

newsletter

NCCR North-South

Research Partnerships for Sustainable Development

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Focus on

GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT

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Focus on Governance and Conflict



Chiefs from the southern Sudanese state of Eastern Equatoria participate in a conference aimed at organising and strengthening traditional authorities in councils. Photo: Martina Santschi

Stronger states, more stable economies

While the economies of rich nations have been making headlines recently, stabilising the economies of developing and transition countries is an ongoing challenge. Examining the role of the economic sector both in fostering and in potentially mitigating conflicts is a topic of NCCR North-South research. Specifically, this newsletter looks at the roles of tourism and key commodities such as the stimulant *chat*.

A stable economy requires a strong and credible state and one focus of NCCR North-South research is on analysing how new types of statehood are negotiated by different actors in fragile post-war states. In South Sudan and Ethiopia, researchers have gained new insights into power relations in emerging states.

Where state-building is no longer underway but well established, NCCR North-South research looks at governance and how previously “voiceless” groups are making themselves heard. Research on this topic is conducted in South America; the latest findings are presented in this newsletter.

Editorial



Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti
Regional Coordinator,
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Various countries, mainly from the South, are experiencing mutual antagonisms, power struggles, inter-state hostilities, subversive cross-border terrorism, separatist movements and internal instability. The causes are in most cases related to poor state governance.

For example, all countries of South Asia are in one way or another suffering from social tension, armed conflict and a deep sense of insecurity. The relationships between the states and the people are problematic. Achieving a better understanding of these problems and exploring possible options for addressing them requires in-depth and rigorous research and analysis.

Hence, the NCCR North-South has identified 'Governance and Conflict' as one of the priority themes in its research. This issue of the NCCR North-South newsletter highlights the work done in the areas of 'Governance and Conflict' in different parts of the world. Research evidence has demonstrated important contributions of the NCCR North-South in addressing the problems related to conflict and poor governance.

NCCR North-South News and Events

evidence for policy

The NCCR North-South has launched its policy briefs series. Entitled *evidence for policy*, the series provides research highlights on important development topics. The first issue deals with the challenges of integrating participatory approaches in the governance of protected areas.

A PDF is available on: www.north-south.unibe.ch; for a paper copy, please contact: nccr-north-south@cde.unibe.ch

New doctoral programme

A joint doctoral programme on 'Global Change, Innovation and Sustainable Development' is currently underway with funding from the ProDoc scheme of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The aim of the project is to build on the NCCR North-South by creating a permanent structure for research partnerships with the South among the participating universities of Bern, Zurich and Basel as well as the Swiss Tropical Institute and swisspeace. Eight PhD students are participating in the doctoral programme, which comprises a training module and four research modules.

basecamp 09

The NCCR North-South is participating in basecamp 09, a science festival aimed at young people. basecamp is organised by the Bern-based foundation Science et Cité and will include a mobile exhibition and events in six Swiss cities. The NCCR North-South and the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) will present aspects of their work from 9–13 September 2009, when the exhibition takes place in Bern. For more information: www.basecamp09.ch



NCCR Umbrella Communications Campaign

The Swiss National Science Foundation and its 20 National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs) in Switzerland are organising an umbrella communications campaign for 2009. The aim of the campaign is to increase awareness of the NCCRs among different target groups from politicians to the public by showing how the NCCRs have brought added value to Swiss research.

Governance and Gender

“Governance” is widely referred to in international development policies. Examining the many uses of “governance” – as a term, concept or fashionable tool – is the collective research objective of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (IHEID) and its Latin-American partner institutions within the NCCR North-South.

The work has led to the development of the “Governance Analytical Framework”. This is a practical methodology to analyse collective processes which determine how decisions are made and how social norms and institutions are created, with reference to public issues. This analytical tool has proven to be useful and efficient in the study of governance systems and in analysing debates on governance models. In other words, it helps to determine global or contextual issues linked to global change and/or to sustainable development such as biodiversity, vulnerability, decentralisation, health and labour.

One core transversal aspect of this approach is the gender perspective. This perspective considers the sex/gender system as a complex social construction that includes sexual categories, practices, relations, representations, symbols and institutions marked by both hierarchies and inequalities. Gender is considered as intertwined with class, nation, race, culture and ethnicity in particular historical contexts. This “intersectionality” is one relevant element in studying governance forms and systems.

