

# news

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from the Nordic Africa Institute

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# To Our Readers

**Regional co-operation** remains an important issue when Africa is to take itself out of its present marginalized position on the global scene. This issue of *News* therefore deals with a number of aspects of such co-operation.

In the first commentary, Cyril Obi, of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos and newly recruited to the Nordic Africa Institute as a programme co-ordinator, summarises in a concise way trends and emerging issues as regards conflict and peace in West Africa. He reminds us that although the region has emerged in the last decade and a half as one of the most conflict prone parts of the world, it has also been a place for some of the most successful experiments in the regional approach to peacekeeping and democratic transition. Although violent conflict has been considerably reduced, the foundations of peace still remain frail. Therefore the promotion of democratic governance, economic reconstruction and human security remain very critical to peace in the region. As another example of regional co-operation, Emmanuel Addo Sowatey from the African Security Dialogue and Research, Ghana, uses his experience of Ghana to reiterate the developments with regard to small arms proliferation and the emerging challenges to regional security in West Africa.

The third commentary also deals with conflict and peace, this time in Uganda. Although this conflict is also regional in its character, the author, Sverker Finnström, researcher and lecturer in Cultural Anthropology at Uppsala University, also looks at it from a local and national perspective. Although recently there have been developments which have encouraged commentators to speak about seeing an end to the conflict he warns against declaring a post-war situation too soon. On the contrary, he points to facts on the ground that lead rather to the conclusion that the situation will continue to worsen in the coming years and that there is a lack of political will to end the atrocities committed on all sides of the conflict. We can all

only hope that the parties take advantage of the opportunities that the author also points out for reaching peace in an area that has already been tormented for far too long by war and all kinds of atrocities.

The fourth commentary, by Georges Kobou, Professor at the Economics Department of the University of Douala in Cameroon, continues our discussion from the previous issue of *News* on trade and Africa. He discusses the question of how the inequity in world trade and the crisis of development affects Africa. Kobou points to the fact that while the international community at large in the past twenty years has requested Africa to liberalise its trade, the major trading partners in the industrialised world have followed very restrictive trade regimes particularly in areas where African countries have comparative advantages such as in agricultural products. For Africa to overcome its marginalized situation much has to be done in order to allow trade to go in both directions.

We are also pleased to present two interviews with prominent researchers on Africa, one from the Nordic countries and one from Africa. Professor Björn Beckman has recently retired from his chair in Political Science at Stockholm University after having devoted most of his life to political studies in Africa and in particular Nigeria, where he has been a very well-known and well-liked scholar. He has also been a close associate of our Institute. Professor Adekunle Amuwo, a political scientist from Nigeria, is at present Executive Secretary of the African Association of Political Science and gives his hopes and aspirations for that important organisation in his interview.

Finally we are very sad to report that two Swedish researchers, Björn Lindgren and Anders Närman, who have been very close to our Institute, have died in the midst of their active work on and with Africa leaving behind a big gap for their colleagues as well as friends. ■

*Lennart Wohlgenuth*

# Conflict and peace in West Africa



**By: Cyril Obi**  
Programme co-ordinator of the research programme 'Post-Conflict Transition in African States: The State and the Civil Society' at the Nordic Africa Institute

"Although there are no longer civil wars, West Africa still faces the challenge of winning the peace", says Cyril Obi in this commentary on the current trends regarding conflict and peace in West Africa.

**Although West Africa** has in the last decade and a half emerged as one of the most unstable and conflict-prone regions in the world, it has also been a place for some of the most successful experiments in regional approaches to peacekeeping, and democratic transitions. The Economic Community of West African States Peace Monitoring Initiative (ECOMOG) has been instrumental to the return of peace to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau. Most recently, ECOWAS troops have been involved in Côte d'Ivoire where they are operating under a UN peacekeeping arrangement. Thus, apart from Côte d'Ivoire where an uneasy truce holds between the government forces and rebels in control of the northern part of the country, all civil wars in the region have recently come to an end. However since 1999 when Nigeria returned to democratic rule, there has been a rash of low intensity conflicts sometimes along communal, religious and ethnic lines. From 2003, there has also been an escalation of violence in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region where armed ethnic minority youth seek the

control of oil and confront security forces. More recently, national strikes over the increase in the price of petrol have rocked Nigeria, heightening concerns within the region and the international community about the security situation in the region's powerhouse.

The foregoing clearly shows that although there are no longer civil wars, West Africa still faces the challenge of winning the peace. Although violent conflict has been considerably reduced, the foundations of peace as yet remain fragile, and the risk of regression exists. Therefore, the promotion of democratic governance, economic reconstruction and human security remain very critical to peace in the region. Since the states have been traumatised by decades of authoritarianism, misrule and economic crises, it should be emphasized that dealing with these challenges would be a formidable task.

Fortunately, democratically elected governments are the norm across the sub-region, and in countries like Senegal, Benin and Ghana, opposition parties have come to power by defeating erstwhile ruling parties/governments in elections. In other countries such as Togo, Burkina Faso, Guinea and the Gambia, the picture is more complicated as in spite of holding elections, incumbents use the power of the state to win, and hang on to power. But everywhere, some form of political pluralism is allowed for relatively freer political competition. With the political process moving broadly in the direction of multiparty democracy, a lot of effort still has to be made to consolidate democracy in ways that symbolise the real transfer of power to the people and the adoption of policies that promote their welfare and dignity. The need also exists for the democratic process to address issues of social and gender equity, poverty, equal access to power and resources, the youth, national reconstruction and development and social justice. However,

this process must take cognizance of the critical role of international actors and institutions in West Africa.

The recent news that government forces in violation of the 2003 Linas-Marcousis Agreement launched air strikes against the rebel-held northern part of the country threatens the fragile peace in Côte d'Ivoire. However peace is gradually returning to Liberia, and the various factions have been disarmed and disbanded in preparation for elections in 2005. Neighbouring Sierra Leone has held post-conflict elections and is undergoing reconciliation, re-integration and reconstruction. Thus, any resumption of hostilities in Côte d'Ivoire would endanger the newly won, but fragile, peace in the entire Mano River sub-region of West Africa. A lot of effort has to be made by regional actors (ECOWAS and the African Union) and the international community to ensure that civil war does not recur in Côte d'Ivoire, since it would affect the entire region.

### The roots of conflict

While there have been various attempts to explain the roots of conflict, and recommend appropriate policies and strategies for conflict management and post-conflict transitions, more still has to be done to build peace in West Africa. The four broad approaches to explaining the roots of conflict in West Africa are: historical/political, socio-economic, population size and resource insecurities, and war economies. The *historical and political* approach to conflict focuses on the structural problems arising from the ways in which the states in West Africa were created by the forces of British, French and Portuguese imperialism. Some of these structural problems relate to the monocultural and dependent nature of the economies, authoritarian political cultures linked to the character of the colonial state that survived after independence and fuelled dictatorships and the politics of exclusion in most countries of the region.

The *socio-economic* contradictions that lie at the heart of the conflicts are linked to the ways in which the majority of the populace has been excluded from politics and governance, and de-

nied access to resources and power. Attempts by the people to protest such exclusion and demand their rights as citizens were often met by brutal repression by security forces acting at the behest of the state. With all legitimate avenues for redress closed to them, and in the face of the loss of legitimacy of the state as a social force acting in the interest of all, it has been challenged by various social forces and armed groups. This has been a feature of the violence in the region, and is illustrated in the cases of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

Another dimension of the crisis in West Africa is linked to the collapse of the external sector of the primary product export economies in the 1980s following the collapse of international commodity prices. The resultant shocks generated by the fall in the prices of West Africa's traditional exports had far-reaching social implications in the region. It led to increased pressures from the citizens for access to resources and democratisation, while the states sought to repress such demands by using force. In the cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone, such pressures led to military coups, and the emergence of insurgency movements as the states buckled under the weight of their contradictions and social pressures. Elsewhere in Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Mali, Gambia, Burkina Faso and Senegal, the socio-economic crisis led to protracted struggles either against military regimes or one party states. These were further compounded by the adoption of IMF/World Bank-type Structural Adjustment Programmes by their governments. With the new emphasis on state retrenchment from the economy, removal of subsidies on social services and energy, more hardship was inflicted on the middle class and the poor, leading to unparalleled tensions and struggles for democratic opening up. It was within this context that some countries slid into civil war.

Some scholars have also tried to trace the roots of violent conflict in West Africa to the ways in which rapid *population growth* beyond the carrying capacity of the environment has bred resource scarcities and violence. It is believed that resource insecurity is at the heart of resource wars as people struggle over shrinking resources.

However, it appears that the roots of conflict lie more in terms of distributive inequities and oppression. This is usually a situation in which the small elite controls a disproportionately large amount of resources at the expense of the majority of the populace.

The *war economies*' approach imposes a logic of economic rationality on civil wars and violent conflict in West Africa. It seeks to explain conflict in relation to greed rather than grievance. This suggests that people engage in conflict either for the profit they will make from the plunder of natural resources or the opportunities that a breakdown of the system would provide for them to loot such resources. The implication of this perspective is not so much that it seeks to provide an economic model for civil wars, but that it also seeks to prove that civil wars cannot end except when economic opportunities for the combatants no longer exist. This approach has been used to explain the war that ravaged Sierra Leone and Liberia in terms of the quest of warlords for diamonds. The danger in this approach lies in its monocausality and the way it tends to conflate violence with economic rationality, and downplays the salience of other sources of conflict.

The roots of conflict in West Africa are much deeper and complex, and are embedded in the interplay of historical factors, socio-economic crisis, the legacies of authoritarianism and the politics of exclusion, international forces, and local struggles. It is from a holistic perspective on the roots of conflict that its transformation to peace can be engaged in a sustained and meaningful manner.

### **Transforming conflict into peace**

West Africa is placed between the dire needs of post-conflict transitions and the challenges of democratic consolidation. Either way, there are no easy choices as the people who have borne the trauma of misrule and conflict have high expectations of the peace and democratic dividends. In all this, several issues are relevant; the nature of local politics, the economy, the role of international actors and regional institutions.

The nature of politics in West Africa is underlined by a zero-sum contest for power and access to resources. In spite of two decades of economic adjustment the state remains the focus of power and vortex of factional struggles for power. The democratic institutions in place are largely weak, while the political class is still influenced by the legacy of decades of military or one party rule. In this regard, the political process though formally democratic has been adversely affected by the reality that the character of the state has remained the same, and the hegemonic elite that is in power continues to rule rather than govern. Beyond participating in periodic elections, the people are largely alienated from democratic governance and its dividends, thereby further weakening the social-economic basis of their human security.

In terms of the role of international actors, while globalisation and economic reform have led to greater informal cross-border flows of goods and persons, there is also a large inflow of goods and capital from South Africa, Asia and the West. This has had implications for the economies of the region, particularly local manufacturers. As a result, unemployment, deepening poverty, falling prices of cash crops and reduced state spending on social welfare continue to pose serious problems for development within the region. It is also important to note that although ECOWAS has been active in promoting market integration as a way of pooling resources for economic growth across the region, this has met with limited success. Rather ECOWAS has demonstrated more competence in conflict management and peacekeeping, but still faces some limitations in terms of logistics and resources. It is in this connection that multilateral organisations like the United Nations, the European Union and other members of the international community have provided some support for ECOWAS peacekeeping operations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. The need exists for increased support for peace building in West Africa.

