

## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND ABSTRACTS**

### **PANEL 1 QUO VADIS AFRICA? POWER AND STATE 50 YEARS AFTER**

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**Petr Skalnik**

University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

E-mail: [petr.skalnik@upce.cz](mailto:petr.skalnik@upce.cz)

#### **The Power of the Powerless in Africa**

The paper will address the question about how much power have those Africans who nominally have little or no power. On the one hand the autochthonous populations have often been overpowered by immigrant conquerors already during the pre-colonial times, nevertheless they managed to work out complementary arrangements according to which the people endowed with coercive mechanisms agreed to respect the invisible world of autochthonous deities believed to command supernatural sanctions. While the religious factor has continued to exert influence and even enhance it during colonial and post-colonial eras, other techniques have been developed which give the powerless new space in which to realize their potential to influence or even undermine the powerholders in Africa. Present-day African political culture contains the elements of consensus politics, religious politics, party politics and direct democracy of the masses. The paper will bring in comparative data about various African polities that have displayed different degrees of inequality between the powerful and powerless.

**Ruth Mauri**

University of Torino, Italy

E-mail: [ceskaruth@yahoo.it](mailto:ceskaruth@yahoo.it)

#### **From Powerlessness to Power and Back: Power Practices during the Sékou Touré Regime in Guinea.**

How does the national leader and his opponents exercise power inside and outside the national borders? How do these practices tackle with local political cultures and how does the conception of 'sacred power' changes with them?

**Aleksi Ylönen**

African Studies Group, Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain

E-mail: [aeylonen@hotmail.com](mailto:aeylonen@hotmail.com)

#### **Beyond Marginalisation and Exclusion: Nation-Building in Southern Sudan**

The contemporary state and governing elite in Sudan are products of particular historical processes. A number of studies have highlighted power and powerlessness between the governing elite in the centre and the regional elites in the Sudanese periphery. It has been argued that the particular socio-culturally defined marginalising power relations are behind the persisting political dynamics propelling opposition, instability and insurgencies in the periphery. However, regional dynamics of ethnic relations, political authority and conflict within peripheral Sudan have received less attention. This is especially relevant in southern Sudan, which since the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) has been ruled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) dominated autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS). Since the formal cessation of hostilities in 2005, localised ethnic violence has persisted in many parts of southern Sudan. This is not only related to the established violent economic practices, but also political authority and ethnic relations, with the GOSS engaging in nation-building around the formal and informal SPLM/A hegemony, viewing on a possibility to establish an independent state through a 2011 referendum of self-determination stipulated in the CPA. This paper begins by describing the narrow base of political and economic power in Sudan since independence maintained through marginalisation and exclusion of periphery and non-Arab Muslim social groups. It then examines the dynamics of political power relations within

southern Sudan in the wider context of the Sudanese state. The paper highlights the dominant role of the SPLM/A in the current process of peace implementation and nation-building, and underlines dynamics arising from this in southern Sudan. It finds that the pattern of narrow concentration of political and economic power at the national scale has similarities with the situation prevailing within southern Sudan, which calls for increasing participation in regional governance for more equitable power and resource sharing.

**Loránd Szabó**

Africa Research Centre, University of Pécs, Hungary

E-mail: [szabo@btk.pte.hu](mailto:szabo@btk.pte.hu)

### **Failed States – Successful Elites? Comparative Study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s and Somalia’s Ruling Groups**

The former Zaire under the dictatorship of the late Mobutu became one of the “exemplary” cases of the African kleptocracy. Its members had pretty various origins. The country became one of the poorest of the continent. After the turmoil created by the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the rule of the “Leopard” has collapsed, and from 1997, new forces seized the power, then the “First World War of Africa” broke out. It seems that in part those new forces had to share the power with their supporters among of which we can discover the members of the old “establishment”. What is more, the new forces show oddly familiar faces from the Zairian past. Somalia could “boast” of her emblematic image as the first failed State of Africa immediately after the end of the Cold War with the failure of the American-led intervention. The already poor country has plunged into a slow disintegration, the total dysfunction of the central government, a war of secessions between different clans and warlords often acting as proxies for the neighbouring Ethiopia and Eritrea. Nowadays, the boom of poor pirates raking in huge ransoms is propelling the country’s name to the cover page of tabloids. Two war-torn countries, one dominantly Christian, the other Muslim, having histories not directly interconnected, do their elites have something in common? If they do, why? What are their differences and why? What is their attitude towards the poor of their respective country? These issues are intended to be discussed by the lecture.

**Alemayehu Kumsa**

Institute of Ethnology, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

E-mail: [Kumsa@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:Kumsa@ff.cuni.cz)

### **The role of various forms of social power in historical development of society**

Social power manifests itself in different societies in various ways. Human beings starting living in bands as gatherers and hunters through agricultural, industrial and contemporary “post industrial” society led by some form of leadership. Power is every where in the development of human history in different levels according to the progress of the society. Social power is the ability to exercise one’s will over others and authority is socially approved power. In this paper my aim is to approach the topic from interdisciplinary way to combine Anthropology and Sociology of power to outline the functions of social power in the so called traditional and modern society. My combination of theories of these two social science branches is to break the barrier between them and in my view there is no pure traditional society in contemporary Globalizing world. My approach to social power will be divided into four sub-group like ideology/religion, economic, military and political power. I will outline the function of social power starting from band to the contemporary society led by Global power elite.

