaches. The fast-approaching deadline for the WTO waiver is putting pressure on exporters from ACP countries, as in the case study of meat producers in Namibia. To avert disruption of business contracts, suppliers need to have an answer to the tariffs they will face by the end of September.

Several papers explored the possibilities for extending negotiations to ensure that sufficient time is given to reach consensus on the development fundamentals underlying EPAs. In this regard, the EU preferential schemes could be adapted to provide improved market access in a WTO-compatible way and ACP and EU were encouraged to fully explore these possibilities. Such adaptation

would be consistent with the requirements of the Enabling Clause as was reiterated by the WTO Dispute Settlement Body in the 2004 EC – Tariff Preferences Case.

The final panel of the conference looked at Aid for Trade in the context of EPAs. There is the potential for the A4T instruments to meet development concerns in a manner that matches the development priorities identified by ACP countries. However, many issues remain unsolved including the definition of what constitutes aid for trade, the level and scope of resources required and the mechanisms for operationalisation. These need to be solved before EPA negotiations are concluded.

In the coming weeks, key decisions will be made on EPAs by EU and ACP Ministers. Trade and Development Ministers from the Nordic countries will be deeply involved in these discussions, and we hope that the rich debate and suggestions emanating from the conference contribute to ensure that the decisions taken truly support Africa development and poverty alleviation. ■

#### Trade research at the Nordic Africa Institute

The research programme 'Global Trade and Regional Integration: African Economies, Producers and Living Conditions' was started in December 2006. It is co-ordinated by Yenkong Ngangjoh Hodu, who holds an LLD degree in International Trade Law from the University of Helsinki. More information on the trade programme at [www.nai.uu.se/research/areas](http://www.nai.uu.se/research/areas)

#### Conference on Trade 7-8 September 2007

The conference, which took place in Uppsala, was entitled 'Commodities, Rules of Origin, development and Legal dimensions of the European Union/Africa Economic Partnership Debates: The Nexus between African Issues of Concern In EPAs and the WTO Doha Development debates'.

More information on the trade conference at [www.nai.uu.se/events/conferences/archives](http://www.nai.uu.se/events/conferences/archives)

#### Trade Policy Notes

This new series of publications was initiated by the Global Trade and Regional Integration programme. The first two issues are: *Effects of Rules of Origin on the European Union – Africa Economic Partnership Agreements: Summary of issues* by Roberto Rios-Herran and *The Development Dimension or Disillusion?* by Marikki Stocchetti. The Trade Policy Notes can be downloaded at [www.nai.uu.se/publications](http://www.nai.uu.se/publications)

## On AEGIS and the ECAS conference

AEGIS – Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies – is a network of European African studies centres. The main activities are biennial European Conferences of African Studies; biennial Summer Schools; guidance and expertise towards the development of joint graduate teaching and research supervision in African Studies; and the organization of methodological, theoretical or subject-based state-of-the-art workshops or conferences. It has an agreement with Brill Publishers to publish a series of monographs or edited volumes on Africa. AEGIS also supports the publication of *Africa Yearbook* whose editors are based at the member centres in Leiden, Hamburg and Uppsala. The Nordic Africa Institute is an active partner in the AEGIS network and will host the fourth European Conference of African Studies in 2011 in Uppsala.

Below follows an interview with Patrick Chabal, President of AEGIS, a report from the second European Conferences of African Studies held in Leiden in July 2007 and an account of the experiences among AEGIS member centres of evaluation of academic output.

### Interview with Patrick Chabal



Photo by Susanne Linderos

Patrick Chabal is Professor of Lusophone African Studies at King's College London, University of London in the United Kingdom. He is President of AEGIS – Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies in

Social Sciences and Humanities. Chabal was interviewed by Susanne Linderos, Information Manager at the Nordic Africa Institute.

*As you are the president of AEGIS I should like to ask "Why AEGIS and what are its objectives?"*

Ever since I got involved with AEGIS, about 1990, I have felt that there was a need for better cross-European communication and collaboration in African Studies. This, it seemed to me, involved two important aspects – the personal and the

professional – which we could try to combine, since this was the spirit in which AEGIS had been created by its founders (Bordeaux, London, Barcelona, Bayreuth and then Leiden). The question was how best to combine the pleasant interaction with colleagues from other countries with the necessary development of an organisation that could do things not easily done in single centres.

My aim, since I became President, has been to keep the balance between an agreeable interchange between colleagues who have got to know each other well and the growth of AEGIS as an organisation integrating more and more new centres as members. My assumption has always been that the network would work best if the individuals who were members felt positive about their colleagues in other countries and were encouraged, rather than directed, to collaborate with them on research and teaching activities.

The Board has attempted to steer AEGIS' evolution in the direction of an 'enabling' organisation – that is a network that made possible the

organisation of the activities that the members themselves wanted to undertake – without pre-conceived idea as to where this would take us. Since we have no resources, over which members might compete, what we achieve is only due to the collaborative energy and enthusiasm evinced by those members who want to launch or become involved in collaborative activities.

My objective has been to ensure that the organisation would survive regardless of who was in charge. Thanks to the support of a large number of people, and most particularly the institutional backing of the African Studies Centre in Leiden, I feel that the network is now secure. It may develop in totally new directions in the future (directions I will not have anticipated) but that is as it should be: the ability to adapt is AEGIS' main strength. It is not bound by individuals, centres or particular ways of working. It can change and thrive whatever the circumstances of European African Studies in the future.

