

REPORTS

FUTURE AFRICA – CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION IN GERMANY (VAD) – BAYREUTH JUNE 11-14, 2014

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Bayreuth is one of the most prolific Africanist centres in the world, with a number of professorships concerned with Africa, from development via anthropology, literature, economy, linguistics, history, etc. As the president of the University of Bayreuth stressed in his welcoming speech, 33 disciplines in all six faculties are involved in African studies. Bayreuth's Institute of African Studies is one of the major centres participating in the network of AEGIS (Africa/Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies). Part of it is now well-known BIGSAS alias Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies which was recently supplemented by Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies that invites established scholars to carry out research in a congenial atmosphere with all the desirable facilities.

The motto of the reviewed conference, namely "Future Africa", was taken from the Academy's main topic that aims at pointing out the potential of Africa becoming the laboratory of the future. The organizing team led by Georg Klute ably prepared and ran a conference which received nearly 400 paper abstracts. The keynote speaker invited by Klute was Dr Fatima Adamu of Sokoto's Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University. In her address she strived to answer the question "Is Africa Too Poor to Drive Its Future?" Her impassioned speech was received with ovations because she managed to persuade hundreds of listeners that Africa's stocks are increasing in value.

The biennial conferences of the VAD which has taken place since the late 1960s have developed into a major international Africanist event. The stress is on cooperation with Africa but specialists from other continents are welcome. This year about 550 participants arrived in Bayreuth, among them, for example, a substantial group of Indian

Africanists. They organized a special panel on India's involvement in Africa. However, there were 46 other panels at the conference, each attracting its own audience. As it is with most conferences, it was impossible to be present at all of the panels. I attended the above mentioned panel on India with 12 papers, 10 out of them presented by Indian scholars.

The topics varied from very general such as whether India, by its land grabs in Ethiopia and Madagascar, is a new imperialist in Africa, to specific relations of India with Nigeria, South Africa or Lusophone Africa. Related was a panel on Asian traders in Africa which discussed Chinese presence in different countries of the continent. Antoine Socpa reported about the competition between Chinese and African entrepreneurs in Cameroon. Alena Thiel described the ascent of street vendors in Accra who become transnational entrepreneurs in China, the new El Dorado.

Panel 13 convened by Alexander Stroh of GIGA, Hamburg, brought in papers dealing with the future of elections, political participation and representative democracy. Obert Hodzi revealed the commoditisation of elections in Zimbabwe while Irina Turner turned the attention of listeners to the free/born South Africans' deliberate disenfranchisement in South Africa's National Elections. What was very impressive was the workshops of young scholars who discussed questions connected with PhD supervision and mentoring, networking, research ethics and academic writing and publishing as well as the theorizing of social movements. There were also Round Tables concerned with the modernity of witchcraft, African agriculture, digitalization of Africa-related archives and libraries. What is also worth mentioning is the cultural programme which included the future of Nigerian theatre and future of arts, literature and culture in Kenya. The band "The Bigshots from Ghana" enlivened the conference with their well-attended concert. There was also a film programme featuring several pictures by African film makers.

I was fascinated by Panel 34 "Visions of the Future in the History of Africa and the Atlantic" convened by Christine Whyte and Achim von Oppen. John Lonsdale of Cambridge by comparing opposing views of Jomo Kenyatta and Louis Leakey tried to answer the question of Kikuyu ethnic reactions to modernity while Bruce Berman of Queens

University in Canada added Malinowski into the debate on what kind of modernity is/was suitable for Africa. Taking part in this panel prevented me in going to Panel 9 on “Travelling in Africa” convened by Kurt Beck and Rami Wadelnour. The first convenor spoke about technological dramas in the time of transition from absence of regular roads to highways with police patrols, driving licence and roadworthiness controls, road marking and the likes of formal motorism. The other convenor presented an account of the overload and ‘undifferentiated transport of passengers and load’ while travelling long-distances in Sudan. Other participants in the panel such as the Nigerian anthropologist Nnanna Arukwe spoke about Road Safety Law Enforcement in West Africa while Sidy Cissokho of Paris I discussed the reactions of professional unionized drivers to the reforms of urban transport in Dakar. Sebastian Wenz added his findings about the indispensability of fitters to African road transport while Hanna Lena Reich of Bayreuth shared with listeners her experiences of long-distance travelling by bus in Tanzania.

