STABILITY, DEMOCRACY AND RIGHTS

BUILDING STRONGER UNIVERSITIES
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

PSDR south partner study stays in Denmark

Workshop at Aarhus University, May 2-3, 2013

Workshop discussion, day one

During a two days workshop at Aarhus University staff members and PhD candidates from Maseno, Gulu and Tribhuvan University met to present and discuss both research proposals and ongoing PhD projects with their Danish hosts and partners in North. The workshop created a unique opportunity for a large group of visiting researchers to meet and elaborate on specific research topics within the academic themes of PSDR.

All South participants are in Denmark on either short study stays (1-3 months) or having longer study period in connection to an ongoing PhD project. They are hosted by academic staff across the Danish universities.

In total, 16 presentations were delivered and discussed. 28 people participated in the workshop. In addition, one session was dedicated to experience-sharing regarding study stays in Denmark, and one session presented the activity plan for PSDR Phase II.

Academic session

The presentations and discussions at the workshop evolved around the following seven themes:

1. Governance and Democracy

2. Gender Aspects

3. Food Security and Environment

4. Urban Challenges

5. Instruments

6. Employment and Education

7. Language

After a brief introduction by Mr. Jens Seeberg (PSDR Chair, Dep. of Culture and Society, Aarhus University) and personal presentations from the workshop participants, the first five themes of research and project presentations took place at the first day of the workshop.

Divided into the above mentioned themes each speaker had 15 minutes for presentation, rounded off with joint discussions based on the audience raised questions to each presentation.

Governance and Democracy

Mr. Tom Mboya (School of Development and Strategic Studies, Maseno University): "Democratizing Regional Governance: The Case of East Africa"

Mr. Tom Mboya investigates the implications of supra-national institutions, e.g. EAC and ECOWAS, on democ-

racy and participation (civil society) in the region, for instance regarding transfer of a state's sovereign authority and transparency in media, etc.

Mr Charles Amone (Department of History, Gulu University): "Ethnicity and political stability in Uganda: are ethnic identities a blessing or a curse?"

Mr Charles Amone states that in the case of Uganda, ethnic identities have both been a blessing and a curse. Using ethnographic research methods he sets out to 1) discuss the role of ethnicity in the fragile political landscape of Uganda, 2) to explore the roots of ethnocentrism in Uganda – and 3) to find out how ethnic identities can be harnessed to create political stability in Uganda.

Mr. Tom Mboya, Maseno University

Mr. Saroj Koirala, (Tribhuvan University): "The role Nepalese print media are playing for the consolidation of democracy"

Mr. Saroj Koirala investigates politics in print media and how papers put pressure on politicians. February 2013 became a period of crucial discussion whether Chief Justice should be appointed as the Prime Minister or not. He gives this presentation based on the opinions expressed through editorials, letters to editor and articles published by the Nepali newspapers during February. For instance, papers indicated that parties should not simply reject the proposal but rather utilize the chance to change government. Also, parties should get rid of 'Hamletian inaction' and go for a quick decision.

Gender Aspects

Ms. Meena Gurung (Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University): "Nepalese Women in Politics and Political Decision Making: A Case of Kaski District Western Nepal"

The main objective of Ms. Meena Gurung's research is to study women's involvement in politics and political decision-making in party politics in Kaski district. Based on qualitative and quantitative data she asks e.g. how socio-cultural practices influence Nepali women's involvement in party politics, and why men are more interested/enrolled in politics compared to women? As she points out, the law that all citizens are equal does not apply in practice.

Ms. Stella Laloya (Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, Gulu University): "Gendering livelihoods in post-conflict settings. A case study of northern Uganda"

The project strives 1) to understand how gender roles have changed in pre- and post-conflict Uganda, e.g. how NGO's have given priority to women and left 'the weak men' behind; 2) to ascertain the effects of microcredit acquisition on gender relations at household level in Gulu Municipality; and 3) to examine to what extent microcredit strengthens the asset base of households and reduces vulnerability.

Ms. Meena Gurung, Tribhuvan University

Food Security and Environment

Mr. Babiiha Mpisi Sulayman (Faculty of Business and Development Studies, Gulu University): "Participatory development for sustainable household food security in post-conflict northern Uganda"

Mr. Babiiha M. Sulayman has a focus on the actual food security situation in the Acholi sub-region through four parameters: 1) availability; 2) accessibility; 3) consumption; and 4) utilisation. He will analyse the way participation is experienced in livelihoods, investigate whether specific combinations or amounts of assets provide greater possibilities of success in participatory engagements – and explore the potential of participation as a tool for achieving sustainable household food security in the post-conflict Acholi sub-region.

Ms. Lillian Atieno Omondi (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Maseno University): "Social capital and community stability in the face of the climate change crisis: a study of the Mara River Basin, Kenya"

This project explores the effects of climate change on the livelihoods of the residents of Mara River Basin.

Furthermore, the researcher asks if the existing 'social capital' contributes towards climate change adaptation within the study area. Instead of taking a macro-level approach (i.e. of nation states), she focuses on local strengths and weaknesses regarding local communities' ability to react on and solve common challenges in relation to climate change.

