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The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) is a center for research, documentation and information on modern Africa in the Nordic region. The institute is dedicated to providing timely, critical and alternative research and analysis of Africa, and is financed jointly by the Nordic countries.

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The Programme and Research Council’s chairperson and Director of NAI from March 2013, describes the institute as a unique forum for multi-stakeholder exchange.

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NAI FORUM

NAI Forum is a platform for policy debate among researchers and policy-makers as well as development practitioners, civil society and the interested public at large.

Our aim is to promote a well-informed, evidence-based debate in the Nordic region and thus add value over and above that of the development policy debates within each of the Nordic countries.

NAI invites anyone with an interest in African development to participate in an open Nordic policy debate.

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Relevance for whom?

In October 2012, I participated in a panel during the Nordic Africa Days in Reykjavik entitled "What makes research relevant?" There were six participants, plus the chair. All of us had interpreted the title in different ways. For some, relevance had primarily to do with how useful research is to the African community. For others, it had to do with the general state of research in Africa today and the perceived deterioration in conditions for research at African universities. For others, it had to do with the capacity of policy-makers to absorb new knowledge.

The Nordic Africa Institute and similar centres of research as well as universities have for years been asked to demonstrate the relevance of their research. But must we not ask ourselves, relevance of research for whom, when and how?

If I am a researcher who believes that I am doing something important that other people should know about, I will try to communicate my research results. My challenge is to find someone who is prepared to listen.

If I am a policy-maker, I may need new knowledge to justify a new project or programme. How do I find this information?

An evaluation undertaken by NORAD presents some interesting challenges. The report "Evaluation of Research on Norwegian Development Assistance, 2011" identifies a major problem when it comes to communication between the research community and the development practitioner community.

The evaluation found that independent research is required to ensure policy-makers access to impartial and evidence-based analysis of the impact of aid in different countries and contexts.

However, it also found that researchers' and policy-makers' preferences for independent research were diametrically opposed.

The basic problem was not the limited amount of independent research, but the inadequate demand for it. While researchers expressed their strong preference for independent research even when they recognised the advantages of commissioned research, foreign affairs staff strongly preferred, and described themselves as relying exclusively on, directly commissioned research.

According to the evaluation team, policy-makers and aid managers tend to be instrumental, forward-looking and reactive, operating within short cycles. Researchers, by contrast, are analytical, their work cycles are longer and they tend to be more reflective, reviewing what has happened to draw lessons for application in the future.

The NAI Annual Report 2012 deals with development dilemmas. A large part of the research conducted by our researchers and their partners is about development, about change, about obstacles, about possibilities and impossibilities.

Read and become engaged. Read and see what we are doing – and see how relevant it is for you.

Carin Norberg
Director of the Nordic Africa Institute (2006–2012)
Development dilemmas and manufactured hazards

Text by Terje Oestigaard

Development processes have conflicting aims and players, and these are a challenge for making good policy. Choosing the wrong development path could have devastating consequences. Research into development issues is key to understanding the realities about which political decisions have to be made.
Rather than economic development, many of the countries experienced increased poverty.

In other words, the risks were manufactured and grew in terms of causing and prolonging poverty. With regard to responsibility for enforcing these policies in African agriculture, donors have shifted policy but not borne the consequences economically and otherwise – a price left to Africa to pay.

Third, this example also shows that there are many development paths. Forcing Africa to adopt neoliberalism in an asymmetrical and hierarchical economic world has created some successful minority elites, but has not necessarily succeeded in alleviating poverty for the many. Thus, the policy may have increased risks instead of reducing vulnerability and
poverty, contrary to risk management, which involves “maximising the areas over which we have some control over the outcome, while minimising those where we have absolutely no control and where the linkage between effect and cause is hidden from us.” Independent research is important in addressing these challenges and in establishing new linkages between cause and effect.

Lastly, this example echoes the theme of this annual report, Development dilemmas. In all developments, there will always be numerous and at times conflicting aims and interests. The complexities of the real world are challenging to grasp, but understanding them is fundamental to the making of good policy. By choosing wrong development paths, the many may suffer devastating consequences while the few may benefit. In this context, research addressing the broad spectrum of development issues is key to enhancing understanding of the complex realities about which political decisions are to be made.

The research at the Nordic Africa Institute is organised into four clusters addressing topics related to the fundamental development dilemmas facing large parts of Africa both currently and into the future.

In this annual report, various development dilemmas in a range of countries are discussed from different perspectives. All the research is highly policy-relevant, but the relevance is also dependent on the aims of and ideologies behind the policies of a given country. If the aim of development research is to advise on or change policy and aid agendas to improve African futures, such research still has to acknowledge another development dilemma: different countries have different aims and policies, and this is as true of the Nordic countries as it is of their African counterparts. Thus, even in a democratic country, the actual policy relevance of research may vary depending on the policy of the government in office at a given time. From this perspective, basic research on development issues may also have value of its own by transcending short time frames, national boundaries and policies, and becoming part of global knowledge available to all.
Urban dynamics

Research on the changing realities in African cities.

Current projects

Marginalised youth
This project aims at acquiring a better understanding of marginalised young people in postwar Sierra Leone. Mats Utas links this project to his previous research on youth combatants in the Liberian civil war. Utas’s two-year fieldwork in Sierra Leone focused on an informal group of young people surviving by washing cars, stealing and selling drugs.

Predicting the infrastructure
It is striking how in the Nigerian city of Jos, as in most African cities, its imperfections make the infrastructure a very present reality in people’s everyday lives. Erik Trovalla and Ulrika Trovalla examine how infrastructure comes into being through changing processes of flow and non-flow and presence and absence. People put much effort into trying to predict these changing processes, and to discover new ways around the infrastructure’s shortcomings.

Recycling beyond poverty
Informal waste recycling is a commonly practised livelihood strategy and a crucial stopgap measure in many African cities. Informality is often equated with poverty, but the concept of informality remains under-theorised and the process of waste-recycling is itself little understood. Onyanta Adama analyses the complexity, dynamism and place-specific nature of the informal solid-waste recycling sector in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Seeking the good city
Aspirations for the good city have been eroded by weakly regulated capitalism and gating strategies by and for urban elites. Andrew Byerley researches how modern projects of power and knowledge have targeted African urban spaces and reflect a will to “improve” and “develop”.

Medicine for uncertain futures
Jos used to be seen as a peaceful place, but in 2001 it was afflicted by clashes that arose from issues largely understood as related to ethnic and religious belonging. Former friends became enemies, and places felt to be safe were no longer so. Ulrika Trovalla analyses the processes now shaping the emergent city of Jos and its inhabitants in the aftermath of the crisis. At the core are some of Jos’ practitioners of traditional medicine.

Struggle in divided cities
Marianne Millstein examines the dynamics at play between forces that shape urban policies and the everyday experiences of citizens as they struggle to make a place for themselves in deeply divided cities. Millstein looks at Delft, a poor township on the outskirts of Cape Town, where the government has built temporary relocation areas (TRAs) in response to housing emergencies.

Urban imaginaries
African cities are widely represented as sites of disorder and chaos, decay and crisis, as ungovernable and beyond state control. Certain urban imaginaries have emerged that show a different path for African cities, but they tend to be informed by Western planning ideals. This project, involving Onyanta Adama, Andrew Byerley and Mats Utas, examines who has the power to define “the good city” and who belongs in it.

The post-apartheid city
Annika Teppo’s work involves three lines of research, all focused on the changing post-apartheid city.

The first concerns racial boundaries and categories before, during and after apartheid. Teppo also studies the new forms of religion that have emerged among white South Africans in the post-apartheid era.

Lastly, Teppo is interested in public spaces and the effects of neoliberalism on South African cities.

CLUSTER LEADER: ANNIIKA TEPPO
RESEARCHERS: ONYANTA ADAMA, ANDREW BYERLEY, MARIANNE MILLSTEIN, ERIK TROVALLA, ULRIKA TROVALLA
In South Africa, malls have become popular social spaces and, importantly, new spaces for racial mixing in a country where few such places exist.

Malls for all

TEXT BY ANNIKA TEPPO

SHOULDN’T A PLACE of commerce make its patrons feel welcome, allow them to mix convivially with others, and visit without fear? This is not as self-evident as one might think. In South Africa, where the middle class had doubled since the end of apartheid in 1994, the income inequality has also grown — it is now the highest in the world. This partly explains the sky-high crime figures, which engenders a demand for safe shopping places far from insecure city centers. Small wonder then that South African cities have seen a surge of new malls — often sprouting up in previously unthinkable places. Malls have sprung up in former townships such as Soweto, providing services to areas which had none before and proving very popular. But neither they, nor the older malls, are now only directed at the four and half million wealthy white population. They eagerly welcome the rapidly increasing black and coloured middle class, who currently number between three and four million. This u-turn is reflected in the advertisement, the products sold, as well as in the staffing policies as South African business-owners race to please the tastes of the rising middle classes.

The impact of these spaces of consumption reaches far beyond their commercial use, as they are also places of sociability and leisurely enjoyment. The artificial environment and the lack of sunshine or fresh air in these malls is more than compensated for by their privately guarded safety in cities rife with violent crime, considered to be among the most dangerous in the world. Importantly, they are also the new spaces for racial mixing and urban sociability in a country with very few such spaces. Some malls have become exceedingly popular social spaces and new public spaces for all South Africans.

ONE OF THE MOST legendary malls in South Africa is the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront mall in Cape Town. The Waterfront — built in a working harbor and providing free music performances as well as, for example, traditional gumboot dancing in its large outside spaces — is particularly attractive. A combination of luxury shops, grocery stores, cheap fastfood places, preppy upmarket restaurants and expensive tourist souvenirs draw in a strikingly diverse assortment of people. Capetonians of all ethnic backgrounds mix with tourists and one another. This might not seem much to an outsider, but in the South African context this sharing of urban spaces is new as well as remarkable. As public spaces, malls can be criticized as consumerist and commercial spaces, and with good reason. However, in cities where there are very few options to share urban spaces with all your fellow countrymen regardless of their color, they serve an important purpose.
Infrastructure becomes suprastructure

While cellphones, computers, mobile internet access and satellites increasingly shape African urban realities, people must in their everyday lives also navigate an infrastructure marked by decay and unpredictability.

Text by Ulrika Trovalla

In Jos, a Nigerian city with more than one million inhabitants, electricity is supplied through a spider web of official and unofficial power lines. The wires continually, and in a very real sense, connect and disconnect the inhabitants to larger wholes – the city, the nation and beyond – through their power to turn television sets, computers and mobile phones on and off. The electricity situation is often referred to as “epileptic,” and power cuts are so common and lengthy that inactive lines are the norm. When electricity does run through the wires, the current is often either too weak to even charge a mobile phone, or too strong, ruining light bulbs, precious second-hand fridges, television sets and mobile phones. Thus, homes and businesses rely on voltage regulators, surge protectors and back-up power systems – generators, invertors that charge car batteries, solar panels and a vast array of rechargeable lamps and torches.

In a very literal sense, the flaws in the infrastructure mean that the prefix “infra” (“below”) should be placed in brackets: instead of operating behind the scenes, manifesting itself primarily through its effects, the constant failures bring it to the forefront of experience. Infrastructure becomes a part of everyday life and its imperfections come to be very visible and tangible in the material trail they leave, traces that shape the urban landscape but that can also serve as signs to be read.

Defining moments in the nation’s history, such as the oil boom of the 1970s when prosperity peaked, and the oil bust of the 1980s, when broken dreams and structural failure became the order of the day, are described in terms of infrastructure. Many Nigerians try to make sense of what Nigeria used to be like and where it is heading through stories of how infrastructure has changed over the decades.

