

D+C

MONTHLY E-PAPER

DEVELOPMENT AND
COOPERATION

ENTWICKLUNG UND
ZUSAMMENARBEIT

D+C

E+Z

International
Journal

ISSN
2366-7257
August 2020

SUMMER SPECIAL I

New film tackles threat
of Islamist violence in
Senegal

SUMMER SPECIAL II

Impressive novel
conveys what goes on
in a terrorist's mind

SUMMER SPECIAL III

Tragic love story
between rich and poor
in Nigeria



Traumatised nations

Summer Special

Reviews of Mamadou Dia's film "Baamum Nafi", Amitav Ghosh's novel "Gun island", Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio's novel "Alma", Oyinkan Braithwaite's novel "My sister, the serial killer", Yasmina Khadra's novel "Khalil" and Chigozie Obioma's novel "An orchestra of minorities" | Nowadays: Drone use in Malawi | Imprint 4

Debate

Comment on Black Lives Matter protests 13

Focus section: Traumatised nations

DARLEEN SEDA
The conundrum of the ICC and Afghanistan 15

INTERVIEW WITH ARFA KHANUM SHERWANI
Why some Indian Hindus want to see Muslims suffer 17

RUKAMANEE MAHARJAN
Coming to terms with sexualised violence perpetrated in Nepal's civil war 19

SHEILA MYSOREKAR
Demanding justice after Argentina's military dictatorship 21

ISABELLA BAUER
Remembering life under Idi Amin in Uganda 23

HENNING MELBER
Why Germany should support land reform in Namibia 24

MIRIAM MODALAL AND DALILAH REUBEN-SHEMIA
Addressing Lebanon's collective trauma 26

FLORIAN GAISRUCKER
Relevant reading: Joint report of UN and World Bank on peacebuilding 28

Covid-19 diary

KATIE CASHMAN
Building back better: stimulus spending and climate protection 29

ALMUT SCHNERRING AND SASCHA VERLAN
Unfair distribution of care work becomes obvious in pandemic 30

RAPHAEL MWENINGUWE
Malawi's new president faces daunting challenges 32

KATHARINA MICHAELOWA AND MARTINA ZAHNO
Indoor air pollution increases Covid-19 risks in India 33

Traumatised nations

Afghan conundrum

Prosecuting war crimes can make peacebuilding more difficult in the short run, but in the long run, justice is needed. In regard to Afghanistan, the International Criminal Court has no easy option, argues Darleen Seda, a Kenyan lawyer. **PAGE 15**

South Asian wounds

Arfa Khanum Sherwani, an Indian journalist, elaborates in an interview why some Hindus are eager to see their Muslim compatriots suffer. In Nepal, sexualised violence was wide-spread in the country's civil war. The phenomenon is largely hushed up – and that makes it even harder for victims to come to terms with their traumas. Law scholar Rukamane Mahajan assesses matters. **PAGES 17, 19**

Remembrance matters

Argentina's military regime was murderous in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Some 30,000 people were killed. Civic activism is making sure that they are not forgotten and the perpetrators are punished, reports journalist Sheila Mysorekar. **PAGE 21**

Life under Idi Amin

Isabella Bauer, a German author, visited the first photo exhibition that dealt with Uganda's dictatorship in the 1970s. The National Museum organised it in Kampala to help people grapple with their country's past. **PAGE 23**

Redistribute farm land

What is now Namibia used to be a German colony and was later controlled by Apartheid South Africa. Dispossessed ethnic groups are still marginalised. Henning Melber, a political scientist, explains why Germany's Federal Government would do well to support land reforms. **PAGE 24**

Collective memories

In Lebanon, peace work after the civil war contributes to a healing process of collective trauma. It is essential that people understand how individual and social identities are influenced by the past. Miriam Modalal of forumZFD, an international NGO, and Dalilah Reuben-Shemia, a peace researcher, discuss the experience made. **PAGE 26**

Belonging together

Nations are nothing natural. They are “imagined communities” created by human beings, as Benedict Anderson prominently wrote. A nation becomes real when a sufficient number of people identify with it. It does not simply result from people speaking the same language, living in the same geographic space, adhering to the same religious faith or sharing cultural traditions.

Consider Switzerland. Its official languages are German, French, Italian and Romansh, which is spoken by a very small minority. Its people live on different sides of the Alps, which are less a shared region than Europe’s most massive natural border. Each of the three major linguistic groups has a lot in common with the large neighbouring country that uses the same language. Almost 40% of the Swiss are Catholic, 30% are Protestant and 20% do not adhere to any religious faith.

By European standards, Switzerland is unusually diverse, but also unusually stable. The Swiss have a long history of emphasising local-level self-rule and defining themselves as independent of Europe’s major powers. Their sense of nationhood is strong – and closely linked to the country’s constitutional order. A strong sense of nationhood serves as an immunisation against fragile statehood. Where people accept that they belong to an imagined community and share its fate, violence strife is less likely than where they lack such a sense of belonging. In its absence, crises of legitimacy can result in terrible. A recent European example was Yugoslavia’s disintegration in the 1990s.

Conceptually, the terms “peacebuilding”, “statebuilding” and “nationbuilding” have considerable overlap. The reasons are that non-violent resolution of conflict is more likely where the state commands a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and that a shared national identity makes people less disposed to taking up arms against one another or against the state.

After traumatic socio-political disasters such as civil war or dictatorship, all three matter: peacebuilding, statebuilding and nationbuilding. Since they are mutually reinforcing, it is not important to figure out what comes first. Action to promote one indirectly promotes the other two, and the essential thing is to promote them all to the maximum extent possible.

The history of high-income countries shows that nationhood fosters two kinds of solidarity. One is the solidarity against other countries and foreigners, which can become quite aggressive. The other is welfare-state solidarity, defending compatriots from desperate need. Today’s right-wing populists link both varieties in a perfidious way. They claim that immigrants and other minorities only want to exploit the government-funded safety nets which, according to populist narratives, should only serve the nation understood as a homogenous entity. The irony is that this kind of agitation is divisive. It undermines people’s sense of belonging together and weakens institutions.

Traumatised nations do not need scapegoating but reconciliation. Acceptance of the historical truth is necessary, and so is trust in institutions and the rule of law. For these things to come about, people must feel secure. It is a fallacy to believe that effective social-protection systems are basically the reward for strong nation- and statehood. They are also preconditions for nation- and statehood. In post-crisis countries, the international community should not only try to provide military security. Efforts to establish social security would serve peace and nation building.

► You’ll find all contributions of our focus section plus related ones on our website – they’ll be compiled in next month’s briefing section.



HANS DEMBOWSKI
is editor in chief of *D+C Development and Cooperation* / *E+Z Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit*.
euz.editor@dandc.eu

Photos: picture alliance/AA; Sushavan Nandy/picture-alliance/NurPhoto

Summer Special



Kolkata, New York, Venice

Amitav Ghosh’s most recent novel “Gun island” deals with the issue of global heating. This is an interesting choice, because the Indian novelist had previously argued that this topic was impossible to tackle in serious fiction writing. Review by Hans Dembowski.

PAGE 7

Tale of a man-murdering Nigerian

African literature is often heavy and tragic. Young Nigerian author Oyinkan Braithwaite shows in her debut novel that it is not always the case: she has written a funny, entertaining story about a man-murdering beauty and her sister. Review by Sabine Balk.

PAGE 9

Covid-19 diary



Build back better

The International Energy Agency (IEA) wants governments around the world to use stimulus money for the dual purpose of escaping the Covid-19 slump and protecting the climate. Its advice makes sense, argues Katie Cashman of 2811, an environmental civil-society organisation in Chile.

PAGE 29



Summer Special

This year's summer special comprises of a mix of artistic works once more: the editorial team of D+C/E+Z presents books and a film, all of them tackling issues of developmental relevance. We would be pleased if our recommendations inspired you, our readers, to read or watch one of the reviewed works.

SUMMER SPECIAL

A battle for the soul of Islam

Violent Islamist fundamentalism has not yet come to Senegal, but it could – just as it has in Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. A fascinating new feature film from Senegal shows how it could happen.

By Aviva Freudmann

The Islamist fundamentalists came into town softly at first, bearing cash and gifts. They slowly won the favour of townspeople and gained authority. And then they took control – imposing a harsh and violent rule on unsuspecting people who had practiced a gentle form of Islam for centuries.

That is the main story line of a gripping new film by a young Senegalese filmmaker, Mamadou Dia. The film was shown in February at the Film Museum in Frankfurt in the presence of the director, who spoke with the audience afterwards about what he has to say in this film, and why.

On one level the film, titled “Baamum Nafi” (“Nafi’s father”), is a family drama. It concerns two brothers, one known only as “the Tierno”, the town’s long-serving Imam, who leads his people with a gentle hand. The Tierno, a much-loved but somewhat weak figure, has lived in the town all his life.

His older brother, Ousmane, on the other hand, received their father’s support to travel abroad and expand his horizons. Ousmane became a follower of a radical fundamentalist known only as “the Sheikh”. He returned to his home town as an agent of the Sheikh, bringing with him the violent jihadist’s cash and gifts with which to buy influence, and a band of thugs with whom to take control.

Complicating matters is that the two brothers are also fathers, and their teenage children – the Tierno’s daughter Nafi and Ousmane’s son Tokara – are in love and wish to marry. In view of their traditionalist families, the kids are quite avant-garde: the beautiful and intelligent Nafi wishes to study medicine in Dakar and become a doctor, and the gentle and talented Tokara wishes to study dance and become a profes-

sional dancer. They support each other in their aspirations.

The two fathers are unaware of these modernist winds blowing through their own homes. They are focused on their struggles



Film director Mamadou Dia speaking to an audience at Frankfurt’s Film Museum.

with each other: the Tierno’s bitterness that he did not have Ousmane’s opportunities in the world; their differences over how the wedding of their children should be conducted; and their battle to control the town and determine how Islam will be practiced there.

The Tierno is clearly the more sympathetic of the two brothers. But the townspeople, blinded by cash gifts and by arguments about “true Islam” meant to undermine the Tierno’s authority, gradually shift to Ousmane’s camp.

Then the dark side of Islamist fundamentalism starts to appear. Women are required to cover themselves from head to toe with chadors. Forced marriages take place in a mass ceremony. Girls skipping rope run away when the religious overseers approach, knowing that anything that looks like fun is against the new rules. Unmarried couples holding hands in public are seen as a problem.

It gets worse. A petty thief is punished harshly; one sees a sword coming down, and while a severed hand is not shown, viewers get the idea. A town that was previously easy-going and tolerant turns into a fearful place gripped by corrupt, power-mad rulers using religion to impose a reign of terror.

Clearly, a new interpretation of Islam has taken hold. The townspeople are ambivalent; many were taken by surprise. At one point the two brothers debate what Islam actually means. Is it a religion of tolerance and charity, as the Tierno understands it? Or is it a harsh system of rules based on strict interpretation and punitive application of Koranic precepts, as seen by Ousmane?

The film ultimately is a tragedy. To be able to marry, Nafi and Tokara carry out a trick to get around Islamist rules. The gambit ends badly. But towards the end, Nafi does go off to the University and one gets the sense that many townspeople have come to see the reign of terror for what it is, and turn against it.

Interestingly, this film was made in Mamadou Dia’s home town of Matam, in northeastern Senegal, right on the border of Mauritania. Only two professional actors were in – those portraying the two brothers. Everyone else in the film is a resident of Matam.

That arrangement gives the film a documentary aspect – showing daily life in a small town – while weaving in fictional elements to show how violent Islamism can infiltrate a peaceful town. It also meant Dia – who previously worked as a journalist across Africa – could produce his first feature-length film on a low budget.

In his comments to the audience in Frankfurt after the screening, Dia explained why he made this film. “In 2014 I went to



A small town is used to showcase how Islam is lived peacefully in northeastern Senegal.

New York to study film. Every time I said I am a Muslim, people had a certain idea of what that is, and I had to explain, ‘no, Senegal is different, that is not how we live Islam.’” Senegal is officially a secular state and

it outlaws violent fundamentalism. In local towns, the practice of Islam is often mixed with pre-Islamic traditions.

Dia noted that fundamentalism is an interpretation of Islam and is not necessar-

ily linked to violence. “There are a billion Muslims in the world. There is not just one type of Muslim; there is a whole range. In Senegal, we call Muslims who eat pork and drink alcohol ‘Muslims of the left’, and there are many other types as well. The one percent of Muslims who go around killing people, the so-called Jihadists, kill more Muslims than any other religion.”

In response to an audience member from Mali, who noted that violent Islamism has infiltrated much of the Sahel region including Mali, Dia said: “Senegal is not safer or stronger than Mali or Burkina Faso. We all want to live in peaceful places. Senegal is secular and extremism hasn’t happened yet. I wanted to tell the people of Senegal not to wait for extremism to hit before we talk about it. That is why I made the film: to get the debate started.”