**Petr Janský**

Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

E-mail: [jansky.peta@gmail.com](mailto:jansky.peta@gmail.com)

### **Power Trends in Africa**

Fifty years since the memorable Year of Africa is a good opportunity to look back and attempt to evaluate the power trends since the many African countries’ independence. We challenge the notion that the distribution of power and powerlessness seems to be more rigid than on other continents using the latest comparable statistics for African nations and the rest of the world. We show that Africa is not the worst in comparison to other continents in all the dimensions and this definitely does not hold

for some of the African countries. With detailed statistics on variables such as political system, individual freedoms and political activities, women quota in parliaments, corruption victimisation, freedom of press, and other, we draw a complex picture of power and powerlessness trends in Africa which immensely differ across the national states, political systems, power dimensions and time. On top of using the standard datasets and surveys from institutions such as the World Bank and United Nations, we innovatively employ the detailed statistics and unique survey data from Gallup WorldView, Global Database of Quotas for Women, International Crime Victims Survey, Transparency International, Democracy-Dictatorship, Freedom of the Press by the Freedom House, Freedom of the Press by Reporters without Borders. Our conclusion on the basis of the data analysed is rather positive for the development of the African continent: in terms of political power and freedoms, Africa emerges as a heterogeneous continent that is overall converging to the developed world.

## **PANEL 2**

### **DEVELOPMENT, URBANISATION, MIGRATION**

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**Vanessa Wijngaarden**

Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies, Hoofddorp, The Netherlands

E-mail: [vanessa.wijngaarden@gmail.com](mailto:vanessa.wijngaarden@gmail.com)

#### **The Power behind Representations. The World Bank and African Poverty Reduction from 1970-2000.**

Sub-Saharan Africa is by far the poorest region in the world. As the World Bank's mission is to reduce global poverty, it has been heavily involved in the continent. From the 1970s up till the new millennium, Africa has however impoverished substantially. The World Bank has teleologically equalled poverty to lack of development to lack of modernity. To veil and explain its lack of success it produced a new representation of Africa every decennium. Implicitly pointing towards historical stereotypes of Africans as (ig)noble savages, it has depicted the continent as a child (1970s), a patient (1980s) and a criminal (1990s). The region was continually represented by outsiders and never by African people, and Africa's need for help was stressed constantly. The central idea was that Africans need to be acted *upon* to make them pursue their goals or to make them responsible. Analysing the World Bank's history, its (often hidden) structure and workings in combination with its discourse on Africa in 'turning point' speeches, reports and interviews, makes clear that the institution ideologically legitimates and supports the continuity of the fundamental division of wealth and power already in place. As an intellectual as well as a financial complex, it uses the language of development and humanitarianism that is often used to depoliticize political issues. The discourse of poverty reduction consists of seemingly universalist principles and common interests, but is actually favourable to those in power, because it implicitly legitimates the norms of the existing world order. The alleviation of poverty is a moral mission undertaken by the rich countries, who have allied themselves with Third World elites. This mission justifies and even strengthens positions of the powerful, while at the same time keeping ideas of global redistribution under control. The representation of Africa is an important tool in this process.

**Dalene M. Swanson**

Faculties of Education, Universities of British Columbia and Alberta, Canada

E-mail: [dalene@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:dalene@interchange.ubc.ca)

**Beyond Deficit and Disadvantage: Indigeneity and the Problem of the Development Paradigm**  
Predominant discourses on Africa suggest that to construct Africa as a "success story" or in terms of "progress" is to canalize understandings of "what Africa needs" or how it can be "fixed", which locate discourses that capitulate to a narrow economic development model. Other alternative perspectives have been rendered absent and unavailable within the current global neoliberal and imperial spread. A

“successful” future for this continent is foreclosed in terms of the ‘rightness’ of Western (and now also Asian) economic investments and capitalist relations of production. Even, or mostly, humanitarian efforts on the African continent have been plagued by external visions of what is relevant for Africa and its people. The recent humanitarian effort in Haiti that very quickly became a US military and capitalist occupation of the country is a very visible and immediate example of an iteration of empire that similarly and substantially has affected the African continent and contributed to its violent colonial and post-colonial history.

In this paper, I will draw on my research in sub-Saharan Africa in a mathematics education context from a cultural studies perspective to discuss the circulation of discourses in the social domain that enable or limit possibilities for learners of mathematics, especially those from ‘impoverished’ communities, and examine the mathematics classroom as a site of struggle between competing discourses that perpetuate or resist deficit models and the “construction of disadvantage.” From this viewpoint, I will discuss hegemonic practices and limitations in educational settings, and how the development paradigm influences what is and is not possible for African students, especially in the sciences. Discussion will follow on African indigeneity, especially Ubuntu as an African philosophy and its take-up in the nation-building context of post-apartheid South Africa, to examine the problem of Western imperial modes of operation, what forms of resistance are and can become available, in what social spheres, and through deploying which social domain discourses.