Panel 31 “African capitalisms” was well attended and was convened by Thomas Bierschenk of Mainz. The convenor pointed out that capitalist actors in Africa are under-researched and indigenous African capitalism is treated by Africanists as if it does not exist. The panel showed that the issue is far from settled. Toulouse researcher Anouk Batard examined the Nigerian film industry nicknamed Nollywood as an “unintended baby from the Structural Adjustment Programmes.” Chambi Chachage of Harvard reported about post-national capitalist class in post-Nyerere Tanzania. Michael Stasik of Bayreuth presented an excellent analysis of what he calls ‘vernacular neoliberalism’ on the example of his research of public transport entrepreneurs in Ghana. He showed that their self-regulating economic ingenuity ensured that their business was thriving even when others stagnated. Olabisi Shoaga of Bordeaux considered internet shopping in Nigeria where the standards of goods are unreliable and therefore consumers have to organize themselves into networks of online consumer activists. Florian Schaefer of SOAS discussed new agrarian capitalists in Ethiopia who engage in large-scale coffee plantations and cut flower production. The paper concluded that the understanding of concrete capitalisms in contemporary Africa depends on the combination of empirical studies with the knowledge of history and political economy.

The variety of panels was astounding. Only when I turned all pages of a three hundred page conference catalogue did I notice panel “20 years after Afrofuturism in Aural and Visual Cultures”. Convened by Kerstin Pinther (Free University Berlin) and Hauke Dorsch of Mainz, this panel introduces the width of the concept of Afrofuturism which ‘interrogates the past, present and future in humanities, sciences, religion, and challenges the Eurocentric motifs of identity, time and space’. One only regrets that such fascinating topics might take years before they are published and made accessible beyond the conference presentations. Similarly, the panel called “African movements in globalisation and transnationalisation” convened by Bettina Engels and Melanie Müller ((both Free University Berlin) posed the question of social movements and political struggles in Africa. Engels shows that food price riots in Burkina Faso had an international framework. The conference took place before the recent popular revolution in Burkina and one wonders how Engels could have explained the success of it with reference to the mobilization against the high cost of living in that West African country.

To conclude the writer of the present report would like to stress that the VAD conference was a great success, not only organizationally but especially by exposing the wide spectrum of current African studies and the vocal place of German research on Africa in it.

REVIEWS

Review article: Political Partisanship in Sub-Saharan Africa. Elischer, Sebastian. 2013. *Political Parties in Africa. Ethnicity and Party Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 319 pages.

The issues concerning the theory of African political parties have managed to distinctively enter the awareness of professional public in the last decade. Provided that since the year 1961 when the pioneering work of Thomas Hodgkin titled *African Political Parties* was published there were only a few works devoted to African political parties (Morgenthau 1961; Sklar 1963; Coleman - Rosberg 1964; Zolberg 1964) then after the beginning of the process of democratization of the African continent at the beginning of the 1990s we can observe the gradual growth in the interest in these issues not only among the Africanists but also among political scientists and experts interested in the wider processes of transition, democratization and consolidation of democracy with which the establishment and activities of political parties are closely linked.

After being in existence for almost three decades, the one-party systems (one-party state), that de facto emerged in most of the African countries after they gained political independence, the establishment of multi-party political systems in the majority of African countries at the beginning of the 1990s served as a catalyst for their subsequent research.

Since the 1990s Africa has become a real laboratory of modern political science where both Western as well as African specialists study various phenomena of transition, democratization, elections and election campaigns, types of political regimes, processes of (un)fair governance, failed states, the institutionalization of political institutions including institutions of the modern African state and not in the least the political parties.

The current wave of theoretical literature about African political parties was first preceded by a large amount of case studies whose

authors analysed the establishment and development of a political partisanship in various African countries. Those were not always targeted empirical-analytical studies that aimed at capturing the whole (historical) development of a political partisanship. Attention of the authors was devoted to the selected political parties in power (or parliament), the creation of new political systems of evaluation and the political parties in individual elections.

It was only at the beginning of this century that the first attempts of theoretical summary on the establishment, development and character of African political parties from the previous decade have started to appear in specialized political science journals (*Party Politics, Comparative Politics, the Journal of Democracy, Democratization, the Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, etc.) and also in Africanist journals (*African Affairs, the Journal of African Elections, the Journal of Modern African Studies, African Studies, the Journal of Southern African Studies, Africa Spectrum, the South African Journal of International Affairs*, etc.).

Gero Erdmann, Matthias Basedau, Andreas Mehler, Alexander Stroh, Sebastian Elischer, Peter Burnell and many others try to verify some of the latest theories and concepts of political science using the example of African political parties. In connection with the attempt to create universalistic typology of political parties (Diamond - Günther 2001; Günther - Diamond 2003) several studies verifying the applicability of this theory using the example of African countries have since appeared (Erdmann 2004; Basedau - Erdmann - Mehler 2007; Fiala 2012b). The research of African party memberships has very clearly shown that the majority of types of political parties noted by L. Diamond and R. Günther was not much represented on the African continent.