FILM

Baamum Nafi (Nafi’s father), 2019, Senegal, director: Mamadou Dia.

Photo: Joyvedici

FREE PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS

We are updating our mailing list. Any institution involved in global development affairs can currently subscribe to the print edition of D+C free of charge, and so can any person who has a serious interest in the matter in a professional or volunteering capacity. To get free copies of our future print issues, please sign up at:

www.dandc.eu/en/dc-subscription

The print issues do not include everything we post on our website (www.dandc.eu), but they are useful in terms of documenting important aspects of global debate long term.



SUMMER SPECIAL

Kolkata, New York, Venice

Amitav Ghosh's most recent novel "Gun island" deals with the issue of global heating. This is an interesting choice, because the Indian novelist had previously argued that this topic was impossible to tackle in serious fiction writing.

By Hans Dembowski

In "The great derangement", an essay Ghosh published in 2017, he wrote that factual reality of the climate crisis exceeded the scope of a novel (see D+C/E+Z blogpost from 19 November 2018). For one thing, environmental change was a global phenomenon, he pointed out, while novels were expected to deal with a specific time and place. Moreover, Ghosh wrote back then, the impacts of global heating seem to be unthinkable.

The author has now convincingly risen to those challenges. "Gun island" tackles the global phenomenon from a distinctly Bengali perspective. The first chapters are set in Kolkata and a remote island in the Ganges Delta, where storms are intensifying, coasts are being eroded and biodiversity is dwindling. This beautiful, but constantly shifting and dangerous landscape was the location of an earlier Ghosh novel, "The hungry tide" (2004). Some characters from "The hungry tide" reappear – and it becomes clear that life has become ever more precarious.

Young men in particular are eager to leave. Ghosh traces two of them as they attempt to get to Italy. On their trip, they join Bangladeshis and easily blend in with them. The novelist shows that national borders are erratic results of history rather than anything one might consider natural.

One of Ghosh's two migrants from West Bengal makes it to Venice, an ancient city threatened by the rising sea level. As has become typical of Italy, this city has a considerable community of Bangladesh immigrants, most of whom do poorly paying menial jobs, typically without any legal protection. Ghosh's other young man is diverted to Egypt, from where he tries to get to Italy too.

There is another kind of migration however. Some of Ghosh's protagonists are

academically successful Bengalis with careers in the USA. The lead protagonist is a Bengali scholar who has become a New York City-based rare-bookseller. Crucial scenes of the novel play in a wild-fire engulfed Los Angeles.

During a short stay in Venice, the bookseller meets the illegal immigrant by coincidence. They know one another from a dramatic encounter in the Ganges Delta which culminated in a person being bitten by a cobra and only barely surviving.



Threatened environment: eroding shoreline of a Sundarban island in the Ganges Delta.

A leitmotif of "Gun island" is a popular Bengali legend about a merchant who is hounded by a snake goddess. The merchant tries to escape and goes on an adventurous journey overseas which to some extent resembles Homer's Odyssey.

The novel starts with the bookseller becoming interested in the myth once more. His PhD thesis had shown that the legend probably originated during the little ice age of the 17th century, when failed harvests and other calamities caused serious problems all over the world – including the 30-years war in Germany (see Hans Dembowski in Monitor section of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2017/10).

As "Gun island" progresses, the bookseller eventually concludes that the legendary merchant himself must have found his way to Venice.

As the plot unfolds, the bookseller's life story begins to resemble the merchants' Odyssey. He keeps encountering poisonous creatures and only narrowly escapes. He sticks to rational reasoning as an academically trained person should, but he increasingly becomes aware of the relevance of premonition and the scope for supernatural experience in human life.

There is thus a spiritual dimension to the book, and that fits another point Ghosh made in the "The great derangement". In view of the current crises humanity is facing, he finds the pronouncements of faith leaders, and in particular Pope Francis,

more convincing than the language of multi-lateral agreements and government policies.

The plot has many surprising twists, but the general setting is plausible. Though the happy ending is tinged by death, it resembles religious miracle narratives and is perhaps a bit too euphoric.

BOOKS

Ghosh, A., 2019: Gun island. London, John Murray.

Ghosh, A., 2017: The great derangement. Chicago, University Press.

Ghosh, A., 2005 (paperback): The hungry tide. London, HarperCollins.

SUMMER SPECIAL

The shattered soul of Mauritius

The novel “Alma” describes a search for a lost time, which was itself thoroughly post-paradisal.

By Katja Dombrowski

Five hundred years ago, the island of Mauritius must have been a paradise. There were no people or other predators. The island was divided between giant tortoises and dodos, flightless birds that were about one meter tall. Then came the Europeans. The list of things that were destroyed by them and the animals they introduced is long; it includes the giant tortoises and the giant birds. The latter were only found there. They are thought to have gone extinct around the end of the 17th century.

Today, the dodo is the national animal of Mauritius and a symbol of a lost paradise. Therefore it is no surprise that it plays an important role in the latest novel by Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio: the protagonist, Jérémie Felsen, a French scientist, travels to Mauritius in order, ostensibly, to search for traces of the dodo. In reality, he is searching for the history of his family. The novel is named after the estate that his family lived on for generations: Alma. This homeland was also a victim of destruction.

And there is one more dodo in the book: it is the nickname of Dominique Felsen, the other first-person narrator, who comes from the “wayward branch” of the family. Dodo, who grew up in Alma and is inextricably linked with Mauritius, tells his own, personal story, which is marked by illness, poverty and exclusion. He also sets off on a journey, but in the other direction: to France. Both stories run parallel to one another, with the family story providing points of contact.

It is obvious that Le Clézio’s personal history played a big role in the creation of the novel. The 80-year-old author, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2008, has his own family roots in Mauritius. He lived there for a time as a child and is a citizen of both France and the island nation. He visits Mauritius regularly, and several of his novels and stories take place there. Travel



The extinct dodo is the national animal of Mauritius and a symbol of a lost paradise.

and departure, nature and its destruction, a comparison of different ways of life, colonialism and its consequences: many of the themes that Le Clézio explores in his other books also recur in this late work.

In “Alma”, Mauritius is, on the one hand, a place of longing and the antithesis to life in Europe. On the other hand, the paradise has been destroyed, which the

Felsen family is partly responsible for, at least indirectly. Racism and inequality, the consequences of colonial rule and slavery, persist in present-day society. When the descendants of the white plantation owners have a party, the mess is cleaned up by the descendants of the African slaves who were forced to toil on the plantations. Their children are only allowed to watch from the other side of the fence. A Dutch pilot exploits an underage prostitute whom Jérémie Felsen himself has his eye on. Reprehensible behaviour in this novel is never confined to the behaviour of others: the protagonist is part of the problem and knows it.

It is also clear in Le Clézio’s work that society is not just black and white, but multi-coloured. One example is the character of Aditi, the descendant of Indian plantation workers who came to Mauritius after slavery was abolished. They surely came out of desperation, but not by force, which is nevertheless progress. Nowadays Mauritians of Indian descent make up around two-thirds of the population and dominate the politics and economy of the island nation.

After she is raped, Aditi takes her life into her own hands. She defies social conventions and lives in the forest, where she also gives birth to her child alone. This connection to nature, which stands in opposition to Europe’s urban and technology-driven lifestyle, is another strong theme in Le Clézio’s work. But in modern Mauritius, shopping centres, streets and hotels are sprouting up everywhere. The world that Jérémie Felsen is looking for is in the process of disappearing. At the end of the story it is clear that what little of paradise remains will inevitably be lost. Dodo ends

up in an asylum for poor and mentally ill people in Paris, and Jérémie returns to his old life following his “pilgrimage”. He is done with the island. And thus concludes the story of the Felsen family in Mauritius.

NOVEL

Le Clézio, J. M. G., 2020: *Alma*. Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Cologne. (French original from 2017)

SUMMER SPECIAL

Murder, sex and a special sibling relationship

African literature can often be heavy and tragic. Young Nigerian author Oyinkan Braithwaite shows in her debut novel that it is not always the case: she has written a funny, entertaining story about a man-murdering beauty and her sister.

By Sabine Balk

The title makes it immediately clear what the story is about: “My sister, the serial killer”. And the novel begins in medias res. Korede is called to a crime scene by her sister Ayoola: the apartment of Ayoola’s lover Femi somewhere in Nigeria’s capital Lagos. Ayoola has “accidentally” stabbed Femi and needs Korede’s help. Horrified though she is by her sister’s crime, Korede helps her dispose of the body and meticulously clean the crime scene of all evidence.

The murders committed by Korede’s beautiful young sister are farcical crimes, and so is the way she deals with them. Ayoola has no sense of guilt, she even denies that the murders of her lovers happened on purpose. But the reasons she gives are pretty flimsy. The setting is reminiscent of a Quentin Tarantino film.

Actually, the story does not really centre on Ayoola’s crimes. The main focus is the relationship between the sisters. In the course of the book, it becomes increasingly apparent how different the two women are. Ayoola, the younger sibling, is stunningly beautiful and captures the heart of every man who lays eyes on her. She does not think much of men. She uses them to get what she wants – and they are so blinded by her beauty that they never notice. That cold indifference also explains why she has no moral qualms about killing them. If she has a problem (like a new murder) she calls her older sister.

Korede is the opposite of Ayoola. She is conscientious, dependable, circumspect. In looks, she is unremarkable, tall and angular. Korede works as a hospital nurse and is on

the brink of being promoted to head nurse. She gets angry at Ayoola, who is always causing difficulties for her, and yet she still feels responsible for her.

Korede is secretly in love with the good-looking doctor Tade but he sees her only as a chum. When Tade meets Ayoola

rupt. When Korede is pulled over in a police road check in the car she used to transport Femi’s body, she gets scared. But she knows how to deal with this kind of official and puts on a submissive show. It works; she is allowed to drive on unchecked.

Oyinkan Braithwaite was born in Lagos in 1988 and spent her childhood in Nigeria and Britain. She studied law and creative writing in Surrey and London and has lived in Lagos since 2012. On the background to her book, Braithwaite told the British daily *The Guardian* that she almost failed in her ambitions. She had set out to write a great novel but found herself blocked. Around her 30th birthday, she finally gave up. As *The Guardian* reports, she told herself “Just



The novel “My Sister, the Serial Killer” does not show the Nigerian police in a good light.

– and naturally falls head over heels in love with her – the relationship between the sisters is sorely tested.

Apart from the siblings’ relationship, the book shines a light on the relationship between men and women. On the one hand, there are Ayoola’s lovers; on the other, there are also a number of police officers – all of them men – who do not come off well in the book. They are portrayed as dumb and cor-

rupt. The result was not the great profound novel that explains the world but an entertaining crime novel that is a pleasure to read. It will be interesting to see what else this up-and-coming writer produces.

BOOK

Braithwaite, O., 2018: *My sister, the serial killer*. London, Atlantic Books.

SUMMER SPECIAL

Khalil – inside a terrorist’s mind

In November 2015, terrorist attacks in the heart of Europe shook the world. What motivates a young man to board a packed train with an explosive belt around his middle with the aim of killing himself and taking as many innocent victims as possible with him? The Algerian author Mohammed Moulessehoul, writing under the pseudonym Yasmina Khadra, tells the story of Khalil from the perspective of the terrorist himself.

By Dagmar Wolf

Cheering and celebrating people fill the streets of Paris. Football fans stream into the Stade de France under the watchful eyes of security forces. People sit in bars and cafés, enjoying their evening. Meanwhile,



A café on the Place des Abesses, similar to many cafés where Parisians enjoyed their evening on 13 November 2015.

four “brothers” from the Brussels suburb of Molenbeek, are on their way to the scene. One of the young assassins is Khalil, the protagonist of the novel. Two of the “brothers”, whom Khalil does not know, get out of the car at the Stade de France and disappear into the crowd. In a few minutes, the French capital will be transformed: openness, joie

de vivre and the lightness of being will give way to fear, mistrust and controls.

Khalil and his childhood friend Driss know this. They talk about what is going to happen. They are convinced that they are doing the right thing. “For the first time in my life, I feel important,” says Khalil as he hugs his friend. Then he slips into the train station and squeezes into a suburban train crowded with commuters at the end of the day. Surrounded by people, he gropes for the trigger on his explosive belt and presses the button – determined to blow himself up and take as many people as possible with him.

But nothing happens. Stunned, almost panicking, Khalil keeps pressing the button, but the ignition mechanism is not triggered. What now? Together with Driss, he had pre-

pared for weeks for this mission; failure was never an option.

