The Changing Face(s) of Africa

Current Trends & Future Prospects

Keynote Speaker
Professor Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja
Professor of African Studies
Dept. of African & Afro-American Studies
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Saturday April 23, 2011
9 AM - 5 PM
East Ballroom, Alice Campbell Alumni Center
601 S Lincoln Avenue, Urbana, Illinois
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Funded By: SORF, Center for African Studies, College of Engineering
ABOUT THE AFRICAN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION

The African Students Organization (ASO) is a registered student organization at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Our goals are to:
1. Unite African Students with a goal of raising their political consciousness and providing progressive leadership on issues relating to Africa.
2. Provide student members with an environment conducive to successful completion of their academic objectives.
3. Create and identify opportunities for members from the African continent and members of African descent in the Diaspora to understand each other and their different backgrounds, and enhance awareness about African issues, culture and values.
4. Help incoming African students settle and adjust to studying in the UIUC community and to give them material and moral support in pursuing their educational goals.
5. Provide a forum for discussion and debate of matters of special interest to African unity and development.
6. Build networks, forge links and cooperation with other African student organizations from other institutions.
7. Promote racial, gender, ethnic, political and economic equity, and build unity and solidarity especially with African Americans and other Third World peoples and organizations.

OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**President:** Esther Eke
Email: eeke2@illinois.edu

**Vice President:** Anne Lutomia
Email: lutomial@illinois.edu

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Email: agunbial@illinois.edu

**Treasurer:** Richard Beyogle
Email: beyogle1@illinois.edu

THE ASO FORUM

ASO organizes annual forums aimed at promoting campus awareness and activism on matters regarding the African continent and Diaspora. These forums provide students, faculty, and staff with an opportunity to showcase new research ideas in a professional and open environment. Our hope is that our forum will support creative debates, broaden knowledge, inspire innovations, suggest solutions to Africa’s problems and foster professional networking. So far, we have successfully hosted seven forums and have collaborated with departments such as the Center for African Studies (CAS) and the Department of linguistics; and associations such as the African Cultural Association (ACA), a registered student organization at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. For details on our previous forums, visit our webpage: https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ro/www/AfricanStudentsOrganization/forum.html
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank this year’s keynote speaker, Prof. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja and all our invited speakers, presenters and facilitators for being a part of this year’s forum.

Many thanks go to the Department heads and professors who supported our work: Prof. Merle Bowen and Prof. Maimouna Barro from the Center for African Studies, Prof. Ilesanmi Adesida from the College of Engineering, Prof. Eyamba Bokamba from the Department of Linguistics and Prof. Bekisizwe Ndimande from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

The 2011 ASO Spring Forum was made possible through the efforts of a committee of dedicated graduate students. In addition to the current ASO executive committee, we would like to acknowledge Mbhekiseni Madela, Lydiah Kiramba, Mor Gueye from the Center for African Studies, Hapsatou Wane from the Department of Comparative World Literature and Wang’ombe K. Gitonga from the Department of Education Policy Organization Leadership.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the following organizations:
- Students Organization Resource Funds (SORF)
- Center for African Studies (CAS)
- College of Engineering, Office of the Dean
- The Francophone Ministry, Champaign-Urbana
- African Cultural Association (ACA)
- Panera Bread

Special thanks go to Sam Smith from the Krannert Center for Performing Arts for his insights and advice, Pastor Guy Lombela for his support and Christina Augustyn for volunteering her graphic design services.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Starting from this year, the ASO is reintroducing its two awards to recognize members and friends who have distinguished themselves through dedication to the organization and the Champaign-Urbana African community.

- **The Ibualimu Kakoma Award for Individual Commitment and Leadership** in honor of our Patron and mentor, the late Prof. Ibualimu Kakoma. This year it has been awarded to Tholani Hlongwa. She is one of our faithful members and has invested tremendously into our organization.