*What are the main activities of AEGIS at present?*

The official activities are listed on the website. Of these, the most important ones at the moment are the European Conference on African Studies, the Cortona Summer School, the Thematic Conferences for research and the AEGIS-Brill African Studies Series. On the teaching front, I think that the collaborative links set up by some members of AEGIS to coordinate graduate doctoral training are invaluable.

Beyond that, I would stress the invisible and often subterranean ways in which colleagues get to know each other and work together. We have no record of what goes on but my hunch, based on regular visits to the centres, is that there is a lot going on, which would not otherwise have happened. Although difficult to explain in simple words, this process is perhaps the most important in the long run. When we reach the point at which several generations of European colleagues will have interacted with each other, we will have achieved an important in-depth process of European collaboration.

*What future activities does AEGIS plan to engage in? How do you visualise the future for AEGIS?*

I have no set idea as to which other activities AEGIS might engage in. I never have had. At the moment, I do not sense pressure within the network for more new activities. The European Conference of African Studies is a massive undertaking and it is still bedding in. I suspect that proposals for other activities will come out of this conference as people who come together begin to see the need to organise other projects.

I also think we have to wait and see how African Studies evolves as an Area Study in Europe and in the USA. We are suffering from a move away from Area Studies at the moment but that will change. When Area Studies become 'fashionable' again – and 'fashions' come and go quickly, particularly in the USA – Africanists in Europe may well feel that we have to move in other directions. I hope that when that time comes AEGIS is well placed to respond creatively.

*What are your main impressions of the second European Conference on African Studies (ECAS2) and what are the future perspectives for the conferences?*

The second conference was an improvement on the first one (ECAS1), which is normal in that ECAS1 was a pioneering undertaking in the context of Europe. I think we now know that the number of participants at ECAS2 was about right. More would be too many and would take our gathering in the direction of a 'jamboree', which we do not want. It has to remain human in scale so that people get a chance to meet each other. We need to learn from the way in which panels were prepared and run, at both ECAS1 and ECAS2, and decide whether we want to change the fairly loose format we have at the moment. I have no set idea on this but I know that ECAS3 will experiment with some new ideas. Here, again, I do not think there are – or that we need – set formats. Things will evolve, as they need to in order to meet the needs of the European Africanist community. We would of course want to have more African participants and we have already devoted some of our limited resources to that end. Without increased

resources, there is little AEGIS as an organisation can do. However, the conference organisers can, and already do, find ways of bringing more African colleagues to the conference. Finally, I think we must continue to strengthen the quality of our PhD students participation, which is essential to the life and future of the network.

*How have you yourself benefited from engaging in AEGIS?*

In countless ways. For me the most important aspect of my participation in the network has been meeting, and getting to know better, a large number of European colleagues. This has not just been very pleasant but also very important in the evolution of my thinking about Africanist scholarship. I have benefited immensely from conversations, debates and collaboration with a large number of AEGIS colleagues. I have also come to appreciate better the value of the work done in countries that do not normally have a very high profile in African Studies. That too is an invisible, but invaluable, benefit brought about by our network. On this issue, I hope that our AEGIS Brill Series will make it possible for younger scholars in Europe to publish their work, which they might have found difficult to do in their own country.

*Close to 700 Africanists gathered in Leiden, which is a good sign for the state of African Studies in Europe. What are your reflections on this?*

It shows there are many Africanists in Europe who feel the need for such a gathering. The Conference has managed to break through the national barriers that constrain us so much. One of the great pleasures of ECAS1 and ECAS2 was to see so many people from entirely different horizons engaged in serious, and sometimes heated, discussions about Africa. I hope AEGIS will make it possible for some of them to engage in collaborative activities that they otherwise might not have been able to contemplate. It was also heartening to see participants who had come from Eastern Europe, an area for so long cut off from the West and in which Africanist work has often been difficult,

when not impossible. Without wanting to blow our own trumpet, I think it is fair to say that ECAS has now established itself as a very serious rival to the ASA. Indeed, many of my colleagues think that the best work is now done in Europe. Whatever the case, our aim is not to close ourselves off. We have started talks with the ASA and with our colleagues in CODESRIA and we hope that this will result in closer collaboration. Finally, I hope we can learn from the feedback we get so as to adapt our ECAS better to the needs and demands of this very large community.

### On Patrick Chabal

Patrick Chabal's teaching and research interests are the history, politics, culture and literature of Portuguese-speaking Africa; African nationalism and decolonisation; contemporary African history; African politics; biography; politics and culture; and political theory. Some of his more recent publications include:

*Political Theories of Africa* (forthcoming in 2008).

*Angola: The Weight of History* (eds: Chabal and Vidal, 2007).

*African Alternatives* (eds: Chabal, Engel and de Haan, 2007).

*Culture Troubles: politics and the interpretation of meaning* (co-authored with J-P Daloz, 2006).

*Is Violence Inevitable in Africa? Theories of conflict and approaches to conflict prevention.* (eds: Chabal, Gentili and Engel, 2005).

*Community and the State in Lusophone Africa* (eds: Newitt, Chabal and Macqueon, 2003).

*A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (co-authored with D. Birmingham, J. Forrest, M. Newitt, G. Seibert and E.S. Andrade, 2002).

*Africa Works: disorder as political instrument* (co-authored with J-P Daloz, 1999)

*Power in Africa: an essay in political interpretation* (1994).