John, a man in his seventies, lives with his family in the civil servants’ quarters in Jos. He has waterlines connected to the bathrooms and the kitchen, but there has not been any water running in them for many years. The children instead draw water from the well next to the house. They fill up a plastic barrel located in one of the bathrooms. From there, buckets of water are distributed to the different rooms in the house. His house is connected to the city’s electricity grid, but many days there is no more than five minutes of power. For John, Jos is not what it once was. He often talks about what Jos was like in the 1970s compared to the present – there was water coming through all the lines, constant electricity, the roads...
Instead of being infra – underneath and hidden – they have become supra – above and visible.
were not littered with potholes, motorcycle drivers wore helmets and the taxis did not look like they were falling apart and took four instead of six passengers. He does not like to take them anymore. He prefers to use his own car, but petrol is always scarce and he does not want to use the petrol from the black market – it is costly and could be diluted, ending up destroying his car. In reality, the car more often than not stands idle.

Tales of this sort are so common that they echo throughout the city, just as they do in the nation at large.

THE ELECTION OF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO as president in 1999 not only brought to an end 16 years of military rule, it brought promises of improved power supply and hopes that the new century would bring the fruits of democracy. As generators have increasingly become an essential feature of the Nigerian urban landscape, this period of democracy has, in much the same way as previous periods, come to be known, understood and spoken of in terms of the infrastructural signs. When in 2003 NEPA, the National Electric Power Authority, was rechristened the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), it was for most Nigerians simply a matter of putting old wine in a new bottle. Whereas NEPA was mockingly spelled out as “Never Expect Power Always,” PHCN has gained the nickname “Problem Has Come to Nigeria” or “Problem Has Changed Name.” Today it is commonly referred to as “Please Hold Candle Now.”

Wires, pipes and roads that connect people to and, equally, disconnect them from, the rest of the nation have, in this way, become an essential tool for analysing the state of the country. Instead of being infra – underneath and hidden – they have become supra – above and visible. Constantly on people’s minds, the unpredictable infrastructure has come to symbolise what it means to be Nigerian.

THE STATE OF PERPETUAL infrastructural crisis brings forth its own mode of cultural production. People find new ways around the flaws in the infrastructure, sometimes even turning disadvantage to advantage. Chronic traffic jams serve as market places, dead

This is Ezekiel, one of the millions of generator owners in Nigeria. There are about 60 million generators in Nigeria, the most generator-dependent country in the world.
power lines are used as clotheslines, refrigerators do service as rat-proof cupboards and the Global System for Mobile Communications becomes an alternative banking system. The lack of electricity spawns demand for cheap generators, which in turn, and together with the constant fuel shortages, keep hundreds of small-scale black market petrol vendors in business. Jos still has a train station and is connected to the rest of the country through the railway network. However, no trains move along the rails, and in the train station waiting passengers have been replaced by a shop selling second-hand furniture, while along the tracks there are markets.

Existing technology is assigned other functions and new inventions are made. In 2007, a crudely made battery-operated lamp consisting of LEDs, with a used CRT as reflector, was suddenly to be had for purchase on street corners all over Nigeria. In wry reference to the previous president’s failed ambitions to upgrade infrastructure, the lamp was tellingly named “Obasanjo ya kasa,” translated by one Jos resident as “Obasanjo was not able to.” He elaborated: “I guess since Obasanjo said he would resolve the power problem of the country and he didn’t … they had to find an alternative!”

All of these are examples of how failing infrastructure creates its own production, but also of an alternative or parallel infrastructure that has become an integral part of many African cities. In many ways, this infrastructure depends on the fact that things work less than perfectly. If fuel was distributed without interruption, hundreds of black market petrol vendors would be out of jobs. Many people, especially children, do work on the deteriorating roads, filling potholes or warning of dangerous obstacles. For their services, passing drivers give them occasional “dash” – a small amount of money that is for many of them essential to their daily survival. The many small businesses that sell generators, invertors, surge protectors, rechargeable lamps and batteries, depend on the irregular power supply. Likewise, government employed traffic directors would not be standing in the junctions if there was electricity for the traffic lights.

Urban development initiatives often view these alternative systems as redundant and parasitic and aim to eliminate them. However, many people have come to depend on the deteriorating infrastructure for their survival and “clean-up” activities risk destroying the livelihoods of already vulnerable groups. For many, the parallel systems are the only source of vital supplies. They form the backbone of everyday life in the city, a spine that would crumble if things worked as intended.
Perhaps a starting point for a city to qualify as good would be the city that does not kill. Modern urban planning emerged during the 19th century partly as a response to the fact that cities were, in fact, killing en masse. Squalid and overcrowded housing, rudimentary healthcare at best, wretched working conditions in the “Satanic mills,” compounded by the ravages of alcoholism, fire and major epidemics such as the 1832 cholera outbreaks resulted in a life expectancy at birth of just nine years in some British cities. However, the obvious disharmonies of the early industrial city – made all the more evident as the “iron horse” began to carve open areas of slum tenements to the gaze of one and all – also caused the city and city dwellers to begin to be constituted as targets for “improvement.” Indeed, the spectacle of the dystopian city, coupled with developments in the social and natural sciences, prompted an outpouring of utopian designs for the “good city,” Robert Owen’s New Harmony settlement in North America and Charles Fourier’s Phalanstery being but two notable examples. Foucault tellingly frames this era as the advent of “urban social medicine.”

This will to improve was no simple humanitarian knee-jerk response: cities had long been deadly without provoking much intervention. Not did developments in the fields of science and technology make intervention inevitable. Indeed, many powerful forces opposed state intervention in areas such as housing, despite harrowing living conditions. Of more decisive importance for the actual implementation of interventions to improve urban “life” was the existence of powerful strategic incentives to actually do so. Bruno Latour concisely, albeit sardonically, identified such a need as follows:

The consumption of human life as a combustible for the production of wealth led first in the English cities, then in the continental ones, to a veritable “energy crisis”. The cities could not go on being death chambers and cesspools, the poor being wretched, ignorant, bug-ridden, contagious vagabonds. The revival and extension of exploitation – or prosperity, if you prefer – required a better-educated population and clean, airy, rebuilt cities. (Latour 1988: 18)

Indeed, with the development of industrial capitalism the notion that a healthy nation (especially healthy cities) would beget a wealthy nation would make itself manifest firstly in a range of model industrial worker settlements and, somewhat later, in designs for entire model industrial cities.

FROM THE LATE-1930S, such urban models for engineering society found new opportunities for application, the laboratory of urban Africa. In British colonial Africa, the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act signalled the start of the colonial project of developing modern urban subjects out of “tribal” Africans. Comprehensive urban planning and housing design were again prioritised tools and many Western architects and planners travelled to British and French colonial Africa. The paradigmatic model of the “good colonial city” – paradigmatic not least for its provision of formally planned African housing areas – was Thornton White’s Nairobi Master Plan of 1948, which adopted and adapted the key tenets of Western planning, including functional zoning at the scale of the city, the neighbourhood unit, housing estates and infrastructure to instil a sense of “community” among urban residents.
Capturing the social engineering intent of this planned, model colonial city is best done by quoting from the plan itself: “From early childhood the ways of modern, regular, time bound life can be instilled, and need not be acquired arduously in later life… It is the translation of the values of tribal life into modern terms which is most clearly realized in Neighbourhood Planning.”

Did this herald the model “good” African city? In Uganda, for example, the construction of the large African housing estates in Kampala and Jinja – designed by the German architect and planner Ernst May – entailed the forced removal of thousands of African households located on the urban periphery, their living conditions framed by the colonial powers as deplorable and the areas given monikers such as “the black ring” and the “sceptic fringe.” In their place were built Naguru and Nakawa African housing estates in Kampala, and in Jinja the Walukuba African Housing Estate, spaces reserved for those with formal sector jobs in the state-planned industries that would set Uganda on the road to “development,” Western style. In my own research, I have followed the social and material developments in these estates up to the present time. The initial intention of these housing areas as spaces for engineering “the new Africa” were soon subverted in the economic and political turmoil following independence. Indeed, already in 1965 the Jinja Municipal Housing Committee decreed how the estates were “rapidly becoming an unhealthy and increasingly lawless slum, especially in terms of overcrowding, crime and poor sanitation.” By the late-1990s, almost none of the thousands of residents living in the estate had a “formal” sector job. Instead, most constructed their livelihoods from informal sector activities such as trading, urban agriculture, brewing and a range of other activities.

Despite the physical decay of the built infrastructure, there was a sense that residents had constructed, if not the “good city,” then at least a place that worked for them. While some contemporary writing on the African city does verge on “slum” romanticism, the case of the Ugandan housing estates does bear witness to the dynamism and creativity of urban residents to fashion workable urban spaces through lived and practised knowledge. However, in July 2011 the Naguru and Nakawa Housing Estates were demolished, despite vehement protests from the displaced residents, making way for an “eco-city” suburb, today’s internationally circulating “model” of the “good city.” Among displaced residents this was interpreted instead as yet another case of land-grabbing and displacement of supposedly “problematic” groups from central city areas. Indeed, coupled with other cases, it is possible to discern a government discourse that legitimates the “development” of any state-owned land in the name of societal progress and national “development.” By extension, those who protest are liable to be labelled as against development.

This was powerfully emphasised to me in 2011 in the sentiments of the former residents displaced from the above mentioned Naguru and Nakawa housing estates: “Our stand is not anti-Government or anti-development … We are against development on property that is actually ours by law. The development must be for us and by us.”

The notion of “For us and by us” – while not unproblematic – would seem to be a productive criterion to be able to at least move in the direction of “the good city.” However, despite research proving the benefits of integrating local knowledge into the planning process, state and city governors still show a notable weakness for abstract universal solutions. One currently influential example is Paul Romer’s solution to global urban poverty, the Charter City. Romer argues that Southern cities simply don’t work and can’t work: poor planning, a lack of “correct” rules and institutions, endemic corruption and massive informal growth make any meaningful “correction” impossible. His “solution” is to build entirely new cities wired with the “correct” technology, governance and urban planning regimes and to allow developed countries with a “successful” track record to provide the necessary expertise. While it is, perhaps, too strong to restate Aimé Césaire’s consideration from 1955 that the West must construct the Other as “barbarian” in order to justify its mission as the world’s civilising force, urban imaginaries such as Romer’s do strongly intiate the continued existence of avatars of colonialism. Whether the “charter city” simply represents a macro-scale gated community, the latest utopian model of the “good city,” or is simply a case of a vehicle for creating investment opportunities for Western capital, time will tell.
In cities in the South, much waste fails to reach final disposal sites, largely because of inefficient solid-waste management systems. However, an appreciable quantity of the “lost” waste is recovered by and supports informal actors.

Informal recycling

Text by Onyanta Adama

A TWO-BEDROOM bungalow built with sand-filled plastic bottles. For a number of months in 2011, Sabon Yelwa, a village in northern Nigeria, was the focus of intense interest on the worldwide web. In the country, hundreds of visitors, including traditional rulers, government officials and a blind man who did not want to be left out, made their way to see what many thought was impossible.

By the time the house is completed, it would have consumed about 1,400 plastic bottles. This is very good news for the environment. In Nigeria, safe drinking water is not readily available so many people depend on bottled water. This translates into huge amounts of plastic waste. The plastic house deserves the attention it is getting, but there is a bigger story to tell.