- **The ASO Award for Outstanding Community Service.** This year, it has been awarded to Wamaitha Sullivan for her outstanding dedication to the health and wellness of the Champaign-Urbana community.
THE CHANGING FACE(S) OF AFRICA

The cradle of man, Africa continues to be both invisible and visible in world news. The contradictions and stereotypes about Africa make its face nebulous – thus the many faces of Africa. Whereas others choose to see Africa as a geographical space, Africa can be stated as ubiquitous. Africans currently live in all the continents of the world, leading nations, pursuing careers, inventing, studying, seeking refuge, immigrating, doing business, fighting for human rights, playing sports, singing, dancing, playing drums, inspiring and giving hope. However, the same Africans continue to fight sickness, poverty, illiteracy, rape, female genital cutting, corruption, political upheavals, racism, wars and modern slavery.

Like other places in the world climate change, population growth and development have alarmingly altered Africa over the past 30 years, reported the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This change has also been felt politically. A new kind of politics appears to be emerging on the African continent. African democracies have sprung and recently the so called “revolutions” have also put the African continent in the limelight. Almost defined as the first revolutions on the continent, the question of naming emanates. Who is naming the revolutions? Why? Are the revolutions the first ones to happen or have there been some before? Despite the stereotypes that continue to mire Africa, nowhere in the world has the rate of increase in the political representation of women been as fast as in Africa over the past four decades. Specifically, Rwanda became the country with the highest female legislative representation surpassing the Nordic countries. Additionally, most governments of Africa are now forging alliances with China, a relationship that continues to be studied for understanding.

This forum seeks to not only problematize Africa and its histories but to also share the hope and educate without being romantic. The 8th ASO Annual Spring Forum intends to shed some light on a side of Africa that is never seen or discussed – the changing Africa.

Welcome!

Anne Lutomia
Chair, Forum Planning Committee
# PROGRAM SCHEDULE

## Opening and Welcome Address

**09:00 - 09:15**

**Esther Eke** – President, African Students Organization (ASO)

**Maimouna Barro** – Associate Director, Center for African Studies

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## Paper Session #1: Language Issues

**Facilitator: Dumisile Mkhize – Dept of Curriculum and Instruction, UIUC**

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<th>Time</th>
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<th>Presenter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:15</td>
<td>The Language Issue in African Literature</td>
<td>Mor Gueye</td>
<td>M.A., African Studies, UIUC</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>African languages as the optimal tools of endogenous development</td>
<td>Eyamba G. Bokamba</td>
<td>Prof., Dept of Linguistics, UIUC</td>
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## Invited talks on development in Africa

**Facilitator: Olaide Lawal – College of Business, UIUC**

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<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>Consumers and Entrepreneurs in Subsistence Marketplaces</td>
<td>Madhu Viswanathan</td>
<td>Prof., College of Business, UIUC</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
<td>The Zomba-Urbana Project</td>
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## Invited talks on Politics and Revolution

**Facilitator: James Kilgore – Center for African Studies, UIUC**

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<td>13:00</td>
<td>Beyond Disinformation: Revising Congo’s Past, Reinventing its Future</td>
<td>Anna Roosevelt</td>
<td>Prof., Anthropology, UIC</td>
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<td>13:30</td>
<td>Morocco: The (r)evolutionary exception?</td>
<td>Mark Dressman</td>
<td>Assoc. Prof. and Editor, Research in the Teaching of English, UIUC</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:55</td>
<td>Revolt on the Nile: Story of the Egyptian revolution and the Arab revolt.</td>
<td>Aladdin Elaasar</td>
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Visiting Lecturer, Dept of Linguistics, UIUC.

**Paper Session #2: Politics and Social Issues 14:30 - 15:45**
*Facilitator: Dr. Margaret Njeru - Dept of Linguistics, UIUC*

14:30 - 14:55  
*Voicing the Silence in Post-Conflict Transitional Justice: A Comparative Study of Women at Nuremberg and the TRC (Withdrawn)*  
Emily Steiner  
M.A. African Studies, UIUC

14:55 - 15:20  
*The Dialogue Between Clan and State in Somaliland*  
Mohamed Abumaye  
M.A. African Studies, UIUC

15:20 - 15:45  
*Street Children in Kenya*  
Jacob Butler  
M.A., African Studies, UIUC

**Keynote Address 15:45 - 16:45**
Prof. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja

**Vote of Thanks and Awards Presentations 16:45 – 17:00**
Anne Lutomia – Vice President (ASO) and Chair, Forum Planning Committee.