The “Governance Analytical Framework” is thus composed of two complementary perspectives – governance and gender. It is currently used in Latin America and will soon be tested in other areas of the world. Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico and Peru have common problems related mainly to high rates of unemployment, power and economic inequalities, emergence of new forms of collective action, environmental hazards, conflicts over access and control of natural resources, erosion of indigenous institutions and loss of biological diversity.

In trying to understand these problems, three research themes linked to governance and gender were implemented by the NCCR North-South: 1) social movements, decentralisation and citizenship; 2) urban risks and segregation; and 3) biodiversity and protected areas.



Indigenous organisations in Tiwanaku, Bolivia, gather to celebrate the election of President Evo Morales just before his inauguration in January, 2006. Photo: Inti Cohen

In Honduras, development projects in tourism, conservation and power generation led to protests by the Garífuna and Lenca ethnic groups. Various organisations and communities protested against the violation of their rights of autodetermination, as well as on the negative impacts on their local environment and their livelihoods that the projects had. In the course of these social conflicts, “otherness” and colonial legacies are taken up and redefined by the actors concerned. This results in the emergence of a new sense of multicultural and gendered citizenship.

In Bolivia and Argentina, new political processes and new public policies have led to the deployment of a variety of citizen strategies which respond not only to structural issues but also to social, political and cultural aspects. For example, women face serious obstacles when trying to actively participate in neighbourhood organisations (Bolivia) or unemployed workers’ organisations (Argentina). On the one hand they have little access to leadership roles and on the other they have to make greater efforts than the male leaders to perform the same tasks within these organisations.

Further reading

De la Fuente M, Hufty M, editors. 2007. *Movimientos sociales y ciudadanía*. La Paz: NCCR North-South, IUED, Plural.

Hufty M. 2007. *The Governance Analytical Framework*. <http://www.north-south.unibe.ch/content.php/publication/id/2299>

Hufty M, Dormeier Freire A, Plagnat P, Neumann V, editors. 2007. *Jeux de gouvernance. Regards et réflexions sur un concept*. Paris: Karthala, IUED.

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Negotiating Statehood

Over the last two decades, in the wake of civil fighting, the debt crisis and neo-liberal policies, states in the South have come under particular threat. To the extent that states are often considered in some academic and policy discourses as “weak” if not “failed” or as mere “shadows”, and thus as constituting a strong challenge for sustainable development. Against this normative trend, NCCR North-South research on “negotiating statehood” aims at understanding how states actually work, despite all their shortcomings in terms of service delivery, norms setting and security provision. It looks at how new forms of statehood emerge as the product of interactions between local, national and international state and non-state actors.

In Ethiopia, NCCR North-South research is examining the effects of decentralisation in Oromia, one of the country’s nine regional states. Decentralisation – the devolution of power and authority – was introduced in Ethiopia in 1992 as a means of accommodating diversity and empowering citizens. It has allowed various ethnic groups to establish their own regional states, and use whatever language they prefer in administering themselves. It has also empowered various ethnic groups to exercise full cultural self-determination.



Case attendants in a district court in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. Photo: Sibilo Keno

However, the research has also revealed negative side-effects of decentralisation. It is found to be exacerbating the tradition of bribe-taking, especially in court. It has also produced a new form of favouritism in government institutions. These factors appear to be eroding the

legitimacy of regional as well as central government in the eyes of regional people in general and Oromo people in particular.

In Sudan, NCCR North-South researchers are focusing on how power is perceived at the periphery of the state. In rural Aweil East County, for instance, the process of state-building brought administrators physically into villages. However, the administration at the grassroots level is characterised by a lack of funds to pay salaries or to provide infrastructure and services. Traditional authorities are crucial in governing and allocating resources at the local level and they are perceived as legitimate authorities. Health services and access to clean water are either not available or provided by international donors. In this context, citizens refer to *hakuma* (government) as a far-away institution in the state capital.

This tends to reinforce parallel networks based on ethnicity, clan, family and civil society which overlap and are interlinked with the state, since it is through these networks that private and public resources are distributed. In local political arenas, where traditional authorities, administrators and other actors compete for authority and access to resources, functions and competencies of the administration and of chiefs are not yet legally determined; authority and statehood are negotiated locally. It is by studying power plays at the interface between these various networks that this project provides new insights into the emerging state in post-war South Sudan.

