



# NEWSLETTER

Institute of Global Cultural Studies, Binghamton University  
Volume 6, Issue 1, Fall 2006

## Message from the Director, Ali A. Mazrui

### Governance and Gender: Cross-Cultural Experience

Until 2005, Africa and the United States seemed to be almost the only regions of the world that had never elected a woman to be head of state or head of government. Europe had produced Margaret Thatcher and a number of Scandinavian female leaders. Latin America started off with Isabella Peron, widow of the great Argentine leader. The Caribbean has had female prime ministers — the latest in Jamaica. And Asian female leaders have ranged from Indira Gandhi of India to Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia. Even Canada had a woman prime minister, Kim Campbell, for a few months.

Now Liberia — a product of both Africa and the United States — has in turn produced Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, Africa's first female elected president.

In the 19th century Liberia was established and was celebrated as "Africa's first Republic." Emancipated African Americans had crossed the Atlantic back to Africa and established a Black Republic in West Africa.

In this 21st century Liberia is once again "the first among equals." This tormented but historic country is once again ahead of the pack, setting the grand precedent of a

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**President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia,**  
**first woman president in Africa's history.**

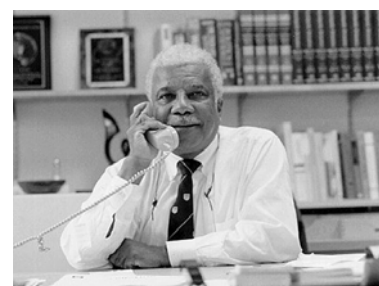
## Public Intellectuals and the African Experience: Comparative Intellectual Recognition

By IGCS reporters

Professor Ali A. Mazrui can now add two distinctions to his resume: being named one of the world's top 100 public intellectuals and one of the 100 greatest Africans of all time.

Mazrui was recently named by *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* magazines to their new list of the top 100 intellectuals. He was named to *The New African* magazine's list of the 100 greatest Africans of all time last year.

But what is a "public intellectual"? A public intellectual is "a person who has shown distinction in their own field along with the ability to communicate ideas and influence debate outside it." Ironically, Ali Mazrui publicly defined the term "intellectual" for the first time in East Africa as long ago as the 1960s. He was, at the time, a professor in Uganda. In the town hall of the city of Kampala, Uganda, Mazrui debated a leading member of the Uganda government on "The Role of the African Intellectual in the African Revolution." Mazrui's debating adversary was Uganda's head of security and intelligence, Akena Adoko, who was at the time the second most powerful civilian in Uganda, after President Milton Obote. The moderator of



**Professor Ali A. Mazrui was nominated among the 100 top public intellectuals in the world by *Foreign Policy* magazine (Washington, D.C.) in 2005.**

the debate was the mayor of Kampala. The town hall was packed to overflowing. Ali Mazrui offered his definition of an intellectual, which was destined to capture the imagination of East Africans for decades: *An intellectual is a person who has the capacity to be fascinated by ideas, and has acquired the skill to handle some of those ideas effectively.*

But is Ali Mazrui a "scholar" or a "public intellectual"? In the 1960s President Milton Obote of Uganda asked

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*Director Ali Mazrui in consultation with some of the women members of IGCS. Left to right: AnnaMarie Palombaro, Nancy Hall and Barbara Tierno (2006).*



*Some members of IGCS in a solemn mood, after a hectic day. Seated left to right: Ali Mazrui, AnnaMarie Palombaro, Nancy Hall and Barbara Tierno. Standing: Ruzima Sebuharara, Seifudein Adem, Patrick Dikirr and Senthilkumar Mehalingam (2006).*



## Robert L. Ostergard's Legacy: Between Central and Marginal Concerns

By Dr. Ali Mazrui

Robert L. Ostergard Jr., associate director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies, has tendered his resignation from Binghamton University. He has accepted a tenure-track position at the University of Nevada in Reno beginning this fall.

Ostergard obtained his PhD from the Department of Political Science at Binghamton. From the start, he showed a knack for choosing research challenges that were off the beaten track. As a political science doctoral candidate, he might have chosen to write his dissertation on an aspect of American politics, or on democratization or modernization in the developing world. Instead, he addressed the politics of intellectual property in three very divergent societies: Nigeria, the United States and the People's Republic of China. It was an unusual topic for a political scientist and was a professional risk. But it turned out to be a measure of his breadth of vision, rather than a case of self-marginalization.

The Ostergard paradox in research consists of human centrality and disciplinary marginality. Ostergard subsequently

turned his attention to another topic of great human significance, but not necessarily a subject in the mainstream of political science. Ostergard began to focus on HIV/AIDS. But, once again, his approach to HIV/AIDS was not from the perspective of the more obvious angles of sexuality and drug addiction. Rather, he wanted to address HIV/AIDS as a security hazard and a militarily relevant issue within Africa and from a global perspective.

Ostergard went to one of the African countries worst-affected by HIV/AIDS, Uganda. This country was also affected in diverse ways by problems of insecurity and conflict. His papers and articles on the security implications of HIV/AIDS began to arouse the interest of both international organizations and book publishers. The World Health Organization, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and other agencies and organizations began to show increasing interest in Ostergard's work and to invite him to some of their health-related and security-related workshops.

However, if Ostergard's choices of research concerns were humanly central but professionally marginal to political science, his teaching interests have been both humanly central and professionally mainstream. After September 11, his most ambitious course was on "Terrorism and

War," which enrolled some 500 students and enlisted other professorial voices in the course. In the political atmosphere of the year 2001-02, Ostergard's course became mightily controversial, both on campus and in the wider mass media. The rightwing media explicitly targeted Ostergard and Ali Mazrui. The course on terrorism has since been taught on a more modest scale on this campus.

On the Binghamton campus, Bob Ostergard has also tried to resurrect traditional political theory as a political science concern — from Machiavelli to Marx, from Camus to Cabral. He has also co-taught from time to time the course that Ali Mazrui invented for this campus — "Cultural Forces in World Politics" — taught from freshman level to the graduate level.

IGCS at Binghamton has had a special relationship with the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University for more than a decade. With Ali Mazrui, Bob Ostergard has also co-taught courses at Cornell on government and politics in Africa and on the African Diaspora.

As a man of ideas and as an innovative scholar, Ostergard's departure from Binghamton is bound to leave a serious void. We will continue to monitor his special talent for turning professionally marginal subjects in political science into central concerns of the human condition.

# Monetary Policy and Central Banking

By IGCS Staff



Ruzima C. Sebuharara, a long-serving research member of the IGCS, was awarded a PhD in economics from Binghamton University in 2005. Dr. Sebuharara's area of research interest is in monetary policy and central banking, with a focus on two main lines of inquiry. First, Sebuharara is interested in the stability of money demand and its implications for monetary policy in the presence of significant institutional and structural changes, particularly in emerging economies. Following this line of research, which gained popularity after 1973 when the partial adjustment specification was unable to explain the apparent instability in the money demand experienced in the United States since the early-1970s (what has been referred to as the "missing money episode"), he pursued the attempt to improve the ability of the model to explain the past performance and to predict money demand in the future by accounting for financial innovation and deregulation, among other factors. Applying his model to the data gathered from Ghana and Kenya, Sebuharara found that the

inclusion of Banking Density, a variable that serves as proxy for the development of a banking network, had a significant positive influence on the demand for money, particularly in Kenya. The development of the financial sector network in Kenya induced economic agents to hold greater amount of money balances in forms of bank deposits, even after controlling for inflation.