**DISPLAY BOOTHS**
Booth 1: Krannert Art Museum  
Booth 2: Betsem Atiback Benjamin: *Kemet Art Sankofa*  
Booth 3: Nightingale and Nathan Uchtmann: *African Arts and Crafts*  
Booth 4: Vatonna Dunn: *Connect Force: An after school hip hop arts program*

Booth 5: Zomba-Urbana Project  
Booth 6: Engineers Without Borders (EWB)  
Booth 7: Invisible Children

Booth 8: The Last Pharaoh book display  
Booth 9: Center for African Studies  
Booth 10: Summer Institute for languages of the Muslim World (SILMW)
THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN AFRICA
Keynote Address by Professor Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The popular revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt and ongoing struggles for political change in Libya, Côte d’Ivoire, Swaziland and elsewhere are manifestations of the continuing struggle for liberation in postcolonial Africa. These struggles against authoritarian and corrupt African rulers began as early as 1963 in Congo-Kinshasa and 1964 in Sudan, once the people realized that their expectations of independence as ushering in a new era of democracy and social progress had not been fulfilled. As popular struggles for democracy, both armed and peaceful protests, were often unsuccessful in an international context dominated by the Cold War until 1989, and by strong external support for dictatorial regimes under military or one-party rule. Today, in a post-Cold War era dominated by globalization and widespread awareness of fundamental human rights, dictatorship and social exclusion can no longer be tolerated. In Africa, this implies the realization of the people’s aspirations for a “second independence;” multiparty democracy with respect for the rule of law and full citizenship rights; and the eradication of poverty and social exclusion in order to improve the standard of living for all. This paper examines these past and current obstacles to democratization, and suggests ways to surmount them in order to reach for and achieve the people’s aspirations for a second independence.

Talk Outline
PART ONE. INDEPENDENCE AS A PROMISE FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS
1. Colonialism as a System of Economic Exploitation, Political Repression, and Cultural Oppression
2. The Fight for Independence as a Struggle for Democracy and Social Progress

PART TWO. THE POSTCOLONIAL STATE: AUTHORITARIANISM AND IMPOVERISHMENT
3. The International Context of Decolonization
4. Military and One-Party Regimes
5. Development and Underdevelopment with External Constraints

PART THREE. POPULAR STRUGGLES FOR DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA
6. The Struggle for a “Second Independence”
7. The Struggle for Multiparty Democracy, the Rule of Law, and Full Citizenship Rights
8. The Struggle against Poverty and Social Exclusion, to Improve the Standard of Living for All

SHORT BIO ON KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Prof Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja
Prof., Dept. of African and Afro-American Studies, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA).
Professor Emeritus of African Studies, Howard University, Washington, DC (USA)

Born in Kasha, Congo-Kinshasa, Prof. Nzongola holds a B.A. degree in philosophy from Davidson College, Davidson, NC, an M.A. in diplomacy and international commerce from University of Kentucky, Lexington, and a Ph.D. in political science from University of Wisconsin-Madison. As an expert on governance, conflict and capacity building issues, Professor Nzongola has served as an international civil servant for seven years with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): as a senior adviser for governance to the Federal Government of Nigeria from March 2000 to May 2002; as Director of the Oslo Governance Centre, from August 2002 to July 2005; and as Facilitator for the Africa Governance Institute (AGI), from August 2005 to July 2007. He is the author of several books including, Nation-Building and State Building in Africa; Le mouvement démocratique au Zaïre, 1956-1996; Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Africa; The Congo. From Leopold to Kabila: A People’s History and numerous articles on African politics, development, and conflict issues.

-excerpt from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum www.ushmm.org
SUBMITTED ABSTRACTS

Paper Session #1: Language Issues

The Language Issue in African Literature
MOR GUEYE
M.A. – African Studies

In which language(s) should African written literature be produced? With a total of six linguistic families and a pyramid of about 1,500 languages, Africa represents one of the biggest diversities in the world. Added to that complexity are Arabic and other European languages introduced in the continent through processes and reasons of different kinds.