For more information about Patrick Chabal, see [www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/pobrst/staff/chabal.html](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/humanities/pobrst/staff/chabal.html). For information about AEGIS, see [www.aegis-eu.org](http://www.aegis-eu.org). ■

# Evaluation of academic output – experiences among AEGIS members

This article is based on a report by Anna Eriksson Trenter for the Nordic Africa Institute, June 2007 (revised in October 2007).

With the objective to initiate a discussion within the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS) on the issue of evaluation of academic output, the Annual Plenary Meeting of 2006 set up a working group to deal with these matters.

With the position that “it is always better to be assessed by your own standards than by those of an evaluation committee set up on an *ad hoc* basis”, the working group started its work by sending out a survey to all AEGIS affiliates, about 20 centres and institutes in total. Besides making an inventory of evaluation systems in use at the different AEGIS institutions, the purpose with this survey was to find out whether there is an interest among the members to put forward a joint strategy within the group to meet the challenges of the evaluation regime and the new financing modes.

The working group presented a report back to the Annual Plenary Meeting in Leiden, the Netherlands, in July 2007 as a starting point for further discussions on the issue of academic evaluations within AEGIS.

## General observations

There seems to be a widespread notion among AEGIS members that competition for research funding has become dramatically more severe over the last decade. A common method of allocating funding used by governments and research councils all over Europe is by assessments of academic performance (or output), according to various criteria. The evaluation practices are partly due to a new ideal of public sector management, the so-called New Public Management, by which

public spheres of activities are being assessed in order to secure an “efficient” use of resources (be they public or private). In this respect, the most common method to assess academic performance is by bibliometrics (for an explanation, see page 28), e.g. citation analyses.

There is, however, a general concern within the human and social sciences that they will have a disadvantage in the allocation of funding, when funding depends on quantitative indicators, such as publications and citation indices. This is particularly inappropriate with regard to African studies, for the following reasons (listed by Leo de Haan, Director of the African Studies Centre, Leiden, in his concept policy note *Towards a measurement system of the academic output of the ASC*):

- Citation indexes are commonly used for some disciplines (like economics) but much less for others (like anthropology and human geography).
- A deliberate choice is sometimes made for publication in a lower-ranking, regional journal, in order to better reach the African academic community.
- Bibliometrics are usually confined to journal articles in the English language; hence, publications like chapters in books as well as publications in other languages are not considered, which would not do justice to the output.

## Systems of evaluation in use within AEGIS

Most of the responding AEGIS-members say that they are subject to some sort of evaluation, and some also indicate that these have more or less direct consequences for their funding. It might be

of interest to already point out at this stage that the survey does not reveal a unanimous negative attitude towards assessments as such, but rather to the way they are in some cases constructed and performed, in particular when they are heavily based on bibliometrics.

The systems of evaluations used at AEGIS centres and institutes naturally do differ, but not to a substantial degree. However, since the organizational structures of the members, and the national and institutional context in which they exist, differ considerably, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to make a clear-cut comparison of the systems in use. Some recurrent indicators, though, are for instance:

- publications
- external funding (grants from other funding organs)
- international cooperation
- dissemination of results.

The Dutch research school for resource studies for development (CERES), which is a coordinating body for development oriented research in the Netherlands, has in recent years designed a ranking system of its own to measure academic output specifically suitable for development studies. For a multi-disciplinary research environment, it was important to develop an integrated system of rating and output evaluation, which would encompass all the varying disciplines and fields of study. The CERES model also embraces a ranking index for book publishers, since book publishers are not included in the ISI-databases, but are of great importance for the dissemination of research within developmental and African studies. The CERES system has been adopted by the African Studies Centre in Leiden in a self evaluation of the period 1997–2003.

The system is not static and is continuously updated. Each year, new journals and publishers are added. Moreover, rankings of journals and publishers may change. Once a year, the CERES Publications Accreditation Committee, with representatives from all CERES institutions, including the African Studies Centre in Leiden, meets to discuss the updating of the system.

Lastly, it is of interest to notice that the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutions (EADI) has also adopted the CERES evaluation system.

Norway is the sole Nordic country where public research agencies use bibliometric measures and journal impact factors as tools for allocating funding. The publications are ranked in a hierarchical manner and money allocated in accordance with the publishing record of the researcher. The Department of Social Anthropology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, points at the negative consequences of this practice for scholars within the field of African studies. Cross-disciplinary articles or edited books in other languages than English give very low, if any, credits in this system (which to quite a great extent draws upon the ISI-databases) and hence are a disadvantage in the funding process.

The Research Council of Norway regularly reviews research institutes and their research programmes to see how they compare in an international perspective. In the evaluation of the research programme of the Chr. Michelsen Institute in 2006 the following five key sections of the Terms of Reference could give guidance in the further discussion:

- Scientific Quality
- Policy Relevance
- Communication of Results
- Capacity-building
- Outreach in the South.

### Future challenges

All of the AEGIS affiliates are comprised of individual researchers who – in an increasingly competitive atmosphere – need to take care of their academic careers and to secure their future funding. It seems that one of the greatest challenges for the centres/institutes is to create a milieu that offers the researchers possibilities to strengthen their position within the research community, without having to renounce the specificities of African/developmental studies. ■

## Bibliometrics

The aim of bibliometrics is, to put it simply, to “describe the development of science and technology by using quantitative analyses of scientific literature”. The term bibliometrics was introduced in 1969, but the practice of studying the growth of science using quantitative analyses of publications comes from the 1920s. Bibliometric methods are also used in the study of scientific communication, i.e. network analyses, and in the study of structures of different research areas. Used in these contexts, bibliometrics as a method is quite uncontroversial. But it has also, and this is more controversial, been increasingly used as a method to evaluate research “performance” and to guide research-funding organs in the process of allocating money.

