

Editorial

Extending the Frontiers of Social Science Research

The year 2012 marks the beginning of a new Strategic Plan and a new Programmatic Cycle, both of which cover the same period, 2012-2016, for the first time in the history of CODESRIA. The new Strategic Plan is the result of a long consultative process involving successive Executive and Scientific Committees, members of CODESRIA and officials of some of CODESRIA's main funders that began in 2009. Key moments in that extensive consultative process were: a brainstorming workshop held in July 2009; a joint meeting of the Executive and Scientific Committee in July 2011; a Secretariat retreat in August 2011; CODESRIA's 13th General Assembly held in Rabat in December 2011; and a strategic planning workshop held in Dakar in June 2012.

The directions in which CODESRIA ought to be moving in the coming years, the changes and consolidation required in terms of priorities for research, programme development, and programme management, were discussed in all these key moments. The report of the external evaluation carried out during the first quarter of 2012 also contained important recommendations that were taken into account in the drafting of the Strategic Plan. Some of the original think pieces from these various meetings are published in this issue of the Bulletin under the general heading "New Directions and Priorities for Research in Africa: Some Think Pieces". Part of what makes the strength of CODESRIA is, we would argue, the active engagement of the community of scholars in reflections on the priorities for research in Africa, and for CODESRIA itself, and in the determining the best ways to respond to current challenges and anticipate new ones. The think pieces published in this issue are a good illustration of the not only the range of views expressed, but also the depth of the reflections and the commitment.

The 2007-2011 Strategic Plan was under the umbrella theme of *Re-thinking Development and Reviving Development Thinking in Africa*. As the presentation of the new Strategic Plan of CODESRIA in this issue of the Bulletin shows, "development is still a key concept in the thinking on social transformation that translates into greater freedom and enhanced well-being of the peoples of Africa. The understanding of development that has now become widely shared among members of the CODESRIA, and African research community is the result of a combination of post-structuralist, ecological, gender and southern critiques of the dominant modernization and development paradigms, and years of re-thinking development both as a concept and as a socio-historical process. As Amin has argued, development, for us, is not so much about "catching up", but "an invention of another kind (...), a process of inventing a new civilization" (Amin). The new civilization being referred to must be founded on core universal values, and it has to be humane, democratic,

"ecological", and based on the respect of human and peoples' rights, justice and equity, particularly gender justice and equity. The research agenda will therefore include the exploration of the various ways in which the development policies take on board the new thinking on development and the alternative pathways through which African countries are trying to bring about development under the current global conditions. The range of issues to be explored during the new Plan period is therefore very diverse.

The debates section of this issue of the Bulletin start with 'Marikana and the politics of Law and Order after Apartheid' by Suren Pillay. He examines the recent events in South Africa that are reflective of the remaining work that must be done on the way to total liberation of South Africa. He makes the point, that "... as many of us are trying to make sense of the massacre at Marikana through the obvious dire economic conditions, wage rates, and inequality that these workers face. We should also try to make sense of it through the lineages of law, order and the new configurations of politics emerging in post-apartheid South Africa." He observes that the "dominant response to violence in South Africa, whether in its political or criminal forms, reveals a post-apartheid state relying more on other means to govern, than the anti-colonial and democratic idealism of its founding political and moral vision." He calls on us to reflect on the politics of law and order in their raw form after apartheid.

There are three articles reflecting on the crisis in the financial system, marked by the September-October 2008 collapses. Samir Amin, in his article 'Renewing Development Paradigms for 21st Century' says that it is "... indicative of the scope of forthcoming transformations." He goes on to say that "... this crisis implies a systemic re-assessment, especially regarding the reproductive patterns of accumulation and growth, modes of access to the natural resources of the planet and the management of their use." He notes that though the signs that this crisis was imminent were ignored because of a "... nearly fundamentalist double dogmatic of the 'market' conceived as the sole regulator of 'rational' economic life, and of 'multiparty electoral democracy' – conceived as an exclusive means to manage political life – contributed to the concealment of the importance of malfunctions, evading the challenge of 'thorny issues' through programme phrases such as 'good governance', 'fight against poverty'."

