This article presents an overview of the less widely spoken languages of the Atlantic Group (Niger-Congo), as representing the most seriously threatened language group in West Africa. Study of this group indicates that language endangerment is real and widespread. The basis for this claim comes from the literature on these languages, from personal research on the Atlantic languages dating back to 1984, and from recent and ongoing fieldwork on several highly endangered languages of Sierra Leone and Guinea.

The Atlantic Group contains a few well-known languages such as Wolof and Fulfulde, but the majority of them are much less widely spoken and are threatened by such well-known and more widely spoken "predatory" languages. The threats come from within the Atlantic group itself, e.g., Wolof, and from outside, e.g., Soso and Malinké. The Atlantic Group is found in a broad discontinuous swath pressed against the Atlantic coast from Senegal to Liberia. Minority Atlantic languages are completely surrounded by speakers of languages from the Mande Group.

The general picture of the Atlantic Group is one of fragmentation and peripheralization, where languages are being pushed either to the sea (e.g., the Baga languages of Guinea), or into the mountains (e.g., among the Northern Branch of the Atlantic Group). Fragmentation is the rule in West Africa. It may be linguistic, that is, genetically related groups separated by non-related ones, or political, that is, single groups separated into different countries. The Kisi people, for example, are found in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Fragmentation is certainly one cause of language endangerment but typically the consequence of other, more powerful, forces. The other major language group in this area is Mande. The Northern branch of the Atlantic Group contains the majority of the languages (33 of 50) and some of the most seriously threatened. For example, the five or so Tenda languages of the Northern Branch, spoken in the highland area along the border between Senegal and the two Guineas are all under considerable pressure. But the same is also true of the Southern Branch, particularly those languages spoken along the coast, where contact with Europeans, the slave trade, Islamic jihads, and the “Mande Expansion” have all contributed to the marginalization of languages historically spoken there. Bijogo, the isolate, seems relatively secure, although there are threatening signs there as well.

### Language shift and language death

Most Atlantic languages are under threat, especially when evaluated against common measures. The assessment, for example, that languages need 100,000 speakers to be safe, means that only a few Atlantic languages will survive into the next century. Many of the languages in this group have fewer than 5,000 speakers and still others have fewer than a hundred.

Traditionally, speakers of most Atlantic languages have not organized themselves into entities beyond the village or hamlet and, at the same time, have welcomed outsiders or "strangers". Particularly among the less widely spoken languages of Atlantic (not Wolof, Fulfulde, Temne, etc.), groups of Atlantic speakers have been buffeted and assimilated by larger, better organized groups, often with devastating effect. Some languages have undoubtedly changed because of this contact and likely many have disappeared without a trace.

Table 1 shows documented cases of death and near-death in Atlantic languages. The first two languages have definitely disappeared. Banta/Banda is a highly divergent dialect of Temne and is preserved today only in certain rituals and in its influence on the local Mende dialect. The three other languages in table one have nearly disappeared. Undoubtedly there are other Atlantic languages that have disappeared without a trace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mo-peng</td>
<td>Disappeared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baga Kalum / Baga Koba</td>
<td>Disappeared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banta / Banda</td>
<td>Preserved only in certain rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bom</td>
<td>A few elderly speakers in a village outside Torma Bum, Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krim / Kimi</td>
<td>Several score speakers estimated in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullom / Mmani / Mani</td>
<td>Estimated several hundred speakers in 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on page 14
Inside This Issue...

Feature Article
Language Death within the Atlantic Group of West Africa.............................1

News
From WARA’s US Director.............................................................................4
From WARC’s Director................................................................................4
WARA at ASA..............................................................................................5
WARA 2008 Grantees...................................................................................5

Reports
Bamako Teleconference................................................................................6
Ford International Fellows Program.................................................................7
The United States of Africa?......................................................................8
Conference on Elections in West Africa......................................................9

Film Reviews
Rumba on the River.....................................................................................8

From Our Fellows
Tick Borne Diseases in Cameroon.................................................................9
WARA Resident Scholar at UNC Greensboro..........................................9

Announcements and Opportunities
Calling All WARA Institutional Members................................................12
Navigating Northwest Africa....................................................................12
Multi - Culturalism, Democracy and Development..................................13
WARC Travel Grants..................................................................................15
WARA Goes Online....................................................................................15

!!! NEW !!!
Now You Can Pay Your Memberships Dues And Make Contributions On Online!!!

WARA is pleased to announce a new online member contribution system. We recently partnered with Network for Good to setup a secure online payment system that should help us maximize your contributions. Please visit Network for Good’s website at http://www.networkforgood.org/, and then type in West Africa Research Association in the keyword field and follow instructions to pay.
From Our Directors

Much has happened since our fall newsletter appeared on your doorsteps. Importantly, our grant review committee has completed the selection of this year’s WARA grantees, which are listed on page XX. A big thank you is due to Erin Augis, who headed up the committee, and to all of those who took on the difficult task of evaluating applications. We wish all of our grantees success in their research and look forward to reading about their work in future issues of the newsletter.

In March, WARC received a very special visitor, Mary Ellen Lane, Executive Director of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. This visit provided Dr. Lane, who is one of the original founders of WARC, the opportunity to see how her baby has grown and developed over the years. Needless to say, she was impressed by how far WARC has come since its early days. She met with WARC-affiliated scholars and researchers, saw the workings of a number of the programs based at WARC such as CREPOS and IFP, toured the expanded library, to meet with WARC staff, and enjoyed some tasty Senegalese cuisine in the WARC café. Her visit also included meetings with the rector of Université Cheikh Anta Diop and a tour of the UCAD library, meetings with the rector and faculty at Université Gaston Berger in Saint Louis, and a meeting with Robin Diallo, the Public Affairs Officer at the US Embassy in Dakar. Everyone at WARC was thrilled to welcome Dr. Lane and we hope that she will be a regular visitor at the Center.