Urban challenges

Mr. George M. Onyango (Dept. of Urban Management, Maseno University): "Stability and fragility of urban futures in natural resource management: strengthening mainstreaming of climate change mitigation and adaptation in Lake Victoria local authorities' development planning"

Mr. George M. Onyango's study focuses on strengthening the capacity of local authorities in the Lake Victoria Basin in relation to climate change and instability resulting from competition for resources. The goal of the study is to mainstream climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in the development agendas of Urban Local Authorities in the Lake Victoria region so as to reduce conflict and enhance stability.

Mr. Prakash Upadhyay (Department of Sociology/ Anthropology and Rural Development, Tribhuvan University): "Claiming the Urban Space: Forming and transforming of the Sukumbasis (Squatters) of Pokhara Sub-metropolis, Nepal"

Mr. Prakash Upadhyay builds his study on both qualitative and quantitative methods in an exploration of squatters' altering relationship with non-squatter urban dwellers and state authorities. He concludes that a sharp transformation has occurred in the urban population's perception of squatters. They are no longer a uniform mass but an altering community embedded in a paradigm shift from conflict to collaboration in all aspects of daily life.

Coffee talks, day one

Instruments

Mr. Jimmy Alani (Department of Economics and Business, Gulu University): "Effects of Technological Progress and Productivity on Economic progress in Uganda: Econometric and

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simulation approach"

Mr. Jimmy Alani's study recommends the twin promotion of technological progress (to cater for the promotion of economic growth) and maintaining productivity growth (to keep either interest rate or inflation low). Among a wide range of objectives he seeks to estimate the effects of technological progress, and productivity on interest rates in Uganda within the given period (1970 to 2009).

Ms. Victoria P. Awiti (School of Development and Strategic Studies, Maseno University): "Aid Effectiveness in Fragile States: A Study of the Great Lakes Region"

The overall objective of Ms. Victoria P. Awiti's study is to analyze the extent to the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program has enhanced the capacity of the state to combat terrorism in Kenya. The study is anchored on

Mr. Erasmus Abrose Okot, Gulu University

the concept of state building that is widely applied in Development Corporation as a framework for combating state fragility. For instance, she will examine the effectiveness of strategies used by donors to strengthen the internal security mechanisms to curb terrorism in Kenya.

Mr. Erasmus Ambrose Okot (Department of Educational Management and Administration, Gulu University): "Founding and performance of Uganda's public Universities: A case of Gulu University"

Mr. Erasmus Ambrose Okot's study is to investigate why some public universities in Uganda seem to perform better than others. Furthermore, he wants to empirically establish the state of funding and financial management in Uganda's public universities and why there seems to be frequent performance-related problems in the universities, specifically focusing on academic programmes; management, academic staff, support services and students' activities.

Employment and Education

Mr. Madara M. Ogot (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, School of Business and Economics, Maseno University): "Strengthening Kenya's fragile stability through increased youth employment"

In his investigation of youth exclusion and violence in Kenya, Mr. Madara Ogot focuses on 'economic decline' as one out of four primary risks factors threatening the country; the other three being security, political and social/cultural factors. He argues that a reduction in un/underemployment among youth should reduce their likelihood of engaging in violence and thereby strengthen Kenya's fragile stability.

Mr. Asaf Adebua (Department of Educational Management and Administration, Gulu University): "Role of Education in Community Rehabilitation and Transformation"

Mr. Asaf Adebua carries out a case study of Gulu University's objective regarding 'applied research towards community transformation' in the post-war situation of Northern Uganda. His motivation is to unpack the motto, and critically examine the University's practical agenda in its engagement with the community. Furthermore, he wants to focus on gender dimensions of the community transformation given that women suffered a lot in the war.

Language

Mr. Phillip Visendi Lumwamu (School of Arts and Social Sciences, Maseno University): "Language and Conflict Resolution: A Linguistic Analysis of Kiswahili Metaphors in Kenyan Electronic Media on the ICC Indictment Discourse"

Mr. Phillip V. Lumwamu investigates how language usage has the potential to cause conflict and, conversely, can be used to resolve conflict, especially in fragile states like Kenya. Despite the general peace prevailing in Kenya, the country continues to exhibit increasing signs of state fragility in continuation of the 2007 post-election violence. This has primarily been compounded by the indictment of prominent Kenyans at the International Criminal Court (ICC) to face trial for crimes against humanity. His study, therefore, attempts to analyze the use of Kiswahili metaphors that form part of the ICC indictment discourse in Kenyan electronic media and their effect on conflict.

Ms. Anne Obinju Adhiambo (Dep. of Linguistics, Languages and Literature, Maseno University): "A Genre Analysis of Linguistic and Rhetoric Features in the Televised job Interviews conducted by the Judicial Service Commission to attain Democracy, Freedom and Human Rigths in Kenya"

Ms. Anne O. Adhiambo's study concerns the role of language in the Kenyan Judiciary in promoting democracy, freedom and human rights. Inefficiency, incompetence and corruption in the Kenyan Judiciary have resulted in loss of public confidence in the institution. As a response, the selection of judicial officials now happens through open, transparent job interviews, which are televised. The intention is to promote democratic values in the selection process.

