Dr. Attahiru M. Jega has been the Vice Chancellor of Bayero University Kano (BUK) since November 2005. As he neared the completion of year III of his four-year term, I sought an interview with this man who is one of Nigeria’s most visible activist academics and head of one of its most important federal universities. With a PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University Jega rose quickly to a professorship in that field at BUK, and was the founding director of Bayero’s significant public service link, the Centre for Democratic Research and Training, “Mambayya House,” which is housed in the family home of Malam Aminu Kano. BUK began its life in the “third phase” of the development of higher education in Nigeria, establishing BUK in 1975 as a federal university out of its earlier role as a university college of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Jega is originally from Kebbi State in Nigeria’s northwest and Professor Jega has maintained an academic life despite the administrative roles he has played in this decade. A recent and abbreviated list of his books and edited publications would include:


As much as anything, this list reflects the focus of Mambayya House and the work of a Nigerian political scientist. I spoke to Dr. Jega in August for an hour in his office on the BUK ‘new site’ campus, outside the walls of the old city of Kano.

How do you see your role as Vice Chancellor of a federal institution of higher education?

AMJ: The role of Vice Chancellor is to promote and facilitate the search for knowledge and truth. Our public universities have been and continue to be the primary source of ideas, innovations, skills, creativity and technology. We support that quest for knowledge, and more specifically, in third world countries obviously universities have a developmental role, in human resource development. We need skilled human resources for development, not just for the public sector, but also for the private sector. We seek knowledge and skills in a Nigerian context. When Nigerian universities were initially founded and conceived during the colonial era, they reflected British educational values with an emphasis on the esoteric. Most higher education development occurred after colonial rule, when we paid more attention to the US university orientation. Higher education began to have a more applied role—utilitarian, development, nation building, national integration, bringing people from different backgrounds to work and study together, transcending their ethnic or religious background. Ironically, our overemphasis on the university’s role in development has undermined the need to really develop universities. We reached a point where universities were overproducing graduates in the arts and humanities, and then we went too far in the opposite direction. Government introduced a policy of science/arts admissions ratio, accelerating the development of science graduates. And then the arts and humanities were severely undernourished, and the sciences as well. We lost a great deal in both. The social sciences/arts/humanities were stifled, but our investments in the sciences were not sufficient either.
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Introducing New Institutional Members

The Africa Network is a nonprofit consortium of liberal arts colleges committed to literacy about and concern for Africa in American higher education. Although it welcomes the counsel and partnership of African studies scholars and departments in the large research institutions, the Africa Network is focused on the nation’s relatively small but influential liberal arts colleges, where the need for African expertise and curriculum is especially acute. Institutional and individual memberships in the Africa Network are free through the end of October 2008; membership applications can be completed online at the Africa Network website: www.africanetwork.org.

Shepherd University is a state-supported institution within the West Virginia system of higher education. The University has evolved over the last 130 years into a comprehensive center of higher learning and offers baccalaureate degrees in the liberal arts, business administration, teacher education, the social and natural sciences, and other career-oriented areas as well as a limited number of master’s degrees. Internationalizing the curriculum and enhancing study abroad opportunities are current goals. Plans are underway for a 2010 interdisciplinary study tour to Senegal and the Gambia. The University looks forward to collaborating with WARA.

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AROA/WARC : Professionnalisme et Ouverture

Disposer de ressources logistiques, assurer la mobilité des chercheurs et mettre en public les résultats de la recherche sont des handicaps majeurs de la recherche en Afrique de l’ouest. L’AROA, la W ARA et le W ARC ont choisi une approche plutôt pragmatique pour appuyer la recherche dans la maîtrise de ces contraintes pour l’atteinte de la qualité. Dans cette perspective, la décision a été prise de consacrer les ressources des bourses de voyage académique au financement des recherches de terrain centrés sur l’Afrique de l’Ouest. La coopération avec le CREPOS constitue un exemple pratique de ce soutien à la recherche promouvant la formation de jeunes doctorants.

L’animation culturelle et académique a conservé sa dynamique et son ouverture au grand public avec le traitement de questions d’une vibrante actualité. Le 8 Mai 2008, nous avons eu le privilège d’accueillir Mme Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, professeur émérite d’histoire, qui a animé une conférence publique sur le thème : « Histoire, colonisation et débats mémoriels dans la France contemporaine ». Le 5 juin 2008, Ousmane Sène et Fallou Ngom ont débattu avec le public sur « le système éducatif américain : quelles perspectives et contraintes pour le modèle sénégalais ? ».

Dans le même registre, on notera pour s’en réjouir l’audacieuse initiative du W ARC d’organiser une rencontre autour du thème « femmes et politique » avec des leaders femmes des formations politiques de l’opposition et du pouvoir, pour un dialogue citoyen enrichissant.

L’année universitaire 2007-2008 est témoin d’une dynamique d’ouverture sur la scène internationale mais aussi d’un ancrage plus solide dans l’espace académique ouest-africain qui est notre domaine mais que nous avons du mal à couvrir. Du 6 au 27 Juillet 2008, nous avons accueilli au WARC un atelier de l’American Political Science Association (APSA) qui a réuni des participants de divers pays d’Afrique sur un thème au cœur de notre actualité : « Political Participation in Africa ».

Avec l’atelier régional sur les réseaux de centres de recherche ouest-africains organisé du 9 au 11 septembre 2008, nous avons brisé les frontières linguistiques mais aussi mis ensemble des institutions académiques, publiques et privées : Point Sud (Mali), Center for African Studies, University of Ghana-Legon (Ghana) et Département des Relations extérieures de l’Université Abdou Moumouni de Niamey (Niger). La contribution du Professeur Boubacar Barry à cet atelier a été fort appréciée par les participants.

Nous devons le succès de ces manifestations et initiatives au dévouement et au professionnalisme du personnel du WARC qui a une haute conscience de ses responsabilités sous la conduite d’un leadership de rigueur, d’ouverture, de transparence et d’écoute et à l’appui multiformes de nombreuses institutions qui ont été nos bailleurs de fonds.

Ibrahima Thioub
Président, AROA

WARA 2008 ASA Panel
Knowledge and Practice of Islam in Senegal and Ghana
Perspectives of Laity and Scholars, Women and Men, Across Class and Ethnic Lines
Friday, 5pm – 7pm, Huron Room

Islam is not often associated with Africa and especially not with Sub-Saharan Africa; yet the religion has been practiced in many parts of the continent for over a thousand years, with great adaptation and creativity in a variety of situations. Senegal is a Muslim majority country, while in Ghana Islam is a minority religious practice, but the scholars in this panel find considerable common ground in the ability of Muslims to work with and relate to Christian and non-monotheistic communities, adjust to secular rule by colonial authorities and independent states, and find ways to solve economic, domestic, and theological problems. In this panel we will look at oral and written testimony, lay and clerical perspectives, the Islamic knowledge and practice of women and men, the development of new literatures, and perspectives on Islamic militancy and radicalism. In so doing, we add to the understanding of the creativity, practicality, and tolerance of Islamic knowledge and practice in Africa. Panel presentations are part of an electronic project that includes primary oral and visual materials in addition to narrative analyses. The knowledge generated by participating scholars will be available to a range of audiences inside and outside the academy in the U.S. and in Africa, including members of the communities among whom the research was conducted.