About half the world’s population now lives in cities, with obvious implications for the environment. This is why Municipal Solid Waste Management (MSWM) is attracting attention. In cities in the North, the waste hierarchy, an integrated system aimed at reducing the waste that goes for final disposal, is promoted as an effective approach to MSWM. Waste prevention is accorded the highest priority and disposal in sanitary landfills the lowest. In-between is waste minimisation through recycling, composting and incineration. Much of what is happening is the result of partnerships between governments and the private sector. In cities in the South, it is more a case of a waste hierarchy from below, with developments largely driven by informal actors. Much of the waste fails to reach final disposal sites, largely because of inefficient solid waste management systems. However, an appreciable quantity of the waste that is “lost” is recovered informally. Scrap metal, plastics, glass, paper and rubber are notable examples of the materials recovered. The informal recovery of waste takes place at different sites, from officially designated points to illegal sites such as vacant plots and drainages to the communal sites found in residential and commercial areas. The recyclables are sold to recycling plants and used to manufacture a range of products from toilet paper to building materials for the housing industry. It is, of course, important to acknowledge that there are environmental problems associated with informal recycling, including littering and the melting down of copper wire. However, the sector is making a valuable contribution to resource recovery and at no cost to the government. It also has to be said that waste pickers are not as poor as people think. In many cases, they earn more than the minimum wage government employees receive. ■
ON THE OUTSKIRTS of Abuja in Nigeria lies Mabushi district and one of the many unofficial transfer stations for the city’s waste that can be sold or recycled.

The waste pickers, often the younger men of the community, leave early in the morning to collect useful waste in the city. When the cart is full, they drag it back to Mabushi and sort the waste. Metal, especially aluminium, is the most precious, but plastic, paper and wood are also gathered. Everything that is not sold can be used.

When the pickers have enough metal waste, they hire a truck and transport the waste to Lagos. The official capital Abuja doesn’t have a metal industry, and that’s why metal waste is sent all the way to Lagos. For the same reason, plastic and paper are disposed of in Kano. Twenty-five tons of metal waste will bring US $5,000 in profit.

THE CHIEF OF MABUSHI who is popularly called Alhaji Mallam has lived at the transfer station for 29 years.

− Still, it was poverty that made me a waste picker. I had no alternatives.

But today I have managed to build my own house, says Alhaji Mallam.

The main concern for the waste pickers is not their ability to earn a living, but the fact that they live under constant threat of being forced away by the authorities. They don’t have a legal right to the land they use. One way of resolving this is by paying regular bribes to the police.

Another has been the formation of National Association of Scavengers (NAS), which aims to unite waste pickers in Nigeria and through advocacy work change their informal status.

− If we get legal status we can negotiate with the government on issues like protective clothing and proper tools for the work, says the NAS president, Yahaya Gora.

Official recognition by the government would also change the way people view and treat waste pickers.

− We are actually helping the city’s population, but instead of gratitude we are treated like the trash we deal with. Without our work, Abuja would drown in its own garbage, says Yahaya Gora.

TEXT & PHOTOS BY JOHAN SÄVSTRÖM
AWARDED A TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP by NAI, Heleen de Goey was able to go and collect data for her thesis on Tanzanian women’s perceptions of poverty.

She interviewed a number of women on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam who were involved in small-scale business activities with the help of microcredit. However, de Goey didn’t seek to investigate if the small enterprises were profitable, but rather to understand how the women define and perceive poverty and well-being.

- To them poverty is when you don’t have enough food for the children or have low status among neighbours because you always need to borrow things at the end of the month. Well-being is then when you have enough food, are able to pay school fees and can plan the household economy, says Heleen de Goey.

QUITE A FEW of the women have enjoyed better living conditions since receiving the micro-credits. They have gained self-esteem and independence by earning their own money. The ability to contribute to the household budget instead of having to ask husbands for help has diminished domestic violence as well.

However, what was most apparent was the team spirit among the women’s groups. The support of others was particularly important when a woman first embarked on her economic activities, but was also important when a husband sought to interfere with the spending of credits. The team spirit made women stronger in resisting such interference.

- I see poverty differently now. One can’t just call a person poor, many factors are involved. Most important, however, is the person’s own perception of the situation, says Heleen de Goey.

The team spirit among the women’s groups. The support of others was particularly important when a woman first embarked on her economic activities, but was also important when a husband sought to interfere with the spending of credits. The team spirit made women stronger in resisting such interference.

TEXT BY JOHAN SÄVSTRÖM

THE NAI LIBRARY has a twofold mission to make literature and other information about modern Africa accessible. One is to have the books physically in the library and the other is to provide information about the literature.

NAI chief librarian Åsa Lund Moberg points out the uniqueness of a special library.

- Special libraries complement the literature in general libraries, contributing to a richer collection for both national and international users. We often purchase titles deemed too specialised by other libraries. By listing them for loan or for information in databases, researchers and students become aware of their existence.

NAI IS AN IMPORTANT actor in disseminating research from Africa. The visibility of Africa’s published research is still hampered by the lack of local catalogues and databases. With 50 per cent of its holdings published in Africa, and 75 per cent held nowhere else in the Nordic countries, NAI library places African research alongside research produced in the North.

- Google as you like, these titles are still far down the hit list, if at all. The NAI library is an important piece of the jigsaw and can’t be replaced. Every year we enrich the information landscape with unique information that would otherwise be lacking, says Åsa Lund Moberg.

TEXT BY JOHAN SÄVSTRÖM
Rainmaking and climate change
In Tanzania, rainmaking has been an intrinsic part of culture and religion. The rainmaker is responsible for the wealth and health of his people. Today, these traditional beliefs are under pressure from modernity. Terje Oestigaard studies the relationship between traditional rainmaking and agricultural practices in the face of globalisation and climate change.

The project examines how different sources of water enable changing strategies and agricultural practices.

To follow the cattle or the sheikh?
Liberalisation and democratisation processes have allowed diverse religious groups to gain ground in Africa.

Tea Virtanen researches how religious diversification takes place in the Adamawa Region of Cameroon by investigating the intra-religious mass conversion of the Mbororo Fulani pastoralists to Tijaniyya, an Islamic Sufi order.

Virtanen explores the reasons for the growing popularity of Tijaniyya among the culturally and politically marginalised pastoralists, and how the conversion has affected people’s lives.

Land access and food security
Global corporations are currently investing in land in Africa for food and energy production.

Kjell Havnevik and Linda Engström investigate large-scale agro investments in biofuels and how they impact rural smallholders in Tanzania.

The project will examine the conflict between using land for export crops or subsistence farming, and how this conflict plays out in terms of changes in household food security and power imbalances.

Water politics in the Nile basin
From 2013, a cross-cutting project that involves the NAI’s International Links (Mats Hårsma) and Rural Change (Terje Oestigaard) clusters together with the Stockholm International Water Institute and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, will investigate the water and land nexus in the Nile Basin.

The researchers seek to understand how the current surge in land acquisitions and investments by foreign countries will affect transboundary water interactions in the region. Will power relations change and conflicts arise?
Since 1992, MBOSCUDA, the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association of Cameroon, has advocated for its people. From the beginning, education has been its main focus.

Educating pastoralists

TEXT BY TEA VIRTANEN

WITHOUT EDUCATION, it is hard to claim one’s basic civil rights. Among the Mbororo (Fulani) of Cameroon, many of whom earn their living from semi-nomadic pastoralism, these rights are frequently violated. This is often done by local authorities, which have a long tradition of dispossessing the – mostly illiterate – Mbororo of their cattle. Oumarou Sanda Habane, one of the general secretaries of MBOSCUDA, stresses that even a single educated Mbororo can, by being aware of civil rights, protect the rest of the family against arbitrary treatment.

Within MBOSCUDA, the importance of education is well understood. From the organisation’s inception, a central objective has been increasing the rate of school enrolment, especially among girls. According to some estimates the overall rate is now between 10 and 15 per cent. Habane remembers well the day when, at the age of two, he started school in the railway town of Ngaoundal.

– I was carrying a plastic sack containing a pencil, two pieces of chalk and a little blackboard donated by MBOSCUDA. I also had my knife in my pocket, just in case. I was told earlier that our teacher was Mbororo. But when I entered the classroom and saw a sturdy man not belonging to my people, I started to tremble with fear.

Yet primary education is not the only focus of MBOSCUDA: promoting education at all levels is considered the key to dealing with all kinds of challenges. For instance, enhanced adult literacy is crucial, as even modest reading and writing skills will facilitate everyday living and reduce the risk of being cheated. Many formerly illiterate Mbororo are now capable of writing their names, and recognising numbers for using telephones and understanding prescriptions.

AS TO VOCATIONAL training, acquiring professional skills often helps youths to stay out of trouble.

– An ever-growing number of young women escape arranged marriages and enter into prostitution, says Habane.

By providing dressmaking training to more than 300 young Mbororo women, MBOSCUDA has furnished them with better prospects. Equally, more than 200 young Mbororo men have been trained as drivers, carpenters and tailors – men who, with low levels of education and lacking the means or motivation to return to pastoralism, might otherwise drift into alcohol, drugs and a life of crime.

MBOSCUDA is also sponsoring Mbororo youth in secondary schools, as well as in higher education. Habane himself was the first Mbororo to pass the matriculation exam in Ngaoundal in 2008. Now he is studying economics at the University of Yaoundé 2 with the aim of joining the approximately 100 Cameroonian Mbororo who have so far earned university degrees.

The 20th anniversary of MBOSCUDA was celebrated at the Palais des Congrès, Yaoundé, on 15 December 2012. The association has about 30,000 members and representation in nine of the ten regions of the country.
Will the water in the Nile Basin be sufficient for the growing population of the region? Irrigation and dams can increase agricultural output and food security. Yet more and more of the best agricultural land is being used to produce industrial crops for consumption in other countries.

Lack of water, industrial cropping and food security

*Text by* Terje Oestigaard

The White and the Blue Nile meet in Khartoum in Sudan to form the River Nile, the world’s longest river, which drains approximately one-tenth of the African continent. In 2050, it is expected that the total population in the Nile Basin’s 11 countries will be 10 times higher than it was in 1950. More than half of the expected 860 million people will live in the river basin. In developing countries, agriculture accounts for up to 95 per cent of water use. The major threat to food production in the future will not be lack of arable land, but water scarcity.

Irrigation is crucial to enhancing food security. In sub-Saharan Africa, subsistence farmers predominately dependent on rainfed agriculture are suffering the most from hunger, even though, paradoxically, they produce food. Globally, about 20 per cent of cultivated land is irrigated and produces 40 per cent of the world’s food. Irrigated agriculture generally generates more than double the income of rainfed agriculture, but, depending on choice of crops, can generate much more. Thus, irrigation enhances both food security and capital accumulation.

Dams provide a steady and reliable supply of water for irrigation. Erratic rainfall patterns, which may become more marked as climate change leads to increased droughts and floods, can be countered by dams, which store waters for timely release during the cultivation season.

In 1958, Egypt’s President Nasser described the importance of the forthcoming Aswan High Dam, which was inaugurated in 1971, in the following lofty terms:

“For thousands of years the Great Pyramids of Egypt were foremost among the engineering marvels of the world. They...”
ensured life after death to the Pharaohs. Tomorrow, the gigantic High Dam, more significant and seventeen times greater than the Pyramids, will provide a higher standard of living for all Egyptians.

THE DAM WAS CONSTRUCTED to store the equivalent of two annual Nile floods, thereby turning the river into what has been called a “giant irrigation canal,” as well as providing and securing energy needs. Also important, when Ethiopia and other Nile countries suffered from drought and famine, Egyptian farmers could continue to cultivate as before, since the water supplies they needed were secured by the Aswan High Dam.