Two main positions are noticed among African writers and critics: one in favor of writing in African languages and the other which favors the use of European languages in an Africanized or domesticated style. However, the whole issue cannot be summarized in such an opposition. Numerous but related questions are of a crucial interest if one needs to study this relationship between African literature and its languages. How do we define African literature? Is it a production on and about Africa and its people in African languages? Or is it a form of speech that reflects strictly African matters which any language can transmit? Moreover, for whom should such a literature speak? What is African literature addressing? Can non-African languages faithfully transmit the concerns and realities of the continent? To what extent the linguistic diversity can be an obstacle to advocates of the first position?

This problem hides another, much more determinant issue for the development of Africa itself: the language policy, or more narrowly, the promotion of African languages in the policies of planning. At this level, one can ask two sub-questions: First, if African literature has to be in African languages, how many scholars have the necessary skills to produce written literature as wide as its target population’s demands? Second, what percentage of the population possesses sufficient knowledge and interest to use it? In almost all African countries a non-African language is the main medium of instruction from elementary to university level and African languages are forgotten in literacy and other stages of informal education. How then can one argue in favor of African language in literature?

The debate on the use of African languages in African literature is of a great importance. However, the stage of the language policy should be more clearly elaborated and more pragmatically redefined. And this stage, it is more about political ambition and popular awareness about language use than just issues of language choice.

The hegemonic use of English in South African schools
MBHEKISENI MADELA
M.A. – African Studies

The paper presents and problematizes the hegemonic use of English as the only medium of instruction in South African schools and universities, whereas there are eleven official national languages, the majority of which are indigenous languages, the latter category includes: isiNdebele, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Xitsonga, Setswana, siSwati, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Sesotho. The use of South African scenario is a mere demonstration of what is happening in former African colonies of Britain that have gained independence from decades of brutal colonial rule. The paper exposes acts of discrimination, segregation, and other forms of injustices, exercised by former colonial and apartheid South African governments using language medium to enrich English-medium schools while impoverishing schools using indigenous languages. To demonstrate the latter dichotomy, the paper samples with English-medium schools and isiZulu-medium schools, by comparing school’s administration set ups, academic and extra-mural programs, premises, amenities, recreational grounds, finances, running water and sanitation, teacher-pupil ratios, and many more. The paper also navigates the present democratic government’s languages acts and policies, and the policies have been found to be ambiguous and lack uniformity in implementation. Information in this paper is from some literary works by educationists, academics, civil rights movements, NGOs, which I have personally reviewed. The English-isiZulu discourse has attracted
the attention of many South African citizens who are advocating for formal use of isiZulu alongside English, especially in KwaZulu-Natal schools and universities. The paper concludes by suggesting some future trends of language-in-education policies and implementation strategies for governments to deliver qualitative and liberating education to all country’s citizens.

**Linguistic Human Rights in Kenya**  
**LYDIAH KIRAMBA**  
**M.A. – African Studies**

Kenya is a culturally, racially and linguistically heterogeneous country and so the language policy in place is rather ambiguous. Studies reveal that although the policy stipulates that the mother-tongue is to be used as the medium of instruction at elementary level, there seems to be an unwritten policy regarding the use of English, Swahili and other indigenous languages. The majority of Kenyan children go through an education system that at times fails to provide instruction in the language they speak; which is the language they understand best. This has been said to contribute illiteracy in people entering workforce with inadequate skills. This paper analyzes language policy and practice in Kenya to determine the extent to which language rights are upheld in Kenya education system. The following questions are addressed: (i) What language practices can one witness in Kenya; (ii) what are the basic language rights to language use; (iii) which of the language rights are threatened in Kenya; and (iv) what are the pedagogical implications of the language practices in the country?  
**Keywords:** linguistic human rights, language policy

**African languages as optimal tools of development in Africa**  
**EYAMBA G. BOKAMBA**  
**Prof. - Department of Linguistics**