Chair: Catherine A Foley, Michigan State University
- David Robinson, Michigan State University
- Maria L Grosz-Ngaté, Indiana University
- Fallou Ngom, Boston University
- Gracia C Clark, Indiana University

Dr. Ibrahima Thioub

Ibrahima Thioub
Président, AROA
From the WAR's Director

As we begin another academic year, we can look back with satisfaction on a rich and eventful year. We were able to support cutting edge research through our WARA Fellowship Program and WARC Travel Grants (see reports from grantees in this issue). We offered the WARC Library Fellowship for a second year; it is an excellent way of supporting our library and our future librarians! Speaking of the library, WARA would like to acknowledge the generous book donations of Professors Wm. Zartman (Johns Hopkins), John Hutchison (Boston University), David Robinson (Michigan State University), and Tom Callaghy (University of Pennsylvania). In anticipation of the arrival of these collections, WARC is in the process of expanding available shelf space. We would like to thank the US Embassy in Dakar for assisting with shipping.

This past year has been a very active one for the association and especially for activities at WARC, many of which are reported on in this newsletter. Perhaps the best news for us is that Professor Ousmane Sène, who has provided such terrific leadership for WARC over the past few years, has signed a four-year contract! Professor Sène, along with the entire WARC staff, has made WARC a much-sought-after institution, increasingly known for the quality of its programs, the beauty of its center, and the graciousness, professionalism, and dedication of its staff.

This fall we lost a long-time member of the WARC family. Bassirou Serigne Ndiaye, who had been with WARC since its early days, passed away in September. We will remember him for his long service to WARC.

I’d like to welcome our new board members, Marame Gueye of East Carolina University, Ugo Nwokeji of UC Berkeley, and Edmund Abaka of the University of Miami. At the same time, I extend my thanks to those who are rotating off the board this year: Emilie Ngo-Nguidjol, who has done so much for the library at WARC; Erin Augis for her diligent work chairing the Fellowship Committee; and Emmanuel Yewah for his work reviewing WARA Fellowship applications. I appreciate your many contributions to WARA.

WAR’s programs are made possible by the generous support of the US Department of Education and the Educational and Cultural Affairs office of the US Department of State, by our members, and by the African Studies Center at Boston University, which provides WARA with office space in a pleasant and intellectually vibrant atmosphere.

This year, WARA welcomes a new Graduate Assistant, Abel Djassi Amado, a Doctoral student in Political Science at Boston University. You will have the opportunity to meet Mr. Amado at the WARA Membership Meeting, scheduled for Saturday evening, November 15 at the ASA conference hotel. I look forward to seeing many of you there and to discussing together future WARA projects and programs.

From WARC’s Director

As we are about to enter the last term of 2008 and we look back over the last nine months, we can safely say that 2008 has been an eventful year for the West African Research Center. Very successful public lectures, workshops and seminars were held at the Center, including the high-profile panel on “Women in Politics in Senegal;” the video conference on the film Bamako, organized with a number of universities in the Massachusetts Valley and the participation of key Senegalese academics, officials and personalities; and the launch of the first biography written on the Senegalese filmmaker, Ousmane Sembene. In March, we were graced with the visit of WARC’s Founding Mother, Dr. Mary Ellen Lane, Executive Director of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC).

In June and July, a successful study tour was organized by the Center for Teachers, Professors and Researchers from WARA institutional member UNC-Chapel Hill, and the American Political Science Association held a landmark workshop in Dakar in association with the West African Research Center. In early September, thanks to a grant from CAORC, WARC was able to host directors of research centers and institutions from Mali, Ghana and Niger for a three-day consultation towards the future networking of major research centers in West Africa.

Currently, we are working on streamlining WARC operations to ensure compliance with good practices in terms of financial management and administration. A major step in this respect is the full-scale audit that is currently being conducted. Preparations are now underway for the upcoming CAORC Directors Meeting which WARC will be hosting in January. This will bring together the directors of CAORC-affiliated research centers in the world over. This will be followed by other major international meetings later on in the course of 2009.

While it is strongly hoped that the nightmare of power outages will soon be a thing of the past with the powerful generator and the solar energy WARC is planning to install, efforts are also being made in other areas. For example, the restaurant of the Center will soon be offering a more varied menu with the hiring of a student caterer to further train the restaurant staff. Also, discussions are underway with the Senegalese Institute of Food Technology (Institut de Technologie Alimentaire - ITA) in order to soon offer our customers excellent dishes from Senegalese traditional and modern cuisine using local cereals and foodstuffs. Yes, research is our chief concern, but we also keep an eye on applied research as a way of promoting West African products, and the link with ITA means just that.

Ousmane Sène, WARC Director
After many turbulent years in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d’Ivoire, things are getting back to normal. The fighting has stopped, the streets are bustling, and political leaders are talking. Amid the calm, there are still lingering questions about the causes of the wars, the nature of the peace processes, justice and accountability, and national reconciliation and democracy.

I spent three months (May to August 2008) in these three countries collecting data on the civil wars and peace processes. The research was made possible by a generous Post-Doctoral Fellowship from the West African Research Association. I collected archival materials and interviewed a wide range of people involved with the civil wars and the peace processes. They included politicians, community leaders, scholars, diplomats, and officials of key international organizations. The study is a long term project that seeks to examine the causes of the civil wars and the peace building role of the international community. Over the next couple of years, I hope to publish the findings.

The study points to several critical issues in the political development of these countries. The foremost issue is political marginalization. While each of these countries faces a unique set of problems, there is a sense of marginalization in all of them. Marginalization has been viewed in terms of regional/ethnic divides, elitism, and economic exploitation. While most political actors and observers in these countries acknowledge the internal causes of the wars, they are quick to underscore the role of international and local actors in fueling the wars for their own personal gains. This is most evident in the blood diamond trade in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the foreign domination of the Ivorian economy. In all three countries, the critical challenge for the international community is how to walk a fine line between steering the peace process and respecting the sovereignty and dignity of the people. This is most pronounced in Côte d’Ivoire where nationalism seems to be getting stronger. This raises critical questions about the appropriate role of the international community in peace building. Finally, there is the thorny issue of transitional justice. The challenges are how to deal with impunity, bring closure for victims, reintegrate combatants, and avoid unraveling the peace. These challenges are most poignant in Sierra Leone, where tremendous atrocities were committed and the international community has invested heavily in the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

In addition to collecting data, I made invaluable contacts with scholars at the University of Liberia, University of Cocody (Abidjan), and University of Sierra Leone. We are exploring the possibilities of holding a conference on the peace processes in these three countries and doing collaborative research. I am also working with the University of Sierra Leone to organize a study abroad program to Sierra Leone starting from 2010.

The WARA fellowship has not only made it possible for me to collect vital data, but to also establish invaluable contacts with scholars and political actors that will further my long term research. My goal is build these contacts into solid institutional relations.

As I traveled through these countries, I could not help but also notice the differences between Côte d’Ivoire and the other two countries. Too often, we tend to think that all African countries are the same. True, there are countless similarities, but Côte d’Ivoire looks very different.

The trip itself was revealing. Traveling within Africa can be challenging. I, too, had my share of adventures in navigating treacherous roads and dealing with airline staff, police officers and customs agents who repeatedly reminded me of the pathologies of government and exploitation of the masses.

Abu Bakarr Bah
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Northern Illinois University
abah@niu.edu

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**Spring 2008 WARC Travel Grantees**

**Azeez Butali**  
Dundee Dental School  
University of Dundee  
*An investigation into the role of cleft lip and palate in the aetiology of orofacial clefts in Nigeria*

**Georgette Koty**  
Civil & Industrial Engineering  
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University  
*An Optimization Model for the Management of a Regional Multi-Purpose Multi-Reservoir System*
Thanks to funding through the West African Research Association, I was able to spend two months in Bénin this summer examining the role Vodun plays in the creation of nationalizing discourses. As a result of this research, I have come to see Vodun as a religious system that moves across ethnic boundaries. This approach will allow me to explore how both Fon and Yoruba peoples produce Vodun and then to compare these practices with the ways the tourist industry markets and “consumes” local culture, so as to analyze how Vodun remains culturally viable while negotiating a position in global arenas.