On the top of that G. Erdmann in his research pointed at the necessity to clearly define the character of individual African political parties (e.g. clientelistic, honorary and ethnic parties), so that a misleading overlap of terms did not occur. These studies then opened the way for further discussion about the basic types of African political parties (Basedau at al. 2011; Basedau - Stroh 2012; Bogaards 2003; Bogaards - Basedau - Hartmann 2010) and the influence of ethnicity on political parties (e.g. Posner 2005).

The issue of political opposition is quite a popular topic among the current political scientists focusing on African political systems. This interest most probably arises from the situation that although one-party state has been more or less eliminated in Africa, it is a party system with one dominant or predominant political party (with a constitutional majority) that tends to be gaining ground in African countries (e.g. Olukoshi 1998; Hulterström – Kamete - Melber 2007). These topics are also dealt with in the latest publication by R. Dorenspleet, namely *One-Party Dominance in African Democracies* (2013).

If we carry out an analysis of all fundamental topics of research concerning political parties that have been looked into within the pages of scientific journals and publications then it is the issue of institutionalization of African political organizations that holds the priority.

This topic was opened in 1995 by a couple of researchers, Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully, who in the introduction of their eminent publication called *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (1995) offered and innovated methodology for the institutionalization of political parties that they have applied to Latin American political parties. Their foundations were in older works of Huntington (1967) or Panebianca (1988) and some other authors.

It is mainly a group of German Africanist researchers based at the GIGA Institute in Hamburg that belong to this category of authors who have been lately engaged in the research of the process of institutionalization of African political parties both in particular countries as well as in larger regions (e.g. Western Africa – mainly Basedau – Stroh 2008, 2009). The issue of institutionalization of African political parties has also been investigated by a number of other authors (Lindberg 2007; Fiala 2012b).

The attention of Africanist political analysts has currently turned towards the issues concerning political membership such as the transformation of national liberation fronts/rebellion movements into political subjects participation in regular free and democratic elections (such as MPLA, UNITA, FRELIMO, RENAMO, ANC, SWAPO, EPLF, etc.), or lately the discussion concerning ideologies of political parties based on the analysis of their political and election programme (van de Walle 2003, Erdmann - Engel 2007; Elischer 2012). The questions

of the relationship between African political parties, African elections and African party systems (Bogaards 2007) have also become a research.

Theoretical research into of individual African political parties and mainly the organization of regular free and democratic elections in many African countries (more than half of the sub-Saharan countries have arranged in the recent past three and more regular multipartite parliamentary and presidential elections in a row) have opened the way to analyse the process of formation and institutionalization of party systems (Bogaards 2004; Randall 2001; Engels 2005; Carbone 2013; Dorenspleet 2013).

Unfortunately other important aspects of the theory of political parties such as their functions, financing, organizational structure, the alternation of party leading elites, member base and other important questions connected with the existence of political parties and their functioning on the political scene currently lack the attention of the political scientists and Africanists. The main reason for this fact is the lack of a deeper knowledge of these issues or the inability of political scientists (and Africanists) to deal with the ideological range (pragmatism?) of African political parties, unclear financing of activities of political parties (this is not just a problem of the African political parties), a lack of knowledge of the practical mechanisms of selection and restoration of political elites and an independent chapter is formed by the (non)existence of political party structures and the lack of information about the member base.

Due to these gaps in research any new monograph that is devoted to the issues of African political partisanship is welcome. The above mentioned work that I would like to pay close attention to in my review article belongs to the latest contributions in the field of research on African political parties. The author is Sebastian Elischer, Assistant Professor of Comparative Politics in a not so widely known Leuphana University Lüneburg, who is also at the same time a research fellow at the above mentioned German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg. As it has already been stated, Sebastian Elischer started his academic career in the Africanist department at the institute of GIGA in Hamburg, where he completed his Ph.D. studies. A group of Africanists (members of which include apart from Elischer Alexan-

der Stroh, Matthias Basedau, Andreas Mehler and others) has been created by the late Gero Erdmann who was the pioneer in the field of African political parties. The reviewed publication is then one of many research outputs of this Hamburg based Africanist school of political partisanship.¹

As the subtitle of the reviewed publication indicates, S. Elischer examines the effects of ethnicity on party politics in Sub-Saharan Africa, predominantly in Ghana, Kenya, Namibia and partly in Tanzania, Botswana, Senegal, Zambia, Malawi, Burkina Faso and Benin. Unfortunately the justification for the selection of these main three and other seven countries is missing from the introduction. The choice of Ghana, Kenya and Namibia, the three main case studies, covers three geographical areas: West Africa (Ghana), East Africa (Kenya) and South Africa (Namibia).