West Africa appears not to have fully emerged from the legacy of linguistic divisions from the colonial period. The Francophone/Anglophone/

Lusophone divides continue to persist, thereby weakening the unity and trust required for sustained regional integration. In addition, ECOWAS is affected by the lack of political will of its members, compounded by their economic weakness and lack of resources. There is also the need to strengthen its institutions and capacities, and transform the organisation in ways that integrate the participation of the people of West Africa in its affairs and decision-making processes.

For some time to come, post-conflict transitions will remain one of the most critical issues in West Africa. The most critical components of the process will include democratic transitions, demobilisation, reconciliation, re-integration, and reconstruction. Critical to these will be the demilitarisation of politics and governance, and

the nurturing of a culture of civic engagement and popular participation. In relation to economic reconstruction, reforms that do not provide for the human security of the people will fail and increase the risk of reviving the roots of grievance. In the same manner issues of reconciliation and reintegration should provide concrete succour and justice both for the victims and perpetrators in ways that touch the person or group positively. Both at the national, ECOWAS and international levels, a lot will have to be done to rebuild the socio-political roots of peace and development. Ultimately however, the foundations of the transformation of conflict into peace rest upon the people, the political class and civil society, and the place of West Africa in the geo-politics and economics of a rapidly globalising world. ■

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## Nordic Africa Days

aimed at africanists in the Nordic countries  
will be held in Uppsala on 30 September – 2 October 2005.  
Detailed information is available at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se).

# Small arms proliferation and regional security in West Africa: The Ghanaian case



**By: Emmanuel Addo Sowatey**

Researcher at the African Security Dialogue and Research, Accra, Ghana

Despite the ban of local gun production, Sowatey estimates that about 100,000 guns are produced annually in Ghana. The illicit proliferation of these arms and their impact on security in the region are analysed in this commentary.

**The illicit proliferation** of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in West Africa is a topical issue among governments, civil society, and the international community. Ghana is no exception. This article seeks to undertake cultural analyses of gun manufacturing in Ghana, and also suggest ways to efficiently tackle the challenges posed by the trade. To achieve this aim, a holistic four part structure has been employed to guide this discussion. The discussion opens with a brief description of the genesis of indigenous craft production. This is followed by a critique of the legislative regime underpinning gun production in Ghana. The penultimate section discusses the cultural and political economy of the trade. The article concludes by suggesting the way forward.

## Indigenous craft production

Indigenous craft production in Ghana dates back to before the 15th century when the Europeans

first arrived on the then Gold Coast (modern day Ghana). At this time, there were local artisans in iron-smithing (popularly known as blacksmiths), pottery, cloths, weaving, salt extraction, mining, and bead making among others. In recent years, their production techniques have seen only slight modification. In relation to iron working, Oppong (1973) argues that an iron specialist in former times produced weapons such as knives, arrowheads, spears and later guns and bullets for chiefs among certain ethnic groups like the Dagombas of northern Ghana. This phenomenon is not unique to the northern part of the country. In other parts of the country, iron-smithing thrived with the support of powerful rulers who needed iron specialists to make guns and other peaceful tools like agricultural implements for their socio-economic needs. Agbodeka (1992) posits that iron working was widespread because, apart from iron specialists, other professional artisans like hunters were expected to learn aspects of iron-smithing. This was to help them repair their rifles and also prepare their own cartridges and cutlasses for hunting. Since colonialism, however, local gun production has been banned. The reason from the colonialist perspective could have been that the colonialists did not want guns to be in the hands of the colonised since that could hasten the demise of their reign. Measures were therefore put in place to try to stifle the trade. The ban has been carried over into the post-colonial era.

## Law and regulations

The Arms and Ammunition Act 1962 (Act 118) as amended by the Arms and Ammunition Decree 1972 (NRC 9) and the Arms and Ammunition (Amendment Act 1996) prohibit both the manufacture and assembly of firearms. On the other hand, these laws legalise the repair of guns after

a licence has been acquired. The upshot of this legislation is that, local artisans have over the years acquired more skills through the various repair jobs that they undertake on guns. This cognitive process of acquiring more skills has resulted in a number of the artisans acquiring the skills to manufacture not only single barrel gun, but also sophisticated guns such as pump action guns, and self-loading rifles. A number of the artisans have indicated their capacity to produce AK47 assault rifles once the guns are dismantled and their various components studied. So professional is their handiwork that pundits will find it difficult to differentiate an imported single barrel gun from a locally manufactured one. Paradoxically, guns cannot be legally manufactured. This has driven the trade underground with no official statistics on (a) the number of gun manufacturers in Ghana. (There is however, the Ashanti Regional Association of Blacksmiths, the members of which have the capacity to produce guns. African Security Dialogue and Research and, particularly, Dr Emmanuel Aning and myself continuously play a key role in assisting the association. The creation of this association was a collaboration between the African Security Dialogue and Research and the blacksmiths.); (b) the numbers of guns produced per annum; (c) who the clients are; and lastly (d) how to mark and trace these increasingly sophisticated weapons.

To further comprehend the state of local gun production in Ghana, it is important to also understand the cultural as well as the political economy that underpins local gun production and why the trade has survived despite the ban.

### **The cultural and political economy of the trade**

Among a substantial number of ethnic groups in Ghana, for instance, the Akan, Dagomba and Gonja ethnic groups, who are spread mainly in the central and northern parts of the country respectively, owning a gun is a sign of accession to manhood. Among the Gonja ethnic group for example, a gun is fired whenever a male child is born. During most festivals in Ghana and at the funerals of prominent people, guns are fired as part of the occasion.

In addition, most farmers buy guns for hunting and guarding their farms against birds and other animals. Given the fact that about 55 percent of Ghanaians are employed in the agricultural sector, the demand for guns for agricultural purposes is high. As a result, people buy locally manufactured guns that are durable as well as affordable, and which can be paid for over a period of time unlike the imported ones that have to be paid for upfront. In other words, guns are made for people who are known to the artisans or who have been introduced to them by trusted people in the society. Thus, the cultural dimension of guns has meant that societies see local gun producers as their relatives and friends who are championing the cause of their tradition and culture. These are associational networks that cocoon the manufacturers from the security agencies. This is a major reason for the survival of the trade despite its illegality. Even more important is the fact that these gun manufacturers have the skill to produce peaceful tools such as agricultural implements and parts for lorries and trucks. This makes them indispensable in the countryside where they operate.

Increasingly, also, criminal networks and sub-state actors in the sub-region are demanding made-in-Ghana guns. This is because the exchange rate makes it cheaper for people from Togo, the Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso (Ghana's immediate neighbours to the east, west, and north respectively) to purchase good quality guns in Ghana. The transactional nature of the problem is further made easy by the extreme porosity of Ghana's borders. This is especially the case during the dry season when the major rivers shrink and the vegetation is burnt by bushfires making large tracts of land easily accessible for trans-border crossing. Added to this is the fact that some of the security agencies personally purchase these guns for private use whilst others sympathise with the cultural role of these weapons within their society. The ready market for guns, as against peaceful tools, becomes a further incentive for some gun manufacturers to produce guns for criminal networks and sub-state actors in the sub-region. With the increasing cost of living (high school fees,

expensive health care, rising price of petrol and falling prices of export crops) it is difficult for most gun manufacturers to stop their production, more so, when the peaceful tools they produce do not have a ready market. It is important to emphasise that most gun manufacturers are illiterates or at best have very basic education. Consequently, their only source of livelihood is their trade since their level of education strictly restricts their employment opportunities.

A combination of the above factors has converged to help the trade withstand the ban.

### Political economy of the trade

In terms of cost, one could purchase a locally manufactured pistol for less than five USD (with about three USD cost of production) and a single barrel gun for about 80 USD (with about ten USD cost of production). On the average, a local artisan can produce two or three pistols in a day and a single barrel gun in three to four days. It is interesting that these artisans do not use sophisticated machinery to produce the guns. The basic things they need to produce guns are a pair of bellows to fan the fire, a hammer, and an iron pipe. This makes it easy for the artisans to outwit the security agencies by producing guns in their rooms, in forests, farms and many other secluded places. There are also occasions when some manufacturers have been invited by groups with hidden identity in Côte d'Ivoire to produce guns in that country. This is another way that criminal networks adapt to outwit the security agencies. Given the volatile situation in that country, one can only imagine the group(s) that the guns would have been produced for. What is the way forward?

### Lessons learned and the way forward

The use of locally made guns by criminal networks and feuding parties in conflicts in Ghana has been increasing since the closing years of the 20th century. On a number of occasions these guns have ended up in the hands of sub-state actors in the West African sub-region with absolutely no official records for tracing them. In addition, more sophisticated guns are increasingly being produced in the country. For instance, in just two (out of the ten) regions in Ghana, there are over 6,000 people with the skill to manufacture guns. Currently, the prognosis is that about 100,000 guns are produced annually in Ghana. This is a country of about 18 million people, centrally located in the West African sub-region with a total land area of about 238,539 square kilometres. As a way of dealing with the problem of local arms manufacture, two mutually reinforcing options are available for debate among Ghanaians and more importantly ECOWAS states. These are: (a) the legalisation of gun production as a way of marking and tracing; and (b) diverting the gun making skills of the producers to the production of peaceful tools, that the artisans already have the capacity to produce. The issue of illicit proliferation and misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons can only be addressed through the strengthening of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. It is up to the major role players in Ghana (and indeed West Africa) to conduct a dialogue on the impact of locally manufactured guns on the rule of law, democracy and the whole issue of human security. ■

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# No-peace-no-war in Uganda



**By: Sverker  
Finnström**

Researcher and lecturer, Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, Uppsala University, Sweden, and affiliated to the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies, Gulu University, Uganda

Northern Uganda has been afflicted by war since 1986. The situation in the region has been described by a high-rank UN representative as one of the worst humanitarian crises of today. Yet, recently there have been developments which have encouraged some commentators to speak about a 'post-war' situation. In this brief commentary, I warn against declaring a post-war situation too soon.

**In 1981, Yoweri Museveni** and the National Resistance Movement/Army launched a guerrilla war in central Uganda with the objective of replacing Milton Obote's second government (1980–85). Museveni took to arms with the argument that the 1980 elections that brought Obote back to power were rigged. In his book *Uganda since independence: A story of unfulfilled hopes* (1992) Mutibwa holds that there was an absolute need to revolutionise Ugandan politics in the aftermath of Idi Amin's fall from power in 1979. He argues that "the system" that brought Obote back to power for the second time had been "created" by the colonialists and "inherited at independence," thereafter "perfected" by Obote in the 1960s and "matured" under Amin's rule. Museveni captured state power in 1986, and introduced his no-party Movement system. Unfortunately, and despite positive developments in

large parts of Uganda so often reported on, the northern region has been war-torn ever since. To be blunt, in 1986 the war zone simply shifted from central to northern Uganda. Especially affected is Acholiland (Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts), where I have conducted anthropological fieldwork. Today the Ugandan army is fighting the Lord's Resistance Movement/Army (LRM/A, or more commonly in the media, LRA).

For an excellent overview of the background to the conflict and its stakeholders – in particular with reference to the many peace efforts that have failed over the years – I recommend *Protracted Conflict, Elusive Peace*, a volume edited by Lucima. The free online version includes a rich list of Internet resources as well. The conflict has recently found its way to the centre of international attention. As quoted in *The New Vision*, Uganda's state-owned daily, on November 11, 2003, the United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, claimed that "northern Uganda must be one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world".