While Bénin did not attract steady international tourism until 1990, tourists now travel to Bénin in significant numbers to explore Vodun. During the two prior decades, Matthew Kérékou, the military dictator of Bénin (1972-1990), deterred international tourists from traveling to Bénin due to his many authoritarian actions—including prosecuting and murdering many Vodun priests and other local religious practitioners. In 1993, newly elected President Nicéphore Soglo re-legitimized Vodun practice not only by reinstating its former legal status but also, with the help of UNESCO, establishing “National Vodun Day,” a national holiday that celebrates Bénin’s local religious traditions. Although “National Vodun Day” undoubtedly affects local religious ideologies by re-positioning Vodun center stage as a source of national pride, art historian Dana Rush reminds us that originally, “National Vodun Day” was conceived as a commercial rather than a religious enterprise, intended to promote tourism” (Rush 2001:33).

Today, Vodun in Bénin finds itself at a critical juncture, as it develops simultaneously for internal consumption and global markets. As a result of the historical trans-Atlantic slave trade, African religions such as Vodun have persisted and flourished in the African Americas (notably Cuba, Haiti, Brazil and the American South). Propelled by the movie industry and other mass media, exaggerated, pejorative, and racist images of staggering zombies, vengeful witchdoctors, and gory blood sacrifices have shaped many Westerners’ images of “voodoo.” The West’s fascination with Vodun has been exploited by tour agencies marketing “the African experience” to would-be adventurers. Indeed, as tourists and other visitors become involved in Vodun, the religion’s mutability propels it into the global arena not only as a “cultural treasure” or “marketable cultural heritage” but also as an emergent “world religion,” functioning similarly to other “world religions” such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. How has Vodun come to comfortably occupy and thrive in spaces that have historically rejected African religious ideologies?

In summer 2008, after traveling to and considering several research sites in Bénin, I selected Ouidah as the best site for my future doctoral project. Because Ouidah is an international tourist hub, working in that city will allow me to observe the interplay between local and global understanding of Vodun. The home of both Fon and Yoruba peoples as well as the Supreme Chief of Vodun in Bénin, Ouidah is marketed by the tourism industry as “the cradle of Vodun.” While in Ouidah I conducted preliminary interviews with many Vodun participants and priests, international tourists, and local tour guides. Moreover, using French as my foundation, I worked with a language teacher to gain beginning competence in Fon and Yoruba languages, which make up the vast majority of Vodun practitioners in Bénin. I also developed research affiliations with the temple of the Supreme Chief of Vodun in Bénin, and with the palace of King Onikoyi, the king of the Yoruba peoples in southern Bénin.

Having worked in the Afro-Caribbean and now extending my research focus to West Africa, this project will allow me to further the mission of the West African Research Association by fostering regional dialogue across the “Black Atlantic” (Gilroy 1993) and strengthening interactions among Béninois scholars and social actors, as well as scholars who work solely in Africa or in the Caribbean. My project also promises to enrich our understanding of religion more broadly. As the world becomes ever more global, scholars have suggested that local religious ideologies are threatened by cultural or religious extinction, often replacing “traditional” religions with those that are more “mainstream” and globally accepted (Horton 1971). However, the case of Vodun suggests the possibility that globalization may also unexpectedly provide the space for the opposite reaction. As Vodun demonstrates, globalization notwithstanding, local religious ideologies may become more, rather than less, important to the millions of people who believe in them and beyond.

Timothy Landry  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Tlandry2@uiuc.edu
Migratory Herders and Conflict Management

As a WARA Pre-doctoral Fellow, I conducted research this summer on migratory herders and conflict management in the Kita district of western Mali. During my seven-week stay (June 1st to July 20th), I laid the groundwork for dissertation research to be conducted next year. For my PhD, I seek to understand how Fulani herdsmen secure access to water and grazing areas at the beginning of their dry season migration.

The beginning of the dry season is a critical period for herdsmen and farmers alike: rainy seasons are ending earlier and more sporadically in the Sahel, where herdsmen spend the rainy season. This forces herdsmen to move south earlier than usual, which often brings them into conflict with farmers who are still harvesting their crops. In Kita, this problem appears to be exacerbated by a biosphere reserve that is located along their path of migration. Herdsmen are prohibited from spending more than 72 hours in the reserve, a policy that accelerates their southerly movements towards settled and increasingly cultivated regions.

Managing herd movements and minimizing conflict with farmers is a complex challenge. It involves demographic pressure, global climate change, political decentralization, and the ongoing monetization of Mali’s rural economy. At the core of this issue are newly elected local governments that are struggling to define livestock corridors and protect herdsmen’s legal right to dry season water access. These imperatives are greatly complicated by customary land tenure through which agriculturists maintain claims over virtually all productive land.

I spent several weeks conducting participatory observation and semi-structured interviews with herders, farmers, and local officials in several communities located along a major route of herd migration. Notably, I participated in several community workshops during which new farmer-herder conflict management committees elaborated their policies. A very interesting issue that emerged from these workshops had to do with the physical location of herd migration corridors. Farmers and herdsmen contested the distance to villages, fields, and the biosphere reserve. By witnessing this dispute, I was able to see firsthand the highly political nature of natural resource management in rural Mali.

The issue of village-scale land management is complicated by a number of additional factors: rural Mali’s plural structure of governance. ‘Plural’ refers to the coexistence of modern and traditional institutions that perform overlapping, complementary, and often competing functions. Moreover, larger scale issues such as rainfall variability in the Sahel and socio-religious ties to other communities transcend individual communities. In this sense, I see herd mobility and management as a quintessential topic of geographic inquiry. It includes social as well as biophysical variables interacting at different spatial scales.

I also spent time in the Malian capital of Bamako and I am collaborating with several individuals in the academic and civil society communities. My advisor in Mali is Dr. Brehima Kassibo of the Institute for Research in the Humanities (ISFRA). I am also working closely with the Swiss NGO Helvetas, which manages a project on farmer-herder conflict in Kita. I thoroughly enjoyed Bamako’s cultural ambiance, especially the live concerts and Sunday weddings.

My research will make a significant contribution to the WARA mission by initiating a new collaborative research project between the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the National University of Bamako. I believe that the research I began this summer will continue for many years and I welcome ideas, questions, and feedback from the WARA community.

Leif Brottem
Department of Geography
University of Wisconsin-Madison
brottem@wisc.edu
Adoption of resource-conserving agricultural technologies by smallholder farmers in the Jos Plateau
An economic and policy analysis for Nigeria

Objectives of the Research
The broad objective of my research, conducted between January and May of 2008, is to identify the factors influencing farmer’s adoption of land management technologies in the highlands of Jos-Plateau, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

• Find out farmers knowledge, perception and attitudes with respect to soil degradation and the extent of their adoption of introduced and indigenous land management technologies

• Analyze the spatial and temporal variations in the adoption of land management by examining the role of policy, institutional, socio-economic, biophysical and accessibility factors in influencing the variation

• Examine how government policies, programs and institutions are influencing adoption of land management technology and their implications for production, resources conditions and household income

• Suggest policies conducive to environmentally sustainable, economically and socially viable land management technologies

The Jos Plateau makes up a major part of rich agricultural land in Nigeria. However, the Jos Plateau has been experiencing rapid population growth, leading to increased demand for food, fuelwood and agricultural land. Most parts of the slopes have been experiencing declining soil fertility and severe soil erosion due largely to continuous cultivation. As a result, agricultural productivity has declined, leading to serious food shortages.

Amidst the growing concern about the adverse effects of agricultural land degradation due to accelerated soil erosion, nutrient depletion and high population pressure, farmers in the Jos Plateau have adopted several biological and structural land management practices, though the degree of adoption varies from one farm household to another. This study examines the adoption of land management technologies among smallholder farmers in the Jos Plateau, Nigeria.

