

# Oxford *Development Matters*

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT QUEEN ELIZABETH HOUSE



## *Inside this issue:*

BEHIND THE INDIAN VOTE  
FOCUS ON REFUGEE ARCHITECTURE  
WORKPLACE POVERTY  
SPEAKING OUT ON BREXIT  
QEH AND COLONIALISM





# Welcome

Welcome to the 2019 issue of *Oxford Development Matters* – my last as Head of Department before I hand over to Professor Diego Sánchez-Ancochea from October. I hope you enjoy reading the issue, meeting some of our interesting alumni and finding out a little more about the life of the department.

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**Edited by:** Jo Boyce

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Thank you to the students, academics and alumni who have contributed to this magazine.

Amid a growing understanding that universities must make an honest reckoning with their colonial pasts, QEH has been re-examining its own history: on pages 10–11, Emeritus Professor Valpy FitzGerald chronicles the founding and early days of the department, originally envisaged as a place of training for colonial officers. And as part of a process of rethinking our future, we invited Professor Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni to speak to us about ‘cognitive justice’ – the need to value non-Western forms of knowledge – in this year’s Olof Palme Lecture. You can read a summary on page 14 and listen to the full lecture on our website.

Moving to the present, 2019 saw elections in the world’s biggest democracy; opposite, DPhil student Amogh Dhar Sharma draws on his doctoral work to explore how professionalisation is changing the nature of campaigning in India, and the implications of this shift for democracy. And on page 9, former DPhil student Jennifer Cassidy talks about becoming a vocal and widely followed online commentator on the increasingly fraught Brexit debate in the UK.

Social media make a central appearance in two other articles in this issue. On pages 4–5 we read about a newly published dictionary of African politics, in which the authors turned to Twitter to crowdsource a huge range of fascinating political terms in multiple languages for inclusion. And on pages 12–13 a more sombre story details a prize-winning investigation coordinated by former MPhil Emmanuel Freudenthal which brought together a group of open-source investigators via Twitter to help expose the perpetrators of an extrajudicial killing in Cameroon.

From new media to old media: on pages 6–7, Associate Professor Tom Scott-Smith describes the tricky process of making a documentary film about his research into refugee architectures, the dilemmas it threw up and the new working methods it demanded. You can see part of the film at this year’s Meeting Minds alumni weekend in Oxford in September.

And finally, on page 8 we learn about the University’s very first social enterprise spin-out, which takes the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative’s well-known methodology for measuring and tracking multidimensional poverty into the world of business, to help companies understand and relieve deprivation among their own employees.

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine, and do please keep sending us your stories and stay in touch.

*Christopher Adam*  
Head of Department



# Backstage in the world's largest democracy

In 2019, nearly 900 million Indians went to the polls. *Amogh Dhar Sharma* examines how increasing 'professionalisation' is changing the nature of campaigning in the country.

**T**he world's largest democratic elections took place this year in India. Over April and May 2019, 879 million voters had the chance to elect 543 members of parliament to the Lok Sabha. The sheer number of eligible voters is matched only by the sprawling logistical infrastructure needed to carry out these elections. The Election Commission of India deployed 3.96 million electronic voting machines over 1 million polling stations spread across the country, and marshalled over 200,000 paramilitary and 2 million state police personnel to oversee the free and fair conduct of the polls.

However, to what extent do elections remain free and fair amid the deluge of conspiracy theories, fake news, and blatant misinformation that have come to characterise politics in India? The Indian cyberspace was the site of relentless hashtag wars, 'trolling', and political propaganda in the months leading up to the election. Highlighting the salience of new media technology, the 2014 Indian general elections were termed 'India's first social media elections' and the 2019 elections are being called 'India's WhatsApp elections' in the popular press. Notwithstanding the hyperbole in such terms, it is undeniable that all political parties in India are actively engaged in using new media technologies as a part of their voter mobilisation efforts, often in ethically dubious ways.

During the course of my doctoral research I have sought to explore how the organisation of election campaigns in India is changing as a result of this new political and media landscape. What sort of campaign infrastructure is needed to conduct election campaigns in an era of 'post-truth politics'? My research has found that India is undergoing a process of 'professionalisation of politics' – as previously witnessed in North America and Western Europe – which, broadly speaking, has two elements.

Firstly, an emergent feature across all major political parties is the rise of professional party staffers, hired to perform highly specialised and technical tasks associated with an election campaign. For instance, the Indian National Congress – the grand old party of India's independence movement – has recently instituted a 'social media department',

a 'research department', a 'data analytics department', and an election 'war room' that provides a central nodal point to coordinate campaign activities. Similarly, the Bharatiya Janata Party employs a large team of IT professionals who manage the party's digital communications. It has also instituted an internal think-tank – the Association of Billion Minds – that provides campaign strategy guidance.

Another major element has been the rise of political consulting firms in Indian elections. Political consulting was estimated to have grown to a \$120 million industry in India by 2014 alone, and has witnessed further expansion in recent years. Political parties routinely hire these political consultants on matters such as opinion polling, constituency-based research, get-out-the-vote campaigns, and media management.

*Prima facie*, such campaign professionals appear to bring more order, discipline, and efficiency to the field of Indian politics, which is often criticised for being corrupt, criminal, and inefficient. Equally, however, this professionalisation of politics also raises concern about the functioning of democracy at large. Firstly, since professionalisation is solely geared towards maximising electoral success, it places heavy emphasis on practices of media management, 'spin-doctoring', and malicious use of fake news and propaganda to exploit popular sentiments. Such practices

distort voters' choices and detract from a more substantive focus on issues. Secondly, the influx of highly educated and skilled professionals means that political decision-making within parties comes to be exercised by a small elite, thereby making political parties unrepresentative and unresponsive to the demands of the wider population. It also often leads to a declining emphasis on traditional vertical ties between party leaders and rank-and-file party members. Thirdly, this professionalisation has also dramatically increased the costs of election campaigns, imposing high entry costs on new political entrants and promoting the use of illicit finances. In the 2019 elections, political parties will have spent an estimated \$7 billion during the campaign, with nearly \$1.5 billion being spent on digital propaganda alone.

There is an urgent need for new regulatory mechanisms through which exorbitant campaign expenditures and the problem of 'fake news' can be better monitored and controlled. Equally, the professionalisation of politics in India provides us with an opportunity to explore the endless planning, deliberations, negotiations, and strategising that go into running election campaigns in the world's largest democracy.