Second, and as an alternative to the so-called "money view," Dr. Sebuharara's research is in line with the renewed interest in the importance of financial aspects in macroeconomic models (the "credit view"), which gained popularity in the 1980s, and the role of asymmetric information in credit markets. Inspired by the theory of credit rationing, Sebuharara's doctoral research also examined the effects on money demand of the degree of credit restraint. He developed a degree of credit restraint variable that he introduced in the money demand function to play the role of opportunity cost of holding money balances in situations where interest rates are not operative or are unobservable, such as in the informal financial markets of several developing countries. Using annual data from Ghana and Kenya, his preliminary econometric results support the hypothesis that the credit restraint variable has a strong negative influence on money demand, even after controlling for other explanatory variables such as income, inflation rate and banking density, which was also introduced to capture institutional changes. Sebuharara is working on the search for new proxies for the degree of credit restraint, constructing higher frequency data and expanding the sample of his countries in order to be able to use newer and more robust econometric techniques and to generalize his findings. A further extension of his research could contribute to the understanding of the behavior of the banking sector, asset pricing and other investment decisions.



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**Professor  
Ali A. Mazrui  
with young  
Somali  
intellectuals  
in Hargeisa,  
Somaliland, 2006.**



## Valuable Books and Dangerous Authors: IGCS Perspectives

By IGCS Reporters

It is many years since Ali Mazrui last published more than one book in a single year. But he has done it again in 2006 with the release of *Islam between Globalization and Counterterrorism* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press and Oxford: James Currey, 2006) and *A Tale of Two Africas: Nigeria and South Africa as Contrasting Visions* (London: Adonis-Abbey, 2006). A few advance copies of the first book were auctioned in Los Angeles at an American Muslim Alliance fundraiser, with one book fetching \$1,000. A pre-released copy of the second book was orally reviewed by a Nigerian scholar before an audience of over 2,000 people in a stadium in Kano, Nigeria, in February 2006. Mazrui was a guest speaker at the same event under the auspices of Bayero University, Kano.

A more hostile book to Mazrui and 100 other scholars is David Horowitz's book, *The Professors: 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2006). Mazrui is falsely accused of having been a spokesman for a terrorist organization called Muhajiroun (of which Mazrui is totally unfamiliar)! He is

also accused (this time accurately) of describing Israel "as a threat to American democracy." Other "dangerous professors" in David Horowitz's list include Noam Chomsky of MIT, Juan Cole of the University of Michigan, John Esposito of Georgetown University and Richard Falk of Princeton University. Despite the buzz surrounding Horowitz's book, many of the cited professors refused to participate in the television program about the book.

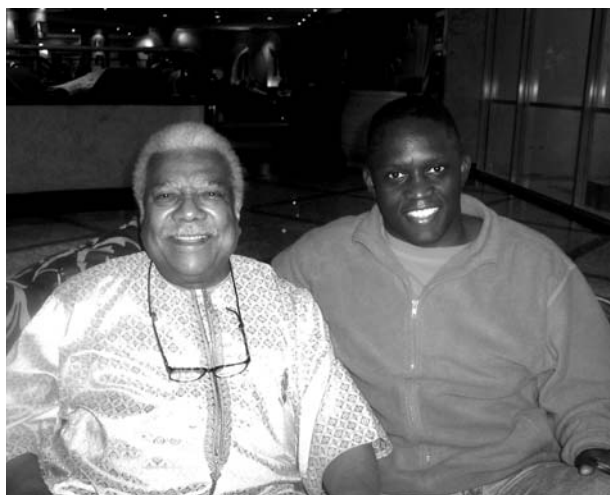
In January 2006 Mazrui gave a Distinguished Lecture at Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the huge new library in Alexandria, Egypt. The library is dedicated to the memory of the ancient classical library of Alexandria that was burned down by the Romans during the era of Cleopatra. The new library is state of the art in advanced equipment and in global status among the libraries of the world.

The new Library of Alexandria has offered to translate into Arabic Ali Mazrui's book, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, the companion book to Mazrui's 1986 television series of the same title (PBS/BBC). The library may also translate into



**Abdul Samed Bemath, winner of the Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers (ASAIIB) Award for Best Bibliography 2004-05 for his book, *The Mazruiana Collection Revisited: An Annotated and Select Thematic Bibliography, 1962-2003*.**

Arabic the huge book that Mazrui edited and co-authored for UNESCO, *Africa Since 1935* (UNESCO General History of Africa, Paris, France, Vol. VIII, 1993).



**Professor Ali A. Mazrui with Michael Sudarkasa, an African American businessman, in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2005.**



**Professor Ali A. Mazrui in a Talk Radio program in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2005. James N. Kariuki (right) is Mazrui's liaison officer for Southern Africa.**

# Between the Sacred and the Secular: Indigenous Intellectual Property, International Markets and the Modern African State \*

By Robert L. Ostergard Jr., Patrick Dikirr and Matthew Tubin

In the modern global economy, transnational corporations have become important sources of technology, market access and capital — all of which states seek in propelling economic growth. States themselves provide territory, and establish the “rules of the game” by which corporations may operate within that territory. However, with the commodification and commercialization of indigenous cultural and intellectual property, states are bypassed and negotiations emerge between corporations and sub-state actors who claim to represent population segments. Does the bypassing of the state further weaken national or state identity among indigenous groups? Such is the case that may be emerging in Africa with groups who claim profits derived from the development and marketing of indigenous cultural and intellectual property. This article explores the possibility that profit-sharing agreements between transnational corporations and sub-state groups may contribute to the widening of ethnic cleavages in African states by promoting inequalities between groups.

## Property appropriation: the historical context

Africa has been at the crossroads of history for thousands of years — in geographic terms, in evolutionary terms and in economic terms. During the pre-colonial period, African peoples themselves were one of the sources of Western development in the form of slave labor. During the colonial period, the colonial powers ransacked African kingdoms and states for their natural resources and cultural property. In the post-colonial period, African states and their indigenous ethnic groups now confront the growing international demand for their indigenous intellectual property.

The transformation of international markets has led to a reassessment of the value of Africa's indigenous heritage from such diverse items as art and architecture to indigenous medicinal secrets. Western society has shifted its views of African art

and innovation, from originally one of primitivism to now one of pure beauty, grace and scientific ingenuity, bringing with it substantial implications for the African continent and the modern African state.

The re-evaluation of Africa's treasures, however, has been a double-edged sword for African countries. On the one hand, it has placed the cultural heritage of many African countries on par with Europe's in terms of artistic importance. On the other, that same revaluation has increased Western museum, auction house and private collector demands for antiquities from African countries, creating an environment that encourages pilfering and looting not just from archaeological sites, but also from a variety of sources of cultural property including indigenous people.

