Workshop 1
Africanist Network

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This regional network, proposed at the 6th EASA conference at Cracow (see report in EASA Newsletter 29, p. 9) and launched in Copenhagen in 2002 (session held at the Centre for African Studies, University of Copenhagen), will meet in Vienna for the second time. There will be a scientific part and an administrative part.
The meeting will also discuss further programme of the network between the conferences such as EASA Africanist seminars, cooperation with national and other continental organisations of Africanist anthropologists, publications of the network, etc.

Kalahari Revisionism, Vienna, and the "Indigenous Peoples" Debate

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The debate on the notion of 'indigenous peoples' is one of the newest facing Africanist anthropology. Yet the theoretical foundation of that notion is not new. It is implicit in both Kalahari revisionism and its opposite, the ecological approach that treats hunter-gatherers as exemplars of primal culture. It is also reminiscent of the earlier views of some in the 'Vienna School', especially Wilhelm Schmidt, whose earliest culture circle was represented by African hunter-gatherers. That said, the notion of 'indigenous peoples' is more complex than earlier models; and its opponents, such as Adam Kuper, must struggle against both philosophical premises (which are relatively easy to challenge) and practical arguments in favour of keeping the notion (which are more resilient, both within and outside anthropology). While this paper focuses on the 'indigenous peoples' debate in Africanist anthropology, its wider aspects include the interconnections of theoretical premises within diverse schools in the discipline and the general relation between anthropological theory and practical politics.

Afrikanerdom under Threat: Contested Collective Identity within the New Political Dispensation in South Africa

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Under apartheid South Africa seemed to be the embodiment of multiple division: of cultures, languages and territories. With the advent of the united South Africa, universalist cultural project has been challenging previous particularist tendencies. The awareness of belonging to one South Africa is particularly salient with the so-called White tribe in Africa, i.e. Afrikaners. There is a reemergence of nationalistic moods among them which tend to reactivate old grievances, while evoking their traditional sense of exclusion.

This paper examines the complexities of rapidly changing South African social landscape in which the cornerstones of Afrikaner identity are jeopardised. This results in both deconstruction and reconstruction of this distinct "population group". To deal with their contemporary "deteriorating" position within the new political dispensation, I shall analyse various political and sociocultural strategies used at both the individual and group level.

Bearing in mind that any identity construction is an ongoing process influenced by a complex network of elements and their interrelations, the inclusion/exclusion tendencies will be looked at.

The paper will draw on the data gained from an anthropological fieldwork in Potchefstroom, South Africa, once the bastion of Afrikaner ideological exclusivism. Empirical investigation will challenge the views that conceptualise Afrikaners as a monolith. The level of permeability of their group boundaries will be discussed as well as Afrikaners´ struggle for the recognition of their new political and/or cultural aspirations.

The paper will raise the fundamental issue: Will the Afrikaners be willing and able to accept that their own cultural identity should be part of the overarching, all-embracing cultural unity of South Africa? Or will they rather opt out?

**"Because all we were born here, we want to stay together":
Education, Politics, and Muslim-Christian Relations in
Contemporary Tanzania**
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The increase of education level in the country is a priority task for the Tanzanian state. However, it may seem that completion of this task may cause political problems as far as since the colonial period Christians have generally been more educated than Muslims and obtained better access to high positions in the sphere of administration. If Muslims become as educated as Christians, will not it lead to a severe struggle for power between the two communities? Our analysis based on field research reveals that most likely, this will not be the case: neither the present-day situation nor the tendencies we trace point at high probability of the negative scenario for the future. The increase of education level of both Christians and Muslims will rather

contribute to further toleration of the Christian-Muslim relations in the country.

Mayi-Mayi: A Rebel Movement in Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo)

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This paper addresses the history and the ethnography of Mayi-Mayi, a rebel movement in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Between October 1996 and May 1997, Mayi-Mayi appeared on the stage of the AFDL war, which put an end to Mobutu's regime. The movement is still very active in the rural zones of Northern and Southern Kivu. Actually the term Mayi-Mayi refers to a cluster of groups scarcely co-ordinated among themselves, ones that are often striven by internal conflicts. At the same time some common characteristics allow constructing a general view of the entire phenomena. First of all the rebels make a constant resort to war rituals, centred on the belief in the power of mayi (that means water in Congolese Swahili), a special treated water supposed to save rebels themselves from the bullets of their opponents. Second, the movement articulates a set of common grievances based on nationalist ideals in order to oppose Mayi-Mayi to Uganda and Rwanda military intervention in Kivu. As I will show, meaningful links can be sorted out between the present Mayi-Mayi rebellion and the resistance movements, which characterised the whole area in colonial and postcolonial times. Mayi-Mayi speaks to a symbolic continuity with the beliefs and rites related to the invulnerability of warriors widely documented also in other African context.
I believe that these symbols and practices supply to the scarcity of modern weapons. At the mean time Mayi-Mayi ritual discourse constitutes an efficacious strategy of mobilisation, which favours the enrolment of new recruits, in a context where the youth easily joins local militias to escape their social marginality in the local and national political arena. Mayi-Mayi references to the ancient rebellions and to the fight for independence validate the political discourse of the rebels, and reinforce their war rites.