Can African states achieve holistic development, including participatory democracy and economic justice? If so, as one would optimistically believe, what would be some of the critical factors that would potentiate this achievement? This paper examines the role of African languages in public domains, with a particular emphasis on education and governance, to document the extent to which most African states have squandered their language resources to privilege exclusively the utilization of the former colonial languages in their so-called nation-building efforts in the past 50 years of political independence. The paper argues that if educational data and the continent’s language policy practices in the past a half century are taken as indicators of post-colonial development, the continent will not achieve holistic development in the near future, because its language policy practices disenfranchise the vast majority of the populations (ca. 65-85%) who do not speak the official exogenous languages (viz., English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish). To reverse these practices and pave the way to generalized development in the continent, it is argued that African languages, especially well established linguae francae or trans-boarder languages, must be incorporated into African states’ language policies to serve as the optimal tools for development. Failure to pursue such transformative policy practices will certainly condemn the continent to underdevelopment and exploitation.

**Invited talks on Politics and Revolution**

**Beyond Disinformation: Revising Congo's Past, Reinventing its Future**  
**ANNA ROOSEVELT**  
**Prof., Anthropology, UIC**

Literature on the 1960s Congo Crisis and its fallout consequences is deeply flawed by numerous falsified documents created by a Belgian Surété officer who led the NATO conspiracy against the first Congolese Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba. A Colonial White Supremacist adamantly opposed to independence, he and his collaborators have falsely depicted Congolese as unable to cohere and self-organize, corrupt, prone to fratricidal violence, and technologically and commercially inept.
The genuine evidence for the period gives a very different, hopeful picture. One of the first fully modern human cultures arose in the basin several hundred thousand years ago. In the last 10,000 years, technological innovations were achieved there: iron and carbon-steel working, ceramic and textile industries, effective commercial and religious organizations, and land-management. In the last three thousand years, there were long-lived chiefdoms, kingdoms, and states employing a range of canny, heterarchical methods. In the first modern elections, mid-twentieth century, Congolese voted at high frequencies rarely achieved in Europe or the US, and the Parliament they elected held firm for their remarkable Prime Minister until his murder, despite massive bribery and economic strangulation by the NATO countries.

Surviving c. 30 disastrous years of a dictator imposed from the outside, Congo became too weak to control its military or defend its borders against warlords bankrolled by multinationals desiring access to the mines. But with its natural, technological, and human resources, the reparations due from the foreigners, and the help of neighbors and the international community, Congo can move through these problems to gain its place as the strong center of its important continent.

Morocco: The (r)evolutionary exception?
MARK DRESSMAN
Assoc. Prof. - College of Education
Like nearly every other country of North Africa and the Middle East, the Kingdom of Morocco has experienced mass demonstrations and calls for reform in the past four months. Protests in major cities on February 20 resulted in vandalism, looting, and the deaths of five people in the northern city of Al Hoceima. But unlike many other countries in the region, calls for revolution through regime change have not been forthcoming, and after King Mohammed VI announced future constitutional reforms giving parliament new legislative and executive powers on March 9, further demonstrations have remained peaceful. What accounts for this difference in outcome between Al Maghrib Al-Aqsa and its neighbors to the East? In this presentation, I argue that it is the result of three factors: A geographical circumstance that produced significant differences in the history of Morocco and its neighbors; the present King’s own disposition and life experience; and a strong tradition of moderation and civility in Moroccan society over the last century.

Revolt on the Nile: Story of the Egyptian Revolution and the Arab Revolt.
ALADDIN ELAASAR
Visiting Lecturer, Dept of Linguistics, UIUC.
The Egyptian revolution that started in Jan, 25, 2011 has captivated the World’s attention. It has generated a great deal of attention about what’s really has been happening in Egypt, and what would unfold there in the future? Will Egypt sail smoothly to the shores of freedom and establish a democratic, rule after more than a half a century of autocratic rule? Or will it turn into another Iran; hostile to American and Western interests? Will the Muslim Brothers sweep through the elections and even the presidency? Will the next regime be hostile to its neighbor, the state of Israel, and revoke the Camp David Peace Treaty?
The Egyptian revolution has inspired several other uprisings in the region; in Yemen, Libya, Bahrain and Syria. What’s happening in the Arab world? Where is it heading to? Will the Arab world whether into freedom and democracy like Eastern Europe did after the fall of the Berlin Wall? Will it be integrated into the EU and NATO as good friendly neighbor to southern Europe and play a leading on the Mediterranean Basin? Or will it be influenced by fundamentalists taking it back to the time of the dark Ages and the Crusades?
Voicing the Silences in Post-Conflict Transitional Justice: A Comparative Study of Women at Nuremberg and the TRC (Withdrawn)