Helplessly, Khalil wanders through Paris. Desperation and self-doubt plague him. He finally succeeds in returning to Molenbeek. There, he tries to contact the “brothers”. He wants to make it clear to them that the failure was not his fault.

Through the first-person narrative, Khadra leads us into the thoughts of the 23-year-old Khalil, who lives as the son of immigrants in Molenbeek. Khalil despises the life of his parents, who come from a village in Morocco and, in his eyes, will never amount to anything. He has a bad relationship with his family, feeling misunderstood and hating his father. His twin sister Zhara is the only one to whom he feels close.

Khalil ends up on the street. He sees no meaning in his life, seems not to belong to society, feels like a parasite – that is the ideal breeding ground for the ideologies of extremist organisations. Khalil’s lack of self-esteem is compensated for by the so-called “brothers”. In the mosque he finds security and the feeling of being part of a strong community: “I wandered around blindly for a long time, looking for the right path,” says Khalil. “The brothers showed me the way, and for the first time in my life I felt taken seriously.”

Through the novel, the reader experiences Khalil’s radicalisation. The author does not sympathise with his protagonist, but he does not condemn him either, although as a high officer in the Algerian army, he fought against Islamists himself. Khadra rather seeks the human being in Khalil.

The author sees his novel as an “anti-radicalisation book”. In an interview he said that he would like his novel to become compulsory reading in schools. For Khadra, there is nothing more valuable than life. He hopes to convey this message to young readers so that they will not be blinded by extremist leaders’ seductive speeches.

Khalil loses contact with his family and argues with his twin sister, who later falls victim to a terrorist attack in Brussels. However, Khalil only finds out about this by chance after the funeral. Angry at his family and society, he sits at her grave and mourns.

The “brothers” give Khalil a second chance after his failed attack: the organisation is planning attacks in Marrakech in which Khalil is to play a central role. Will he carry out his mission this time?

BOOK

Khadra, Y., 2018: *Khalil*. Paris, Julliard. (The english version will be published in November 2020 by Nan A. Talese, New York.)

SUMMER SPECIAL

Descent into hell

“An orchestra of minorities” is Nigerian author Chigozie Obioma’s second novel and, like the first, has drawn international acclaim. It tells the story of uneducated chicken farmer Chinonso, who falls in love with a young woman from an upper class Nigerian family. But it is not a light summer read. Love brings trouble and tragedy for Chinonso.

By Linda Engel

The plot has a fairy-tale ring to it: a young woman from a wealthy family is persuaded not to jump off a bridge by a simple poultry farmer, and the two fall in love. However, it very quickly becomes apparent that this is no fairy-tale novel. The reader watches as Chinonso embarks on a road to self-destruction, giving up his life for the woman he loves. In places, it is painful to read on – but it is even harder to put the book down.

From the outset it is clear that the family of Chinonso’s lover, Ndali, finds her relationship with an uneducated man unacceptable. Chinonso makes a living from raising chickens and growing a few crops. Which in 2007 – the year in which the book is set – also makes him an undesirable suitor in the eyes of the Nigerian upper class. Chinonso is not only mocked and ridiculed but receives dire threats. His response is to make plans to study for a degree in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. An old school friend – in an apparent act of kindness – helps him make the preparations. Chinonso sells everything he has – the family compound, his home and his chickens – before even telling his lover of his plans. He wants to return to Nigeria as an educated man with excellent job prospects.

On the outward flight, Chinonso realises something is wrong when he meets fellow Nigerians who give grim descriptions of the country his friend portrayed as a promised land. During the stopover in Istanbul, he finds his friend is no longer reachable. He has disappeared and most of Chinonso’s money has gone with him.

“An orchestra of minorities” is Obioma’s second book and, like his debut novel,

was shortlisted for the prestigious British Man Booker Prize (see Sabine Balk, Summer Special, D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2019/08). The story is inspired by true events. Obioma himself studied in Northern Cyprus and met many compatriots who had lost money to middlemen.



Chickens are protagonist Chinonso’s best friends.

Europe, the land of promise, becomes a nightmare for Chinonso. The young man, with no great ambition, wanting only to be with the love of his life, becomes a broken wreck, stranded in a hostile country.

Chinonso is a bit like his livestock, the helpless chickens he has farmed since early childhood. Along with many other stranded souls, he belongs to the “minorities of this world whose only recourse was to join this universal orchestra in which all there was to do was cry and wail”.

At many points in the book, the protagonist remains silent, resigned to his fate – which sometimes infuriates the reader. When Chinonso realises he has been cheated, he does not tell his lover and does not ask for help. He is ashamed and tries to overcome his problems alone. That proves to be a mistake because before long there is no way at all he can contact Ndali.

Even his “chi”, his guardian spirit, who is the narrator of the story, cannot prevent that. In the Igbo culture to which the protagonist belongs, everyone has a chi. Hearing the story from the chi is sometimes amusing

but the excursions to the spirit world can be exhausting, especially for a reader with little knowledge of Igbo language and culture.

From the outset, the narrative perspective makes it clear there is virtually no chance of Chinonso’s life turning around. Readers who tend towards Weltschmerz and pessimism will find plenty to feed their world view in this book.

BOOK

Obioma, C., 2019: *An orchestra of minorities*. Boston, Little, Brown and Company.

Help from the sky

Malawi is establishing itself as a centre of excellence in the design and use of drones – unmanned aerial systems that can quickly collect geological and climate information, take aerial photos and deliver critically needed supplies.

This year Malawi opened a new training centre for the development of drone technology and for the analysis and visual presentation of data collected by drones. The centre – the African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) – is supported by Unicef, the UN agency for children, and by aid organisations from several countries.

Malawi has also created a corridor to test drone flights for humanitarian purposes. The corridor – for drone flights within a restricted zone up to 400 meters above ground level – is located near Kasungu airport in the Central Region. A student working there has built a drone that flew 17 kilometres, Unicef says.

The aims of both the air corridor and the ADDA training centre include speeding deliveries of critical items such

as laboratory samples and emergency medical supplies to and from all parts of the country, and ultimately all parts of Africa. Many remote areas rely on much slower road and ferry transport.

Drones are also used to collect data that helps to prevent and respond to natural disasters such as droughts and floods. For example, the devices collect data that pinpoint mosquito-breeding sites so that officials can fight malaria and other diseases more effectively.

ADDA supports these aims by responding to “a lack of skills in drone and data technology in Malawi and the wider African continent,” says Rebecca Phwitiko from Unicef. Developing drone technology for humanitarian purposes fits in well with the agency’s mission to improve the lives of children. “We want to advance technologies that deliver services more effectively to hard-to-reach communities,” says Phwitiko. “This includes new products and programming that support children’s growth, development, education and protection.”

The ADDA trainees are Africans aged between 18 and 24 years who can show proficiency in English. Students also must have university training in a field of science, technology, engineering or mathematics or equivalent practical experience.

The first cohort has already received certificates for completing ADDA courses in drone technology and data analysis. Those students can now use their skills in their home countries, which include Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Botswana, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and host country Malawi.

In all of these countries, poor transport links can delay supplies of critically needed items and medicines such as malaria drugs, antibiotics, blood transfusion kits and vaccines. Especially in poor and remote communities, health care can be hard to find. With Malawi’s drone technology and training initiatives, help may soon come from the sky.



RAPHAEL MWENINGUWE is a freelance journalist based in Malawi.
raphael.mweninguwe@hotmail.com

IMPRINT

D+C DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION
 Vol. 47, 2020
 D+C is the identical twin of the German edition E+Z
 Internet: www.DandC.eu
 ISSN 2366-7257
 The production of this e-Paper was completed on 31.8.2020.

D+C Development and Cooperation is funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and commissioned by ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL. D+C does not serve as a governmental mouthpiece. Our mission is to provide a credible forum of debate, involving governments, civil society, the private sector and academia at an international level. D+C is the identical twin of E+Z Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit, the German edition.

ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH
 Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen
 Tulpenfeld 7
 D-53113 Bonn
 Phone: +49 (0) 2 28 2 07 17-0
 Fax: +49 (0) 2 28 2 07 17-150
www.engagement-global.de

ADVISORY BOARD:
 Thomas Loster, Prof. Dr. Katharina Michaelowa,
 Dr. Susanne Neubert, Prof. Dr. Imme Scholz, Hugh Williamson

PUBLISHER:
 FAZIT Communication GmbH
 Executive director: Hannes Ludwig

ADDRESS OF THE PUBLISHER AND EDITORIAL OFFICE:
 Frankenallee 71–81, D-60327 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

This is also the legally relevant address of all indicated as responsible or entitled to represent them in this imprint.

EDITORIAL OFFICE:
 Dr. Hans Dembowski (editor-in-chief), Dagmar Wolf (assistant)
 Freelance support: Sabine Balk, Katja Dombrowski,
 Aviva Freudmann, Monika Hellstern (social media),
 Jan Walter Hofmann (layout), Malcom Bell (translation),
 Claire Davis (translation)
 Phone: +49 (0) 69 75 91-31 10
euz.editor@dandc.eu

Disclaimer according to § 5,2 Hessian Law on the Freedom and Rights of the Press: The shareholders of the company are Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH (40%) and Frankfurter Societät GmbH (60%).

ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE:
 FAZIT Communication GmbH
 c/o InTime Media Services GmbH
 PO Box 1363
 D-82034 Deisenhofen, Germany
 Phone: +49 (0) 89 8 58 53-8 32
 Fax: +49 (0) 89 8 58 53-6 28 32
fazit-com@intime-media-services.de

PRINTING:
 Westdeutsche Verlags- und Druckerei GmbH
 Kurhessenstraße 46
 D-64546 Mörfelden-Walldorf, Germany

Opinions expressed by authors indicated in bylines do not necessarily reflect the views of ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL, the publisher or the editor and his team. Provided that they indicate the original source, third parties have the permission to republish in complete or abridged versions the manuscripts published by D+C Development and Cooperation and E+Z Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit. However, those who do so are requested to send the editorial office two hard copies and/or the links to the respective webpages. This general permission does not apply to illustrations, maps and other items with explicitly and separately marked copyright disclaimers.

PRICES (INCL. MAILING CHARGES):
 single issue: € 2.20
 annual subscription, Germany: € 14.00
 annual subscription, world: € 18.00

LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

Black lives matter

King Philippe of Belgium has expressed his “deepest regrets” for the violent crimes committed in the Congo basin under colonial rule. An Oxford University college has voted to take down the statue of Cecil Rhodes, the prominent imperialist. Legislators in Mississippi have decided to erase the symbols of the pro-slavery Confederacy from their state flag.

By Hans Dembowski

This looks like a global reckoning with the legacies of colonialism and slavery. It started in Minneapolis, after police officers killed George Floyd, an African-American man. Protest fast spread across North America and then to other continents.

I am sure that President Donald Trump’s tone-deaf response added momentum to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the USA. He equated demonstrators with violent thugs, claimed his opponents are terrorist and spoke of dominating the streets with military force. At the same time, he now shows no interest in Russia paying bounties for the killing of US troops and rejects any responsibility for managing the Covid-19 crisis, which affects the affluent less than it does the poor, many of whom are black.

Opinion polls show that up to two thirds of the US public now support BLM. Trump certainly helped to make that happen. Nonetheless, the global protests are not primarily anti-American. People in many countries are upset about police brutality and racism at home. They are aware of things being unacceptably bad in the USA, but also know that they are not much different and perhaps even worse in their own countries.

It is often said that nothing has changed in the USA since the civil-rights movement of the 1960s. That is not true. I lived in the USA as a child and remember that, in the 1960s, it was considered a spectacular exception that the mayor of Gary, Indiana, was a “Negro”, as we said back then. Today, so many big cities have – or

had – a black mayor that these leaders are not exceptional anymore. There is no lack of African-American role models, though it is still true that black people are under-represented in positions of power. There has been change – but not enough change. On average, African-Americans are still poorer, have fewer opportunities and are more likely to suffer police violence.

Awareness of racism, however, is more advanced in the USA, than in Germany, for example, where many still refuse to see that institutions systematically discriminate against migrant communities. We should know better. When the neo-Nazi terrorists of the NSU went on their killing spree, German security forces systematically failed to investigate their crimes and thus could not prosecute the terrorists effectively. For a long time, officialdom blamed Turkish gangs. Later it turned out that agents of the Verfassungsschutz, the domestic intelligence service, were entangled in NSU networks and potential evidence was therefore declared to be a state secret. It could not be used in court. Germany is among the countries where children from migrant communities struggle particularly according to the

OECD – and migrant youngsters say they feel discriminated against by the police.

The sad truth, however, is that not only high-income countries have to come to terms with troubling divisions in society. Years ago, an intern with a Kenyan father told me that a Luo – Barack Obama – was elected president of the USA, but another member of that same tribe – Raila Odinga – saw an election stolen from him in Kenya.