Amogh Dhar Sharma is a DPhil student at ODID.



Getty.com/Atul Loke



# The language of *African politics*

*Nic Cheeseman, Eloïse Bertrand and Sa'eed Husaini* introduce their newly published *Oxford Dictionary of African Politics*, which combines scholarship with crowdsourcing to create a rich work of reference.

Every country has its own political language. These terms and phrases that have developed over time give distinctive meanings that may not be fully understood by outsiders. Unless we learn them, we may miss critical information about how politics really works.

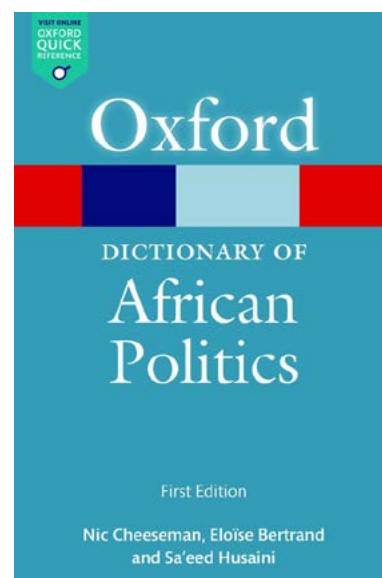
Our new dictionary of African politics reveals the witty and insightful political terminology that people in different African countries use to speak truth to power and discuss everyday developments. It shows the importance of language for understanding politics and the varied experiences of different nations.

The dictionary serves three key purposes. First, it provides clear and concise overviews of hundreds of key personalities, events and institutions from the colonial period to the present day. These range from Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to former South African leader Jacob Zuma, through the late Kenyan environmentalist and Nobel Laureate Wangari Mathaai, and Aja Fatoumata Jallow-Tambajang, a leading gender activist and the Vice President of Gambia.

Second, it explains a rich set of theoretical terms that emerged out of research on Africa over the last 70 years. These include 'neo-patrimonialism' and 'extraversion', which have become important for global debates about power and the way it is exercised.

Third – and much more significantly – it allows for a better understanding of the contributions that the continent has made to the practice and understanding of everyday politics. It also makes it possible to share the perceptive and shrewd ways that people engage with politics in various countries: this is the real reason why the world needs a new dictionary of African politics.

To access this wealth of *kona* knowledge (street-corner wisdom in Kiswahili), we crowdsourced suggestions for the most relevant and insightful terms, using social media. The hundreds of responses we received mean that the dictionary is packed full of fascinating terms from across the continent. These come from a variety of languages including Kiswahili, Chibemba, Kikuyu, Wolof, isiZulu, and isiXhosa. There are also Africanised versions of English, French and Portuguese words.



An illustrative example is the wealth of English vocabulary that has emerged from the interaction between local political norms and democratic institutions. This includes the Kenyan model of 'negotiated democracy' – the sharing of political positions between different communities in advance of an election to avoid conflict.



Another is the Nigerian practice of 'zoning', which was set up to try and ensure that the presidency of Africa's most populous country alternates between northerners and southerners. That way, no community is permanently excluded from power.

Clothing-related expressions have emerged in countries such as Kenya and Ghana to show voting behaviours. 'Three-piece suit voting' refers to supporting the same party for all elected positions. On the contrary, 'skirt-and-blouse voting' means to vote for different parties for presidential and legislative elections.

A series of evocative expressions describe a politician's move from one party to another – usually from the opposition to the governing party following an inducement. Terms such as 'floor-crossing' or 'cross-carpeting' are inspired by the parliament's settings, or nomadic traditions – examples are 'transhumance' and '*nomadisme politique*'.

The ingredients that shape these terms are decades, if not centuries, old. They thus provide an insight into a collective memory that goes back to well before colonial rule. But language also evolves to keep up with the times. In French, for example, '*glissement*' means sliding. But in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the word recently took on a whole new meaning: as then-President Joseph Kabila repeatedly postponed scheduled elections that would

see him stand down, Congolese citizens started using the term to refer to the act of deliberately 'sliding' past the official election date to retain power indefinitely.

Similarly, in francophone Africa the term '*alternance*', used as the demand for a transfer of power, shows a passionate commitment to the liberal-democratic norm of putting limits on the number of terms a president may serve. This has no equivalent in Europe and North America.

While the use of words such as '*glissement*' hints at the world-weary cynicism many ordinary people feel towards their leaders, other terms revel in the joy of wordplay. One of our favourites is 'watermelon politics'. It refers to an individual who professes to support one political party but in reality belongs to another. It was coined in Zambia, where activists from the opposition United Party of National Development (whose colour was then red) pretended to support the governing party, the Patriotic Front (whose colour was green) to avoid reprisals. They were thus depicted as 'green on the outside, but red on the inside'.

Such expressions show the ingenuity and humour with which citizens evade despotism and exercise their democratic rights. They also show how much researchers and journalists miss when they do not pay attention to African ideas and concepts. Thus, the best reason to read this dictionary

is to learn about the political ingenuity of African citizens and to gain insights into local political ideas and frames of reference.

The dictionary is also about much more than that. It includes one of the most thorough timelines of African political events ever compiled, with direct links to entries that put critical events into context. It also provides useful overviews of the topics that are of most interest to students. These range from HIV/AIDS to gender quotas, and from the anti-apartheid struggle to the Rwandan genocide.

Our hope is that it does justice to the efforts of the many people who took time to send in the suggestions that have enriched it, and that everyone who takes a look learns something new.

The dictionary can be accessed online at <http://bit.ly/OxDAP> (paywall).

This article was originally published by The Conversation ([www.theconversation.com/uk](http://www.theconversation.com/uk)).

Nic Cheeseman is Professor of Democracy at the University of Birmingham, Eloïse Bertrand is a PhD student in Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick and Sa'eed Husaini is a DPhil candidate at ODIID.

**kitu kidogo** • A colloquial Swahili term for a bribe or petty corruption widely used in East Africa that literally means something small. In 2001, the Kenyan musician Eric Wainana further popularised the phrase with his song '*Nchi ya Kitu Kidogo*', meaning 'In the Land of Petty Corruption'.

**oga** • A term used in Nigeria to denote someone with power and influence. This might be a leader, someone with great wealth, or someone with another form of status or prestige such as education. For example, 'my oga at the top' means 'my boss'.

