



## Programme Point Sud 2018

### Revisiting Dams in Africa

17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Maputo, Mozambique

### Report



## **Revisiting Dams in Africa**

### **Conveners**

Dr Tamer Abd Elkreem, Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Khartoum

Dr Valerie Haensch, Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Munich (LMU)

Prof Inês Macamo Raimundo, Geography, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo

Dr Elú시오 Viegas Filipe, History, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo

### **Themes and Objectives**

The construction of high dams in Africa has tremendously increased since the turn of the new millennium. During the last two decades, the emergence of new players in funding and building dams, as well as the global concern for climate change, has reinvigorated the interest in dams as a source of clean and renewable energy, serving poverty reduction and food security. However, dams have also generated massive displacements, impoverishment of the affected communities and environmental hazards. The controversial legacy of large dams has not yet been satisfactorily revisited in a way that connects issues of state, society, environment, developmental paradigms and their related knowledge production. Although the continent is currently witnessing another boom of dam construction, it lacks a home-grown critical review of the legacy of the last half century. African dams are still governed by imported visions of modernization, neo-liberal and developmental state models and World Bank guidelines that do not take into account the specificity of the region and the wider socio-political conditions within which these projects are pursued and implemented. The aim of this workshop was to go beyond the de-contextualized, de-historicized and de-politicized legacy we observe in the dam-related literature and the developmental paradigms by scrutinizing the state-society-environment nexus. Therefore, we discussed the complex assemblages of heterogeneous knowledge and actors involved at different levels of dam projects. Our aim was to open multiple dialogues between disciplines, young and senior researchers, activists and scholars, Africans and non-Africans. We focused on the state-society-environment nexus by paying particular attention to African dams' historical trajectories, current experiences and future aspirations. To tackle the dynamic nexus, we concentrated on the following themes in order to revisit the debates over African dams and energy futures:

1. Understanding infrastructures' socio-political processes and development-induced displacement.
2. Understanding escalating civil or affected people's unrest and protests and the involvement of global anti-dam networks.
3. Uncovering new visions for Africa's development (competing developmental models, neoliberal vs. East Asian developmental state) and China's involvement in dam building.
4. Tackling the questions of social responsibility (for people, environment, by whom).

### **Methodology and Results**

The workshop took place at the Centro de Estudos Africanos, Eduardo Mondlane University, in Maputo. The Centro de Estudos Africanos provided an excellent venue and vibrant intellectual environment to hold this workshop, which benefitted from the centre's research expertise on dams, displacement, and migration in Mozambique and Southern Africa. Historically, Mozambique as well the neighbouring countries Zambia and Zimbabwe are sites of some of the largest hydropower dams in Africa built on the Zambezi River. Furthermore,

several dams are currently planned in Mozambique for generating electricity to be exported to South Africa. The workshop was held for three days and was attended by 18 academics (including the organisers) from across Africa (9), Europe (5) and the USA (4); 10 among them were junior scholars. We invited 2 practitioners from leading regional and international civil society organizations as well as 1 artist and documentary filmmaker. Furthermore, we invited 4 senior researchers from various disciplines (political science, history, anthropology). Ahead of the workshop we distributed a call for papers and carefully selected 10 scholars (mostly junior scholars and PhD candidates) to arrive at both a balanced and diverse composition regarding gender, regional specialisation, and disciplinary background – history, anthropology, development studies, political science and geography. We pre-circulated full papers among the participants to allow them to prepare. The workshop consisted of 8 thematic sessions, as well as an opening keynote and a closing keynote. In each session, individual papers were presented followed by a discussion among all participants. Each session was led by a chair who summarized the paper and coordinated the discussion. The themes of the sessions reflected the key thematic threats of the workshop's focus on the state-society-environment nexus. The opening keynote was given by Chris de Wet, a leading scholar of research on dams, displacement and resettlement. He presented a historical overview on dams in Africa and the changing paradigms of approaches towards dam-induced displacement and resettlement. Several papers discussed the developmental visions, ways of ongoing resistance among displaced people as well as the long-term social and environmental consequences of large dams such as the Kariba Dam and Cahora Bassa Dam. The historical perspective on the older dams, which were built during the colonial period, was very fruitful for comparison with the numerous planned and newly constructed dams (for instance in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Cameroon) in terms of the changing political economy, newly emerging donors, the enduring focus on centralized energy production, and changing possibilities for resistance. The workshop was a great opportunity to combine single case studies and practical experiences with the broader picture of the general challenges and dilemmas of the current boom of dam construction, energy access and changing state-society relationships in the postcolonial condition. The main points raised in the workshop were summarized by Harry Verhoeven in his closing keynote, which was followed by a discussion on the future of large dams in Africa. The exchanges during the workshop highlighted among other important insights, that African dams on the one hand, are still governed by various versions of high modernist visions of development and state building. On the other hand, the discussions reflected the changing nature of financing and new social inequalities as well as new modes of empowerment but also continuing modes of disempowerment of affected people and civil society organisations. Our discussions on power relations between state and society as well as the possibilities of critical knowledge production will be presented in a planned special issue. In addition to the sessions and the screening of a film about the Akosombo Dam in Ghana, we had the chance to exchange during the joint dinner. We participated in a guided tour through the University Eduardo Mondlane and the Centro de Estudos Africanos. We also had the chance to participate in a guided city tour through the centre of Maputo which was organized by the Centro de Estudos Africanos.