Both studies provide new, empirically-based knowledge on current dynamics of state formation and transformation. By contributing to a better understanding of how states actually work, research in this field can identify lines along which state intervention to support sustainable development can be enhanced.

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NCCR North-South research on Governance and Conflict is conducted within the framework of a work package under the direction of Laurent Goetschel (left) of **swisspeace** in Bern, Switzerland, and Michel Carton (right) of the **Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID)** in Geneva, Switzerland.

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The Rapidly Transforming Culture of *Chat* Consumption

The consumption of *chat* – a plant whose leaves are chewed as a stimulant – is undergoing a rapid transformation process. Now increasingly linked to an urban lifestyle, the chewing of *chat* has become synonymous with mutual interaction and communication, despite the fact that it is still considered by many as a potential danger in terms of public health.

Although *chat* has always been chewed by a broad spectrum of people, the lifestyle of today's chewer is incomparable with that of people who chewed *chat* some 30 years ago. In recent years, *chat* has been transformed from a cultural ritual to a highly commercialised commodity.

Among *chat*-growing communities specifically



A gift of chat from farmers to the social anthropologist conducting the study. Photo: Abdi Hasan

in the eastern (Harerge) and southwestern (Jimma and Gurage Zones) parts of Ethiopia, *chat* still plays religious and socio-cultural roles including providing energy to farmers toiling in their fields. In urban centres it is chewed – for different purposes – by a wide range of people from artists to construction engineers (both Ethiopians and Chinese in recent years), from tourists to bank clerks. People chew it as a stimulant to concentrate, to fight back fatigue as well as to escape boredom. Faster supply coupled with the image of how it fits into a trendy urban lifestyle has added a new dimension to the commoditisation process of *chat*.

Chat has become one of Ethiopia's leading export commodities and, as such, now plays a vital role for the country's economy. In addition to its research on the production, commercialisation and consumption of this plant, the NCCR North-South is examining the politi-

cal economy of *chat* in the country and beyond its borders, thus showing how this commodity can be a factor of further conflicts and/or development through new sources of income for impoverished farmers and all intermediaries along the commodity chain.

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Tourism, Conflict and Peace-Building in Nepal

Tourism, a vital sector of Nepal's economy, was hit hard during a decade-long war that ended in 2006. The conflict caused Nepal's image to plummet from a peaceful to an insecure tourist destination. The ensuing closure of hotels, airlines and travel agencies and resulting unemployment strongly affected the livelihoods of many people.

During the conflict years, international development agencies supported the government in the running of tourism-related Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes in various districts. The aim of this was to provide socio-economic benefits to people in rural areas and thus contribute to peace-building in Nepal, in the knowledge that poverty was the root cause of the armed conflict.

Against this background, NCCR North-South research attempts to understand the role of tourism in conflict mitigation and peace-building in Nepal. In addition to analysing the coping strategies of the tourism industry during the armed conflict, the research examines the potentials of the tourism sector in peace-building in post-conflict Nepal.

An innovative project has just got underway to put into practice some of the theoretical reflection on how tourism can contribute to conflict prevention. The PAMS (Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes) project of the NCCR North-South began in January 2009 with the aim of developing a community-based tourism model in the Kaski district in Western Nepal. The project aims to establish a conflict-sensitive tourism code of conduct in five villages on a trekking route. The guidelines are intended to serve as a model for how to develop conflict-sensitive tourism projects elsewhere in Nepal.

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NCCR North-South Recommended Reading



Conflict Transformation in Central Asia

Irrigation disputes in the Ferghana Valley

Bichsel C.

London, UK: Routledge, 2008. 192 pages.

This book provides the first systematic analysis of peace-building in Central Asia for inter-ethnic conflicts over water and land in the Ferghana Valley based on concrete, in-depth and on-site investigation. The core analysis centres on peace-building projects in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan by three international aid agencies – an international NGO, a bilateral governmental donor and a multi-lateral agency – and the shared approach which the donors developed and used for conflict transformation. Using ethnographic case material, the author critically examines both the theoretical assumptions guiding this approach and its empirical outcomes when put into practice. Building on existing work in conflict transformation and the ethnography of international assistance in Central Asia, the book sheds light on Western attempts to transform the post-socialist societies of Central Asia and provides fresh empirical data on and insights into irrigation practices, social institutions, and state and identity formation in the Ferghana Valley.



