

Democratization and conflict in Africa

Venerdì 23 settembre / Friday 23 September 10.45-13.15 (I sess.), 14.15-16.00 (II sess.)

PROPONENTI: Henning MELBER (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala), Arrigo PALLOTTI (Università di Bologna)

ABSTRACT: Twenty years after the onset of the democratic transitions, political disillusionment is growing within African countries, as the consolidation of democratic practices and institutions is still far from being achieved, and the hiatus between political opening and socio-economic empowerment is deepening. As regional and socio-economic cleavages deepen, protests and strifes have been recorded in most African countries, and have sometimes degenerated into ethnic or religious conflicts. Faced with such serious challenges to their rule, African governments have increasingly made recourse to authoritarian means in order to maintain order and stability and secure their power, helped by the shift in Western donors' priorities from promoting good governance and accountability to fighting international terrorism. The panel conveners invite paper submissions that provide new theoretical insights on the changing nature of democracy in Africa within a context of socio-economic transformations, conflicts and changing donors' priorities, or present national case studies of troubled or faltering democratic transitions.

PAPERS:

I sess. (10.45-13.15), *Southern Africa*

Henning MELBER, *Competitive Authoritarianism? – The Case of Namibia*

ABSTRACT:

Since Independence in 1990, the former liberation movement SWAPO has deeply entrenched a de facto one-party rule based on a system of constitutional democracy. Widely recognized as one of the African states ranking high in terms of good governance, Namibia's government remains largely unchallenged by a weak and diverse political opposition offering hardly any meaningful political alternatives. The country's political culture resembles features of what has been more recently termed competitive authoritarianism. This paper examines to which extent Namibian democracy does indeed merit such category.

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Henning Melber is Director emeritus of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Senior Advisor of the Nordic Africa Institute and Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria and the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein.

Arrigo PALLOTTI, *A never-ending story? The TANU/CCM in power in Tanzania*

ABSTRACT:

In power since independence in 1961, the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) (formerly the Tanganyika African National Union) has shown in the past a remarkable capacity to manage two complex transitions – from the socialist experiment of ujamaa to a market economy, and from a one-party state to multipartism – without losing its control on the country's state institutions. The paper analyses the political factors that have allowed the CCM to maintain a tight control on Tanzania's state and society after independence, focusing in particular on the policy continuities and discontinuities between the socialist and the post-socialist period

and the complex legacy of ujamaa. The paper questions the ability of the CCM to successfully manage the deepening crisis of expectations brought about by the many contradictions of the development vision currently pursued by the government, and raises a number of questions on the nature and sustainability of the Tanzanian democratization process.

PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL PROPONENTE:

Arrigo Pallotti, Professore associato di Storia e istituzioni dell’Africa, Università di Bologna
(<https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/arrigo.pallotti>)

Maria Cristina ERCOLESSI, *Peace, democracy and development in post-conflict Angola*

ABSTRACT:

The paper analyzes the evolution of Angola’s political systems since the end of the civil war in 2002. The emphasis will be put on the evolving characters of MPLA’s rule and its discourse on the link between peace and development as the major justification for maintaining power and restricting spaces for civic and political participation.

The high rates of growth of the last decade have contributed to MPLA’s electoral success but the dwindling oil prices and permanent social inequality challenge in the medium term the feasibility of the economic model so far implemented and the political consensus built upon it. On the other hand, the threat of “a return to war” (with the attached delegitimization of opposition parties and political opponents) has been fading away, especially for the younger generation and an embryonic but growing civil society.

The next elections (2017) for Parliament and the Presidency and the uncertainty about the role that the present President José Eduardo dos Santos is willing to play in them as well as the debate about his succession and MPLA congress in August 2016 will contribute to clarify the prospects of the “Angolan model” of authoritarianism.

PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL PROPONENTE:

M. Cristina Ercolessi – Professore Associato di Storia e istituzioni dell’Africa, coordinatore del dottorato di ricerca in Africanistica, Università di Napoli “L’Orientale”.

Mario ZAMPONI, *Democracy and State-building in Southern Africa. The Case of Zimbabwe*

ABSTRACT:

Zimbabwe's history has left open relevant questions such as the formation of the state, democracy, the redistribution of resources (the land in particular). Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980 was the result of a compromise on social transformation models, compromise that in the 1990s entered in crisis. Since 2000 the crisis forged a new authoritarian model resulting in a situation of social and political conflict. The paper will discuss the main reasons and characteristics of the political trajectories of the ruling party (ZANU-PF) within this framework: from liberation movement to a ruling party more and more based on the elaboration of an authoritarian nationalism, and of a political discourse which paved the way to an economic and political crisis characterized by social conflict, political violence, violent "seizure" of the land.