The Lord's Resistance Movement/Army rebels, with bases in southern Sudan and led by Joseph Kony, are notorious for their gross violence against the non-combatant population. They have abducted thousands of minors. The rebel movement has become increasingly isolated and alienated from society over the years, and perhaps also increasingly fragmented. Their military practices have also changed considerably over time, becoming more violent and terror-like. In the aftermath of September 11 and with direct US support, the Ugandan army launched "Operation Iron Fist". This extensive military campaign was meant to once and for all flush out the rebels. It is being carried out on Sudanese territory with the approval of the Sudanese government. It has seriously added to the pressure on the rebels.

Small and extremely mobile rebel units operate increasingly in isolation from the high command. “If the rebels face difficult battles, they will be rude to the civil population. If they don’t face the battle, they are not rude,” a fieldwork associate concluded when we discussed Operation Iron Fist and the increase in rebel atrocities.

### **Yet another local, peripheral war in Africa?**

In my own work, I have focused on the role of politicised rumours, cosmology, religion and local moral worlds in war. I have also discussed the discrepancy between the Lord’s Resistance Movement/Army’s violent insurgency practices and its political manifestos as well as internal mass displacement and the Ugandan army’s counter-insurgency tactics. In recent years, for example, a growing number of human rights abuses also committed by the Ugandan armed forces has been recorded. In its counter-insurgency tactics, the Ugandan army has forced large portions of the population into camps with strict curfews. More than 80 percent of the Acholi population, or more than one million people, are internally displaced, living in a chronic state of emergency. More than 1.6 million people are internally displaced in northern Uganda. One of the main concerns in my own work regards the fact that the war in northern Uganda has been dismissed for too long as an essentially local problem. Uganda is widely regarded, among both academics and influential organisations, as a success story of reconstruction, structural adjustment and economic liberalisation, celebrated for its fight against HIV/AIDS. To mention only one example, Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1999) have listed Uganda among the African countries “where a logic of violence has been replaced by a political process of negotiation and rebuilding”. An exception to these positive developments, the northern region has been described as peripheral, and particularly war-prone. In the war propaganda, reference has been made to the alleged primitiveness of the Acholi people. Major General James Kazini, a non-Acholi and long-time member of the Ugandan army’s high command, illustrates the trend when he

blamed all military violence upon the Acholi. “If anything, it is local Acholi soldiers causing the problems. It’s the cultural background of the people here: they are very violent. It’s genetic,” he claimed in an interview with Human Rights Watch. Taking issue with such conclusions, I found it necessary to devote substantial space in my PhD thesis to discussing colonialism and its racist ideologies, Uganda’s imperial inheritance and the country’s contested political history, and global politics.

### **No peace, no war**

“Suddenly,” writes the Gulu based Justice and Peace Commission in a statement from August 2004, “there is real hope that the 18-year old war that has afflicted Northern Uganda – particularly Acholi – may come to a quick end. Many organisations are even beginning to talk of the imminence of a ‘post-war’ situation.” The statement continues: “A ‘military peace’ won by a Government victory over the LRA may be in sight.” The monthly newsletter of the Justice and Peace Commission, freely distributed via e-mail, always includes well-researched and updated chronologies. The newsletter is essential reading to anyone who is following the developments in northern Uganda.

The reason for the commission’s optimism, it seems, is that rebels surrender on a daily basis. In November 2004 a former Ugandan minister, Betty Bigombe, who was active in peace talks in 1993–94 that eventually failed for various reasons, was again instrumental in linking the rebels with the Ugandan government. However, we need to be careful in declaring any post-war situation. The army’s Operation Iron Fist continues, and so do rebel attacks on civilian targets. Alleged rebel collaborators are arrested on a daily basis, including a priest and other peace emissaries. These days one can frequently read in Ugandan media, that the helicopter gunships of the Ugandan armed forces have been successful in yet another battle against the rebels. More often than not these stories are reproduced in Western media as well. In these news flashes, a given number of rebels are reported

to have been killed. Yet on other occasions, the same news channels report that the Ugandan armed forces have again been successful, but now in rescuing a number of abducted children from rebel ranks. The bitter irony, however, is that the people referred to are most often minors, but categorised differently depending on how the propaganda of war describes the situation. If killed, they are labelled “rebels”. If they survive the bombing of the helicopter gunships, they become “rescued abductees”.

In early 2004, the Ugandan government requested the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague to collect evidence of war crimes committed by the Lord’s Resistance Movement/Army in general and its leader Joseph Kony in particular. The Ugandan government’s call for international justice left out possible war crimes committed by its own army. “Our position is if they [the International Criminal Court investigators] come across any allegations against government officials, they should let them be tried by the government,” as the army spokesperson is reported to have said to *The Monitor*, Uganda’s independent daily, on August 16, 2004. In addition, the International Criminal Court was created on the international diplomatic consensus not to include any crime committed before 2002. But having this year as starting point for investigation, regardless of the international diplomatic consensus behind it, cannot be said to be a correct choice, something that must be obvious to any person who has an informed understanding of the conflict in northern Uganda. It is notable that the initial fifteen years of war in northern Uganda will perhaps be left unaccounted for. In the light of Bigombe’s recent peace efforts, which many of my informants hope will be successful but which they from experience remain sceptical of, the Ugandan President has indicated that he may even be willing to plead with the International Criminal Court to drop the case against the LRM/A. Most likely he has listened to local clan chiefs and religious leaders who have argued all the time that there are better ways to become reconciled with the rebels, than international law.

Amnesty International in London has however protested firmly against this.

Here it becomes necessary to interpret the conflict in relation to the wider national, even international, context. The Ugandan scholar Oloka-Onyango has described the ruling government as a “quasi-military” government and Prunier has exposed the Ugandan army’s murky involvement in eastern Congo. Despite a blanket amnesty offered to the rebels, the political environment in Uganda is increasingly volatile. For high rank rebels, amnesty means nothing other than plain surrender, and the risk of being sent to The Hague adds to these rebels’ scepticism.

### Conclusion

Let me conclude this brief commentary by noting that Uganda’s political past is increasingly contested. The global war against terrorism continues in Uganda too, and president Museveni has indicated his unwillingness to step down from power. Like most of my informants, I doubt that the Lord’s Resistance Movement/Army can be defeated militarily. If there continues to be no genuine and consistent will to find a political solution to the conflict, it is difficult to see how the ruling government and its oppositional groups, including those bearing arms, can find avenues to replace a logic of violence by a political process of negotiation and rebuilding, to refer to Bayart and his colleagues quoted above. Rather, let us just for a second accept Mutibwa’s note on Uganda’s political history (also quoted above). He holds that Uganda’s political system was created by the colonialists and then perfected under postcolonial rule. Then it is again difficult to see, at least if the war in the north is included in the analysis, that Museveni’s military takeover in 1986 has resulted in any genuine departure from this unfortunate development. ■



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# Inequity in world trade and the crisis of development in Africa



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**International trade** has over the centuries been a catalyst for development and wealth-creation among the nations of the world. It has provided goods and services and profits to those who participated in trade. Trade has acted as an incentive to the production and exchange of goods and provided employment, while contributing to the spread and mixing of ideas and cultures across the world. It should however be noted that the benefits of international trade were not equally distributed. While some people and nations reaped enormous profits, others recorded losses.

That is precisely the case of poor countries, and the purpose of this reflection is to show that the weak level of their development is partly linked to the relatively inequitable character of world trade. Trade agreements seem to be the root of the inequity in global trade, given that they are essentially structured to serve the interests of rich countries.

## The equity deficit in trade agreements

The clause concerning the most favoured nation – any exporting country enjoying this disposition automatically gets the most favourable custom rate – is the basis of world trade relationships. This clause, usually considered as the pillar of

multilateralism, fulfils two essential functions: firstly, it prevents discrimination and secondly, it secures commercial agreements. Subsequently, the expected effects from agreements cannot be put into question by a preferential agreement. The clause concerning the most favoured nation therefore corresponds to one of the obligations that nations signing an agreement commit themselves to respect in order to create conditions of fair trade, and by that favour a perfect liberalisation of world trade. The spirit of this clause may be compatible with the requirements of free trade. It is however appropriate to point out the difficulty inherent in its application, especially when the interests of the most powerful actors of the system such as the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) – more than 80 percent of transactions are carried out in one of their two currencies – are threatened. Generally, these actors impose their rules of law on principles that govern the trade agreements elaborated by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Their influence on most of these principles is manifest, conveying the equity deficit in these agreements. Equity is founded on a liberal philosophy of law, and privileges in its commercial aspects the relationships between producers, without considering the interest of third parties like consumers. It therefore has as its aim the protection of producers from measures or behaviours considered as ‘abnormal’, and which could put them in an unfavourable position vis-a-vis competitors. However, this deficit can be verified on three main aspects: 1) the commercial legislation of the US, 2) the introduction of certain norms in agreements, 3) the exceptions inscribed in agreements.

It is surprising to note that the *American commercial legislation* takes precedence over WTO agreements, as the ratification of the Mar-

rakech accord explicitly stipulates that the US is free to leave the WTO if it is condemned three times by the WTO's conflict settling organ. This commercial legislation goes further, allowing the US to play the double role of player and referee. In effect, the US has the possibility to ignore agreements elaborated by the WTO, and make recourse to the dispositions of 'section 301' of the trade legislation which allows them to take retaliatory measures against countries that they judge guilty of "unjustifiable, unreasonable or discriminatory" practices which would place their trade in difficulties. The objective of these dispositions is to favour the development of fair trade, the advocates of which consider that the form in which trade is practised in order to profit from the comparative advantages constitutes a sort of pre-trade condition. The supremacy of the American commercial law permits the measurement of the scope of equity problems in trade agreements and one can understand why certain critics consider the WTO an instrument at the service of American interests.

The equity deficit in trade agreements is also in evidence when we study certain *norms which are taken into consideration*: social and environmental norms. The clause on social norms leans on the idea that certain developing countries carry out social dumping, which is at the origin of artificial advantages in exchanges with industrialised countries. How can we consider that trade between poor countries and rich countries is affected by social differences which could be the source of a sort of biased competition? As we can observe, this clause levels out conditions for competition and poses the question of protectionism towards developing countries. The EU and the US demand negotiations on the establishment of such a social clause, whereas the developing countries are opposed to this perspective which they consider as increased protectionism in disguise. Environmental norms constitute another aspect of protective barriers erected against poor countries, all of which contribute to throwing more light on the weak level of equity in world trade relationships.

This problem is also found at the centre of *exceptions or derogations* tolerated by texts governing

the WTO. In effect, although these texts do not resolve the problem of unfair competition posed by exports on the markets of developing countries, they do, however, recognise the possibility of resorting to subsidies, whose contribution to developed countries is to render their production competitive, notably by favouring the sales of excesses on the world market. Nevertheless, the sales of the excesses of the EU and the US provoke a fall in the prices of many agricultural products, bringing about an instability of these prices and precariousness in the development of poor countries, the majority of which depend on these products.

In sum, the framework governing world trade relationships is fundamentally unequal, given that the strong dictate their rules to the weak. The latter can only bear the suffering from the point of view of their development and we will now point out the consequences.

