

Seminar on Ethnicity, Political Patronage, and State Resource Allocations: Explaining Educational Inequalities in Kenya
Oxford University, Oxford, November 1 2007

Local Host: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
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Short Seminar Report

The purpose of the seminar was to get critical feedback from the scholars from a variety of countries to discuss how ethnicity and political patronage affect the distribution of state educational resources and how this affects the equality of education in Kenya.

There was a discussion on cross-cutting issues on the interrelationship between ethnicity and inequalities, comparison of alternative study designs for data collection, sharing of information and approaches to inequalities (especially with comparison to Nigeria) and past research findings in the developed and developing world. The themes discussed were:

- Political patronage
- Ethnicity and social inequality
- Ethnicity in different regions of the world (Kenya, Nigeria, Latin America and India)
- Educational inequalities
- Measures to test theories about ethnicity and inequalities
- Study designs for cross-national comparability of studies.

I presented tentative results based on a variety of population-based studies and interviews I conducted in Kenya. The discussion revealed that the relationship between ethnicity and inequality is a phenomenon that takes different forms across Africa and that while this leads to complications and the need to adapt old tools to new problems it also represents an advantage

since it forced me to study and look at specific problems from a different angle. For example, experiences in Nigeria demonstrated that the regions from which the elite ruling group came were not faring well in educational outcomes regardless of their privileged position, due to the poor and negative reception of Western education. In light of these peculiarities, I believe I need to bring out what makes the Kenyan state distinctive because of its political history in order to substantiate my hypothesis.

It was a nice experience having a seminar in Oxford University. My heartfelt appreciation to the participants who gave their critical thoughts, insight and suggestions on the topic. Thanks to Dr. Raufu Mustapha for his support in Oxford, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Susanne Schech who made it possible for me to go to Oxford University!!!

Alawiya Allui