The main variables in a bibliometric analysis are publications, authors, source materials or citations. One or several of these parameters are always included in a bibliometric analysis. The most widespread types of bibliometric studies fall within what is called *citation analysis*, which can be either an analysis of the sources used by the authors (“reference”) or an analysis of the citations made of the authors (“citations”). The latter is the most frequent type, and also the most relevant for the question of ranking.

A citation analysis aims at revealing to what extent a certain publication is used by the scientific community. Answering the following questions does this: Has the publication been cited? How many subsequent authors have cited the publication/the author? From where do the citations come? From within or outside the same country? From the same or from some other field of research? etc.

One basic assumption, on which the science of bibliometrics rests, is that the available literature reflects the activities of a specific researcher or a research environment. Another assumption is that science is – and should be – accumulative, i.e. important research will catalyse new research, and hence be cited by many following researchers. However, it is important to remember that the number of *authors* is not synonymous with the number of *researchers* within a specific field. One of the main shortcomings of bibliometrics

is the fact that scholars who don't publish, or who don't publish in the channels found in the traditional databases (e.g. the ISI-databases, which will be introduced shortly), are excluded from the analyses. Hence, since no database could possibly cover *all* existing publications in the world, the practice of using publication databases as a source for bibliometric analyses will always give an inadequate picture.

One of the reasons behind the popularity of the citation analysis, despite a common awareness of its limits, is according to Riitta Kärki and Terttu Kortelainen, the mere existence of the citation indexes that the Thomson Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) has elaborated and made available on the internet, not, however, for free (web addresses on page 30).

The three databases from which the index is derived are: Science Citation Index; Social Science Citation Index; and Arts and Humanities Citation Index.

The probably best known and frequently used service of the Thomson Institute for Scientific Information is the ranking of journals in accordance with their so-called *impact factor*. The impact factor is calculated in the following manner: the number of citations that are made to a specific journal or series under a certain time-span, normally two years, is divided by the number of articles published in that journal/series under the same period. The impact factor of a journal is considered to reflect the importance of that journal/series for the scientific community; the higher impact factor the more prestigious is the journal/series. Top ranked journals will attract, and are likely to accept, the most prominent scholars, but scholars published in top ranked journals will then again almost automatically be regarded as the most prominent researchers within their field. Thus, there is an obvious risk that the ISI-ranking system regenerates itself. ■

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 • Sources: The report 'Ranking of publications on the  
 • basis of bibliometrics' (NAI, 2006) and R. Kärki and T. Ko-  
 • rtelainen, *Introduktion till bibliometri* (Helsinki, 1998).  
 • .....

## The Norwegian system

Norway is the sole Nordic country with a formalised system of research output evaluation that explicitly effects the allocation of state funds.

In 2001, the Norwegian parliament passed a resolution on a comprehensive and thorough-going reform concerning higher education and research, called the Quality Reform (*Kvalitetsreformen*). This reform has been seen as a Norwegian answer to the European Bologna process. Even though it mainly affects undergraduate studies, it also has far-reaching implications for research, because it incorporates an element of productivity evaluation into the research grants structure.

To meet the challenges of the new financing model, the Rector of the University of Oslo (UiO) in 2002 instigated a committee (*Publiseringsutvalget*, hereafter called the UiO Working Group on Publications) with the mission to formulate recommendations about how research output could be evaluated. In February 2003, the working group submitted a report (*Forskning med tellekanter. Publiseringsutvalgets instilling*). On the whole, the UiO Working Group on Publications supports the idea that research funding shall – at least partly – be linked to research output. In the report, it is concluded that in the absence of a “rational” and transparent system for research documentation, arbitrary and politically motivated concerns might influence how funds are allocated. The existing documentation systems were, however, considered to be intolerably unsatisfactory, especially if they were to be used in a funding model. Up till then, research documentation had been derived from information provided by the research community itself, and that system depended too much on the diligence of the individual researchers. In the absence of incentives, this diligence had, as it seemed, often been lacking. Neither was using the ISI-databases considered to be an option, because of their (well-known) deficiencies for the social and human sciences.

Concurrently to the work of the UiO Working Group on Publications, the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR) was commissioned by the Ministry of Education

and Research to explore more thoroughly how a national database for research documentation, i.e. for publications, could be designed, one that would give a fuller coverage of research in all fields and disciplines. The threefold purpose of this was to ensure the high quality of Norwegian research, to provide reliable statistics, and to guarantee that the publication indexes made up a trustworthy indicator of scientific output, which could inform research-funding institutions. Furthermore, UHR was instructed to update the classifications of disciplines as well as to suggest routines for a continuous maintenance and revision of the database. UHR put forward their recommendations in the report *Vekt på forskning: nytt system for dokumentasjon av vitenskapelig publisering* (“Emphasising research: A new system for documentation of scientific publishing”, 2004). The models suggested were finally adopted and now serve as ruling principles for UHR as they classify and evaluate publications.

As a whole, the content of the new national register is derived from many different sources of information (e.g. the ISI-databases), but anyone can in fact nominate a publication channel to be included in the register. This is done at the web-address <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/kanaler>.