On another note, WARA has been invited to organize a Fulbright Hays Seminar Abroad in 2009 in Senegal. This provides us with a wonderful opportunity to continue our Summer Institutes which we have been unable to offer the last couple of years due to lack of funding.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the ongoing and tireless work of WARA president, Maria Grosz-Ngate and AROA president Ibrahima Thioib, who volunteer so much time, energy, and expertise to our associations. And, on behalf of the WARA board and membership, to Wynie Pankani Lindberg, for her support of WARA over the past two years as the WARA Graduate Assistant at the University of Florida. Wynie has been responsible for keeping the WARA membership database and for producing the newsletter, tasks that she has accomplished admirably. That we can now renew our memberships and make contributions to WARA online is also Wynie’s doing (see page 2). Wynie is leaving WARA to conduct her fieldwork and we wish her all success.

As always, we are grateful for the ongoing support of the US Department of Education, which allows us to keep WARC up and running; and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department, which funds our fellowship program.

Jennifer Yanco
US Director

WARC was also approached by the initiator of the future West Africa Institute for International Research on Regional Integration to be based in Praia, Cape Verde Islands, to discuss its possible contribution to the establishment of such a body poised to play a key role in the achievement of political and economic integration in West Africa.

Meanwhile, the Center has kept a high profile in a number of cultural and academic happenings, including the various events celebrating the 50th anniversary of University Cheikh Anta Diop. The close cooperation with University Cheikh Anta Diop and other higher learning institutions has been recently highlighted by a series of jointly organized events including a major presentation on the first comprehensive biography of the celebrated Senegalese writer and filmmaker, the late Ousmane Sembene. Other major activities are being developed and scheduled to further materialize in 2008 the commitment of the West African Research Center to initiative and excellence in the areas of culture, research and scholarship in West Africa.

Ousmane Sène
WARC Director

Over the last eight months, the West African Research Center has been particularly active in seeking partnerships in its efforts to promote research, academic cooperation and cultural initiatives in Senegal and the rest of the West African region. At the same WARC is striving to keep up with its objectives and achievements in the various sectors it has been operating in so far.

The Center has been sought out by a number of potential or actual partners for collaboration and joint endeavors. In this respect, WARC has been selected by the International Fellowship Program of the Ford Foundation (IFP) to be its home base in Senegal. The activities of the fellowship program are very much in keeping with one of the stated objectives of the Center, namely to promote scholarship in West Africa, and the cooperation between the two institutions will hopefully contribute to strengthening the academic and professional development of many young Senegalese who are active in grassroots development efforts. Discussions and contacts have also been initiated with other local institutions such as the implementing agency of the Third Edition of the World Festival of Negro Arts for further involvement of WARC in the preparation and actualization of such a landmark event in 2009.
**Save the Date!**

ASA 2008, November 13th - 19th  
Chicago, Illinois

**WARA Membership Meeting:** Please mark your calendars: WARA will hold its annual membership meeting on Saturday evening, **November 15**, during the African Studies Association’s Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois and we urge everyone to come. We will have updates on WARA and WARC’s activities, reports from grantees, and want to hear from you with your ideas for how WARA can better fulfill its mission. Please consult the program for details on the room and exact times.

---

**WARA 2008 Grantees**

We thank all of those who submitted applications for WARA Research Fellowships this year and only regret that we do not have more of them to go around. We received some excellent proposals. WARA extends its congratulations to this year’s awardees, listed below:

**WARA Post-Doctoral Fellows**

- Dr. Abu Bakarr Bah (Sociology, Northern Illinois University)  
  "State Decay and Regional Insecurity: A critical examination of the international peace mediation in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire"

- Dr. Hromi-Fielder (Public Health, University of Connecticut)  
  "Dietary practices, food availability, and nutritional status among Liberian refugees"

**WARA Pre-Doctoral Fellows**

- Leif Brottem (Geography, University of Wisconsin-Madison)  
  "Pastoralism, bioculture, changing patterns of governance in West Africa"

- Timothy Landry (Anthropology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)  
  "Local Production and Global Imaginings of Vodun in Benin"

- Kathryn McHarry (Anthropology, University of Chicago)  
  "Growing the Nation: Childhood, Medicine, and Technology in Senegal’s Development"

**WARA Graduate Intern**

- Zahida Sherman, (Department of African Studies, Howard University) to work at the W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan African Culture in Accra, Ghana

**WARC Library Intern**

- LaBae Daniels, Drexel University. Ms. LaBae comes to us with an M.A. in African Studies and Research from Howard University, and a special interest in closing the digital divide between Africa and the rest of the world.

**WARA Residency**

- UCLA to host Dr. Francis Minimah, Department of Philosophy, University of Port Harcourt.
On Friday, February 29, WARC, in collaboration with the Five College African Scholars Program, screened the film “Bamako” for a Dakar audience. The film chronicles the sorry plight of Africa and Africans in this age of globalization, and sits in judgment on unfair and inequitable trade between African nations and their Western partners. It should be added that the film is also an indictment of bad governance in developing countries.