Tribal hatred, ethnic divisions and social marginalisation of specific groups haunt many other countries too. The divide-and-rule strategies that exploit them often date back to colonial times. Paroma Soni, an Indian author, is right to speak of hypocrisy when some of her compatriots express solidarity with BLM, but stay silent about Indian security forces’ violent abuse of religious minorities or the lowest castes.

Police brutality is worse in the USA than in Europe, but things are still worse in many developing countries. By early June, according to official data, the Kenyan police had killed 15 people when enforcing lockdown rules. A Kenyan colleague tells me that tribal resentments did not play a role, but that the police’s brutal anti-poor bias has not changed since colonial times. Either way, I found photos of Nairobi protesters depressing. They adopted the symbolism of BLM, taking a knee and raising their fists. Though Trump certainly does not appreciate it, civil-society activism in the USA is leading the world.



Nairobians protesting against police violence.

Argentina's Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo make sure the victims of military dictatorship are not forgotten.



Traumatised nations

Failed states, fragile statehood and dictatorships are probably the greatest obstacles to healthy development. Where governance is bad – or non-existent – special interests dominate social life. In such settings, the public good tends to be neglected completely, and people's rights are not protected. After socio-political disasters, the societies concerned must deal with their national

traumas. Otherwise, the restart may all too easily fail. The global community has a shared interest in nations developing successfully in peace.



This focus section directly relates to the UN's 16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Peace, justice and strong institutions. It also has a bearing on the other SDGs.



The International Criminal Court in The Hague.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Revisiting the peace versus justice debate

In peaceful times, peace and justice co-exist, and their relationship seems uncomplicated. After a conflict, however, it becomes estranged. Demands for criminal accountability can then be an obstacle to peace.

By Darleen Seda

The ongoing debate over peace versus justice is well-known in conflict resolution. Experience has shown that after a political resolution or military victory, peace agreements are negotiated among the parties to the conflict. These peace agreements usually contain not only restorative measures but also retributive actions to deal with suspects of atrocious crimes.

Criminal accountability of international crimes may take different forms:

- national prosecutions where states prosecute international crimes under domestic law,
- hybrid courts which feature domestic and international composition and usually

operate within the jurisdiction where the crimes occurred, and

- international courts such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) whose legal mandate is to hold perpetrators of international crimes individually responsible under international law.

While the mandate of the ICC is clear, it is noteworthy that the Court's founding document, the Rome Statute, gives the prosecutor the discretion not to initiate an investigation if, after considering the gravity of crime and interests of victims, she concludes that it would not serve the interests of justice. How does this provision affect people coming to grips with the past or even ongoing violence? Should the phrase be construed broadly enough to include the interests of peace?

The preamble of the Rome Statute establishes a presumption against deferring to peace processes once a state is unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute international crimes. It provides that the ICC's mis-

sion is to ensure prosecution of "the most serious crimes of concern to the international community" in order to "put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes and thus to contribute to the prevention of such crimes". If the court were to defer to political negotiations or peace processes, it would be acting adversely against its own duty to end impunity for the gravest international crimes. Besides, if the court acts on the duty to prosecute without considering any political arrangements or negotiations, this may likely deter gross human-rights abuses.

UNPROSECUTED CRIMES

Afghanistan has experienced civil war for decades. Thousands of civilians have been and continue to be victims of atrocious crimes, some of which fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC. According to a report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in December 2019, "civilian casualties surpassed 100,000 in the past ten years". The number of casualties over the past four decades has certainly surpassed the million mark. Moreover, sexual violence has been reported to be widespread and extensive. Lack of documentation of most gender-based and sexual crimes has led to numerous cases going unreported and thus unprosecuted, leading to a pervasive culture of denial.

The questions of justice and dealing with past atrocities remains unanswered. In the past, the Afghan authorities and the international community both favoured and promoted “peace first, justice later”. This policy encouraged more violence and promoted a state of impunity. While there have been efforts to deal with past human-rights abuses through various transitional justice mechanisms, Afghanistan has continued to experience cycles of conflict. National prosecution efforts have been inefficient at best. The Afghan government has sometimes initiated investigations, but these have lacked impartiality and independence. Adding to the problem, investigators often lack the capacity to carry out investigations.

In November 2017, the prosecutor sought authorisation from the Pre-Trial Chamber of the Court to initiate formal investigations into crimes against humanity and war crimes in Afghanistan. Under the Statute, the ICC has jurisdiction over crimes committed on the territory of a member state, regardless of the nationality of the accused. The investigations in Afghanistan

will also target US nationals, specifically the US military forces and employees of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In April 2019, the Pre-Trial Chamber denied the prosecutor this request ruling that an investigation into Afghanistan would not be in the interest of justice.

This was the first time that the Court implored this argument. The Pre-Trial Chamber concluded that opening investigations would only create unrealistic expectations from victims and possible hostility towards the Court. The Court cited limited prospects for success due to such factors as the “volatility of the political climate surrounding the Afghan scenario” and the likely lack of cooperation by the countries involved. However, if this argument is to be accepted, arguably, no investigations in any situation would ever be started.

Expectedly, the prosecutor filed an appeal against this decision. The Appeals Chamber rightfully reversed the problematic ruling made by the Pre-Trial Chamber and authorised the Court’s prosecutor to investigate possible war crimes and crimes against

humanity in Afghanistan since May 2003. The ruling was endorsed by many international justice and human-rights advocates and hailed as a true hope for victims of the conflict. It reaffirmed the Court’s essential role of granting justice to victims even when all other criminal accountability options are in vain.

The Afghanistan situation before the ICC is a recent example of potential discord between peace and justice. Demands for criminal accountability should never impede ongoing peace efforts. The Appeals Chamber decision should not be seen as a hindrance to the ongoing intra-Afghan peace talks between the parties to the conflict since the absence of accountability for grave international crimes can have a lasting negative impact on efforts to achieve peace.



DARLEEN SEDA
is a Kenyan lawyer who specialises in human rights and international criminal law.
darleen.seda@gmail.com



Join us on Facebook!



RECURRING TRAUMA

Feelings of aggravation

The demolition of Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh was a turning point in the history of independent India. On 6 December 1992, a mob of Hindu supremacists tore it down, claiming that it stood on the birthplace of Lord Rama, a Hindu God. According to them, the Mughal Empire destroyed a temple to build the mosque in the early 16th century, and they wanted to reverse things. Arfa Khanum Sherwani was affected by Islamophobic rioting that spread throughout India. She is from another part of Uttar Pradesh.

Arfa Khanum Sherwani interviewed by Hans Dembowski

What did you experience on 6 December 1992?

I was 12 years old, and I was lucky to survive. I am from a Muslim family. Tensions had been building up for some time, and many of our Muslim neighbours had already fled. My father, however, believed in India's secular constitution. He only realised after the riots had started that we had to flee. For a while, my baby brother and I were separated from our family. It was only after several hours that I could reach a community relief camp where we were safely reunited with our family. This frightful night overshadows my entire life.

The event triggered riots all over India, so frightful memories must overshadow the lives of all Indian Muslims.

Yes, after I published a summary of my personal experience, I got a lot of e-mails in which other people shared their memories. There were riots in Pakistan and Bangladesh too, where Hindus, Sikhs and other religious minorities were attacked. Up to December 1992, many Indian Muslims had put faith in the constitution which forbids religious discrimination. We thought our nation was on a path towards development and prosperity, but since that terrible night, we know that Hindu supremacists have a very different vision. They want India to be a Hindu nation, and some will not shy away from violent means.

The trauma of Ayodhya was preceded by the trauma of partition. After colonial rule, British India was split into Pakistan and India in 1947. Masses of people fled in either di-

After 1992, there was further violence. In 2002, when Narendra Modi, who is now prime minister, was chief minister of Gujarat, a gruesome anti-Muslim pogrom took place there. Hindu pilgrims had died in a burning train, fanatics accused Muslims of arson and took revenge.

Yes, that was terrible. However, state institutions generally still endorsed secularism, and we hoped things would eventually improve. Muslims and Hindus often viewed



Hindu fanatics tearing down Babri Mosque in 1992.

rection, and there were brutal massacres on all sides of the borders. To what extent was what happened in Ayodhya a continuity of that previous violence?

Well, the problems started even earlier, as faith-based divisions in the 1920s and 1930s hampered the independence movement. The British had relied on a "divide and rule" strategy. They succeeded in pitting Hindus against Muslims. Nonetheless, Indian Muslims believed that the identity issue was settled after partition. After all, the Muslim community that stayed in India had made the conscious choice to do so, and Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first prime minister, promised a new beginning based on secularism.

one another with suspicion, but at the grassroots level the communities often got along in peace. They actually still do in many places, but since Modi became prime minister in 2014, things have deteriorated fast. Modi's party, the BJP, belongs to a broad-based network of Hindu supremacist organisations. At its centre is the RSS, an authoritarian cadre-based organisation. According to its ideology, India must be a Hindu nation. Narendra Modi himself is an RSS member. His government's hard-line stance has become more overt and aggressive after he was confirmed in office in last year's general elections. His party commands an absolute majority in the national parliament even though it won less than 40% of the vote. Its

candidates, however, came in first in many constituencies.

The irony is that Modi claims to make India strong, but his policies are not earning the country more respect internationally. The plain truth is that my-nation-first attitudes tend to weaken a nation's international influence. That is even true of Donald Trump's USA.

Well, the general public in India does not have a solid understanding of international relations. This is a huge country, and only very few people get a good education. Opinions tend to be shaped by whatever narrative is currently dominant. It is scary that misguided rhetoric of “national strength” resonates with so many people. They are falling for how the supremacists are redefining their own religion. Historically, Hinduism was tolerant, non-violent and syncretic, which means accepting other religious practices and belief systems as spiritually valid. Instead, Hindu supremacists are turning the faith into a tool of exclusion.

They obviously long to overcome a feeling of inferiority by exerting power. Is that long-ing rooted in colonial history?

I am sure it plays a role, but it is fascinating that the Hindu supremacists never speak of British rule as Christian rule, while they always call the Mughal Empire Muslim rule. This nomenclature is not by accident but by design to train people to think a certain way.

Does it matter that India was never a united Hindu empire? Ashoka's empire was Buddhist, and later, there were many different kingdoms which adhered to different religions, including different varieties of Hinduism. “Hinduism” itself is actually a word that was created by outsiders to label the diverse religious practices that are connected to Vedas, the holy scriptures that only members of the Brahmin caste were allowed to read. Many popular Hindu practices are only loosely related to Vedanta, the knowledge of the Vedas.

Well, Hindu supremacists care less about Vedanta than Hindutva, the dominance of Hinduism as they define the faith. They call anyone who disagrees with them “anti-national”. The scary thing is that their narrative has begun to resonate to some extent with people from the “lowest castes”. The Hindutva ideology cultivates feelings of ag-

gravation and humiliation and promises to heal those wounds by enforcing Hindu supremacy. It may sound illogical but this is the reason why so many of them want 21st century Muslims to be answerable for what medieval Mughal kings did or did not do several centuries ago.

So it is more about taking revenge than solving problems. It is striking that, even though Modi promised to be an economic reformer, he has hardly achieved anything on that front.



Rioter in Gujarat in 2002.

No, he did not. Under his rule, economic growth has actually slowed down. He promised millions of new jobs, but failed to make that happen. Nonetheless, in the absence of a strong opposition and a credible alternative, he managed to win re-election last year.

In the winter months, Modi faced unprecedented civil-society opposition. Masses of people rose up in protest against a new citizenship law which discriminated against Muslims. To what extent was this movement a Muslim movement?

Well, the critical mass was Muslim. Many others participated too, including Hindus who believe in secular democracy. As a matter of fact, all Indian minorities have a stake in protecting the constitution. That said, Muslims are more exposed to Hindutva aggression. Adding to their frustration,

India's independent Supreme Court ruled in autumn that a Hindu temple will be built where Babri Mosque used to stand. Litigation had been pending for three decades, and the shocking judgement showed that even judges are influenced by what they call “collective conscience”, perhaps another name for majoritarian sentiments.

The Covid-19 pandemic ended the movement. It could not be continued during the lockdown. Will it be revived at some point?

I have doubts. The Modi government and its supporters have been using the lockdown to entrench their position. The media has built a popular narrative that members of the Muslim community have intentionally spread the disease. During the lockdown the government has been arresting people who assumed leadership roles in the protests. It is disturbing, however, that it did not take legal action against high-profile Hindu supremacists who indulged in Islamophobic hate speech immediately before the deadly riots that rocked Delhi in late February.