In practice, dams are also one of the few options African countries have to deal with the consequences of climate change. Africa releases only four per cent of the globe’s carbon emissions, but the impact of climate change is expected to hit Africa hard, with both more droughts and more floods.

The construction of dams is, nevertheless, controversial for a number of reasons. Although dam building has been fundamental to the development of the West, India and China, environmentalists raise strong concerns about their ecological impacts and many donors are reluctant to support large-scale dam building on the African continent. Building dams along the Nile and using the water for irrigation and energy is also a controversial issue for other reasons.

IN THE NILE BASIN, Egypt and Sudan signed the agreement For the Full Utilisation of the Nile Waters in 1959, whereby they divided the water between themselves without inviting upstream countries to the ne-

... there has been recent recognition that behind every “land-grab” there is a “water-grab.”

increased irrigation in upstream countries will reduce the water flow to Sudan and eventually Egypt.
negotiations. This agreement hindered those countries in developing hydropower plants and huge irrigation schemes. In 2010–11, the Cooperative Framework Agreement changed this hegemony. In terms of the agreement, all the Nile Basin states may use the water resources, but in an equitable and reasonable manner intended to prevent the causing of significant harm to other states. However, Egypt and Sudan oppose this new agreement.

Dams for hydropower are less problematic than dams intended to store water for irrigation, because to produce electricity the water has to be released downstream in order to power the turbines. Irrigation schemes, however, draw down the water, and increased irrigation development in upstream countries will reduce the overall water flow to Sudan and eventually Egypt.

The total irrigation potential of the Nile Basin is 8 million hectares, of which some 5.5 million are currently irrigated, predominately in Sudan and Egypt. Since 85 per cent of the Nile water comes from Ethiopia, the irrigation potential of Ethiopia is significant but hardly developed. Many uncertainties remain regarding the feasibility of the future planned irrigation projects in the Nile Basin as a whole, but in the long-term these projects may involve 10.6 million hectares and about one and a half times the water that actually flows in the Nile. Consequently, not all these plans can go ahead. In addition, improved rain harvesting techniques for agriculture may also reduce the overall volume of water reaching the Nile, since the run-off will be less.

Dams will be important for increasing agricultural production and enhancing domestic energy security. Yet, another challenge is that more of the best agricultural and irrigated land is not used to produce food for domestic consumption, but industrial crops for international energy needs. It is estimated that Ethiopia has granted more than 3 million hectares and Sudan (including South Sudan) about 4.9 million hectares to foreign investors, mainly for biofuel and other agricultural products.

This has been called “land-grabbing” and there has been recent recognition that behind every “land-grab” there is a “water-grab.” With the Nile waters becoming an ever scarcer resource with high population growth, will those waters be used to produce food for the peoples of the basin states or energy and goods for the global market?
Over the past decade, 13 companies acquired approximately 200,000 hectares of land in Tanzania for biofuel production. Only one of them is operating. Linda Engström visits a village as it grapples with the sudden departure of an investor.

When investors leave

Text by Linda Engström

I feel this is still village land. The villager shrugs his shoulders.

We are sitting on a bench in a small wooden hut in his village in the district of Rufiji, Tanzania. The village chairperson beside him, we gradually realise, is drunk. The hot midday air is still and sweat is dripping down my back.

– But we are not using the land. Because there is no statement from the investor that we can, explains Magembe Nkini, one of five male farmers who joined our meeting.

A few years before our visit, the village was approached by an Anglo-Norwegian company, African Green Oils, wanting to invest in oil palm plantations on the village’s land. First they asked for 25,000 hectares, but the villagers said no.

According to Tanzanian law, villages need to have their land surveyed and its uses planned before an investor can have access to it. In this way farmers know the size of their land and which areas should be used for what purposes, such as food production, grazing and wood collection. Many villages also set aside land for future generations. This village had no land-use plan, but the local government official encouraged the village assembly to give the land to the investor anyway, and without a contract. First, he explained, they needed to see whether the company was serious or not. Then, they could proceed with a contract.

The village decided to give the investor 200 hectares of land from the plots set aside for future generations. In return, the company promised to deliver better water access, education facilities and to build a health clinic in the village.

Only one year after the land had been cleared of all vegetation and the palms had been planted, the company disappeared, leaving the palms growing in the fields. They claimed that lack of water made it impossible for the operation to be profitable, an explanation the villagers don’t believe.

– They claimed they would invest 50 billion shillings over seven years. By 2010 the company had invested 2 billion and suddenly they are bankrupt? You can see there is plenty of water on this land. And the palms are still growing well, says Magembe Nkini.

The trail narrows, and we leave our car and walk under the hot sun through the village land set aside for future generations. After half an hour, we reach the field of oil palms on sandy soil, with palm fruit bunches beginning to turn reddish-orange. The fruit will soon be ripe enough to be harvested and crushed for palm oil. This oil has been widely used as cooking oil in the area for decades, and can also be processed into biodiesel, which was the original aim of African Green Oils.

Since there is no contract, no one seems to know who the land belongs to now, not even the local government officer we talk to. The villagers agree that the land should be theirs, since there is no contract stating the contrary. According to the villagers, the national authority coordinating investment in land – the Tanzanian Investment Centre – had identified the investor as serious, but was unaware that African Green Oils had actually acquired land in Rufiji. The villagers have complained to the authority and to the district about their situation, but have received no answer. They also tell us that the benefits promised by the investor did not materialise. However, after exerting pressure including through the local media, a ward health clinic was
built. As yet, there is no nurse or electricity. Before the investor came, the villagers used the land for collecting firewood, water and timber for construction. Then, they were employed to clear the land for the company – pull out the stems, drag them away, clear all the bushes and burn the land. For this, they got paid 2,500 shillings (equivalent to US $1) per day, on condition they cleared one hectare in teams of 10 people. If they did not meet this target, the amount of pay would be spread over two days. Some villagers have sued the investor for not paying their final wages before leaving.

However, one could also see some potential benefits in that a major investment has been made in the form of land preparation and planting and the trees are now left to the villagers. The villagers could manage the plantation themselves, for example, by starting their own company and harvesting the fruit. The farmers we meet, however, don’t see it that way.

– We don’t have the time to manage these fields, we have enough to do on our own farms, they say.

What they really need is employment. The fact that this would also take time away from their own agricultural commitments does not seem to matter. Instead, they put their hopes in another investor.

– If the investor is good, we can benefit.

**While acknowledging** that data on land investments is elusive, an overview conducted within Nat’s current research project on large-scale land acquisitions shows that 35–40 companies have requested land for biofuel investment in Tanzania over the past decade. Of these, 13 companies have acquired land, covering a total of 200,000 hectares. However, only one of them, an oil palm company, is operational. Another company has highly advanced plans to establish large-scale cane plantations for sugar and ethanol production. It seems most companies never even started their operations, while some companies have switched to other crops and others have gone bankrupt and sold to new investors.

The reasons for bankruptcy have not yet been investigated in detail. However, during the financial crisis of 2007–08, it became harder to find financing for these costly investments. For jatropha plantations, companies have pleaded, for instance, lack of water and disappointing yields from a crop that was heavily promoted for its excellent qualities. Social conflict, weak national governance and the criticisms of international civil society have also contributed. Over the past few years, Tanzania has been developing a national biofuel policy that is now nearing finalisation. The policy, together with lessons learned from previous investments as well as ongoing EU processes, will give important signals as to where Tanzania is headed regarding biofuel investments in the future, and to what extent environmental and social impacts can be mitigated.
Acclaimed Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was one of the conference’s keynote speakers. She attracted much attention among the general public as well as in the Swedish media.

The other keynote speaker, President Martti Ahtisaari (left), shaking hands with former NAI director Lennart Wohlgemuth (right) and Pekka Pekola (centre).

The audience actively participated throughout the conference. Here Lars Rudebeck is making a contribution.

Participants keenly waiting to have their copies of her latest book signed by author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.
Carin Norberg chats with Ebrima Sall and Carl Gösta Widstrand, the institute’s first director.

PHOTO: STAFFAN WIDSTRAND

Michael Ståhl, Lars Rudebeck and Olav Stokke at the reception for the 50th anniversary banquet.

PHOTO: STAFFAN WIDSTRAND

Swedish author Henning Mankell inaugurates the room holding the African fiction collection at the new premises of the NAI library.

PHOTO: SERGIO SANTIMANO

Rajabu Hamisi, Rune Skarstein and Kjell Havnevik during a coffee break at the 50th anniversary conference.

PHOTO: SERGIO SANTIMANO
International links
Research on how Africa connects with other parts of the world, with a particular focus on trade, migration and cooperation.

Current projects

Return migrants in West Africa
Return migration is attracting increasing attention among international development policy-makers. The potential is claimed to be that returnees contribute not only with money but also with the knowledge they have gained abroad and their new social connections and experiences. To what extent can migrants take on this role as “the new developers”? Lisa Åkesson examines the role of returnees in Cape Verde.

Trade, regionalization and Africa-EU cooperation
Francis Matambalya researches international trade, Africa-EU relations and regional integration. From this broad theme three projects have evolved. The “trading up” study looks at how African countries can blend domestic initiatives and international partnerships to achieve sustainable competitiveness in investments, production and international trade.

Another project investigates international investments in agriculture in developing countries, with the initial standpoint that foreign direct investments are desirable and necessary. A third project examines those productive resource capacities that need to develop further if African countries are to improve their chances to reap the opportunities of globalisation.

Technical change in West Africa
Research by Mats Hårsmar examines the factors that enable and hinder peasants in Burkina Faso in adopting new cultivation techniques and what role there is for outside actors in such processes.

The project studies the conditions for increased labour, land and input productivity in small-scale agriculture.

Water politics in the Nile basin
From 2013, a cross-cutting project that involves the NAI’s International Links (Mats Hårsmar) and Rural Change (Terje Oestigaard) clusters together with the Stockholm International Water Institute and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, will investigate the water and land nexus in the Nile Basin.

The researchers seek to understand how the current surge in land acquisitions and investments by foreign countries will affect transboundary water interactions in the region. Will power relations change and conflicts arise?

Business for development
Lisa Román has begun a research project into the potential of business corporations as a development tool. In looking beyond the role of private sector development per se, the project thus addresses the issue of changing norms and values for institutional change.

Research and education systems
Education systems in Africa are largely formed by a global policy agenda expressed through international donors. Måns Fellesson analyses the structures and premises in research and higher education, with a particular focus on what is researched, why and by whom?

The project will shed light on how different policy agendas are interpreted and converted into practice by institutions and individuals in the research and education systems of Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda.

PhD holders’ career paths
Swedish development cooperation has for many years supported PhD-level training for African academics. Måns Fellesson examines the long-term outcome of this support in terms of the mobility and career paths of the Sida-funded PhD graduates. Are there patterns of mobility and what driving forces and rationales lie behind individual career choices?
URING 2012, most international reports on the African economy have focused on jobs and employment. After years of complacency over the continent’s rapid economic growth, it is now widely recognised that, if growth is to be sustained, it is high time for inclusiveness. In particular, the demographic dividend has to be reaped. If Africa can put its rapidly growing population to productive work, its economic future will be very bright.

If, on the other hand, the many young are left unemployed or in less productive informal activities, persistent poverty and increasing inequalities might well turn into social unrest and conflict. Such a lesson has been very clear from the “Arab Spring.”

There are divergent views on how growth in Africa should be understood. Two stories compete. One says that the rapid growth has come about due to a combination of two factors: increased international demand for oil, gas and commodities, and domestic improvements in governance. African countries have greatly improved their macroeconomic policies and moved into new economic sectors, such as telecommunications. As a result of this growth,
poverty is falling. Proponents of this story admit that major challenges remain. However, if Africa has managed to grow despite these huge challenges, it will most likely continue to do so.