## The San People and P57

In much the same way that Western demand and reassessment increased values for cultural property, the same type of revaluation has increased the attention given to indigenous intellectual property from the developing world. Knowledge of plants or animals and their medicinal use or the possession of certain genetic characteristics can translate into significant gains for those in the position to capitalize on the commercial markets for them. The primary question is who should the beneficiary be? The recent case of the San people offers a good illustration.

The San of southern Africa developed a way to stave off their hunger pains when they hunted in the desert heat by chewing on bits of the Hoodia cactus, an appetite suppressant. In 1997, the South African government-funded Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) isolated the suppressant agent, P57, and patented it. Subsequently, CSIR licensed the patent to British biotechnology firm Phytofarm. Phytofarm then sub-licensed the patent to U.S. pharmaceutical manufacturer Pfizer for \$32 million, but maintained a direct role in the product's development. The rights to the anti-obesity drug have the potential to

make Pfizer, Phytofarm and CSIR substantial profits, but initially, no one spoke of providing the San with any royalty revenues for their knowledge of the Hoodia cactus. Indeed, Phytofarm executives claimed that the group was extinct, citing information provided by CSIR.

The San took legal action, and within two years of the original patent announcement secured a contractual arrangement with the firms and CSIR. The agreement provides the San with 8 percent of all milestone payments received from Phytofarm, and 6 percent of the royalties that the South African government receives once the appetite suppressant is commercially available. Providing clinical trials are successful, annual sales of P57 are expected to top US\$3 billion. Phytofarm will continue to grow Hoodia plants for purposes of P57 extraction in South Africa, with the selling rights in South Africa reserved for the government. The San populations of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Angola, numbering approximately 100,000 people, have only received \$30,000 collectively so far, but expect three more payments during the drug testing period.

While some of the parties in the agreement have hailed it as a major triumph for the protection of indigenous intellectual property and the rights of indigenous populations, the issues that the agreement raises may be more problematic than those solved. While in the short term the agreement appears to satisfy the claims of the indigenous population, the long term ramifications to the San people could present problems at three different levels: (1) inter-ethnic rivalry, (2) inter-state rivalry, (3) intra-state instability.

The internationalization of Africa's indigenous intellectual property brings with it a potential “golden parachute” out of poverty for some indigenous groups. The underlying problem in dealing with indigenous intellectual property is that there is often no clear lineage of ownership to the idea or resource. In the case of the Hoodia plant, it is conceivable that other indig-

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\*Note: For a longer version of the paper, consult *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49, 2 (2006), pp. 309-333.

## Between the Sacred . . .

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enous groups may have claim over the knowledge that the plant possesses appetite suppressant properties. As Stephenson (2003: 49) has argued, some non-San indigenous peoples could assert a claim over the knowledge of the Hoodia's properties. Such claims may create a myriad of political and ethnic alliances among non-governmental organizations, indigenous groups, corporations and the governments that will determine how those claims ultimately are exercised. This could pit the San against other indigenous groups, resulting in extensive legal battles and competition for the right to claim ownership over the intellectual property associated with the plant.

Such rivalries, of course, may cross international borders on two fronts. First, the Hoodia plant and other related species are not confined to South Africa, but are found in other parts of southern Africa. Second, potential rival indigenous groups with knowledge of these plants are also located outside South Africa. Hence, the ownership of such knowledge may not be exclusive to a single group, and is certainly not confined to a single African state. Since group identity in African states is often stronger than state identity among its people, it is conceivable that the San do not necessarily identify with a particular African state. Instead, if the San had a strong identity with their respective states, the states with the majority San populations would probably be more active at protecting both the San's and the state's interests. As it is, South Africa, which represents less than 5 percent of the entire San population, negotiated the benefits agreement among the parties, while also securing its own interest in the matter.

In the case of the San and South Africa, the benefits-sharing agreement excludes direct benefits to the states of Botswana and Namibia, both of which have substantial San populations and access to the Hoodia plant. The South African government, through CSIR, holds exclusive rights to the P57 compound and any derivative products that Phytofarm and Pfizer may develop. The potential windfall is in the billions of dollars, none of which will accrue to the governments of Botswana and Namibia. While the CSIR

has engaged in research on the Hoodia plant since the 1960s, the claim to an exclusive right to the compound and derivative products is tenuous.

Should South Africa have a monopoly on the knowledge of P57, because it happened to file a patent on knowledge that has been around for centuries? The question that arises is not one of whether South Africa should benefit from the research it has done since the 1960s (it probably should); rather, the more poignant question is whether Botswana and Namibia should be stripped of the ability also to utilize the resources (i.e., the Hoodia plant) within their own boundaries?

The internationalization of Africa's indigenous intellectual property raises fundamental questions about the benefits to be derived from the commodification of indigenous intellectual property. The issues surrounding the use of natural resources and biodiversity appear at one of the most critical times for African states. In the post-Cold War period, African states have been marginalized by states of the former Eastern bloc and the West, reducing foreign aid and leaving African states to solve many of their own domestic economic and political problems. While limiting external influence in Africa is not necessarily detrimental, the contemporary situation means that African states need to utilize their available resources if they are to emerge from this period of significant economic and political transition on the continent. The internationalization of Africa's indigenous intellectual property can be of tremendous benefit in raising capital to assist states in this transitional stage. The potential is that the targeted resources could either be appropriated by non-African entities or monopolized by a small number of African states. Both scenarios result in an inequitable distribution of resources among those who may have legitimate claims to benefits derived from the intellectual property.

Inequality issues associated with the benefits derived from the internationalization and commercialization of indigenous intellectual property exist not just between states, but also within them.

The rapid influx of income and wealth to groups receiving benefits from intellectual property agreements could be a socially destabilizing force within a state. Given the level of ethnic diversity in San-populated states, the inequality between the San and other groups may erupt into forms of ethnic resentment or violence, or what may be termed *nouveau riche* violence. Can ethnic tensions rise over sudden disparities in wealth between groups? Part of the answer may lie in the role states play in the benefit agreements for indigenous intellectual property.

The San entered into their agreement with the South African government, which is the principal beneficiary of the derivative products from P57. Botswana, Namibia and the other San-populated states are not parties to the agreement, and are not entitled to share in the derivative benefits. This suggests that when the San in these states receive their share of the royalties from P57 sales, they alone will see their wealth, status and standard of living increase, while other groups will remain comparatively stagnant. These states will not have the capacity or resources to provide similar benefits to the rest of their societies, potentially building resentment between San and non-San groups, and creating development inequalities within the state.

In conclusion, as shown with the San and P57, the acquisition of cultural property from indigenous people by transnational corporations may result in greater levels of social instability and a deepening of ethnic cleavages that further hinder the formation of a unified state identity among the population. In turn, the potential for further destabilization or, at a minimum, exacerbation of the inequality problems that have plagued African states during the post-colonial period becomes a real threat. While the tendency has been to claim that indigenous groups are entitled to compensation for their knowledge, such claims, exclusive of state participation, are detrimental to building state identity and a civic culture that will solidify the place of the state in modern African society.