Preliminary findings
• Results from a duration model show that diffusion of externally induced technologies such as alley farming, agroforestry has been relatively slow, with long lags in adoption due to differences in land quality, farm size, farmer education, and regional factors

• The results of the multi linear regression analysis of 150 households revealed four variables, namely, extension service, agricultural labor force, gravity of soil erosion, and out-migration explaining nearly 90% variation in adoption of land management technologies. All these variables except out-migration have positive influence on adoption of land management technologies

• With the increasing trend toward rural-urban migration in all developing countries, it is plausible to anticipate that in the future farmers are unlikely to maintain the highly labor intensive practices, even if they are indigenous. Farmers are likely to be attracted to adoption of technologies that are relatively less labor intensive, but provide higher return to the resources involved including land and labor.

Two conference papers have been produced from the research fieldwork, “Biodiversity and land degradation: Ecological awareness and knowledge required by stewards of the creation” presented at the International Conference on Ecological Theology and Environmental Ethics held June 2-6 in Chania, Greece. The second paper “Adoption of agricultural land management technologies by smallholder farmers in the Jos Plateau, Nigeria” has been accepted for presentation at the 5th International Conference on Land Degradation in holding September 18-22, 2008 in Bari, Italy. A journal article has been submitted to the International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability (IJAS) for publication.

I am most grateful to WARC for the travel grant which enabled me to conduct my dissertation field research Nigeria. The findings of this study will bear significant importance for formulation of policies conducive to promotion of sustainable land management and for the alleviation of poverty.

Othniel Mintang Yila, PhD Student
Regional and Rural Development Planning,
School of Environment, Resources and Development,
Asian Institute of Technology,
Klong Luang, Pathumthani 12120
Thailand www.ait.ac.th
othniel.mintang.yila@ait.ac.th
From Our Fellows

Gender, Social Movements and Democracy
Examining the Factors for Success of Women’s Social Movements in Ghana

As a recipient of the WARC Travel Grant, I was able to travel to Ghana from May – July 2008 for my doctoral fieldwork. My research seeks to explore the nexus of democracy and civil society development in Africa by using Ghana as a case study. The research examines the processes by which democracy may contribute to civil society development by posing the question: has formal democracy (defined as the holding of competitive elections and the granting of civil and political rights) contributed to the establishment of a strong civil society in Ghana?

By using women’s organizations as a proxy for measuring civil society development, the research was conducted mainly through primary interviews with women’s organizations. Secondary sources of information were also gathered through library visits, newspaper clippings, and interviews with prominent intellectuals.

Although the fieldwork is in the analysis stage and no conclusive findings have been made, there are a few preliminary findings worth mentioning. First, women’s organizations existed as part of civil society in Ghana during military regimes, but the types and numbers have changed with the advent of democracy. For example, unlike earlier times, the number of women’s organizations has increased due to the guarantees contained in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, which provides for the promotion and protection of the rights of association and freedom of expression.

Second, another interesting finding is that though there has been a growth in numbers, women’s goals have not seen much change as most of them are still trying to assure the “practical” needs of women such as economic and social rights. This had therefore led to a scenario whereby only about two of the seventeen interviewed organizations actually engage in more “strategic” issues such as political participation of women.

Third, the effect of the second observation has been that, for most of these women’s organizations, the institutional openings provided by democracy such as a free and representative parliament and a free and fair judicial system has not been of much use to them. The establishment of the Women’s Ministry, which has a Cabinet position, has also not led to many gains for the women’s movements, as the Ministry itself lacks the financial capacity to function due to the meager budgetary allocation it receives from the government.

Fourth, it is worth noting that the government has created the necessary institutional openings but there is still a long way to go as civic organizations continue to engage with the government for more accountability.

The recent passage of the Domestic Violence Act of 2007 heralds the opportunity created for civil society to engage with the state. However, there are still many other issues which need to be addressed, such as the dwindling number of female members of parliament in the forthcoming elections in December 2008.

During my fieldwork, I also attended the annual colloquium of the Political Science Department at the University of Ghana. This colloquium enabled me to meet with political scientists in the field and engage with them on issues pertaining to my research and other political developments especially in an election year in Ghana.

Through this grant from WARA, I was able to conduct my fieldwork with the utmost peace of mind and the full concentration required of a researcher in the field.

Josephine Dawuni
Georgia State University
jdawuni@yahoo.com

2008 WARC Library Internship

This summer I completed an internship with the WARC library in Dakar, Senegal. I am a master’s candidate at Indiana University. I am pursuing a dual degree in Comparative Literature and Library Science, both with specializations in African Studies. I am interested in the literature of social movements in Africa. I added a Library Science degree to my Comparative Literature degree in order to gain the skills necessary to develop collections in local language literatures and literatures of social movements in Africa. Outside of the initiatives pursued by WARC, few institutions are focusing on the collection and management of resources pertinent to my studies. I feel a responsibility to contribute to communities that I learn from and do research in, and a degree in librarianship will also supply me with the tools I need to assist these communities in digitization.
W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan African Culture

Background and Objectives

More than half a century after an African American exodus to Ghana in answer to President Kwame Nkrumah’s call for Pan African development, African Americans continue to come to Ghana in search of heritage and Pan African connections. At the W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan African Culture, I researched African American and Ghanaian views of each other, Pan Africanism, and heritage in a post-colonial context.

Activities Associated with Internship

My main internship tasks were to assist the Centre with the maintenance of its Pan African public library. The internship also allowed me to participate in a number of Pan African cultural and scholarly activities which included a book launch about Ghana's role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, musical performances, and theatrical reenactments of the slave trade. I also assisted the Centre in the filming of a promotional video in partnership with the U.S. Embassy.

Findings

Most scholars of African American-Ghanaian relations have revealed that the two groups misunderstand each other. I found this to be true during my research internship. In general, most African Americans visit Ghana with the symbolic desire to return to their roots and visit sites dealing with the slave trade. This ancestral homecoming comes with the expectation that Ghanaians have always viewed them as kindred, possess a full understanding of African American history as related to the slave trade, and look the part of the “indigenous” African.

Ghanaian perceptions of African Americans are equally complex. From my internship and previous travel experience in Ghana, I was told that most Ghanaians are not familiar with African American history, have not visited heritage sites, nor understand the motivations of the African American minority who has permanently settled in Ghana in lieu of U.S. wealth. Further, some Ghanaians have a condescending view toward African Americans for their slave and White ancestry (hence the term “oburonyi,” or “white person in one of the local languages), and Westernized upbringing. Those interviewed deemed African Americans as culturally and linguistically estranged from Africa and Africans. Ghanaians more familiar with African American motivations to tour Ghana expressed disappointment at an African American condescension toward Ghanaian cultural values, practices and beliefs.

Despite both groups’ problematic perceptions of each other, various groups in Ghana promote Pan Africanism between the two on a primarily cultural and economic level. Yet I observed that when both groups’ interact at these gatherings, their underlying perceptions of each other are typically left unaddressed. The result is a guise of Pan Africanism that is financially profitable with deceptive undertones.

Interestingly, each group believed in the necessity of Pan Africanism despite their stereotypes. Most stressed the importance of going beyond misperceptions to form meaningful relationships that can be utilized for Ghanaian economic development. Though aware of this problematic paradox of heritage, Pan Africanism and economics, most Ghanaians and African Americans interviewed felt it necessary economically and could not provide alternatives.

I believe that in a post-colonial and superficial context, African Americans and Ghanaians have less in common in the areas of racial oppression than they did in the 1960s and thus, have dulled motivations for unity. It is not surprising then, that when it comes to identity, heritage and Pan Africanism, they have totally different needs and expectations. With my research internship complete, I find myself wishing I could probe both groups more about how to forge meaningful relationships with each other and why, despite their diverging views of each other, they still view Pan Africanism as necessary. Such answers will be extremely helpful as African and African Americans continue to converge socio-culturally, scholastically, and economically. I hope to answer these questions in my future research.