**István Tarrósy**

Department of Political Studies, Africa Research Centre, University of Pécs, Hungary  
E-mail: [tarrosy@btk.pte.hu](mailto:tarrosy@btk.pte.hu)

### **Afro-Asian Relations and the New Type of Competition Generated in Global Politics Comparing China, India and Japan: Traditions, Attitudes, Strategies**

Increased Asian presence on African soil has become an issue in global politics, as long as the different types of attitude – for instance, in communication, persuasion (or rather manipulation) and collaboration – make African elites react in a different way. If we think of China’s non-interference and ‘non-pressurizing’ policy on the one hand, but its heavy focus on expressing mutual gains as partners in trade with Africa on the other hand, this approach is a true challenger for the European Union and the United States. A new type of competition (scramble?) for Africa among the major actors of the international scene has evolved.

Certainly, motivations, intentions, strategies differ in terms of establishing or managing partnerships with African states. The paper will investigate traditional ties and long-term thinking from the Asian side, comparing the differences in attitudes towards Africa among some of the main Asian powers, i.e. China, India and Japan. At the same time it will point out that strategic thinking is missing on the African side as for how to handle the new type of competition for their local/national/regional assets, and what to gain from partnerships in the long run. Naturally, in this context the problem of fragile or failed states must also be taken into account, therefore, the analysis will touch upon the political and economic limitations of African actors – together with all the criticism that can be echoed about the “new” elites and their power relations responsible partly for the state of Africa today.

**Geoffrey I Nwaka**

Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria  
E-mail: [geoffreynwaka@yahoo.com](mailto:geoffreynwaka@yahoo.com)

### **The Urban Poor, the Informal Sector and the Right to the City in Nigeria.**

Poverty and rapid urbanization are two of the greatest challenges facing Africa today. Many analysts have observed in post colonial Africa a new process of urbanization unleashed by the masses of relatively low income migrants who have flocked into the cities since independence, and are seeking to solve their problems of accommodation and employment informally, and on their own terms...; the urban poor are dominant, and in most cases are transforming the city to meet their needs, often in conflict with official laws and plans. UN-Habitat estimates that sub-Saharan African cities have over

166 million slum dwellers, most of who work in the informal sector where they simply do not earn enough to afford decent shelter and services. To survive, most townspeople maintain close ties with their rural communities, and engage in extensive urban agriculture. Although some elite neighborhoods enjoy relatively high quality housing and residential environment, basic amenities lag behind population growth in vast areas of the cities. Unlike the historical experience of Europe and North America where cities and national populations grew slowly, over the centuries, allowing sufficient time for the institutions and structures for urban management to develop apace, the rapid rate of city growth in Africa is occurring in the context of widespread poverty, with little industrialization to provide jobs, and ahead of the development of the requisite capacity and institutions for managing and providing adequately for townspeople.

The paper examines how urban poverty and the informal city have developed in Nigeria and other African countries since the colonial period, the extent to which government policies have helped or constrained the poor, and how poverty which leads to slum conditions can be alleviated and reversed in order to reduce social tensions and worsening disparities in access to basic urban services. The paper also considers how housing and planning codes, standards and regulations inherited from the discriminatory policies and segregationist practices of the colonial period have continued to inhibit the access of the poor to affordable land and housing security; how the laws and regulations for planning and development should now be reviewed to make them more realistic, flexible and compatible with local conditions. It argues that to achieve sustainable urbanization in Africa greater priority should be given to the health and development concerns of the poor. It draws insights from the human settlements dimension of Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda, ILO's Decent Work Agenda, WHO's Healthy Cities Programme, the NEPAD Cities Programme, and other recent global initiatives which provide guidance on how state and local authorities, the private sector and civil society organization, the international development community and the urban poor themselves should collaborate to build cities that are safe, productive, inclusive and socially sustainable.

**Reinhilde Sotiria Konig**

Amsterdam School of Social Science, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

E-mail: [R.Konig@uva.nl](mailto:R.Konig@uva.nl)

### **Beyond the Promises of the Returning Migrants – the Power of the Myth in the Congolese Political Diasporas**

Since 1996 the political power in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been highly influenced by individuals coming from abroad, living in exile or in the diasporas. The DRC is an example for power relations shaped and moulded outside of the former home country. What does this influence mean for the political stability and political institutions? How a diaspora does take part in a political process? In my paper I concentrate on a moment in Congolese history when power had been shifted by forces outside of the country and would like to participate in the discussion about political diasporas and their impact on their 'homeland' in a transnational world.