### **The consequences of equity deficit in trade agreements**

The main objective of the WTO is to ensure the liberalisation of world trade with the aim of favouring economic growth. Yet, concerning less developed countries in particular, there exist doubts on the link between external opening up and growth, and the absence of this link could be interpreted in the light of the equity deficit that we have previously presented. As most developing countries depend on agriculture, it is mainly from this sector that we will appreciate the consequences of inequitable trade agreements on their development. We will successively study aspects of these agreements related to *subsidies, progressiveness of rights and preferential agreements*.

As for *subsidies*, they have perverse effects on the economy of poor countries as they do not only artificially stimulate world production, bringing about overproduction (and by consequence, a fall in prices), but also, they permit farmers of the EU and the US to better resist falls in prices. Limiting ourselves to the case of cotton, it has been established that the value of the subsidies distributed to 25,000 American farmers is higher than the value of their production. In 2001, the cotton they

produced was valued at 3.5 billion USD, while during the same period, they received subsidies amounting to 4 billion USD from the state. Elsewhere, the size of these subsidies is double the 1.9 billion USD authorised according to the rules of WTO. In total, American farmers, whose cost of production is double the international sale price, enrich themselves to the detriment of the ten million African peasants who have only very limited means of subsistence. This situation is of such concern as cotton alone constitutes a vital resource for many developing countries: it represents respectively 75 percent and 60 percent of export revenues in Benin and Burkina Faso; it constitutes more than one third of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Burkina Faso.

We can also observe the consequences of equity deficit in trade agreements on the development of poor countries from a second aspect, the *progressiveness of rights*. The progressiveness of rights intervenes when tariffs increase in relation to the stages of transformation. It constitutes a protection for domestic transformation industries, allowing them to increase, in an artificial manner, their value added compared to that of more efficient international competitors. This disposition inscribed in agreements on agriculture is not favourable to poor countries, in the sense that it risks confining them to the exportation of primary products. Considering the fact that they are characterised by a non-dynamic specialisation, with less diversified exports and centred on primary products, such a confinement is not consistent with the phenomenon which is at the heart of globalisation. In effect, this process is accompanied by a world trade marked by an important domination of manufactured products: these represent about 80 percent of this trade. To this effect, primary goods which represented a little more than one third of exchanges just after the second World War, lost their ground and represent now only 10.3 percent of exchanges at the beginning of the third millennium. In sum, the structure of exchanges has been modified and it is difficult, in practice, to build a harmonious development of poor countries on primary goods, especially at

this time, when grey matter constitutes the main determinant of development.

If world trade has to be governed by principles of free trade, it is logical that it should not suffer from market frictions. *Preferential agreements* correspond to such frictions, and their analyses permit us to see the extent to which they constitute a source of impediment to the development of poor countries. Let us consider the case of the system of generalised preference payments in the framework of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Lomé Convention, adopted by the European Economic Community and ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific). Although the objective of these preferential agreements was to help ACP countries to increase their exchange with European partners, the unexpected impact has been a further isolation of these economies from international competition. In other words, these agreements have killed the incentives to increase efficiency in production and trade, and also the competitiveness of these countries, particularly African countries. This can be explained by the fact that the main part of Africa's advantages in external trade derives from the mechanisms of these agreements: about 60 percent of Africa's exports go to Europe; 20 percent go to the US and Japan, and these three poles accord Africa privileges of the generalised preference system.

## Conclusion

Free trade is assumed to be beneficial to participants in world trade. But, this is not the case in practice, due to differences in strength, which bring about inequitable situations, prejudicial to the development of countries whose weight does not influence the negotiation of commercial agreements. There is therefore a need for collective awareness of the stakes involved and the acceptance by each and every one to make immediate concessions in order to promote a common approach in the framework of world trade. The best way is, however, to redesign the process of multilateralism which can promote an equitable opening of world trade and permit the population of the whole world to benefit from the opportuni-

ties and wealth that it can provide. In this regard, African initiatives such as the New Partnership for African Development, Tony Blair's initiative such as the African Commission, and current

EU-ACP relations have to pay closer attention to how Africa's development can be tied to greater commitment to promoting equity in their trade relations with the continent. ■

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# Interview with Björn Beckman



Professor Björn Beckman is a well known Swedish radical political scientist and intellectual-activist in Nigeria and Africa, where he lived and worked in the 1970s and 1980s. His works and ideas continue to inspire two generations of African social scientists, some of whom were his students at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, where he taught between 1978 and 1987. Although retired and currently living in Sweden, Björn Beckman continues to visit and conduct research in Nigeria and Africa. He remains a foremost authority on Nigerian politics, civil society and trade unions in Africa. Beyond this he is a friend, comrade and mentor of many of Nigeria's committed and outstanding social scientists.

(Cyril Obi, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, and from February 2005 programme co-ordinator at the Nordic Africa Institute)

*Lennart Wohlge-muth (LW), director of the Nordic Africa Institute: Please summarise your (academic/professional) background.*

I trained originally as a classical archaeologist and later as a medieval historian at Stockholm University. I switched to contemporary Africa and political science in the 1960s when I became politically involved and when I met my wife, Gunilla Andræ. As a transition, both of us did our licentiate degrees in London in the early 60s where I wrote a thesis on the ideology of 'indirect rule' in Africa. With two small kids we spent almost five years in Ghana in the late 1960s, a bit of teaching but mostly research. When we returned to Sweden in the early 1970s, there was an opening at the political science department at Uppsala University and I got involved in the formation of the AKUT Group (1976–1993), a regional (Uppsala-Stockholm), political economy oriented, development studies collective, with Lars Rudebeck, Inga Brandell, Mai Palmberg, Olle Törnquist, and others.

I defended my doctoral thesis on Nkrumah's CPP and its relation to the cocoa farmers (*Organising the Farmers*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1976) before returning to Africa in 1978 to teach political economy at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in northern Nigeria, which I

did until 1987. While at Ahmadu Bello University, Gunilla and I wrote a book on food policy (*The Wheat Trap: Bread and Underdevelopment in Nigeria*, London: Zed/Uppsala: the Nordic Africa Institute, 1985), our most popular book so far. This was the time when we first linked up with the trade unions and the textile industry, resulting in a heavy monograph, *Union Power* (Uppsala: the Nordic Africa Institute; Kano: Centre for Research and Documentation, 1998), our most substantive work. During this period I was also closely involved with the Sheffield based *Review of African Political Economy*.

Back in the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University, I responded to a booming interest in third world politics among the students. We formed a new research collective, the Politics of Development Group at Stockholm University (PODSU), which was fortunate to receive SAREC (Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation; later incorporated into Sida) funding, also for its co-operation with third world institutions, especially the Centre for Research and Documentation (CRD) in Kano. I retired from teaching in 2003 although I continue to be involved with PODSU as a research supervisor, with my own projects, as well as in research co-operation, especially in Africa.

*LW: What evoked your interest in studying Africa?*

I am a child of the decolonization phase. Nasser and the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956 and the reports from the liberation struggle in Algeria in the late 1950s were clearly formative experiences. As was the Sharpeville massacre of 21 March 1960. At that time I had been pulled into liberal students' politics and I was a member of the first Anti-Apartheid Committee. As the Central African Federation was breaking up, I got deeply involved in a campaign in support of UNIP, Kenneth Kaunda's party, together with Jan O. Karlsson of the Social Democratic Students – Rhodesia Kampanjen. This was also in the early 1960s. I believe it was the first of the new type of public solidarity campaigns in support of national liberation movements. When Gunilla and I left for Ghana with financial support from the Nordic Africa Institute we saw it as a way of getting involved with the anti-colonial movement and its aspirations for rapid social transformation and industrialization. Returning from Ghana in the 1970s we both involved ourselves politically with the anti-imperialist movement, including the Swedish Africa Groups, organising study circles, holding rallies in local shopping centres, collecting second-hand clothing, singing solidarity songs and so on.

*LW: You have a special relationship to Nigeria and Nigerian researchers. Could you give us the background to that?*

With a quarter of Africa's population, Nigeria is a big part of the continent and it was always assertive in terms of culture, history, and with a 'vibrant' – that is restless, inquisitive, and quarrelsome! – 'civil society'. The oil boom of the 1970s allowed for the massive expansion of a 'proudly African' university system. I was lucky to join Ahmadu Bello University in a very dynamic phase when the first generation of white 'Africanists' had just been kicked out and young committed Nigerian scholars were anxious to identify with the global upsurge of radical forces. Imperialism had shown its grim face in Chile but the US had

been defeated in Vietnam and so had the colonialists in Portuguese Africa. The anti-apartheid struggles had intensified after the students' rising in Soweto. I responded to an advertisement for someone to teach 'Marxist Political Economy', an academic position unheard of at the European end. At an early point, I felt that I was part of a movement. The students needed me to advance their academic careers but I needed them; they were the lifeline to local society and politics.

The Zaria political economy group – which included Yusuf Bangura, Jibrin Ibrahim, Raufu Mustapha, Yahaya Hashim, and Adebayo Olukoshi, now the Executive Director of CODESRIA in Dakar – made a major imprint on the development of the social sciences in Africa. The Zaria political economy scholars were central to the establishment of the Centre for Research and Documentation (CRD) in Kano, with which I have also been closely associated. While much of the original group has dispersed, they continue to provide the core of my 'Nigeria network'. CRD has held a series of workshops focusing on key civil society groups, labour, women, students and more are planned. There has also been much CRD input at the Stockholm end, including preparing the book *Civil Society and Authoritarianism in the Third World* (edited by Beckman, Hansson, Sjögren; Stockholm: PODSU, 2001). I visit Nigeria regularly in conjunction with continued research co-operation, usually once a year, also to see the children of my friends grow up.

*LW: What have been your major areas of research and what are you focussing on at the moment?*

I have told you of my early work in Ghana and Nigeria. Since the late 1980s the focus has been on trade unions and other civil society groups. I chaired the trade union committee of the Swedish Africa Groups in the early 1990s. I am just back from two months of field work in South Africa and Zimbabwe, as part of my major current project, 'African Trade Unions and the Politics of Reform', with three years' funding from SAREC (2004–2006). The core is a Nigeria-South Africa comparison of union attempts to influence state

policy. It is set in a wider African comparative context, drawing primarily on the cases covered in a book jointly edited with Lloyd Sachikonye at the University of Zimbabwe (*Labour Regimes and Liberalization. The Restructuring of State-Society Relations in Africa*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press, 2001). My visit this time began with the National Congress of the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Unions (SACTWU) in Cape Town and ended with the Congress of ZTWU, the Zimbabwean textile workers in Masvingo (close to the Great Zimbabwe Ruins!). This project will keep me busy for the next three years. Some final editing also remains on a book on the Nigerian Student Movement which hopefully will be out in early 2005 (with Y.Z. Ya'u, Centre for Research and Documentation). I am also supposed to participate in the editing of one of the volumes coming out of the 2003 CODESRIA conference.

*LW: What are your experiences of making research results available to policy makers?*

It is crucial to link up with forces on the ground. I don't mean 'policy makers' in a formal government sense but civil society organisations and activists who are busy developing their own strategies and responses to those in authority. This was central to the AKUT perspective and has been equally important for the Politics of Development Group at Stockholm University and the Centre for Research and Documentation in Kano. It is crucial not just at the level of the orientation of the work but also for the way in which it is disseminated and made available. For instance, it is more useful to publish locally in collaboration with local publishers than with

academically prestigious publishers who produce expensive hardback copies in small print runs for university libraries. But the first thing is that the research needs to be planned and developed in interaction with the actors on the ground. It must be useful to them. Only then is it legitimate to draw on their time and effort when undertaking the research.

