

Editorial Introduction

Peter M. Ngau
University of Nairobi

This volume contains nine reports on research undertaken across the world: in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The articles cover four research themes of contemporary interest to readers on regional development studies. While five articles explore the contextual aspects of local and regional development, two articles explore the implications of globalization on interregional cooperation in the Caribbean and the Republic of Korea (hereinafter, Korea). Another article focuses on conservation of wetland ecosystems. The last article is conceptual in nature.

The first article, by Fenta Mandefro Abate, titled, “The Contextual Dimension of Local Governance Networks (LGNs) and Development: Lessons from the Tigray and Amhara Regions, Ethiopia,” highlights the importance of local context using Helmsing’s argument (2005), which contends that “...the success of a locality’s development depends on its ability to attract and involve state and non-state actors, and enable them to interact and establish a network of relationships in the production and delivery of services”. The author therefore uses empirical case studies of four *woreda* governments to analyse how regional and local contextual factors affect the emergence and functioning of LGNs in Tigray and Amhara. Factors analysed include the regional political contexts, pre-existence of organized community-based organizations (CBOs) and participatory structures, experience of local leaders and community members in undertaking the responsibility for local development, and local government leadership legitimacy, capacity, and continuity. The article concludes that the emergence of LGNs is subject to the influence of a multitude of factors, among which regional and local contextual factors are particularly crucial.

The second article in this volume, by Isaac K. Mwangi, titled, “Levels of Organization and Tracks of Planning Methodology in the Ewaso Ng’iro North Development Authority (ENNDA) Region, Kenya,” examines the nature of actor-interests and levels of organization in the process of regional development planning and implementation. The article is organized into five sections. The introduction section reviews recent strategies and programmes for regional development at the district level in Kenya. The second section presents planning challenges faced by large natural resource regions in respect to actor-interests, levels of organization, and planning methodology. In section three, the author demonstrates the complex nature of multi-level planning organization, institutions, and units in the ENNDA region. In addition to formal organizations, there exists a galaxy of nongovernmental and grass-roots institutions and networks that pose a formidable challenge to regional development and planning in the region. In section four, the author illustrates the micro- and

macro-policy actor-interests in the ENNDA region and identifies multi-platforms for various development actor-interests. The article ends by stressing the need to assess and appraise the strategic value of each level and track in the regional development planning and implementation process.

The third article by Syeda Khaleda, titled, "Microenterprise and Entrepreneurship Development through Microfinance: A Key to Entering into an SME and Getting out of Poverty," discusses the prospect of microenterprise (ME) development through microfinance and its role in poverty reduction and economic growth. The article is based on field research and the author's experience in micro-credit and ME operations in Bangladesh. It is organized into five main sections. The introduction looks at past anti-poverty programmes in Bangladesh, which consisted of charity and wage employment through food-for-work programmes. Although these programmes at first appeared to be effective and provided the requisite basic infrastructure, the development of sustainable income generation and employment for the poor has been limited, mainly due to their temporal and seasonal nature. In section two, the author examines types of MEs in Bangladesh and their contribution to poverty reduction. According to the author, microfinance has been reported to reduce moderate poverty among participants by as much as 20 per cent in Bangladesh. In section three, the author looks at backward and forward linkages in agro-based MEs. Section four focuses on trends in ME loans disbursement using select case studies, drawn mainly from the poultry sector, to illustrate the existing backward and forward linkages in ME and its development possibility by establishing MEs in every stage of the linkage process. The last section of the article discusses the problems that enterprises and funding organizations are facing at present, and makes recommendations on how to overcome these problems so as to ensure higher economic growth and reduce poverty.

The fourth article by Navil Mansur Chowdhury examines the inequality in Bangladesh. Titled "Inequality in the Distribution of Household Expenditures in Bangladesh: A Theil Decomposition Analysis, 1995-96," the article examines the effects of sectoral and household characteristics on expenditure inequality using the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) data of 1995-96 to shed light on the impact of the enhanced structural adjustment programme (ESAP), which was initiated in the mid-1990s. The article is organized into four sections. The introduction is followed by a brief theoretical foundation and research methodology. The results of the Theil decomposition analysis are then presented in section three. The last section draws conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. According to the author, poverty alleviation has been a stated goal of nearly all economic planning documents in Bangladesh. In this regard, the country has had considerable success in reducing the proportion of the population living below the poverty line from 65 per cent in 1974 to 48 per cent in 1986. The higher average GDP of the 1990s raised hopes that the pace of poverty alleviation would be accelerated. However, the higher growth has brought about increased inequality within the society, especially in the fledgling urban areas. Based on an analysis of the factors that drive inequality, the article concludes that inequality in Bangladesh is mainly affected by location (rural/urban) and education. Gender, age, household size, and landownership do not seem to play a significant role in explaining total inequality as the 'between' components accounted for less than 5 per cent of total inequality.

