

Editorial...

With spring well on its way, coinciding with the autumnal calendar of French research, a few staff changes are taking place at IFAS-Research. Two CNRS researchers on secondment to IFAS, Laurent Fourchard who was based in Cape Town from September 2008 to September 2009, and Jean-Loïc Le Quellec who was based in Johannesburg from October 2007 to October 2009, are departing, although both will be back in Southern Africa in the very near future. IFAS wishes them every success in their future endeavours. Part of the fruits of their IFAS-based research still needs to be reaped: first with the closure of the GDRI "Governing African Cities", co-directed by Laurent Fourchard and Simon Bekker, which will be held in Stellenbosch in early December, and secondly with the publication in France at the end of 2009 and, we hope in South Africa in 2010, of "Cattle Theft at Christol Cave" co-authored by Jean Loïc Le Quellec.

The end of 2009 also sees the closure of programmes that have contributed to furthering research at IFAS for the past few years, particularly with the ANR programme MITRANS on "Transit Migrations in Africa", which resulted from a collaboration between IFAS and the Laboratoire URMIS. The closing colloquium for the programme, to be held in Paris in December and which will sum up all the research conducted so far in this domain, promises to be particularly full, although the end of the ANR programme does not mean the end of research on this subject at IFAS.

The spring 2009 issue of Lesedi (n°10) sanctions the new formula inaugurated last July, with the publication of two main articles: one short on rooibos, and one long on the Malawian Elections. Waiting to be published, the article on Rooibos gave rise to a reply from another researcher, which is also published in this issue. This sudden development towards another problematic is symbolic of one of IFAS' objectives, that of enabling researchers working on Southern Africa to network.

Wishing you happy reading and a happy summer!

Sophie Didier,
Director IFAS-Research

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Lesedi: Sesotho word meaning "knowledge"

Party System and Elections in Malawi First analyses of the May 2009 poll¹

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On the 19th of May 2009, Bingu wa Mutharika of the Democratic People's Party (DPP) became once more President of Malawi, one of the poorest countries in Africa², with 66,2% of the vote, beating his main opponent John Tembo of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP)³, and Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF)⁴. National and international observers on the whole found that these elections – the fourth since the return of multiparty elections in 1994⁵ – were free and fair despite a few “imperfections during the voting”⁶, and noted a high participation rate (78%).



Supporters of DPP candidate Bingu wa Mutharika at the presidential elections, during a rally held in Chileka on 23 April 2009.

These elections testify to an evolution in the political choice and the party system. On the one hand, the multiplication of the number of political parties (40 were officially registered⁷) and the record number of candidates (1 166 for 193 constituencies compared to 613 candidates fifteen years earlier), testify to the diversification of the political choice. On the other hand, the decline of “historical” parties, the fragmentation of the party system in as many political structures as the number of candidates, and the multiplication of the number of independent candidates (41%) bring one to question how much influence parties actually have, through which they have become “indispensable in protesting against the

government and in conquering political posts”⁸.

As part of this questioning, a detailed approach of the elections makes it possible to conclude that political parties are in fact experiencing a renewal rather than a demise. Thus, with the currently diminished political representation of historical parties to the benefit of independent candidates in particular, political parties remain nonetheless the monopolising structure on the electoral stage. An analysis of the situation shows that the success of independent candidates depends strongly on the relationships they managed to forge with political parties, which testifies to the ongoing capacity of political parties to control the elections.

Renewal of the party system: the end of the historical parties' dominance

Up until 2005, the political and electoral scene was monopolised by three factions: the MCP, the UDF and the Alliance For Democracy (AFORD). These political factions gathered 98% of National Assembly deputies in 1999, and more than 60% in 2004. They developed a strong hold over their members and managed to regulate the “political careers” of their staff, depending on their own objectives. In this context of strong domination, political personalities, with a view to standing out or pursuing their function, were often compelled to create their own organisations. The DPP of President Bingu wa Mutharika is a case in point. Although he was elected in 2004 under the UDF label, he was forced to leave the party and create, in March 2005, his own group, the DPP, following many clashes with former Malawian president and historical founder of the movement⁹, Bakili Muluzi.

However, the 2009 elections established a renewal of the political landscape in Malawi, by a process of densification of the party scene and the victory of a new party, the DPP.

- This densification resulted in citizens being able to choose from among many parties during the last elections, thereby questioning the electoral domination acquired by the three main factions. In 1994, eight parties were competing in the election compared to nineteen in 2009. Concerning the presidential elections, there were four candidates in 1994 compared to seven in 2009. In addition to historical party candidates, the

likes of John Tembo of the MCP/UDF¹⁰ alliance and Dindi Gowa Nyasulu of AFORD, candidates of more recent parties also ran, such as B. wa Mutharika of the DPP, Kamuzu Chibambo of the People's Transformation Party (PETRA), Stanley Masauli of the Republican Party (RP), Loveness Gondwe of the New Rainbow Coalition Party (NARC) and James Nyondo as independent candidate. The diversification of the political supply was also illustrated by the fact that there were on average six candidates per constituency, compared to only three in 1994.

- The DPP victory was unprecedented with the presidential candidate winning 66,2% of the votes. There was a high voter turnout of more than 4,4 million. With 113 deputies out of 193, the DPP established itself as the country's leading political force, thereby obtaining an absolute majority with around 59% of the seats in the National Assembly.