Also the selection of the other African countries is aimed more or less at these three regions. If we do not consider Botswana and Namibia that usually come under Southern African countries, then it would be the research of political partisanship primarily in the Republic of South Africa that would be worth attention. Central Africa and Horn of Africa (the political partisanship of the African islands would deserve individual attention)² is not covered at all.

The selection of African countries is clearly dominated by former British colonies (six countries) and French colonies (three countries). Namibia used to be under the trusteeship of United Nations that was carried out by the Republic of South Africa. Unfortunately any representative of Lusophone Africa is missing among the selected countries. From the point of view of the development of a party after political independence it is mainly the countries that have undergone the phase of one-party state but Botswana and Senegal represent countries with a multiparty system that has been in existence for a long time. In this selection it is Namibia that tends to stick out a bit because it is the only one that had to fight for its national liberation.

1 Here it is certainly necessary to point out that a similar line of research is also supported at the University of Hradec Králové, where several fundamental publications have come into existence in the last five years that are devoted to the origin and development of African party membership. (Fiala 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, Prouza 2010).

2 The first attempt of detailed analysis is represented by a publication by Fiala 2012c.

It is a speculative question whether the choice of the selected case studies has had somehow influenced the final theoretical findings of the reviewed publication. Nonetheless it has to be appreciated that no other current publications concerning African political parties deals with such a wide sample of countries.

The publication consists of seven main chapters. The first two are dedicated to the character of theoretical anchoring (“Comparative Politics and Political Parties in Africa” and “A New Framework of Comparison for Political Parties”). Three case studies (“Kenya: The Ubiquity of Ethnic Parties”, “Namibia: The Dominance of Non-ethnic Parties”, and “Ghana: The Ubiquity of Non-ethnic Parties”) are then connected to the two theoretical chapters. The sixth chapter called “The Diversity of African Party Politics” mainly tries to carry out a comparative analysis of political parties analysed in the previous case studies while the author widens his attention also to the most powerful political parties in Tanzania, Botswana, Senegal, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Zambia and Benin.

The last chapter “Explaining the Formation of Non-ethnic Parties” is mainly aimed at the verification of the hypothesis connected with the Ethnic Fractionalization Index (Scarritt and Mozaffar 1999), that means that countries which have ethnic core groups (Botswana, Senegal, and Burkina Faso) have a lower ethnic fractionalization index, thus according to the author non-ethnic parties can be expected to predominate in these countries. On the other hand, countries without the ethnic core groups (Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania), have a much higher ethnic fractionalization index, and therefore the ethnic core group parties can be expected to dominate the political partisanship. Nevertheless the research has shown that this hypothesis has been only partially verified (the leading Tanzanian CCM has a non-ethnic character, similarly the cases of Zambia and Malawi are ambiguous from the point of view of verification of the hypothesis ambiguous – p. 257).

The reviewed publication is completed by the Conclusion (“Political Parties in Africa”), in which S. Elischer sums up the fundamental findings of his publication. He also answers the research questions and hypothesis. Elischer comes to the most significant conclusion that the findings of this book shatter dominant assumptions about party

politics in ethnically segmented societies. Ethnic parties are neither inevitable nor ubiquitous. According to the author, “the African landscape is more diverse than conventionally assumed” (p. 261).

On the other hand Elischer does not deny the existence of the ethnic parties on the African continent (the case study of Kenya confirms this thesis), nevertheless he strongly believes that their transformation into a programmatic, catch-all party or other types of political parties is a question of further political development of African countries. In Elischer’s opinion the current “multiparty competition in ethnically segmented societies does not lead to ethnic polarization; rather, it causes parties to widen their social base.” (p. 263)

Further on Elischer denies the validity of the following argumentation that is often stated in literature that the formation of ethnic parties is frequently the lack of industrial revolutions and the ethnic diversity of nations. In his opinion “this proposition no longer holds, because in some countries, ethnic parties dominate, whereas in others, non-ethnic parties have become the norm.” (p. 263).

In the “Conclusion” Elischer devotes significant attention to the role of political parties in the process of democratization. Firstly he points out the cardinal changes in the role of European mass political parties after 1945, in order to come to define four basic features of African political parties in the process of democratization. Firstly he comments on the function of integration and comes to the conclusion that parties do not provide this representative function by incorporating “the people” at large, but by incorporating powerful individuals from the major communities that make up the state” (p. 266). Secondly Elischer claims (unlike many of the contemporary Africanists who have adopted a negative stance on the matter) that parties in Africa, even if programmatic ideas, do express the interests of their citizens (p. 266).