**pungwe** • A term that originates in the Shona language and literally means 'sunrise', commonly used in Zimbabwe to refer to an all-night vigil. During the country's liberation struggle, *pungwes* acted as a way to educate citizens and recruit fighters, tapping into pre-existing cultural practices

in which the ceremonies operated as rituals through which people could be connected to their ancestors. More recently, ZANU-PF supporters and war veterans have used *pungwes* to intimidate opponents and rivals, including people occupying land that they wish to seize.

**ville morte** • A type of protest characterised by a general strike and a call for the population to stay at home that has been used by opposition groups throughout francophone Africa. '*Ville morte*' literally translates as 'dead town' in French, and so by using this phrase opposition leaders instruct their supporters to stay home and effectively shut down the country's main urban areas. This kind of absentee campaigning emerged, in part, as a way to circumvent bans on rallies and marches. *Ville morte* protests have been carried out in many countries, for example in Douala, Cameroon, in 1991–2 after the government of Paul Biya refused to

organise a national conference to facilitate a new democratic political dispensation. This strategy has also been employed in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2016 to protest against Joseph Kabila's failure to implement an agreement in which he promised to arrange elections before the end of 2017 and eventually leave power, having already exhausted presidential term limits. In anglophone Cameroon, similar movements have been referred to as 'ghost towns'.

**wananchi** • A Swahili term for ordinary people or citizens that is widely used in East Africa. It is the plural of *mwananchi*, which means 'individual' or 'citizen'. In popular usage, the term is often used to evoke the notion of the public will, or common needs and interests, as in 'we need a government that is responsive to the needs of *wananchi*' and the slogan of the National Council of Churches of Kenya: 'For *wananchi*'.





## Focusing the lens on *refugee shelter*

**Tom Scott-Smith** reflects on his experience of translating academic research on refugee architecture into a documentary film.

**T**he skills that make a good academic writer don't necessarily transfer to film. Complex stories that unfold very effectively on the page can become meandering narratives on the screen. Nuanced arguments can seem fussy when transferred to a visual medium. Readers might be willing to invest time in a long book with carefully cited evidence, but they expect films to be punchy and entertaining.

For all these reasons, I had some concerns when, three years ago, I set out to make a documentary film with my close collaborator, Mark Breeze at the University of Cambridge.

The aim of this film was to communicate the findings of our Architectures of Displacement project at the Refugee Studies Centre. Our research looked at how humanitarian agencies in six different countries provided basic shelter to refugees from Syria following the 'summer of migration' in 2015. Each country had a very different strategy, and the shelters took a range of physical forms, from IKEA's award-winning flat-pack shelters to makeshift tents and shacks, from formalised refugee camps to informal squats and settlements. Film seemed an obvious way to communicate the diversity of these shelters, illustrating what they looked like and how it would feel to live in them, explaining the aims of their designers and the experiences of their inhabitants. There were, however, numerous challenges involved.

In preparation for making the film we watched a very large number of documentaries, especially on the topic of refugees. This showed us what we did *not* want to make. We wanted to avoid the whole visual grammar that

we quickly came to despise: slow-motion photography, unnecessary graphics, soaring music, and presenters talking into the camera and walking off into the sunset. Our film was the output of an academic project, so our approach had to be sober but accessible.

This meant that we made some overall editorial decisions that shaped the film from the earliest days. First, our film had to be driven by big ideas rather than personal stories: exploring the (deeply flawed) idea that a cheap and universal basic shelter could be rolled out anywhere in the world. Second, the film had to contain some core characters and human experiences, but should not gratuitously manipulate the viewers' emotions, allowing people to draw their own conclusions about the successes and failures of humanitarianism instead. Third, we decided to avoid dubbing sound effects in post-production, creating, as far as possible, a naturalistic sense of place. Fourth, we rejected a unifying explanatory voiceover in favour of a structure led by interviewees, giving them time in a slow-paced edit to let ideas unfold. Finally, we decided to have no background music, avoiding the trap of relying on a score to patch up narrative or tell the audience how to feel. These decisions created a simple but, we hope, powerful film, led by carefully framed shots and explanatory sit-down interviews.

The most significant challenge in making the film was not, in fact, a technical one. Equipment today is comparatively cheap, portable, and remarkably high quality, making film a far more democratic and universally available medium. Led by Mark, an experienced filmmaker, we purchased a good-quality digital SLR camera and a portable sound recorder, which could be packed into a small rucksack. This meant our filming process was mobile, discreet and



compact – making it easy to travel around refugee camps, squats and sensitive sites.

The core challenge, instead, related to the representation of refugees. The film was primarily about humanitarians and designers – their visions for better shelter and how these so often fell short – but in order to examine the successes and failures of these visions we also needed to communicate the perspectives of the inhabitants. It was important to represent refugee stories in a sensitive way, without gratuitous displays of suffering or narratives of simple victimhood. We were particularly challenged because many refugees, understandably, did not want their faces to appear on film, but this limited our scope for empathetic connection. Filming their hands and heads risked making them seem like criminals, unhelpfully playing into narratives of illegality.

We ended up treating refugee stories quite differently from expert interviews. Even if they had agreed, it seemed unnecessarily

aggressive and interrogative to place the inhabitants of emergency shelters in front of lights and a camera, so we recorded them in audio, juxtaposing their voices with footage of their accommodation, which bore the imprint of everyday life. This offered a humanistic understanding of their experiences, evoking empathy and connection through the arrangement of mundane, everyday objects, like a still life. We sought to create a balance in our representation, illuminating what it was like to live as a refugee without placing them on display, violating their privacy, or manipulating their stories.

In contrast, we used a more classical sit-down format to film humanitarian workers, politicians, and designers, with close framing and detailed questioning. The idea was to ask people in power to account for their decisions and explain the lessons of different forms of shelter. This process turned out to be particularly fascinating from a research perspective, because for most of my academic career I had relied upon very private, off-the-record interviews and assurances of anonymity when interviewing experts. I rarely even recorded my conversations, aiming for a natural and ethnographic form of engagement, and believing that obvious recording equipment would create caution and hesitation from my interlocutors. I assumed anonymity was the best way to get reliable and honest responses from humanitarian workers concerned about neutrality, or policymakers wary of their careers.

For this film, however, we sat people down in front of a camera, affixed microphones to their bodies, placed lights on their faces and asked direct questions as the camera rolled. I had assumed that the result would be negative, but often people opened up in new and interesting ways. They became more aware of their words, performing for the camera, and coming better prepared. It did not generate an inferior kind of interaction, just a very different one.