The other story says that, despite the rapid growth, no real structural transformation has taken place. African countries are still heavily dependent on commodity exports. These sectors bring in large sums of money, but create very few jobs. Hence, inequalities are rising, with half the population still living on less than US $1.25 per day. If no structural transformation takes place, growth is less likely to be sustained in the longer run. More fundamentally, poverty reduction and broader socioeconomic development will not happen.

**STARTING WITH THESE two divergent narratives, in late November 2012 Nät organised a workshop in which the Swedish finance minister, Anders Borg, took part. Other participants included Nät researchers; Shanta Devaraj, chief economist for the Africa region at the World Bank; Thandika Mkandawire, guest professor at the London School of Economics and Stockholm University; and Miguel Nino-Zarazua from the UN University on development economics (UNU-WIDER) in Helsinki.**

Any such conversation between policymakers and researchers has two objectives: to better understand what is happening, but also to find out what can be done to improve things.

This particular discussion came to focus largely on governance. Yes, macroeconomic balance and policies have improved considerably in many African countries, but further governance reforms are needed to achieve much needed structural transformations. Especially the vast and increasing inequalities have to be tackled.

Where to start? Here, the perspectives of policymakers and researchers complement each other in interesting ways. While researchers try to combine different factors into comprehensive approaches, policymakers try to see what is possible right now and where support can be built for change in selected areas.

According to a mainstream economist’s view, there is, for instance, a need to deregulate the transport and energy sectors in African countries. Take transportation as an example. The rows of lorries and vans waiting for documents to be processed at custom posts, border crossings and ports tend to be very long. Regulation originating in an era when these sectors were perceived to be natural monopolies and key national interests tends to persist. Specific interest groups benefit from these regulations. Getting rid of them would bring transport and energy costs down considerably, improving competitiveness. This has been tested in Rwanda. When the transport sector there was deregulated, prices fell 73 per cent. Other studies show that the cost of moving a vehicle is no different on African roads than it is in, for example, France. The great differences in transport costs between Europe and Africa flow from differences in regulations.

However, there is a research-based critique of this narrow approach to deregulation. To focus on selected and limited areas and on the interests of powerful groups will not be enough, according to the critics. There are at least three other “Ts” to consider: a) Infrastructure investment needs are immense in sub-Saharan Africa; b) Institutions will continue to malfunction, and c) International conditions create massive vulnerability for African economies. For structural change to come about, a much more comprehensive approach would be needed. There were many lessons to be learned from what went wrong during the 1980s and 1990s. During that period, the Washington consensus view of economic policies dominated and policies were to a large extent prescribed by international institutions. One of the lessons learned was that the focus on deregulation and “getting the prices right” was much too narrow. Productive capacity is not built that way. Much more comprehensive policies are needed. Another of the lessons was that policy reforms have to be driven by African policymakers themselves, and not by outsiders.

**Another of the lessons was that policy reforms have to be driven by African policy-makers themselves, and not by outsiders.**

**While academics argue from different positions about what combination of policies is the correct one, a policymaker thinks differently. Instead of discussing details in a policy package, a politician would first try to understand what reforms stand a chance of being implemented. What possibilities are there to find broad alliances in favour of certain reforms? Rather than starting with a fully coherent programme, one or possibly two reforms should be chosen from the larger set of reforms needed. As soon as one reform is implemented, the next could follow. If, for instance, potential international investors, together with domestic businesses, push for reform in the transport and energy sectors, there might be...**
enough political support for starting with these sectors. If, on the other hand, interest groups unite for change in other sectors, it might be better to start elsewhere. Not everything can be done at once, so it becomes even more important to select and start with the most important reforms. The policy agenda is long, but some issues are more fundamental. In the workshop, there was wide agreement that low productivity in small-scale agriculture and in other informal sectors is just such a major and fundamental problem. However, to solve this, policy interventions and governance improvements over a vast range of areas are needed. Knowledge, improved health and better functioning markets are some of the necessary factors.

IN THE AREA of education, great progress has been made with school enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa. The continent is on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal on primary school enrolment, with an average enrolment rate of 80 per cent, according to recent UN statistics. However, this is not enough. Drop-outs are high, mainly among girls. In some countries, only 33 per cent complete primary school. Teachers are often absent from work. When they are there, the quality of the education is often poor. To tackle such problems, the whole educational system needs reform. Universities and higher education need to be extended so that teachers can have proper training. Teachers need a wage increase.

However, perhaps most importantly, pupils need to see possibilities for finding jobs after their education. Many factors are interlinked, and education is just one of the factors needed for agricultural productivity to increase. Other needs include better functioning of markets and improved connections between local markets and the export sector. Furthermore, social protection systems should be built for peasants to be able to deal with all the risks they face in cultivation and marketing. Hence, a wide set of reforms is needed. If governments are to deliver on this, their governance capacity generally has to increase.

INFORMALITY POSES SPECIFIC problems for a reform agenda. Of the approximately 400 million people in the African workforce, more than 70 per cent do not receive wages. Using this way of counting, 275 million people would be working informally. A common approach, not least from a Western point of view, is to promote formal sector wage jobs. However, if such jobs are provided, these may very well come at the expense of informal employment. Street vendors are swept away when shopping malls are built in efforts to modernise and expand the retail sector. Small-scale farmers run the risk of losing their lands when large-scale investments beef up the agricultural sector. The mining sector is capital- rather than labour-intensive. Employees in this sector are often brought in from abroad rather than hired locally.

Hence, when the recent McKinsey International’s report Africa at Work argues that 72 million new jobs may be created in Africa by 2020, capturing at least a large part of the additional 122 million people that are expected to enter the labour force in the same period, questions arise. How many informal jobs will be lost and what will the net result be in terms of job creation? What would safety nets, if any, look like for those losing their informal employment?

Structural transformations of economies are needed, but so are measures to protect people currently in the informal sector. The big challenge is to find ways to use the productive capacities of the many who live in poverty. According to recent statistics, these account for almost half of Africa’s population.
Reverse migration

CAPE VERDE has a long history of emigration and the money sent back by migrants to relatives at home represents a significant part of Cape Verde’s economy.

In recent years, Cape Verde has also become a receiver of immigrants, mainly from West Africa but also from China and Portugal. Additionally, there are the returning Cape Verdiens emigrants. In the past, few migrants returned before retirement age, implying that they seldom contributed their skills and experience to the Cape Verdean labour market and economy. Nowadays, emigrants return earlier and often set up small-scale enterprises.

NAI researcher Lisa Åkesson has for many years conducted research into Cape Verde and migration. In November last year, she was invited to a conference in Cape Verde to speak about the role of returning nationals.

– Besides providing employment, some returnees contribute new ideas and skills. First, they may have knowledge about products and techniques that are new to the national market. Second, some have acquired skills abroad that help them to provide better quality services. Third, some have experience of new kinds of management and workplace relations, says Lisa Åkesson.

It is not that easy to come back and set up a business in Cape Verde. Investment loans are difficult to obtain. The interest rates charged by banks are high, repayment periods are short and demands for collateral security are excessive. As a foreign guest at the conference, Lisa Åkesson could bring up other, more sensitive, obstacles to local development.

– Many of my informants talk about political nepotism. Without beneficial contacts with politicians it is hard to run a successful business. Favourable relations with the customs service are also important. On the other hand, it is a promising sign that these problems can be discussed at a national conference, says Lisa Åkesson.

Receiving newcomers represents a great shift in Cape Verdean society, which hitherto has only had to contend with migration from the islands. This shift implies a new national identity. So far, official discourse on immigrants has been welcoming.

– They say they want to treat immigrants in the same way as they want Cape Verdeans to be treated in foreign countries. At the same time, there is reluctance about receiving a large number of immigrants from West Africa. Even though some of these aim to move on to Europe, many get stuck in prolonged transit in Cape Verde, says Lisa Åkesson.

TEXT BY JOHAN SÄVSTRÖM

PhD holders’ career paths

FOR OVER 30 YEARS Swedish development cooperation has supported academics in countries such as Ethiopia, Mozambique and Tanzania in obtaining PhD degrees. However, not much is known today about the current situations of these PhD holders. Are they undertaking research at their home universities? Are they living abroad? Are they working in the field of education or in other sectors of society?

NAI researcher Måns Fellesson has initiated a project to investigate these issues.

– Perhaps we will find that the majority of the PhDs have left their universities to work abroad. Then there is reason to believe the original idea of supporting local capacity-building wasn’t optimal. But there are also other dimensions to this.

If a PhD holder, for instance, works on poverty-related issues at an international organisation such as the World Bank, the original investment may be equally sound, though in more general terms. Brain drain and brain circulation may be two different ways of looking at the situation, says Måns Fellesson.

By mapping and then interviewing the African academics in question, the project hopes to unearth more about the driving forces and rationale behind their mobility and career choices.

– The results will be placed in the broader context of what we already know about the changing role and function of research and higher education in Africa. For instance, the increasing commercialisation of higher education and research and a growing emphasis on accountability and audit mean a move away from the “traditional” academy to a “relevant academy,” says Måns Fellesson.

TEXT BY JOHAN SÄVSTRÖM
Thousands of youth are making do on the streets of Freetown. Pentagon is a street corner where mainly young men gather to “look for money,” as they put it. They do so by washing cars, driving taxis, carrying goods, working as day labourers on construction sites, illegally selling drugs, doing informal protection work or engaging in petty theft. Many are homeless and live on the street corner: The street is my office, my living room and my bed room is a common expression. Although survival is hard, the street corner is often filled with laughter.
Building peace

Research on conflict, (in)security and democratic state-building in Africa.

Current projects

Land conflicts and citizenship
In his research, Anders Sjögren analyses land conflicts, civil society organising and struggles over citizenship and political identity. The project seeks to connect the critical issue of land conflicts to the equally burning question of citizenship and state-formation in Africa.

Market for the poor
In Liberia, efforts are being made to ensure markets better benefit the poor. However, changing the market system to support a more inclusive development path will also change economic structures and economic power relations.

Military networks linger
In postwar Liberia, the command structures of armed groups continue to exist and constitute a serious challenge to peacebuilding. Warlords and politicians employ such structures to engage in war and crime, and they also are used to exploit natural resources. Mats Utas, Anders Themnér and Ilmari Käihkö seek to shed light on how the networks of ex-commanders are sustained after a civil war and to identify how they can also be used to promote peace and development.

Big man politics and democratisation
Elections tend to be violent in many new African democracies. This project, carried out by Mimi Süderberg Kovacs, Johanna Söderström and Mats Utas, examines the causes and dynamics of electoral violence, and how such incidents affect the citizen’s perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the electoral process.

Post-Ghaddafi consequences
Religion is only one of many conflict dimensions in Mali and the Sahel sub-region. To grasp the situation local conflict patterns, socio-economy and the implications of radical shifts of geopolitical character need to be included.

The project is a joint effort with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Accra.

Egypt’s complex changes
Maria Frederika Malmström explores the role of emotions, thinking and modes of action after the Egyptian uprising in 2011. Malmström’s research focuses on the way in which Egyptians understand and respond to Egypt’s complex changes. In particular, her work looks at how these actors contest, subvert or embrace the ongoing transition.

Conflict and state building
The Horn of Africa is one of the most conflict-ridden region of the continent. Redie Bereketeab examines the origins and causes of these conflicts, which often include legacies of the colonial era and the Cold War, as well as internal cleavages and political conflicts.

The project aims to identify internal and external actors and stakeholders, and also critically examine the state-building enterprise in the Horn of Africa.

