

THE SWEDISH INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH NETWORK
ON LIVELIHOODS AND NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE
AND
THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE (RESEARCH CLUSTER ON
AGRARIAN CHANGE)

Invitation to workshop on
**Transformation of an African town
Shashemene, Ethiopia**

Tuesday 19 May 2009, 13.00 – 17.00

Venue: The Nordic Africa Institute, lecture room 2nd floor, Kungsgatan 38, Uppsala

Presentations by docent Gunilla Bjerén, Stockholm University and Atakilte Beyene,
researcher, Stockholm Environment Institute

In this workshop we will present preliminary results from a longitudinal study of a commercial town in southern Ethiopia. The great majority of the population in Ethiopia, as in other African countries, are still rural people, but the number and size of towns is expanding rapidly. The town of Shashemene is a case in point.

We will present some aspects of the changes that have taken place over a 40 year period. From a modest size of 12-15,000 inhabitants in 1970 Shashemene now harbours more than 100,000 and the ethnic, linguistic, religions and occupational structure of the town has been radically transformed. From being a typical market cross-roads town the town is now developing into a regional commercial centre in a rapidly modernizing economy.

The change in scale and functions is accompanied by internally evolving institutional transformations of some socio-economic practices. There are institutional innovations in different fields, such as the reception of job-seeking new arrivals, the protection of migrant children, the development of micro-finance institutions, the emergence of new forms of religious institutions etc.

NOTE: The presentations of this workshop are part of an on-going study of Shashemene town, located at 260 km south of the capital city, Addis Ababa. Shashemene is a polycultural town in the region of Oromia. Its location is strategically situated at a crossroads which connects five major economic, agricultural and political regions. The workshop will be an opportunity for inspiring discussion rather than presentation of definite results.

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