The final challenge was writing a script. With over 60 interviews and hundreds of hours of footage it was an enormous job identifying the best sections and stitching them together into a



coherent story. I had concerns that the editing process would take people's words out of context. After all, editors and writers have huge power to use material in a way that serves their purposes rather than those of their interviewees. This power seems intensified in film. For one thing, the viewer links the words directly with a person and a face, sometimes erroneously associating the filmmakers' decisions with the speaker themselves. In addition, editors can make use of a special alchemy in juxtaposing pictures and words. At times I found this power terrifying: the meaning of people's voices could be changed through small edits, linking together of different points, and using images to disguise the joins.

In the end, we created a story of high hopes and eventual failure: a tragedy of ideals with important lessons about refugee shelter. At times it has become a more simplified story than I would have liked – it is remarkable how few words can be used, even in a 90-minute film – but I have learned that films can have a different kind of power and impact through the combination of sights and sounds. This will not be the only output of our project, and

more research will appear in traditional written formats, such as articles and monographs. We hope, however, the film communicates our messages in a more accessible way. The key findings for the project, after all, are about the importance of listening to refugees when creating accommodation and the need to think beyond purely physical needs when exploring the possibilities of design. If this message reaches more people as a result of the film, then so much the better.

*Shelter without Shelter* will be released in 2020. Tom and Mark will be screening and discussing a section of the film in a private showing for Oxford alumni at ODID during the University's Meeting Minds weekend on 21 September. Registration for the event opens on 11 July at [www.alumni.ox.ac.uk](http://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk).

Tom Scott-Smith is Associate Professor of Refugee Studies and Forced Migration at ODID. Mark Breeze is Director of Studies for Architecture at St John's College, University of Cambridge.







## A new tool to tackle poverty at work

A recently launched University spin-out drawing on OPHI research will help businesses identify and fight poverty within their own workforces. *Jo Boyce* reports.

**T**he Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at ODID has already transformed the way many countries across the world understand and tackle poverty through its innovative method for measuring non-monetary poverty. Now a new social enterprise aims to take the methodology out into the world of business and help companies track and fight poverty among their employees and across their supply chains.

The new company, sOPHIa Oxford, was launched by Oxford University Innovation in March; although Oxford has created many for-profit spin-outs based on University research, sOPHIa is its first social enterprise spin-out.

sOPHIa will have a worldwide licence for the 'Business Multidimensional Poverty Index' (bMPI) – a way of measuring poverty developed by OPHI with business association Horizonte Positivo in Costa Rica that draws on the methodology behind OPHI's well-known multidimensional poverty indexes (MPI).

These indexes measure poverty not according to income but using a range of indicators that encompass aspects that poor people themselves consider important, such as access to education, health care and social protection, or quality of housing. These MPIs are used by a rapidly growing number of countries across the global South. The bMPI transfers this concept to the private sector, providing businesses with tools

to measure and respond to multidimensional poverty among their employees and their families, contractors, and in their supply chain.

'Corporate leaders pursuing purpose and profits want objective measures to be able to manage against and be efficient as they respond to poverty within their companies,' Jamie Coats, President of sOPHIa Oxford, said. 'The Oxford University-developed Business Multidimensional Poverty Index is a new tool for company information systems to help align corporate values and operations. In Costa Rica we have seen it be both effective and inspiring for employees and managers.'

The bMPI came about when OPHI was working with Horizonte Positivo and the government of Costa Rica to develop a national poverty indicator for the country. A member of the Horizonte Positivo board asked whether there might be multidimensional poverty in his own bank, BAC Credomatic Bank, and an initial survey revealed more employee household poverty than expected, at around 12 per cent.

Similar results were found in two other pilot companies in Costa Rica, Purdy Motors, the country's Toyota dealer, and the public relations agency CCK Central America. Horizonte Positivo went on to test and apply the bMPI elsewhere in the private sector and now provides assistance to 39 companies across business sectors in Costa Rica. It is expanding that number to 100 companies in 2019.

BAC Credomatic Bank responded to the

findings by devising a programme of measures, BAC Possibilities, to target poverty, consisting of subsidised loans supported by donations from its own managers; psychological support; financial coaching; and a care network for elderly, disabled or very young family members. The bank hopes the programme will be exported to its corporate clients too.

sOPHIa aims to draw on the success in Costa Rica to take the approach global; it will provide businesses with the bMPI survey and the platform through which to administer it among their own employees, while providing technical support. sOPHIa is also planning to offer companies the ability to be audited to verify that they have met standards in implementing the bMPI and programmes to address the poverty of employees. Companies meeting the standards will receive a seal to demonstrate their commitment to ending poverty.

In Costa Rica, both the national MPI and the business MPI use the same indicators of poverty, facilitating public-private partnerships to address the issues identified.

sOPHIa Oxford has offices in Oxford and in Boston, Massachusetts. It is currently being funded by individuals in the UK and USA and is working to attract more investors.

Find out more: <https://sophiaoxford.org>

Jo Boyce is ODID's Communications and Alumni Relations Officer.



# Speaking out on *Brexit*

With over 40,000 followers on Twitter and numerous media appearances, former DPhil and now Lecturer in Politics **Jennifer Cassidy**, aka @OxfordDiplomat, has become a vocal commentator on Brexit. She spoke to *Oxford Development Matters*.

**Y***ou are an Irishwoman, now living in the UK, who once worked as an EU diplomat. How do you think that background has shaped your perspective on Brexit?*

It is my nationality as an Irish citizen that has most shaped my ability to analyse, examine, and judge the events of Brexit. The border [between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland] has become the most contentious issue within the debate and has seen anti-Irish rhetoric espoused within Parliament in ways that we have not seen since the Good Friday Agreement. This, coupled with the refusal to compromise on what the border should be post-Brexit, has deeply impacted Anglo-Irish relations. Equally, as my generation are known as the children of the peace process, we have been and continue to be highly invested in maintaining and preserving the hard work that was achieved for us.

Grounded firmly within my national identity sits my experience working within the EU diplomatic service. Working at the heartbeat of the EU enabled me to see who the EU truly serves, what its impact can be, and, most importantly areas in which member states can work together to reform. This nuanced insight is sorely missing from the Brexit debate. What we see is those who champion it at all costs with no critique, versus those who critique it at all costs with no recognition of its values for its member states.