The film was followed on Saturday, March 1, 2008, by a videoconference during which very lively, insightful and instructive exchanges were conducted between a panel of specialists in Dakar and a group of academics and students in western Massachusetts.

At the end of the discussions and question and answer session, it was clear that responsibility for the current state of affairs in Africa was shared between those promoting all-out liberalization and privatization in a number of international multilateral organizations and developed nations on the one hand, and, on the other, those African leaders whose chief concerns are predatory, more concerned with their spoils than with improving the living conditions their people.

The discussions were eagerly followed by a large public both in Dakar and at Smith College (Massachusetts), composed chiefly of academics, students and members of NGOs and civil society. The panel in Dakar featured high profile personalities in academia, civil society and the political field, namely:

- Mrs Aissata Tall Sall, lawyer, political leader and former minister of information of Senegal (featured as a lawyer in the film)
- Professor Abdoulaye Diagne, a well-known professor of economics at University Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD)
- Professor Ibrahima Thioub, one of the leading thinkers in the social sciences in Africa, and currently chair of the Department of History at UCAD
- Dr Ebrima Sall, senior researcher and chair of a research department at the Council for the Development of Research in the Social Sciences in Africa (Codesria), Dakar
- M. Mignane Diouf, a member of the Senegalese civil society and coordinator of the Social Forum, an institution grouping together many development NGOs.

The discussions were organized and moderated on the Dakar side by WARC Director Ousmane Sene. At the end of the session, the US and Dakar-based organizers of the event pledged to explore other avenues for fruitful collaboration.

The joint initiative of WARC and the Five Colleges was unanimously acclaimed by the panel members and the public and WARC was strongly encouraged to keep up efforts to contribute to this important debate in Dakar and the rest of West Africa. The film on Friday attracted a crowd of more than 100 people and the videoconference held the next day was attended by a full house.
Highlights

Ford International Fellows Program For Senegal Now Based At WARC

In November 2007, WARC partnered with the Association of African Universities to be the administrative body of the Ford Foundation International Fellows Program (IFP) in Senegal. IFP’s Senegal operation is now physically based at WARC. The agreement with IFP continues to March 2009, at which time it will be reviewed. Meanwhile, WARC is pleased to be able to work in partnership with this important program.

IFP is a postgraduate research program and the largest single grant in the Ford Foundation’s history. Through this program, the Ford Foundation focuses on funding leadership development to enable exceptional individuals from historically underrepresented communities, who would otherwise lack opportunities for advanced study, to pursue postgraduate studies. IFP was launched in 2000 with $288 million to be disbursed over 10 years. In May 2006, the positive evaluation of the program allowed for a new $75 million grant from the Ford Foundation. The new funding will allow 900 additional fellows to participate in IFP, raising the initial number of fellows from 3500 fellows to 4440 in 2013, the projected date for the end of the program. The program operates in 22 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Russia. Ten of these countries are on the African continent: West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal), East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), Southern Africa (Mozambique and South Africa) and North Africa and the Middle East (Egypt and Palestine).

The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program’s secretariat based in New York City is responsible for the overall management of the program and works closely with Partner Organizations in participating countries to ensure that program objectives are met.

In West Africa, the Association of African Universities (AAU) is the regional partner of IFP and works with Pathfinder in Nigeria and WARC in Senegal (since November 2007). The partner organizations house the program, provide office space and other office support, recruit the IFP staff, oversee the management and implementation of IFP, receive and oversee the management of IFP funds.

In 2001, the program was introduced in Senegal, the only francophone country of IFP. Between 2001 and 2007, 66 Senegalese fellows were recruited. Twenty-two alumni are back home and are working toward the establishment of the Senegalese Alumni Association.

Fellows from disadvantaged groups that have limited access to higher education are selected on the basis of their leadership record and commitment to their community or country as well as the strength of their academic achievement. Fellows can pursue graduate studies at universities anywhere in the world. The maximum length for a Masters degree is two years and three years for the PhD program.

WARC held an orientation session for the first group of IFP grantees in March and looks forward to working with these and others fellows in future.

Clotilde Thiaresene
IFP Program Officer
Senegal

In Memoriam

The West African Research Association, l'Association de Recherche Ouest Africaine and the West African Research Center lament the passing of Babacar Ndiaye, who was the victim of a terrorist bombing in Algiers while serving the United Nations as a security officer in Algeria. Before joining the United Nations, Babacar brilliantly served his country, Senegal, as a young officer in the army. He was also a fine scholar, who completed a PhD in the Department of Philosophy, University Cheikh Anta Diop. Condolences are extended to his wife, Selbee, to his children, and to his many friends. May his soul rest in peace.
The United States of Africa: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?

WARA asked radio journalist Henri-Pierre Koubaka, who attended the recent African Union meetings in Addis Ababa, to comment on the United States of Africa project.

This current proposal for a Union Government, which follows on the enduring dream of Pan Africanism, was introduced by heads of state at the 9th African Union summit in Accra, Ghana in July 2007. At that time, a ministerial committee was set up to study the concept of a Union Government.

Two of its strongest proponents are Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal) and Momar Khaddafi (Libya). As Mr. Koubaka shows, the proposal has engendered much discussion of the impact such a continental government would have on national sovereignty and on living conditions; it has also highlighted the gaps existing between various countries and peoples on the continent.

The 10th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa (25 January – 2 February 2008) was the most recent setting for talks concerning the proposed establishment of a Union government or ‘United States of Africa.’ While the theme of the summit was Industrial Development, it was also the occasion for continued discussion of this project.