## Public Intellectuals . . .

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Mazrui a related question: "Professor Mazrui, are you sure you know the difference between being a political scientist and being a politician?" The president was irritated by Mazrui's political activism. Obote was often angry with Mazrui's readiness to criticize major public policies openly, in contradiction to presidential pronouncements. This was long before the term "public intellectual" was coined! With or without such a term, was Ali Mazrui evolving into "someone who had demonstrated distinction in one's own field, combined with a capacity to communicate ideas and influence debate beyond his or her professional field"?

In addition to Ali Mazrui, other prominent Black Africans on the list include novelist Chinua Achebe, playwright Wole Soyinka and plant pathologist Florence Wambugu. Only three African countries are

represented in this list of the top public intellectuals: Nigeria (Achebe and Soyinka), Kenya (Mazrui and Wambugu) and South Africa (J.M. Coetzee). Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Dutch citizen of Somali-Muslim ancestry, is also included. In addition, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qadrawi, an Egyptian whom Ali Mazrui has known since his days at Oxford is also on the list.

As for non-African public intellectuals in the top list selected by *Foreign Policy* includes Noam Chomsky of MIT, Samuel Huntington of Harvard, Vaclav Havel, former Czech president, Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore, Paul Wolfowitz, the new President of the World Bank, and Salman Rushdie, author of the *Satanic Verses*.

In addition, Ali Mazrui was also astonished to learn in September 2004 that he was among those nominated by readers of London-based *The New African*, as one

of the 100 greatest Africans of all time, a distinction covering the entire span of African history. Although Mazrui was flattered by the tribute, he dismissed the selection as "exuberance"!

By coincidence, Africa World Press, a publisher in Trenton, New Jersey, may be publishing a book titled *The Public Intellectual in Thought and Action*. The book is about the work and career of Ali Mazrui, evaluated by a dozen other professors and edited by Professor Parviz Morewedge, an Iranian-American scholar.

Ali Mazrui is grateful for this new wave of international recognition. "Well, it's obviously gratifying to know that enough people out there are reading and appreciating what I produce," Mazrui said. "I do write a lot and I want to believe that what I write has an impact."



**Ali Mazrui in conversation with the President of Somaliland, Dahir Rayale Kahin, Hargeisa, March 2006. Dr. Mazrui was invited to Somaliland as a leading African intellectual for consultations.**





## Interview with Seifudein Adem

*Dr. Seifudein Adem joined the Institute of Global Cultural Studies (IGCS) in January 2006 as a research assistant professor after more than 10 years of studying and working in Japan. An Ethiopian-born and Japanese-educated scholar, Dr. Adem brings a valuable international dimension to IGCS in particular, and to Binghamton University in general. Below is an interview held with Dr. Adem on February 23, 2006.*

**You have written a book on the political philosophy of Professor Ali A. Mazrui. How did you come to know about him? What elements of Mazrui's scholarship have inspired you the most?**

"Mwalimu" is a Swahili term for teacher or professor, and that is how I will refer to Professor Ali A. Mazrui from here on. I was familiar with the works of Mwalimu Mazrui long before I came to know him in person. I first read his book, *Cultural Engineering and Nation Building in East Africa* (Northwestern University Press, 1972) in 1987. It was instantly appealing, but at the time, I was unable to say why it was so in specific terms.

After receiving a BA (with Distinction) in political science, I began to read Mwalimu's work with great interest. However, it was not until 1995 when I began study for my doctorate in International Political Economy at the University of Tsukuba, Japan, that I contacted him for the first time. In 2002 I came to the Institute of Global Cultural Studies (IGCS) as a research associate to complete work for my first book, *Paradigm Lost, Paradigm Regained: The Worldview of Ali Mazrui* (Global Humanities Press, 2002). So, exactly 15 years after my first exposure to Mwalimu's work, I shook hands with him in his office. Unfortunately my stay in Binghamton was brief, only a few weeks, since I had to return to Japan. Four years later, I am back in IGCS again and, this time, hopefully for a relatively longer stay.

What attracted me most about Mwalimu's works, I know now, was primarily his reasoned and engaging discourse. Mwalimu often writes about matters and issues that would otherwise go unheard or unnoticed. In our discipline there are issue areas that are privileged and those that are overlooked. For instance, Mwalimu has greatly contributed through his scholarship to the effort of keeping Africa and African issues on the international agenda. He has continually been

Africa's articulate voice in international politics. Many of his works address ethical issues that are also rarely discussed in social sciences. I am attracted to Mwalimu's works also because I share the normative concerns expressed in many of them.

Secondly, Mwalimu frequently focuses on the bigger picture of what has taken place in the past, what is taking place at present and/or what will be taking place in the future. Of course, such intellectual orientation is not sometimes without its limits, such as in relation to the smaller parts of the bigger picture that it would inevitably leave out. Mwalimu's focused analysis at any given moment may pertain to one issue area, region or historical period, but his focus is almost always on the bigger picture. "[A] most illuminating interpreter of the drift in world politics" was how Hedley Bull, the noted scholar of international relations, described Mwalimu about 30 years ago. The intellectual outputs of Mwalimu over the last 30 years unequivocally validate Bull's observation. Mwalimu's highly readable style of writing (to which I will return shortly), coupled with the amazing speed with which he writes essays after essays and books after books, could of course make the task of high-level abstraction and comparative historical analysis look easier. As someone who has tried to do just that, often unsuccessfully, I would say that that is not true. Among the enduring features of Mwalimu's approach to intellectual inquiry are his interest in macro-level generalizations mentioned above; the comparative method, a method so effectively used by him to elucidate dialectical relationships between events and processes which appear unrelated at first glance; and comprehensive taxonomy, a method by which Mwalimu transforms useful but thick, slippery or broad concepts into intelligible ones by disassembling them and then putting them together, often with the help of neologisms and colorful combination of words and phrases. These ap-

proaches have sustained my interest in the works of Mwalimu.

Another thing is the simplified style of writings that Mwalimu uses, a style that may be called analytic-narrative. Great communicators use languages that are accessible to the widest possible audience. If one writes a treatise that only a handful of experts can understand, it goes without saying that the ideas could not reach a large audience and would not have an impact on a wider scale. Of course there are exceptions, such as highly technical matters about which one cannot simplify the medium of communication and the terms of discourse below a certain level without distorting the message. However, in some branches of social science, bewildering terminologies appear to be more of self-imposition than an unavoidable result of the nature of their respective subject matter. Mwalimu's works are clean from such inadequacies even when he is addressing most abstract and philosophical issues. Mwalimu brilliantly combines elegance with clarity and erudition with accessibility in all of his writings. Someone once said that reading Mwalimu's works was like conversing with him. Therefore, I am attracted to Mwalimu's scholarship because it represents a masterpiece of effective communication, is simple to understand and is a pleasure to read.