Thirdly Elischer proves by using empirical facts that African party politics is dominated by powerful individuals, not by ordinary party members and that informal elite arrangements are the key to who becomes the leader of a party (p. 266). But at the same time he also adds that the lack of truly democratic nomination procedures does not take away the fact that electorate structuration takes place in Africa

and that African parties provide their electorate with a choice between alternative sets of leaders (p. 267).

Fourthly in connection with ethnic parties Elischer comes to the conclusion that “no robust claim can be made about the relationship between ethnic party systems and democratic consolidation... More detailed research must verify whether ethnic parties are really that much more detrimental to democratization than other party types” (p. 267). Indeed it has begun to show that in some countries ethnic parties can play a positive role in the process of democratization, while in others their existence tends to lead more to the separation of the society. Probably the most significant is Elischer’s last conclusion according to which research on political parties requires a new and more global agenda (p. 267)

No doubt the theoretical anchoring of the reviewed publication is one of its very strong points. In the first introductory chapters the author very clearly deals with the specification of the issue (Comparative Politics and Political Parties in Africa) and the theoretical framework for the research (A New Framework of Comparison for Political Parties). The author’s leading thesis is the statement “that not all African parties are ethnic parties; instead, a wide variety of political party types shape the African political landscape.” (p. 1).

When looking at several hundred political parties and organizations (for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo which is not at all any extreme exception from the situation in other African countries), the above mentioned statement of the author cannot be agreed with. According to the author “a detailed assessment of political parties in several countries indicates that, over time, the political salience of ethnicity is decreasing.” (p. 1).

The author in the very first pages of his publication points out the basic reasons for insufficient scientific results of the research of African political parties. In his opinion scholars interested in African parties had no conceptual framework by which to identify and compare parties. The first phase of the research of African political parties consisted mainly of the research of political partisanship of individual countries that were grounded in the election results or survey data. A very big problem of the majority of the former (but also of some of the current)

research of political partisanship in African countries is the attempt to view them from the Euro-American point of view and by means of contemporary concepts of political parties that are based on the experience from the countries of the North. A major positive feature of the reviewed publication is the fact that the author is well aware of the downsides of the previous research and makes thorough effort to avoid such weaknesses. As far as logical structure it seems that the subchapter called “International party assistance and ethnic parties” does not fit very well. Personally I consider the international party assistance an interference of Euro-American donor structures into the inner political issues of individual African countries. Democracy (and the establishment of political parties) was exported and supported from abroad and by no means can it bring effective results and in the majority of African countries it tends to have a rather negative impact on political partisanship. In my opinion a large number of foreign donors try to play a civilizing role on the African continent though in good faith they do not take into consideration the local political situation, specificities of the African society and requirements for the establishment of democratic structures including political partisanship.

The result of their efforts (including the pressure of significant international organizations such as UN, EU, IMM, WB and leading powers) is the compulsion of African political elites to accept many of the principles of the functioning of a democratic society (political parties, elections, division of political power) without actually reaching the conditions allowing these to emerge in these countries. The last twenty five years in which the process of democratization on the African continent has been taking place provides testimonies of failures of these attempts while also countries that in the long run showed high indexes of success rates of this process (such as Mali) have afterwards totally collapsed.

The Euro-American world goes back to the times of the cold war when it tells the African political elites what to do and how to do it. I also do not know whether it is right that current political scientists speak highly about the successful fight with the ethnical character of African political parties (Elischer 2013: 4-5) and that extensive research, scientific studies and publications (e.g. Bogaards – Basedau - Hartmann 2010, 2012) are devoted to that issue. V.I. Lenin would no doubt be

happy with the current development and would in this context mention his thesis about the digression of some phases of social development.

It is mainly Elischer's sentence that "both Western donors and African governments are keen to create a political playing field in which ethnic parties are absent" (p. 5) that evokes my concern as the reviewer of the publication. Every researcher should ask the question what is the relationship between Western donors and African governments in the question of prohibition of African ethnical political parties. Are the African governments frank when accepting laws prohibiting ethnical political parties or are they only trying to fulfil some of the conditions allowing them to gain economic help or other advantages?

For a Euro-American researcher it is very difficult to gain really credible empirical data concerning African political partisanship that cannot be opposed. As some of the field research that has been carried out by the researchers of our Afro-Latin American department (University of Hradec Králové) in Togo, Ghana, Burundi or Zambia demonstrate it is often a very exacting task just to persuade the respondents to participate in the survey and very often the surveys are limited to in the participation of university educated or literate inhabitants. On top of that the respondents (particularly in the authoritarian regimes) clearly demonstrate anxiety about speaking openly and their answers often sound like the slogans used by political parties.