Publication channels used by Norwegian researchers are grouped into two different levels. Level 1 constitutes “the normal publication pattern” of a specific discipline, i.e. it includes the most frequently used publication channels of that discipline. All publications fitting into the definition of a scientific publication (one that presents new insights in a form that allows repetition and makes the result usable in other contexts; is accessible [as regards e.g. language and distribution] for other researchers that might have an interest in the results; and is published in a forum that uses peer review) do in principle meet the criteria listed at level one. Level 2, on the other hand, consists of the top ranked publication channels, which are to be selected on the following criteria:



- They should be perceived by the scholars in a specific field to be the most leading journals/publishers/editorials etc. within that field of research.
- They should bring out the most significant publications on an international scale, i.e. not only of research emanating from Norway.
- They should stand for no more than one fifth of the total number of publications within each discipline or field of research.

With these criteria as ruling principles, UHR, together with the national so-called Faculty Councils (*fagråd*), select the level 2 publication channels. As regards social science and the humanities, impact factor based on citation analyses is said

to be of less importance for the ranking of level 2 publications. Indeed, the Faculty Councils are relatively free to use their own criteria as they single out the level 2 publication forum. The list is revised annually.

Guided by the UHR-ranking system described above, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research allocates research funds to universities, and some universities use them as well, when distributing money internally. This reform, which has been both criticized and praised, is now under evaluation by the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education, NIFU STEP (see [http://www.nifustep.no/norsk/innhold/prosjekter/evaluerer\\_av\\_kvalitetsreformen](http://www.nifustep.no/norsk/innhold/prosjekter/evaluerer_av_kvalitetsreformen)). ■

## Literature

- Benner, Mats, 'Universitetet måste klara sitt rollspel', in *Axess* no. 2006:7.
- Kvalitetsrapport 2005*, The Faculty of Social Sciences, Uppsala University. Available at [www.nek.uu.se/Faculty/gottfries/kvalitetsrapport%202007.pdf](http://www.nek.uu.se/Faculty/gottfries/kvalitetsrapport%202007.pdf).
- Kärki, Riitta and T. Kortelainen, *Introduktion till bibliometri*, Helsinki, 1998.
- The Nordic Africa Institute, *Ranking of publications on the basis of bibliometrics: Some experiences from the Nordic countries and the Netherlands*. Unpublished paper, 2006.

## Websites

- Comité National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), guideline for evaluations: <http://www.cnrs.fr/comitenational/english/evaluation/criteria.htm>.
- Explanation of the ranking system of Ceres: [http://ceres.fss.uu.nl/module\\_search/welcome\\_zoek.html](http://ceres.fss.uu.nl/module_search/welcome_zoek.html).
- Kvalitetsrapport 2005*, The Faculty of Social Sciences, Uppsala University: <http://www.nek.uu.se/Faculty/gottfries/kvalitetsrapport%202007.pdf>.
- Thomson Institute of Scientific Information, Social Science Citation Index: <http://scientific.thomson.com/products/ssci>.
- Thomson Institute of Scientific Information, Arts and Humanities Citation Index: <http://scientific.thomson.com/products/ahci>.

## Answers to the survey were received from the following AEGIS members:

Contemporary History Section, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium.

Centre d'Etudes d'Afrique Noire, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Bourdeaux, France.

Centre d'Etudes des Mondes Africaines, Sorbonne, France.

The Bayreuth Institute of African Studies, Bayreuth, Germany.

Institute of African Affairs, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg, Germany.

The African Studies Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Dept. of Social Anthropology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway.

Centro de Estudos Africanos, Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Lisbon, Portugal.

Centre for African Studies, School of Global Studies, Gothenburg, Sweden.

The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden.

Centre for African Studies, Basel, Switzerland.

The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, The United Kingdom.

King's College, London, The United Kingdom.

# Report from the AEGIS ECAS conference in Leiden in July 2007

This was the Second European Conference on African Studies, ECAS, organized by AEGIS (Africa Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies). ECAS conferences are organised every second year, the first one took place at SOAS (School of African and Oriental Studies) in London 2005 and this second ECAS was hosted by the African Studies Centre in Leiden, the Netherlands. It took place on 11–14 July 2007. The next one (2009) will be in Leipzig, and the one after that (2011) in Uppsala, hosted by the Nordic Africa Institute.

The idea of the ECAS conferences is that they should be a European alternative to the annual African Studies Association (ASA) conferences in the US. I support this initiative very warmly. Many centres of African studies in Europe have close links to research environments in Africa, and closer links to each other would be useful. Why travel to the US in order to meet? The ECAS enterprise is a new creation, but it seems to be on a good track. Compared to ECAS1 in London in 2005 it seemed to me that this time there were more African participants, and more young people. More efforts had been made to secure scholarships for African participation, and the decentralized recruitment procedure (initial selection of suggested panels by conference committee, after which panel organizers are responsible for composing their own panels) seems effective in terms of mobilizing committed researchers, creating good discussions. According to the list of participants, among ca 650 researchers, ca 120 were based in Africa – this in addition to a number of European-based African scholars.