Presidential Election Results of 19 May 2009

Candidates	Number of votes	Percentage
Bingu wa Mutharika (DPP)	2 963 820	66,17%
John Tembo (MCP/UDF)	1 365 672	30,49%
Kamuzu Chibambo (PETRA)	35 358	0,79%
Stanley Masauli (RP)	33 982	0,76%
Loveness Gondwe (NARC)	32 432	0,73%
James Mbowe Nyondo (Independent)	27 460	0,61%
Dindi Gowa Nyasulu (AFORD)	20 150	0,45%
Total	4 478 874	100%

Source: Malawi Electoral Commission, 2009

- The decline of the three "historical" parties was obvious: these gathered less than 31% of the votes during the presidential elections (compared to 98% in 1999), and less than 45 elected members in Parliament. Nevertheless, it reflects an older process, as the three major parties of Malawi have seen their elected MP numbers decrease in the past ten years. The number of MCP deputies went from 66 in 1999 to 57 in 2004. During the same period, the number of UDF deputies, the party then in power, went from 93 to 50 between 1999 and 2004. As to the AFORD, which went from 29 elected members in 1999 to six in 2004, it no longer had any weight in the legislative debate.

Parliamentary Election Results of 19 May 2009

Political Parties	Number of seats	Percentage
DPP	113	58,6%
Independents	32	16,5%
MCP	27	14%
UDF	17	8,9%
AFORD	1	0,5%
MAFUNDE**	1	0,5%
MPP***	1	0,5%
Total	192*	99,5%*

Source: Malawi Electoral Commission, 2009

* The Parliament includes 192 elected members for 193 seats. The poll in the Blantyre City Centre electorate was postponed due to the death of one of the candidates during the electoral campaign.

** Malawi Forum for Unity and Development.

*** Maravi People's Party

- Finally, the 2009 elections were characterised by a high number of independent candidates. This phenomenon has been increasing since the last two parliamentary

elections. Independent candidates represented 29% and 41% of the total number of candidates in 2004 and 2009 respectively, compared to only 2% in 1994. They managed to win 32 seats in Parliament during the last parliamentary elections, making them the country's second most important political force.



MCP supporter during the MCP-UDF meeting in Lilongwe on 26 April 2009.

Role of parties still decisive in electoral victory

The capacity of party systems, in Africa, to carry out certain functions is constantly being challenged. Political parties are often criticised for being mere electoral machines, devoid of any real programmes setting them apart, which explains the important occurrence of floor-crossing among party personnel. Without wanting to recall the limitations of such a profane analysis¹¹, certain dynamics are indeed putting pressure on party influence. The increasing number of independent candidates during the last legislative elections, questions the capacity of the party administrative staff to control their candidates and elected members. Nevertheless, an analysis of the success of independent candidates shows that it appears to depend closely on their capacity to forge relations with political parties. Beyond this, political parties testify to their indisputable success in controlling elections by determining, partially or totally, the outcome of a candidacy,

even when it is for an independent seat.

Observing the campaign as such revealed that a candidate running under a party, particularly the MCP or DPP in the Central region or the UDF in the South Region, benefited from a winning advantage, as was the case for an important number of candidates in the 2009 elections. Indeed, the main national parties still represent a powerful vector in directing votes. As a result, independent candidates sought to use certain party attributes:

- Certain independent candidates mobilised to their advantage the representations of the most popular parties. For example, many independent candidates did not hesitate to use an array of electoral technologies borrowed from the DPP, the UDF and the MCP: campaign schedules, emblems or services¹². Several hundred complaints have been lodged by main party candidates with the Malawi Electoral Commission¹³ against independent candidates. These complaints concerned the fact that some independent candidates used the same colours as those used by political parties (e.g. the light blue of the presidential party in the Central Region¹⁴ or the yellow of the UDF in the South Region). Moreover, the posters and political references of independent candidates were adapted in such a way as to claim affiliations with, for example, John Tembo by displaying posters of him, or President B. wa Mutharika so as to take advantage of his economic track record when he was in office¹⁵.

- Many independent candidates relied also on the social networks of political parties. In this almost exclusively rural country, the local government system, based on traditional authorities in particular, makes it possible to reach a large number of voters. Also, the main political parties, especially the MCP and the UDF, due to their past political influence, maintained privileged access channels to these networks. In this context, several independent candidates, during their traditional presentations to the local authorities, introduced themselves as being affiliated to one party or another, so as to benefit from these.

Finally, a study of the post-electoral period revealed that political parties constitute an anchorage hardly unavoidable for independent candidates.

- Once elected, many independent candidates prefer to be integrated into the party system. This was the case of former Tourism Deputy Minister Billy Kaunda who, after being elected as an independent in Mzimba West,

joined the DPP a few days after the official results¹⁶. He was not the only one to take such a decision: around fifteen other independent candidates of the South Region¹⁷ in particular, did the same during that period¹⁸.

- In fact, although they are autonomous and have their own resources, (materially, symbolically and as regards social relations) and, sometimes, even have political mandates acquired without the help of an organisation – some candidates actually conducted a campaign totally independently from parties – institutional constraints, in particular those of the reinforced executive power, incite them to join political parties. Nicholas Dausi, former DPP spokesperson and elected in the constituency of Mwanza Central where he is well established, rejoined the party of President B. wa Mutharika shortly after the election results¹⁹.



Traditional dancing in honour of Mrs Jean Sendeza, MCP candidate for the Lilongwe South West constituency, during a rally held in Matapa village on 25 April 2009.

Conclusion

After around fifteen years of the multiparty system, political parties showed with the 2009 election their indisputable success in controlling the elections. As a result, few of the independent candidates sitting in the National Assembly remained outside of the political groups (only around 10 out of 32). The capacity of political parties to put independent candidates in a dependent position, testifies to their being a structuring institution in Malawian elections. Note in this regard that many countries, such as Kenya, prefer to ban independent candidacies in order to establish the political parties. In this context, the end of the MCP-UDF alliance, and the rapprochement of B. Muluzi's party with the DPP, has created a weak opposition of only thirty deputies and less than 10 independent deputies.