Diasporas have their positive and negative impact on politics in their former homelands; there is always a flipside to the prosperous diaspora who sends revenues and knowledge back home. This paper focuses on the mythology of power when one is going abroad and comes back. A cosmopolitan returnee was more welcomed than a local who never went away in the days of relocations of power in '96 and '98. This phenomenon of having been away and gaining power is important to study in a highly mobile and transnational world and more and more Congolese leaving the country.

How did the African diasporas shape the political landscape of the country of departure in the late 20th century and what is to be learned by a comparative approach with other political diasporas redefining and engaging in power relations of the 'homeland'. How do the European Congolese diasporas influence the political institutions in Congo-Kinshasa? In 1996 and 1998 it seemed a dangerous endeavour that returnees were taking over institutions and redefining power in a moment of Congolese history when belonging was on a stake. A comic strip is the material of which upon my analytical thinking will be based. A strip in which the artist – Kojele Makani - draw on experience and expectations of his homeland. Why has someone who has been abroad more chance to get a better job than someone who stays at home and what happens if power is only given to the go getters? The comic strip reveals the social and cultural mechanisms of political play in the Democratic Republic

of Congo in the late twentieth century which ultimately led to what has been titled ‘the first African world war’.

### **PANEL 3**

#### **CULTURE, LITERATURE, LANGUAGE AND POWER**

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**Alena Rettová**

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK.

E-mail: [ar42@soas.ac.uk](mailto:ar42@soas.ac.uk)

#### **The Philosophy of the Powerless: The Straying Ways of Philosophical Thought in Africa**

The paper looks at the possibilities of expressing philosophical thought in a situation where the "normal" channel of philosophical expression (that is, academic publications) is blocked. While the theoretical model outlined in the paper applies to a number of cultural contexts worldwide, and comparative evidence will be drawn from Eastern Europe under the Soviet domination, for most of Sub-Saharan Africa the ongoing subjection to such conditions is undeniable. We recognize here that it is the "West" which sets these norms and which is also the source of the requirement to find philosophy in African cultures, and we critically examine the legitimacy of such a requirement. This "normal channel", then, may be blocked due to various conditions: due to totalitarian political regimes that take over and utilize official channels of theoretical expression for their propaganda, due to the hegemony of imported Europhone discourses, or due to the absence of traditions of scholarly philosophy in local cultures. The paper suggests alternative ways of expressing philosophical thought and analyzes closely several selected examples of these, with a focus on the Swahili-speaking areas of Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Philosophy developed through such channels tends to be ignored or disregarded by mainstream philosophers, be they Western or African, a situation which contributes to the low esteem and self-esteem of the affected cultures in the arena of world philosophy. Yet, as the paper argues, it is these overlooked pathways of philosophical expression that represent the philosophical potential of Africa, and their full vindication is an imminent task facing African and Africanist researchers in the domain of philosophy.

**Gert Maree**

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of South Africa

E-mail: [Mareegh@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Mareegh@unisa.ac.za)

#### **Voicing the Voiceless: the song “Umshini Wami” (My Machine Gun) as Discursive Site in Contemporary South African Politics.**

Although theorists generally agree that performance provides a discourse about society and the relationships between individuals and groups in society, they do not agree on how one should “read” performances, nor on what performance-centred research should regard as its subject matter. One of the major sources of discontent has been the continued foregrounding of the texts of performances, i.e. symbolic expressions such as writing and the lyrics of songs, at the cost of embodied experience, and consequently its diminishment of the embeddedness of texts in their broader socio-historical contexts and capacity of performance itself to influence or constitute the socio-cultural world of the performers and audiences. In particular, scholars, despite a wide acknowledgement of the presence of voice, sound and body “as powerful, instable signs at work” in the shaping and operation of the public sphere (see Gunner 2009:28), still fall short of adequately delineating how the somatic and other non-verbal elements of performance enable diverse and often marginalised publics to seize the power to participate in national debates and influence the flow of transformation in the body politic.

In the context of these theoretical debates, my presentation will attempt to uncover multiple messages emanating from the performance of the liberation struggle song, Umshini Wami, which recently has gained prominence as the signature song of Jacob Zuma, the President of South Africa, due to its performance in varying contexts such as his court trails and associated succession struggle with Thabo Mbeki for the office of President of the African National Congress, the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa and amidst a public outcry against polygamy, at his recent wedding. In particular, an attempt will be made to illustrate how an analysis of the somatic and other non-verbal

elements of its performance enhances an understanding of the song as a discursive presence within the public sphere.