*You were also active on Twitter ahead of the 2018 Irish referendum on legalising abortion, which ended in success for the Yes campaign. Are there any lessons for those in the UK seeking a second referendum or 'People's Vote'?*

Reflecting on the success of the campaign, many of us turned to the work done on Twitter in the lead-up to the referendum. One such campaign in which I was highly involved was #HomeToVote. Under Irish law, voting is legal only within its borders. Therefore, many students across Europe and worldwide became disenfranchised if they were unable to afford travelling home to vote. A group of Irish students and faculty at the University of Oxford passed a motion at the Student Union which would provide funding for students, regardless of voting preference, so that they could return #HomeToVote. This motion sparked similar initiatives across universities in the UK, including Birmingham,

Nottingham, and Cambridge. From the day the motion was passed, the #HomeToVote movement online gained rapid momentum, with the Irish diaspora across the globe now engaging with the referendum. Twitter and the #HomeToVote movement played a pivotal role.

Although very different issues, Brexit (or the People's Vote) and the Irish referendum share two distinct qualities: they are both highly contested and divisive. While not all lessons are applicable, the grassroots and bottom-up nature of the campaign helped expand the voting demographic and ensure that those who would be most affected by the outcome were given a chance to have their voice heard. This is in contrast to what we witnessed in the Brexit referendum, where there was no direct push towards certain demographics and arguably towards those who will be most affected by the outcome of the vote. A lesson for a potential People's Vote is to ensure that online campaigns don't just target those who will vote, but all eligible voters and those who will be most affected by the impact of a post-Brexit Britain.

*Being a vocal woman on Twitter is not always a comfortable place to be. Have you encountered any particular problems and how have you coped?*

In contrast to my male counterparts, I receive more hate speech, regular comments on my appearance, and a high level of unwanted direct messages. With that said, tweeting in a professional capacity – that is, backed by my position as a Lecturer at the University of Oxford and my experience in the diplomatic service – I would claim has served as a shield; although I encounter sexism and misogyny online, I do believe this is at a reduced level.

But being active on Twitter has opened countless opportunities within the last year alone. These have ranged from appearances on BBC Newsnight, prime-time debates on Irish television, weekly radio appearances both in the UK and in Ireland and other speaking opportunities, including in the Houses of Parliament. These opportunities have allowed me to grow as an academic and as a political commentator.

*You continue to carry out academic research at Oxford into digital diplomacy*



Dr. Jennifer Cassidy  
@OxfordDiplomat

Follow

What an experience. First time on @BBCNewsnight and would do it again in a heartbeat. Thanks to @KirstyWark | @IainDale | @pollytoynbee | for making me feel so comfortable and at ease. And of course, for the discursive analysis of all things Brexit, Ireland and the EU.



1:41 AM - 4 Apr 2019

20 Retweets 250 Likes



*and gender and diplomacy. Has your own online presence and use of social media drawn on your theoretical knowledge?*

While there is ample room for the worlds of theory and practice to combine and, indeed, to inform one another in the digital sphere, meaningful observation of successful digital practices and lessons learned requires at its core a consistent, longitudinal process. Therefore, I frequently reconstruct my styles of communication online and observe and compare the impact of how these alterations are received by different online demographics. These may vary according to topics and themes, which is in itself an interesting theoretical observation.

Although this statement may be contested, I believe that the digital realm has altered the way in which theory informs practice and practice informs theory. In many cases, we now have at our fingertips a vast amount of data ready to be unpacked, analysed, and conceptualised. Perhaps the reversal of what we have seen historically. This is not always the case, but this is a novel aspect of digital communication.

*What do you think will happen with Brexit?*

Judging by the standard of the negotiations and the ever-changing policies of the major parties in the House of Commons, it is difficult to predict what road the politicians will choose to take the country down. However, what we do know is that time is running out – we need to remember that Brexit is a British issue but one that has consumed the workings of the European Union for too long. This has been done at the expense of an already pressing mandate that has at its core some of the most challenging issues of our time, which also lie at the heart of this department, namely the refugee and migrant crisis and climate change.

# Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford and the British postcolonial project

As the University intensifies its reckoning with its colonial past, *Valpy FitzGerald* looks back at the founding and early days of Queen Elizabeth House.



Lord Chandos

**T**he history of Queen Elizabeth House represents a significant element in the protracted process by which Oxford is coming to terms with the British colonial aftermath.

Between the Wars, the University hosted non-degree training courses for both the probationers of the Indian Civil Service and the Colonial Services, building on its century-long tradition of sending its best graduates out to rule the Empire. These courses formed part of a patchwork of late colonial training at Oxford, which also encompassed Rhodes House, the Indian Institute, and the Imperial Forestry Institute.

Anticipating the need for a more professional colonial civil service, the University established the Committee for Colonial Studies in 1943, the Institute of Colonial Studies (ICS) in 1945, and a professorship of Colonial Economics in 1946.

The immediate post-War Labour government headed by Clement Atlee – inspired by

Fabian ideals – initiated a process of imperial disengagement, starting with Indian independence in 1947, leading to the creation of the Commonwealth in 1949. However, this process was redirected by Winston Churchill's second administration, from 1951 to 1955, which favoured a different strategy: the Conservatives believed that even though the formal empire was contracting, new economic ties and defence treaties would permit Britain to maintain indirect influence over the newly independent countries. The ICS was already the Oxford expression of this rear-guard strategy, organising the Overseas Government and Development ('Devonshire') Courses – originally for early-career British colonial officers but later for mid-career Commonwealth civil servants. (These courses were downscaled and replaced by the Diploma in Development Economics in 1965, a precursor of the present-day MSc in Economics for Development at ODID.)

In 1952, the Colonial Office – headed by Lord Chandos, then Secretary of State for the Colonies – proposed to establish a new college

at Oxford specifically for colonial officers; 'Queen Elizabeth's College' at Oxford was even seen as an appropriate coronation present for the new monarch, Elizabeth II. However, in the event, the Treasury was not prepared to provide the capital endowment required to found the college, while the University was unwilling to assume responsibility for colonial staff training on a greater scale – so the project was reduced to a 'house'.