The Rise of Vigilante Groups: Political Transcontinuities or Signs of State Devolution?

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My paper explores a particular set of actors: vigilante groups in West Africa. The first part of my paper presents three case studies and examines the ways these groups recruit their members, strive for legitimacy, establish norms and rules, and handle disputes in various fields. A major issue of debate is whether these actors and institutions emerge as novel or represent historical transcontinuities. The second part discusses their relation to the central state and the national legal field. Vigilante groups are

neither destructive nor supportive in guaranteeing public order in a communal level per se: their actual course of action depends from various actors and may change over time. Subsequently I will explore the limits of the self-regulating modes of creating order that vigilante groups offer to local communities. The third sector of the paper looks at historical and contemporary parallels, in Africa and elsewhere, and seeks for possible interpretations why such groups emerge in African societies today.

In the light of my case studies I will take up and discuss the argument, as outlined in the call for papers, considering conflict as not necessarily only destabilising local societies, but a process of re-ordering the public sphere, including incentives to the emergence of new legal institutions and patterns of legitimacy.

Chiefdom in Crisis: Unsuccessful Succession in Nanun, Ghana

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During the 20th century six successions to the naam of Bimbilla (paramount chieftaincy of the chiefdom of Nanu_) took place. All of them were accompanied by complications wrought by the modern colonial or postcolonial state. Most recent succession began in 1999 with the death of the Bimbilla Naa Abarika. Normally succession to paramountcy should not last more than a year and it consists of the ritual funeral immediately followed by the selection and installation of the new Bimbilla Naa by the electors. The naam of Bimbilla alternates between two chiefly houses, Gbu_mayili and Ba_yili, both tracing their origin from one ancestor, the founder of Nanu_. Succession has been unfinished as of writing these lines in March 2004. The delay is due to the split between the nine electors. Six of them support the eldest son of the Bimbilla Naa Dasana (ruled between 1959-1981) from one particular branch of the Gbu_mayili. The remaining three electors support the present incumbent of the naam of Nakpaa, who is a grandson of a Bimbilla Naa from another branch of Gbu_mayili. The six, whom I call "modernists", are led by a rich yam trader living in the capital city. The other faction (which I call "traditionalists") is led by the head of electors. Whereas the Nakpaa Naa is the true candidate of tradition because the incumbent of the naam of Nakpaa is according to it the most likely candidate for the naam of Bimbilla, the candidate of the modernity is an agricultural engineer who lives in the regional capital. The modernists argue that the traditional requirement of consensus among the electors is no more needed because the democratic majority of six to three is sufficient (since 1992 Ghana is a democracy). An intriguing discourse of legitimacy has been unleashed in Nanu_ and presently involves state judiciary. The state of Ghana fears that chieftaincy conflicts such as this one in Nanu_ could result in fighting and bloodshed. Therefore it intervenes once again to resolve a conflict which could be settled only according to the tradition (kali).

Models of Cultural Responses to Population Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Large families with a lot of children are highly valued in most African cultures. However, increasing population growth threatens development and political stability in many countries in modern Africa. In complex agrarian societies, excessive population growth is known to cause the decline of food per capita consumption, abrupt urbanisation, growing unemployment rate and food prices, frequent cases of famine, political instability and warfare. The majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa resemble preindustrial agrarian empires in terms of having agriculture based economies. However, these are developing societies undergoing modernisation processes. In some African countries, population growth does lead to malnutrition and serious persistent instability. Other societies manage to find more adequate responses to this major problem. The paper is aimed to the analysis of different models of responses of different African societies to the challenge of population growth.

Traces of the Past: Colonial Memories in Kubandwa Spirit Possession (Great Lakes, Africa)

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In the Great Lakes Region of Africa the practise of kubandwa spirit possession can be seen as a mimetic representation of the past. In precolonial times kubandwa possession was mainly referred to the spirits of deceased kings Bacwezi, legendary figures whose historicity has never been stated. The institution of the kingdoms was strictly tied to this religious practise, which legitimated present dynasties connecting them with a mythical past. During the colonial period kubandwa possession was forbidden, but mediums continued to practise secretly. It was in this time that the new spirits began to be involved in possession. In addition to the old Bacwezi spirits, some new characters entered the pantheon: mediums were thus possessed by the spirits of the personification of Western Medicine, of the Airplane, of Islam, of Europeaness, or by the Virgin Mary or some other Saints of the Christian Tradition. The stories of these new spirits continue to be mimetically represented through possession even at our days. The analysis of the spiritual identities involved in possession shows a stratification of different traditions and events, which contributes to preserve the past in a very vivid way. If local memories are rarely object of a written history in this region, possession gives a way to fix and re-elaborate the past through a mimetic representation which can be widely shared among the people.