



University of Mumbai



Indian Diaspora Centre

Diasporic Constructions of Home and Belonging Indian Diaspora Centre

A Report on Dr John Njenga Karugia's Interactive Discussion

on

'Connective Afrasian Ocean Memories: Between Competitive and Multidirectional Remembering'

The CoHaB IDC hosted a discussion led by Dr John Njenga Karugia on 'Multidirectional Remembering in the context of Afrasian studies on 13th October, 2016. The interactive session was centred on his analysis of Pheroze Nowrojee's *A Kenyan Journey* and discussed the ideas of memory and culture in the Afrasian context.



Dr Karugia is a researcher at the Inter-Centre-Programme on new African-Asian Interactions (AFRASO – Africa's Asian Options) at Frankfurt. He has completed his PhD from the Graduate School 'Global and Area Studies' of the Research Academy Leipzig, where he studied current

relations between China and Africa, especially with regard to Chinese immigration to Tanzania. He has been a visiting scholar at Duke University, at Shanghai Maritime University and at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. He also holds a Master of Arts in Global Studies. Some of his publications are “Tazara Memory in Africa’s Contemporary Politics of Dignity” (*International Aid Journal* 2015) and “The Chinese in Tanzania: Migrants and Investors” (*Duke East Asia Nexus Journal* 2011).



He is currently working on the project, The Indian Ocean as a Memory Space which aims at expanding the understanding of ‘Asia’ beyond China.

The ideas of the Indian claim over history and the materiality of memory and cultural presence were discussed. Dr Karugia made nuanced points about the relationship of the Indian migrants with the Kenyan

land and the Kenyan culture. In the context of Nowrojee’s text *A Kenyan Journey*, he engaged the audience in a discussion about such issues as the paradox of the Indian migrant being implicated for the cultural memory of the Indian labourer building the railway, thereby seeing him as the perpetrator of colonial rule, and yet being celebrated for his role in the Kenyan freedom struggle.

Dr Karugia concluded with the idea that the Kenyan cultural framework is a *mélange* of contributions rather than a monolithic national identity. The faculty members in attendance took a keen interest in the ideas discussed.