1. This research work was carried out while taking part in the Election Observation Mission of the European Union in Malawi, as an observer in the Central region and with the support of the French Institute of South Africa, in April-May 2009.
2. Malawi, with 14 million inhabitants, is classified as one of "the least advanced countries". Agriculture represents 40% of the Gross Domestic Product and more than 90% of receipts from exports.
3. Hastings Kamuzu Banda was President in Malawi from 1964 to 1994, relying heavily on the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), the only party at the time. In 2009, John Tembo, a strong political figure during the Banda presidency, gathered 30,5% of the votes.
4. Former MCP member Bakili Muluzi founded the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1993.
5. Bakili Muluzi (UDF) won the first multiparty elections in 1994, against Hastings Kamuzu Banda (MCP), then President (since 1964). Re-elected in 1999, he was succeeded in 2004 by Bingu wa Mutharika, then member of the UDF. Cf. M. Ott, B. Immink, B. Mhango & C. Peters-Berries, *The Power of the Vote. Malawi's 2004 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections*, Zomba, Kachere Series, 2004.
6. The impartiality of the media, the government media in particular, to the benefit of the Democratic People's Party (DPP) and its candidate, B. wa Mutharika, has been denounced by several international organisations. Cf. EUEOM Malawi 2009, *Preliminary Statement*, Blantyre, 21st May 2009.
7. Government of Malawi, *Registrar of Political Parties*, Lilongwe, June 2008.
8. E.H.O. Diop, *Partis politiques and processus de transition démocratique en Afrique noire*, Paris, Publibook, 2006, p. 91.
9. After accessing power, Bingu wa Mutharika began fighting against corruption, which affected high officials from the UDF in particular. At the beginning of 2005, he was the victim of an attempt on his life by members of his own party, which forced him to leave the UDF. He then founded the DPP. Since then, the tensions between the DPP and the

- UDF have been such that President Mutharika has been confronted with two impeachment attempts and has convened Parliament only once in the past two years to vote on the budget.
10. Initially, the presidential elections included eight candidates. However, Bakili Muluzi, who had been President twice from 1994 to 2004 when he was with the UDF, was forbidden by the Electoral Commission to run for President in the March 20th 2009 elections, on the basis of the Constitution which specifies that a presidency is restricted to two mandates. His appeal was rejected by the Constitutional Court on April 7, forcing him to make a historical alliance with John Tembo, leader of the former unique party, the MCP.
 11. Cf. *Politique Africaine*, "Partis politiques d'Afrique : retour sur un objet délaissé", n°104, décembre 2006 or M. Basedau, G. Erdmann and A. Mehler, *Votes, Money and Violence. Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Scottsville, Uppsala/KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007.
 12. "Independents cling to party colours, symbols", *The Nation*, 16th April 2009.
 13. Interview with Deverson Nil Makwete, member of the Electoral Commission in the Central region, Lilongwe, 20 April 2009.
 14. Several independent candidates, such as Chikondi Nkhoma in Lilongwe City Centre or Madalitsa Kapalamula-Banda in Lilongwe North East, did not hide the fact that they were using such election techniques. Interviews carried out in Lilongwe, on April 25th and 28th respectively.
 15. Observations recorded during meetings conducted with Elizabeth Lamba and Lyson Milazi in Lilongwe City West, Emmanuel Elliot Mwale in Lilongwe East, Chikondi Nkhoma in Lilongwe City Centre, Philip Kadwa in Mchinji South West and Wickford Kingsley Sulamoyo in Mchinji North.
 16. B. Kaunda was appointed Deputy Minister of Sports and Youth on 15 June 2009.
 17. "Blantyre independent MP joins DPP", *The Daily Times*, 25th May 2009.
 18. "MPs' exodus to DPP bad for Malawi", *The Daily Times*, 28th May 2009.
 19. "Mutharika welcomes Independents", *The Nation*, 28th May 2009.

Rooibos: Therapeutic infusion or national heritage¹?

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Rooibos is a tea produced from a plant endemic to the Cederberg Mountains in southwest South Africa. It is probably one of the best known South African products in the Western countries. Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, the United-Kingdom and Japan are the biggest importers: together, they bought over 5 000 tonnes of rooibos in 2006², which represents more than half of the total production³. This latest craze can be explained by the fact that rooibos is considered as a health drink due to its lack of theine, low tannin content and the fact that it contains antioxidants. On the tea and infusion market, the sale of special teas and herbal teas,



Rooibos container. The Laager brand was created in 1945. (Photo M. Leclercq)

which includes rooibos, has the highest growth rate⁴.

The medicinal properties of rooibos have been given media coverage since the 1960s in South Africa and since the 1990s in the Western countries. Although these properties are well-known by consumers, they are still the subject of controversy. Scientists who study rooibos admit that it is a drink with beneficial properties, thanks to its antispasmodic properties or its efficiency in treating dermatitis. However, its anti-allergenic properties or its content in vitamin C have been contradicted, the reason for food scientists not to consider rooibos as medicine⁵. Research on the other properties and particularly on the anticancer properties of rooibos continues⁶.



Harvesting rooibos in the Cederberg Mountains. (photo M. Leclercq)

Rooibos can also be considered as part of the South African heritage which has been progressively constructed during the 20th century. It is a product which reflects the roots of local cultural identities, and which corresponds perfectly to the academic definition of heritage according to Shepherd: "In the notion of heritage, we recognise the rootedness *and* constructedness of identities, cultural ties which feel deep but which are open to transformation"⁷.

However, in legal terms, rooibos is not currently part of the South African heritage. Shepherd shows that the legal concept of heritage in South Africa has been evolving since the beginning of the century, according to the political and social history of the country. We present here a few summarised stages of the construction of this concept. One of the first legal notions of heritage concerned Archaeology and Prehistory (cf. the legislation on protecting San (or Bushman) relics voted by the South African Government in 1911). Subsequently, heritage became a notion reserved for Afrikaner folklore (especially from 1948, when the National Party came to power with the racial segregation

programme of apartheid).

