

Notes from the Editors

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(Editors-in-Chief)

This special issue consists mainly research papers presented in the Atlanta Conference in 2009 on science and innovation policy introduced by two guest editors, Sonia Gatchair and Susan Cozzens. In addition to the research papers from the conference we have added a reprint of a research paper from Charles Edquist, six research notes (including a personal profile) and two book reviews. The papers from the Atlanta conference are informed by the challenging research quest on how knowledge can be converted into innovation in low income economies in Africa and other regions of the world in order to stimulate smart economic growth. Most of the papers deal with issues related to the challenges of African development and are written by co-authors that combine both senior and emergent scholars.

An emergent field of science, technology, innovation for development (STI4D) or what in the GLOBELICS research network is simply rendered as Innovation and Development (I&D) has opened up opportunities to incorporate explicitly research, knowledge, invention, creativity and innovation in changing the economic condition of underdevelopment that many economies face in the world in general and in Africa in particular. The explicit appropriation and incorporation of knowledge, invention and innovation to revitalise and dynamise the development debate by adding new and fresh perspectives and directions is indeed timely and necessary. The creative combination of innovation and development will generate new insights and approaches in examining the unacceptable continuation of the state of underdevelopment that has been plaguing many low income economies in Africa and elsewhere. We hope AJSTID along with other journals will provide greater focus on innovation and development and publish new theoretical and empirical explorations by providing publishing opportunities especially for younger African emergent scholars.

One important constraint is that innovation theory has evolved without considering explicitly the development context and issues. It evolved mainly as part of evolutionary economic theory, which in turn came in opposition to neo classical economic theory. The theoretical effort to link innovation theory with development economics may require that both innovation theory and theory of development economics are re-thought and reconfigured. Something like the development economics of innovation may need to be developed. The attempt to do this has begun both with the GLOBELICS initiative and some of the works that are coming out like the *Handbook of Innovation Systems and Developing Countries: Building Domestic Capabilities in a Global Setting* reviewed by Ayinde Opeyemi E. and Mammo Muchie in this issue. What remains a puzzle is that combining innovation systems with development economics remains problematic and finding ways to make the synthesis that generates insights, learning, theorems and workable policy directions remain a big challenge. One way to make the combination work is to make the separate communities from innovation and development economics to join in GLOBELICS or similar networks at regional level such as ASIALICS and AfricaLICs. Whilst the move to make the combination is inspiring, the actual theoretical synthesis and its impact remain to be realised.

In the African context, the combination of innovation with development is a big challenge. It is not easy to do it. The main reason is that Africa's economic development has been constrained by the load it still suffers from the colonial legacy. The states as they exist are divided and when they form regions, they still remain divided. There are claims that Africa's fortunes are changing and conflicts are decreasing. There are some economies that are growing above 7%. Democratisation is slowly and surely growing. Technologically mobile phone users are growing and the ICT revolution in Africa may help Africa to leapfrog and join as a player rather than a victim of the division of labour in the world economy. Whilst these optimistic scenarios are useful and may counter the pessimism of diagnosis and pessimism of prescription that Africa has faced for centuries, we need to appreciate that the key to Africa's development remain the ability for Africa to create an African united economy. The existing states or the regions they suffer from a formidable deficit, that is, failure to 'Put Africa First' and failure to formulate a united policy and strategy to deal with the colonial legacy and the new and current challenges Africa is facing today. Research on African innovation and development is needed at various levels to demonstrate what would work most effectively in the specific African context.

The selection of the research papers in the Atlanta conference by the guest editors is driven by the fact most of the papers selected were research undertaken on aspects of knowledge and technology related to Africa. The

guest editors in their introduction have introduced the papers. What has not been introduced is the other research paper by Charles Edquist with the title 'System of Innovation Perspectives and Challenges'.

In addition to the research papers we have brought out 6 research notes which includes a personal profile of a Tanzanian research scholar Professor Sospeter Muhongo. The other research notes included are: 'The Challenges and Opportunities of Re-inventing Higher Education as Centers of Research Capacity Building' by Mammo Muchie and Angathevar Baskaran; 'Research Typology and Knowledge Needs for Development in Africa' by Robert Joumard and Ménouèr Boughedaoui; 'The Menace of Inadequate Infrastructure in Nigeria' by Akeem Ayofe Akinwale; 'Science and Technology Policies in Networked Environment: Case of Finland and South Africa' by Helena Tapper; and 'Bridging the Nano knowledge divide through the ICPC Nanonet Project' by Lesely Tobin.

The book reviews are by Ayinde Opeyemi E. and Mammo Muchie on the *Handbook of Innovation Systems and Developing Countries: Building Domestic Capabilities in a Global Setting*, and Silvia Masiero on the *E-Governance for Development: a Focus on Rural India*.

In sum, the combination of the research papers from the Atlanta selected by the Guest editors with the inclusion of the network and personal profiles, research notes and book reviews - together add the deeper reflection on research related to the problems and challenges of Africa's innovation and development. This theme will continue in the research papers for AJSTID for a number of years to come.