The three main case studies have similar structures. The chapters start by setting the historical background against which multiparty politics manifested itself from the early 1990s onward, which are divided into several observational periods by the author. With respect to the main goal of the research (the position and role of ethnic parties) the author in each of the three researched countries follows the total ethnical composition of the country and of individual provinces. Before the actual research of individual observation periods the author tries to determine the formation and the rise of the basic ethnic cleavage lines development of which he then follows in the following periods after the year 1990.

Within the research of individual observational periods the author then devotes special attention to legal acts that had an influence on ethnicity and he also examines the issue of factionalism within the

major political parties. The individual subchapters are then aimed at the development of these parties their election programmes, composition and restoration of party elites and internal conflicts for power.

The important empirical data that the author uses are mainly the results of individual parliament elections (referendums), the ethnical composition of the cabinet and data gained from the analysis of political party programmes and election programmes. The author's attempt to summarize the disaggregated results for all political parties where he gathers the information about the party goals, electoral strategy, organizational structure and social base from the point of view of the major political parties can be viewed as very interesting.

Probably the most fundamental question of reliability of the whole research is to answer the basic question of how to assess the "transition" of the originally ethnical political parties into catch-all parties. Mainly it is important to assess the character of the governing political parties that were originally established as ethnic (e.g. SWAPO, Kenyan FORD-K, NDP or SDP) or ethnic alliance parties (such as DTA, Ghana's NPP, Kenyan FORD-A) etc. some of which then transformed into catch-all parties (SWAPO, CoD, NPP, NDC).

In my opinion Elischer's findings concerning mainly SWAPO and partially Ghanaian NPP and NDC are strongly debatable. Generally the ethnic political parties display typically stable electoral and material support mainly in the core ethnic regions. If we really focus our attention to the electoral gains of SWAPO in the areas inhabited by Ovambo and non-Ovambo, then we find out that SWAPO gains almost the same electoral support within all observed periods.

Although SWAPO has been talking for almost 25 years about the countrywide character of its party and carries out so called Namibization of the society, it fails to increase its political gains in non-Ovambo regions. Also the data about ethnical composition of the Namibian cabinet clearly indicate a rising tendency towards Ovamboization (the rise of representation of Ovambo from 47% to 67%). On the top of that, not only in Namibia but also in other clearly ethnic party systems it can be witnessed that the (ethnic) governing political powers try to integrate into the executive also the representatives of other ethnic

groups, in order to “weaken” the ethnical origin of the government and make impression of the multi-ethnic character of the government.

“The countrywide character” of SWAPO is then enhanced by the fact that SWAPO was a national liberation front that led the country to independence and the fact that Ovambo represent 51% of the Namibian population. For these reasons it is not necessary for the leading political elites of SWAPO to overly emphasise their ethnic origin as it is completely obvious and understandable to all voters.

If we leave aside Kenya (in which the author confirmed the ethnical character of the governing political parties) then it is only Ghana that shows electoral gains of the most powerful political parties also in the areas that are not their ethnic core regions. Nevertheless these results could be questioned in Ghana as well when we consider the ethnic composition of individual provinces (a significant migration wave has influenced the multi ethnical character of the provinces).

My argumentation can then be also supported by the fact that the electoral support of neither the NPP nor the NDC in individual provinces has changed significantly. Of course it can be other than ethnic factors that play a role in the stable support of the NPP and the NDC but should for example programmatic values of the Ghanaian political parties play a more significant role than more significant fluctuations than +/- 2-3 per cent would have been registered.

Elischer supports his results with the analysis of political parties and electoral programmes but in the reality of politics it can often be witnessed that even clearly ethnic political parties suppress in their basic party documents their “ethnic origin” with the goal to gain as many electoral votes as possible and they speak for the whole national population.

Probably a more unbiased source for identification of “ethnicity” of (not only) SWAPO would be a research aimed at the ethnic composition of the lower state structures revealing who is the head of administration in non-Ovambo provinces and mainly how are the state resources divided between Ovambo and non-Ovambo regions. Another argument could be the finding how important are ministries occupied by non-Ovambo and how other departments of so called wider governments are allocated (including the position of vice-ministers, etc.).

Another problematic area of the research is the author's emphasis on only the most powerful political parties. Should he have incorporated in the research the majority of parliament (possibly also the non-parliament) political parties, then he would no doubt have reached the opposite conclusion that the ethnic and multi-ethnic political parties still play a very important role in the political process in Africa. In Namibia alone there are about 20 active parliament and non-parliament political parties from which the vast majority has undoubtedly an ethnic character without a shade of doubt (Fiala 2013b: 83-128).