Those in attendance made it clear that the idea of a Union Government does not introduce anything new to the dream of Pan Africanism, and that the path to implementation is still rife with challenges. This view was also expressed at the meeting of foreign affairs ministers that preceded the actual Summit.

Union member nations exhibit various degrees of socio-economic development, face numerous challenges, and have major differences in culture and lifestyle. The idea of a United States of Africa falls within the context of this picture of lack of cohesion. Nevertheless, it is good for African leaders to meet with the purpose of reviewing some of the more contentious issues involved in the proposal for a Union government, and to discuss development strategies, as long as they are working towards creating policies to reverse pauperization and marginalization in a continent where many people live on less than one US dollar per day.

The report submitted by ministerial committee established at the Accra talks in 2007 reveals that the issue of sovereignty of member States is a critical area that needs to be given more thought. In the debates of this 12th executive council ordinary session, several voices were raised to question of the relationship between national governments and a Union Government. Other issues on the table included:

- Timing and steps for the elaboration of a roadmap and a schedule for the establishment of a Union Government;
- Strategies for reversing the process of pauperization, marginalization and exclusion;
- Establishment of properly conferred authority that is scrutinized and shared, when so many African leaders insist on staying in power indefinitely and/or turning power over to their progeny;
- A healthcare system that can effectively fight malaria, meningitis, and HIV/AIDS;
- Appropriate continental responses to climate change, especially given that the continent contributes least to global greenhouse gas emissions but is one of the most vulnerable regions in terms of the negative impact of climate change;
- Ensuring that African products are competitive;
- Contributions to the atomic energy discussion;
- Managing Africa’s 10% of world oil and natural gas reserves.

Finally, the issue of ongoing conflict was raised. It is difficult to see how Africa can discuss industrialization at the 10th AU summit, when the issue of peace and security in Chad, Kenya, Darfur, and the Great Lakes region remains so intractable. And even when we try to solve African problems with African solutions, we are still looking for help from non-African partners—to transport AU peacekeeping troops, for instance.

And we have not even mentioned free movement of goods and services; within the ECOWAS zone alone people complain of harassment from immigration officers. Nor has the issue of human rights or election fraud been on the table. And finally, what about adopting a working language for a Union Government that would replace French, English or Portuguese?

Clearly there is a long way to go in building economic and cultural integration on the continent. Yet, as Alpha Oumar Konare, former AU commission chairperson put it, “Today, the United States of Africa is a must.” There is much capacity-building that is necessary before we can realize the dream of contemporary Pan Africanism in the form of a United States of Africa or the Union Government.

Henri-Pierre Koubaka
Journalist
Dakar
Senegal
hpkhp@yahoo.com
Conference on Elections in West Africa April 10-11, 2008 Miami University, OH,

Report

Conference on Elections in West Africa
April 10-11, 2008 Miami University, Ohio

The Department of Political Science, with support from several offices and units at Miami University, organized a two-day conference on elections and democratization in West Africa. At the conference opening, participants were welcomed by representative from Miami University: Dr. David Hodge, President; Dr. Jeffrey Herbst, Provost and Executive vice-President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Steven DeLue, Senior Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Ryan Barilleaux, Chair, Department of Political Science; and Dr. Abdoulaye Saine, Department of Political Science and Conference Coordinator.

During the two-day conference, a series of panels were held, including panels entitled Consolidating Democracies?, Elections in Civilian/Liberalizing States, The Future of Democratization in Africa, Liberal and Autocratic Elections in Lusophone West Africa, and Quasi-military/Authoritarian Regimes/Engineered Elections. Another series of panels on Comparative Regional Elections, The Kenyan Presidential Election, US Presidential and Congressional Elections, were also held during the two days to compare the situation in West Africa with situations elsewhere.

The conference as a whole provided some measured optimism about electoral processes and democratization in West Africa. Provost and Professor Jeffrey Herbst noted in his opening remarks that we often underestimate the extent and significance of changes that have taken place since the end of the Cold War in Africa in general, but particularly West Africa. While even the minimum conditions of democracy are still not present in far too many countries and there are serious doubts about the viability of democracy in African countries in general, the achievements are nevertheless historic.

Historically, democratization has taken many decades if not centuries in most parts of the world and we have no reason to expect Africa to be deviant in this regard. Making electoral processes become impartial and fair has often taken many, many trials and errors in processes fraught with difficulties and conflict in every country.

Recent experiences in the US also testify that maintaining the integrity of electoral processes and the quality of democracy, even once achieved, is an on-going and never ending process. Historical evidence also suggests that poverty, natural resources dependency, traditions of clientelism, and states with limited infrastructural power to project over vast territories, are factors making democracy less likely. In this perspective, what has been accomplished in a short time in West Africa is actually relatively amazing. This, of course, should not take away from the need to pressure for much needed improvements on all fronts and the fact that a number of countries still are faced with conflict and authoritarian mis-rule.

More than 60 professors and doctoral students from over 20 universities, institutes, and other institutions participated as presenters, discussants, and panel chairs. The aim is to publish a series of the papers in an edited volume. More information is available at http://www.miami.muohio.edu/news/article/view/4839. Interested persons can also contact the conference coordinator: Dr. Abdoulaye Saine, at sainea@muohio.edu.