More recently, in 1999, a law on national heritage resources was passed by the South African government, the preamble of which stipulates that "[Our heritage] helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation. It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in so doing shape our national character. Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequities."⁸ This preamble corresponds to the definition of heritage as proposed above, where it is introduced as a notion open to change while being anchored in the past, and as the desire to rebuild South

African identity by expiating the stigmas of the past which are then founded in new national symbols.

Rooibos is not registered in the National Heritage Register, yet an analysis of the historical and technical trajectory of this product shows that it is a heritage resource. Rooibos is the fruit of a complex history, combining various heritages. The plant was probably discovered and consumed for the first time by the San in the 18th century or at the beginning of the 19th century. There is however no trace of such a discovery in the literature⁹. Rooibos was subsequently consumed locally as a tea and coffee substitute up until the beginning of the 20th century, before being cultivated from the 1930s onwards. The cultivation and transformation techniques as well as the agricultural equipment used for it were developed locally, through collaborations between agronomists and producers.

The rooibos product as we know it today is the creation of the community leaders of Clanwilliam and was for a long time considered as a defining feature of Afrikaner cultural identity.

The technical trajectory and economic expansion of this product benefited widely from the – voluntary or forced – support of Coloured farm workers¹⁰. In this regard, while accessing land for Coloured populations was strictly restricted under apartheid, the end of the regime in the mid nineties gave an opportunity to certain producers to form co-operatives. Also, while possibilities for the improvement of the economic status of Coloured producers are still limited, these producers benefitted in time from the emergence of international niche markets (organic agriculture and fair trade market) to develop and promote their production at the beginning of the millennium. Lately, these producers have been taking part in reinforcing the image of rooibos by marketing a product perceived as being sustainable (i.e. small-scale production, most of which is carried out by hand), of good quality (they produce on plateaux reputed for the quality of the rooibos) and as reflecting good ethics (in that they take part in local

development to some extent). This reputation is recognised today by Afrikaner producers.

As can be seen, this product has progressively been gathering various local cultural identities. Today, as a product, rooibos not only reflects a Khoisan heritage (Khoisan being a generic term including the Khoi – formerly called the Hottentots – and the San people)¹¹, it also reflects production techniques developed essentially by the Afrikaners as well as a “new Coloured heritage” held by the workers and certain producers. It is in this manner that rooibos can be thought of and introduced as a heritage shared by different past and current populations of South Africa, and can be defined as national heritage.

It is at least partly for this reason that rooibos has recently been the subject of a Geographical Indication (GI) project, which consists of protecting the name of this product and have it recognised as a national heritage¹². A GI is an intellectual property right used on goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess certain qualities, reputation or characteristics that are essentially attributable to that origin.

Today, in a way, drinking rooibos not only means consuming a healthy product, it also means consuming a constantly evolving national symbol. As such, rooibos can be considered as a medium¹³ for national reconciliation¹⁴. Transforming rooibos into heritage would help Coloured and Khoisan populations being recognised culturally and symbolically. However, while the legal recognition of the rights of populations disadvantaged during apartheid¹⁵ has been established, it is only partially applied. The land redistribution programme is far from reaching the objectives set in 1994¹⁶, and socio-spatial segregation remains topical, even in the rooibos production context.

NB: Joekels Tea Packers for the brand Laager and Achterfontein estate kindly allowed us to use the images of the rooibos.