**Sihawukele Ngubane**

School of IsiZulu, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

E-mail: [Ngubanes@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Ngubanes@ukzn.ac.za)

### **Language and Nation-Building in South Africa**

Language forms part of three dimensions in nation building. Besides culture and language, politics is one of the major influences of how the nation should develop in terms of social cohesion. Apartheid divided ethnic groups into small pockets through languages that they speak. All indigenous languages were then silenced at the expense of the two official languages that were recognized and developed. People who do not speak the two languages were discriminated and considered as primitive and uneducated. That situation forced people speaking languages other than the official languages find themselves left out. Amongst people who speak indigenous languages there was a further division since some languages such as Se Sotho and the Nguni group are not mutually intelligible. There were unfilled gaps in communication which resulted in English being used for communication across different ethnic groups. The new democratic government is committed to a policy of multilingualism with the intention to promote the previously marginalized languages. After fifteen years of democracy, there are challenges faced by South Africa in developing these languages and bringing people of diverse cultures as a United Front. The paper examines the impact of the change in power in South Africa to bringing people together or setting them apart through their identity. It will look into the language policy and its implementation for the past fifteen years. It answers the question whether language is a discursive construct in uniting South Africans as a single nation. Lastly, the paper will investigate the problem of the perpetual usage of English in almost all spheres of life in the post-apartheid South Africa in the quest of seeking tolerance amongst different language speakers.

**Stephanie Rudwick**

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

E-mail: [rudwicks@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:rudwicks@ukzn.ac.za)

### **English Power Dynamics in Post-apartheid South Africa**

In contemporary South Africa, English remains the 'only' language of power and is the one linguistic medium that is associated with upward mobility and privilege. While the hegemony of the English language in South Africa has been discussed extensively in sociolinguistic literature, qualitative empirical research on the correlation between the restricted access to this language and power dynamics remains scarce. This paper aims to fill this paucity by presenting data collected in the province of KwaZulu-Natal during February 2002 and 2007. Lengthy interviews with teachers and learners, as well as participant observation in classrooms and staff buildings of three, so-called 'previously disadvantaged' schools located in the Umlazi Township, provide the data for the research methodology and analysis. This paper focuses specifically on whether, how and what kind of English isiZulu-speaking South Africans teach and learn in these three official English medium secondary schools, which remain under-resourced and disadvantaged. By relying on Bourdieu's social analysis and by understanding language as a socio-historical phenomenon, which encodes social values and hierarchies, we interpret the data and argue that little has changed for many township school learners since the new democratic dispensation. A societal and political system, which claims to be equitable, such as South Africa, must be based on people having equal access to the linguistic resources associated with power. We argue, however, that the South African state, fails to provide adequate access to 'good' English for the majority of African language speakers. The result is that a large number of South Africans are disempowered because their access to the language of power is severely restricted. Comparative considerations as regards other states of sub-Saharan Africa conclude this paper.

**Carine Zaayman**

University of Cape Town, South Africa

E-mail: [Carine.Zaayman@uct.ac.za](mailto:Carine.Zaayman@uct.ac.za)

### **A Storm in the Archive: Approaching the Ghostly Figure of Krotoa in South African Colonial History**

The proposed paper concerns a seminal yet complex figure in the colonial history of South Africa, namely Krotoa (c.1642 – 1674). Krotoa was one of the Goringhaicona, a subset of the Khoi community.<sup>1</sup> As a young girl, she was taken into the household of Jan van Riebeeck (the first VOC governor of the Cape) shortly after his landing at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Her role in his household was varied and complex, and included domestic duties more commonly associated with a 'maid'. There is however evidence that a special relationship existed between Krotoa and the van Riebeeck family, and that they saw her as a kind of daughter. Importantly, she was employed as an interpreter for Van Riebeeck in his negotiations with the Khoi for land and in disputes concerning thefts. Krotoa (called 'Eva' by Van Riebeeck) became the first so-called indigenous woman to be baptised in the Cape, and her marriage to a Danish ship doctor was the first between a European and a Khoi at the colony. While Krotoa's life initially seem to have been made more comfortable by her association with the Dutch, after the departure of Van Riebeeck and the death of her husband, she lived increasingly on the margins of the colonial society, and was eventually imprisoned on Robben Island. Sadly, it would appear that without male protection, her 'go-between' status ultimately excluded her from acceptance in either the Dutch or Khoi communities.

In my paper I shall be tracing the ways in which Krotoa's story is represented and ideologically massaged in the present time. The vague and incomplete information on Krotoa is the result of biased colonial archival formation, but it also predicates the construction of her as heroine in the contemporary post-apartheid context, especially with reference to the in-between role she played. Contemporary theoretical reconsiderations of archives, such as those of Laura Ann Stoler will inform my argument.

**J. O. J. Nwachukwu-Agbada**

Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria

E-mail: [jojagbada@yahoo.com](mailto:jojagbada@yahoo.com)

### **Poverty and Exclusion in Nigeria: The Factor of English**

In Nigeria, English is an economic asset of sorts. This fact is always lost on the country's social and economic planners whenever they consider poverty alleviation steps and measures. Thus the writers of the story once carried by [www.rawstory.com](http://www.rawstory.com) which claims that Nigerian leaders at various levels "stole US \$ 380 billion from our treasuries between 1960 and 2006" may not have factored in English as one of the critical villains in the entire exercise of heedless looting. Suppose that the sum quoted above is exaggerated, even a quarter of the stated figure is still mind-boggling! It, however, partly explains why more than 50% of the nation's population currently lives under the poverty line in spite of more than 50 years of crude oil exploitation with its huge revenue receipts. Poverty-in-the-midst-of-plenty in the country is the handiwork of 'pen-robbery' whose main agency is the English language, it being the language of communication, business and administration, only utilized by the elite and therefore restricted in usage to a minority. This paper seeks to demonstrate how the non-acquaintance with English by the majority in Nigeria excludes them and consequently makes them powerless in the life necessities of sheltering themselves, feeding well, educating their children and providing such children with modest health care. Suggestions as what could be done to remedy the situation are equally proffered.