Jeux de gouvernance. Regards et réflexions sur un concept

Hufty M, Dormeier Freire A, Plagnat P, Neumann V.

Paris, France and Geneva, Switzerland: Karthala, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), 2007. 248 pages.

This book (available only in French) joins the debates around the concept of governance. It aims to help clarify the meaning of the concept of governance, while illustrating the difficulties linked to its use in the field of international relations and development. The texts it contains explore the potential of the concept in a theoretical and historical perspective, and consider its application within various topics: decentralisation, citizenship, private-public connections, urban governance, environment, financial institutions, traditional knowledge, democracy and construction of the postcolonial state.

Completed PhD Theses with a Governance and Conflict Focus

Pastoral conflict and resource management in Ethiopia's Somali Region; Haggmann, Tobias; Ethiopia

Dangerous divisions: Irrigation disputes and conflict transformation in the Ferghana Valley; Bichsel, Christine; Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

Land, class, ethnicity: Permutations of environmental conflicts in two districts of Assam; Barbora, Sanjay; India

The economics of shared irrigation water rights: An alternative analytical framework and application to Ethiopia; Moges, Shiferaw; Ethiopia

Ethiopia and the Nile: The dilemma of national and regional hydro-politics; Arsano, Yacob; Ethiopia

The transformation of violent conflicts in pastoral areas of Ethiopia: An ethnography on the notion of conflict among the Karrayu of the Middle and Awash Valley; Mulugeta, Allemmaya; Ethiopia

The national and indigenous management of environmental conflicts, Savannah Belt, Sudan (cases of the Ingessana Hills, Blue Nile state and the Nuba Mountains, Southern Kordofan State); Ahmed, Mey Eltayeb; Sudan

Double-edged hydropolitics on the Nile: Linkages between domestic water policy making and transboundary conflict and cooperation; Luzi, Samuel; Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan

Deforestation and customary law in Madagascar [in French]; Muttenzer, Frank; Madagascar

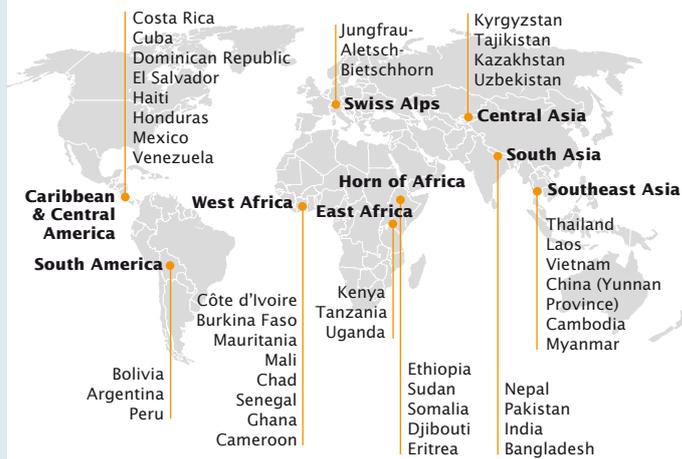
Gender, participatory governance and politics: A case study in a lower class urban settlement in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India; Walter, Sandra; India

Métisse knowledge: An analysis of strategies for protecting traditional knowledge in Peru [in French]; Galvin, Marc; Peru

Democratizing global environmental governance: NGOs and Andean biodiversity; Diaz Ramirez, Liliana; Bolivia, Peru

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Partnership Regions



Programme Management

- The NCCR North-South is directed by a board made up of representatives from the Swiss Partner Institutions together with the Regional Coordinators. It is headed by programme directors Hans Hurni and Urs Wiesmann, and coordinated by Thomas Breu.

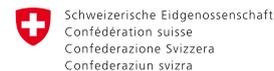
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Swiss Partner Institutions

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www.cde.unibe.ch
- Department of Water and Sanitation in Developing Countries (Sandec) at Eawag (Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology), Dübendorf
Roland Schertenleib
www.sandec.ch
- Swiss Tropical Institute (STI), Basel
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www.sti.ch
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