Zahida Sherman
Northwestern University
zahida.sherman@gmail.com
How do you keep track of all of Nigeria’s needs and then find a place to address them in the university?

AMJ: Government attempted to do that through the National Manpower Board. But it was not placed on very sound footing— the board had insufficient research support. A couple of years ago we had a meeting at the National Universities Council where I asked if we had data on our university carrying capacity. That is, how many grads do we want in the next 10 years and in which fields? And how can the universities address these needs? But the manpower board is not in the position to really give us the information we need to make these estimates. An effort is being made now to readdress this need and reevaluate our research capacity in this area.

How are you feeling about students today? Are they well prepared? Are they taking their higher education seriously?

AMJ: Every generation seems to believe that they have been better prepared than the current one. But today the Nigerian universities are doing very well under the circumstances, despite serious problems of underfunding. Our graduates seem to be doing well in getting admission to foreign universities, which is a significant measure. But when we travel outside, we do come back feeling bad about our standards. Industry complains that our graduates are not meeting their needs— but this seems to be a universal. Industry complains that they have to spend time and money retraining the graduates. Despite the problems we are doing OK. In many countries universities are teaching and research institutions. But in Nigeria, we are primarily teaching focused, we do not have the capacity to be research institutions, we have given in to the demands of teaching and we do not have funds for research and invention, etc.

In terms of quality assurance, any student getting a basic degree can compete with anyone in the world, we think. Students who study computer engineering know the theory, but they have not necessarily had the laboratory work they may have needed. Our medical doctors can compete with anyone, we think, and lately we have come to be impressed with our neuro-surgery grads, finding them to be the best in Africa. We are still doing our best despite the circumstances. And those circumstances include the fact that we are severely understaffed, our best and trained staff frequently taking jobs outside of Nigeria.

What about your national role? How do you deal with all the competing interests here? So many of your students are first generation college students— how do you introduce their parents to the customs of higher education?

AMJ: Frankly, I do not have many opportunities to directly deal with parents. And there are really fewer opportunities to deal directly with students, either, except for the ceremonies, matriculation, commencement, etc. Many of the student complaints I field begin in university senate decisions— expulsion, etc for poor performance. Technically, it is the student who should appeal, but we often get parents appealing on behalf of their child, “I know my boy is responsible and would never cheat”, etc. We have been talking about establishing a town and gown forum to debate some of the issues concerning community cooperation and involvement in Kano. We hope to have kind of a representative group to discuss university and community challenges and how they are related in Kano. How can the community contribute to the development of the university? And how can we contribute to the development of Kano? For now, our discussions are limited to the city of Kano and its surrounding villages, which today represents Nigeria’s second largest metropolitan area after Lagos.

How do you balance your national role with your university administrative responsibilities?

AMJ: Well, frankly, I am trying to balance my own academic interests as a political scientist; my interests are in Nigeria’s foreign policy, and I have taught and written in this field. So, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs decided to include academics in Nigeria’s UN delegation to the General Assembly last year, I grabbed the opportunity, thinking down the road about having a good topic to teach about when I go back to the classroom. I have also written a great deal about democratic reform and electoral politics in this country. So, I was appointed to the Electoral Reform Commission that President Yar’adua established after our difficult elections of last year. I have to balance these time-consuming commitments with those of running the university. But there is life beyond the Vice Chancellorship and I think that my experience in this office is not as relevant to my teaching as these other political life in Nigeria opportunities. These activities have also allowed me to promote the university in diverse environments. They have been great opportunities to interact with people in the public service community.

How do you feel about the growing private sector universities?

AMJ: Some of us are greatly concerned about quality assurance in these new institutions. We are all aware that Nigeria has fewer university seats than it needs, but the private expansion has not necessarily been one of high quality. From 1999 Nigeria has opened 40 new universities. And the pool from which we all recruit teachers is not expanding. The privates are either poaching our staff or employing our staff as part timers, which does not necessarily serve all of us well. These private universities here are private for-profit which does not necessarily serve the public; they serve the investors, the private capitalist owners. Scholarship is not high on the private university agenda, but it is a response to tremendous demand from high school graduates. The university as private investment which can have profit returned to investors is a new phenomenon in Nigeria which we must watch carefully.

BUK is in an Islamic environment. What is the impact on the university?

AMJ: For us running the university our constant demand is to be sensitive to the immediate environment, we are constantly chal-
lenged by that. We try to bear it in mind, but we do not feel daily pressure on this issue. The Muslim student groups may say this or that is anti-Islamic, but we do not necessarily feel pressure from these groups. We have our established guidelines to follow, our own rules, and we stick to them. We came up with the dress code, for example. We felt that the student teacher relationships were being affected by the way students dressed, so we initiated the dress code. I distinguish ‘dressing for the beach’ from ‘dressing for the classroom.’ We can define ‘decent dressing’ not in religious term, but just to promote a scholarly atmosphere. Dressing has relevance to character formation, not necessarily religious concepts. But the students interpret the dress code as a religious guideline. But it is not an “Islamic dress code’. We began this policy in 2006, erecting the “Dress Decently” billboards on and near the campus. Our important goal was to minimize exposure…. There is a strong Islamic atmosphere at BUK and local religious leaders often play a role in conferences here, etc. How do you establish cordial relations with religious leaders?

AMJ: We are not a local university or a religious university. BUK is a federal university, so we must run this institution based on the national character, which is secular. But there is always the tension with the local religious sensibilities. Students who have applied for entrance may go to a traditional ruler and seek his influence who may then try to influence us, but we look at qualifications and do not take these recommendations into account. We do reply to these traditional rulers, and we reply to them politely, but we try to make clear that we have other criteria by which we make our decisions. But we can write to these rulers and tell him that we cannot admit so and so because he is not qualified. They do not affect our decisions; we follow our own guidelines.

What is the role of foreign institutions in your work developing Bayero University Kano?

AMJ: Foreign institutions have been very important in our revitalization efforts. Prior to 1999 our Nigerian institutions were in real crisis, of sustainability, etc. But in the new democratic era, some foundations, particularly the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (the Carnegie, Ford, MacArthur and Rockefeller Foundations), has done an amazing job of supporting us, purchasing equipment, providing staff development funds up to and including the PhD level, reforming curricula, information and instructional technology. We have benefited substantially here, particularly from the MacArthur Foundation. We have now received US $ 8 million in the past two years alone. We have been able to train 30 new PhDs with this money, and hope to do up to 10 more in the next 10 years. Carnegie, Rockefeller have also supported other Nigerian institutions. The foundation staffs have been very concerned about quality control of these grant projects so we see much support from the foundations. The National Universities Council has rated our university very highly, I think as a result of this project work. Accreditation has been granted for all of our programs, and from the Nigerian medical and dental council for our medical schools and from the national board of engineers for our engineering programs.

Interview by Steve Howard
Director, Center for African Studies
Ohio University
howard@ohio.edu

In April, WARC librarian Adama Diouf, participated in a ten-day training organized by the Digital Library for International Research at the Chicago Research Libraries. After the training, Ms. Diouf was a guest of WARA board member, Emilie Ngo-Nguidjol at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she presented to library colleagues at the Memorial Library, the African Studies Program, and the School of Library and Information Studies. Her afternoon talk was entitled “The Role of the West African Research Center (WARC) Library in Scholarship on West Africa”
I travelled to Mali to visit Timbuktu from August 18 to August 24, 2008. My primary goal was to see whether the recently popularized Timbuktu manuscripts were exclusively in Arabic or whether there are unacknowledged manuscripts in local languages written in Ajami. Thanks to the PAO office of the US embassy in Dakar and Bamako and the help of WARA, I was connected to Abdel Kader Haidara, the head of a local NGO called SAVAM-DCI. The staff at SAVAM-DCI introduced me to scholars, local authorities, and library owners I wanted to meet and made me visit over eight Timbuktu libraries. I discovered that there were Ajami documents (although in smaller numbers compared to Arabic manuscripts) in each of the libraries I visited. However, these Ajami manuscripts were often not granted any particular significance by their owners. In fact, many people I found in the libraries were not familiar with the term “Ajami.” They referred to these manuscripts as “les manuscrits en langues locales écrits en caractères arabe” (literally: manuscripts in local languages written with the Arabic script).