*LW: What will you do now that you have time to concentrate on your research full time?*

I want to do more research but probably also more work which is less 'project-looking' in the eyes of the normal research funding institutions. I want to spend more time on assessing African developments during the period when I have been privileged to be a 'participant-observer'. In 2007, for instance, Ghana will celebrate its 50th Anniversary of Independence and Gunilla and I are anxious to be back, not just to assess developments but to examine what happened to our own understanding, how it developed over time. Similarly, I have been exceptionally privileged to be allowed to observe Nigerian development at close hand over several decades. I wouldn't like to 'put my pen down' without having attempted to review and assess that experience. The struggles for the liberation of Southern Africa have also been a major theme in my life experience. It would be nice to find time to write more on the history of the movements at this end. But it is also a question of having more time to read and study what other people have produced. For instance, I look forward to reading properly – not merely browsing – Tor Sellström's majestic volumes on Sweden and the National Liberation in Southern Africa. ■



# Interview with Adekunle Amuwo

Professor Adekunle Amuwo, a bilingual political science scholar, teacher, activist, critic and administrator is the new Executive Secretary of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS). Appointed for three years in the first instance, he resumed work in November 2004 at the secretariat of the association based in Pretoria, South Africa.



**After his initial training** at the University of Ibadan School of Political Science between 1974 and 1978 and 1979–1980 (for the Bachelor and Masters degrees respectively), Amuwo obtained his doctorate from the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques/ Centre d'Etudes d'Afrique Noire* (IEP/CEAN) of the *Université de Bordeaux I*, France in October 1984. His research interests have been in as diverse sub-disciplines as civil–military relations, international political economy, comparative politics and administration, intellectuals and power and Francophone Africa. He has published extensively both within and outside the continent. He was between April and July 2004 an Archie Mafeje Senior Research Fellow at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) in Pretoria, and between August 1988 and July 1990 the Vice-Dean (Undergraduate Affairs) of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan. During the same period, he was the National Secretary of the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA). Between May 1997 and April 1999, Amuwo was the Head of Department of Political Science at Ibadan before moving on to become Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science, University of the North, Sovenga, South Africa from April 2000 to March 2003.

*Cyril Obi (CO), programme co-ordinator at the Nordic Africa Institute: What, in your view, are the challenges facing AAPS? How do you intend to address these challenges as the new Executive Secretary?*

The challenges facing AAPS can be categorised into four: professional; organisational/governance; financial and policy. Professional challenges can be articulated in terms of post-Cold War shifts in global political situations and paradigms. The shifts are of three major and critical dimensions. The first consists of the ongoing political, social and economic transitions within the context of contemporary globalisation. The second is the seemingly endless spate of conflicts and political instability in many parts of Africa and the third, but by no means the least, is the alarming rate of environmental degradation. AAPS has to confront these crises with new theoretical paradigms/insights and from the prism of particular experiences of the African community. As African scholars, we have to insist on defining ourselves – and being defined – not in relation to other peoples and races, but in a manner that is *sui generis*. Organisational/governance issues are of profound interest to the Association, particularly the relationship between the Secretariat and the Executive Committee. Mercifully, some recent developments led, during the AAPS/IPSA Congresses in Durban in June and July 2003, to the setting up of, amongst others, a *Constitution and Governance Committee*. It has the important mandate to review the constitution and govern-

ance structures of AAPS with a view to enhancing service delivery, accountability and transparency. It is expected that the committee's report will be extensively debated both by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly during the 15th biennial congress in June 2005 in Cairo.

A key component of organisational/governance challenges is the need to strengthen regional and national chapters (and create the latter where absent) in order to enable them to facilitate research networks and other activities of the Association as well as ensure functional links and relations between the secretariat and field branches. It has to be admitted that unless national and regional chapters become veritable and functional facilitative 'grassroots' organisations, AAPS as a continental body can hardly be effective. One way to begin to do this is to admit national and regional bodies as constitutional organs, not as mere corporate members. This would be with a view to strengthening AAPS–customer links. Similarly, in order to fully utilise Vice-Presidents, it would be necessary to constitutionally define specific functions for them. The latter point dovetails into financial challenges. For AAPS' Strategic Plan to provide a real goal orientation and serve as an effective roadmap to concrete achievements, we would have to broaden the financial base of the association. The major problem in the past 30+ years has been that of financial sustainability and capital adequacy. It is high time we confronted the problem head-on and aggressively. There are several ways of doing this: get more and more donors interested in our activities, in addition to Sida-Sarec (our major funder), Ford Foundation and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation; generate funds internally through aggressive membership drives and annual (and library) subscriptions; tap into pan-African resources by raising funds on the continent from the public and private sectors and individuals; undertake aggressive consultancy services and elaborate a market strategy in respect of our publications; progressively make national and regional chapters sustainable and capable of running their activities

on a cost-recovery basis; make a more effective use of Executive Committee members (officers and non-officers alike) in the mobilisation of funds – as well as members and goodwill – for the Association through their many social and allied networks. This core work cannot be done by the secretariat alone.

Arguably one of the most innovative ways of rising to the challenge of adequate funding was formulated a couple of years ago by some of the founders of AAPS, namely, the putting in place of the *Hansen-Rweyemamu Endowment Fund*. The Fund was conceived as "a vital means for enhancing capacity of African governments to formulate and implement public policies that will facilitate the development of the continent". This laudable initiative has to be revived and energised. This leads us to the fourth major challenge, to wit, how to give more visibility and value added to AAPS and improve on its competitiveness in the public policy matrix of African states. Expressed differently, the issue is two-pronged: how to contribute to policy through applied research without unduly neglecting basic research and how to push the continent's intellectual project to lead to debate on practical policy matters.

*CO: What activities have you planned for 2005?*

AAPS plans to constitute new research networks in 2005, the details of which are being worked out; organise six methodology workshops in the next three years, one each for the six regions into which AAPS is divided (Southern Africa, Francophone West Africa, Anglophone West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and North Africa); begin an annual African Campus on Human Security; a post-doctoral fellowship, a Small Grants Programme for Masters' and Ph.D dissertations as well as regional Public Forums. We also plan to unveil the maiden winner of the Claude Ake Award for Excellence in Political Science for the best doctoral dissertation in African universities. We are excited by this award because it is an attempt to motivate our younger colleagues to aim for the sky in their academic pursuits. By far the most important intellectual manifestation in

2005 is the Association's 15th biennial Congress to be held in Cairo in June. The theme of the Congress is *Globalisation, Sustainable Development and Governance in Africa*. We are expecting no fewer than 120 paper presenters and panelists as well as massive participation by our Egyptian and other North African colleagues.

*CO: What is the relationship between AAPS, other regional research organisations, universities and African governments? How can these linkages be strengthened to build capacity for researchers, and make research relevant to the policy makers?*

AAPS has, over the years, strengthened links with various professional and academic bodies within and outside the continent with a view to promoting scholarly interaction among African political and social scientists on the one hand and their counterparts in other parts of the world, on the other. These bodies include CODESRIA, OSSREA, CLACSO (Council for Latin American

and Caribbean Social Science); African Studies Association (USA); the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOPBS) and International Political Science Association (IPSA). In 2002/2003, CODESRIA, OSSREA and AAPS did an *Inventory of the Role of Regional Research Organisations in Africa*. One of the reports, by Professor Adele Jinadu, has been published in the *AAPS Occasional Paper Series* (vol. 7, no. 1, 2003) with the title *African Intellectuals, Democracy and Development: History of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS), 1973–2003*. My job, in tandem with my colleagues in the secretariat, is to deepen and broaden these linkages, alongside public relations and marketing functions and the mobilisation and management of funds. We also have to develop a dialogue forum for the exchange of ideas across generations as well as encourage female colleagues and young scholars to participate in AAPS' activities through special funds for scholarship and research. ■

## The African Association of Political Science

The African Association of Political Science (AAPS) is a pan-African, non-profit and non-governmental organisation of scholars, based in Pretoria, South Africa. Its mandate is to promote the study and application of political science in and about Africa. It is open to individual scholars of African descent specialising in political science, public policy, and related disciplines. It also admits scholars of non-African descent as associate members.

AAPS' long term vision is to grow into a formidable, broad-based pan-African social science institution that would enjoy active moral and financial support from its membership, and offer dynamic intellectual and scholarly leadership to the social science community based in Africa, as well as offer technical support to African governments and civil society organisations. In this regard, the Association is engaged in strengthening its administrative capacity and restructuring itself into a network of active local and national chapters that will engage its members in research and debates on current issues in African politics and development.

To know more about AAPS, its structure, objectives and activities – and how to become a member – please visit [www.aaps.org.za](http://www.aaps.org.za).



# Youth, popular culture, and the celebration of politics in Kenya

Photo by Mai Palmberg



**By: Fibian  
Kavulani  
Lukalo**

Researcher and Lecturer, Department of Communication Studies, Institute for Human Resource Development, Moi University, Kenya, and recently guest researcher at the Institute

**The political, economic,** social and cultural context of rural and urban life in Kenya in the 1990s greatly increased the suffering of vulnerable groups like the youth. These changing dynamics increasingly propelled the voice of the youth to be heard through popular culture and musical compositions and brought to the fore self-reflexive questions about democracy, political uncertainties, self-discovery and youth identity. At the same time the twists and turns of self-discovery enabled the youth to become more explorative, making strong connections with their audience, at the local and international levels. Evident in the youth-led political acclamations of 2002 was renewed awareness that popular culture cannot be cut off from the historical trajectories, which sustain it and in which it develops and transforms. But that the youth who contested, resisted and criticised injustices meted out to Kenyans by the political regime, were largely ignored or treated as peripheral in the mainstream political dispensations was a subject of concern to me.

Evidently, since such ascendancy of youth awareness through popular culture is hardly ever reflected in the political mainstream debate, often their views are seen as misplaced or an impasse. My research discusses that the late 1990s saw meaningful flows of popular culture by urban

youth in Kenya become a relevant and urgent mode of political and religious expression in the public sphere. The research also emphasised that the dynamics of this ascendancy were hardly reflected in the political mainstream awareness of the time since these youth were thought to lack a constituency, which could allow them to play a more effective role in the democratization reform process. Nevertheless, I propose that such youth musical ascendancy catapulted beyond hedonism clearly addresses and emphasizes the paradoxes in ordinary Kenyan lives.

## **Popular music as barometers**

This resulted in popular musical compositions that became real barometers of what the community felt. The research also positions itself within the global and local popular cultural experiences closely connected to the political experiences in Kenya, which aided the emergence of varying perceptions of youth, identity and urban culture. Along similar lines I assert that the social realities and political differences in the country helped in the reception, interpretation and perception of youth and popular culture.

Popular culture research, however, often raises fundamental issues about human realities and the agency of knowledge. For urban African youth the odds they have against them on a daily basis as a result of political miscalculations, as articulated in their songs as sites of intense political activities, do not attract interest and are often ignored. The urgency for this research drew inspiration from the fact that, studies on music, popular culture and youth in Kenya are minimal. And critically so are the youth connections at the global level, hemmed in with the local complexities. In dealing with these areas, the research focuses on two critical areas: the role of the youth and music in the political hegemonic dispensations from the

year 2000 in Kenya both on the local and global platforms; the linkage between the nuances of youth identity, popular culture and the claims of religion. Yet, as the research maintains, youth in urban settings have effectively used popular culture for political contestations against the hegemonic power of the state. That youth in urban settings heavily influenced political uncertainties in Kenya during the late 1990s was relevant for this discourse. These paradoxes and tensions in Kenyan lives were captured through the focus on the Kora 2000 award song for the East African region *Nchi ya Kitu Kidogo – Eric Wainaina* ('The country of small things') and the appropriated Christian song and political campaign slogan *Yote yawezekana... bila Moi* ('All is possible... without Moi'), within the context of the political arena prior to the general elections of 2002 in Kenya.

