

Uppsala 15 February 2010

NEWSLETTER FROM THE NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE

Comment by Fantu Cheru

African Engagements: On whose terms?



In the past two decades, Africa has experienced dramatic changes.

Between 1990 and 2005, in more than 42 African countries peaceful and democratic changes of government took place through competitive multiparty elections, notwithstanding more

recent setbacks in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Gabon.

On the economic front, Africa emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing regions in the wake of a boom in the international commodities market, despite the recent global financial crisis. Some African countries have put in place appropriate macroeconomic, structural and social policies that have contributed to improved growth rates and some progress towards meeting the MDGs. Significant efforts are also being made to reverse the productivity decline in agriculture and the decline in higher education and basic research in the face of equally daunting challenges including poverty, and post-conflict reconstruction and democratic consolidation.

Africa is also changing demographically, in terms of its fast growing youthful population, and high rates of urbanization that are placing new demands on resources and connecting regions and other parts of the world in complex different ways.

The end of the Cold war, and rapid globalization have contributed to increased competition for resources and markets in Africa by the world's established and emerging powers. In an increasingly multi-polar world, Africa's relevance

Nordic Africa Days 2010

Deadline extended for panels and papers

The next Nordic Africa Days (NAD) will take place at Åbo Akademi University in Åbo/Turku in Finland on **30 September to 1 October 2010**.

The theme for **NAD 2010 is *Time Space Africa: Reconnecting the Continent*** and the organizers are now inviting proposals for papers and panels.

The deadline for proposing panels and papers has been extended until 1 March 2010.

[Read the NAD 2010 Call for Papers here.](#)

[Visit the NAD 2010 web site here.](#)

Inequalities as a Cause of Conflict

Lecture by Frances Stewart 11 March 2010

Frances Stewart's lecture, titled *Inequalities between social groups leading to conflict*, will present findings from a research program covering countries in Latin America, Southeast Asia and West Africa. The conclusion is that inequalities – be they political, economic, social or cultural – among salient identity groups increases the risk of violent conflict. The lecture is based on Prof. Stewart's recent book, *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies*

The lecture will be held in the Nordic Africa Institute Library, Kungsgatan 38, Uppsala (ground floor), on 11 March 2010 at 14.15 - 16.00.

Explorations of "Afrinesia"

Workshop with Uppsala University 22-24 March 2010

A workshop titled *Explorations in "Afrinesia": Experimental Approaches to Legal and Political*

and influence in the emerging post-Cold war order is not in doubt. From being in a state of neglect and marginality in the immediate post-Cold war period, the continent—its resources and markets have become sources of interest and engagement by these powers.

Despite the political and economic changes within the continent and the world, the study of Africa remains a contested terrain. Questions as to how to understand the current changes in the continent, and how the world can engage a changing Africa on an equitable basis is far from being settled.

The challenge remains, how the world can study and engage a resurgent Africa on the basis of mutual respect that facilitate a process of tapping into the present moment to promote social transformation and development on the continent, while the world opens up innovative African products, cultures and ideas.

The research community faces the challenge of evolving and expanding opportunities and spaces which can allow for a common multi-disciplinary exercise of knowledge production and understanding without necessarily talking with one voice, thereby enriching the understanding of a dynamic and diverse Africa.

Fantu Cheru

Research Director of the Nordic Africa Institute

This article is an abridged version of the Conference Announcement for ECAS 4, the 4th European Conference on African Studies, which will be convened in Uppsala, Sweden on 15 -18 June 2011. ECAS 4 is co-organised by NAI and African Studies in Europe (AEGIS).

Read the full text of the conference announcement [here](#).

Anthropology in Africa will be held on 22 - 24 March 2010, in cooperation with Uppsala University.

More information will be posted on the NAI web site. www.nai.uu.se

Vacancies at NAI Applications invited

NAI currently has four vacancies for researchers.

[Read more about the researcher vacancies here.](#)

Recent NAI Publications

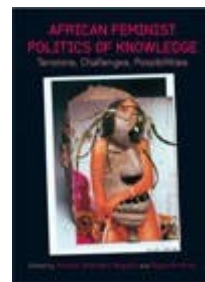
New Book on Homophobia in Africa A Debate That has Only Just Started



Henriette Gunkel's new book "The Cultural Politics of Female Sexuality in South Africa" (published jointly by Routledge and the Nordic Africa Institute) highlights a debate that has only just started: of homosexuality, lesbianism and homophobia in Africa in general and in post-apartheid South Africa specifically.

[Read the introduction from the book and a brief interview with Henriette Gunkel here.](#)

African Feminist Politics of Knowledge Tensions, Challenges, Possibilities



A book that aims at exposing the dilemmas and conflicts that feminist researchers and practitioners living and working in the Global South have to deal with on a daily basis. Edited by **Akosua Adomako Ampofo** and **Signe Arnfred**. Forthcoming title that will be published in March 2010.

[Read more about the book here.](#)

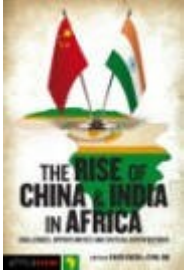
Policy Note

No 1/2010. Maxi Schoeman. South African female peacekeepers on mission in Africa: Progress, challenges and policy options for increased participation.

[Download here.](#)

New NAI Book Series With Zed Books

Africa Now is an exciting new series published by NAI in association with Zed Books in London. Featuring high-quality, cutting edge research from leading academics, the series will address the big issues confronting Africa today.



The first two books in the series are *The Rise of China and India in Africa. Challenges, Opportunities and Critical Interventions*, edited by Fantu Cheru and Cyril Obi (published in March 2010), and *Africa's Informal Workers: Collective agency alliances and transnational organizing in urban Africa*, edited by Ilda Lindell (published in April 2010).

[Read more and order books here.](#)

Nordic Africa Institute, P.O. Box 1703, SE-751 47 Uppsala, Sweden
www.nai.uu.se