AU and civilian protection
Linnea Gelot analyses the norms and practices of the African Union (AU) as it emerges as a peace and security actor. Gelot examines the AU interventions in Darfur and Sudan and the organisation’s position on actions against Libya and on Ethiopia’s deployment of troops to the Abyei region of Sudan.

Gender and police reform
One of the consequences of violence for individuals and communities is the perpetuation of poverty. Pillage, extortion and illegal taxation by state security personnel worsen the situation. One recommendation in policy literature is increased women’s representation in state security forces.

Maria Eriksson Baaz researches how gender identities inform police reform and civil-police relations in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Daily bread, daily tread
Maria Eriksson Baaz and Judith Verweijen are undertaking research into the income-generating strategies of both security staff and citizens in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and how these intersect, conflict and collide.

The project investigates the impact of such intersections on local markets and on the livelihoods of small economic actors.

CLUSTER LEADER: MATS UTAS

RESEARCHERS: ELDRIDGE ADOLFO, REDIE BEREKETEAB, MARIA ERIKSSON BAAZ, GUN ERIKSSON SKOOG, ILMARI KÄIHKÖ, LINNÉA GELOT, MARIA FREDERIKA MALMSTRÖM, ANDERS SJÖGREN, MIMMI SÖDERBERG KOVACS, JOHANNA SÖDERSTRÖM, ANDERS THEMNÉR, JUDITH VERWEIJEN
The Muslim Brotherhood has, in a short period, been transformed from an underground political Islamic movement into a ruling, democratically elected Islamic political party in the new Egypt. Political Islam had gained legitimacy in Egypt during the former regime. It offered social services and religious instruction; responded to popular demands; and tried to entrench Islamic ideology in everyday life. The political Islamic movements stood for pride, authority based on high moral standards and national self-determination. In several respects, the political Islamic movements of Egypt delivered what they promised to especially the Egyptian poor, unlike the state. Many women and men in Cairo that I met one year ago considered Islamic politics to be a form of moral Islamic modernisation and this belief helped to restore their sense of confidence in the nation. However, today the political Islamic party needs to meet several demanding challenges, and the clock is ticking.

During my earlier research in Egypt in the early 2000s, there were two dominant emotions among the people I met daily, fear and lack of hope. One year ago, these sentiments had radically changed into hope and lack of fear, not only among my former interlocutors, but in Egyptian society in general. By the end of the fall of 2012 and after 100 days under the new President Morsi, one of these feelings has begun to change. There is still a general lack of fear, but today there is a growing crack in the feeling of hope. There are also new sentiments—confusion and frustration. To understand the importance of these emotions in the Egyptian uprisings and in relation to change, security and stability, we need to go back a couple of years.

The women and men I worked with 11 years ago lived in various low-income areas of Cairo, both in the old Islamic quarters and in the newer suburbs. The Egyptian state at this time frequently made use of the Emergency Law, which allowed for the prohibition of demonstrations and the deployment of security police in response to political instability. Central security troops outnumbered protestors in the spontaneous demonstrations during the Iraq War, in sharp contrast to the uprisings of 2011 and later demonstrations. The central parts of Cairo were filled with helmeted police and military equipped with shields and heavy weapons. People complained to me of torture and arrests following the demonstrations, but also of censorship of the national media.

Ihbaat again?

Ihbaat — frustration — is one of the emotions in play as Egyptian people try to cope with their new political circumstances.

Text by Maria Frederika Malmström

“If you’re not confused, you haven’t been paying attention”, @iyad_elbaghdadi wrote on twitter.

Photo: Iyad Elbaghdadi
They felt that doomsday was approaching. Many were dissatisfied with their lives and were despondent about the future. The majority could see only dark prospects for themselves and their children. They frequently described the suffering Egyptians experienced because of Mubarak’s policies. People reacted with anger and dissatisfaction at the state’s weakness towards the West and the economic mismanagement. The Iraq War highlighted these feelings and nourished a sense of fear and hopelessness. Their security and basic needs were dependent on the regime. Hidden forms of action were crucial to avoid arrest and torture under the Emergency Law. When I went back to Cairo after the fall of Mubarak, I immediately sensed the new relaxed atmosphere that was marked by hope and lack of fear.

It was no surprise that political Islam won the parliamentary elections or that the leading figure in previously forbidden Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Morsi, won the 2012 presidential election. Mubarak had continued Sadat’s approach to modernisation and religion and tried to control the growth of Islamic movements. Market orientation entailed reduced state protection for the poor. Corruption, state violence, together with growing income disparities and unequal access to welfare, created political discontent and frustration. The state’s inability to manage social and economic problems and to satisfy basic needs affected people’s lives in a number of ways. The former Egyptian political system was synonymous with humiliation and impoverishment. Furthermore, conditions under Mubarak – widespread unemployment, poverty, social injustice and government corruption – helped create a climate of instability that could easily be manipulated by political forces. All this created space for political Islamists. Political Islam movements have for a very long time taken care of the people in poor areas. They stand for morality and self-esteem as well as for the forging of an Arabic identity, in contrast to Mubarak’s state-promoted ‘secular’ Islam. The only other alternatives for the majority of Egypt’s population have been the low-cost health facilities, low-standard public schools and the Islamic charity organisations. These organisations have offered free and inexpensive health services and interest-free loans based on religious education and guidance from Orthodox Islam. Islamic charity organisations have indeed played an important role in the poorer parts of Cairo and offered a political alternative to unpopular national policies. Today, liberals, leftists and secularists in Egypt agree that political Islam in Egypt and in North Africa has not only been well organised for a long time, but has also been very smart in buying the voices of the poor through social charity. In the words of one observer, “Now it is time for them to harvest what they have planted.”

When I was in Cairo in October 2011, some of my former interlocutors among the Egyptian poor told me they still believe in the Muslim Brotherhood. This organisation was seen as credible and as a stable political actor. Others no longer trusted political Islam: “They show their real ugly face now.” However, most of those I talked to last year, from different social strata and with different political affiliations, saw no problem with political Islamists, who used religion to convince people of their principles. Rather, their problem was with the continuance of army control of the state. Egyptians seem to be more and more confused. There are so many uncertain future scenarios, ambivalences, conflicting images, rumours and forces in constant flow. Furthermore, the lack of hope is not confined to the political opposition to political Islam: even among the poor who believed in the Muslim Brotherhood one year ago, today the majority has lost their faith in the brothers.

EGYPTIANS HAVE ALWAYS been politically active. However, in early 2000, there was no uprisings on the streets. The rules of the state were abided by with apathy, but also with cynicism, rumour and humour. Community organisations, familial and informal networks have also been an expression of political participation. These networks kept alive alternative visions of politics and strategies to achieve shared goals. People were repressed, fearful and paranoid. Their security and basic needs were dependent on the regime. Hidden forms of action were crucial to avoid arrest and torture under the Emergency Law. When I went back to Cairo after the fall of Mubarak, I immediately sensed the new relaxed atmosphere that was marked by hope and lack of fear.

It was no surprise that political Islam won the parliamentary elections...
Members of the Journalists Union march down to Tahrir Square. Since President Morsi announced legislation giving him near-absolute power, clashes have worsened between his supporters and protesters.
will they manage to keep their promises to Egypt’s poor population, who make up the vast majority, and how will they navigate between internal and external forces and act in global politics? It takes time to change former structures – as one Egyptian scholar points out it, “the bottom is still rotten” – and establish new politics. However, Egyptians have been patient for too many years, but their patience is wearing thin. Emotions of insecurity and loss of control may also lead to a longing for the past.

Even if Morsi has scored several national political gains by raising Egypt’s international profile among some of his former liberal critics, he is also failing to achieve what he promised for his first 100 days. The focus on global politics, while neglecting the development of Egypt, seems to be making him increasingly unpopular. Among his underprivileged followers who lack resources and who are struggling to meet their basic needs, there is no patience. In a voluble outburst, one taxi driver told me that in fact everything had been better under Mubarak. The former regime was corrupt, yes, and there was a growing gap between rich and poor, yes, but people could at least fill their stomachs and had water and electricity. Setting these emotions in the context of Morsi’s 100 day plan, it is not difficult to understand the irony and the very core of seriousness in the popular mango jokes that cropped up after a TV interview with the president, who said that during his rule the mango was affordable and attainable by all. An ironic comparison between Morsi and Marie Antoinette was immediately published on social media: Let the people eat mango! (instead of bread).

THE EGYPTIAN STATE has signed a $200 million loan with the World Bank and President Morsi has requested a $4.8 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. To meet the IMF’s conditions for the loan, the president will have to gradually remove subsidies from basic goods, such as bread. In 1977, bread riots erupted among the Egyptian poor in a spontaneous uprising against President Sadat’s acceptance of a World Bank and IMF-mandated end to state subsidies on basic foods. One of the slogans at the time was: “Thieves of the Infitah [open door policy], the people are famished.” The
BUILDING PEACE

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ABED/AFP/GETTY

[Image of a person holding an Egyptian flag in front of a large crowd, likely a protest or demonstration in Cairo.]

[Caption or article not provided]
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respect are part of a wider anti-Western
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This sentiment certainly did not disappear
/dollar/taboldstyle/one/taboldstyle/five/taboldstyle billion in military and
opinion and preserving good relations with
the US (including economic support, since
riotings did not stop until the Egyptian state
called off the new policies.

Many Egyptians have seen Presidents
Sadat and Mubarak as marionettes of the
us, a perception political Islam has used
as a political weapon against the former
regime. President Morsi has been sensible
in navigating between appeasing public
opinion and preserving good relations with
the US (including economic support, since
the US provides $1.5 billion in military and
other aid annually). When President Morsi
tried to put his foot down after the now
infamous YouTube clip of mid-September
2012, condemning violence but welcoming
peaceful demonstrations, President Obama
immediately called him. He let Morsi know
that he was going to destroy the diplomatic
relations between the two countries and
underscored the need for Egypt to take
satisfactory steps to protect US staff. Morsi’s
tone soon changed.

It should be said that anti-American
sentiment in Egypt is nothing new and has
been widely used in the rhetoric of politi-
cal Islam against the Mubarak regime.
This sentiment certainly did not disappear
after the uprising. Degradation and dis-
respect are part of a wider anti-Western
discourse in the Arab world and are linked
to colonial heritage, anti-Islamic racism,
exophobia, the Israel-Palestine conflict,
the Iraq War and a sense of cultural im-
poverishment. The invasion of Iraq and
the subsequent war were seen among the
poor Egyptians I met 11 years ago as con-
firmation of a Western ambition to turn
the whole “Arab world” into a Western
duplicate. During Mubarak’s tenure, the
Muslim Brotherhood was a disciplined
religious and anti-colonialist movement.
Are President Morsi’s politics still anti-
colonial, or is he just another puppet,
another laughing cow, as former President
Mubarak was jokingly referred to?