Though having certain doubt about the overall credibility of some of the above mentioned conclusions, I have to state that the reviewed book it is one of the best and complex contemporary analyses of the political partisanship today. S. Elischer has chosen a very in-depth composed methodology for the research, he carried out a very detailed research of three selected countries (a less detailed one of some other ones) and he has presented some new daring conclusions that are based on the carried out analysis and comparisons of the gained data. It is very probable that his findings will be confirmed by the development of the political partisanship in future decades (the transformation of ethnic/multi-ethnic parties into catch-all, or programmatic parties) and that his work is going to be considered pioneering in the future. Nevertheless in my opinion we are at the beginning of the process of the transformation.

I strongly recommend the reviewed publication not only to the specialized Africanist academic community including students but to all interested in political partisanship not only in non-European areas, but mainly in the Euro-American areas. A long time of overlooking the African political partisanship has finished and world experts on political parties and party systems should focus their attention on this fast developing continent.

Vlastimil Fiala

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Klíma, Jan. 2014. *Dějiny Kapverdských ostrovů, Svatého Tomáše a Princova ostrova* (History of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe). Praha: Lidové noviny, 278 pages.

Although Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe are small islands in the Atlantic Ocean, their history represents an important fragment of the mosaic history of sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, the Cape Verde islands are unique due to the harsh natural conditions that formed the population imported there by slave ships from all the countries of Africa, which unified the Portuguese rule. São Tomé and Príncipe are unique due to the tropical nature and the history of slavery, which have in the past made it into a significant exporter of cocoa.

The history of each nation is an important source for understanding the present and for understanding what direction it will develop in the future. In this category we can include the *History of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe* by Jan Klíma, who is a prominent expert on the history of Portugal and the Lusophone countries in Africa, the Americas and Asia.



The book describes the history of two countries, therefore it is divided into two separate sections. The first describes the history of Cape Verde and the second the history of São Tomé and Príncipe. At the beginning of each section there is a geographic summary, which allows the reader to classify both destinations according to geography and by fauna and flora.

The book provides a chronological order of events from the discovery of the islands, which launched the beginning of the history of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe through a dark period of colonialism, represented by the African slave trade, the decolonization process, and finishes with the current situation. Jan Klíma managed sensitively to link the history of both countries with the history of their former colonial power Portugal which is further connected through European and world history. The reader is surprised by the amount of detailed information on the history of the two countries, which testifies to the excellent work of the author with archival materials. São Tomé and Príncipe have been the site of some major historical events (such as the massacre Batepá) and other events of a curious nature (the establishment of diplomatic relations with Taiwan). The

History of Cape Verde surprises everyone, its peaceful decolonization, as well as the smooth transition from a one party system to a democracy, in which the alternation of power as a result of free elections is a common instrument of change. For political scientists and social researchers the chapter on decolonization and contemporary politics of both countries are particularly valuable. Czech readers will surely appreciate the chapter on the relations between the Czech Republic and the Cape Verde Islands. The most notable event in this chapter is the fact that Cape Verdeans were inspired by the Czech Sokol gymnastic movement system.

Each separate section of the book is provided with extensive annotations. The book also includes a detailed extensive register and list of sources and literature, which contains mainly Portuguese sources. The text book is appropriately complemented by illustrative photos. The book of Jan Klíma *History of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe* combines an interesting text for readers with scientifically relevant information.

Petr Sobotka

 **Shelands, Wealth and Work. 2014.  *Transformations in Dwars River Valley, Stellenbosch.* Ed. Kees (C.S.) van der Waal. Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal. viii, 247 pages.**

South Africa has been busy removing the injustices of the apartheid era for the past 20 years. The legacy of apartheid includes among others separate living of former population categories as they were defined and created by the apartheid regime. Separate living is closely connected with social class and income. In other words poverty and wealth have been distributed along the lines of divisions of population registration and group areas. As is well-known, “The New South Africa” instead of revolutionary expropriation of white capitalists chose a gradualist redistribution model combined with the adoption of the non-white elite into the neo-liberal capitalist system. Thus a minority of the formerly disadvantaged joined the middle and upper classes while the overwhelming majority still languish in poverty, are unemployed and have low social status.

The apartheid legislation was abolished a quarter of a century ago. Theoretically people formerly classified as white, coloured, black and Asians may live where they like. But this is easier said than done. The present reality of South Africa is that the geography of poverty and wealth continues to largely overlap with the long abolished categories. Affordability of right is more powerful than the right itself. One has the right to live better, and anywhere, but cannot afford it. To give an example leading us to the book under review, people formerly classified as coloured and black further stay in separate townships around Stellenbosch while middle class people formerly classified as white continue to inhabit their spacy and comfortable houses and flats in Stellenbosch town. There has been hardly any movement to town from townships and certainly no movement from town to townships!