The Leiden conference had 90 different panels, many with two or three sessions. As a result up to 15 panel sessions took place at the same time. Lots of interesting topics were up for debate, many along the lines of re-thinking, re-conceptu-

alizing, challenging old paradigms. Many panels focused on new trends and on African agency: How do Africans deal with current social changes, including devastating developments such as HIV/AIDS and war? What are the implications of new communication technologies, internet and cell phones? Several panels discussed statehood in Africa – public sector, public service, conceptions of democracy – all in order to go beyond prevailing notions of states in Africa as ‘fragile’, ‘weak’ etc. What is actually taking place? More empirically grounded studies of the day-to-day functioning of African bureaucracies were called for. Current phenomena like migration, remittances, border trade, borderlands etc were discussed in several panels, applying innovative and interdisciplinary approaches, all of this in an atmosphere of commitment to social change in Africa, looking beyond development paradigms, with a focus on African initiatives and social movements. Some panels (not many) dealt with issues of gender, two with a focus on sexualities. Below I will report from one of the two panels on sexualities.

## Sexuality and Politics in Africa (panel no 31)

The Call for Papers for this panel was circulated in October 2006. After this much correspondence followed with abstract submitters coming in and drifting out, including some last-minute cancellations (two of which were due to visa-problems – it is getting increasingly difficult for Africans to visit Fort Europe, however briefly). With the remaining papers the panel was organized in three sessions as follows:

Session 1: *Sex in the public domain: State politics of sexuality*. Papers by Raymond Sutner (UNISA, South Africa), Kopano Ratele (UNISA, South Africa), Elina Oinas (NAI) and Codou Bop

(GREFELS, Dakar). Discussant Elaine Salo, University of Cape Town.

Session 2: *Re-inventing culture: Battlefields of gender power?* Papers by Henriette Gunkel (University of East London), Lene Bull Christiansen (University of Roskilde) and Signe Arnfred (NAI). Discussant Elina Oinas, NAI.

Session 3: *Sexual identities: Local cultures/global concepts*. Papers by Babere Kerata Chacha (Egerton University, Kenya), Serena Owusua Dankwa (University of Bern) and Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju (University of Ilorin, Nigeria). Discussant Signe Arnfred, NAI.

The attendance was fine: 30–50 people in the audience, which I find surprisingly good, taken into consideration the tough competition from lots of other very interesting panels. It was a highly qualified and engaged audience, resulting in interesting discussions. Of these I will mention just a few.

One discussion focused on silences – silences as a tool of power and/or silences as a space of freedom. According to Serena Dankwa, in her paper on so-called Supi-relationships in Ghana, these kinds of female same-sex intimacies exist more easily as long as you don't talk about them: silences create space. Often, however, in contexts of HIV/AIDS, silences are seen as connected to stigma and repression. But other readings are possible. Elina Oinas, talking about governmentality and state surveillance of intimate lives legitimized by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, questioned the mainstream notions of 'being more open about sex' as a straightforward liberatory move. Prevention efforts expose sexuality and explicitly invest in breaking silences, but what does this mean in terms of policing and surveillance of everyday lives and emotions? In South Africa state concern with citizens' sexual lives is nothing new. Kopano Ratele's paper showed how in Apartheid days state surveillance of im/morality was a core activity in the political high-profile enterprise: construction of whiteness.

A related discussion, with a point of departure in Henriette Gunkel's paper, questioned

the liberatory-only aspects of 'coming out'. The closet/disclosure terminology belongs to metropolitan gay/lesbian sexuality. South African history and cultures provided and provide a space accommodating forms of female same-sex intimacies, which are not conceived as 'lesbian'. Naming them thus turns these relationships into something else: the metropolitan language of sexuality transforms sexual relationships. Also on the theme of language and discourse, Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju noted how contemporary ways of talking about sexuality in Africa are often almost a repetition of Dark Colonial Narratives, DCNs as he called them, thus 'talking back' to development discourse of acronyms. DCNs freeze African culture in an exotic past.

So too do African elites (and others). Another discussion focused on conceptions of 'culture' and on who deploys which notion of 'culture' for which ends. Raymond Suttner's paper, with a point of departure in the Jacob Zuma rape trial in South Africa last year, called attention to Zuma's masculinist (but almost un-challenged) interpretation of Zulu culture. Lene Bull Christiansen saw, based on her material from Zimbabwe, 'culture' as a convenient cover up for patriarchal gender struggle. According to a dominant trend in current debates, men's superior position is inscribed in Zimbabwean culture. Thus, from a feminist point of view, the struggle is over interpretations of 'Zimbabwean culture'. In my own paper I wanted to highlight how certain African feminist thinkers present very different interpretations of African 'culture', taking these interpretations as a point of departure for conceptualizing issues of 'women' and 'gender' in ways which expose supposedly universal Western feminist thinking as blind to its own ethnocentric bias.

For those of you wanting further information, all panels and abstracts from the conference are available at <http://ecas2007.aegis-eu.org/Panels.aspx>. ■

*Signe Arnfred,*

*Researcher, coordinator of the programme  
'Sexuality, Gender and Society in Africa'*

# The Nordic Africa Days 2007

Nordic Africa Days are arranged by the Nordic Africa Institute every second year in Uppsala. This year's conference took place on 5–7 October. As usual, it was structured around lectures given by internationally known scholars and workshops led by NAI researchers and their networking colleagues. The keynote speakers are presented below.



Photo by Karim Kerrou

Rudo Gaidzanwa, Professor at the University of Zimbabwe, gave a speech on 'Gendered citizenship, mobility and belonging in contemporary Southern Africa'.