Reviewed by Julia Goldrosen
Host/Producer, Africa Kabisa
www.africakabisa.org
WMBR 88.1 FM, Cambridge, MA

The Congo River does not run in this film. Rather, it flows slowly, almost imperceptibly, nearly stagnating at times around the heaps of derelict boats and barges that lay rotting in it. Watching from the bank, Wendo Kolosoy, the emblematic Congolese rumbero (and former boat mechanic), stares out wistfully. “Such a shame, such a waste,” he laments. “Politicians never come to the port, they do not move the country forward. They only arrest and kill fellow citizens. We got our independence, but all we do is kill each other.”

“Rumba on the River” is more atmospheric than narrative, and often seems more of a political statement on the current sad state of the Democratic Republic of Congo and its pillaged material and human resources than an exploration of la rumba congolaise. Still, Sarasin has a love for the music and the nostalgia it evokes of more hopeful times. (Sarasin is obviously fond of the old-timers of African popular music; he also directed and produced the 2001 documentary of Mali’s Boubacar “Karkar” Traore, Je Chanterai Pour Toi.)

Wendo is a man who has always eschewed politics to focus on music. Born in 1925, Antoine “Wendo” Kolosoy, aka Papa Wendo, became one of Congolese music’s first pop stars when he scored a massive hit in 1948 with “Marie Louise,” a song with as mean a hook as one of the ex-boxer’s famed punches. (Even as a professional musician, Wendo found his boxing skills useful for keeping his band in line, as well as for pulverizing rival musicians who arrived at the port from Brazzaville. “He’s very, very complicated,” comments one of his sidemen in the film.) Wendo also had a trademark yodel that would have put to shame American country star Jimmy Rodgers. The age of romantic Cuban-influenced / Congolese-interpreted son montuno, beguine, and cha cha that permeated the 1940s - 1950s was known as “Tango Ya Ba Wendo,” the era of Wendo. That era faded in the 1960s as young upstarts like Franco and Rochereau swept in with their electric guitars to transform the sound.

During the 1960s, Wendo stopped performing and recording, mostly for political reasons. As he told Afropop’s Banning Eyre in a 2002 interview, “The fact that there was a time when I didn’t sing much, politics is at the base of it. Because political men at the time wanted to use musicians like stepping stones. That is to say, they wanted musicians to sing their favors. Me, I did not want to do that. That’s why I decided it was best for me, Wendo, to pull myself out of the music scene, and stay home.”

Nearly 50 years later, Wendo is struggling, but he is still revered, and although the film may indicate otherwise, Congolese rumba is still a significant musical genre. In the 1990s and 2000s, Wendo recorded a number of new albums and toured internationally. (It seems that nearly every few years I see a new Wendo album arrive with the comment that this probably marked his last time in the studio.)

Despite the film’s heavy symbolism of decay, neither Wendo nor the rumba is a rusty relic. Wendo may be beaten down but, like the boxer he was, he is a fighter at heart. And, first and foremost, he is a musician. The passion for music, which rises above all of life’s struggles, is apparent throughout the film in the words and playing of Wendo and the members of his band, Victoria Bakolo Miziki. (“I live only for music,” says veteran trumpet player Alphonse Biolo Batilangandi.) Interspersed with the river detritus and shots of Kinshasa’s gritty streets (and boxing rings), are scenes of pure, heartbreaking joy as the musicians gather in their rehearsal compound to play sweet songs of unrequited love. One of the most joyous and moving moments in the film occurs when Wendo’s “younger brother,” the likembe player Antoine Moundanda (born 1928) arrives from Brazzaville. He joins the band and spontaneously improvises a song recounting his meeting with Wendo at the harbor. “The only way is to learn by ear,” says Moundanda at one point. “The important thing is to protect the memory.” Although Wendo stands as an icon of a past era, the Congolese rumba continues to flow strong, as does Wendo’s enduring musical legacy.

Notes
2.Recommended recordings include: Various Artists: Ngoma, The Early Years, 1948 -1960 (Popular African Music 101); Wendo: Nani Akolela Wendo? (Franc’Amour 075); Wendo Kolosoy: Amba (Marabi 468012); Antoine Moundanda: Likembe Geant (Label Bleu 9743). The soundtrack for On the Rumba River is available on Marabi (46822).
3.For more on the history of Congolese rumba, read Gary Stewart’s wonderfully definitive book Rumba on the River.
Tick-Borne Diseases in Cameroon

As a medical microbiologist with research interests in emerging infectious diseases, particularly tick-borne infections, I was thrilled to be able to visit the University of Texas Medical Branch, (UTMB) in Galveston from September 8 – 22, 2007. While in the States I was also able to attend the 56th annual meeting of the American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in Philadelphia in November.

My visit to the Rickettsial and Ehrlichial diseases research laboratory in the Department of Pathology, UTMB, was enlightening. I acquired new techniques important in the diagnosis of tick borne diseases. I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Jere McBride (Assistant Professor, Departments of Pathology and Microbiology and Immunology) on characterizing the ehrlichial dsb gene amplified in DNA extracted from Cameroonian patients. To do this we used a highly sensitive, genus-specific PCR assay to diagnose ehrlichiosis in patients who presented with symptoms of acute febrile illness at local clinics in the South West Province of Cameroon. Even though the symptoms related to this type of infection are very much like malaria and typhoid fever, the diseases are unrelated. However, we did identify the HME agent, Ehrlichia chaffeensis, as a cause of febrile illness.

Previously, we reported the pathogen in the brown dog tick, Rhipicephalus sanguineus (Vector Borne Zoonotic Dis. 7:221-8, 2007), and hypothesized that E. chaffeensis could be a cause of undifferentiated febrile illness in Cameroonian patients. This study therefore extends the known range of HME infection.