This is followed by two other articles on the same crisis, the first by Joseph E. Stiglitz entitled 'Market Failures in the Financial System: Implications for Financial Sector Policies, especially in Developing Countries' and the other by Mahmood Mamdani's response framed as 'Not how the State can Regulate the Market, but how Society can Regulate both the State and the Market'. Mamdani questions Professor Stiglitz's definition

of the problem, as one of 'market failure'. His view is that "... the process requires a more a comprehensive definition of the crisis, from the point of view of society and not just the state and market binary."

In the article 'The Outstanding Issues between the two Sudans: A Way to Peace or Conflict' Prof. al-Tayib Zain al-Abdin examines the problem between Sudan and South Sudan. He observes that "... it is not unique in Africa but it is more complicated because of internal and external factors, and a long history of confrontation." He notes that the civil war between the North and South in the Sudan started in August 1955 before the independence of the country. "The reasons behind the war are complex and intermingled between external and internal factors. He argues that the British laid the foundation for the crisis by separating the two regions for three decades; secondly he observes that "... the missionary propaganda inflamed the feelings of southerners against the Muslim Arabs in the North." These were coupled with the long military rule in Khartoum that chose war as the solution to the southern problem rather than opting for a political solution that would give the South an acceptable federal system.

In her piece 'Economic Change in Africa and Prospects for Business: An African Perspective', Dzodzi Tsikata examines Africa's economic performance. She observes that although Africa's economic growth has been consistent at an average rate of above 5 per cent since 2002, these high growth rates have been fuelled in many cases by only a few sectors, natural resources, infrastructure, energy and services. She calls for cautious optimism as the sources of growth need diversification to be sustainable.

In 'The Discourse of 'Africa's Turn'?' Moses Khisa takes a look at this growing discourse on 'Africa's turn' "... the turn to turn the corner, to exorcise the twin evils of social deprivation and economic backwardness. In a word: the turn to muster socioeconomic transformation. The discourse trumpeting 'Africa's turn' is unmistakably palpable. It echoes debates during the so-called 'decade of hope' – the 1990s – predicated on structural adjustment programmes." He notes that the rhetoric from the Western capitals appears to have changed, "... a change occasioned by China's conspicuous presence on the continent: 'We want a relationship of partnership, not patronage', declared US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, speaking in the Tanzanian commercial capital, Dar es Salaam." He concludes that "... the turn might be here, but the transformation is by no means foregone. Africa has been there before and has stumbled. For the pessimist, stumbling again is not far-fetched."

'Archives of Post-independent Africa and its Diaspora Conference' by Brenton Maart is a report on a conference that

brought together theorists and practitioners to examine archives of seemingly different forms, times and places, which collectively describe a dynamic terrain, which according to him is in continual flux. He observes that a conference on archives requires presentations from a divergent range of hitherto traditionally unrelated disciplines. It was an occasion to discuss "... contemporary methodology that is part science and part humanities, part factual and part interpretative, part irrefutable and part conjecture, part documentary and part fiction, part rhetorical and part substantive, part public and part civic, part summative and part formative, part contemplative and part performative, part ethereal and part tangible, part analogue and part digital. This was a potentially incoherent and discordant amalgam of instruments, which, through careful curation, was conducted into a high-drama opera by the clear and simple power of that motif called imagination."

James Murombedzi, in 'Where Do We Go from Rio? The Implications of the Third World Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+ 20) for Sustainability and Environmental Governance in Africa' notes that because of the failure to address the structural causes of unsustainability, 20 years after Rio the environmental crisis is more acute, and each and every one of the problems described in the Brundtland report is now far more severe. "As a result, the commoditization and privatization of the environment have accelerated. This is evident from increased 'green grabs', land grabs, new forms of land and resource expropriation through carbon sequestration, water privatization, and the creation of new protected areas on lands expropriated from the poor and marginalized, and the suppression of indigenous forms of production and consumption. According to him this amounts to the privatization of nature – under an ideology that the market is the best mechanism for managing the world's natural heritage." He notes that this is equivalent to expropriating the basis of life and livelihood for most of the world's people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The debates in this issue conclude with Prakash Kashwan's article 'Democracy in the Woods: The Politics of Institutional Change in India's Forest Areas' which is about the same issues as RIO+20. He observes that "... natural resources are among the prime sites where struggles to define the contents and meanings of democracy and citizenship are waged in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Claims and counterclaims over land, water and forests, rooted in competing interests in and ideas about resource governance, are mediated by a variety of institutions." The article offers a comprehensive approach to understanding and analyzing institutional change in the context of the management of natural resources such as land, water and forests.

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