PROPOSER’S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Mario Zamponi, Associate Professor in African and Development Studies, Centre for Historical and Political Studies on Africa and the Middle East, Department of Political and Social Sciences - University of Bologna. He is editor of the peer-reviewed journal on African studies '*afriche e orienti*'

Corrado TORNIMBENI, *Conflict and the Monopoly of Democracy in Mozambique*

ABSTRACT:

In 2012 Mozambique celebrated 20 years since the general peace agreement of Rome that ended the civil war and gave way to a democratic political regime with the first pluralist elections of 1994. 20 years in which the former marxist-leninist "party-state" of Frelimo has managed to remain in power in a political system formally competitive, and its governments have been widely praised by the international financial institutions as "good performers" for the democratic and economic achievements of the country. Liberal democracy and economic growth appeared well consolidated in Mozambique, above all if compared to situation of the majority of the African countries. However, "suddenly" and with some surprise in the international community, within one year after the celebrations violence broke out again in Mozambique, and currently the perspective of its escalation into open war is high and couples with an increasing authoritarian turn by Frelimo. The debate on the root causes of this conjuncture is open. This contribution addresses in particular the political system that has been shaped in the transition period of 1992-1994 and during the first years of democratic government, and looks at the way in which the international community turned a blind eye on Frelimo's monopolization of the national political space in view of its supposed reliability in promoting the international investments in the country.

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Corrado Tornimbeni is Lecturer (Assistant professor) in History and Institutions of Africa at the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the University of Bologna, and is co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal on African studies '*afriche e orienti*'.

II sess. (14.15-16.00), West Africa-Sudan

Valerio COLOSIO, *Decentralization or ricentralization? Political reforms in contemporary Chad*

ABSTRACT:

Since its independence, in 1960, Chad state has been always under the threat of armed rebellions and unable to effectively control its territory. Three years after independence, President Tolmabayé forbid multipartitism in the country, paving the way to tensions and rebellions. The situation escalated after 1975 military *coup d'état* and 1979 -1982 civil war. In 1990 Idriss Deby Itno defeated military the previous president, Hissene Habré, promising a transition to democracy for the first time in the country. The 1996 constitution formally recognised multipartitism and started a process of formal decentralization of the state institutions. This paper will critically analyse this process. Moving from a 9 months fieldwork in Chad, it will show how this process -expected to involve grassroots communities in state administration –is in fact fostering a diffused control of the territory from the central government for the first time in Chad history. This process has been possible thanks to the capacity of President Deby to win the military control of the whole country and involve the various local elites inside the state machine; but the harsh control kept by the central state and the growing competitions between the new administrative institutions created is increasing the risk of ethnic tensions and conflicts in the country.

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:

I am PhD student of Social Anthropology at the Sussex University, working in cotutorship with Università di Milano –Bicocca about state building and legacies of slavery in Chad.

Eduardo CARREÑO, *Democracy and Regional Cooperation in West Africa: Obasanjo's Worldview during Nigerian Fourth Republic (1999-2007)*

ABSTRACT:

The aim of this paper is to estimate the impact of the former President Obasanjo's worldview in promoting and strengthening democracy in West Africa during the Nigerian Fourth Republic (1999-2007). Obasanjo is considered one of the greatest African statesmen and during his political life has been advocate for peace and institutional stability in African countries, rule of law and regional cooperation on human rights.

This paper analyzes Obasanjo's role in reach of these goals in Africa (i.e. Sierra Leone) as well as the action of Nigerian multilateral diplomacy in this arena, particularly, in African Union and ECOWAS. Moreover, this research will evaluate Nigeria's contribution to implement two regional agreements to promote the democracy and regional security: Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999) and Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001).

PROPOSER'S ACADEMIC PROFILE:**Eduardo A. Carreño**

- Ph.D. candidate in Political Science, Autonomous University of Madrid.
- M.A. in International Relations and African Studies, Autonomous University of Madrid.
- M.A. in International Studies, University of Chile.
- B.A. in Government and Public Administration, University of Chile.