HME manifests as an undifferentiated flu-like febrile illness, which is not easily clinically differentiated from many other febrile tropical diseases. Severe manifestations of HME have been reported more frequently among patients infected with HIV. Currently, diagnosis of HME is still largely based on the combined evaluation of clinical signs, laboratory and epidemiological data. Since most physicians are unfamiliar with HME, this disease is often misdiagnosed and underdiagnosed even in the United States. Although tick exposure in Cameroon is high (usually associated with recreation, occupational, and peridomestic activities), tick-borne diseases are not routinely considered in a differential diagnosis by local clinicians whose primary diagnostic focus is on endemic malaria and typhoid.

This situation is complicated by the fact that the diagnosis typically requires specialized skills and equipment which are unavailable in local clinics. The clinical course of HME and other tick-borne diseases requires further investigation, especially in sub-Saharan African countries where the prevalence of HIV infection is high.

At the ASTMH meeting in Philadelphia, I had the opportunity to present our recent findings on the Ehrlichia species in Cameroon. I was also invited to chair a scientific session on Ectoparasite-borne diseases. This was a good start for my career prospects and I express my sincere thanks to W ARA for their support.

I would like to commend the efforts of W ARA in assisting young scientists to accomplish their academic endeavors. I am indebted to Dr. Jennifer Yanco for her patience and professionalism.

Lucy M. Ndip, Ph.D
Lecturer of Microbiology
University of Buea,
P. O. Box 63, Buea
S. W. Province, Cameroon.
lndip@yahoo.com

WARA Resident Scholar at University of North Carolina, Greensboro November 2007

During my visit to the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG), I served as Adjunct Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and the in Women’s and Gender Studies. I gave a joint colloquium; made several classroom presentations; consulted with Women’s and Gender Studies faculty; and met with Dr Timothy Johnson, (Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Associate Provost for International Programs) about possible exchanges and cooperative programs between UNCG and the University of Buea.

We tried to establish options for students and faculty in both institutions – include individual/joint research, teaching, supervision of students’ research activities, internships, and joint publications (books, journals, etc). Possible exchange visits/collaborations include study experience with possibilities for students to earn credits and/or conduct their research. Visits to UNCG by students from the University of Buea starting in 2009 or 10 are in the works, although we acknowledge this might be difficult.
because of financial constraints. Nevertheless, we gave ourselves the responsibility to search for ways that students from Buea would travel to UNCG.

The possibility of producing a book on “community studies” to serve as teaching/learning material was also discussed. The uniqueness of such a book is in its authorship: We will engage faculty and students from both UNCG and UB in the study of an African community through two lenses – outsiders and insiders. It is our hope that a book of this nature will help to better inform US students and public at large on some of the realities of African society, thereby reducing distortions and disrespect for other cultures, especially African cultures/peoples/contexts.

It is a fact; courses that address Africa are often based largely on textbooks and by faculty with little or no experience on the continent. This project will make a useful contribution toward filling this knowledge gap.

I also met and had substantive discussions with Dr. Kathy Jamieson head of the Women’s and Gender Studies. We talked about our common interests, compared and contrasted our programs and discussed the challenges and possibilities for cooperation.

Students and senior administrators expressed keen interest in establish collaboration between our institutions. As a result, we have resolved to seek ways to realize our intent. Professor Markham has raised the possibility of student exchange program and interested faculties have agreed that such exchanges are very desirable and have committee to working on them.

In this respect, the sociology department at UNCG has received approval for a new course that will allow students to receive course credit for a summer research experience abroad. UNCG plans to offer the course for students going to Buea in the summer of 2010.

This report constitutes the basic documents which will be used to initiate discussion with University of Buea officials charged with inter-university cooperation. Already, a UNCG student and faculty member who have expressed interest in coming to University of Buea to do research and serve as a visiting professor respectively. Other benefits derived from the visit include access to academic materials to enhance teaching and research for the benefit of myself, students and other faculty in University of Buea; establishing a working relationship with faculty of the Department of Women’s Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, Washington D.C.

I had a very fruitful discussion with faculty of the department, in which we talked at length about how resources (especially human resources) of both institutions can be used to strengthen the teaching and research programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in our departments as well as how to secure for funds to support future collaborations.

The Department of WGS, University of Buea was invited to join the informal consortium of eight Women’s and Gender studies around the globe, which are hosted by the department of Women’s Studies at the University of Maryland.

During my stay the Department of Sociology and UNCG provided me with office space, a computer, stationery and access to the library and sport facilities. In terms of hospitality and the organization, I very much appreciate the efforts of Professor Markham.

Joyce B. Mbongo Endeley, Ph.D
Director of Academic Affairs
Head of Department, Women and Gender Studies
South West Province
Cameroon
joyceendeley@yahoo.com
j_bayande@hotmail.com
Announcements and Opportunities

!!! Calling All WARA Institutional Members !!!
It’s Time to Start Planning for WARA Residencies

This competition, which is reserved for institutional members of WARA, provides support for bringing a specific West African scholar to your campus. In the interest of enhancing transAtlantic exchange and collaboration, WARA offers these grants to WARA member institutions.

These residencies last four to eight weeks and provide the visiting scholar with opportunities for library research, guest lecturing, and/or collaborative work with American colleagues — both at the host institution and elsewhere. The fellowship covers international travel for the scholar and a living stipend.

Host institutions are encouraged to provide additional support in the form of housing, local travel, arranging conference participation, etc.). Details on the application procedure can be found on the WARA website (www.africa.ufl.edu/WARA). The next deadline is not until January 2009, but it is never too early to start planning.