1. This article comes from my doctoral research and presents

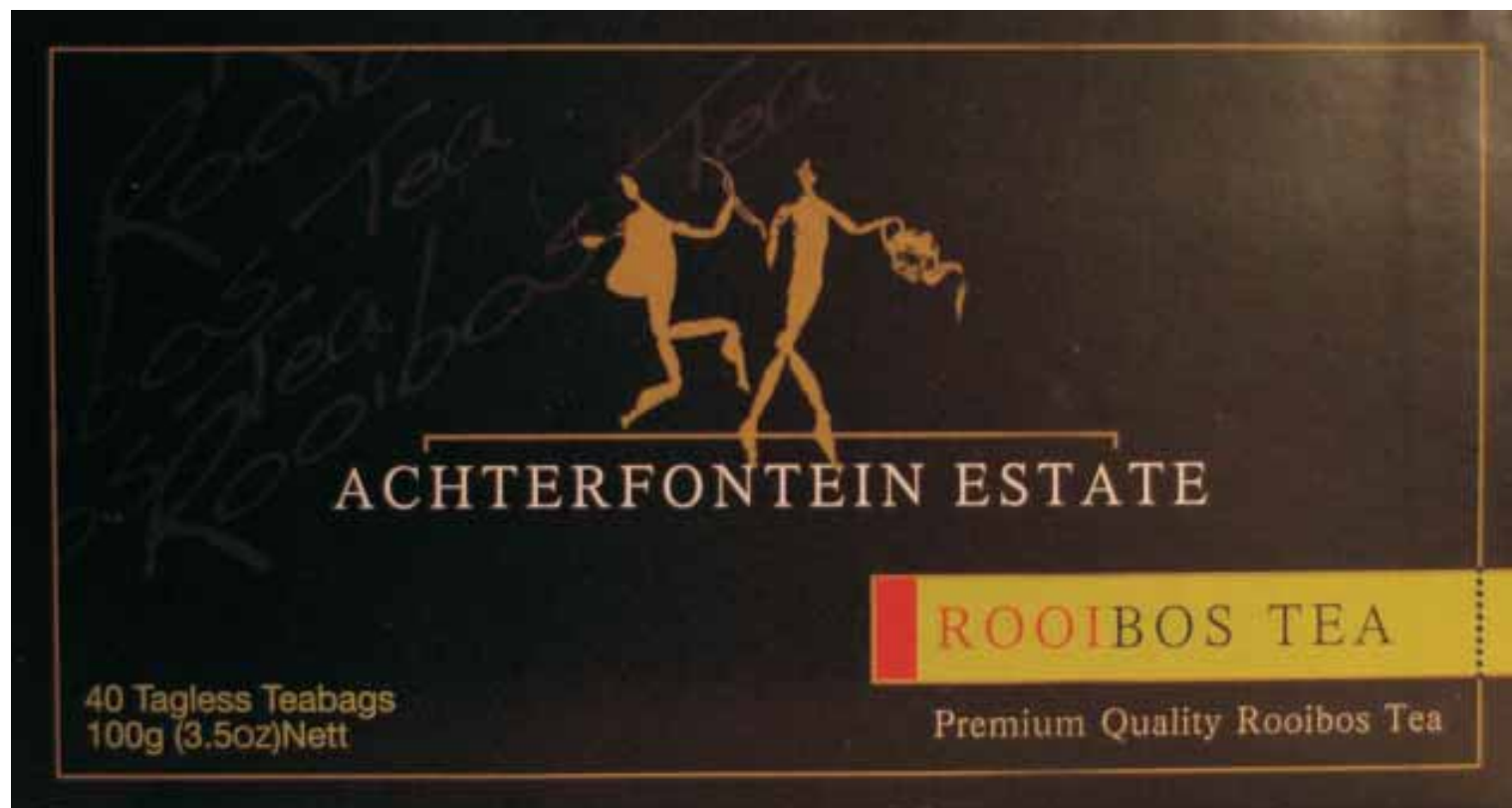
- preliminary and synthesised results. This work benefited from the financial support of IFAS.
2. Van Zyl, E. C. et N. S. Schreuder. 2007. *A domestic and international market overview: Rooibos tea*, dissertation presented for a B.Sc. at the University of Bloemfontein, South Africa. The production and consumption data come from several bibliographic sources.
 3. For a few years, however, production has been increasing faster than demand. The total rooibos production was estimated at 10 000 tonnes in 2006, and reached a record 20 000 tonnes or so in 2008. The global consumption of rooibos was estimated at between 10 000 and 15 000 tonnes in 2008; with the market therefore in overproduction.
 4. Raynolds, L. T. & Ngcwangu, S. U. 2009. Fair Trade Rooibos Tea: Connecting South African Producers and American Consumer Markets. *Geoforum*: 1-10.
 5. Information collected during interviews conducted with researchers from the ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij and the Department of Food Science of the University of Stellenbosch between October 2008 and February 2009.
 6. Joubert, E., W. C. A. Gelderblom, A. Louw and D. de Beer. 2008. South African Herbal Teas: *Aspalathus linearis*, *Cyclopia* spp. and *Athrixia phylicoides* - A review. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 119:376-412.
 7. Shepherd, N. 2008. "Heritage", in *New South African keywords*. Edited by N. Shepherd and S. Robins, pp. 116-128. Johannesburg: Jacana. Page 123.
 8. Republic of South Africa. 1999. "National Heritage Resources Act," vol. 19974. *Government Gazette*, pp. 45. Cape Town. Page 2.
 9. The missionaries and explorers of the time wrote many descriptions of the Cape region concerning its fauna, flora and inhabitants; but their works do not contain, to my knowledge, any information on rooibos. This is probably due to the fact that the plants researched and described were useful or medicinal plants.
 10. The term 'Coloured' under apartheid referred to populations defined as neither Black nor White, i.e. mixed populations as well as descendants from slaves or Khoi from the Cape Region, the fruit of mixing between European and Khoi populations.
 11. Which can be noted through the recent promotion of the Khoi and San universe in rooibos symbolism, especially on the packaging sold on the national and international markets.
 12. In this regard, cf. Biénabe, E., M. Leclercq and P. Moity-Maizi. 2009. Le rooibos d'Afrique du Sud : comment la biodiversité s'invite dans la construction d'une indication géographique. *Autrepart* 50:117-134.
 13. By medium, we mean an object which is subject to media coverage and which serves as mediator at the same time.
 14. Reconciliation refers to the Reconciliation and Development Programme (RDP) on which Nelson Mandela based his campaign in 1994.
 15. This concerns only the Coloured populations, since the Khoisan, as an ethnic group, no longer exist in that region.
 16. One of the objectives of the 1994 land reform was to redistribute, over a five-year period, 30% of White-owned land to historically disadvantaged populations. In 2008, only 4% of that land was effectively redistributed (Hall, R. Editor. 2009. *Another countryside? Policy Options for Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa*, Cape Town: PLAAS (Institut for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies).)

Response... Revisiting the Image of “Bushmen Tea”

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With the mere reproduction of a rock painting on a box of rooibos tea, suggestions and even requests are being made on the reader. The fact that it is a rock painting connotes the past and even Prehistory. The short bow

brandished by one of the two painted characters, labels him as a San (i.e. “Bushman”) hunter. Yet, he is also carrying a swollen bag on his back: that makes him a hunter-gatherer. But what did he gather? The other character who is standing on the right and starting to pour the content of a tea pot on the ground, like a propitiatory libation, gives us the answer. As such the whole painting works like a puzzle to be deciphered as follows: “bushmen + tea”, i.e. one of the English names of rooibos.



Rooibos container. The Achterfontein brand was created in 2008. The logo adapted from a bushman painting. (photo M. Leclercq)

Thus it is suggested that there exists a connection between San and rooibos, and even that the use of the plant as a type of tea, reached us through them. We are required to believe that this is part of their heritage and that using rooibos is somehow primeval, or at least extremely old, going back to Prehistory (the San being commonly associated with the beginning). In this way, two stereotypes are being called upon: that of the hunter-gatherers, possessors of ancestral knowledge and experts on nature's secrets, and that which gives more worth to "old" and "traditional" knowledge. Yet, the first stereotype only relies on a perception naturalising the San and defining them as being "close to nature", when in fact only their culture matters. As to the second stereotype, ancient communities were just as prone to mistakes as modern ones and that, as far as traditions are concerned, some are absolutely appalling.