The geostrategic purpose of this emblematic post-colonial project is explained in a 1953 letter from Lord Chandos and his fellow Tory grandee Viscount Halifax, then University Chancellor, to the South African mining magnate Ernest Oppenheimer, soliciting his support:

*'... the future political, social and economic relations between the constituent parts of the Commonwealth and Colonial Empire have become the focal point in the maintenance of world peace, and of the defence of the free world. ... In many regions new, and as yet*



Student visitors at QEH in the 1960s





The original QEH building on St Giles

*untried, nationalisms are threatening the very foundations of fruitful economic intercourse and stable development. ... The British Government desires to maintain, and to strengthen, the spiritual, cultural and economic ties between Britain itself and the Colonies and associated territories of the Commonwealth, by ensuring a steady flow ... of persons in every respect qualified to deal with the problems of government, industry, commerce, and cultural and social change.'*

Queen Elizabeth House was to be an independent foundation affiliated to the University, funded by the government for the first decade of its institutional life. 'QEH' – as the House soon came to be known – was constituted by Royal Charter in 1954 as a residential centre which people concerned with the study of Commonwealth affairs could visit in order to make contacts and exchange ideas. Oppenheimer and the Colonial Office provided £150,000 (about £5 million in today's money) as initial capital; while the University agreed to support QEH once the initial Treasury funding expired, despite considerable opposition from both the Social Studies Board (due to other teaching priorities) and the ICS (because of overlaps in funding and research).

Lewis Wilcher, an Australian Rhodes Scholar and previously colonial officer in the Sudan, was appointed as the first Warden by a Governing Body made up of eminent persons appointed by the University and the Colonial Office: these included senior government officials, Oxford academics, businessmen and even a bishop. QEH soon acquired its iconic premises in St Giles' on a long lease from St John's College and hosted a series of Commonwealth visitors and specialist courses for civil servants from developing countries. In 1961 the ICS (now renamed the Institute for Commonwealth Studies – a sign of the times) moved into the House.

In 1962, Prime Minister Macmillan reprised his 1960 'Winds of Change' speech at the opening of a new QEH library and residential building and praised the University's role in preparing the leadership of newly independent colonies within the Commonwealth. But after the Bandung Non-Aligned Conference of 1955 and the Suez Crisis of 1956, the Tory dream of informal imperialism was already a lost cause.

In 1964 a Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM) was created by the new Labour government to replace the Colonial Office and establish a new relationship based on 'development cooperation' not only with the newly independent Commonwealth but also poor countries worldwide. The new ministry was an explicitly social-democratic alternative to the post-colonial Conservative strategy. The ODM continued to fund the training of Commonwealth administrators at QEH, but the University reneged on its commitment to assume long-term responsibility for the House, although it did support the ICS, which had become an integral part of QEH, sharing a director. Moreover, Oxford was not prepared to accommodate the new Institute of Development Studies which the government wanted to establish in order to lead development research in the UK and train civil servants from developing countries – which went instead to the newly created Sussex University.

Without core funding from Whitehall or established status within the University – or indeed a clear academic mission – the House was under existential threat by the mid-1960s. Fortunately, it proved politically impossible – or even literally an act of *lèse-majesté* – simply to close a chartered body such as QEH.

So instead the University appointed Paul Streeten, a senior Oxford economist with extensive experience of international development institutions – he had temporarily directed the IDS in Sussex at its start – as

both Warden and Director of the ICS in 1968. Under his leadership (and supported by his Balliol colleague Thomas Balogh – then serving as economic adviser to Prime Minister Harold Wilson), QEH underwent a radical pivot in its focus, engaging with the emerging field of development studies intellectually and with the United Nations institutionally. In addition, QEH provided a temporary home for academics from Bangladesh and elsewhere fleeing political persecution. This pivot eventually led – albeit after several difficult decades – to the emergence during the current century of the present Oxford Department of International Development as an integral part of the University and the leading UK centre for academic research and postgraduate teaching in its field. Some academic staff and many students now come from the Commonwealth, and the department's critical approach to teaching and research includes the examination of colonial and post-colonial developments.

The Royal Charter was given up in 1994 as the University took over the department's governance. Nonetheless, when the department moved to its present location in Mansfield Road in 2005, royal approval was sought – and given – for its new building to be called Queen Elizabeth House. It is a pleasing historical irony that the rear entrance of QEH now gives onto Jowett Walk – named after the 19th-century founder of Oxford training for colonial administrators (and, of course, a brilliant philosopher).

**This article was written as part of the University's new 'Oxford and Colonialism' project.**

Valpy FitzGerald is Emeritus Professor of International Development Finance at ODID and was Head of Department between 2007 and 2012.

# A crime uncovered

Former MPhil Emmanuel Freudenthal and a team of investigators have won multiple awards for their work using open-source data and software to expose an extrajudicial killing in Cameroon. By *Jo Boyce*.

In the summer of 2018, Emmanuel Freudenthal, a journalist based in Nairobi and a former student of the MPhil in Development Studies at ODID, took part in an extraordinary and disturbing investigation.

In July, a contact had sent him some terrible mobile phone footage that was then circulating on social media. The film showed a group of unidentified soldiers leading away two women and their children, whom they accused of being part of Boko Haram, before blindfolding and shooting them. 'The video was horrendous, the worst thing I've ever watched', Emmanuel says.

The footage appeared to have been filmed in Cameroon, a country Emmanuel knows well – he carried out his MPhil fieldwork there, got his first job there, wrote his first articles on Cameroon as a freelance journalist and continues to work in the country.

A few days after the video surfaced, Amnesty International put out a press release saying it had 'credible evidence' that the video was indeed taken in Cameroon. But the Cameroonian government quickly dismissed the claim, saying the video was 'fake news' and must have been filmed elsewhere.

According to Emmanuel, it was quite apparent that this could not be the case: 'You could clearly tell by the accents of the soldiers that they were Cameroonians.'

So he decided to dig deeper into the events, forwarding the footage to a contact at BBC Africa Eye, Aliaume Leroy. Emmanuel had worked previously with Africa Eye, using close analysis and comparison of smartphone footage and satellite photos to show that Cameroonian soldiers had been burning villages and torturing civilians in anglophone regions of the country during 2016-17. Perhaps the same approach could shed light on this new atrocity? This time, however, analysis was more difficult.

'It was a very hard video to verify because the quality was poor, there weren't many buildings or unique features', Emmanuel says. But then 'Aliaume had the brilliant idea to start a Twitter group with a bunch of other obsessive people to put our heads together. Lots of people on Twitter started to investigate.'