Most victims of the riots were Muslims. Mosques were set ablaze, but no Hindu temple. Nonetheless, the Hindu supremacists claim that Muslims started what actually looks very much like an anti-Muslim pogrom. As the prominent political scientist Paul R. Brass has been arguing for decades, this kind of violence does not erupt spontaneously. Was it an organised pogrom?

I personally cannot prove it, but according to the Delhi Minorities Commission, the violence was “one-sided and well-planned”. The Commission works under the state government of Delhi, which is not controlled by the BJP. I also find it noteworthy that the rioters used gas cylinders to set buildings on fire. That is difficult to do and shows that they were well trained and equipped. It is terrifying, however, that the Covid-19 lockdown turned out to be an even more effective means of repression than rioting. The terrible truth is that some Indian Hindus have been convinced to some extent that, to feel strong, they need to see Muslims suffer.



ARFA KHANUM SHERWANI is senior editor with the independent Indian news website **TheWire**.

Twitter: @khanumarfa

TheWire: <https://thewire.in/>



Women demand their rights: demonstration on 8 March 2020, the international women's day, in Kathmandu.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Justice for the victims

In Nepal, the sexual violence committed during the internal armed conflict was never adequately addressed. Even in today's society, perpetrators are still not being appropriately punished, and victims are discriminated against. The state urgently needs to reform its laws. Doing so is the only way to achieve the inclusion and equal rights that are enshrined in the 2015 constitution.

By Rukamane Mahajan

In May 2019, the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) called on Nepal to bring its laws regarding rape and other forms of sexual violence in line with international standards. Furthermore, the state should improve victims' access to justice. The HRC also called on Nepal to investigate the specific case of Fulmati Nyaya (pseudonym), an indigenous woman who claims to have been subjected

to rape, torture and forced labour at the age of 14. The events occurred during the period of violent conflict between the government and the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal, which lasted from 1996 to 2006.

The HRC issued similar recommendations back in 2017. At that time, it was responding to the case of Purna Maya (pseudonym), who, according to the allegations, was raped by four soldiers in a barracks in 2004. She filed charges eight years later with the help of two human-rights organisations. Following the event, Purna Maya not only suffered from enormous health problems, she also had to leave her home together with her daughter because her husband abandoned them.

Over 13,000 people lost their lives in the internal conflict, and around 1,000 disappeared. Both parties to the conflict, the government troops and the Maoist rebels,

raped and abused women and girls. The former "punished" women, for example, whom they suspected of being Maoists or of supporting them. The latter used sexual violence in many cases as an instrument of war. In the aftermath, the victims suffered from issues like unwanted pregnancies, psychological problems and trauma, and social exclusion and expulsion.

In 2015, the Nepalese government established two commissions to investigate human-rights abuses during the conflict, make proposals on how to deal with the perpetrators and thus conclude the period of transitional justice: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP). They received 63,000 claims of serious human-rights abuses, but only 300 pertained to sexual violence and assaults. The victims may have been concerned that the commissions would not handle their cases confidentially.

CULTURE OF IMPUNITY

It is not only sexual violence that occurred during the armed conflict that goes un-

reported. There is a general culture of impunity and a lack of information about victims' legal options. Even today, there is no clear zero-tolerance attitude towards sexual violence in Nepal, and an alarming number of women are victimised. In a survey from 2016, seven percent of women and girls between the age of 15 and 49 reported that they had experienced sexual violence in the past. In fiscal year 2017/2018, 1,480 charges of rape and 727 of attempted rape were brought before the court. Only 387 and 118 of the defendants, respectively, were convicted.

Many victims of sexual violence keep the events to themselves voluntarily or are forced to do so by their families in order to avoid shame, discrimination and stigmatisation. Victims are often held responsible for the crime; in addition, they must also fear that the perpetrators will take revenge, particularly if they are influential people. There are also reports of cases in which the victims were forced to marry their rapists.

Sometimes charges are withdrawn under pressure from the perpetrators, or an out-of-court agreement is reached. For example, in 2010, a young woman was raped by two men in a sugar-cane field. The men were caught, but not punished. Instead, residents of the village expelled the woman for allegedly "ruining" the young men. She turned to the police and local politicians and ultimately received about \$400 in compensation. Half of that was withheld by those who helped broker the agreement: they called it a "donation" for development efforts in the village.

But despite such cases, awareness of sexual violence is noticeably increasing in Nepal. The media are reporting more and more on the issue. When, in 2018, the 13-year-old Nirmala Pant was raped and murdered by a group of men, there was social unrest after the suspicion arose that powerful politicians were hampering the police's investigations. It culminated in a nationwide mobilisation of the public.

JUDICIAL REFORM

After repeated requests from UN bodies, Nepal reformed its legislation. The criminal code that was adopted in 2017 defines rape as "sexual relations with a woman without

her consent and with a girl under the age of 18 with her consent". The definition of sexual relations was broadened to include sexual intercourse, oral intercourse and penetration with objects, rather than simply intercourse, as was the case in the past. In addition, the statute of limitations for reporting a rape was lengthened from 35 days



After the end of the civil war, the Communist Party of Nepal won the elections. Supporters celebrate the victory in April 2008.

to a year. The penalties have also become slightly more severe.

However, one major problem still is that the punishment depends on the age of the victim rather than the gravity of the crime and the harm suffered by the victim. If the victim is under ten or over 70 years old, the punishment is life imprisonment, whereas if the victim's age is 18 to 69 years, the punishment is seven to ten years imprisonment only. In case of marital rape, the husband is imprisoned for five years.

Nepal's new law has improved the legal situation. But in its decision from last year, the UN Human Rights Committee called for the statute of limitations to be made significantly longer, and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination

against Women recommended in 2018 that Nepal do away with all statutes of limitation because it can take years before a rape victim is in a position to initiate proceedings, particularly when it comes to children or other vulnerable people. Furthermore, the law gives authorities and judges a great deal of leeway with regard to sentencing, meaning there is a risk that perpetrators will receive a light penalty that is incommensurate with the gravity of their crime.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) considers sexual violence that occurs during conflicts a serious human-rights abuse, and generally speaking, the TRC may not grant amnesty to perpetrators. However, the laws that would allow sexual violence in conflict to be prosecuted are insufficient, because they do not form part of the criminal code.

At the root of sexual violence are structural problems relating to the prevailing culture of impunity. These problems seriously threaten Nepal's prospects for long-term peace and democratisation. Therefore it should be in the interest of the government and all political parties to take a clear stand against any toleration of sexual violence. Nepal will be under special international scrutiny until at least January or February 2021. Then it will be subject to another Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN Human Rights Council. The government should use the time it has left to enact further legal reforms in order to ensure access to justice for victims of sexual violence and to bring its definition of rape in line with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Furthermore, Nepal should heed the advice of UN Secretary-General António Guterres on how to deal with sexual violence in conflict. In March 2019, he called on the UN Security Council to grant victims temporary legal protection and full compensation, including medical and psychosocial care, social assistance and appropriate reparations. It is also important that Nepal swiftly implement Security Council Resolutions 1325, from 2000, and 1820, from 2008, which relate to women, peace and security.



RUKAMANE MAHARJAN is assistant professor of law at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. rukumaharjan@gmail.com



In March 2011, activists of H.I.J.O.S remind in Buenos Aires of all the people who disappeared during the military dictatorship in Argentina.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social memory

Traumatic events mould the collective memory of a society. Each new crisis brings old injuries to the surface. However, previous experiences also offer the skills to master new challenges in a better way. Argentina is a good example.

By Sheila Mysorekar

Crises are not only current issues, but they also remind us of previous crises. During the Corona pandemic, memories of the plague and the Spanish flu return. In an economic crisis, people remember how they managed during earlier economic hardships. And when armed military patrols the streets – even if it is only in order to control the Corona curfew – those who have lived through a dictatorship will feel uneasy.

Epidemics, economic crises or military rule are no individual experiences, but a common experience shared with all members of a society. There are differences of course: not everybody falls sick during

a plague, some have large savings while others immediately face hunger when they lose their job. In a dictatorship there are perpetrators, followers, members of the resistance and victims – and that leads to very different perceptions of the same situation.

9/11 AS A COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

Social psychology studies how a traumatic event that concerns many people simultaneously becomes manifest in the collective memory of a society. A well-known example is the terror attack in the USA on 11 September 2001, called 9/11. The image of the exploding airplanes in the skyscrapers of the World Trade Center in New York is present in all corners of the world, even if the political consequences of these attacks diverged a lot, for instance between the Arab world and the West.

Psychologist Angela Kühner has studied collective trauma. She calls 9/11 a “collectively relevant traumatic reference event”.

Kühner and other scientists do not speak of collective trauma, but rather of a “collective injury of the social fabric”. In other words, a terrible occurrence changes a society long-term. All people are affected, but to different degrees.

A typical reaction to such an event is solidarity: the collective tries to master the shock together. Shared processes of mourning are an effective method to do this. However, they can be hampered if the dead cannot be buried like it happened after 9/11.

It is even more difficult after dictatorships such as the last military rule in Argentina: 30,000 people were kidnapped and killed between 1976 and 1983. They are called “desaparecidos” (“disappeared”). The families could not bury the victims of this so-called “dirty war” – the majority of them had disappeared forever.

Similar to many other Latin American countries, Argentina has passed several cycles of traumatic events, repressing the recollection and then bringing it to mind again. The overarching Latin American experience is colonisation and the mass destruction of the indigenous peoples. In many countries, this memory has been silenced and repressed until today, also in Argentina.

The 20th century was characterised by frequent military coups as well as economic

crises. After each economic and political crisis, a kind of “avoidance behaviour, which is a typical reaction to trauma” can be detected in Argentine society, says neurologist Enrique de Rosa of the Argentine medical association “Asociación Médica Argentina”. Many people are not interested in politics anymore. “Daily micro-traumas erode the psychological strength of people and turn into an acquired hopelessness. You have the feeling that never mind what you do, there is no escape – we often observe this in unemployed persons,” de Rosa explains.

After an economic crisis, all people yearn for stability, and after a period of violence, they crave peace. The victims’ desire for justice and punishment of the perpetrators is often perceived as an interference of this newly acquired peace. They are told to stop their request for punishment, according to the motto “drawing a line under the past”. But the end of a war or a dictatorship does not equal peace. Without justice, true peace is impossible. Old conflicts lurk below the seemingly calm surface and can erupt any time.

In this situation, there is an antagonism between examination and defence, that is, between voicing and denial of the event. Victims play a special role in this: they are – in a manner of speaking – the personified memory. Therefore people try to ignore them, and thus forget the violent past.

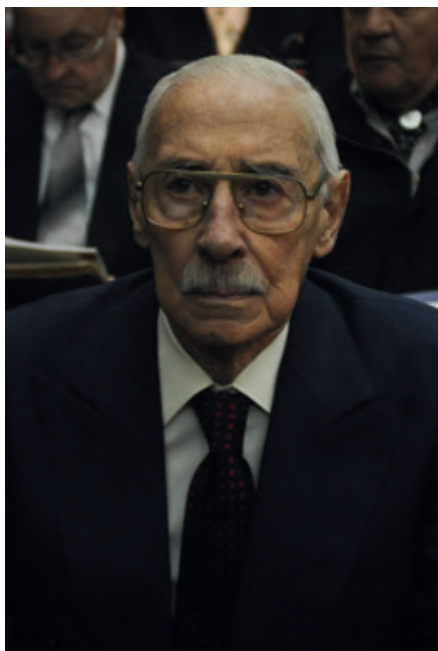
Argentina passed through such a phase after the end of the military rule in 1983. In contrast to other Latin American countries that also suffered dictatorships, Argentina staged a huge trial where the guilty were named and convicted.

Due to pressure by the military, however, the perpetrators were amnestied one after the other in the subsequent years: first the lower ranks and at last even the junta. As a result, local human-rights groups started to keep the memory alive in different ways – against great resistance. The children of the disappeared founded the organisation H.I.J.O.S (“Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio” – “Children for Identity and Justice, against Oblivion and Silence”).

The members of H.I.J.O.S. appeared in front of the homes of convicted torturers, told their neighbours next to whom they were living, read the judicially inflicted sentence by loudspeaker and distributed flyers

listing all the crimes of the member of the military or police in question.

Social science labels shared social practices of remembrance – such as memorial days, for instance – as “intentional memory”. The practice of remembrance of the “Children of the Disappeared” was



Jorge Videla, the former junta leader, on trial in 2012.

unconventional, but it showed effect: the amnesty laws were gradually revoked. The murderers and torturers had to go back to jail.

The Dutch anthropologist Antonius C.G.M. Robben, professor at the University of Utrecht, has studied the practices of remembering in traumatised societies, amongst others in Argentina. On account of state terror during military rule, “the trust of citizens in the state was totally destroyed”, he maintains. This distrust on all sides, between authorities, ex-military and families of the disappeared, continues – and prevents Argentine society to “put the traumatic past behind it”, Robben concludes.