**Besides Mazrui's scholarship, what other influences have shaped your scholarly pursuits?**

The works of many scholars have positively influenced my intellectual development and approaches. Because I read widely, it is hard for me to single out specific authors as having influenced my thought in specific fashion. My perspective is a product of many authors and experiences. However, I can say that more than any past or present philosopher, Mwalimu's works have influenced my intellectual development and orientation.

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**What can Africa learn from Japan and are there things which Japan could learn from Africa?**

I believe there are many things Africa can learn from Japan. One of these is, in general, learning how to mobilize one's own cultural resources to overcome the challenges of modernization. What Africa can learn from the cultural experience of Japan is in fact the theme of an edited book of mine forthcoming this year titled *Japan — a Model and a Partner: Views and Issues in African Development* (Leiden, Brill).

As to what Japan can learn from Africa, I should like to think there are many things. But, obviously, that wasn't a task I set for myself as priority and, therefore, have not thought about it more systematically. In one of his books, Mwalimu writes that the sins of the powerful would acquire the prestige of power. It seems to me, again, the reverse of that observation in a slightly modified form is also true, that is whatever good qualities the weak may possess, they are more likely to be regarded as less than good.

**You have said your latest work relates the Japanese cultural experience to African development. Can you tell us a little more in detail about what Africa could learn in this regard?**

The lessons from the Japanese cultural experience, in my view, can be summarized as follows. First, some experts argue that Africa need to undergo a radical culture change in order to overcome the challenges of modernization. I have a different take on this. Cultural changes take a very long period of time, perhaps many generations, and Africa cannot afford the luxury of time. Also, the experience of Japan demonstrates that culture, any culture, is an asset rather than a liability in the modernization process. Given this fact, I see no reason why a cultural route to modernity is impossible in Africa. In short, massive culture change is neither feasible nor desirable. Japan's culture did not change to fit the putative requirements of modernity. Instead, it is modernity that was made to serve the dictates of Japan's culture.

Second, instead of culture change, what is needed in Africa is to create appropriate institutions and manage them properly. Japan is especially successful in this respect as it was able to modernize its tradition also by domesticating ideas that were imported from abroad.

Third, in its modernization effort Japan not only changed gears from one system or model to another, from time to time, but was also able to blend different models all at once. African modernizers in the post-independence period, on the other hand, seemed to have viewed such behavior as a sign of indetermination, and embraced vehemently whichever system was in vogue. Binding commitment to an ideology continued to be the order of the day in Africa even when it was clear that the system was not working. Of course, the choices that were available to Japan were not as disharmonious as the ones that post-colonial Africa confronted. And most important, the ultimate choice the Japanese made was never arbitrary, but was often a choice filtered through cultural prism as much as it was also conditioned by the felt need of the society.

Finally, Japan was able to modernize because of its culture, and not in spite of it. But this does not mean there are no elements in modern Japan that are simply not compatible with "reason and number." Japanese still observe some age-old Buddhist and Shinto practices that don't make sense from a scientific point of view. What this means is that a society doesn't have to cut itself off from the past completely or wipe out traditional and unscientific practices to make use of modern science. In fact, the Japanese government even made conscious effort to preserve some of these very practices, enabling traditional values to remain in place, especially those that were believed to be harmless to modernization even if they were not also positively contributing to it. The point is that the old system should not be necessarily obliterated in order to build a new and modern one. In fact, selectively linking the old and the well established to the new and emerging may be the best approach to modernization. Japan's modernizers never sought a radical transformation of their culture in order to modernize. They saw to it that if there was a change, it was only to be incremental, often with some sort of link between the old and the new. The case of Japan seems to demonstrate, therefore, that one can be modern and traditional at the same time, however oxymoronic such a notion may sound. In short, my reading of Japan's experience bears out that it pays to be flexible, rely on one's cultural resources, link traditional values to modern ideas and vice versa, and realize that a society can be modern and traditional at the same time.

**What are your lasting impressions about Japan?**

On a personal level I can share two impressions I formed about Japan. One is the pervasive atmosphere of tranquility. The second is more of an observation than an impression. From the moment I arrived in Japan it continued to strike me how well organized the society was.

Mwalimu Mazrui, in one segment of his TV documentary, *The Africans* (1986), lamented that in many places he went in Africa, even in the most 'Westernized' parts, he was negatively impressed that many of the things he saw were dysfunctional, from telephone to tap water in spite of the (deceptive) presence of the hardware. This, he argued, was because Western tastes came to Africa without the corresponding skills. In Japan the situation I saw was just the opposite of what Mwalimu was referring to in his TV program. You see in Japan both the hardware and the software of modernity are all fully functional. I was very impressed.

**What is your major area of academic interest? Is it philosophy or political science?**

I do not see the boundaries between these disciplines as impermeable; so, I have crossed in my writings one or the other at various times, sometimes in a single work. But because of the in-built bias in my own field of training, I can say, for the most part, the emphasis in my teaching and research has been on political science rather than philosophy.

**Dr. Adem, please briefly describe your journey from Ethiopia to Japan and some of the challenges you faced.**

I went to Japan in September 1992 to pursue a graduate study at the International University of Japan (IUJ), a small private university sandwiched between mountains in Niigata prefecture. Part of my scholarship was borne by Tokyo Electric Power Company. The other part of the scholarship was covered by Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, where I was assistant lecturer of political science at the time. After I was notified by IUJ that I had been selected for admission and offered a scholarship, and before I decided to accept the offer, I researched International University of Japan. Although the university is small and relatively new, some things about it

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# Black Boswell: A Tribute to Omari H. Kokole

By Dr. Ali Mazrui

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the sudden and premature death of Dr. Omari H. Kokole, the first associate director of this Institute of Global Cultural Studies, at the age of 44, in September 1996.

Kokole was born in Jinja, Uganda, in 1952. His life and mine began to intersect when, as a teenager, Omari began to be fascinated by my ideas. At the time, I was head of the Department of Political Science at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. A remarkable friendship developed between a secondary school student and a senior professor.

By a cruel coincidence, Kokole was admitted to Makerere as an undergraduate in the same year I resigned and transferred to Stanford University in California due to Field Marshall Idi Amin's escalating tyranny. When the news of my resignation from Makerere broke, Kokole called me in California. He said he had dreamed about my being his professor one day, and felt betrayed that I was leaving Makerere at a time when he was arriving as an undergraduate student. He knew Field Marshall Idi Amin personally, and was ethnically related to him — they were both Kakwa — and did not believe that there was any threat to my life.

As an undergraduate at Makerere, Kokole majored not only in political science but also in English literature (double honors). I assume it was at Makerere that he learned about James Boswell (1740-1795), a Scottish scholar

who decided to become the detailed biographer of Samuel Johnson. Johnson (1709-1784) was an outstanding man of letters in 18th-century England and the virtual inventor of the modern English dictionary.

At some stage Kokole saw me as Africa's Samuel Johnson and himself as the equivalent of James Boswell, my biographer. Like Boswell, Kokole kept detailed records of his interaction with me over the years, with the intention of writing my definitive biography.

