

CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA

Rehema Kilonzo, and Tiina Kontinen (eds.)
University of Helsinki (Publications of the Department of Political
and Economic Studies 23). 2015. pp. 220
ISBN 978-951-51-1007-7 (paperback)
ISBN 978-951-51-1008-4 (PDF)

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The book is a collection of 14 papers from a host of authors coming from five diverse institutions in three countries. This is good, as it contains the potential for knowledge creation, given the diversity and multidisciplinary brought about by the authors; even though about 64 per cent – that is, nine of the 14 authors have either written about Tanzania and/or come from two public institutions in the country.

I find it to be a good book, as it is thought-provoking and stimulates academic debates on a number of issues that are of great importance to the continent and in Tanzania and Zambia in particular. From my analysis, I see that the book revolves around issues that are well stipulated in the *Mpango wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umaskini Tanzania* (MKUKUTA – National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty in Tanzania). MKUKUTA consists of three clusters namely Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction, Human Being Well Being and Governance and Accountability. The three clusters were informed by the Millennium Development



Africanus
Journal of Development Studies
Volume 45 | Number 2 | 2015
pp. 91–93

Print ISSN 0304-615X
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Goals (MDGs), as well. The MDGs as we know them were formulated by the international community to address problems facing the human race, especially in the developing world. However, it is unfortunate that most of the goals were not met in many of African countries, including Tanzania and Zambia.

The chapters are divided into five sections whose titles, except for that of the last one, seem to be informed by MKUKUTA. It is good to see that national strategies consciously or unconsciously influence the thinking of African scholars. Part I discusses natural resources. It contains two papers; the first one discusses natural gas in Tanzania whilst the second dwells on mining in Africa and presents Zambia as a case study. Part II presents and discusses issues of decentralisation and governance. This section contains three papers. The papers present the Tanzanian experience on women in local governance, decentralisation reforms and poverty reduction. The third one discusses decentralisation and the delivery in public services. Part III comprises two papers which discuss social accountability issues. The first paper discusses accountability in local civil society organisations in Zambia. The second paper explores corporate social responsibility in Tanzania. Part IV is on livelihoods. It contains three papers. The first paper explores the contribution of wildlife to livelihoods in Zambia, while the second paper examines the agricultural policy on female farmers in Tanzania. The third paper proposes social development to be at the centre of Africa's economic growth. Part V, which brings to the surface controversial issues in development studies, contains four respective papers.

The book presents and discusses issues of interests in development studies worldwide. Chapter 11 is of special interest to academic institutions of the developing world. This chapter discusses capacity building between North and South institutions by strengthening the discipline of development studies. However, the institutions covered are mainly public institutions. This programme of empowering African Universities sidelines private institutions. In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), including Tanzania, public institutions are financially and academically better off than private ones as the former enjoy direct government support. Therefore, it is private institutions that need this capacity building programme the most.

Moreover, in the same line of thought, the question of staff empowerment is also discussed, albeit briefly. Staff empowerment is seen as based on encouraging staff to publish in international, well-known journals. Publishing is overemphasised, which makes the cliché 'publish or perish' sustainably relevant. However, with the help of this book, I would like to question this practice as far as epistemology is concerned. Does knowledge creation depend on international, famous and/or local journals? It is definitely not limited by any of such standards. Therefore, I would like to launch an appeal to encourage African academics to follow the right principles in creating knowledge as required by standards and I would encourage them to create knowledge which addresses local people's problems and publish in journals of their local languages. If such journals do not exist, let the academics establish them so that

the people will read what addresses their concrete life challenges. Let the knowledge we create benefit directly the people we live with so that they see the relevance of our disciplines. Let African research students inquire on issues that address local problems and not simply work on projects of interests to the West/North just because they fund them, while they at times lack relevance in the communities we live in.

While I commend the book for addressing developmental issues in SSA, I have two points of criticism to raise about the book. The first one concerns the title phrase, 'contemporary concerns', and the second point concerns the priority of the contemporary issues in Tanzania picked for the volume. On the topic of the titular phrase 'contemporary concerns', I question whether this volume has been preceded by another title on ancient and modern issues in Tanzania, and also whether it is appropriate to use a historical perspective and logic in general. I also ask, what were developmental issues in the past, in ancient as well as modern Tanzania? I am of the view that contemporary issues are best informed by the past.

On the content priorities in the volume, I am of the view that major issues of concern since independence and which continue to be important today are those of poverty eradication and the war against diseases and ignorance. These should have been addressed explicitly. Since Tanzanian independence in 1961, the country has waged war against ignorance, poverty and diseases, and the battle still continues. Thanks to analyses, I am informed that about 18 per cent of men and 28 per cent of women in the country do not know how to read and write and that most people in the rural areas are poor (Research and Analysis Working Group 2011). Another conspicuous issue which I think should have featured is corruption and selfishness amongst political leaders in the country. Corruption amongst politicians is catalysed by failure in leadership ethics such as those proposed by the Arusha Declaration in 1967 which were annulled by the Zanzibar Declaration in 1991 (Tanzania Human Development Report 2014). Another gigantic issue of concern in contemporary Tanzania is definitely the question of the new Constitution. The process of its creation was a great experience which raised issues that I think need to be discussed academically.

All in all, I commend this book as it contributes to knowledge creation and instigates academic thinking. It is useful to both students and academics in social sciences and more specifically in development studies.

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