In an effort to engage local scholars on the Ajami literatures in the city, I gave a talk on Wolofal (Wolof Ajami of Muridiyya) at the Mamma Haidara Library.1 The talk was well attended by scholars and regular folks. The talk and the discussion that followed it triggered new local interests in existing Ajami literatures which had been largely overlooked by scholars. Discussions focused on the insights that may be contained in Ajami literatures in Songhay, Bamanankan, Tamasheq, Fulfulde or Hassaniyya. Because most of the efforts in Timbuktu have been centered on Arabic manuscripts, Ajami documents are the voices that are seldom heard. Yet, they are the voices of important local thinkers and regular folks whose insights capture the local worldview, beliefs and history of their era. These manuscripts are therefore an important part of our human heritage that must be gathered, catalogued, preserved, translated, studied, and be given the consideration they deserve.

As the new Director of the African Language Program at Boston University, my experience in Timbuktu and my ongoing work in Wolofal led my colleagues and I to incorporate Ajami in our African Language Program starting this Fall. We now teach both the Latin-based script and Ajami script in our three main languages (Wolof, Pular-Fuuta Jalon, and Hausa). It is my hope that this will become a trend in African Language Programs throughout the country so that the new generations of American scholars are able to have direct access to the wealth of information still hidden in African Ajami literatures. Ultimately, I hope that our efforts on Ajami would lead to a new mode of knowledge production about Africa and to the creation of an International Centre for Ajami Teaching and Research in which all aspects of the “Ajami world” of Sudanic Africa will be studied and disseminated.

Fallou Ngom
Boston University
fngom@bu.edu

1 The PowerPoint presentation and video-cassettes of the talk and the discussion in French are available upon request.
In July, the American Political Science Association (APSA) sponsored a workshop on Political Participation which took place in Dakar, Senegal at the West African Research Center (WARC). The workshop, funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, sought to enhance the capacities of twenty-five mid- and junior level political scientists from East and West Africa and to provide a forum for supporting their research agendas. Bahram Rajee and Helena Saele of APSA’s International and External Relations coordinated with WARC to organize the conference. The workshop was led by Leonard Wantchekon of New York University (US), Catherine Boone of University of Texas/Austin (US), Augustin Loada of the University of Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Alioune Diop of the University Gaston Berger of Saint Louis (Senegal). It included scholars from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Mozambique, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar. Four graduate students, two from University of Texas/Austin, one from New York University and one from Michigan State University, also participated in the workshop.

As one of the graduate student participants, I found it to be a very rewarding experience. The workshop provided excellent opportunities to present research, learn new methodologies, review important literature, and become a member of a network of talented researchers. The participants were deeply engaged in the workshop and everyone who presented research received helpful feedback.

APSA assembled a group of participants that represented the full diversity of research traditions in political science. The participants’ range of methodological backgrounds contributed to the strength of the workshop. Those with a more historical approach learned to marshal other methods to make their research more rigorous. By the same token, those subscribing to a more statistical approach were pushed to more fully examine the mechanisms at work in their models. In addition, participants who had not had a great deal of exposure to quantitative methods learned more about the approach.

One of the important aspects of the workshop was instruction on framing papers in order to increase the chances of publication. Many of the participants were trained in the “European” approach to political science and the workshop offered a contrasting approach. While many papers offered compelling results, their organization or approach sometimes obscured the findings. By discussing published articles and their theoretical approaches, participants became better informed on how to organize their arguments. This will hopefully increase the amount of publishable work emanating from Africa.

An encouraging development was the talk of future collaboration between participants. Moreover, the workshop created a network that will continue to cultivate important research. For example, a scholar interested in legislative elections with a desire to obtain data will now have potential research partners in eight other countries. There is a limited amount of good data available in Africa and contacts such as these should prove invaluable.

Outside of the workshop sessions there were ample social events designed to allow the participants to interact in less academic settings. One such event was an excursion to the Island of Gorée that allowed the participants to meet and engage in a less formal setting. It was interesting to see many of the African participants visit an island that they had read about in their history books in primary and secondary school. Moreover the opening and closing ceremonies of the workshop gave participants the chance to engage with some of Senegal’s leading political leaders and intellectuals. These opportunities provided a much needed break from work but still fostered discussions that were work related.

I was able to benefit from the workshop in several ways. First I was able to present a paper before the group of participants. The paper uses Afrobarometer data to look at the causes of political violence in Africa; the feedback from the participants was useful. Participants pointed out variables that I may have omitted and also suggested alternative arguments. Secondly I was able to discuss potential research agendas with my African counterparts, particularly those from Burkina Faso. In December of this year I will be starting a Fulbright fellowship in Burkina Faso and it was helpful to become more familiar with the Burkinabé scholars. Finally, I hope to co-author a paper with one of the Burkinabé scholars who I met at the workshop. As a final remark, the singular role that WARC played in hosting the workshop warrants mention. Having had previous experience in West Africa I was eager to help APSA with logistical arrangements and other matters. As it turned out, my services were not needed, as WARC was a more than capable host.
Education and Religion in Senegal, A Study Tour for Educators

In June, the African Studies Center and World View at UNC-Chapel Hill partnered with WARC to provide 33 North Carolina K-16 educators and administrators with a group study of education and religious practices in Senegal. The wonderful professionals at WARC allowed participants to experience Senegalese hospitality firsthand as staff dealt with the particular logistic challenges presented by such a large and diverse group of Americans, most of whom had never been outside the U.S. before. We were a moving city, occupying two buses, three domiciles, and communicating via cell phones with marching-band precision! WARC arranged lectures by UCAD faculty on such topics as education and adult literacy and the history of Mouridism in Senegal, as well as organizing Wolof lessons at WARC.

The group visited mosques in the Dakar area, and met with religious leaders of the Mouride and the Tijaniyya in Touba and Dakar, respectively. Several of the participants remarked later that this was one of the most compelling aspects of their travel: the opportunity to experience Islam in a manner fundamentally at odds with mainstream media portrayals in the U.S. Although initially uncomfortable with engagement with Islamic thought and practice—several participants shared that family members had begged them not to go to Senegal for fear of Muslim terrorists—teachers and administrators found themselves curious about Sufism and Senegalese religious tolerance. In a conversation with Serigne Mansour Sy Jamil, the group promised to take his message of peace for the upcoming G8 conference in Japan back to their own churches, synagogues and schools.

The group also visited a wide range of public and private primary, secondary and post-secondary schools in Dakar. As with the religious content, many teachers felt fundamentally changed by the experience of observing and talking with Senegalese educators and students. North Carolina participants were chastened by the discipline, intellectual rigor, and enormous challenges they observed. In one of the most touching moments, our group was brought into a room of high school teachers who were grading end-of-term exams. The North Carolina tour declined to ask questions, though, requesting that our interpreters explain that they simply couldn’t take time from this grading work, knowing so well the time pressures that the Senegalese teachers must be facing. Their Senegalese professional brothers and sisters applauded in gratitude.