Kokole graduated from Makerere with a First Class bachelor's degree and applied for a scholarship to my own alma mater, the University of Manchester in England. Manchester is where I had obtained my bachelor's degree. After graduating from Manchester, Omari proceeded to Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada, for his doctoral degree.

Kokole's dream about his playing Boswell to my Dr. Johnson persisted. He convinced me to get him an assistantship at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where I was a professor. He remained with me at Michigan, until I brought him to Binghamton University in 1989. By that time he had earned his Canadian PhD and was eligible for a faculty position at Binghamton. On my recommendation to the University, Omari was appointed associate director of the newly created Institute of Global Cultural Studies and assistant professor in Africana Studies and in Political Science.

The Boswell project gathered momentum. Omari envisaged two phases. Phase I would be to invite other scholars to a conference about my writings. Omari successfully persuaded the African Studies Association of the United States to allocate four different panels to papers about "Ali Mazrui and His Writings" as a celebration of my 60th year in 1993. Those panels constituted a conference within a conference. Subsequently Kokole chased the panelists to edit and polish their papers for publication. It took at least another two years before the full book-length collection of essays was ready for the publishers.

The manuscript was submitted to Africa World Press in Trenton, New Jersey, in 1996. Kokole wanted to commission two or three more papers

explicitly about my paradigm of Africa's Triple Heritage (the triple legacy of Africanity, Islam and Western culture in Africa). These new papers were also to be presented at the annual convention of the African Studies Association (ASA). This latter convention was scheduled for November 20, 1996. The first phase of Kokole's Boswell project was close to fulfillment. He had mobilized other scholars to evaluate my works. This time it was the 10th anniversary of my television series, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*.

On Monday, in September 1996, Omari Kokole taught his class at Binghamton; on Tuesday, he was admitted to the hospital; on Wednesday, he was in intensive care; on Thursday (to our utter disbelief), he died.

By the choice of his family in Kenya and Uganda, Omari was buried in the town where he died — Binghamton, New York. The family had decided to follow the Islamic tradition of burying the deceased within a day or two of his or her death at the most. Omari left behind a wife and a baby in Binghamton and two older daughters in East Africa.

Could the second half of the Boswell project be partially saved posthumously? Had Omari left behind volumes of notes and files or documents for the biographical project?

Unfortunately, we shall never know. While we were all trying to recover from Omari's sudden death, Omari's wife, Anita, threw away bundles of what she regarded "campus junk"! She took her baby and walked out of our lives forever.

The Boswell symphony had come to an abrupt stop. The first phase (papers by other scholars about my work) produced a volume entitled *The Global African: A Portrait of Ali A. Mazrui*, edited by Omari H. Kokole and published by Africa World Press in 1998.

The final phase of the Boswell project (a full-scale Mazrui biography by Omari H. Kokole) died with the young Kakwa in 1996 — a scholar who had pursued his dream across three continents and two decades. My own life has been the poorer because of Omari's premature death.

*Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?*



**Omari H. Kokole, 1952-1996.**

## Report on IGCS publications:

Dr. Ali A. Mazrui

### Books and Journal Articles

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- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Pan-Africanism and the Intellectuals: Rise, Decline and Revival," in Thandika Mkandawire, ed. *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development*. Dakar, London and New York: CODESRIA Books and Zed Books, 56-77.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "The Re-invention of Africa: Edward Said, V. Y. Mudimbe, and Beyond," *Research in African Literatures*, 36 (3): 68-82.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Africa's Wisdom Has Two Parents and One Guardian: Africinity, Islam and the West," *Horn of Africa* XXIII: 1-36.

### Lectures and Conferences

- Parliament of the Republic of Somaliland, "Cultural continuities and constitutional innovation: Plenary address to an African Parliament." Address to joint session of the two Houses of Parliament of the Republic of Somaliland, Hargeisa, Somaliland, March 22, 2006. This address was preceded by a private meeting between Professor Mazrui and the speakers of the two Houses of Parliament.
- Binghamton University Africana Studies Conference on the New Diaspora. "Diaspora and Homeland: Towards Renewal and Revitalization." April 2006.
- Binghamton Students for Students International, Binghamton University. "Education Across the Globe." April 2006.
- Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio. "From Bandung to Baghdad: Cultural Forces and Political Trends." April 2006.
- University of South Africa. "African Fact Finding Mission." March 2006.
- Murtala Mohammad Memorial Forum, Kano, Nigeria. "Political Leadership and Political Martyrdom: Lumbumba, Sadat and Murtala Mohammad." February 2006.
- The Bibliotheca Alexandria, Alexandria, Egypt. "Arabia: Is Africa Merging with the Arab World?" January 2006.

- Walter Rodney Anniversary Conference, Dar-es-Salaam Tanzania. "Islam between Democracy and Africa's Experience." January 2006.
- Academic Conference on "Interaction and Interrelation in Africa." Khartoum, Sudan. The Continuous Approaching between Africa and Arabic World." January 2006.
- Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), Dallas, Texas. "Islam between Revivalism and Innovation: Implications for the West." June 2005.
- Brain Drain Conference and African Academy of Sciences, Nairobi, Kenya. "Can Reverse Migration Compensate for HIV Losses?: The Brain Drain, the AIDS Crisis, and Skill Depletion." December 2005.
- African Studies Union, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich. "Sixty Years of Pan-Africanism: A Triple Heritage Perspective." November 2005.
- African Heritage Studies Association, Cornell University. "The Idea of Africa in Literature and Social Thought." October 2005.
- Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio. "Islam and Political Radicalism in Africa's Experience." October 2005.
- UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), New York City. "The United Nations Between Union of States and Alliance of Civilizations." October 2005.
- Bassam Tibi's First A.D. White Visit. Cornell University. "Is There a Muslim Diaspora?: The Growing Islamic Presence in Europe, Africa and North America." September 2005.
- IMF/World Bank, Washington, D.C. "Toward an African Renaissance: A Post-Glenagles Perspective." September 2005.
- Schomberg-Mellon Humanities Summer Institute. New York City. "The Rise of the Anticolonial Movement in Africa." July 2005.
- Jaramogi Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya. "Not Yet Uhuru." July 2005.
- Kenya Association of Museums, Kenya. "Between Nostalgia and Cultural Amnesia: African Museums and the Archival Memory." July 2005.
- Human Rights Commission and Launching of Swahili Resource Center and Exhibition of Works of Sheikh Alamin bin Ali Mazrui, Mombasa. "Human Rights: Terrorism and Constitution-Making." July 2005.
- Memorial for Dunstan Wai, World Bank, Washington, D.C. "Governance and Capacity as Constraints to Sustainable Development in Africa: Reflections on the Contributions of Dr. Dunstan Wai and the Challenges Ahead." June 2005.
- Walter Rodney Conference, Georgetown, Guyana. "Struggles in Africa." June 2005.