Photo by Birgitta Hellmark Lindgren

Manthia Diawara, Professor at New York University and film maker, spoke on 'Nollywood and the African Film Industry'.



Photo by Birgitta Hellmark Lindgren

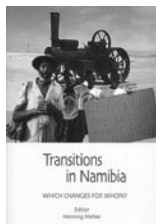
Gabeba Baderoon, South African poet and Assistant Professor at the Pennsylvania State University, gave a keynote speech on 'Minorities in Africa: The Case of Islam in South Africa'.

## Other conferences recently organised by NAI

- ◆ **Commodities, Rules of Origin, development and Legal dimensions of the EU/Africa Economic Partnership Debates: The Nexus between African Issues of Concern In EPAs and the WTO Doha Development debates**  
7–8 September 2007, Uppsala, Sweden
- ◆ **Political Economies of Displacement in Post-2000 Zimbabwe**  
24–25 September 2007, London, UK  
Co-organised with London School of Economics and Political Science.
- ◆ **Africa Days for Librarians**  
15–16 October 2007, Uppsala, Sweden
- ◆ **The Cultural Construction of Zimbabwe**  
20–22 November 2007, Harare, Zimbabwe
- ◆ **Ageing in African Cities: Revisiting the Issues, Responses and Outcomes**  
29 November – 1 December 2007, Zomba, Malawi

Reports are available at [www.nai.uu.se/news/conferences](http://www.nai.uu.se/news/conferences)

## Recent publications



Henning Melber (Ed.)

**Transitions in Namibia**

*Which Changes for Whom?*

ISBN: 978-91-7106-582-7, 262 pp, 290 SEK (ca 31 euro)

This volume completes the research project on “Liberation and Democracy in Southern Africa” (LiDeSA). It mainly addresses socioeconomic and gender-related issues in contemporary Namibia. Most of the contributors are either Namibian, based in Namibia or have undertaken extensive research in the country. Their interest as scholars and/or civil society activists is guided by a loyalty characterised not by rhetoric but by empathy with the people. They advocate notions of human rights, social equality and related values and norms instead of being driven by an ideologically determined party-political affiliation. Their investigative and analytical endeavours depict a society in transition, a society that is far from being liberated. Not surprisingly, this compilation explores the limits to liberation more than its advances.

“The themes covered are extremely topical and reflect important challenges facing Namibian society today. The chapters in varying ways challenge the notion that there has been as much change to the economic and conceptual spaces as suggested by the state’s historical narrative which threads through all policy initiatives. One point that several of the papers suggest is that in some areas, relating to attitudes on gender for example, independence may not have actually marked such a pivotal point of ‘transition’ as might be imagined.” (Jeremy Silvester)

*Henning Melber* is the Executive Director of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala, Sweden.



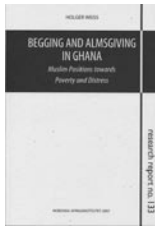
Bruce Baker

**Multi-Choice Policing in Africa**

ISBN: 978-91-7106-603-9, 227 pp, 290 SEK (ca 31 euro)

Policing is crucial to how Africans experience the freedoms of democracy and determines to a large degree the levels of economic investment they will enjoy. Yet it is a neglected area of study. Based on field research, this book reveals the surprising variety of people involved in policing besides the state police. Indeed many Africans are faced with a wide choice of public and private, legal and illegal, effective and ineffective policing. Policing in Africa is very much more than what the police do. It concerns the activities of business interests, residential communities, cultural groups, criminal organisations, local political figures and governments. How people negotiate this ‘multi-choice’ of policing options, and the implications of this for government and donor security policy, is the subject of this book. It covers policing in all its forms in Sub-Saharan Africa, including two case studies of Uganda and Sierra Leone.

*Bruce Baker* is Professor of African Security at Coventry University.



Holger Weiss

## Begging and Almsgiving in Ghana

### *Muslim Positions towards Poverty and Distress*

ISBN: 978-91-7106-597-1, 175 pp, 140 SEK (ca 15 euro), Series: Research Report

The vast majority of Muslims in Africa generally do not 'objectify' concepts such as poverty and religion in discussion. Poverty is a situation for 'ordinary' poor people in rural or urban poor areas where people seek to make marginal gains in income to avoid ever-threatening destitution and social disintegration. Most of these 'ordinary' poor people, especially poor and illiterate women, do not really believe that things can change.

There exists, however, in all Muslim societies and communities in Africa a minority that criticize social and political conditions in society with the stated aim of striving for an Islamic solution to poverty and injustice. The common denominator for this group is that they are urban educated Muslims, having both a traditional educational background and, usually but not always, a modern, secular one, too. For them, the concept of poverty more readily forms part of a religious discourse involving feasible strategies for change. Their basic idea is to highlight the possibilities of generating new forms of financial resources by combining Islamic ethics and norms with a modern development-oriented outlook. Their vision is the usability of obligatory almsgiving in a modern context, namely that, instead of the traditional individual-centred 'person-to-person' charities, zakāt or obligatory almsgiving should be directed to become the source of communal and collective societal improvement.

This study focuses on the conditions of poverty and the debate among Muslims in Ghana, a West African country with a substantial but largely economically and politically marginalized Muslim population.

*Holger Weiss* is currently professor in general history at Åbo Akademi University in Finland. He is docent in global history at Åbo Akademi University and docent in African history at the University of Helsinki.