**Kateřina Mildnerov**

The University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic

E-mail: [k.mildnerova@seznam.cz](mailto:k.mildnerova@seznam.cz)

### **Power of the Holy Spirit. Spirit Possession and the Fluctuation of Prophet's Charismatic Authority in a *Mutumwa* Church in Lusaka.**

This paper focuses on the role of spirit possession in the process of social construction of the charismatic authority of prophets – spiritually endowed healers – of a *mutumwa* church community in

Lusaka. Mediumistic qualities represent a symbolic capital in the Zambian society. For illiterate members of society the possibility to become a prophet represents a way of raising their social prestige and acquiring the authority. To become a prophet is equally attractive for these people as to become a politician for well educated, as both positions are intrinsically linked to power. As there is no official procedure for the appointment of religious leaders within the *mutumwa* church, acquiring abilities as a spirit medium is viewed as a spiritually propelled phenomenon that has to be appreciated by other participants in the congregation as it appears. This means that if a patient after being exorcised demonstrates the loyalty to the church and a proper spiritual vigour, he has in principle bright prospects to move to a higher rank of church membership or even to become a prophet in the future. His mediumistic qualities which were before linked to the ‘uncontrolled demon possession’ are now cultivated in order to control the Holy Spirit power entering his body. As an example of fluctuating authority of a prophet Lameck Phiri will show, the social label ‘possessed by demon’ serves as social stigmatization of prophet whose popularity is on decline in the church. As the boundary between demon possession and the Holy Spirit possession is thin and permeable, its interpretation depends fully on social consensus within the community.

#### **PANEL 4**

### **POWER AND POWERLESSNESS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN HORN**

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**Nathaniel King**

Max-Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle / Saale, Germany

E-mail: [nking@eth.mpg.de](mailto:nking@eth.mpg.de)

#### **Marginal Secret Societies Performing Sierra Leone’s Youth Complex**

Youth, universally, tends to be seen and reacted to as a chronological age expression. In Sierra Leone, youth is not a transitory stage between infancy and adulthood: rather, it is social and economic inability. In my paper, I will look at how the youth concept, in Sierra Leone’s terms, is performed. Youth, in Sierra Leoneans’ lived experiences, then is an embracing of childhood, adulthood and, as counter-reasonable as it might seem, even old age. By implication, youth and adulthood are socio-economic referents. These said youth are not passive to their circumstantial youthdom; but actively striving to graduate to socio-economic adulthood. My findings show that the means to this end could be varied and creative: ranging from unobtrusive self-employment, exploiting the socio-economic-politically powerful unto youth themselves performing the State in their localities. Because of the large expanse of youth, in these defined terms, Sierra Leone’s youth are beginning to distil a source of power from their powerless. One of the most potent ways that these youth exert their social relevance is by becoming members of marginal secret societies. Since established secret societies set minimum social and economic requirements for membership, the socio-economic youth have created their own secret societies. And because of the size and functionality of this “youth membership”, socio-economically powerful Sierra Leoneans, especially politicians, are clamouring to become members of these marginal secret societies, to enable them to win elections, for example. Right from the heart of their social, economic and political powerlessness, Sierra Leone’s youth, by means of the variegation of their category and the marginal secret society phenomenon, are fashioning a numbers-based power – making the margins very fashionable and turning disadvantage to advantage.

**Katerina Werkman**

Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

E-mail: [katka.werkman@gmail.com](mailto:katka.werkman@gmail.com)

#### **Justice for Whom? The Charles Taylor Trial and the Ordinary Sierra Leoneans**

The decision on the kind of transitional justice mechanisms to be used in a post-conflict country lies usually in the hands of the powerful – the governments, the international community, the top representatives of a few civil society groups. The views on justice and reconciliation of the ordinary

people are rarely considered, the majority that bore the brunt of the violence is rarely consulted. But does the current emphasis on the international criminal justice meet the needs for justice of the common man, the poor, the powerless? The present contribution will discuss the views of ordinary Sierra Leoneans on the ongoing trial of the Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor. What do they know about the trial? What meaning does it have for them and their efforts to come to terms with the war experience? Additionally, the paper will attempt to compare the findings from Sierra Leone with research conducted on similar issues in other African post-conflict societies, for example Rwanda, Burundi, or Uganda. The discussion is based on original interviews and observation across several districts in Sierra Leone in January and February 2010 as well as on secondary sources research.