What do we know about the origin of the use of "rooibos" (*Aspalathus linearis*) as a herbal tea? While there are no clear mentions about rooibos in the texts written by missionaries and naturalists of the 18th and 19th centuries¹, it is often asserted by promoters or pharmacologists², on Internet in particular, that the oldest known reference appeared under the pen of Swedish botanist – and pupil of Linnaeus – Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828) who travelled in the Cape region from 1771 to 1773, and who wrote a *Flora Capensis*. In his travelogue, he noted that "of the leaves of the *Borbonia cordata*, the country people made tea"³. But *Borbonia cordata* was the old name for *Aspalathus cordata*, which is not rooibos⁴. In other texts, Thunberg gave a list of useful plants of the Cape and their usage: "for tea, the *Borbonia cordata*; for coffee, the

Brabejum stellarum; etc."⁵. Once more, it is not the actual plant called rooibos which is mentioned, but a related plant. Yet, these are the only two testimonies from which it is now asserted, for example, that "*the Khoisan, an old Bushman tribe from the mountainous regions west of the Cape [...] harvested rooibos and, after fermenting the leaves, made herbal tea from it for medicinal purposes*"⁶, or that "*centuries ago, rooibos was a drink of the Bushmen, who chopped the bush's stalks, bruised them, and let them dry in the sun*"⁷. The idea that this drink was inherited from old San traditions is thus substantiated.

But let us not be hasty in this regard for, in addition to the lack of precision on the species mentioned, Thunberg's first passage, as described above, mentions only "country people", which could certainly designate those he called in other parts of his book "Hottentots", "Hottentots Bushmen" or Namaqua Bushmen", according to the usage of the time. But he could just as well have been referring to the various Dutch settlers who offered him accommodation on their farms during his journey, which is in fact the general sense given to the expression "country people" or "peasants" in the 18th century in the Cape Colony, where it always refers to Dutch settlers⁸. The list of the second quote includes also, in addition to that famous local tea, European plants such as *Cercis siliquastrum* or *Securigera coronilla*, which were introduced to South Africa and which the said farmer-settlers used to make hedges. Moreover, while Thunberg gladly gives the common names of the plants used by the "Hottentots", he does not do so for the *Borbonia* – alias *Aspalathus* – which he said, was used as tea. The fact that he mentions that it was "for tea", while *Brabejum stellarum* was "for coffee", could suggest that, for the peasants, these

plants were only substitutes. Finally, plant guides and synonymic dictionaries give a whole series of names for rooibos: *Bush tea*⁹, *Kaffir tea*¹⁰, *Mountain tea*, *red bush tea*¹¹, *Bushman tea*¹², *Koopman's tea*, *naaldtee* ou *Naaldthee* (= "needle tea"), *bossiestee* (= "bush tea"), *veld tea*, *rankies tea*, *maktee*¹³. Strikingly, all these names are either in English, Dutch or Afrikaans, while no Khoisan name seems to have ever been reported for the plant¹⁴. *Koopman's tea*, based on some anthroponym of Dutch origin, even refers to it as being the tea of a certain Koopman, whose name means "merchant".

Let us recall that the drink and its name, "tea"/"tee", appeared in Europe in 1610, via the Dutch of the Dutch East India Company. It was only in 1650 England that people began to speak of "that excellent and by all physicians approved China drink, called by the Chineans Tcha, and by other nations Tay, alias Tee"¹⁵. Without playing devil's advocate, we must admit that all this does not plead in favour of high antiquity and does not reinforce the hypothesis according to which the use of rooibos as tea is of Khoisan origin. Could it be that the tea-loving Dutch settlers, whom Thunberg met in the Cape region in the 18th century, used a local plant as substitute to prepare their favourite drink, and that this practice spread to local neighbouring populations?

While we cannot decide for sure, we can at least wish that the now frequent reference to rooibos as being of very old origin, be better argued in the future. Indeed, cultural traits of great social importance are ascribed great age... which is frequently contradicted by historical data. The mythicisation of cultural traits can happen very rapidly. The example of the horse (of recent introduction obviously) that became central to the culture of the Ameridians from the Plains is well known in this regard. But in Africa, another such mythicisation concerns... tea! Among the Moor and the Tuareg, tea is integrated to such an extent in the culture, hospitality rites, oral traditions and paremiology that it appears to be essential to these groups, and seems to go back to time immemorial. Yet, the use of that drink, aristocratic at first, became popular only during the second half of the 19th century in Morocco¹⁶ and Mauritania¹⁷, from 1875 to 1880 in Libya¹⁸ and during the mid 20th century in Central Sahara.

While marketing and promotion today can no longer be envisaged without the use of "brand images", "pictograms" and other visual identities, the rooibos tea packaging photographed above is one of those¹⁹ packages that have led to an nth manipulation of the image of the "Bushmen", thereby contributing to their mythicisation. In the photograph, their role of ancestors and transmitters of culture is automatically suggested by a rock painting on which one character holds an English-style tea pot of a type made in Europe at a time when the Khoisan of the Eastern Cape were systematically being slaughtered²⁰. Even if the San from the Cape had already been making pottery since 700 Ce²¹, and even if the oldest reference to Khoi pottery in the Eastern Cape actually comes from Thunberg who saw some in the region of Gamtoos River in 1772-1773²², a tea

pot in the hand of a San on a rock painting is as strange as Lautréamont's famous "chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella". Nonetheless, this rock painting still illustrates the reconstitution process calling on a South African past which is so distant that it is perceived as being a historical and anyone can appropriate it. Where the image of the rock painting uses elements from previous centuries, it then becomes possible to project towards the future a constantly reinvented identity.