Feel free to contact the WARA office for further information or to discuss ideas for a residency at your institution.

Navigating Northwest Africa: Towards an analysis of Saharan connectivity
An interdisciplinary workshop. Magdalen College, Oxford Friday September, 2008

This workshop aims to rethink the history and the contemporary realities of North and West Africa ‘from the bottom up’ and ‘the inside out’. It will focus on the Sahara as a shared environment of social, cultural and political interaction at the centre of a region that has been historically, and remains today, characterised by multiple and enduring connections and commonalities.

Proposals might address any of the following areas: ecological spaces and patterns of human habitation; production and commercial exchange; social mobility, migration, population displacement; shared, conflicting and changing systems of human and geographical classification, cultural & intellectual transmission and exchange; shared artistic, architectural, musical and spiritual traditions; language communities and communicative interaction (oral and/or written); epistemologies, worldviews and thought-worlds; non-state legal frameworks shared throughout the region; political communities, state forms and state-society relations.

Abstracts of proposed papers (up to one A4 page) should be sent by post or e-mail to: James McDougall, History dept., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, LONDON, WC1H 0XG, UK. email: jm56@soas.ac.uk. Closing date for receipt of proposals: Friday 25 April 2008. The workshop will be held in French and English. Participants selected will be asked to submit their papers for pre-circulation, by 31 August at the latest.
Multi-Culturalism, Democracy and Development in West Africa

This international conference, to be held at the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin, will build upon sets of relationships established more than twenty years ago to strengthen efforts focused upon issues of democratization and development in West Africa. Academics, government officials, representatives from NGOs, and youth will be brought together by this conference. Together they will reflect upon past experiences and consider practical options for future initiatives among multi-ethnic populations that will enhance and sustain the process of democratization in the West African region.

The conference, scheduled for June 12-14, 2008, will have several complementary objectives. First, it will reconvene the principal participants from Nigeria, Benin and the United States from the Multi-Culturalism and Constitutionalism Conference held in Benin 1987. This meeting immediately preceded the historic National Conference which catalyzed the country’s current democratic electoral process. Having recently concluded the third successive peaceful transition of national democratic rule, the Republic of Benin remains a model for post independence, democratic, political transformation in West Africa. Its neighbor, Nigeria, continues to struggle with the tensions of multi-ethnicity and constitutionalism as it moves forward on the democratic path.

During this first decade of the 21st century, as plans are being shaped for Africa’s democratic future, we can learn much by reflecting on the past two decades of experiences. Many of the participants in the 1987 conference moved from the academy into government service (including foreign minister, national judiciary, ministry of education, etc.). We have a record of their views on the issues concerning multi-culturalism, constitutionalism and the democratic process through the archived essays from the first conference. During this portion of the conference participants will reflect upon their experiences, document lessons learned and contribute recommendations which may enhance the efficacy of future democratic experiences.

The second objective of the 2008 conference is to enlarge the group of persons addressing these issues. Therefore, the conference will include comparative voices from the region (such as Senegal, Niger, Ghana and Cape Verde) who will contribute their experiences to this discussion. Current and former members of government, the academy and NGOs are being invited to participate. The conference will be documented on video and with a published volume.

A third essential objective of these meetings is to include youth in the dialogue. Several of the conference sponsors work with youth leadership either in institutions of higher education or in leadership development contexts. Youth from both Africa and the United States will be asked to make presentations to the conference. The University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB), Wheelock College and a consortium of other institutions in the Greater Boston area will send a delegation of students who will participate along with students from Benin. Following the meetings we hope that students will also lead follow-up conversations in their respective communities.

Since the original meetings in 1987, the University of Abomey-Calavi has formally signed a cooperative agreement with UMB and the YES (Youth, Education and Sports) Program to jointly establish the Center for International Education and Sustainable Development. The Center will co-sponsor the conference and serve as the follow-up vehicle to implement ideas which can promote public policy and youth involvement in future democratic processes. Through conference workshops, plenary sessions and published materials we intend to expand and enrich the dialogue on issues related to multi-culturalism, democratization and the development process.

Jemadari Kamara,
Center for African, Caribbean & Community Development
University of Massachusetts Boston
Boston, MA 02125
(617) 287-6793
adjarra@yahoo.com
Languages may partially disappear through combination with other languages. Language mixing and intertwining have likely occurred in the Atlantic Group, although such claims, numerous as they have been in the older, non-linguistic literature have been advanced with little linguistic evidence.

The major cause of endangerment for the less widely spoken Atlantic languages, however, the advent of the Mande peoples. Table 2 is a summary of evidence for Mande predominance up through the present, manifested in their skill at imposing their social structures on their hosts and in their (former) military might. As stated above, there is some evidence for a lack of Atlantic political organization beyond the village. It is this disparity that has led to the great influence that Mande has had on the Atlantic Group.

In addition to and perhaps associated with the Mande Expansion is the devastating effect of the slave trade. For example, the coastal Krim were enslaved and subverted by Mende-led groups. The nearby Gola speakers are also completely surrounded by speakers of Mande languages with some shifting to Mande. Another example of the shift to a Mande language is the case of the Mani, a clearly moribund language in its last gasps. Although not all of the forces at work on Mani are the same as those at work on other Atlantic languages, the case of Mani will offer further insights into causality.