IN HIS FIRST SPEECH as democratically elected
president, Morsi proclaimed: “I affirm to
all segments of the Egyptian people that I
have today, by your choice and your will,
through the favour of Allah, become the
president of all Egyptians.” However, not
all Egyptians see their president in this light.
The clashes between secular-minded Egyptians
and the Muslim Brotherhood are, of
course, not new, but are tensions increasing
in the new Egypt? As a leftist woman activ-
ist said after one of the clashes, “This is the
new war we are afraid of.”
The Egyptian Copts are another dis-
contented group. Among other things, they
are increasingly angry at the president’s
failure to prosecute anyone for the Maspero
massacre in October 2011. The draft consti-
tution is yet another dilemma. Mohammad
Al Baradei and other politicians say they
will hold Morsi accountable for instituting
a fair and balanced constitution. Many lib-
erals and leftists in the Constituent Assembly
have resigned in protest, since they argue
that powerful Islamic political figures in the
Assembly are attempting to write an “Islamic
constitution” and nothing else. When Pres-
ident Morsi granted himself unlimited powers
by decree at the end of November 2012,
huge protests immediately followed and both
his supporters and critics demonstrated
throughout the country. Again, we can see
the power of collective emotions – this time
not only a total lack of fear, but also imme-
diate rage. The decree banned challenges
to his decisions and prevented any court
from dissolving the Constituent Assembly.
His declaration also gave the Assembly more
time to draft a new constitution. However,
the protests were successful and in early
December unlimited powers for the presi-
dent were cancelled.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to predict what will happen
in the future or which path Egypt will take.
I am as confused as every Egyptian woman
and man. The outcome of the current ten-
sions remains unknown. What is clear is that
by understanding Egyptians’ emotions in
relation to their imagination of the new
Egypt we will better understand both future
dilemmas and possibilities.

First, the most significant outcome of
the Egyptian uprising of 2011 is Egyptians’
lack of fear. This means that people are not
afraid to act politically in relation to the
current regime and the military, irrespective
of how these forces might respond.

Second, the increasing confusion and
frustration after the referendum may be
used in a transition period as something
powerful and fruitful, as a creative tool for
building the new Egypt. However, it can
also turn into something that I see as the
biggest threat to Egypt’s future, that is,
where Egyptians totally lose hope again
and perceive tomorrow as pitch black.
Some of the people researchers meet in the field must be seen through multiple lenses. On one hand, they are human beings, flesh and blood. On the other, they are myths, yet just as real.

Of man and myth

TEXT BY ILMARI KÄIHKÖ

FORMER WARLORD and Liberian president Charles Taylor was certainly at least as much myth as man. While not as famous as Taylor, there are many rumours about Mr Thompson. It is almost certain that he has been involved in most Liberian conflicts since 1990. Many believe that he was an elephant hunter who could become invisible and shoot elephants from the middle of the herd. Others say he was the right-hand man of Captain Yonbu Tailey, a former street youth accused of killing hundreds of civilians and put down by his own comrades.

A FEW YEARS LATER Mr Thompson is said to have caused a short but intense “war” between the Ivorian military and the rebel group he had joined, a conflict that resulted in multiple casualties among Liberian refugees trying to escape. After the presidential elections of 1996, Mr Thompson hunted elephants in Côte d’Ivoire and sold the tusks in Monrovia for $500 apiece. When fighting against Taylor intensified in 2002, he reappears, although it is unclear whether he really fought against Taylor’s forces as is usually claimed.

In June 2012, Mr Thompson was obviously doing well, as he had just got a large plot of land cleared for planting the rubber plants that were waiting in his nursery. The next thing, he was accused of organising a crossborder attack that killed a number of UN peacekeepers. After the government declared him a wanted man, he immediately left town without trace. A week later, security forces reached his house, kicked in the door, stole whatever valuables they could find and tossed everything else outside.

The door to Mr Thompson’s house was still half open when I arrived a few weeks later. A wall of silence surrounded his absence: no-one talked about him or about anything connected to the rebellion in Côte d’Ivoire. Thirty minutes after my arrival, a dozen heavily armed soldiers came and picked me up for questioning. The atmosphere was very tense and unpleasant. Only after many days did I hear the first news about Mr Thompson. I have never heard anybody talk as respectfully – and fearfully – about someone else. “That man is different,” was the endlessly repeated refrain. This went along well with my previous observations of how people acted in his presence, some almost assuming military attention. Others cautioned me not to make him angry, lest he uses his mystical powers on me.

It took about a month before Mr Thompson was finally captured by security forces, sold out by his own comrades. This time he could not turn invisible, and he will possibly sit behind bars for the rest of his life. Perhaps this is a fitting end for a man of such violent character, but at the same time a pitiful finale for a man of such obvious authority.

MR THOMPSON WAS NOT simply a criminal, an insurgent or a powerful man of “tradition.” He was all of this, and more. I came to grasp something about the aura around him as understood by others. He had become much more than a mere mortal – he was a myth whose perceived history condensed two decades of regional conflict.

Some time passed before I saw a newspaper picture of a shackled Mr Thompson being escorted out of a Monrovian courtroom. At this point this was not Mr Thompson anymore, nor do I believe it would be for many of those who know him. Just as in the case of his fellow inmate Charles Taylor, the myth of Mr Thompson had taken on a life of its own.

Between March and October 2012, Ilmari Käihkö conducted fieldwork in Liberia for a NAI project that seeks to shed light on how the networks of ex-commanders are sustained.

From IRIN, January 2013
The downward spiral in Zimbabwe continues. Political stalemate, sanctions, unemployment, corruption and election violence have created a deadlock. It is the Zimbabwean people who suffer, not the politicians.

Better-off without a vote?

Text by Eldridge Vigil Adolfo

A

ELECTIONS LOOM over Zimbabwe in 2013, there is still no resolution to the political stalemate. The three political parties that in 2008 formed a Government of National Unity (GNU) have not achieved the reforms that would have prepared the country for elections and have only recently agreed on a constitution that they will put to a referendum in 2013.

The two MDC formations have lost the moral high ground, since people have come to understand that their MPs and ministers are enjoying the same perks as those in Zanu PF. Cases of corruption involving MDC councillors, and Prime Minister Tsvangirai’s sex scandals, have made matters worse. Zanu PF has strengthened its position among the voters since 2008, and recent opinion polls show it lead the MDC. Still, there are no certainties they will win, even though the MDC is not allowed to campaign at open rallies, since the police either refuse the party permission to hold any or interrupts those that they do hold. It has also dawned on Zanu PF that if they lose the election, they may not be allowed to refuse to leave office again. As a result, all three party leaders would prefer things to continue as they are and thus are likely to strike a deal and move into a continued or second GNU.

However, there is much apprehension once one begins to scratch below the surface and ask about the forthcoming elections. There is not one person I have spoken to that is not dreading the elections and the violence they believe it will bring. Youth bases are already being visibly established in local communities around the country and it is understood that some war veteran associations are already mobilising for the elections. It was from these bases that much of the election violence in 2008 was carried out. Their presence strikes fear into individuals and communities and this may make it possible for political parties to “harvest” the fear created in 2008 and not necessarily resort to overt violence – “toyi-toying” may be enough. However, Zanu PF will not risk losing the new elections and will make sure everything is in place beforehand. With unemployment and poverty still high, especially among the youth, generating violence is very cheap. As a member of the MDC put it, “A scud (local beer) costs fifty cents, so twenty dollars can go a long way.”

THIS LEAVES THE COUNTRY in a very awkward situation in that the political parties, civil society, the business community and ordinary people do not want elections. This prompts the question of whether elections are actually the way out of this stalemate,
especially if they simply act as a catalyst for violence, which, in any case, simply reproduces the status quo. One of the problems with the current governing arrangement is that because it is not internationally supported, the MDC has been thrust into the GNU that has loaded it with responsibilities, but given it absolutely no power or resources (neither from the Zimbabwean state nor the international community) to deliver on those responsibilities. This has become a poisoned chalice for the MDC and has not created a platform to initiate the necessary reforms. Conversely, if elections do go ahead and the MDC wins, and is in fact allowed to take control of the state, there is every possibility it would behave exactly like Zanu PF – simply because it can. The Imperial Presidency in Zimbabwe means the president is not accountable to anyone and can do whatever he/she wants. Power is concentrated in the office of the presidency and even President Mugabe has recently said that “parliament is merely a decoration.” The reality is that the executive negotiates legislation, and parliament simply rubber stamps it. Power needs to be diffused from this imperial office and shared with the parliament, senate and judiciary. It also needs to be decentralised by allowing the provincial state apparatus to exercise some power at the local level.

The Economy has improved since the lows of 2003 and 2008 but high levels of unemployment persist. A compradore class has emerged in Zimbabwe, where certain individuals, without any economic bases, are operating as brokers between the minerals industry and international buyers. However, they do not reinvest the profits to create jobs or contribute to productive economic growth, but are the merchants of capital flight, and focus on luxury consumption – flashy cars, clothes and hotels. These compradores are closely linked to the illegal mining of diamonds: it is claimed that during the last two years, over US $ 2 billion dollars’ worth of diamonds have been sold through them. None of these profits passed through the ministry of finance or the Zimbabwean treasury. The new draft constitution of January 2013 addresses some of these issues, but the nature of informal politics and power in Zimbabwe may circumvent this.

The Land Reform programme has had mixed results. Many of the lucrative farms have been handed out to Zanu PF party associates, who often have hired farm managers (including former farmers whose farms were redistributed by the state) to run the farms, and they are operating somewhat successfully. The poor landless Zimbabweans who were resettled on farms have also engaged in farming with varying results: some have been successful, some are breaking even and some have failed completely. These farmers are also using a different farming model – not large-scale commercial farming, but smallholder farming which has also changed the types of crops and farming inputs. Production has increased from 2003, but is still far less than the pre-2000 levels and there are many farms that are lying in waste. That said, there is a new order in Zimbabwe and many of the changes made with regard to land reform are irreversible. This demands new and creative ways of approaching the land issue and its ownership. I certainly cannot see an MDC government stripping resettled peasant farmers of their land and handing it over to the former white farmers. This would amount to political suicide and the MDC would never live down the accusation of being a “British Puppet.”
LUANDA, THE ANGOLAN CAPITAL, is witnessing rapid infrastructural development, with modern, flashy buildings springing up everywhere. The development of the Marginal on the seafront is very attractive and impressive.

While the development of Angola’s infrastructure is positive and should continue, there are questions about the quality and sustainability of this infrastructure. An Angolan in Luanda commented:

“It is amazing how fast buildings go up. In some cases it takes two to three months and a new building is complete! I am not sure that is enough time for the cement in the foundations to dry. Some of the roads have just collapsed and they actually feel like you are driving on a roller-coaster: up-down, up-down. The hospital in central Luanda which was built less than 10 years ago had to be closed down because it was falling apart! The infrastructure is also being built on an old sewage system that has not been upgraded.”

This rapid infrastructural development should provide the perfect opportunity to create employment for and develop skills among the largely unemployed Angolan youth population. The demand for architects, managers, technicians all the way through to skilled, semi-skilled workers and apprentices is high. However, the government is not investing to provide these opportunities for ordinary Angolans as the gap between the rich and the poor increases. Instead, it is importing almost all the skills needed, including manual labour. This has resulted in “reverse” migration, with mass immigration into Angola by large numbers of Portuguese and Chinese citizens, among others, who are entering the market partly in response to the international economic crisis.

The Kilamba Kaxi (City of the Future) housing complex in greater Luanda is another clear example of Angolans being left behind. This complex has cost an estimated US $3.5 billion to develop and was intended to house over 120,000 people. However, the complex has remained empty because ordinary Angolans cannot afford to buy an apartment there, since there is no access to housing loans. With monthly rents of US $4,000, not many Angolans can afford to lease them either. So while the future is “literally” being built, the Angolans are unable to be part of that future. There is a serious shortage of housing and yet these apartments remain empty. If they are not occupied soon, they will start to deteriorate and that will be another waste of money and resources. Several MPLA members and senior civil servants were awarded houses there prior to and after the recent elections. However, many of them already have houses, and just across the road there are informal settlements where people live in extreme poverty.
WHEN VISITING NAI’s new premises in the Uppsala Botanical Gardens for the first time in October 2012, I admired the magnificent view from the building’s huge windows. All the shades of autumnal orange and yellow foliage in the surrounding trees were like nature’s skilful art. During my second visit in early December, the snow had fallen and the all-white scenery looked so typical of a Nordic winter. The outside picture so well portrayed the physical location of the Africa Institute, while inside the building one could sense the warm beat of Africa in the decorations, art and library collections, and in the focus of the scholarly activity. What could better describe the nature of NAI: its body wrapped in the Nordic climate and its heart filled with passion for and interest in Africa?