1. M. Leclercq, E. Bienabe et P. Caron 2009, "The case of the South African Rooibos: Biodiversity Conservation as a Collective Consensus", *Paris: Colloque international UNESCO "Localiser les produits"*.
2. E.g.: C. Ollier 2006, "Le rooibos, thé rouge (red bush tea)", *Phytothérapie* 4(4): 188-193 (p. 188).
3. Carl Peter Thunberg [1986], *Travels at the Cape of Good Hope, 1772-1775: based on the English edition, London 1793-1795, Edited by Emeritus Prof. Vernon Siegfried Forbes, Translation from the Swedish revised by J. & I. Rudner*, Cape Town: Van Riebeck Society, xlviii-366 p. (p. 44).
4. John Manning & Colin Paterson-Jones 2007, *Field Guide to Fynbos*, Cape Town: Struik, 507 p. (p. 298).
5. Thunberg [1986]: xli.
6. C. Ollier 2006, "Le rooibos, thé rouge (red bush tea)", *Phytothérapie* 4(4): 188-193 (p. 188).
7. Stephanie Hanes 2007, "Bushmen's brew to haute tea", *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 14.
8. Unfortunately, I did not have access to the Swedish original, where it would have been appropriate to see which expression is used by Thunberg exactly.
9. Jean Branford 1991, *A dictionary of South African English, French & European Publications Incorporated*, 361 p., s.v. rooibos.
10. Lloyd V. Crawford 1977, *Pediatric allergic diseases: focus on clinical diagnosis*, London: Kimpton, 324 p. (p. 157).
11. Ollier 2006: 188.
12. Although the Afrikaans name *boesmanstee* designates qat (*Catha edulis*), which is called *umHlwasi* in isiZulu and *iQgwaka* in isiXhosa (cf. <http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantcd/cathedulis.htm>).
13. Rhoda Malgas & Noel Oettle 2007, *The sustainable harvest of Wild Rooibos*, Environmental Monitoring Group Trust, 32 p. (p. 9, 16, 18) and Rolf Dahlgren 1968, "Revision of the Genus *Aspalathus*... with remarks on Rooibos Tea Cultivation", *Botaniska notiser* 121:165-208.
14. It is also possible that the original Khoisan terms disappeared altogether, as has generally been the case in South African toponymy.
15. Kazuko Okakura 2004, *The Book of tea*, Kessinger Publishing, 48 p. (p. 4).
16. Leriche, André (1953). "De l'origine du thé au Maroc et au Sahara" *Bulletin de l'IFAN* 15(2): 731-736.
17. Leriche, André (1951). "De l'origine du thé en Mauritanie" *Bulletin de l'IFAN* 13(3): 866-871.
18. J.-L., Miège (1975). "La Libye et le commerce transsaharien au XIXe siècle" *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 19: 135-168.
19. Other companies associate rooibos with rock art. Cf. for example <http://www.bushmanstea.com/> and the cover images of Rhoda Malgas & Noel Oettle 2007.
20. Many are those who were slaughtered between 1770 and 1800. Towards the end of that period, a settler told Colonel Collins that he had killed or captured 3 200 of them, and another admitted to having exterminated 2 700 of them (Andy Smith, Candy Malherbe, Mat Guenther & Penny Berens 2000, *The Bushmen of Southern Africa: a Foraging Society in Transition*, Athens; Ohio University Press, p. 47). Thunberg himself reported to have met in the Roggeveld a commando that had killed over a hundred Khoisan, and speaks of another that had slaughtered more than 400 Khoisan in the Sneeuwerge alone.
21. Charles A. Bollong, C. Garth Thompson & Andrew B. Smith 1997, "Khoikhoi and Bushman Pottery in the Cape Colony: Ethnohistory and Later Stone Age Ceramics of the South African Interior", *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 16: 269-299.
22. In this regard, he wrote: "I found pots made of baked earth by the Hottentots themselves."

Publications...

Justice spatiale | Spatial justice

Now online

Published with the support of Wits University's Centre for Urbanism & Built Environment Studies (CUBES) (South Africa), the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre (France), the Laboratoire de Géographie Comparée des Suds et des Nords : Gecko (EA 375) and the UMR LOUEST (UMR 7145) (MOSAÏQUES), this new English-French magazine can now be consulted online.

The first issue gathers research, discussions and controversial debates emanating from the Spatial Justice concept, using a multidisciplinary approach.

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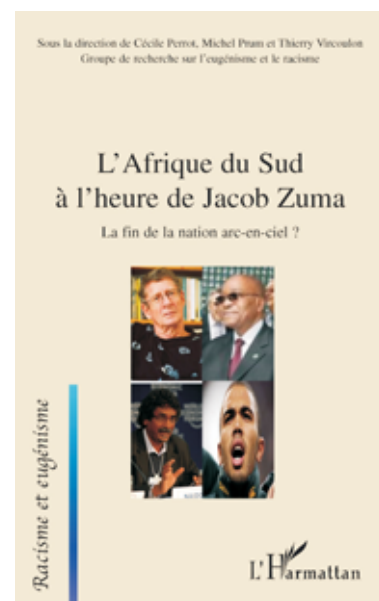
<http://jssj.org/>

L'Afrique du Sud à l'heure de Jacob Zuma:

La fin de la nation arc-en-ciel ?

Cécile Perrot, Michel Prum et Thierry Vircoulon (dir.),
July 2009, Ed. L'Harmattan,
ISBN : 978-2-296-09926-5
294 pages, 19 €.