Panel discussion on Study Experiences

The following panel discussion entered the topic of experiences with study stays at the Danish Universities. In the panel were Preben Kaarsholm (PSDR Vice Chair, Dep. of Society and Globalisation, Roskilde University), Tom Mboya, Stella Laloya, Sharon Millar (Dep. of Language and Communication, University of Southern Denmark/SDU) and Saroj Koirala.

Stella Laloya raised logistical issues, that are often time consuming, e.g. getting a Visa, a CPR-number (for personal identification), and visiting a doctor which can be a much slower procedure than in Uganda.

shared kitchen but basically, no choice was given. There has been a good relationship with the host and advisors, however, in regards to planning domestic travels (in Nepal) there have been some unclear information and planning. Two out of the three Nepal visitors have already finished their PhD programme and in their case, a one-month study stay would be sufficient, including a varied range of activities like lectures and seminars, which had been quite few.

As a host Sharon Miller brought up the issue of distribution of South visitors at the Danish universities. At University of Southern Denmark Charles Amone have been the only visitor and, therefore, not part of a group – obviously making it a different experience. She also raised an awareness of continuation; how do we ensure that contacts made during study stays are kept alive? And how do we make sure that what is being created continues and doesn't vanish into thin air?

Preben Kaarsholm agreed that the issues and situations are different whether it concerns short study visits or PhD stays. However, he found it difficult to summarize experiences at this early stage: It is something new we are in the middle of doing. Of course, there should be clear plans for what people are doing here, so it is possible to measure progress. Also, it is necessary carefully to select candidates who are working within the plat-

Tom Mboya proposed a clear work plan for the study stay before arriving in Denmark. He stressed that a one-month study stay is too short as the visitor easily ends up using the two first weeks to adapt to a new environment. For PhD candidates, solving and figuring out access to facilities like books, computers, IT-networks, etc., can also be a challenge. As a positive experience, he emphasized good internet connections and living standards.

Saroj Koirala, representing Tribhuvan, brought up the issue of accommodation types; there were both good and bad experiences with having one room with a

form theme(s). That is requisite for having meaningful conversations and discussions - and getting the right hosts for each visitor.

Moving on, Preben Kaarsholm pointed out that the present workshop had been quite a success and that it was good for the visitors to get together. It was important to remember that people were brought together from quite different geographical, social, and historical contexts. Even so, the discussions during the workshop, e.g. on youth, exclusion and violence, had shown that there were common issues and concerns that could be developed. The challenge for the PhD students was to be fully integrated with the Danish universities where

they were not necessarily co-registered. The aspiration should be to have them co-registered so they obtain a status similar to their PhD colleagues. The benefit for a South partner PhD student is to be part of the doctoral schools here and to learn from the peer discussions in these environments - as well as taking part in the current research going on.

Response from the Chairman and round of discussion

Jens Seeberg underlined that some logistical issues are outside PSDR control. For instance visas; there is a big difference whether you apply for a 90 days visa or one valid longer than that. At the end of Phase I it was decided to keep all study stays less than 90 days to make it practically feasible. When planning ahead it will be easier, in the case of PhD students, to plan for a longer second stay. However, some might want three stays but shorter periods, so there are different options. About the quality of accommodation it is a costing issue; the more money you use on accommodation the less there is left for food, so there is a trade-off within the given budget, which has to adhere to DFC standards.

Concerning assess to infrastructure, like internet etc., that is an issue where the PSDR would like to learn more from local experiences, because it is obviously important to have access to these resources. At the same time it is necessary to remember that funding for items such as books or computers is allocated under the visiting staff's own university's PSDR budget and must be covered from there.

Preben Kaarsholm pointed out another issue for clarification concerning the PhD students and the provision of study leave: PSDR is aiming at staff members who are upgrading their qualifications. In this matter the collaborating universities in South are supposed to contribute by giving study leave to their staff members for them to be able to work full time on their research projects. This needs to be clarified further.

In the following round of discussion more issues in rela-

tion to study stays were raised, e.g. concerning access to relevant courses, being 'set up and ready to live and work' in Denmark, preparing and developing work plans before and during the stay, responsibilities and expectations to hosts/supervisors (and limitations), literature search - including often new/alien tools for getting access to research material, etc. Of particular importance was the need to establish realistic expectations regarding the responsibility of the visiting scholars in terms of preparing a clear work plan for their study stay and regarding the need for them to be proactive in engaging in ongoing activities and academic discussions at the university they visit.

New Activities (Phase II and Communication Grant)

Jens Seeberg gave a short introduction to the activities and budget of Phase II which has a two and a half year project period from August 1 2013, to January 31 2016. He stressed the substantial increase of the platform budget that enables a wide range of both new and continued activities, such as staff mobility, PhD project collaboration, collaboration small-scale research projects, development of problem based learning, e-learning, etc. The detailed activity plans will be available at the PSDR website, www.bsusdr.org.

Panel discussion on study experiences, day 2