

Final Report: Junior Research Stay at Freie Universität Berlin

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My stay at Freie Universität Berlin was not long, but still very fruitful. During the two weeks, I could freely use any unit of the university library. I also had an opportunity to meet up with some scholars engaged in the study of Africa. These acquaintances turned out to be very useful since I learnt a lot of new about hosting university research on Africa. The library most relevant to my thesis was Political and Social sciences library. There I could access a huge section of literature devoted to Africa. It included a range of literature on different countries of Sub-Saharan Africa; examined therein were anthropology, ethnography, history and politics of African countries.

My primary contact person and supervisor was Louisa Prause, political scientist at Freie Universität Berlin, who is conducting research on conflicts over land in West Africa. During my stay, I had an appointment with Ms. Prause who advised me a lot on how to use the huge library of FUB efficiently during my short stay as well as on whom to contact regarding my research questions.

In Saint Petersburg State University, I am studying the symbolism of politics and leadership succession in Tanzania. The period under study is the time when Julius Nyerere, the first president of the Republic of Tanzania, stepped down. By examining the informal politics of leadership succession one can see the irrational roots of wide political support to a politician.

This study can be of use to the field of sustainability research as well. Political anthropology can contribute to the future of sustainable world, first, because of its focus on people and their behavior. Although my field of study is not directly linked to the scope of research related to sustainability, a considerable part of my work may be of practical use for those engaged in the practices of ensuring a livable earth. The reason for this is the idea that sustainability actually carries the meaning of not only ecological balance but also political and thus social and cultural thriving of a region. Cultural and social dimensions of sustainability is what I believe to be a key focus of my research.

As I have already mentioned I study politics, elections and political behavior in Tanzania. My analysis is set in the framework of socio-cultural anthropology. I examine people's political behavior through

the lens of tradition and cultural beliefs. In my research, I am focusing on what people do and why they do it, how they see the world, what their perceptions are, as well as what their values are about, etc. It is people and their way of life that are solution to the sustainable future.

Though a huge part of my research is devoted to the study of the president's image and struggle for legitimacy of power in general, in my PhD project I am working on a new chapter on the president's popularity and the idea of presidential power in rural communities. The questions I am going to answer are how huge president's popularity is, what beliefs surround the president's figure, and what kind of power he (in case of Tanzania) is attributed to in the worldview of rural people. I am going to pay close attention to the local understanding of the concept of sustainability and the people's view of the president's role in preserving the world.