Nathaniel King

## Conflict as Integration. Youth Aspiration to Personhood in the Teleology of Sierra Leone's 'Senseless War'

ISBN: 978-91-7106-604-6, 32 pp, 90 SEK (ca 9 euro), Series: Current African Issues

The rebel war in Sierra Leone has been given various characterisations. One of the most commonplace of them brands it a 'senseless war'. In this study the author examines the views of the Sierra Leoneans themselves on this notion, and through a sociological lens he explores the "youthscape" of the war. The study also revisits some of the central works on the Sierra Leonean war by authors such as Paul Richards, Ibrahim Adbdullah and Yusuf Bangura.

*Nathaniel King* has an M.Phil. in sociology from the university of Sierra Leone. He is currently pursuing a PhD thesis in social anthropology at the Max Planck Institute in Halle, Germany.



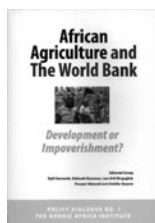
Cyril Obi (Ed.)

### Perspectives on Côte d'Ivoire. Between Political Breakdown and Post-Conflict Peace

ISBN: 978-91-7106-606-0, 65 pp, 110 SEK (ca 12 euro), Series: Discussion Paper

The three articles in this Discussion Paper explore different perspectives to the complex causes of the civil war that broke out in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002. They are written against the background of the signing of yet another peace agreement between the Ivorian government and the former rebel New Forces (NF) in March 2007. This volume also provides a context where the prospects for post-conflict peace, national reconciliation and democracy in Côte d'Ivoire could be critically analysed.

*Cyril Obi* is a researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute.



Kjell Havnevik, Deborah Bryceson, Lars-Erik Birgegård, Prosper Matondi and Atakilte Beyene

### African Agriculture and The World Bank – Development or Impoverishment?

ISBN: 978-91-7106-608-4, 75 pp, XX SEK (ca XX euro), Series: NAI Policy Dialogue

African smallholder family farming, the backbone of the continental economy throughout the colonial and early post-colonial period, has been destabilized and eroded over the past thirty years. Despite the World Bank's poverty alleviation concerns, agrarian livelihoods continue to unravel under the impact of economic liberalization and global value chains.

Can African smallholders bounce back and compete? The World Development Report 2008 argues they can and must. How realistic is this given the history of World Bank conditionality in Africa? This essay explores the productivity and welfare concerns of Africa's smallholder farming population in the shadow of the World Bank.

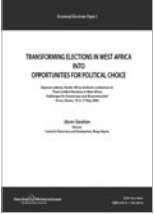
*Kjell Havnevik* is a senior researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden. *Deborah Bryceson* is a researcher at the African Studies Centre, Oxford University, UK. *Lars-Erik Birgegård* is a consultant (economist) based in Uppsala. *Prosper Matondi* is a researcher and policy analyst at the Center for Rural Development, University of Zimbabwe, Harare. *Atakilte Beyene* is a researcher at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden.

The article on page 3-4 is a brief summary of this book.

## New series: Policy Notes

The 'Policy Notes' offer brief and easily accessible research information on themes such as conflict and trade. Three issues have been published so far: *Effects of Rules of Origin on the European Union – Africa Economic Partnership Agreements: Summary of issues* by Roberto Rios-Herran, *The Development Dimension or Disillusion?* by Marikki Stocchetti, and *Young Women in African Wars* by Chris Coulter, Mariam Persson and Mats Utas.

# Electronic publications



Jibrin Ibrahim

## Transforming Elections into Opportunities for Political Choice

ISBN: 978-91-7106-602-2, 19 pp, free for download, Series: Occasional Electronic Papers

This monograph presents a well-informed overview and analysis of political transitions, democratic struggles and elections in West Africa. It explores the ways in which various authoritarian regimes across the sub-region have tried to subvert democracy and how the citizens of various countries have struggled against dictatorship and impunity, to achieve the return to democratic rule.

Drawing on insights from the Ghanaian model of free and fair elections, Niger's difficult, but successful transition to democracy, elections in post-conflict Sierra Leone and Liberia, and the struggles for democracy in Nigeria, Jibrin Ibrahim proposes concrete strategies that will empower the people of West Africa to make political choices which will advance and secure their individual and collective socio-economic and democratic rights.

*Jibrin Ibrahim* is Director at the Centre for Democracy and Development in Abuja, Nigeria.



Carin Norberg and Cyril Obi (Eds)

## Reconciling Winners and Losers in Post-Conflict Elections in West Africa. Political and Policy Imperatives

ISBN: 978-91-7106-601-5, 26 pp, free for download, Series: Occasional Electronic Papers

In post-conflict societies, elections play several roles. They provide citizens with the opportunity to freely choose their leaders and representatives, and provide countries emerging from civil wars with new opportunities to come to terms with a traumatic past and rebuild their lives and societies in a secure and stable environment. For the international community, post-conflict elections lend credibility to peace agreements and provide an exit strategy.

However, when elections are poorly timed or administered, and outstanding issues of justice, participation, national ownership and sustainability of the peace process are not well addressed, there is always a chance that the entire process may unravel. This report based on the debates and discussions of a panel debate on Winners and Losers in Post-Conflict Elections in West Africa, draws on insights from post-conflict elections in the sub-region and provides some crucial policy recommendations as well as areas for further research.

*Carin Norberg* is Director of the Nordic Africa Institute. *Cyril Obi* is a researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute and coordinator of the Post-Conflict Transition, the State and Civil Society in Africa programme.

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