OVERCOMING TRAUMA

For peace researcher Johan Galtung “peace is more than the absence of war”. This is also true for the accounting of old conflicts. Not mentioning them does not mean they

do not exist. It sounds like a contradiction: only collective and continuous practice of remembrance leads to overcoming trauma, so that violent times can be filed away.

Argentina is a good example for other post-conflict societies not to let war crimes rest, but to bring them to light: in Bosnia, Argentinian forensic scientists helped to identify the dead of the massacre of Srebrenica (1995). At last, people were able to bury their murdered family members – this is one way to bring peace to a society.

Not every trauma needs to go on forever, but it can be overcome by shared grief, says psychologist Kühner. The shared grieving process in Argentina, initiated by activists like the “Madres de Plaza de Mayo” (Mothers of Plaza de Mayo) or the “Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo” (Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo), has made people alert: during the economic crisis in December 2001, the government ordered police to shoot at demonstrators. Immediately after, many people gathered at the seat of government in order to defend democracy.

Heavily armed police and military controlled the curfew during the Corona crisis earlier this year. They proceeded with utmost brutality against any breaches, which set the Argentine people’s alarm bells ringing.

In other situations, too, memories of a painful past can help to better surpass a crisis. When in February 2020 it became clear that the Corona virus would spread from Asia to other continents, no precautions were taken in Europe. In eastern Africa, however, the recollection of the Ebola epidemic of 2018 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was still very vivid.

This is why states like Tanzania immediately started to check the temperature of all travellers and isolate suspected cases. This did not happen when the first Corona infections appeared in Europe – in its collective memory, life-threatening epidemics were far away and vague. Accordingly, European political leaders acted more slowly. In other words: a living memory of past crises can be vital for survival.



SHEILA MYSOREKAR
is a journalist and project manager at Deutsche Welle Akademie. For 11 years she lived and worked in Argentina.

sheila.mysorekar@dw.com

IDI AMIN PHOTO EXHIBITION

Facets of a despot

The Uganda National Museum has been hosting an exhibition on former dictator Idi Amin. It is the first attempt in Uganda to come to terms with the past. The organisers' aim is to stimulate a debate about the realities of life for Ugandans during that time.

By Isabella Bauer

Widely known as the “butcher of Africa”, the dictator Idi Amin is considered the epitome of the brutal despot. During his eight years in power, from 1971 to 1979, he sent between 300,000 and 400,000 people to their deaths. He ordered innumerable foreigners, above all Indian traders, to be expropriated and expelled.

During his reign, Amin was escorted everywhere by a team of state photographers. Hundreds of thousands of pictures were taken – because the dictator understood the power of public presence. Until recently, those photographs were believed lost. But in 2015, archivists at the Ugandan state broadcaster discovered a hoard of

thousands of images. Since then, experts from various universities have digitised 25,000 of the 70,000 negatives found. The 200 photos included in the Uganda National Museum's exhibition “The Unseen Archive of Idi Amin” are only a small selection.

The exhibition is intended to show “different facets of Idi Amin's personality”, explains visitor-support team member Anne Kakho. Amin's term of office is presented in timelines. One shows official photographs: the dictator in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate in 1972, meeting Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in 1973, and greeting Emperor Jean-Bédél Bokassa from the then Central African Empire shortly afterwards.

The second timeline shows lots of pictures of everyday life in Uganda in the 1970s. An information panel flanking the display tells the visitor: “The seventies were a time of cultural creativity, a time of love, music and a new life.” Here it becomes clear how the dictator garnered support. He is seen as a musician playing an accordion, as a dancer at a cultural event and as a boxer in the ring.

The third timeline attempts to capture the horror of Amin's rule: empty torture chambers, public executions and the deportation of Indian merchants. Another exhibition panel points out the paradoxical picture presented by “paralysing horror and a vibrant public life”.

The exhibition makes no attempt to appraise events. That is left entirely to the viewer. At the end of the museum visit, Ugandans are invited to leave their thoughts and feedback in writing. For the moment, the aim is to keep this a domestic dialogue.

The public response to the exhibition is generally very positive, even if the feedback is highly diverse, says Anne Kahko. “One family wanted us to take down the displays, saying they were an insult to the present government.” Some of Idi Amin's children have also visited the exhibition and they loved it. His youngest son, Jaffar Amin, was even willing to contribute to the exhibition, offering more photos and lots of stories from the time. The organisers take note of everything. They now see this as just a beginning; they are planning a major exhibition in the future.

The way the images are presented reflects many Ugandans' attitude towards Idi Amin. Very few see him exclusively as the brutal butcher he is perceived to be abroad. Visitor Irene Aikuru believes “he killed no more people than other presidents of this country, no more than the present president. He was just totally unsophisticated and did not conceal anything. He displayed his cruelty openly – that was the difference”.

The format of the exhibition, which allows visitors to see the side of Idi Amin that they wish to see, also says something about how little has been done in Uganda to deal with the past. There has been no reappraisal of the past, no public commemoration of war victims, no acknowledgement of the suffering endured by the civilian population. So this exhibition, with its focus on dialogue, is a ground-breaking event.

The exhibition ran until mid-February 2020 in Kampala and is scheduled to move on to many more venues.



In the exhibition at the Uganda National Museum in Kampala: dictator Idi Amin during a public appearance.



ISABELLA BAUER

is a freelance journalist and adviser specialised in East Africa, Southern Africa and Germany.

isabella.bauer@gmx.de

LAND RESTITUTION

Righting a wrong

Nearly 30 years after starting land reform, Namibia's distribution of land ownership is still skewed. This is a colonial legacy. It is high time to return land to dispossessed communities. As a former colonial power guilty of terrible bloodshed, Germany should contribute to making that happen.

By Henning Melber

National statistics document Namibia's unequitable pattern of land ownership. Fewer than 5,000 (predominantly white) commercial farmers own 48% of the land. About 35% of the land is reserved for communal use by indigenous communities. More than 70% of the population depend on it. The state holds another 17% of the land.

This is inconsistent with stated national policy. The government's declared intention is to transfer land to descendants of those who were dispossessed in colonial times. Its agenda includes resettlements of indigenous people as well as the voluntary transfers of commercial agricultural land. Not much progress has been made however. Land ownership remains heavily skewed in favour of the privileged few, who now include members of the political class (see box next page).

As a former colonial power, Germany bears a responsibility to support redressing the situation. From 1884 to 1915, the colony was called German South West Africa. German colonial rule was very brutal. The administration encouraged whites to set up farms on indigenous land. Resistance by local Ovaherero and Nama communities against forced expulsions triggered the first genocide of the 20th century in the years 1904 to 1908 (see Joshua Kyesi Aikins in Focus section of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2017/11). The Damara were affected too. Survivors were detained in concentration camps and forced into native reserves. White farmers also systematically eliminated San communities (Bushmen).

Land grabs continued after South Africa occupied the territory in 1915 and, in 1919, became the mandatory power. Afrikaans-

speaking white farmers moved to the "fifth province". Expulsions and resettlements of indigenous communities continued until the 1960s under South Africa's Bantustan Policy, which set aside reserves for specific ethnic groups. These areas were euphemistically called "tribal homelands".

Independence was supposed to liberate the black communities and restore their dignity. In 1990, the liberation movement South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) formed the new government of

rights, and [this] requires urgent systematic redress." The Commission suggested to rely on "reparations from the former colonial powers" to strengthen land reform and restore social justice.

A ROLE FOR GERMANY

The two former colonial powers are Germany and South Africa. Their legacy is certainly appalling. The South African government, however, is itself the result of a freedom struggle and refuses to be held accountable for the former Apartheid regime's abusiveness. Of course, South Africa's involvement does not lessen Germany's responsibility in any way.

In mid-2015, a spokesperson of Germany's Foreign Office acknowledged, after



White farmers still own most of the commercial farming land.

a sovereign nation. Land ownership hardly changed, however, even though there was a promising start with a national land conference in 1991. Unfortunately, redistribution of land to the dispossessed failed miserably. The process was slow and far too often benefited politically connected persons who had no ancestral claims.

Dissatisfaction with the failed reform led to a second land conference in October 2018. It paid more attention to ancestral land claims than the first one. In February 2019, a 15-member Commission on Ancestral Land was appointed. In December 2019, the Commission recommended giving priority to the dispossessed. It stated: "Colonialism stripped people of their dignity and cultural rights and other fundamental

persistent questioning from a journalist, that imperial warfare in Namibia was tantamount to genocide. Since then, Germany and Namibia have been negotiating how to come to terms with the persisting injustice. Though Germany's Federal Government has never agreed to reparations and avoids using the term, the Namibian Commission's proposal deserves consideration. Germany could indeed provide funds for land redistribution. The money could be used to compensate expropriated farmers even if they do not wish to sell their land.

The legal foundation for such a land redistribution is in place. While the country's constitution confirms that any property titles that existed at the time of independence are legally valid, its Article 16 states

clearly: “The State or a competent body or organ authorised by law may expropriate property in the public interest subject to the payment of just compensation, in accordance with requirements and procedures to be determined by Act of Parliament”. Laws and regulations are in place, and in 2008, the High Court spelled out guidelines for enforcing them.

Funding a redistribution and expropriation policy along these lines would be a sensible first step. Next, Germany should then co-finance the indispensable investments in rural infrastructure and agricultural extension services. The idea would be to empower local communities in ways that allow them to fully benefit from resettlement. The Namibian government, for its part, would have to ensure that only the descendants of the dispossessed benefit from redistribution, but not politically-connected elites.

Both the German and the Namibian government would be wise to invest in this kind of policy. It would not only facilitate reconciliation between Germany and Namibia, but also between groups in Namibia – the truly dispossessed and those only pretending to be. Namibia would get a new start. The destructive legacy of skewed land ownership would be overcome.

Neither side should shy away from using the word “reparations.” For Germany, an obstacle may be that such a step might look like an irritating precedent to other former colonial powers. They do not want to pay compensations for past crimes (see Kehinde Andrews in Focus section of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2017/11).

As Namibia’s Commission on Ancestral Land correctly stated, however, “the term reparation is used in a wide sense” in international law. It can stand for any measure that serves “to redress the vari-

ous types of harms victims may have suffered”.

Land is identity, and stolen land translates into stolen identity. Property rights that were granted by a legal system that was only established after colonial land grabs may remain valid – but they are inherently unjust. It is necessary to right the wrongs of the past. The current talks between Germany and Namibia offer an historic opportunity to do so.



HENNING MELBER
is director emeritus of the **Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala, Sweden, and an extraordinary professor at the University of Pretoria and the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. He is a member of South West African Organisation (SWAPO), having joined it in 1974.**
henning.melber@nai.uu.se

How the first redistribution attempt failed

Namibia gained independence in 1990. Soon after, the first National Land Reform Conference recommended resettling indigenous communities and transferring commercial farmland to them. Unfortunately, the policy never really took off.

The idea was that white farmers would voluntarily sell land to black buyers who would often rely on government support so they could afford the price. Whenever a current owner put land up for sale, the Conference recommended giving the government preferential rights to buy.

This policy, however, faltered fast. For one thing, the land purchases by government agencies were slow and inefficient. According to official data published in 2018, over 8 million hectares (a bit more

than one fifth of the privately-owned farmland) were offered to the state since 1992, but only 37% of that land was actually bought. The statistics show

that whites still own almost 50% of the land. The descendants of the people who were dispossessed under colonial rule remain landless.

Making matters worse, inequality persists even where redistribution has occurred. It is now no longer necessarily based on pigmentation. Political connections and eth-

nic affinities matter too. Many members of the political and administrative elite have been classified on paper as belonging to the “previously disadvantaged”, which made them eligible for land redistribution. Many of them are originally from Namibia’s northern regions where land had always remained in the possession of the local communities. Subsidised by taxpayers’ money, people whose ancestors had never been disposed thus acquired land. To own a farm, is now a status symbol for members of the new elite.

Such misguided allocation of land has become a bone of contention. Descendants of communities expropriated by colonialism still feel pushed aside. Such feelings fuel inter-ethnic animosities.

There is more bad news. Many of the non-privileged resettlement beneficiaries cannot make a living from the land. Lacking capital and know-how, they depend on state aid. hm



A mural in Windhoek depicts the celebration of independence in 1990.

COLLECTIVE MEMORIES

Legacy of wounds

Addressing collective trauma is important for conflict transformation. In Lebanon, peace-work after the civil war contributes to a healing process of collective trauma through understanding how individual and social identities are influenced by the past.