THE PROGRAMME AND RESEARCH COUNCIL operates as a supervisory council and as an advisory council for the institute. The members of the council represent various stakeholders – Nordic government officials and aid experts, the academic community and the institute’s staff. All of them come together normally twice a year to discuss and give an opinion on the institute’s functions and management. The council through its very structure already serves as a unique multi-stakeholder discussion forum for many, most of whose normal working hours are spent among their own kind: policymakers with other policymakers, researchers among their academic peers. The council does not have an easy task at the best of times, and this year, we have not made it any easier for ourselves: we have frequently debated the very fundamentals of the institute’s 50 year existence.

IN THIS NEW development era of obsession with results and relevance, NAI has also pondered the question of why it exists. What purpose does it serve and what results does it produce? What is the relevance of its work? The 50th anniversary book authored by Michael Ståhl well describes how this question of relevance has arisen throughout its existence – but from different angles and with different meanings.

IT IS FAIR to say that with the recent revival of a “Nordic” dimension in international cooperation, NAI should proudly recognise its unique relevance in embodying the Nordic cooperation in scholarship and research. A research institute can best function as a network of people from different professional backgrounds and with various motivations for acquiring knowledge who come together to share common interests, but also productive differences. I look forward to the recommendations from NAI’s organisational review and hope these will advise the council’s members how to best strengthen this core role.

Iina Soiri
Director of the Nordic Africa Institute
(from March 2013)
AFRICAN CONFLICTS AND INFORMAL POWER. Big Men and Networks
EDITED BY MATS UTAS

In the aftermath of an armed conflict in Africa, the international community both produces and demands from local partners a variety of blueprints for reconstrcuting state and society. The aim is to re-formalize the state after what is viewed as a period of fragmentation. In reality, African economies and politics are very much informal in character, with informal actors, including so-called Big Men, often using their positions in the formal structure as a means to reach their own goals. Through a variety of in-depth case studies, including the DRC, Sierra Leone and Liberia, African Conflicts and Informal Power shows how important informal political and economic networks are in many of the continent’s conflict areas. Moreover, it demonstrates that without a proper understanding of the impact of these networks, attempts to formalize African states, particularly those emerging from wars, will be in vain.

ZIMBABWE’S FAST TRACK LAND REFORM
PROSPER B. MATONDY

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe has emerged as a highly contested reform process both nationally and internationally. The image of it has all too often been that of the widespread displacement and subsequent replacement of various people, agricultural-related production systems, facets and processes. The reality, however, is altogether more complex.

Providing new, in-depth and much-needed empirical research, Zimbabwe’s Fast Track Land Reform examines how processes such as land acquisition, allocation, transitional production outcomes, social life, gender and tenure, have influenced and been influenced by the forces driving the programme. It also explores the ways in which the land reform programme has created a new agrarian structure based on small- to medium-scale farmers. In attempting to resolve the problematic issues the reforms have raised, the author argues that it is this new agrarian formation which provides the greatest scope for improving Zimbabwe’s agriculture and development.

Based on a broader geographical scope than any previous study carried out on the subject, this is a landmark work on a subject of considerable controversy.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AS A WEAPON OF WAR?
Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond
MARIA ERIKSSON BAAZ AND MARIA STERN

All too often in conflict situations, rape is referred to as a ‘weapon of war’ – a term presented as self-explanatory through its implied storyline of gender and war. In this provocative but much-needed book, Eriksson Baaaz and Stern challenge the dominant understandings of sexual violence in contexts and post-conflict settings.

Reading with and against feminist analyses of the interconnections between gender, war, violence, and militarization, the authors address many of the thorny issues inherent in the ‘arrival’ of sexual violence on the global security agenda.

Based on original fieldwork in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as research material from other conflict zones, Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War? challenges the recent prominence given to sexual violence, bravely highlighting various problems with isolating sexual violence from other violence in war.

A much-anticipated book by two acknowledged experts in the field, on an issue that has become an increasingly important security, legal and gender topic.

MONOGRAPHS

RESEARCHING AFRICA
From Individual efforts to structured programmes
MICHAEL STÅHL

The Nordic Africa Institute started on a modest scale back in 1962 by awarding three travel grants to young Nordic scholars with an interest in Africa. Fifty years later, the institute has become an internationally renowned centre of research, documentation, publishing and networking. By coordinating coherent programmes spanning multiple research areas and several sub-topics, NAI has helped to strengthen capacity among young academics in Nordic countries by providing travel grants for field research and an academic platform for communicating and discussing research findings. NAI has thus been a key catalyst in social science research on Africa.

In this publication, Michael Ståhl contextualises, reviews and reflects on five innovative research programmes undertaken at NAI from the late 1980s into the 1990s. Through these thematic, collaborative programmes, NAI complemented its already established support for individual academic projects. In order to place the five programmes in larger context, brief accounts of the earlier research support provided by NAI are given as an overview of the subsequent research profile and administration of NAI up to 2012.

BETWEEN MILITARISM AND TECHNOCRATIC GOVERNANCE
State Formation in Contemporary Uganda
ANDERS SÖGREN

CO-PUBLISHED WITH FOUNTAIN PUBLISHERS

State-civil society relations in Africa have during recent decades been transformed in the context of economic liberalisation and state reform. This study explores state-civil society relations in contemporary Uganda, from 1986 to the present, in order to illustrate and explain the scope for and capacity of different social forces to create access to and democratise the state. The study interrogates state-civil society relations under the incumbent National Resistance Movement government as these are expressed through forms of interest representation and conflict regulation in different political arenas. It analyses this problem through an empirical study of the health sector at both national and local levels.

Changes in the health regime – the rules and practices that regulate health politics – are analysed by a historical reconstruction of how different health regimes evolved from demands from social forces on the colonial and post-colonial state, in relation to broader patterns of political change. The ruling political coalition from 1986 has promoted a model for capitalist development based on donor-driven economic growth, institutional reform and political monopoly – what is referred to in the study as technocratic governance.

Throughout, however, the technocratic tendency has been shaped in relation to the political economy of militarism as a more
openly repressive form of authoritarian rule. The study argues that limits to democratisation of statesociety relations within the health sector and of Ugandan politics at large are best explained by relations of domination in society, within the state and among external political forces. The main conclusion is that democratisation of the state has been resisted by ruling groups, and therefore restricted.

THE HORN OF AFRICA
Intra-State and Inter-State Conflicts and Security
EDITED BY REDIE BERKEKTEAB
CO-PUBLISHED WITH PLUTO PRESS
The Horn of Africa, comprising Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia, is the most conflict-ridden region in Africa. This book explores the origins and impact of these conflicts at both an intra-state and inter-state level and the insecurity they create. The contributors show how regional and international interventions have compounded preexisting tensions and have been driven by competing national interests linked to Western intervention and acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia. This book outlines proposals for multidimensional mechanisms for conflict resolution in the region. Issues of border demarcation, democratic deficit, crises of nation and state building, and the roles of political actors and traditional authorities are all clearly analysed.

CURRENT AFRICAN ISSUES
This series aims to address topical issues in and about Africa by providing in-depth research-based analysis relevant for Africa and for the global community. This is an occasional peer-reviewed series, which is endorsed internally and reviewed externally.

49. TERJE OESTIGAARD
WATER SCARCITY AND FOOD SECURITY ALONG THE NILE
Politics, population increase and climate change

50. DAVID ROSS OLANYA
FROM GLOBAL LAND GRABBING FOR BIO-FUELS EXPANSION TO ACCESS ACQUISITIONS OF AFRICAN WATER FOR COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

POLICY NOTES
Aimed at professionals working within aid agencies, ministries of foreign affairs, NGOs and the media, these reports aim to inform public debate and to generate input into the sphere of policymaking. Most of the authors are connected to NAI or its research networks.

1. ONYANTA ADAMA
PRIVATEZING SERVICES AS IF PEOPLE MATTER: Solid waste management in Abuja, Nigeria

2. ELDRIDGE ADOLFO
ANGOLA’S SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND REGIONAL ROLE BEYOND THE ELECTIONS

3. ELDRIDGE ADOLFO
ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

4. MATS UTAS
URBAN YOUTH AND POST-CONFLICT AFRICA On Policy Priorities

5. REDIE BERKEKTEAB
SELF-DETERMINATION AND SECESSION A 21st Century Challenge to the Post-colonial State in Africa

POLICY DIALOGUE
This is a series of short reports on policy issues relevant to Africa today intended to inform public debate and to generate input into policymaking. Most of the authors are connected to NAI or its research networks. The reports are internally endorsed and externally reviewed.

6. LOUISA VOGIAZIDES, “LEGAL EMPOWERMENT OF THE POOR" VERSUS “RIGHT TO THE CITY" Implications for access to housing in urban Africa

7. ANTI VAINIO,
MARKET-BASED AND RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES TO THE INFORMAL ECONOMY
A comparative analysis of the policy implications

8. LINNÉA GELOT,
“GENDER AND STIR" Reflections on gender and SSR in the aftermath of African conflicts

DISCUSSION PAPER
NAI Discussion Papers present work in progress, such as new ideas and interim results from NAI research on Africa, and are circulated to stimulate discussion and critical comment. Endorsed and reviewed internally.

71. WALE ADEBANWI
GLOBALLY ORIENTED CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE Interrogating Nigeria’s Technical Aid Corps Scheme

72. GÖRAN HOLMQVIST
INEQUALITY AND IDENTITY Causes of war?

73. IKE OKONTA
BIAFRAN GHOSTS The MASSOB Ethnic Militia and Nigeria’s Democratisation Process

74. LI ANSHAN FL.
FOCAC TEN YEARS LATER Achievements, Challenges, and the Way Forward

OPEN ACCESS AND DIVA
Many publications from NAI are downloadable for free from the DIVA archive.
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This is a summary of the expenditures report from the NAI Annual Audit Report to the Swedish Government. The full Audit Report (in Swedish only) is a public document and can be downloaded from the NAI website ("About Us" -> "Organisation" -> "Reports").

### EXTERNAL FUNDING

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<td>Navigating between big man politics and democratisation: local perceptions and individual agency in processes of electoral violence. Conflict Cluster.</td>
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<td>The informal realities of peace-building – military networks and former mid-level commanders in post-war Liberia. Conflict Cluster.</td>
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<td>Urban imaginaries and socio-economic exclusion. Urban Cluster.</td>
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<td>Large scale agro investments in Tanzania – Impacts on small-holderland and food access. Agrarian Cluster.</td>
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Much waste never reaches disposal sites. However, informal actors help cities in the South recycle this waste.

Without their work, the city would drown in garbage.

Hard work, but no kudos

Johan Sävström

South recycle this waste.

However, informal actors help cities in the South recycle this waste.

Choosing the wrong development path can have devastating consequences. Research into development issues is necessary for understanding the realities on the ground and for sound decision-making.

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OUR VISION
African people shaping their own destiny

OUR GOALS
Research of high quality
Equality in determining the research agenda
An impact on policy

The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) is a center for research, documentation and information on modern Africa in the Nordic region. The institute is dedicated to providing timely, critical and alternative research and analysis of Africa, and is financed jointly by the Nordic countries.

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