EMILY STEINER
M.A. – African Studies

In this paper I examine the institutional transitional justice system in a post-conflict context using a gendered lens. International transitional justice has a hidden history of women participation, beginning with the Nuremberg trials in Germany in the 1940s, the first large-scale transnational criminal tribunal, during which several Nazi officials were judged for crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, and war crimes. The focus of this study is to assess the role of women at Nuremberg and at The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa in the 1990s. The TRC was a public tribunal assembled at the end of apartheid rule in order to judge crimes and human rights violations and aid in the transition to democracy. The presence of women at Nuremberg and at the TRC is evaluated on two levels, firstly as lawyers, commissioners and other legal positions, and secondly as victims and witnesses in the hearings. The TRC was significantly different from Nuremberg in the sense that it was based on the idea of restorative justice, an approach that focuses on the needs of victims and perpetrators, and therefore encourages personal testimony as the main method of gaining truth and reconciliation. Nuremberg on the other hand was founded on the principle of retributive justice, which accepts punishment as a valid response to crime.

The presence of women in legal positions, as well as journalists and authors, is significant at both Nuremberg and the TRC. The role of women as witnesses and victims however is limited to the TRC, where they were included as participants in the hearings. I argue that the presence of women in both cases contributed to the shaping of a gendered historical memory of the trials and ultimately developed female prominence in the sphere of transitional justice.

The Dialogue between Clan and State in Somaliland

MOHAMED ABUMAYE
M.A. – African Studies

This research paper will critique the political system of Somaliland, as well as its turbulent history. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the efficiency in Somaliland of a co-existence between the clan and a modern state in overcoming the weaknesses of the contemporary state model. This thesis will be analyzed by first providing background information on Somaliland as this will equip the reader with the tools to adequately understand the structure the Somali state. Afterwards an analysis of the Somali kinship system often referred to as clans will be provided. Immediately following that will be a discussion of the early (1960s) Somaliland state-building project. Moreover, to gain a broader understating of the context of which the modern State was created, a review of Charles Tilly’s theory in regards to state construction will be discussed. Contrasted to Tilly’s theory, an analysis of Herbst and the state-building projecting in Africa will also be examined, as Herbst provides an alternative model of state construction. After all these points have been summarized, there will be a discussion on pertinent data on the current political structure of Somaliland. This section will include an analysis of voting trends, political parties, and elections data, which demonstrates the stability of a state that has managed to successfully assimilate traditional forms of governance such as the clan.

Street Children in Kenya

JACOB BUTLER
M.A. – African Studies

Across the developing world, children working and living on the street has become a common occurrence. These children roam the urban landscape working to satisfy daily needs and survive in an often harsh and unforgiving environment. Throughout this paper I will analyze the street children phenomenon in the Kenyan context, hoping to answer questions related to the factors pushing children
onto the streets, problems associated with life on the streets (and how the children cope with these problems), their interaction with each other and the local community, and the work they do to ensure daily survival. Special attention will be paid to the prevention and rehabilitation of street children in Kenya with emphasis on the actual and potential success or failure of the different strategies used. Throughout the paper I will attempt to discredit the characterization of street children as “passive victims” who are frequently engaged in criminal behavior. Instead, I will argue that street children are highly independent, active, and resourceful individuals who invoke agency in their lives. Additionally, I claim that street children are part of the wider working-poor community of Kenya where they often performing an important service to society as collectors of recyclable products that litter the same streets they inhabit.
Still I Rise
MAYA ANGELOU

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
’Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
’Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history’s shame
I rise
Up from a past that’s rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.