Several of the participants have made presentations to their faculty on Senegal, have revised lessons on Islam in light of the study content, and have established linkages and relationships with Senegalese institutions and individuals. The African Studies Center acquired materials, with the assistance of WARC staff and NRC funds, for a culture box, documenting school life and religious practice in Dakar, which North Carolina teachers will be able to use in the classroom, free of charge.

At least half of these participants had never been outside the U.S.; they represented a wide-range of teachers—from second grade to college—from both underprivileged school systems and private schools from nearly 20 different counties in the state, and ranged in age from 23 to 68. Funding for the group study came from school systems, colleges, individuals, and Title VI funds.

In the words of one college faculty participant, “This trip remains the single greatest academic experience of my career. After all the years of reading and studying about Africa, I can now see that I’ve only just begun to understand Africa.”

Barbara Shaw Anderson
Associate Director, African Studies Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Dictionary of African Biography

Oxford University Press and the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University would like to announce an ambitious new project, the Dictionary of African Biography (DAB). The General Editors of the project are Henry Louis Gates and Emmanuel Akyeampong.

Our provisional list of entries can be accessed at: http://oupreference.jot.com/WikiHome/African%20Biography/DAB%20Table%20of%20Contents. Please submit your recommendation of additional names to: dab@oup.com.
In Memoriam Serigne Bassirou Ndiaye
(1959-2008)

Serigne Bassirou Ndiaye, head of the maintenance staff at WARC, passed away on Tuesday, September 9, 2008. Mr. Ndiaye started at WARC officially in 1999, and was a valued member of the WARC family. Ndiaye was born in Ndiedieng (Kaolak) on October 3, 1959. A devoted husband and father, he is survived by his wife and five children. His eldest son is a teacher in a secondary school in the same area where his father was born. Ndiaye was a born conversationalist and loved to engage with people on social, religious, and political issues. He enjoyed people and could adapt himself to any kind of professional or social situation. He was an avid reader and, once introduced to the computer, quickly adapted to it as a source for keeping up to date. He will be greatly missed by his ‘family’ at WARC and by all of the visitors to the center who came to know him.

Serigne Bassirou Ndiaye (1959-2008)

Serigne Bassirou NDIAYE was a part of the maintenance staff and a messenger for the WARC. (He passed away on Tuesday September 9, 2008, May his soul rest in peace - AMEEN). Ndiaye was such a kind, gentle person, who always remembered me from year to year. I remember him constantly helping me with copies — and he was so patient every time we had to do them over! He was a special presence at WARC and I will always miss seeing him when I am there.

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Announcements and Opportunities

New Initiatives of ALMA
(The African Language Materials Archive)

The African Language Materials (ALMA) Project continues to thrive, now including both audio and video ‘texts’ and is today involved in a number of collaborative projects—all aimed at promoting the use of African languages and in particular fostering literate environments in African languages.

The African Immigrant Voices (AIV) Project, begun at Boston University in 2006, has resulted in a significant body of videorecorded interviews of African immigrants to the Boston area. These recordings feature authentic use of African languages by native speakers telling the stories of their emigration experience in their own languages. The interviews are being transcribed and translated for integration into the website, along with the video footage. John Hutchison, the ALMA Coordinator, is managing this project in collaboration with students, some of whom intend to explore the possibility of producing African language literature on immigration stories from the recorded interviews. It is hoped that this project can be replicated in other urban centers through Title VI center networks. Recent contact with the African Community Health Initiatives organization in Boston—a group that works with more than 200 new immigrants each month—will give AIV access to a far wider range of immigrant stories for the website.

Know Your Rights! (KYR) is a joint initiative with The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) and Brandeis University. Its mission is to make the legal instruments of the ACHPR available to African populations by translating them into African languages and exploring strategies for dissemination. A first KYR workshop focused solely on Senegal and the Gambia and was held in Dakar in June of 2007. This workshop laid the groundwork for a range of related projects. For example, one of the participants in the June 2007 workshop, Professor Fatou Kiné Camara, professor of law at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar and a long-time feminist activist, worked with law students this spring to conduct a series of ‘town meetings’ in and around Dakar. These were focused on discussing (in Wolof), various articles in the Protocol on Women’s Rights. The animated exchanges that resulted not only engaged populations normally excluded from such discussions due to language barriers, but the recorded transcripts will provide important input for the development of human rights terminology. These exchanges involved women’s groups, law students, linguists, and media personnel such as rural and community radio broadcasters. We anticipate funding from the ACHPR to continue the work begun by Professor Camara and her colleagues and will continue to seek funding to expand Know Your Rights efforts into other linguistic communities in the sub-region.

Rural and Community Radio Archive

Recognizing the wealth of literacy material that is held in the archives of rural and community radio stations, the coordinator of ALMA began working with this movement in several countries to explore the possibility of tapping into these local language archives for the purpose of producing literature. From the Mamou, Guinea radio station, three manuscripts have now been transcribed and edited and are ready for production and integration into the website. In Mali, likewise, Hutchison and ALMA Advisory Board member Professor Kassim Kone of the State University of New York at Cortland have begun work with radio broadcasters on the production of literature from archival recordings.

A tribute to our collaboration

The continuing financial and logistic collaboration of Title VI National Resource Centers has enabled ALMA to significantly enlarge the scope of its efforts through new collaborative projects such as Know Your Rights and African Immigrant Voices, and the work with rural and community radio. At the same time, it has allowed ALMA to broaden its archival collection to include a number of new languages. The active and enthusiastic collaboration of the African Union’s Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights; West African colleagues in academia, government, and in the NGO sector; and colleagues here in the US, is a tribute to the value placed on the work of ALMA. The technical assistance provided by TRIX at MSU and the ongoing support of Title VI centers has been invaluable in helping ALMA develop into the vital project it is today.

AIV Workshop on Political Participation - Dakar, Summer 2008

and their staff made the participants and APSA staff feel very well at ease. In West African French the term for well-connected is “branché” and the WARC staff was very “branché.” Academic, technical and personal needs were ably handled by the WARC staff. Another example was WARC’s coordination of the visit of Senegalese politicians to the center. In one instance the WARC staff was able to rapidly resolve a visa issue that impeded a workshop participant at the Dakar airport. In short, the staff at WARC was outstanding. The auspicious results of the first workshop point to future success as the next installments of the workshop take place in other African countries.

Matthew Kirwin, 2007 WARA Pre-Doctoral Fellow
Michigan State University
Religion, Race & Ethnic Relations in Africa/Diaspora: Creating Peace & Justice Dialogues

California State University, Sacramento, April 30 – May 2, 2009
**Deadline for submission of proposals is November 29, 2008.** This conference examines the state of religion, race, and ethnicity in Africa and her diaspora, with a focus on advancing positive models or lessons for peace and justice dialogues—within and amongst groups, institutions, and agencies. Together, we will analyze the prospects for bridging related gaps among Africans in Africa and the diaspora, and identify best practices and models of dialogues for strengthening the capacity for sustainable culture of peace and justice. Please email/fax/mail your proposal to: Ernest Uwazie, Director, Center for African Peace & Conflict Resolution, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6085; uwaziez@csus.edu.

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Tales of Slavery: Narratives of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Enslavement in Africa

University of Toronto, May 20–23, 2009,
**The deadline for submissions is November 30.** Most of the sources used to write the history of slavery in Africa are European, but memories of the Atlantic slave trade remain, are embedded in ritual, song, and memory and have been recorded in court documents, petitions to colonial rulers and correspondence. Because of space limitations at Bellagio, we limited ourselves to West and Northwest Africa. We are now interested in all parts of Africa and in opening up a wider range of questions, for example, the impact of the slave experience on witchcraft belief and narratives of contemporary enslavement. Interested persons should submit a title and an abstract to slavery.tales@utoronto.ca.