**Ndu Njoku**

Department of History and Int'l Studies, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria  
E-mail: [ndulife@yahoo.com](mailto:ndulife@yahoo.com)

### **Power and Powerlessness in Nigeria: Implications for Winning “the Niger Delta Battle”**

This paper examines the contemporary challenge, especially for multinational oil companies, of winning the battle for development in the Niger Delta through empowerment of the people of host communities, within the context of the larger role of the Nigerian state in the distribution of power and powerlessness. The paper reviews the stages in the development history of oil companies in the region, and highlights the complex links and interactions in the oil company-host community relations. It observes that, beginning from the early stages of Nigeria's post-oil boom era, wide-spread dissatisfaction among people of the Niger Delta has created in their psyche the feeling that nearby oil company installations do not symbolize "progress" or "empowerment", but the most immediate and tangible targets of attack to defeat the state for failing to become, for them, a reassuring presence. It also examines the nature of oil companies' community development thinking and official attitudes, especially with the exacerbation of tensions and ethnic political struggles as from the 1980s and the 90s. The paper situates critically the role of the Nigerian state in instigating, and in worsening the political tension in the region through its, more or less, rigid distribution of power and powerlessness. The policy dilemma, then, is how best to contain the hostile activities and political struggles of host communities (aimed at politicising the private sphere and bringing it into the public domain) without disrupting their symbiotic relationship with the oil firms. The paper suggests the need to improve the capacity of the local stakeholders, and the pursuit of the current advocacy for local empowerment through "institutional reconciliation" and partnership as a way to correct the structural and functional disconnect between informal, indigenous values and institutions rooted in host communities' development history and culture, and those mostly transplanted from outside.

**Eleonora Lvova**

The Institute of Asian and African studies (IAAS), The Moscow State Lomonosov University, Russia  
E-mail: [eleonora.lvova@gmail.com](mailto:eleonora.lvova@gmail.com)

### **The Ethiopian “Negus” a Christian Emperor or a Traditional Ruler?**

Ethiopia is considered as the Christian land since 4 century A. D. Each Ethiopian emperor (till 1974) believed himself the Christian leader. They created churches and monasteries, were very close to religious leaders, wrote Christian hymns, had connections with priests of Egypt, Byzantium, Cyprus, Armenia etc. But at the same time we can see a lot of cultural elements which demonstrate the similarity of their authority with traditional African rulers' one. They were sacred persons with many taboos, they had their harems, they had specific African symbols of their powers (and these symbols – drums, axes and so on were sacred too). Their authority was limited by counsels of their honoured men and by women-co-rulers. Some of these features were conserving even in XX centuries

**Kateřina Rudincová**  
University of Ostrava, Czech Republic  
E-mail: [KRudincova@seznam.cz](mailto:KRudincova@seznam.cz)

### **Power and Powerlessness in Somalia: Ethiopian Involvement and Transitional Federal Government**

Twenty years after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in Somalia, the political situation in the country remains violent and unpredictable. Many external influences and interests shape the political reality in Somalia. This presentation will focus on Ethiopia as a dominant player in the region and the variety of instruments it uses towards Somalia and Somalis to achieve its national interests. This includes direct military intervention of the Ethiopian army as well as diplomatic activities in the international organizations such as AU and IGAD. Ethiopia also played significant role in the Somali peace process (various national reconciliation conferences) and in establishment of the Somali transitional governments. Ethiopia is considered by Somalis as threat to their national independence. This makes the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), backed by Ethiopia and Western countries, chronically powerless and instable. This government was hardly perceived to be anything more than ordinary military faction (with President Cabdullaahi Yuusuf Axmed as another „warlord“) by Somalis themselves and hardly preserved any considerable sympathy of the world community as well. Although situation is different today, TFG still does not represent real power in the country, which is divided between much more powerful militias. It seems that Ethiopia favours weak government in Somalia (with regards to significant Somali minority in Ogaden and traditional rivalry in the region), or maybe Zenawi's regime just does not realize that its patronage is automatically compromising Somali government in the eyes of Somalis and prevents it from gaining more power and authority.

## **PANEL 5 SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN AFRICA**

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**Albert Kasanda**  
Centre for African studies and Intercultural Research, Brusells Belgium  
E-mail: [albertkasanda@hotmail.com](mailto:albertkasanda@hotmail.com)

### **African Women and Politics**

The geostrategic restructuring of the world following the fall of the curtain's iron tolled the kneel of African dictatorships and most of regimes inherited from colonization. This event allowed also the advent of a new political era for African countries: the rising of new political leadership, the search for good governance and democracy. Muzzled for years, African people stood up as one man and carried out their claiming for freedom, human rights and dignity. Many African women constituted the spear-head of this search for change in Africa. They were committed through different structures, such as new political parties, social movements and civil society organizations. They fought and they are still fighting not only against unjust political regimes but also against a number of African traditions that consider them to be not worthy of public responsibilities as well as unable to assume political leadership or to rule a country.

Almost twenty years of after this African “political renaissance”, particularly on the eve of the fiftieth African independencies celebration, it seems advisable that we can make a short statement of the struggle of African women for their political visibility and participation. Our purpose consists of exploring the evolution of African cultural preconceptions towards African women, taking as a background gender politics and political struggle. We want to know how important the African women participation in politics is; how visible are women in the African political sphere, what are their recognized competences and abilities in politics, etc.