I shall emphasize that since 2002, a critical juncture of new political dynamics in Kenya,

scholarly writing about the thematic concerns and political implications of youth identity, urban dynamics, music and popular culture such as this is welcome. The aim as stated was to interrogate the role of urban youth in popular culture, a niche within which their artistic talent thrives. Questions dealt with in the larger context of contemporary uncertainties in Africa include: How has youth music utilising political concerns flourished in urban settings? Was urban youth music the impetus for contemporary popular culture or was the political scene the impetus for urban youth popular culture? Or in a different light is there any relationship between youth ascendancy in music and the social and political uncertainties? How did the popular compositions *Nchi ya Kitu Kidogo* and *Yote yawezekana... bila Moi* facilitate understanding of the social relations in which issues of youth, culture, religion, politics and identity are articulated and broadly understood in Kenya? ■

## Politics and ethnicity in Botswana:

### The emerging challenges to nationhood in the 21st century



**By: Teedzani Davis Thapelo**

Africa Guest Researcher, Institute of International Education Fellow, United Nations, New York, and currently a visiting researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute

**Botswana has managed** to pursue a development agenda free of outside intervention and influence. Diamond mining capital has helped it

to escape the structural violence and uncertainties of global economics. Its parliamentary democracy has remained largely unchallenged but this may be about to change. Minority groups, interests and identities are becoming more assertive and pronounced. They are struggling for cultural identity and political recognition. Political pluralism has been achieved, for better or worse, at the expense of cultural liberties. These groups want the situation to change and in doing so they are directly challenging the hegemonic hold of the state on society. Cultural liberty is now being elevated to the centre of development practice in modern global societies as the 2004 Human Development Report shows. Confronted with an emerging

articulate, well organised and uncompromising politics of minority dissent, dissatisfaction, and revolt can the Botswana state confront, negotiate and accommodate the human development agenda of 2004? What are the major challenges and prospects? We use the case of the Bakalanga, Bayeyi, and San ethnic minorities' struggles to explore these issues.

### Research findings

Our research findings show that the ruling elite in Botswana has tried to foster a political modernity predicated upon secularism, homogeneity and a hegemonic nation-state. Constitutional innovations, nation building technologies and symbolisms have been invoked, negotiated and institutionalised in the name of nationhood, a process that has been greatly assisted by mineral wealth. This considerably heavy investment in modernity and its proclaimed emancipatory promises is a development that is still rare in much of Africa. The irony though is that the envisaged homogenised nation-state is experiencing serious ideological, political and intellectual contestations. The Botswana it would appear are not willing, or ready, to surrender to the demands of this political modernity. Many accept its enlightenment elements of modern development, science and reason or rationality. Others do not. But whatever the social category of the various resisters, what is evident is the fact that in the last twenty years this very political modernity has given an unprecedented rise to sudden insurrections of 'little selves' in the body politic. They are struggling to negotiate, transform or accommodate postcolonial modernity by resisting some of the key political categories of its political discourse, institutional character and forms of behaviour.

While political modernity is regarded as a liberator from the tyranny of the past order by dominant Tswana tribes, by the minority groups it is viewed as a present danger to their ways of life. The critical question is how are we to read the moment and manner of the emergence of these varied and contradictory ethnic assertions? When did these assertive ruptures emerge and why did

they emerge at the time that they did? Why did the dominant Tswana identity give way to the rise of these innumerable smaller identities? More significantly, why the sudden dissatisfaction with and subsequent challenging of the large, aggressive and unrelentingly homogenising discourse of nationhood that had submerged their specific interests and cultures for forty years? Even more surprising why the rudimentary and improving successes in minority struggles to unbundle nationhood precisely at the time(s) that these developments became manifest? Could it be that its institutional rigidities and aggressive assertion contained the seeds of its own destruction or are we to assume that the nationhood enthroned by constitutional writ at independence actually remained nothing but the collective imaginings of disparate groups in a nation-form? In other words have these ethnic nationalisms been coeval with the ambiguities of national imagery that haunt so many a nation-state in contemporary Africa?

### Research focus

My research examines the politics and economics of majority-minority groups in Botswana; female-headed households (social minorities category), farm workers (labour market category), national minorities (political minorities category), indigenous minorities (vulnerable communities category), political elites (dominant political category), cattle barons (market dominant category) and mining capital (economic dominant category). The research focuses on the constitutional basis of democracy with respect to issues of land, labour, capital, production, trade and income entitlements through the examination of power relations and public welfare in postcolonial Botswana. The dominant issues explored are political and development participation, cultural diversity and nation building, identity and recognition within and between ethnicities and nationalities from the perspective of group-differentiated rights, group collective rights, special community rights and multiculturalism, philosophical discourses that purport to demonstrate what happens when liberal rights and dispensations fail to appro-

priately condition and structure incentives and rewards for economic action and public welfare in emerging democracies like Botswana. Theme focuses include the problematization of systemic dichotomies like socio-political inclusion-exclusion, market entry-market exit dynamics and the intense contestations for democratic spaces between state and civic society, state and capital and state and nationalities. These issues are explored

within the broader context of resource use and rights, land reform and management, subsistence ecology and conservation and the general problems of rapid economic growth and social justice. Of critical importance too are the issues concerning the justiciability of social, economic and cultural rights that are enshrined in the Botswana constitution and numerous international legal covenants and instruments. ■

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## Björn Lindgren In Memoriam



On November 28, 2004 our colleague Björn Lindgren died at the age of 41, leaving behind his wife Birgitta and their children Linnea and Ludvig. Earlier in the year he had taken part in Vasaloppet, a famous Swedish

long-distance cross-country ski race. Suddenly in June a malignant cancer attacked.

Björn became an associate of the research department in early 2004, having received a grant from Sida/SAREC to study political violence and cultural resistance in Zimbabwe. He came from the Sida department for democratic and social development, where he had been employed in the unit on media and culture. He was much appreciated there, and was at times acting head of the unit. But he wanted to return to research.

In June 2002 Björn Lindgren had defended his Ph.D. thesis in cultural anthropology on ‘The

Politics of Ndebele Ethnicity: Origins, nationality, and gender in Southern Zimbabwe’. Almost all the chapters had been accepted for publication in different journals and books before the dissertation. Because of this they were read more widely than by the usual academic readership. When, in November that year, I met one of his interviewees in Bulawayo, Pathisa Nyathi, he said that Björn had made him rethink Ndebele identity: “It was a man’s world and it hasn’t changed much today.”

We had the privilege and pleasure of having Björn as a colleague for only a few months. But he had been in contact with the Institute for several years and participated in seminars and the Nordic Africa Days. He was an active member of the network of the project ‘Cultural Images in and of Africa’, and an initiator of its multi-disciplinary ‘Higher seminar in the studies of culture in Africa’.

In Björn we have lost a colleague who was gentle, calm, and kind in his contact with others, and ambitious and determined in his work.

*Mai Palmberg  
The Nordic Africa Institute*

# Conferences and meetings

## Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa

10 September 2004, Uppsala, Sweden

In February 2003 the Institute initiated a project of identifying archives in the Nordic countries that cover documentation on anti-apartheid resistance and the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, mainly South Africa and Namibia, during the years 1960–1990. There were a large number of organisations in the Nordic countries that took part in this struggle in different ways, e.g. government bodies, youth organisations, political parties and churches. A vast bilateral co-operation emerged and many well documented conferences and meetings were held in the Nordic countries during this period. Several visits to refugee camps in Africa and encounters with different leaders are also documented on videos, tapes and in pictures. So far the project has produced indexes in English and many archives have been catalogued. Documents totalling more than 30,000 pages at the Institute have been digitalized and the project is intending to digitalize sound and images for the database in the year to come. The database is available on the Internet and includes archive indexes, organisational history, interesting links and personal stories ([www.liberationafrica.se](http://www.liberationafrica.se)).

The project held a workshop in September to present its work and bring together people from the Nordic countries and Southern Africa who were active in the anti-apartheid and liberation struggles up until 1994. Thirty participants, representing 23 organisations and groups from

eight countries discussed the role of archives in the writing of history and remembrance for future generations.

During the workshop, it became evident that Namibia and South Africa have come a long way in initiating archive projects and highlighting the importance of archives in the redress of history after independence.

When it comes to Namibia, Norway and Finland stand out in the Nordic region with their long-term contacts. This is perhaps most clearly visible in the little village of Elverum where more than 80 percent of the villagers in one way or another had been involved with Namibia, mainly through The Namibia Association of Norway in Elverum.

The workshop participants were informed of the history and archive project of SWAPO at the SWAPO Archive and Research Center. The purpose is to make sure that the documentation of the liberation struggle is not lost but becomes known. Making history known and archives available was an issue raised during the workshop and in the case of SWAPO the project involves mobile units that will visit remote areas. An estimated 2.8 million documents in addition to movies, photographs and sound will be catalogued and to some extent digitalized. SWAPO Archive and Research Center is currently co-operating with the Namibia National Archives in sharing premises and equipment. Representatives from the Namibia National Archives visited the Nordic Africa Institute and other organisations in Sweden and Norway two years ago in order to identify important material and complement missing information within the project 'Effort to Recover the Namibian Heritage of Resistance and the Liberation Struggle'. Finland is currently collaborating with the Namibia National Archives.

*“Without archives, we would all be orphans of the past, deprived of personality and knowledge and condemned to repeat ourselves.”*

Jean Pierre Wallot, former President of the International Council on Archives (quoted by Narissa Ramdhani in her opening speech of the workshop).

Participants from South Africa told us of the number of archiving initiatives in the country. One major project for the digitalisation of archives is the Digital Imaging Project of South Africa at Campbell House of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban. Former anti-apartheid periodicals are being made available on-line as well as images and documents related to the liberation struggle.

The ANC documents are based at Fort Hare and offer the prospect of exploring the many aspects of co-operation and links between the Nordic states and the ANC during 1978–1992. The Somafco archives, for example, can be found here. The collection covers 14 years in 719 boxes and 21.4 linear metres of audio-visual material in addition to artefacts. Archives are becoming increasingly important in South Africa and useful in the work on the redressing of history in general and work on a new history curriculum in schools within the South African History Project in particular. Here, it is emphasised that oral history needs to be archived along with more traditional documents. Several volunteers were present at the workshop and contributed with their personal stories and experiences, thus giving life to the documents found in archives.

Current Minister of Justice and Constitutional Reform of South Africa, Brigitte Sylvia Mabandla, talked about the necessary redress taking place within South African history writing. She mentioned the importance of memorial sites and manifestations, such as the Freedom Park, which will assist in shedding light on the history from a different perspective, and will not completely change history. Her strong interest in the matter provides opportunities to facilitate co-operation between archival initiatives.

Representatives in Sweden from NGOs, the church and Sida presented their work within the project. The grass-root movement and political leadership were particularly united in Sweden in their solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggles in southern Africa and paved the way for international contacts with the liberation leaders.