By Miriam Modalal and Dalilah Reuben-Shemia

The Lebanese civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990, left many wounds unresolved and resulted in a fragmented society with deep sectarian divides. The end of the civil war was followed by a collective suppression of

Recent events of a massive nationwide uprising, which started in October 2019 and is known as the October Revolution, put these realities and heteronomous identities into question. Protesters all across the country called for an end of corruption, clientelism and the lack of accountability after the government had announced new taxes on internet voice calls. The October Revolution led to a collapse of the government while the country has suffered several months at the brink of financial bankruptcy. A divided society – where many had remained silent for so long – was unified by demanding a root-and-branch transforma-

about the past. It thus contributes to a healing process of collective trauma through understanding how individual and collective identities are influenced by the past.

During its training series “Memory of War”, peace activists from various conflicted communities reflected on collective narratives of identity and mindsets influenced by the consequences of the civil war. In light of events around the October Revolution, the activists explored the importance of a healthy mourning process. This is an important prerequisite to break the deadlock of the mind and body when trauma remains unresolved resulting in collective emotions of fear and despair. The activists got inspired to look at current conflicts in their communities with a multiperspective lens and learned tools to address the past in the present.

Moreover, forumZFD supports teachers across the country and religious communities to learn and teach about the past without deepening divides but rather bridging them. With creative methods, forumZFD and its partner, the Lebanese Association for History, inspire teachers and students to transform the narration of contested historical events and the memorisation of past violence. Besides multiperspectivity, establishing dialogues with older generations is an important means.

For instance, the project “From Local History to a Wider Understanding of the Past” initiated transgenerational conversations on daily life during the civil war. After recording these oral histories, students are invited to transform their findings through artistic means and express how these memories relate to their own present life. The project contributes to a cross-generational process of reconstructing and integrating fragmented memories from the past which is an essential element in collective trauma healing.

Another focus of forumZFD aims at encouraging community activism across divides to mobilise for nonviolent action. Together with its partner, The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering, forumZFD supported the foundation of a women’s cooperation Nisaa Kaderat (Capable Women) with Syrian and Lebanese peace activists. Nisaa Kaderat opened a self-organised community centre that provides a safe space for women of all nationalities and generations in the city of Baalbek. It invites women to find shelter and relief from



Non-violent communication workshop at the women’s cooperation Nisaa Kaderat (Capable Women).

memories about the past three decades. The state promoted this process with the hopes of creating a sense of normality. Yet, this primarily numbed the pain but did not deal with the deep wounds of loss, shame and despair.

Collective narratives of victimhood were passed on within fragmented communities. The past remains a taboo for school history books, and an open public discourse has been silenced. Instead, migrants and refugees as well as foreign powers are scapegoated to be the threat to security and the reason for social and political misery. A language of fear and mistrust gave political parties a platform to manipulate collective needs for safety and security.

tion of the social and political make-up of Lebanon. It was the end of a prolonged period of collective paralysation.

PEACE WORK THAT RESPONDS TO TRAUMA

Entire communities can be traumatised by violent conflicts, and the traumas can be passed on from one generation to the next (see box next page). In Lebanon, collective trauma is obvious. With its projects on “Dealing with the Past”, forumZFD, a German peace organisation working within the Civil Peace Service programme, uses multiperspectivity – the idea that history is interpretational and subjective – to engage people in conversations

everyday micro-aggressions against their gender and to practice self-care. Inspired by tools from nonviolent communication, community dialogue and psychosocial support, women meet each other with empathy to transform collective emotions of loneliness, victimhood and shame. The dialogue supports women from different generations to stimulate a transgenerational healing process.

In short, on the one hand, the lens of collective trauma can be integrated into the work of conflict transformation. On the other hand, group-building processes create an atmosphere of empathy where individual experiences can be processed with the support of the group and collective learning processes can be facilitated.

Thus, if conflict transformation is sensitive to the psycho-social dynamics of collective trauma, it strengthens the resilience on an individual and collective level. It thereby transforms the health-promoting tools to strengthen resilience and positive coping strategies – parallel to other activities – in order to create safe spaces for groups such as women groups or community groups.

It is also important, however, to work on the transformation of shared narratives of the past and of victim identities through media, arts, festivals, exhibitions and digital storytelling platforms, and to transform the enemy image of “the other”. This in turn will help to strengthen a sense of self-efficacy, helping to overcome shared feelings

of helplessness and to transform passivity and political apathy into empowerment and agency.



MIRIAM MODALAL

is a project manager for community organising at forumZFD, an international non-governmental

organisation working in the field of conflict transformation, in Lebanon.

miriam.modalal@gmail.com



DALILAH REUBEN-SHEMIA

was a peace and conflict consultant and is a nonviolent action researcher.

d.reuben-shemia@posteo.de

Collective trauma

Violent conflicts can lead to the traumatising of entire communities. Results include collectively felt emotions like mistrust and angst, often combined with rigid mindsets, suppressing feelings of guilt and shared disempowering victim identities.

Trauma causes stress, and that can lead to symptoms of hyper-arousal, like feeling easily frightened, cranky, enraged, churning and petrified. Often, this is coupled with difficulties to sleep or concentrate. Psychic numbing is a tendency of individuals or societies to detach from past traumatic experiences. It is a reduced response to the external world including loss of interest in activity, disconnection from others, hiding from the outside world or escaping from reality.

Collective trauma is a not yet fully completed process of learning how to deal with and integrate extreme levels of toxic stress, anxiety and helplessness (Reimann and König, 2018).

It may lead people to be stuck in conflict dynamics while in turn exerting violence against themselves and others. Trauma symptoms are often passed on to the next generation through maladaptive parenting patterns, social or genetic transmission and are then referred to as “transgenerational or intergenerational trauma”.

When certain shared thoughts and feelings are

formed by the traumatised group they become part of the common group reality as collective identity markers (see Reimann & König, 2018). This can hinder healing. Narratives of loss and despair, of guilt and shame and/or a shared identity of victimhood are common. Collective emotions are characterised by distrust, shakiness, extreme anguish and apathy (Becker, 2004). The collective mental models or belief systems are characterised by rigid thinking, scapegoating, prejudices, stereotypes, othering

and exclusive norms. These elements promote aggression, a culture of violence, in-group dynamics and polarisation.

Working in conflict transformation with trauma-sensitivity then implies being conducive to shifting those collective identity elements towards more inclusive perceptions of the world and to invigorate the resilience of affected communities to foster conducive coping strategies.

mm, drs



Graffiti on a bullet-riddled building on the former frontline of the Lebanese civil war in downtown Beirut (photo taken in 2018).

REFERENCES

- Becker, D., 2004: *Dealing with the consequences of organised violence in trauma work*. In: Austin, A., Fisher, M., Rospers, N. (eds): *Transforming ethno-political conflict. The Berghof Handbook*: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden.
- Reimann, C., and König, U., 2018: *Closing a gap in conflict transformation. Understanding collective and transgenerational trauma*. <https://www.ximpulse.ch/wp-content/uploads/1806CollectiveTrauma.pdf>

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Self-perpetuating cycles of violence

Conflicts cause very high costs, so the international community has a keen interest in stopping and preventing them. In 2018, the World Bank and UN published a joint study calling for international cooperation in this field. It spelled out that conflicts are becoming increasingly complex and typically involve a diversity of actors.

By Florian Gaisrucker

The “Pathways for peace” report was written on behalf of the World Bank and UN. It warns that violence is one of the greatest obstacles that may block achievement of the 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). The researchers insist we need peaceful societies – and that is made more difficult by challenges such as climate change, inadequate cyber security or transnational organised crime. The World Bank and UN point out that civil wars are very costly – and not just in a financial sense. For the international community, it is cost-effective to prevent such violence.

The study finds that violence hits low-income countries particularly hard. At current trends, more than half of the world’s poorest people will live in countries with a high level of violence by 2030. The researchers offer a number of explanations for states failing and societies becoming mired in violence for long periods. As the report authors argue, conflicts are triggered by:

- economic crises,
- suffering of marginalised population groups,
- changing social norms,
- availability of arms or
- change of regime or sometimes merely government.

The report identifies various types of civil war – ranging from revolutions to genocidal ethnic conflicts. Economic crises are not seen as a cause of conflict but they put pressure both on political systems and peo-

ple, often making mobilisation to violence more likely.

According to the World Bank-UN publication, the number of intra-state conflicts has steadily increased since 2010. Various kinds of non-state organisations are said



UN peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire in 2012.

to play a major role, mobilising extremists, militants and rebels – but also criminals such as human traffickers for example. They spread ideologies and syphon off economic or political resources. Social media and other online platforms serve to fuel anger and hatred. They are also used for recruitment purposes. At the same time, the authors point out that IT tools can also serve preventive action.

Inter-state conflicts have become rare, the study concludes, but private funding makes intra-state conflicts more complicated. Violence disrupts trade, potentially reducing the supply of food and other essential goods. Shortages are likely to trigger inflation. Conflict in one country, moreover, often affects neighbouring countries too.

The study finds that countries beset by violent conflict fail to sustain the development progress they have already made. They are also more susceptible to epidemics. Social trust is eroded – both between citizens and towards institutions. Social services typically break down because of conflict.

Even after a conflict is over, the consequences are felt for generations, the authors warn. In their view, renewed outbreaks of supposedly settled disputes are likely to cause huge problems.

Calling for prevention, of course, is easier than implementing effective action. The World Bank and the UN note that risks must be recognised and assessed properly. There is a need for institutional reforms, and conflict parties must be involved in shaping them. Successful reforms reduce high spending on military operations and emergency aid. The international community is therefore well-advised to provide support geared to strengthening fragile states before conflicts escalate.

The World Bank-UN study shows that many countries are under intense pressure from global transformations which include climate change and digitalisation. National shortcomings in regard to education and health care are worrying, not least because frustration fuels aggression. On the upside, crisis prevention can break cycles of violence. More cooperation at national, regional and global level can make it work.

LINK

United Nations, World Bank, 2018: Pathways for peace: inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>



FLORIAN GAISRUCKER was an intern with D+C/E+Z at the last quarter of 2019.

euz.editor@dandc.eu

Novel coronavirus

As D+C/E+Z is supposed to tackle issues of long-term relevance without responding much to breaking news, Covid-19 took us by surprise. To deal with this crisis, we started a Covid-19 diary on our website and are including some of the most recent entries here. The authors are from four different continents. Their articles do not necessarily reflect the fast changing state of affairs. The relevant date is the indicated day of publication on our website.

Our web diary: <https://www.dandc.eu/node/4306>



26 JULY 2020

Build back better

The International Energy Agency (IEA) wants governments around the world to use stimulus money for the dual purpose of escaping the Covid-19 slump and protecting the climate. Its advice makes sense.

By Katie Cashman

Energy demand and carbon emissions plummeted this year due to the economic halt. Recovery offers a window of opportunity to “build back better” – the unofficial motto of sustainable disaster recovery. Fatih Birol, the executive director of the IEA, has appealed to member countries to make 2019 the peak year in energy-related carbon emissions by using recovery funding to advance clean energy. António Guterres, the UN secretary General, has endorsed that message, pointing out that “clean energy puts countries on safer and healthier footing”.

As the example of the USA in the 1930s showed, government spending can lead an economy out of a depression, even if that spending is based on significant public debt. Investments in infrastructure are particularly useful because they not only create short-term employment, but also lay the foundation for long-term prosperity.



Cyclist using newly established bike lane in Covid-19-hit Lima, Peru's capital city.

Today, the smart thing is to invest in climate protection and adaptation. Relevant projects include retrofitting housing stock for renewable energy, building bicycle-transport networks or implementing nature-based solutions for flood protection. Stimulus money can be used to build smart power grids or to convert industrial facilities in ways that allow them to use clean energy. Experts warn policymakers not to repeat the mistakes made after the global financial crisis of 2008, when short-sighted bailouts benefited fossil-fuel intensive industries and exacerbated the global problem of climate change. Instead, governments should have focused on the jobs and industries of the future.

Unfortunately, several countries are already showing signs of repeat failure. The Guardian reported in early July, for example, that the USA had given loans worth at least \$3 billion to some 5,600 fossil-fuel companies, including coal-based power plants and oil drillers. US President Donald Trump denies the science of climate change, and his administration serves the special interests of ecologically destructive industries. Trump pretends that environmental protection hurts economic growth, but shows no interest in long-term sustainability. His science denial and focus on short-term business data, moreover, have led to fast opening up after lockdown, allowing Covid-19 infection numbers to rise dreadfully in the USA in July. The worsening pandemic may thus well erase the economic advantages of opening up too fast.

The US administration's destructive stance became evident once more during a virtual global conference that the IEA held in early July. On the upside, energy ministers from 40 of the most energy-consuming countries took part, indicating their interest in accelerating the transition to renewable energy in the context of the Covid-19 recovery.