As part of the Bellingcat collective, Aliaume had experience of this kind of approach. A group

of open-source investigators, Bellingcat came to prominence for their analysis of satellite images of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in 2014 during the war in eastern Ukraine and later helped identify the men who allegedly carried out the Skripal poisoning in the UK.

'Open-source investigation involves digging through information that is publicly available online. This includes trawling through social media, super-advanced use of search engines, satellite photos, etc.', Emmanuel says. 'There are lots of obscure tools used for that kind of research and knowing about them and how to use them takes years of experience. Because the internet is very dynamic, some tools that work one day might be broken the next.'

'There's a very solid online community around open-source investigations, with weekly geolocation quizzes, discussions etc. Many of those people prefer to remain anonymous, but because all of the information is easily checked online, you don't need to rely on trusting people – you can check for yourself – so knowing the identity of the investigators is not crucial.'

Between them, the investigators painstakingly analysed the available information. Firstly, what could they determine about where the killings had taken place?

'One message from an anonymous journalist circulated through social media said the area of the video looked like Mayo Tsanaga, in Cameroon's Extreme North region. So that's where we concentrated our efforts. But it was like looking for a needle in a haystack', Emmanuel says.

'We got excited finding locations that fit some criteria, but were then discarded when we checked for a specific building or tree.'

They also turned to local contacts to give more context to the film: did this dirt road look like one that would connect major towns, or just lead to a village? Could you tell whether the women were from a specific ethnic group?

Then, someone tipped off a member of the investigation group. The location of the murder was near Zelevet in the Extreme North. The tip-off made it possible to match the distinctive outline of the range of hills briefly visible in the





background of the film to an image on Google Earth: 'Finally we had a location that stood up to scrutiny', Emmanuel says.

Matching individual buildings, tracks and trees that could be seen in the film to satellite imagery confirmed that the killings had taken place near Zelevet, close to a combat outpost used by the Cameroonian military.

Next, when had the crimes taken place?

Again, close viewing of before and after satellite images, showing new buildings appearing or structures no longer standing, helped narrow down the time frame, and the presence of a seasonal path added another clue: the killings must have taken place some time between November 2014 and February 2016.

Then one of the team, @sector035, was able to use another small piece of information afforded by the footage – the direction of the soldiers' shadows – to determine the position of the sun when the crime took place. Now the investigators could pinpoint the time quite precisely – to a 16-day window in late March/early April 2015.

Finally, who were the soldiers?

When they initially dismissed claims that their soldiers were involved, the Cameroonian government had argued that the weapons and uniforms seen in the footage were not those used by Cameroonian troops. But piecing together news footage, social media profiles and other publicly available information, the investigators were able to find evidence of Cameroonian government soldiers using the unusual Zastava M21 rifles seen in the film and wearing the very same forest-style fatigues in the Zelevet area.

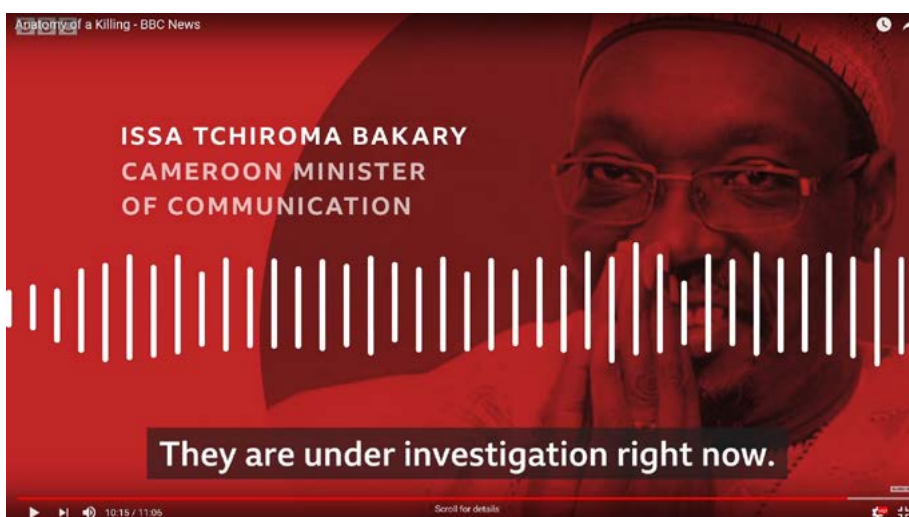
Combining nicknames overheard on the film with Facebook profiles and tip-offs from a military source, the investigators were even able to tentatively identify the three soldiers who carried out the killings.

As the investigation came together, the Cameroonian government had a change of heart: it announced that seven members of the military had been arrested and were being investigated over the killings – three were those already pinpointed by the team.

The investigation, named *Anatomy of a Killing*, was released via a Twitter thread in September 2018 and quickly went viral. It went on to win a number of prizes in 2019, including a Peabody Award, a Webby, and a Royal Television Society (RTS) award; the RTS judges described the investigation as 'a superb piece of public interest journalism which held power to account'.

Emmanuel is now working on a new project – started by journalist François Pilet – to track planes owned by authoritarian rulers around the world.

'The project started with one antenna set up



near the Geneva airport. This antenna collects information freely transmitted by planes. Each time an aircraft owned by a dictatorship lands or takes off from the Geneva airport, a bot tweets about it. The city is popular with dictators because of its banks and hospitals, so the Twitter bot brings a bit of transparency', Emmanuel explains.

'The idea is to expand this tracking to the whole world. That means we need antennas everywhere around the world. Right now I'm focusing on Africa because there are very few

antennas on the continent. So if any QEH alumni live in Africa and have access to a roof with a good view of the sky, they should get in touch with me!'

Contact Emmanuel on [emmanuel.freudenthal@gmail.com](mailto:emmanuel.freudenthal@gmail.com)

Find out more at <https://dictatorialert.org> and [https://twitter.com/GVA\\_Watcher](https://twitter.com/GVA_Watcher).

Jo Boyce is ODID's Communications and Alumni Relations Officer.

## Juan Manuel Santos appointed Visiting Professor

Former President of Colombia and Nobel Peace Laureate Juan Manuel Santos has been appointed Visiting Professor in Development at ODID for a period of three years, with a focus on reducing multidimensional poverty and building peace on a shared planet.

President Santos will conduct independent work on poverty reduction and peace building with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) as well as via interaction with the vibrant academic community of the department and University at large.