Cécile Perrot, Michel Prum and Thierry Vircoulon deal with the racial issue in South Africa under the presidency of Jacob Zuma. Through an analysis of the difficulties and policies implemented in the domains of education, economics, municipalities and sports, they analyse the resurgence of the racial issue in the rainbow Nation and reflect on the future of the South African social contract and societal diversity.



<http://www.editions-harmattan.fr/index.asp?navig=catalogue&obj=livre&no=29266>

Vols de vaches à Christol Cave

Histoire critique d'une image rupestre d'Afrique du Sud

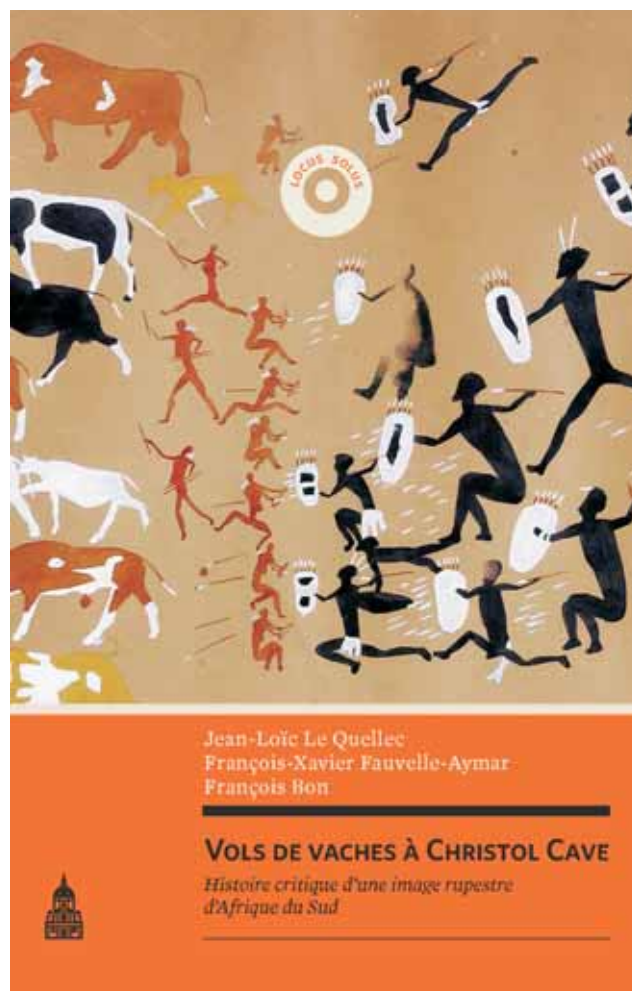
[Cattle Theft at Cristol Cave.
Critical history of a South African rock painting]

Jean-Loïc le Quellec, François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, François Bon
2009, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne,
ISBN-10 : 2859446338
ISBN-13 : 978-2859446338

This is a rock painting, hidden in a shelter in South Africa. On the left, we can see the attackers who are fleeing after having committed their crime. On the right, we can see the victims who, after the initial panic of the first moments, have regained their self-control and are pursuing their aggressors by brandishing spears and shields. The whole business seems straight forward: Bushmen hunter-gatherers have just swooped down on a Bantu agricultural village and stolen their cattle.

But, at the end of the 19th century, a second theft was committed, this time on the actual painting: from the shelter, French protestant missionary Frédéric Christol, one of the first to see the painting, removed whole pieces of rock containing paintings of cattle in order to send them to European museums, and thus testify to the presence of rock art in the confines of the known world.

Since its discovery a century and a half ago, the famous "Christol Cave" painting has been fascinating rock art experts, ethnologists and prehistorians. All saw in it a testimony that was so damning for the



"Bushmen" – the last hunter-gatherers in that part of the world – that the image came to incarnate the "shock" between prehistoric hunters and farmers of the first civilisations.

And yet, is that rock painting really testifying to a "cattle theft"? Did successive commentators really see with their eyes what their reason wanted to see?

We need to review the whole analysis. But is it possible to put the original document back together, despite the many instances of plundering on the painting?

By using archival documents and state-of-the-art technology, we have been able to review the painting that had almost disappeared, and see certain details that had never been seen or understood up until now...

And what if the thieves were not the ones we thought?

The English translation of this publication is currently planned for 2010

For the first time, a rock painting is considered as a historical document on the society that created it, but also on the societies that interpreted it.

Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, Senior Researcher with the CNRS and Specialist on African Rock Art.

François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, Senior Researcher with the CNRS and Historian of Africa.

François Bon, Senior Lecturer at the University of Toulouse Le Mirail and Prehistorian.

All three are Honorary Research Fellows of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Programmes...

Transit Migration in Africa:

local and global dynamics, politics and experiences

The closing seminar for the Mitrans research programme, "Transit Migration in Africa: local and global dynamics, politics and experiences", financed by the National Research Agency, will take place from the 10th to the 12th December 2009 in Nice. The seminar will host about 30 researchers from across the world, presenting papers on three themes: Transit migration as a discursive object and a sector of public policy; Migrant trajectories and urban settings; and Journeys as a source of categorisation, values and new identities.

For more information and the programme, please see:

www.unice.fr/urmis/spip.php?article309&var_recherche=MITRANS



Urban regeneration

North-South perspectives

The sequel of the workshop conducted in June this year on "North-South Urban Regeneration", organised by the CTDJ network, supported by the Universities of Stellenbosch and the Witwatersrand, and co-financed by the University of Paris XVIII and IFAS, took place from the 15th to the 19th of November in Dublin, Ireland. It gathered three young researchers from the University of the Witwatersrand, one

South African senior researcher and three French senior researchers who conducted field trips in Dublin, Ireland, accompanied by two Irish senior researchers and two Irish doctoral students from Trinity College and the National University of Ireland. This research group focused on the global dissemination of urban regeneration models and urban policy neoliberalisation in three cities: Dublin, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

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