The fifth article by Essam Yassin Mohammed, "Estimating the Willingness to Pay of Residents for the Conservation of Haso Wetland using the Contingency Valuation Method (CVM)," uses the CVM to estimate the willingness to pay (WTP) of households of Inuyama City for the conservation of Haso wetland. The article is

organized into four sections. The first, the introduction, provides a definition and describes the role of wetland ecosystems. It also gives a brief background of Haso wetland, which is located in the eastern part of Inuyama City (Aichi Prefecture), Japan. The author contends that the forested area of the wetland has not been properly maintained, and that the budget allocated to maintain the total wetland is insufficient. Using this site as an appropriate example of the undervaluation of the environment, the study seeks to estimate the monetary value of Haso wetland using CVM. It also examines the factors that affect WTP. Section two presents the methodology, a brief description of the CVM, and the survey and sampling designs used. The study results, discussion, and conclusion are presented in section three. The analysis shows the differences in the stated WTP of those who are keen on environmental conservation and those who are not. The former tends to state a WTP value that is twice as much as the latter. With regard to determinants of WTP, income was the only statistically significant variable, which proved that WTP has a direct correlation with levels of income.

The sixth article by Won-Gyu Hwang, titled, "Networking Regions amidst Globalization: Trends, Case Analysis, and Strategies," sets an ambitious goal of analysing the newly-emerging phenomenon where more and more local governments are seeking new ways of cooperating with international partners by forming multilateral associations. The article is organized into three sections, beginning with a brief introduction, followed by an outline of the evolution of international cooperation among regions and localities, from the world-wide emergence of regional economic cooperation to interregional cooperation. Section three outlines the emergence of Korea as a major player in international cooperation (since 1988). The period after 1995 saw Korean localities (local government) participating in international affairs. The author classifies the type and pattern of local participation in international affairs by Korean localities into three categories: first, through bilateral exchange programmes between sister cities (sisterhood programmes); second, by hosting a variety of international programmes at the locality (internalized local festivals); and third, by the local government's participation in multilateral agencies. Finally, the section presents the evolutionary process of Gangwon's internationalization, which is divided into three phases: 1965-1993 (sisterhood relation), 1994-1999 (Northeast Asian cooperation), and after 2000 (global management). Section four presents a detailed account of Gangwon's involvement in the East-Asian Inter-Regional Tourism Forum (EATOF), giving the background and process of establishment, future proposition of the then EATOF, organizational characteristics, evolution (2002-2007), and appraisal. In the conclusion, the article identifies problems arising from implementation and proposes strategies for promoting multilateral cooperation among other local governments.

Marie Thynell's article, "Political Actors and Urban Development: The Challenges of Managing Motorized Mobility in Santiago de Chile, Tehran, and Copenhagen," examines the challenges and the extent to which strategies and choices for mass motorization are handled. The author utilizes Karl Polanyi's perspective of social history (as double movement) to analyse the uncontrolled market expansion in the field of motorization, followed by the emergence of regulations. The article is organized into four sections. The author begins by introducing the research agenda, theoretical approach, and research methodology. Section two then provides an extensive account of the transformation of transport systems in each of the three cities. Discussion about the mobility agenda in Tehran, Santiago, and Copenhagen is presented in section three, while section four concludes by offering insights on how to cope with motorized mobility in the three cities. The author points out that increases in mobility demand in the three cities stress the traditional role of transport in pursu-

ing economic growth. However, in regard to structural relations and political order, it was found that three different ways of handling mass motorization had been adopted. For example, compared to Copenhagen and Santiago, the public and private strategies for urban traffic in Tehran seemed to include fewer policies that were associated with sustainability and public involvement. In Santiago, the management of motorized transport has made good progress. There are regulations on public transport by bus, but not in regards to private vehicles. In Copenhagen, there have been several strong political initiatives to apply sustainable development in the field of urban transport. The political order in Denmark enabled the establishment of structures aimed at enhancing sustainable transport — a product of state politics and a strong civil society.

The eighth article, “North-South Free Trade Agreements: Implications for CARICOM,” written by Marie Freckleton, examines the implications of North-South free trade agreements (FTAs) for the small Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries. The article is organized into six sections, beginning with an introduction. Section two examines the advantages and disadvantages of North-South FTAs for developing countries. Section three provides an overview of CARICOM trade, while section four analyses the competitiveness of CARICOM’s exports to the European Union (EU) and North American markets. Section five examines the potential gains and losses that CARICOM could realize from North-South FTAs. Conclusions are presented in section six. The Competitiveness Analysis of Nations is used to assess CARICOM’s competitiveness in the EU and the North American markets. The author observes that CARICOM’s exports largely focus on commodities with declining demand. It is suggested that diversification into dynamic commodities is necessary for CARICOM countries to gain from the long-term benefits of free trade with developed countries. It is argued that successful export diversification requires relaxation of the structural and institutional constraints that have impeded competitiveness.

The last article, “The Process of Modernization in a Fragmented Political Culture: The Case Study of Bolivia,” written by Paulo Sergio N. Gregoire, highlights the complexities that multicultural societies like Bolivia have to face in order to attain modernization. The author argues that Bolivia is a multicultural society with different perceptions concerning the common good, a situation that foments extreme political fragmentation. According to the author, the constant political and economic failures of hegemonic discourses have led to hostility between the traditionalists on one hand, and the modernizing sectors of the Bolivian societies on the other. He proposes the adoption of a culture of consensus and stakeholder involvement so as to promote cooperation and trust among the diverse social groups in Bolivia. The article is organized into the following four parts: an introduction, and presentation of the theoretical and methodological framework; historical background of the Bolivian Republic; an empirical analysis of the current political culture in Bolivia; and a concluding section where the author discusses the importance of a civic culture and the role of a neutral facilitator.

It is hoped that these brief introductory remarks will stimulate readers to delve deeper into the contents of this volume.