President Santos is a distinguished public figure and an influential leader, well known for his role in the recent Colombian peace process. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016 for 'his resolute efforts to bring the country's more than 50-year-long civil war to an end'. During his term in office, which has recently ended, President Santos took leadership in global efforts to reduce multidimensional poverty, including co-founding the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN), a South-South initiative of policymakers working to fight poverty in all its forms and dimensions, launched in Oxford in 2013 by its Secretariat, OPHI.



## Olof Palme Lecture

We were delighted to host Professor Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni of the University of South Africa for the 2019 Olof Palme Lecture, entitled 'The Cognitive Empire: Struggles for Cognitive Justice and Global Peace', held at Wolfson College on 17 May.

In the lecture, Professor Ndlovu-Gatsheni explored the concept of the 'cognitive empire' – the invasion not of territories but of people's mental universe, in which some forms of knowledge are privileged above others, creating particular notions of the human and enabling particular forms of politics and configurations of power.

He argued that imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, and the Cold War period brought to the surface the evils of the cognitive empire, including incarceration and assassination of those who expressed divergent ideas of liberation, equality and peace in a modern world where politics was underpinned by the will to power, the paradigm of war, and the paradigm of difference.

He critiqued 20th-century decolonisation as essentially a reformist rather than a revolutionary project, and spoke about the 'decolonial turn' that came about with the entry into Western universities and institutions of formerly enslaved and colonised peoples. He went on to talk about the concept of being 'on fire for justice', predicated on a 'we' consciousness



of service to the community, rather than the 'I' consciousness of individualism and materialism.

Throughout, he examined how the life and thought of Olof Palme and his vision of a just and peaceful world challenged and fitted into these narratives.

Listen to the lecture: <http://bit.ly/OlofPalme19>

## TMCD to develop new digital business model

The Technology and Management Centre for Development (TMCD) at ODID in collaboration with a team from the University of Birmingham has won funding for research into a new business model that seeks to enable the poorest people in developing countries to generate income and empower others by sharing their skills and experience using digital technology.

Funding was awarded by the Economic and Social Research Council's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). Xiaolan Fu, Professor of Technology and International Development at ODID and TMCD Director, is Principal Investigator, and the Co-investigator is Pervez Ghauri, Professor of International Business at the University of Birmingham.

The Inclusive Digital Model (IDMODEL) project will particularly target young people and women who are often excluded from market participation due to unequal access to education and resources. The project will develop, test and finalise the model and explore what impact it has on jobs, income creation and building capabilities for poorer and neglected segments of societies.

The project will work with collaborators in Bangladesh and China from both the private and public sectors.

Find out more: <http://bit.ly/IDMODEL>



## New book from *Young Lives*

A new book from Young Lives draws on over 15 years of research to explore how poverty shapes children's wellbeing and development, and how data can inform social policy and practice approaches to improving outcomes for poorer children.

*Tracing the Consequences of Child Poverty: Evidence from the Young Lives Study in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam* is published by Policy Press.

Using life-course analysis from the Young Lives study of 12,000 children over the past 15 years, the book draws on evidence from two cohorts, from ages 1 to 15 and from 8 to 22.

It examines how poverty affects children's development in low- and middle-income countries, and how policy has been used to improve their lives.

It uses new evidence to develop a framework setting out what matters most and when, and outlines effective policy approaches.

Find out more: <http://bit.ly/YL-Tracing>

## MORE NEWS ♦ MORE NEWS ♦ MORE NEWS

◆ Departmental Lecturer Dan Hodgkinson has won a University Teaching Excellence Award for his outstanding contribution to teaching within ODID, and his commitment to the History and Politics stream of the MPhil in Development Studies. Students and colleagues of Dan recognised his dedication to the department beyond his teaching responsibilities in the overwhelmingly positive feedback submitted to the Social Sciences Divisional Board, including his organisation of interactive workshops on 'Identity and Your Learning', and his proactive contributions to other courses.

◆ Marie Godin has won a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship to be held at ODID. Her project is entitled 'Refugees, Social Protection and Digital Technologies in Times of the "Refugee Crisis"'. It aims to explore how the development of tech-social protection initiatives led by, with or for refugees is contributing to a reshaping of welfare politics at local, national and transnational levels. The British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships are three-year awards made to an annual cohort of outstanding early-career researchers.

◆ Masooda Bano and Diego Sánchez-Ancochea have both been awarded the title of Professor in the University's annual Recognition of Distinction exercise. Masooda Bano, whose primary area of interest rests in studying the role of ideas and beliefs in development processes and their evolution and change, was named Professor of Development



Studies. Diego Sánchez-Ancochea, who specialises in the political economy of Latin America, specifically the determinants of income inequality and the role of social policy in reducing it, was named Professor of the Political Economy of Development.

◆ Leverhulme Early Career Fellow Robtel Neajai Pailey has won an International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award for her anti-corruption children's books, *Gbagba* and *Jaadeh!*. The awards are sponsored by the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Centre in Doha, Qatar, and are in support of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and its anti-corruption mandates. *Gbagba* was published by One Moore Book in 2013 and subsequently placed on the list of supplemental readers for 3rd to 5th graders in Liberia and for Primary 3 in Ghana. *Jaadeh!* followed in 2019.

## *Simukai Chigudu* appointed Associate Professor

Dr Simukai Chigudu has been appointed Associate Professor of African Politics at ODID, taking up the position formerly occupied by Raufu Mustapha, who sadly passed away in August 2017.

Simukai was formerly a departmental lecturer at ODID.

'To say that this appointment is an honour would be a terrific understatement', he said. 'Given the hostile and precarious nature of the academic job market, I feel blessed to have landed a secure position in a cosmopolitan and vibrant department where I have unrivalled freedom to follow my intellectual passions.'



'Moreover, through this position, I succeed the inimitable Professor Abdul Raufu Mustapha, whose tragic death is a loss – to Oxford specifically and African intellectualism more generally – that is too great for words. I can only hope that in the years to come, I will follow Raufu's path and chart a scholarly trajectory of such breadth, relevance and originality.'

Simukai completed his DPhil at ODID in 2017 on the politics of Zimbabwe's 2008-09 cholera outbreak. His academic background is eclectic; he received training in medicine at Newcastle University, public health at Imperial College London and African studies at the University of Oxford.



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## SEND US YOUR STORIES

If you would like to write a story for the next issue of the magazine, or have news you would like to contribute, please email [alumni@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@qeh.ox.ac.uk). We are always happy to hear from you.

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