## Report on IGCS publications:

### Dr. Robert L. Ostergard Jr.

#### Books

- Ostergard, Robert L. (ed. with Dean B. Kehoe). 2006 (forthcoming). *HIV/AIDS and the Threat to National and International Security*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ostergard, Robert L. and Andrew T. Price-Smith. 2006 (forthcoming). *Contagion and Chaos: Epidemic Diseases and International Governance*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

#### Articles in Journals and Book Chapters

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- Laremont, Ricardo R. and Robert L. Ostergard Jr. 2005. "Ethnic Grievance or Material Greed?" in Ricardo R. Laremont (ed.), *Borders, Nationalism and the African State*. Boulder: Lynne Reinner.
- Ostergard, Robert L. 2005. "Personalist Regimes and the Insecurity Dilemma: Prioritizing AIDS as a National Security Threat in Uganda." In Amy Patterson (ed.), *The African State and the AIDS Crisis*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Ostergard, Robert L., Matthew Tubin and Patrick Dikkir. 2006. "Between the Sacred and the Secular: Indigenous Intellectual Property, International Markets and the Modern African State." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46, 2, pp. 309-333.
- Elbe, Stefan and Robert L. Ostergard Jr. "HIV/AIDS, the Military, and the Changing Landscape of Africa's Security." in Robert L. Ostergard Jr. (ed.), *HIV/AIDS and the Threat to National and International Security*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (forthcoming).

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#### Lectures

- The Toby E. Huff Lecture, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. "The Failure of American Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era." March 2006.
- Frank Church Symposium Lecture, Idaho State University. "Disease, Disaster and Diplomacy." March 1-3, 2006.
- Council on Foreign Relations, Invited Participant. CFR Conference on the Global Threat of Pandemic Influenza, November 16, 2005.

#### Conferences/Speeches

- Ostergard, Robert L. "Ancient Cultural and Indigenous Intellectual Property and the Modern African State." Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Honolulu, March 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Andrew T. Price-Smith and Matthew Tubin. 2005. "HIV/AIDS and South Africa's National Security." Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Honolulu, March 2005.

### Dr. Seifudein Adem

#### Books and Journal Articles

- Adem, Seifudein. 2006 (forthcoming). *Japan — A Model and a Partner: Views and Issues in African Development*. Leiden: Brill. (ed.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. *Hegemony and Discourse: New Perspectives on International Relations*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Is Japan's Cultural Experience Relevant for Africa's Development?" *African and Asian Studies* 4(4): 629-664.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Ibn-Khaldun as a Modern Thinker." *Chiilki Kenkyu (Journal of Area Studies)*, 24 (1): 129-152.

#### Presentations

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Different Approaches to Common Challenges? Comparative Response to Dilemmas of Modernization in Africa and Japan*. Invited Presentation at the Department of International Studies, Wells College, Aurora, New York, USA, 18 April 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Social Constructivism in African Political Thought: Ali A. Mazrui's Contributions*. Paper presented at the Sixth Seminar of the Special Project on Civil Society, State and Culture, University of Tsukuba, Japan, 1 July 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Is Japan's Experience Relevant for Africa's Development?* Paper presented at the 35th Seminar of the Special Project on Civil Society, State and Culture, University of Tsukuba, Japan, 21 June 2005.

### Dr. Patrick Dikkir

#### Journal Article

- Ostergard, Robert L., Matthew Tubin and Patrick Dikkir. 2006. "Between the Sacred and the Secular: Indigenous

- Intellectual Property, International Markets and the Modern African State." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46, 2 pp. 309-333.

## Message from Director Mazrui

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female chief executive in charge of state.

Long before she was elected president, Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson was a friend of the IGCS. In 1998 she attended the IGCS-hosted conference at Villa Serbelloni in Lake Como, Italy. A photograph of Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, with Ali Mazrui and four other dignitaries, hangs in the director's office at IGCS. The photograph was taken a few years ago in Washington, D.C.

While Africa can now boast its first female President, and while the United States has yet to elect even a female vice president, the Muslim world elsewhere already has a record of four female prime ministers (heads of government) — Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey and Indonesia — and one female president (head of state). Some non-Muslim Asian countries have also produced female national leaders, in India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

But what are the sociological forces that have made these Asian countries receptive to female empowerment at the top — while denying such receptivity to Africa and the U.S.? The cultural differences between Asian countries of female empowerment, on one side, and Africa and the United States, on the other, are, of course, complex. But in this essay we are focusing on one particular variable in Asia: the politics of kinship and transgender succession.

### Female Succession to Male Martyrdom

The martyrdom of male heroes in Asia has sometimes led to a phenomenon that might be called female succession to male martyrdom.

It started in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) when Solomon Bandaranaike was assassinated. His wife, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, succeeded him as leader of the party and then eventually served as prime minister. Their daughter many years later received the reins of power.

In India, Jawaharlal Nehru was not really martyred except metaphorically through his military humiliation at the hands of the Chinese. After Nehru died in 1964, there was a brief succession by Shastri — and then Nehru's daughter, Indira, entered the scene. She turned out to be even tougher as a politician than her Dad.

In Pakistan, an alliance between the military and the judiciary is widely regarded to have judicially martyred Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1977. His daughter, Benazir Bhutto, lived to fight another day — and to become prime minister of Pakistan twice. She is still a powerful force in that country, though often in exile.

In neighboring Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia and Hassina Rahman Waleda have both been prime ministers — female successors to martyred husband and to martyred father, respectively. In the Philippines there was the phenomenon of Corazon Aquino as a female successor to the martyred husband, Benigno Aquino. In Burma (Myanmar) the Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is a kind of female successor to a martyred father.

But in Africa there has not been much female succession to male martyrdom. Although the son of Sylvanus Olympio of Togo has tried to succeed him as president, none of Olympio's female relatives was in the running for succession.

Not many have heard of the widow of Patrice Lumumba or the widow of

Murtala Muhammed — let alone vote for their succession. Mrs. Anwar Sadat had been highly visible as first lady — but rapidly retreated into obscurity after Sadat's assassination.

Neither the widow of Thomas Sankara nor the widow of Thomas Mboya of Kenya became politically powerful. If South and South East Asia have had such a striking series of female successors to male martyrs, why has Africa lagged behind so abysmally? Some good things in Africa have adverse consequences for female empowerment.

For one thing, African cultures are less *dynastic* than most Asian cultures. Therefore, the power of heroic succession in Africa is weaker because there is less of a dynastic pull. A related problem is that African traditional systems of inheritance are often *lateral* rather than *vertical*. In Africa, nephews sometimes have stronger rights than sons and daughters; uncles may have more authority than parents. This makes political succession less neat.

Third, African chiefs and even African presidents are more likely to leave behind children by several different mothers than Asian heads of state are likely to do. Politically influential men in Africa are, on the whole, more polygamous than their equivalents in Asia.

Indeed, Chief Moshood Abiola, widely regarded to have been elected president of Nigeria in June 1993, left behind several widows upon his death in July 1998. Once, when he took me to his home in Lagos, he introduced me to two vastly different wives — one was relatively traditionalist and the other

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## Message from Director Mazrui

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was a modern professional with a Western PhD.

Yet, paradoxically, it has been Moshood Abiola's family that has come closest so far to producing potential female successors to male martyrs in the Asian sense. When Moshood was still in jail, one of his wives got increasingly politicized — so much so that Kudirat Abiola was herself martyred. She was assassinated in 1996.

