

Academic Freedom Still Matters! The Case of Maati Monjib and Nuno Castel-Branco

In recent months, the African scientific community has been faced with two cases of serious violation of freedom of expression and academic freedom. The first one involved Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco, an economist, co-founder of the Institute of Social and Economic Studies (IESE) and professor at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique. Professor Castel-Branco had to face criminal proceedings for alleged slander against the former president of Mozambique, Armando Guebuza, over a message that the scholar posted on his Facebook page on 4 November 2013, entitled "Letter to President of Mozambique". In his letter, Castel-Branco criticised some of the policies of the then President and contended that these policies were responsible for the multifaceted crisis in that country.

Although he was eventually discharged and acquitted by the court, Professor Castel-Branco's arraignment was a clear

Carlos Cardoso
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violation of his fundamental right to freedom of expression and raises new concerns about the issue of academic freedom in some parts of the African continent. The second case concerns the travel ban that was imposed on Professor Maati Monjib, a historian and member of CODESRIA's Scientific Committee by Moroccan authorities recently. Monjib, a political analyst and human rights activist, was a founding member of the 20 February Movement Support Council, which sought reform in Morocco during the Arab Spring. On 31 August 2015, on his return from Montpellier (France), he was unjustly detained by the authorities at Mohamed V Airport in Casablanca. This ugly episode was followed by a series of provocative acts deliberately perpetrated

by the police on his person. The Moroccan authorities also prevented him from travelling abroad in order to participate in a scientific activity, forcing Monjib to embark on a hunger strike to press for his rights. These two cases are not isolated cases. Certainly there are numerous similar events that have not come to the attention of CODESRIA or that were not made public due to limitations in the functioning of the press and also due to the repressive acts of intolerant government authorities in several countries in Africa.

For instance, on 17 March 2015 in Morocco, an investigative journalist, Hicham Mansouri, was imprisoned for 10 months while working on an article on state surveillance. Ibn Rochd Center for Studies and Communication, an organisation which focuses on the freedom of press, of thought and of expression, democracy and cultural development, was forced to shut down by Moroccan authorities. A similar organisation, Freedom Now –

Comité de protection de la liberté de la presse et d'expression au Maroc (Committee for the protection of freedom of the press and of expression in Morocco) was denied registration by the authorities.. These and other recent crack downs on individual journalists and human rights



Maati Monjib

activists show growing restrictions on freedom of expression in Morocco.

The frequency of executions perpetrated against members of the research community and universities on the continent, which contributes to the establishment of a climate of

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– Kampala Declaration

fear and restricts the development of a conducive atmosphere for productive academic and social life is worrying. These acts of repression stifle intellectual debate and make censorship a rule. The cases of Castel-Branco and Monjib may especially be taken as paradigmatic examples of what is happening in the academia and in African societies in general in terms of ensuring freedom of expres-

sion and academic freedom in particular.

With the wave of democratization that swept through several African countries in the early 90s and the improvement of citizen rights conditions that followed them, one would have thought that the time of persecution and the imposition of obstacles to the free exercise of freedom expression had passed. But the recent cases of violation of academic freedom, to which should be added the recent events that took place in South African universities, with students demanding for equal access to education and an end to racism in the delivery of higher education, leading to violent confrontations between students and authorities, are proof that the struggles for freedom of expression and academic freedom in particular must continue. Indeed, we may argue that there is an intrinsic connection between academic freedom and the global emancipatory struggles of citizens.