The volume under review results from an interdisciplinary research by a group of investigators gathered around Kees van der Waal, a seasoned anthropological fieldworker based at the University of Stellenbosch. The subject of their research are people living in several villages in Dwars River Valley. These are people formerly classified as coloured. The valley is situated to the north, in the immediate vicinity of Stellenbosch, a wealthy town with a mostly “white” population. The process under study is transformations, a term used in South Africa for the active surmounting of the vestiges of apartheid. In concrete terms the research was focused on the social experience of transformation of the Dwars River Valley inhabitants. They have been living in the villages of Pniel, Kylemore, Lanquedoc because they were settled there as former slaves and since their liberation in the 19th century as workers in agricultural estates owned by whites. Private landownership emerged as a result of conquest by white settlers who came to this part of the Western Cape at the close of the 17th century, i.e. soon after the establishment of the first Dutch colony of Cape Town. The main agricultural products were wheat and wine, while wine has been today exported around the world. The Cape Winelands, to which the Dwars Rivier Valley belongs, is one of the most beautiful parts of South Africa because the undulating vineyard countryside, created by human activity, is surrounded by wild rocky peaks. Wine estates and some houses in Stellenbosch boast old Dutch colonial architecture which adds to the historical romantic impression of visitors. The latter are wealthy people, both South Africans and the ever increasing stream of foreigners.

While the transformation legislation has been aimed towards economic and social emancipation of the working population, the neoliberal capitalism following its inner logic opposes these official intentions and endeavours by actions leading to the financial maximisation of land use. The tendency is away from agricultural production towards lucrative recreational or permanent housing (gated communities), and land speculation. At the same time, some self-declared (white) philanthropists while developing highly profitable capitalist projects launch development schemes ostensibly aimed at improving the lot of (coloured) inhabitants of villages located on or near land estates owned by them. In the case of Solms-Delta Wine Estate, the paternalist owners went so far as making the workers co-owners of the estate. However, the decision-making remains firmly in the hands of Mr Solms and his partners.

The editor and the contributors to the volume under review are well aware of the ambiguities of both transformation and development concepts. The background for the implementation of socio-economic changes is continuous ownership of the best agricultural land by major private companies. The Boschendal estate comprising 9500 hectares changed owners three times during the last hundred years. Profitability has of course priority while improving the living standards of the workers living in the valley villages copies that what is politically correct in this or that time period. "Transition" for the present Boschendal owners does not really mean empowerment of the marginalized villagers but in fact boils down to enhancing profitability represented by property developments such as the Founders Estates, combined with the production of famous wines and some cattle breeding, in brief making the owners richer by way of orientating to rich customers, local and international. The opacity of neo-liberal meaning of "development" and "transformation" is obvious.

While the volume is able to reveal the perversion of post-apartheid South Africa in the example of Dwars River Valley, it seems to be satisfied with lamenting. No way out of the highly contradictory, in fact mutually opposed, predicament is offered or even attempted. This, unfortunately, is the dilemma of South African academia. Academics are part of the local middle class and as such are unable to seek radical or revolutionary solutions.

Helplessness is not limited to the authors of the chapters, it is characteristic of the de facto segregated inhabitants of the valley villages as well. These people are pictured as seeking merely symptomatic remedies such as neighbourhood watch or female entrepreneurship. But these are at best small exercises in nascent empowerment. The underdog position remains unchanged, masters-landowners can continue with their sinister scheming. The excellent chapter by Tracey Randle documents certain social mobility features, especially in Pniel. “Slow violence”, the term coined by R. Nixon, is shown by Randle graphically in the case of retrenched forestry workers who applied for state-owned Meerlust Bosbou land on which their houses stood. Although the government supported this application and even planned to build additional 600 houses, the commercial farmers in the vicinity quickly formed a landowners’ association in order to prevent the social housing development under the pretext that the value of their properties would go down. These landowners, no doubt rich whites (the book carefully, and politically correctly, avoids using the apartheid population categories), won and the housing project was suspended. Randle nevertheless believes in “new futures and solutions” of the legacy of slow violence in Dwars River Valley.

Another chapter on slow violence of poverty is by a psycho-ethnographer Lou-Marié Kruger. This experienced researcher draws a vivid picture of what I would call the practice of poverty and wonders to what extent researchers reproduce and produce societal discourses and thus contribute to the misrecognition of the poor while economic liberalisation advances. The afterword by Steven Robins, professor of social anthropology at Stellenbosch, praises the book for showing the complexities of the historically evolved inequalities and cases of agency. Though whether sustainable development will indeed take place in Dwars River communities is a question for him. Personally I believe that dependency path of previous and current capitalism in South Africa does not allow more than a very slow process of empowerment by way of paternalistic interventions.

The book is richly illustrated by colour and black and white photographs; there is a detailed index at the end of the book.

Petr Skalník