Abiola's children are also getting increasingly politicized. Kudirat's daughter, Hafisat, a Harvard graduate, has already revealed considerable leadership and eloquence skills as a youth-leader in the U.S. She is a potential female successor to the martyrdom of both her father and her mother. In the 1980s in Southern Africa, Winnie Mandela was a different kind of female successor to her husband's (Nelson Mandela's) martyrdom in jail. She did become a symbol of the anti-apartheid struggle in her own right.

But apart from the Abiolas and the Mandelas, Africa has not been a fertile ground for this kind of female empowerment. And even in the case of the Abiolas and the Mandelas, the women have yet to attain the kind of pinnacles of power (super-heroes?) attained by such Asian women as Benazir Bhutto, Seremavo Bandaranaike, Megawati Sukarnoputri or Indira Gandhi.

The golden age of more authentic super-heroes in African history was indeed the age of the struggle for independence and the struggle against white minority rule in the 20th century. The unsung super-heroes were often women who took great risks. Frantz

Fanon tells us that in the Algerian war of independence women exploited the fact that the oppressor underestimated them. The women turned their very weaknesses into skills of combat. Fanon tells us that Algerian women used their Islamic veils as camouflage to hide grenades for the struggle.

In the 1980s Winnie Mandela became the most famous African woman of the decade. She was harassed, banned, detained and humiliated by the apartheid regime — but she kept the flame of struggle alive. Winnie was by no means an unsung hero but her heroism was often celebrated more abroad than at home.

More clearly unsung were most of the women of Zimbabwe. In the bushes and forests of Zimbabwe during the struggle against Ian Smith, there were many women liberation fighters. They did not pass unnoticed — but they often passed unsung.

### Gender Americana

What about the American experience in relation to cross-gender succession in politics? At the presidential level, no first lady has ever attempted to inherit power from a martyred husband. Jackie Kennedy was highly respected and even adored, but she was never seriously considered for political office. However, at the gubernatorial level, the United States does have precedents of a governor's first lady succeeding her late or retired husband. George Wallace was succeeded as governor of Alabama by his wife, Lurleen. A different kind of gender-succession is the election of Elizabeth Dole to the United States Senate after her husband, Robert Dole, relinquished the seat in a bid for the presidency.

All eyes are now on Hillary Rodham Clinton. Will she become the first former first lady to be elected president of the United States? Unlike Sirimavo Bandarnaike in Sri Lanka, Hillary Clinton will not be a female successor to a martyred husband — unless one regards the Republican effort to impeach Bill Clinton as a form of political martyrdom.

Whether Hillary's presidency can be counted as a cross-gender political succession or not, her election would narrow the gender gap between the politics of the United States and the cultures of Asia.

At least as significant is whether Hillary Clinton will be America's Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson. Liberia was created by Americans, led for generations by Americo-Liberians. It was named "Liberia" by Americans, who also adapted the name of an American president (Monroe) as the name of its capital (Monrovia). Liberia adopted the dollar as its currency and the lone star as its flag. It experimented with constitutions that emulated the U.S. Constitution.

There is no doubt that the U.S. has been the role model of Liberians for more than a century and a half. With the election of Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, the roles have briefly been reversed. Liberia has a woman president well ahead of the United States. For one dazzling moment of female empowerment, Liberia has become a role model for the United States. May the two societies continue to learn positive lessons from each other in the years ahead.



## Interview with Seifudein Adem

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appealed to me, such as the fact that it is one of the best in Japan for the study of international relations. Also, big-name Western scholars such as Barry Buzan, Michael Hawes, K. J. Holsti were visiting professors at the university at the time. The founding president of the university was Dr. Saburo Okita, the founder of Sony Corporation and a well-known former minister of foreign affairs of Japan. I was awarded an MA degree in 1994. With strong recommendation from my academic supervisor to enroll in a PhD program in another university, I joined the graduate school of international political economy at the University of Tsukuba in 1995.

One of the major challenges for me after I arrived in Japan was the Japanese language, which is very different in structure from the languages I had known. I found it very challenging to master even though I enrolled in Japanese language class only weeks after my arrival. My Japanese language skill is still not perfect. But I am comfortably conversant now.

Related to linguistic challenge was the challenge of making friends with Japanese people. That was the case in the first couple of years. But as my proficiency in the language improved, I quickly realized that my inability to speak a common language with many people around me was the major culprit for the challenge I was facing. With much help from my Japanese wife as well as children, I, too, have now become a Japanese speaker.

**What is your plan for the future? What will your contributions be for the IGCS and Binghamton University?**

When I decided to come to Binghamton University, one of the factors that attracted me was the benefits I would accrue from new ideas and approaches in a new working environment. At the same time, I was also aware that I would be bringing with me new experience to this great institution.

While in IGCS, I would like to work on a project which I initiated before coming to Binghamton in collaboration with other scholars, including one about the political economy of Japanese and Chinese interests in Africa. I also warmly welcome more research collaborations here with people from other departments and disciplines. Of course, my primary responsibility in the coming years will be in the IGCS and I shall devote to the institute whatever time is needed or available to me.

In some of my past writings about Mwalimu's ideas, I have called upon fellow political scientists to subject Mwalimu's grand hypotheses to rigorous tests and see if more recent data and new techniques of analysis bear them out. In the coming years, I would start to practice what I have preached. There are other areas, too, in which I would like to collaborate with Mwalimu. By closely working with him I will be able to further develop the capacity and learn the skills of combining values and principles with a critical and informed judgment.

**Opinions expressed in the Institute of Global Cultural Studies Newsletter are solely those of the author and should not be construed to reflect the views of Binghamton University.**

## Saying a Sad Goodbye to Nancy Levis

While we at IGCS have marked the 10th anniversary of the death of Omari H. Kokole, we are again mourning the recent loss of another dear friend and a member of our family, Nancy Levis, administrative assistant to Dr. Mazrui, who passed away April 4, 2006. Nancy left behind a widower, Alberto; two daughters, Maria and Rena; and two grandchildren, Devona and Charles.

Before coming to IGCS at Binghamton University, Nancy worked for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in New

York City. For more than 15 years, Nancy devoted herself to IGCS and the people that have worked here. During those years, many of IGCS' friends came to know Nancy through gatherings, conferences, visits and even just by telephone. As a Native American proverb says: "When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in a manner so that when you die the world cries and you rejoice." We cry now for Nancy, but we will always remember how she touched our hearts through her generosity, her devotion, and



**A Tale of Two Ali Mazruis! The late Nancy Levis playing with Dr. Ali Mazrui's grandson of the same name.**

her infectious laughter and humor. We miss Nancy, but she will always be with us. May her soul rest in peace.

Those wishing to remember Nancy may make a memorial gift to UNICEF via the Internet (<http://www.supportunicef.org>) or by mail to the following address: **U.S. Fund for UNICEF, 333 East 38th Street, New York, NY 10016.**

Checks should be made payable to **U.S. Fund for UNICEF.**

UCM 10.06



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