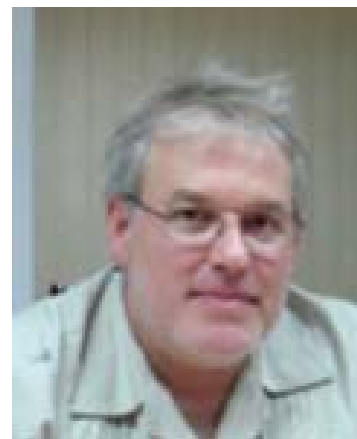
In the cases involving Castel-Branco and Monjib, we are dealing with high-level academics whose voice is likely to influence the critical positioning of citizens about the public acts and the fight for freedom of expression in their countries. Beside his position of an Associate Professor in Economic Development and Industrialization at the University Eduardo Mondlane, Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco is Research Associate, Department of Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM), University of Manchester. His areas of interest include economic growth policy, economic transformation and social system of capital accumulation in Mozambique and

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Sub-Saharan Africa. He is a member of the Mozambican Association of Economists (AMECON) and Mozambican Academy of Sciences.

Apart from being a professor and journalist, Maata Monjib is also a university re-




Nuno Castel-Branco

searcher, human rights activist and president of *Freedom Now*. He has facilitated various debates between Islamists and secular activists in Morocco. He has also instituted a prize for investigative journalism Prize in Morocco. He is also founder and director of the Ibn Rochd Center for Studies and Communication in Morocco.

It is important to reiterate that the practice of the research profession is inseparable from the exercise of free and critical thinking. The right to do research is a right which is recognized by fundamental law. Also, the right to freely communicate research findings is an inalienable right which cannot be separated from the right of citizens to freely express their views on current topics of national interest.

In this context two articles of the Kampala Declaration are worth mentioning. These are the article 3, which states that "no intellectual shall in any way be persecuted, harassed or intimidated for reasons only of his intellectual work or opinions" and the article that states that "every African intellectual shall enjoy the freedom of movement within his or her country and freedom to travel outside and re-enter the country without let, hindrance or harassment" (Kampala Declaration, CODESRIA, Dakar, 1995).

 CODESRIA Book Series

Land in the Struggles for Citizenship in Africa
Le foncier dans les luttes pour la citoyenneté en Afrique

The variety of land questions facing Africa and the divergent strategies proposed to resolve them continue to evoke debates, increasingly, in response to the enduring problems of land tenure, their are land movements of all shapes and orientations, some reformist and others quite revolutionary in their agenda. However revolutionary, land movements have tended to ignore the land tenure interests of women, pastoralists, youth and indigenous people. Several of these longstanding and emerging issues in land tenure include the role of the state in land tenure reform, urban land questions, the nature of land struggles and movements, and, the impact of land tenure developments on particular social groups and countries. An overarching concern is the extent to which land rights are being consolidated, through the conversion of local held and customary tenure systems, into marketised systems. The consequences of this include growing land concentration, land tenure insecurities, diminishing access to land by various sections of society, including the poor, women and less dominant ethnic-religious groups.

This volume brings together different studies on Africa's land questions, exploring emerging land issues on the continent in terms of the wider questions of development, citizenship, and democratisation. The chapters discuss the land question through a variety of themes. Some focus on the agrarian aspects of the land question, while others elucidate the urban dimensions of the land question.

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Gender
in the Construction of the Democratic Developmental State

Awakes about globalisation and neo-liberalism have led to the development of a number of reconstructive strategies aimed at strengthening the form in which democracy is exercised. However, such strategies continue to neglect legitimate concerns about the marginalisation of women, thus raising the spectre of replicating past exclusions on a grand scale. Most policies and projects in Africa have been 'gender blind' and have failed to appreciate the different roles, needs and constraints of men and women. Such policies and projects have failed to meet their goals when women's contributions at both household and project level are overlooked, their need for economic incentives are misunderstood and resources relevant to their productivity are misdirected to men.

Gender issues are truly challenging and, to attain gendered political institutions, women issues must be posed in a democratic manner, in both their specificity and in their connection to the general contradiction of society. Persistent exclusion of women from formal politics requires reform of democratic institutions, since these institutions are not automatically gender-equitable.

This volume, among other things, debates whether gender considerations in democracy will positively impact the possibility of a developmental state in Africa or will have no effect at all. The volume concludes that development should not be seen within the constrained confines of economic growth and wealth creation which can impact negatively on issues of equity and livelihoods, leading to the exacerbation of the feminisation of poverty.

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