A case study: Mani

In 2000 several colleagues from the University of Conakry and I embarked on a mission to document the Mani language. One component of the research was a pilot survey attempting to understand when and why people shifted. Another was to assess who spoke the language and in what contexts. The final picture, as added to later by more extensive work, was more discouraging than originally surmised—the language, as with many of its congeners, stands no chance of survival.

Mani was once spoken in a coastal area straddling the border between the Republic of Guinea and Sierra Leone. The area where Mani was historically spoken is certainly larger than where it is spoken today; at the beginning of the 18th century a Mani kingdom stretched from Freetown north to the River Pongo.

The fate of the language was obvious in a survey of language attitudes. An anecdote illustrates the low esteem in which the language is held, even by ethnic Mani. Alia Fadega, an elder on the island of Kabak, was questioned about the use of Mani in his town of Kakende. He told us that he had heard only the old people (les vieux) speaking Mani, and they did so in only a few domains. He said they used Mani in speaking to their dogs, and sometimes his grandfather would go to a large kapok tree behind the village and speak “au diable (les fétiches).” It is likely the Mani conversation was directed at the ancestors, who have since been demonized by Muslim proselytizers.

One sees, then, a language substantively changed by contact with the language to which its speakers are switching and in which all its speakers are bilingual. In fact, most ethnic Mani are monolingual in Soso. There is no hope for the language itself, although there may be some for its preservation in recent documentation efforts.

Table 2: Factors contributing to Mande predominance

| Prestige and wealth of early traders (9th century on) |
| Knowledge of utensil- and weapon-making; smiths believed to possess magical powers |
| Founding of power associations: Komo, Simo, Poro, and Sande/Bunde |
| Later (16th century) Mandeng warriors’ success (horses & weaponry); conscription of the conquered as soldiers or slaves |
| Reluctance of Mande speakers to assimilate fully (especially if converted to Islam) |
| Mande speakers a part of town rather than country |

Conclusion

The factors contributing to language death within the Atlantic Group are many and include economic factors such as the young seeking employment in the cities or on plantations; demographic factors—large and powerful groups, Wolof, Fulfulde, Malinké, Soso, Temne, etc overwhelming smaller language groups; religious factors such as the spread of Islam and Christianity and military incursions from the Mandeng Empire, and from Fulbe jihads and European colonizers. A cultural of openness to external influences may have hastened the process. The transatlantic slave trade also had a serious negative impact on the survival of these languages.

It is hoped that this brief survey will help to promote the study of such endangered language groups. At the present time there is generous support for such undertakings. I urge the members of WARA to consider such research before these languages completely disappear.

A map showing the location of languages in the Atlantic Group can be found at Segerer 2004 atl_langues_A3.gif

G. Tucker Childs
Portland State University
childt@pdx.edux.edu
CREPOS (Centre de Recherche en Sciences Politiques) is pleased to announce the publication of two new books with Karthala:


---

**WARC Travel Grants Aim to Build Institutional Links on the Continent**

The WARC Travel Grant program promotes intra-African cooperation and exchange among researchers and institutions by providing support to African scholars and graduate students for research visits to other institutions on the continent. The West African Research Center in Dakar, Senegal offers travel costs and a stipend of up to $1000 to selected scholars. This competition is open only to West African nationals. Travel grant funds may be used to 1) attend and present papers at academic conferences relevant to the applicant’s field of research; 2) visit libraries or archives that contain resources necessary to the applicant’s current academic work; 3) engage in collaborative work with colleagues at another institution; 4) travel to a research site. Details on application procedures can be found on the WARA and WARC websites.

[www.africa.ufl.edu/WARA](http://www.africa.ufl.edu/WARA)
[www.warc-croa.org](http://www.warc-croa.org)

The next deadline for applications is September 15, 2008, for travel to take place between January 1, 2009 and June 30, 2009.
WARA Officers and Board of Directors

Officers:
President: Maria Grosz-Ngaté, Indiana University
Vice President: James Essegbey, University of Florida
Secretary: Wendy Wilson-Fall, Kent State University
Treasurer: Jemadari Kamara, University of Massachusetts, Boston

Board
Abdoulaye Kane, University of Florida
Ousseina Alidou, Rutgers University
Emmanuel Yewah, Albion College
Carolyn Brown, Rutgers University
Dennis Galvan, University of Oregon
Fallou Ngom Western Washington University
Erin Augis, Ramapo College of New Jersey
Emilie Ngo-Nguidjol, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Scott Youngstedt, Saginaw Valley State University
Jennifer Yanco, US Director (ex-officio)
Catherine Boone, Past President (ex-officio)
Ousmane Sène, Director, West African Research Center (ex-officio)
Ibrahima Thioub, President, Association de Recherche Ouest Africain (ex-officio)

Institutional Members of WARA

Boston University
Brandeis University
Colorado College
Council on International Educational Exchange
DePauw University
Emory University
Five Colleges African Studies Center
  Amherst College
  Hampshire College
  Mount Holyoke College
  Smith College
  University of Massachusetts Amherst
Harvard University
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Howard University
Indiana University
Johns Hopkins University
Kalamazoo College
Kent State University
Michigan State University
Northwestern University
Ohio University

Pomona College
Rutgers University
Saginaw Valley State University
Smithsonian Institution
University of California at Berkeley
University of California at Los Angeles
University of Florida
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Kansas
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina-Greensboro
University of North Florida
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Texas
University of Wisconsin
Wells College
Willamette University
Yale University

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.

For more information about WARA or to become a member, please check out our website at www.africa.ufl.edu/WARA/index.htm and click on “Membership”