The workshop spoke of the importance of archives as part of nation-building. As new generations grow up, they are taking their freedom for granted and failing to understand the struggle – national and international – that laid the foundation for today's independence.

*Nina Frödin*

## Accessing Information on Africa – Africa Days for Librarians

11–12 October 2004, Uppsala, Sweden

The Nordic Africa Institute held a two-day conference in October for Nordic librarians who cater to students and researchers studying contemporary African topics. 36 librarians participated, three from Denmark, four from Finland, two from Iceland, six from Norway and 21 from Sweden. The conference invitation was spread using various librarians' discussion lists, websites and networks throughout the Nordic countries.

The main purpose of the conference was to give Nordic librarians the tools for assisting students and researchers focusing on contemporary Africa, to build informal networks and to market

the Nordic Africa Institute's library. The aim was also to give the participants an awareness of the kind of topics they might encounter when dealing with students and researchers concentrating on Africa. The programme was divided into introductory talks on current research topics and lectures on information searching. Additional topics covered publishing in Africa, a researcher's perspective on sources and source evaluation on the Internet, among others.

The introductions to current research questions were given by researchers and guest researchers at the Institute who covered a wide spectrum

of the social sciences. The topics for the conference were chosen for relevance and according to availability of researchers to participate. The first morning, the research session included a conflict theme with Cyril Obi presenting Conflicts in an African context with the example of Rwanda-Burundi presented by Thomas Ridaeus. Guest researcher Kirsten Holst Petersen followed with Literature and Society where the participants were introduced to major themes in modern African Literature. The research session on the second day was opened with Signe Arnfred giving a presentation of the development of gender research in Africa, following three threads, Women in Development, Women in Anthropology and Feminism. Amin Kamete and Catrine Christiansen concluded the research sessions with HIV/AIDS issues related to urban areas and to anti-retroviral medication (ARV).

The information searching topics were presented by the library staff. The presentations were based on the first part of the newly published

*Att studera Afrika* ('Studying Africa') edited by Kristina Rylander, each author presenting his/her chapter. Kristina Rylander began the session with a short survey of handbooks and electronic sources used in the reference work. Åsa Lund Moberg followed with introductions to the Africa-oriented link collections which can be found in 'A guide to Africa on the Internet'. Official publications from the African countries were presented by Antonio Lourenço. Katarina Hjortsäter covered statistical sources and Birgitta Jansen ended the information searching session with an introduction to periodicals. The short 20-minute presentations did not allow an in-depth coverage on the topics but merely served as introductions to the specific chapters in the book *Att studera Afrika* which was included in the conference material.

Conference documentation as well as references and links can be found at [www.nai.uu.se](http://www.nai.uu.se) under Seminars.

*Åsa Lund Moberg*

## Genocide and Colonial Literature

### Historic, legal and literary aspects of German colonial rule in South West Africa

28–29 October 2004, Odense, Denmark

This was a joint conference of the German Department at the University of Southern Denmark and the Nordic Africa Institute. It had as a point of departure the German colonial genocide of the Herero and Nama in then South West Africa between 1904 and 1907. During 2004 a series of events commemorated the centenary of this first genocide of the 20th century, which still remains an ideologically and politically contested arena as regards coming to terms with a particular German and Namibian past.

Sven Halse (supported by Birgitta Rosenberg and Lene Petersen) from the German Department at the University of Southern Denmark hosted this event, which was organised at the Odense campus in collaboration with the project 'Liberation and

Democracy in Southern Africa' (LiDeSA) at the Nordic Africa Institute. The hospitable atmosphere was flagged (in the true sense of the word) during the conference at the campus entrance with the Danish, German, Swedish and Namibian banners to welcome the guests.

Presentations and discussions during the first day focussed on the historical and contemporary aspects of the genocide debate as well as the ongoing legal dispute over the claims for reparation pursued by a Herero initiative. Several high profile German colonial historians, as well as sociologists, political scientists and legal experts shared their insights and contributed to an ongoing debate over a controversy which is not yet solved. Neither is there general agreement over the qualification of

the German warfare to be called genocide, nor does the claim for compensation represent a common understanding even in present day Namibia. The conference participants however shared as a common denominator the understanding that coming to terms with this past requires more than simply closing a chapter.

That this chapter is far from being history, but a current challenge also in terms of identities, was in a particular way reflected during the second day, which concentrated on the colonial literature dealing with this concrete event and more generally with the German colonial rule in Namibia. It illustrated that the underlying ideology of the then colonial masters still remains in modified forms an integral part of present perceptions within a disputed public as well as scholarly discourse.

To that extent this conference was anything but dealing with a past. Instead, it highlighted much more current challenges even in the area of African Studies from the particular context of German colonial history and current discourses

both within Germany and Namibia over how to go about reconciliation and how to address historical injustices. Despite the risk of being qualified as eurocentric reduction, the defined aim was to deal with the colonisers' perspective from within the current views of subsequent generations. Hence the 26 registered participants (equally divided between the sexes), who dealt with the related matters of racism, xenophobia and sexism mainly within the particular colonial genre of German South West Africa, came mainly from Denmark and Germany, but agreed that the limits were also gains in the special context of this event.

The presentations to both days are currently in the process of being edited for two separate but complementary volumes with different German publishing houses. They aim to contribute further to the wide range of insights accumulated during 2004 relevant to positioning ourselves vis-à-vis a history, which is not yet past.

*Henning Melber*

## African Christianity in the 21st Century

29–31 October 2004, Uppsala, Sweden

This international conference organized by the Nordic Africa Institute brought together scholars from Europe, Africa and the United States to present papers and to discuss Christianity in the contemporary African societies. Prof. Paul Gifford from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, gave the opening keynote speech on Some Recent Developments in Ghana's New Christianity. Dr. David Maxwell from the University of Keele gave the second keynote speech on Post-Colonial Christianity in Africa. The call for papers attracted many proposals, which shows how much interest and research there is, not only on African Christianity but also on religion in general.

Many of the African societies underwent considerable economic, political, social and reli-



Left: Julian Murchison and Päivi Hasu. Below: Asonzeh Ukah and Boni Dulani.



Photos by Mari Palmberg

gious changes during the last decades of the past millennium. As a consequence of economic crises and reforms such as the structural adjustment policies and economic liberalization numerous governments were forced to reduce their provision

of many of the social services including subsidized or free education and health care. Consequently, the significance of religious organizations such as former mission churches and other NGOs increased in this area. The early 1990s also marked a turning point in many African countries with the political reforms and transition to a multi-party system. In many cases churches played an important role in catalyzing political change. Main-line churches and newer movements have both supported and opposed the ruling governments to varying degrees. Religious pluralism and dynamics have taken on different manifestations in different countries as regards national political processes and ethnicity. In addition, the worsening AIDS pandemic with its social and demographic consequences has posed challenges to the African governments as well as the civil society including religious organizations. At the same time the main-line churches have faced challenges created by other forms of Christianity as well as by other world religions such as Islam. The past few decades have witnessed an unprecedented growth of independent churches, Pentecostalism and other trans-national and global forms of charismatic Christianity in many parts of Africa. Today it is hard to call into question the fact that the church is an important social factor in the civil society in Africa.

*Focus of the conference*

The focus of the conference was on contemporary African Christianity as it relates to politics and democratization processes; Pentecostalism and other forms of charismatic Christianity; AIDS, Christianity and Christian churches, as well as religious plurality. On the first day papers were presented that discussed the history of the interplay between politics and the Christian religion in Nigeria as well as the interpretations of the constitution and the connections to religious conflicts in the country. Furthermore, the role of the Christian churches in the democratization processes in Burkina Faso and Malawi were discussed as was the role of the churches in local politics in Uganda.

A number of papers were devoted to Pentecostalism and other forms of charismatic Christianity.

Trans-national networks among the Ghanaian Pentecostals were discussed as were the notion of Israel and the expressions of 'home' and belonging among Pentecostals in South Africa. Economic transformations, churches as industries as well as poverty and prosperity gospel were dealt with in papers discussing charismatic Christianity in Nigeria, Ghana and Tanzania. Religious plural-



Photos by Mai Palmberg

Left: Paul Gifford. Right: David Maxwell.

ism, social change and the interplay between Christianity and Islam were examined in papers touching upon occult forces and spirit possession in Tanzania and Cameroon. Finally, AIDS, salvation widowhood and sex in Uganda and Kenya were discussed.

*Final discussion*

The final discussion brought up several issues: The present state of affairs in the study of religion, future considerations as well as methodological issues. As this conference concentrated on contemporary Christianity the number of papers with clear historical connections was limited. However, it was pointed out that there is a need to take history more into account. Similarly, papers discussing religious NGOs, civil society and development in detail were absent this time. It was noted that there was great variety in the studies that discussed Pentecostalism but the question was raised whether the amount of research that is being done on Pentecostalism is distorting or whether it gives a fair picture of contemporary African Christianity. The point was made that there is a need to examine the pentecostalizing of the mainline churches on the one hand, and the clericalization of Pentecostalism on the other. It was also felt that more research is needed on the myriad ways religion is connected to dealing with

HIV/AIDS. The more methodological considerations dealt with the general need for long-term studies with historical depth and cross-cultural comparison. Some discussion was devoted to the justification of possible instrumentalization in the presentation of research findings, and the question whether engaged or disinterested schol-

ars present research findings in a fair way. It was suggested that what is needed are multi-faceted approaches and multi-sited research contexts as well as combinations of fieldwork and archival studies.

*Päivi Hasu*

## **Presidential Transitions and the Role of Ex-Presidents in Africa**

8–9 December 2004, Noordhoek/Cape Town, South Africa

A workshop jointly organised by the South African Human Sciences Research Council and the Nordic Africa Institute.

The Democracy Programme of the South African Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the project 'Liberation and Democracy in Southern Africa' (LiDeSA) at the Nordic Africa Institute are currently undertaking a joint project, the results of which are to be published by HSRC Press in 2005. This is a continuation of previous collaborative efforts, which had resulted in the publication of an edited volume (*Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa. The unfinished business of democratic consolidation*) by HSRC Press in 2003.

The current project is partly financed by among others the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the Nelson Mandela Foundation. The co-ordinators are Roger Southall from the Democracy Programme at HSRC, John Daniel on behalf of HSRC Press, and Henning Melber for the LiDeSA project at NAI. According to plan, the recruited project contributors discussed the case studies currently under preparation on Anglophone African countries at a workshop, for which the draft chapters were submitted.

The cases dealing with lessons to be drawn either from individual presidents or more general experiences from countries with several presidential successions include Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia (Charles Taylor), Malawi, Namibia (Sam Nujoma), Nigeria, South Africa (Nelson

Mandela), Tanzania (Julius Nyerere), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe). The scholars either come from, are located in, or have long-standing working experience from within and/or on the countries. Their presentations, also discussed in a comparative perspective, documented more differences than common issues in the variety of experiences. One obvious result and learning process from this exchange has therefore been the sensitisation concerning the degree of differentiation necessary with regard to the countries and their track records.

The close to twenty participants exchanged their analyses and conclusions in a frank and creative way, which provoked lively debates and further insights into the matters under consideration. The revised studies to be published promise to add new knowledge for both academia and policy makers alike on a currently relevant subject with regard to the political culture in a variety of African states. In the likely case that further progress and the final results meet expectations, continued collaboration between the two institutions in another project on a topic within the broad area of 'good governance' issues might be the consequence. The next co-ordinating meeting will take place at a historic place and moment in time, when Namibians and the wider world witness the transfer of power by the country's first head of state to a successor in the office of president in Windhoek on Independence Day on 21st March.