Program:

<b>Sunday, June 17</b>
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9.00-10.00 Welcome Address & Introduction: Convenors, CEA & Point Sud Centre

10.00-11.15 Opening Keynote: Chris de Wet (Rhodes University)

11.45-13.05 Session 1:

*Large Hydro-Dams in Meeting the Energy Access Gap in Africa. The Case of Bujugali and Inga 3 Dam*, Rudo Angela Sanyanga (IRN, South Africa)

*Ideological Bricolage: The Contrasts and Continuities in the Dam Resurgence's Drivers and Practices*, Barnaby Dye (University of Oxford)

14.15-15.35 Session 2:

*Hydraulic Missions, Ruins and Revival: Politics of Space and Power in the Tana-Beles Basins, 1980s-Today*, Kristin Fedeler (University of Edinburgh)

*Dammed swamps: Owen Falls, the Water Politics of the Nile, and the Swamps of Uganda since 1954*, John Doyle-Raso (Michigan State University)

16.00-17.00 Session 3:

*Capturing the Rains: Rising Powers Meet Traditional Donors in Cameroon's Hydropower Sector*, Yunnan Chen (Johns Hopkins University)

<b>Monday, June 18</b>
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09.00-10.20 Session 4:

*The Great Renaissance Discourse: Africa's Biggest Dam through the Eyes of its Peoples*, Kiya Gezahegne (University of Addis Abeba)

*Dams of the Northern Sudan: Politics and Phenomenologies of Staying and Displacement*, Tamer Abd Elkream and Valerie Hänsch (University of Khartoum/University of Munich)

10.50-13.10 Session 5:

*Writing Dams: A History of Cahora Bassa 1965-200*, Allen Isaacman (University of Minnesota)

*Hydro-Identities and Competing Claims around the Kariba Waterscape in Zimbabwe, 1950s-2017*, Terence M. Mashingaidze (Midlands State University)

14.30-15.50 Session 6:

*How Electoral Politics Affected the Implementation of the proposed Itare Dam in the Mau Forest Complex*, Babere Kerata Chacha (Laikipia University)

*Damscapes? Understanding water-food-energy nexus of dams in Ethiopia*, Million Gebreyes (University of Bonn)

16.20-18.10 Session 7:

Film Screening and Discussion: *Ghana's Electric Dreams* (dir. R. Lane Clark)

Stephan Miescher (University of California) and R. Lane Clark (artist)

<b>Tuesday, June 19</b>
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9.00-10.20 Session 8:

*The Building of the Massingir Dam: Development, Conservation and Rural Transformation in Coutada 16, 1972-1983*, Paulo Jose (Eduardo Mondlane University)

*Of conservancies, development and changing livelihoods: Tonga Women in Sinakatenge, Binga, North-western Zimbabwe*, Ivan Marowa (University of Zimbabwe)

10.50-12.05 Cloisin Keynote: Harry Verhoeven (Georgetown University Qatar)

12.15-12.45 Round-up discussion & way forward

14.00 Guided tour University and city tour

## **Sustainability of the Event**

The discussions especially benefited from the interdisciplinary focus of the workshop which brought together junior scholars, senior scholars and practitioners who are working on the current resurgence of dams in Africa. We plan to publish the results of the workshop in a special issue which will deal with past, present and future trajectories of large dams in Africa. We are currently preparing a proposal for the Journal Water Alternatives to inquire if the journal would be interested in a special issue on the current dam construction boom in Africa. Several collaborations emerged out of the workshop. Tamer Abd Elkreem and Million Gebreyes are planning to collaborate in a research project on Sudan and Ethiopia. Valerie Hänsch and Stefan Miescher collaborated in a workshop held at the University of California. It is expected that future collaborations on specific topics such as water infrastructures and environmental justice will develop out of the workshop.

## **Participants**

1. Dr. Babere Kerata Chacha, History, Laikipia University, Kenya
2. Yunnan Chen, PhD-Student, Development Studies, International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, USA
3. Robert Lane Clark, Artist, Filmmaker, USA
4. Prof. Chris de Wet, Anthropology, Rhodes University, South Africa
5. John Doyle-Raso, PhD-Student, History, Michigan State University, USA
6. Barnaby J. Dye, PhD-Student, Political Science, University of Oxford, UK
7. Dr. Tamer Abd Elkreem, Anthropology, University of Khartoum, Sudan
8. Kristin Fedeler, PhD-Student, African Studies, University of Edinburgh
9. Dr. Elú시오 Viegas Filipe, History, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique
10. Dr. Million Gebreyes, Geographer, University of Bonn, Germany
11. Kiya Gezahegne, PhD-Student, Anthropology, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
12. Dr. Valerie Haensch, Anthropology, University of Munich (LMU), Germany
13. Prof. Allen F. Isaacman, History, University of Minnesota, USA
14. Dr. Paulo José, History, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique
15. Anabela Lemos, campaign coordinator and board member of the Mozambican environmental group Justiça Ambiental (JA!), Maputo, Mozambique
16. Dr. Terence M. Mashingaidze, History, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe
17. Dr. Ivan Marowa, History, University of Zimbabwe
18. Prof. Stephan Miescher, History, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA
19. Prof. Inês Macamo Raimundo, Geography, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique
20. Rudo Angela Sanyanga, International Rivers Network, (IRN), Africa Program Director, South Africa
21. Prof. Harry Verhoeven, Political Science, International Relations, Georgetown University, Qatar