The EU, for example, recently released its €1.85 trillion, seven-year recovery plan, which will invest in green industries and technologies. China and India also made promising announcements. Multilateral institutions, including the IEA, would do well to keep pressure on governments to live up to such pledges. In regard to climate protection, the EU, China and India so far have tended to be behind schedule, rather than pressing ahead fast with urgently needed action (for the example of India, see Aditi Roy Ghatak in Focus section of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2020/04).

Low-income countries, by contrast, typically lack the fiscal space to adopt stimulus programmes of their own. The international community should support their indispensable climate action.

In any case, the IEA deserves praise for promoting the clean energy agenda. A decade ago, it still had a reputation for promoting fossil fuels and underplaying the



China's government promises to accelerate transition to renewables. Worker in a coal mine in Inner Mongolia.

potential of renewable energy. Its change of tune is welcome. Pressure from major institutional investors, including pension funds and insurance companies, helped to make it happen. They know that business needs sustainability. The US administration should pay attention to them too.



KATIE CASHMAN is the climate-action director of 2811, an environmental civil-society organisation in Chile. She is expressing her

personal opinion in this comment. katie@2811.cl

23 JULY 2020

A new intergenerational compact

The restrictions on movement resulting from the Covid-19 lockdown brought large parts of Germany's nursing care and support system to a standstill, and that, in turn, showed how heavily this system depends on private care workers. Female workers from abroad matter in particular. Reforms with a view to better pay for – and more recognition of – care providers would make sense.

By Sascha Verlan and Almut Schnerring

The German care system places on families the primary burden of caring for children,

the elderly and incapacitated relatives. Legal regulations perpetuate the traditional division of labour. Most care providers are women.

However, more and more women earn money so they are no longer able or willing to do unpaid care work. Ever more families are forced to outsource care, either to institutions such as day-care centres, schools or nursing homes, or to privately-hired domestic helpers, including au pairs or live-in carers.

Increasingly, immigrant women are doing the care work. Border closures dur-

ing the Coronavirus lockdown, however, showed that immigrants can neither be present all the time, nor can they protect themselves consistently from work-related risks.

In short, the German system for providing nursing care and support has reached its limits. Policies on the matter were already deficient in the sense of not meeting social needs before the pandemic. Current regulations do not require care workers to have appropriate skills, nor do they drive the creation of a nationwide network of professional providers.

Jens Spahn, Germany's federal health minister, wants to remedy the shortage of skilled staff in hospitals and nursing homes by recruiting trained nurses from Mexico and the Philippines. Such efforts highlight systemic deficiencies. Without change, the care system is unsustainable.



Mexico needs its care workers: Red Cross nurse grieving at the funeral of a colleague who died of Covid-19.

One consequence of the current policy is that migrant care workers – most of them women working with temporary permits – tend to labour in difficult circumstances which sometimes are actually illegal. Nonetheless, they are essential workers who are supposed to keep the care system running, thereby reinforcing the illusion that German women can easily make family life and professional careers compatible.

This system, moreover, exploits a wealth and wage gap between Germany and migrants' home countries (see Richa Arora in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2020/06, Debate). Private-sector companies and state agencies in Germany are trying to pay as little as possible when managing their care obligations. The current system basically shifts responsibility to subcontractors and to women from foreign countries. An implication is that those countries lose skilled workers. The women's families are affected in particular. It makes sense to say that care work is being extracted from the economies concerned in the same way that raw materials are exploited. Some accurately speak of international "care chains". Ultimately, children, dependent relatives and people with disabilities end up without support because the caregivers have left. That mostly happens in the global South and eastern Europe, of course.

Instead of perpetuating this pattern, Germany's Federal Government should overhaul its approach to care provision. The new approach should take into account requirements of global development, among other things. Moreover, Germany's governmental social-protection insurances should cover all people doing private care work, whether for children, the aged or incapacitated persons. Payroll taxes would have to be collected accordingly.

Moreover, it would make sense to set up a global social-security fund. Carers in rich and poor nations alike deserve pensions, child benefits and unemployment benefits when needed.

The care crisis cannot be solved by exporting it or by making it invisible. What we need instead is a new intergenerational compact that enables people to combine employment and care work. Employment and care work must be compatible for all – for women and men, for rich and poor, for migrants and those who stay in their home countries. Moreover, reforms are needed to provide greater financial rewards and non-material recognition to those who do care work.

A first step would be to include all related efforts such work in the calculation of gross domestic product. GDP measures prosperity, which, to a large extent, is based on care work. So far, national income statis-

tics give no clear picture of who wins and who loses in the current settings. Nor do they make it clear which activities are "system-relevant", especially in a global context. The burden of care work is not shared in a fair manner – to the detriment of young women's professional development all over the world. Moreover, the impacts on the economic development of countries in the global South are negative too.

Universal access to free public education, health care, clean water, sanitation and domestic energy systems must be guaranteed worldwide. Otherwise, any future crisis comparable to the Covid-19 pandemic will intensify existing social inequalities.

LINK

Equal Care Manifesto:

<https://manifesto.equalcareday.de/>



SASCHA VERLAN and ALMUT SCHNERRING jointly wrote

a book with the title "Equal care". It was published by Verbrecher Verlag (Berlin, 2000) and is only available in German.

kontakt@wu2k.de

They also launched an action day for civil society: "Equal Care Day":

<https://equalcareday.de/en/>



Lazarus Chakwera immediately after the swearing-in ceremony.

10 JULY 2020

Great expectations

Lazarus Chakwera has hit the ground running. He was elected president on 23 June, took office on 28 June and immediately appointed ministers of finance, homeland security, economic planning and development as well as justice. He is facing huge challenges – not least because he must govern in the midst of a pandemic.

By Raphael Mweninguwe

The new head of state was elected in very unusual circumstances. The presidential election was only held because Malawi's Supreme Court annulled the one held in May 2019 (see my comment in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2020/03). Last year, the administration of incumbent Peter Mutharika had manipulated the results so blatantly that people spoke of the "tipp-ex elections". In spring, the judges ordered that new elections had to be held. Opposition groups joined forces in support of Chakwera, who won with almost 58% of the votes. Thanks to the judges, democracy has thus prevailed.

On the other hand, judges may well have made Malawi's health problems worse. The Mutharika administration had planned a Covid-19 lockdown, but it never took force because the Constitutional Court blocked it in late April (see my entry in the Covid-19 diary of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2020/05). A short time later, the Supreme Court upheld its decision. To many Malawians, Covid-19 did not matter. Campaign rallies attracted masses of people, but there were no hand-washing facilities, no face masks and no social distancing.

NOW THE DISEASE SEEMS TO BE SPREADING FAST

By 9 July, 1942 infections were reported. That was 44% more than at the end of June. According to worldometer.com, 25 patients had died. Health experts warned that measures had to be taken fast to stem the spread of Covid-19 and that the country would otherwise face a serious health crisis. Doctors say that the country's health system is overstretched and under-funded, which is typical of sub-Saharan countries.

Many people think, however, that institutional dysfunction is particularly bad in Malawi. The country has a special reputation for corruption and mismanagement. Chakwera spelled out these problems on the campaign trail: "This country needs fixing. There is a lot of corruption and a lot of money is being stolen." He promised not only to redeem the country from "years of misrule", but also to "end hunger".

To fight poverty, he wants to double the fertiliser subsidy to the benefit of millions of smallholder farms. According to the International Monetary Fund, however, African economies are headed for the worst crisis in decades, with national economies set to shrink. The problems the new government must tackle will probably prove much greater than assumed during the election campaign.

The new head of state is a former preacher. Chakwera even used to be the president of the Assemblies of God, one of the most important religious denominations in Malawi. People hope he will live up to his promises.



RAPHAEL MWENINGUWE is a journalist who lives in Malawi.
raphael.mweninguwe@hotmail.com

5 JULY 2020

Clearing the air

Indoor air pollution caused by cooking with traditional fuels such as firewood and cow dung causes respiratory disease and increases vulnerability to Covid-19. Poor people should be informed about the risks so that they switch to cleaner fuels. Research recently done in India shows that awareness raising can make a big difference.

By Katharina Michaelowa and Martina Zahno

Considering the many unknowns surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, it is worth noting that at least one factor is indisputable: having a respiratory disease increases one's vulnerability to the virus.



Fumes make cooking a health hazard for rural women – not only in the Indian state of Rajasthan.

Respiratory disease is clearly linked to air pollution. So it follows that air pollution increases the risks associated with the Coronavirus. In the USA, Italy and Britain, researchers have shown that exposure to particulate matter increases people's Covid-19 infection rates and mortality.

However bad air pollution may be in the USA, Italy or the UK, it is far worse in cities in much of the developing world. Moreover, the health hazards from indoor air pollution may be even greater than those from outdoor pollution. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that it is indeed the

greatest health risk many women face. Traditional cooking with biomass fuels – usually firewood or cow dung – often leads to life-threatening levels of indoor pollution. Things are especially bad in rural areas.

In India alone, indoor pollution from cooking with biomass causes about half a million deaths per year. Things might be better if people knew how harmful indoor air pollution can be.

In 2016, the Indian government launched a large programme to cover the upfront costs of access to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as a clean cooking fuel. Over 80 million households adopted the new technology, but many still use traditional

biomass for most of their cooking nonetheless. Apart from unawareness of health risks, main reasons are the high price of cylinder refills (the equivalent of about \$6.5 for a six-week supply for a family of five) and supply bottlenecks. Moreover, people mention security concerns and say the food tastes different.

The good news is that once rural residents know how harmful traditional fuels are, they change their behaviour. In an experimental study we carried out in the Indian state of Rajasthan, we found that many of the households that received information

on health hazards related to traditional fuels started using LPG much more frequently. After awareness raising, about 30% of the households doubled their LPG consumption during the weeks our research observed. That strong reaction was not a surprise. Among the control group, which was not given information, only 13% were aware of major health issues involved. Most knew, of course, that cooking with cow dung and firewood temporarily irritates the throat and the eyes, but they had no idea of long-term consequences.

Apparently, the communications related to the LPG programme were not clear enough. They referred to LPG as a “clean fuel”, but that reference could be understood as a remedy for the blackened kitchen walls. The marketing campaign did not address serious health issues directly, but highlighted the opportunity to get something that might otherwise be out of reach.

That error should be corrected fast. In view of Covid-19, the Indian government decided to include free LPG cylinders in its Corona support programme for the poor. This is a good opportunity to emphasise the link between pollution, respiratory health and Covid-19.

Only if people know about the risks posed by traditional fuels are they empowered to make conscious choices within their limited budgets. Having that knowledge can also help people to make rational fuel choices in future, once the Covid-19 emergency has passed.

LINK

Zahno, M., Michaelowa, K., Dasgupta, P., and Sachdeva, I., 2020: Health awareness and the transition towards clean cooking fuels: Evidence from Rajasthan. *PLoS ONE* 15(4): e0231931. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0231931>



KATHARINA MICHAELOWA is a professor of political economy and development at the University of Zurich and at its Centre for Comparative and International Studies.



MARTINA ZAHNO is a PhD candidate in political economy and development at the University of Zurich. martina.zahno@pw.uzh.ch



Follow us on Twitter!

To stay in touch with what is happening on our website, follow us on twitter.



www.twitter.com/forumdc

D+C/E+C is interested in African, Asian and Latin American contributors sharing their views. If you want to write for us, please send a short proposal to euz.editor@dandc.eu, spelling out your core message and – if needed – supporting arguments.



D+C

Follow

Editorial office D+C
@forumdc

D+C Development and Cooperation is a webmagazine and bi-monthly print magazine on development and international cooperation.
Imprint: ow.ly/NlIV30kfnUm

Frankfurt, Germany dandc.eu Joined January 2010

2,138 Following 10.7K Followers

Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

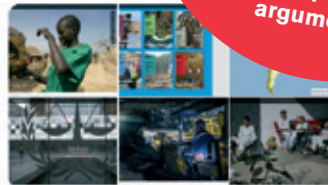
D+C Editorial office D+C @forumdc · 5m
Tragic tale of a young Nigerian's life wrecked by an ill-fated love affair
ow.ly/7GUC50AGVOx
#ChigozieObioma #AnOrchestraOfMinorities #Nigeria #literature #love



D+C Editorial office D+C @forumdc · 2h
Anyone with a serious interest in our content can currently sign up for a free

New to Twitter

Sign up now to get your



You might like

 **Ryan Thomas**
@My3_Ideas Follow

 **Andreas K. Maier**
@maier_ak Follow

 **Nutti Paolo**
@Nutti_Paolo Follow

Show more

Trends for you

Trending in Germany
#NOIaf

Trending in Germany
#neueinfektionen

Trending in Germany
LGBTQ
164K Tweets