*Henning Melber*

# Recent publications

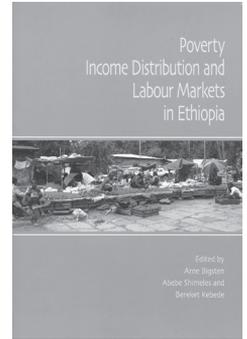
*Arne Bigsten, Abebe Shimeles and Bereket Kebede (Eds)*

## **Poverty, Income Distribution and Labour Markets in Ethiopia**

ISBN: 91-7106-526-1, 200 pp, 220 SEK (appr. 22 euro)

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income of just over USD 100. Understanding the causes of the country's widespread poverty is of the utmost importance. Until recently, however, very little household data was available. This study deals with the many aspects of poverty and income distribution in Ethiopia. It analyses the determinants of poverty and how its conditions have changed in both rural and urban areas over time. Rural and urban poverty profiles and the dynamics of poverty are examined, measurements taken of consumption poverty are compared with individual perceptions of poverty, and an analysis is made of the distribution of intra-household expenditure and the dynamics of income distribution. In addition, the functioning of the urban labour market returns to education, and the effects of education on household welfare are investigated. Finally, there is extensive discussion of the wide range of policies that need to be co-ordinated for poverty reduction in Ethiopia.

*Arne Bigsten* is Professor of Development Economics at Göteborg University. *Bereket Kebede* is currently lecturing at the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia. *Abebe Shimeles* is currently working on a PhD thesis on poverty in Ethiopia at Göteborg University.



*Øystein Rolandsen*

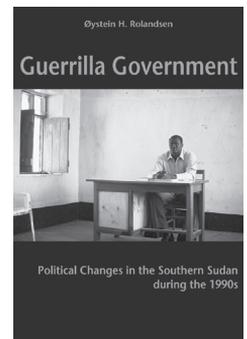
## **Guerrilla Government. Political Changes in the Southern Sudan during the 1990s**

ISBN: 91-7106-537-7, 170 pp, 200 SEK (appr. 20 euro)

Although the SPLM/A suffered a serious setback in 1991, when three senior commanders tried to wrestle control from its leader, John Garang, it has remained the main rebel organisation in the Southern Sudan since the start of the second civil war in 1983. At a national level the SPLM/A's influence over political development in the south has been matched only by the government in Khartoum and its armed forces, and at a local level only by chiefs, who derive their power from the old system of indirect rule, established by the British during the colonial period.

An understanding of the changes and processes within the SPLM/A is therefore essential to an analysis of the Sudans contemporary history and current events, which includes continuing peace negotiations, and the planning of post-war southern Sudan. This volume analyses the main events leading up to the SPLM/A's current position of supremacy and follows the process of internal reform that has brought about a nascent state structure amidst a devastating civil war and continuous humanitarian crisis. The discussion is brought to a conclusion with a brief summary of events during the period 2000–2004 and presents some thoughts on the future government of the Southern Sudan.

*Øystein Rolandsen* is Horn of Africa adviser at the Norwegian People's Aid and board member of the Norwegian Sudan Support Group.



*Quentin Gausset, Michael Whyte and Torben Birch-Thomsen (Eds)*

**Beyond Territory and Scarcity. Aspects of Conflicts over Natural Resource Management**

ISBN: 91-7106-540-7 200 pp, 220 SEK (appr. 22 euro)

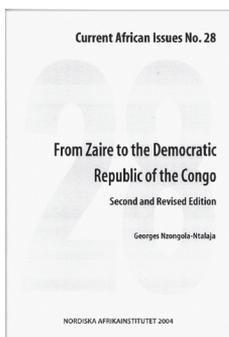
The attainment of sound and sustainable environmental management is one of humanity's greatest challenges this century, particularly in Africa, which is still heavily dependent on the exploitation of natural and agricultural resources and is faced with rapid population growth. Yet, this challenge should not be reduced to Malthusian parameters and the simple question of population growth and failing resources. In this volume, ten anthropologists and geographers critically address traditional Malthusian discourses in essays that attempt to move "beyond territory and scarcity" by:

- Exploring alternatives to the strong natural determinism that reduces natural resource management to questions of territory and scarcity.
- Presenting material and methodologies that explore the different contexts in which social and cultural values intervene, and discovering more than 'rational choice' in the agency of individuals.
- Examining the relevance of the different conceptions of territory for the ways in which people manage, or attempt to manage, natural resources.
- Placing their research within the framework of the developing discussion on policy and politics in natural resource management.

The studies are drawn from a range of sub-Saharan African countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Lesotho, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan.

*Quentin Gausset* is Lecturer at the Institute of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

*Michael Whyte* is Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen. *Torben Birch-Thomsen* is Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Geography, University of Copenhagen.



*Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja*

**From Zaire to the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Second and Revised Edition. Current African Issues no. 28

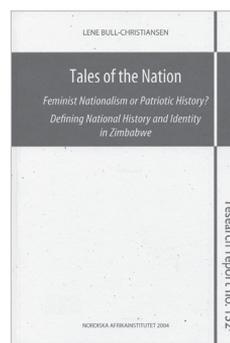
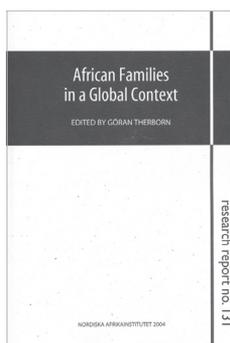
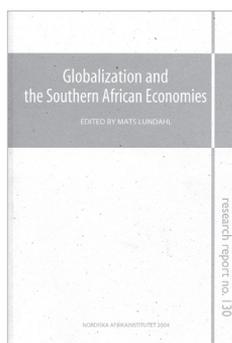
ISBN: 91-7106-538-5, 23 pp , 90 SEK (appr. 9 euro)

This paper examines the political and social situation in the DRC since May 1997, together with the prospects for a successful political and social transition. Consistent with the deepest aspirations of the Congolese population, such a transition will succeed if it involves an irreversible development towards multiparty democracy and the full utilisation of the country's immense resources for economic and social development. In other words, a successful transition is one in which basic freedoms and liberties will be guaranteed through

democratic governance and the rule of law, with tangible improvements in living conditions.

*Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja* is Director of the Oslo Governance Centre of the UNDP and Professor Emeritus of African Studies at Howard University in Washington, DC.

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*Göran Therborn (Ed.)*

### **African Families in a Global Context**

ISBN: 91-7106-536-9, 118 pp, 140 SEK (appr. 14 euro). Research Report no. 131

The family is one of the most important institutions of African societies. Where is it going today? How is it affected by global processes, cultural and political as well as economic? How does it compare with family developments in other parts of the world? These are questions, which this report addresses. The report deals with the African family in a comparative global context, focusing on patriarchy, sexuality and marriage, and fertility; biological and social reproduction in Ghana under conditions of globalization and structural adjustment; Nigerian marriage relations under the impact of current conditions; family changes in the North (Britain) viewed from and compared with a family perspective from the South (South Africa).

*Göran Therborn* is Director of the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology at Uppsala University, Sweden.

*Lene Bull-Christiansen*

### **Tales of the Nation. Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe**

ISBN: 91-7106-539-3, 118 pp, 140 SEK (appr. 14 euro). Research Report no. 132

In light of the uses and misuses of history in Zimbabwean politics in recent years, this research report focuses on how versions of the country's liberation war history have become a site of struggle over the definition of Zimbabwean national identity. As identity politics often do, Zimbabwean nationalism draws on a wide field of cultural symbols of identity and political discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Therefore, the report takes a cross-disciplinary approach to the issue of national identity by mapping out the imaginary field of Zimbabwean nationalism. This approach opens up the possibility of cross-reading the political discourses of the President and the ruling party ZANU (PF) with opposing voices such as those in the works of the author Yvonne Vera. This cross-reading shows how Vera's novels and the political discourses participate in the struggle over Zimbabwean national identity by offering different versions of the nation's history in the form of patriotic history, feminist nationalism, or narratives of difference. In this way the research report adds to our understanding of power and resistance in Zimbabwean politics of national identity.

*Lene Bull-Christiansen* holds an MA in International Development Studies and Cultural Encounters from Roskilde University, Denmark.

*Mats Lundahl (Ed.)*

### **Globalization and the Southern African Economies**

ISBN: 91-7106-532-6, 128 pp, Price 140 SEK (appr. 14 euro). Research Report no. 130

The present volume has its origin in a conference on globalization and Africa held in Cape Town at the end of 2001. It focuses on the place of Southern Africa in the globalized economy. The different chapters identify the overall economic trends in the African continent and the responses – required and actual – to the impact of an increasingly interdependent world economy. The Southern African nations are struggling to find their own ways of participating in global development. This research report provides an insight into how this process has unfolded in the past and into the problems and challenges of the future.

*Mats Lundahl* is Professor of Development Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden.

## Obituary for Anders Närman



It was with the deepest regret that we received the news that Associate Professor Anders Närman had passed away on 15 November 2004. Närman's premature and unexpected death is a big loss not only for his family, friends and col-

leagues, but also for African and development studies and research. Närman accomplished more than most people do in a lifetime. He had an outstanding record as a pedagogue and researcher on development issues and African affairs and published a great number of books and articles. He was a well-known profile at Göteborg University, as well as in the Nordic development community. In addition, Närman was an activist and spent considerable time on NGO activities.

Anders Närman focused his research mainly on the education sector and on the general political and economic development in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. He was one

of the core people in an interdisciplinary seminar that later became the Department for Peace and Development Studies at Göteborg University, Sweden, where he was the driving force behind the courses in development studies for almost three decades. In the nineties he was instrumental in the establishment of the Centre for Africa Studies at Göteborg University. For many years, Närman was one of the driving forces in the Nordic Association for the Study of Education in Developing Countries (NASEDEC). As one of the leading Nordic development geographers he was also responsible for establishing both the Swedish and the Nordic Associations of Development Geographers.

With the passing away of Anders Närman, we have lost a good friend and colleague. Anders was a person with great originality and personality, a person who did not go unnoticed. He loved to debate and to be provocative. He had great integrity. Behind his at times uncompromising attitude, he was a very warm person with a big heart. We will miss him greatly, as human being, friend, colleague, academic and activist.

*Jonas Ewald, Director,  
Centre for Africa Studies, Göteborg University*

## **Power on the people**

Flying on ballots' wings  
Sewn by our bleeding fingers  
You mouth a new song  
From the bowels of the steel house of power  
As your praise-singers mock us, and police bayonets search our bony behinds  
Your fat heels dig deeper into our ribs

Ride higher, fly higher  
Your caressing courtiers urge  
As our blood flows into muddy gutters...

Eat more, take more  
They scream, as the people  
Blinded by stinging tears and hunger  
Polish your borrowed throne

You are the news  
You are the great baobab  
You, the king of lions  
Friend of other Lions  
Feasting on your kingdom

As we choke on the fumes of power  
Our bleeding knees  
Crawl over your broken promises  
Our lips swollen where your last decree bit us...

O mighty one  
Nestled royally in the snake-pit of power  
Will your big ears ever hear  
The wailing of starving, dying children  
Strung on betrayed hopes...

Will your eyes ever see the other truth?

*by Cyril Obi*