**Katarzyna Grabska**  
Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK  
E-mail: [kgrabska@yahoo.com](mailto:kgrabska@yahoo.com)

**“The Life is in my Hand”: Girls, Education and Re-defining Power Relations within the Nuer Households.**

Forced displacement due to a conflict can at times have an empowering effect on the position of girls and women within households and wider society, in particular through access to education available in refugee camps. This paper is based on 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork among the southern Sudanese Nuer refugees in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and in southern Sudan. It highlights the changes in gender and generational power relations as prompted by the experience of war and forced displacement as a result of the 22-year long civil conflict in southern Sudan (1983-2005).

Focusing on the promotion of girls' access to education and gender-mainstreaming programming implemented by the international humanitarian organisations in the refugee camp, this paper shows the role of displacement in enhancing the girls' agency on the one hand and showing the growing discrepancies of gender power on the other hand. The notable change in access to education for the southern Sudanese in the refugee camp was highly gendered: although boys and girls had access to education, the consequence of education was different for each. For boys and young men in Kenya, and later after return in Sudan, education and access to new jobs do not necessarily undermine the system of gender relations to the same extent as does access to similar opportunities for girls. This is linked to the different position of boys and girls, as well as women and men, in the household economy. This, in turn, creates different constraints and opportunities in the context of the interplay of gender and family structure with the wider economic and social environment of the Nuer society. This paper argues that access to education minimises girls' relative powerless position within the household and has profound consequences for the Nuer gender relations at large.

**Olga Iglésias**  
Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Lisbon, Portugal  
E-mail: [iglesias.olga@gmail.com](mailto:iglesias.olga@gmail.com)

**The political Power of the Mozambican Women**

The present paper as a gender case post-colonial study examines the importance of the Women's role at the Mozambican society, in the capital, Maputo. I argue that Women associative movement press FRELIMO Party and obvious the Mozambican government in order to legitimize their positions, claiming for social and political changes in a pragmatic way. What kind of changes? What strategy is been followed? The patriarchal order is been affected? Those are some questions that I will answer in order to understand the political power conquered by Mozambican Women.

**Kryštof Kruliš**  
Law Faculty, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic  
Metropolitan University Prague, Centre for Anglophone Studies, Czech Republic  
E-mail: [com.krulis@seznam.cz](mailto:com.krulis@seznam.cz)

**South Africa - The Crime Paralysed Country?**

The paper is trying to turn attention to the potential problems connected with spread of the violent crime in Africa. The main thesis of the paper emphasises that the economical development in Africa must be interrelated with the sufficient emphasis on the even distribution of economical benefit in the society. The focus is laid on the Republic of South Africa that is economically the most advanced country in Africa while it is also a country where the violent crime causes serious social problems as crime fear motivated emigration or the establishment of gated communities. The paper examines the possible reasons of the South Africa's highest ranking in murders, assaults and rapes categories of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime statistics. It therefore scrutinizes issues like the widely opened poor-rich scissors in this country, unemployment, social impacts of the townships culture and other cultural and ethnic dispositions as well as the political changes following the end of apartheid. Subsequently it is examined how the country is paralysed by the long-term high crime rate that turns

the whole population, the rich and the poor alike, to the position of the powerless hostages. The attention is given to governmental practice regarding criminality from the gun amnesty programme and the National Crime Prevention Strategy to the restriction on availability of the crime statistics information. The conclusion of the paper predicts that the South Africa's scenario of the country paralysed by crime is potentially perilous for all African countries.

**Sian ÓFaoláin**  
South Africa  
sianaranda@gmail.com

### **Powerlessness in the Police: The Example of Diepsloot**

Based on months of ethnographic field work with police officers at the Erasmia police station north of Johannesburg, this paper discusses the role of violence and vulnerability in daily police work. While violence is prevalent in much of the police literature to describe the conditions police officers work in and the difficulties of using force during arrests, for example, I argue that violence in this context serves to reveal the vulnerability and frustrations of police officers. In narratives of the conversion from civilians to police officers, male officers cite violence as integral to their transformation. Everyday operations and interactions with suspects are characterized by violent outbursts and ad hoc expressions of authority. In instances of collective violence and other violence aimed at police, officers feel vulnerable and unprotected, with or without uniforms.

The theme throughout this paper is that the personal feelings of vulnerability and fear that officers feel throughout their working days can find outlets in excessive and malicious use of violence against civilians. The response to the crime landscape in South Africa and Diepsloot in particular leaves Erasmia officers with feelings of cynicism and fear. The private feelings and experiences that officers have in relation to crime and violence easily spill over into their work lives and influence their interactions with the public. The role of the personal in this public duty suggests that violence is an integral part of the police experience that transcends the thin boundaries between their public and private lives. These feelings of helplessness and fear articulated by police officers raises a problematic relationship to discretion, law, security, and corruption in South Africa.