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Internship with the WARC Library (continued from page 9)

projects that have become popular forms of cultural preservation in Africa. During my internship I was able to learn about two digital projects at WARC which are very interesting to my studies: “Diversity and Tolerance in the Islam of West Africa: creating Online Resources of Peaceful Muslim Practice” and the “African Language Material Archive.”

My primary goal for the internship was to promote the digital and electronic projects of the library. I spent the majority of my time organizing and creating records to submit to the Digital Library for International Research (DLIR). I also established an electronic catalog that included searchable keyword lists for the materials in the African Collection. This project, along with my physical reorganization of the collection by call number, has improved searchability in the library. Beyond this, I created an electronic circulation system that allows library staff to identify which books are checked in and out, as well as to recover pertinent information about due dates and patron records. This circulation system will serve to increase productivity and accuracy of record keeping.

My secondary goal was to provide research guides and electronic resource lists for patrons to the library. The guides I produced provide scholars with the research techniques that are necessary to search scholarly online resources effectively. I also provided a detailed list of the most useful online sources for African Studies research including databases, institutional repositories, online archives, scholarly search engines, and academic web guides. Scholars will be able to use these guides as a compliment to the available resources in the library.

My time working with WARC was rich and rewarding. I was provided opportunities to learn about the many aspects of how a library in Africa functions, and I believe I gained as much as I contributed. The staff in the library, as well as the greater community at WARC, were a joy to work with. They treated me as family, and as family they will be remembered. I was thrilled to have an opportunity to intern in Senegal this summer, and hope this is the first of many opportunities I will have to invest in projects that promote preservation and collection of African materials.

Lindsey Campbell-Badger
Indiana University
lincamb@indiana.edu

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Dress, Popular Culture, and Social Action in Africa

Northwestern University, March 13–14, 2009
**Abstracts of 250 words are due by December 1, 2008.** How does dress in particular and popular culture in general constitute and inspire social action? The dressed body readily becomes a flash point of conflicting values, fueling contests in historical encounters, in interactions across class, between genders and generations, and in recent global cultural, and economic exchanges. Popular culture mass circulations of expressive forms rising from day-to-day discourse and action becomes the real and imagined reflections of the complicity and contestation, the desire and discontent, of power and its machinations. Please contact conference assistant, Andrea Seligman, with questions or submissions at AndreaSeligman2012@u.northwestern.edu.

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Imperfect Duties? Humanitarian Intervention in Africa and the Responsibility to Protect in the Post-Iraq Era

March 5-7, 2009, DePauw University
The Janet Prindle Institute of DePauw University, in collaboration with the West Africa Regional Office of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, will host a symposium to explore questions related to the ethics, law and politics of humanitarian intervention and the emergent doctrine known as the “Responsibility to Protect.” The emerging norm of an international Responsibility to Protect the victims of mass suffering squarely confronts the reality of weak but persistent statehood in the global south and especially in Africa. For more information, please consult the webpage: http://prindleinstitute.depauw.edu.

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Announcements and Opportunities

Saharan Crossroads: Views from the North/Carrefour saharien: la vue du nord
AIMS/WARA Conference, Tangier
June 6 through 8, 2009

Africa has traditionally been viewed through a bifocal lens in which the Sahara Desert has been perceived as an impenetrable barrier dividing the continent into the northern “white” and sub-Saharan “black” Africa. Despite trans-Saharan cultural contact spanning centuries, the conceptual divide separating North and sub-Saharan Africa remains strong. Countries to the north find themselves placed in Mediterranean, Islamic, and Middle Eastern studies with little consideration of cultural, historical, or artistic contact with sub-Saharan countries, which are often considered more authentically “African.” Much scholarship has failed to recognize that communication, correspondence, trade and travel has been going on for several millennia, often in partnership with nomadic movements across the Sahara. In fact, the arbitrary and removed perception of Africa as separate zones may be growing. We seek to counteract this tendency. Reality is and has been quite different. Contact among traders, scholars, artisans, and nomads set the stage for the emergence of richly diverse aesthetic expressions along the web of North to South and East to West routes crossing the Sahara as well as at their beginning and ending points. Today, the Sahara and its peripheries are becoming, as is the rest of the world, platforms of interconnected peoples and cultures.

**Saharan Crossroads** invites papers in the fields of art history, literature, anthropology, folklore, cultural history, geography, film, performing arts, and music addressing the methodological, conceptual, stylistic or technical aspects of artistic creativity, culture, and performance, both contemporary or historic, which reflect the nature of this artistic discourse and illustrate how the Sahara has been a porous boundary, a bridge rather than a barrier, for the transmission and exchange of arts and culture through time.

**Saharan Crossroads: Views from the North,** the 2009 AIMS Conference, is the first of a two-part conference. “Views from the South” will take place a year later in West Africa.

A delegation of scholars from the West African Research Association in Dakar (WARA) will participate in **Views from the North.** For Part II in 2010, “Views from the South,” we envision reversing these roles so that WARA takes the lead, incorporating a delegation from AIMS. In this way, the conferences should lead to new and enduring scholarly linkages.

We underline the significance of **Saharan Crossroads: Views from the North’s** artistic and cultural theme of historical and contemporary connections across Saharan space.

Themes to be considered may include, but are not restricted to:

- Historical Construction of the Sahara as a Barrier
- Behavioral, Geographic, and Conceptual Space of the Sahara
- Libraries and the Challenges of Archival Preservation
- Cultural Manifestations of Slavery in North Africa
- Sufi Brotherhoods and their Role in Cementing Relations Across the Sahara
- The Sahara as a Geographic and Cultural Space of Amazighité
- Nomadic Cultures as Agents of Contact
- Saharan Oases as Zones of Cultural Contact
- Saharan Arts, Architecture, and Design
- Music and Performance in and across the Sahara
- Deconstructing North/South Identities: Artists’ Roundtable

Paper proposals of one page, accompanied by a CV, should be submitted electronically to WARA (wara@bu.edu) no later than February 1, 2009. Priority for acceptance and funding will be given to scholars from AIMS and WARA affiliate countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and the 18 countries comprising West Africa), and from the US.

**For Information, contact**

Dr. Cynthia Becker  
Boston University  
cjbecker@bu.edu

Dr. Jennifer J. Yanco  
West African Research Association  
wara@bu.edu

Fulbright Hays Seminars Abroad—Senegal
Gateway to West Africa
June 28 – July 26, 2009

The four-week seminar organized by WARA, is for US educators, administrators and media resource personnel at the postsecondary education level. It will be based in Dakar at the West African Research Center (WARC). During the course of the program, participants will deepen their knowledge of Senegalese history and culture through a series of interactive lectures, field trips in and around Dakar, and readings and discussions. This will include examining Senegal’s historical and contemporary relationships within the region, the continent, and in the international arena.

Participants will also travel to key sites in Senegal including the holy cities of Touba and Tivaouane; Saint Louis, former capital of French West Africa; Toubacouta in the Saloum Delta; and of course, Goree Island. These trips will give participants a live sense of the great environmental diversity of the country. They will also visit a number of NGOs and meet with Senegalese and other West African professionals working in the NGO sector. In addition, participants will also have the opportunity to attend cultural events such as musical and dance performances. The final week of the Seminar will be devoted to independent study and research, specifically, the completion of participants’ curriculum or independent projects. Participants will take home a practical knowledge of the geography and history of the region and how it fits in with the rest of the continent and the world, as well as more profound experience in one country, thus a familiarity with some forms of contemporary cultural expression. This first-hand experience will be immediately applicable in the classroom and in building curricula. Participants, once home, will be able to share with their students and colleagues a deeper understanding of this region of the world and its relevance to world events.

For more information on the program, contact Tanyelle Richardson at tanyelle.richardson@ed.gov
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The West African Research Association is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) based at the Smithsonian Institution. WARA is the only Sub-Saharan African member of CAORC. More information on CAORC is available at the following website: www.caorc.org.