

Final Report on the 2010 Conference of the African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE), Basel, Sept. 8 to 11, 2010:

Cross-border trade in Africa: The local politics of a global economy

Submitted by:

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Summary

The African Borderlands Research Network (<http://www.aborne.org>) is an interdisciplinary network of close to 200 academic researchers worldwide. Its main aims are the propagation, organization and dissemination of research on African boundaries and borderlands, the establishment of borderlands studies as a field of academic enquiry and the transfer of research results by providing expertise and advice to practitioners and politicians. Since 2009, the network is financed by a networking programme of the European Science Foundation. The African Union Borders Programme has so far agreed to co-finance two conferences with funds provided by the GTZ.

From 8-11 September 2010, the Centre for African Studies at Basel University, Switzerland, hosted the 2010 Annual Meeting of ABORNE on the topic “Cross-border trade in Africa: The local politics of a global economy”. The annual meeting was attended by 45 academics from 22 countries, among them 14 based in African countries. 41 papers were presented by a good mix of younger and established scholars. After last year’s meeting, which gave a state-of-the art view of the entire field of African borderlands studies, this year’s meeting was more narrowly concentrated on trade and its political implications. This concentration in a slightly smaller meeting worked very well and engendered a very engaged and fruitful exchange, greatly facilitated by the usual convivial atmosphere of ABORNE meetings. The meeting, whose participants unanimously judged it a great success, will in all likelihood result in a number of joint publications.

Scientific Results

Cross-border trade is one of the main factors in the social and political dynamics of borderlands. It drives the borderlands-related actions of local, national and international actors, affects cross-border cooperation or conflict and crucially shapes the social and physical landscape in border

regions. In the academic field, cross-border trade has found wide interest in many disciplines and on many different levels empiric research. This turned trade into an ideal topic for a conference aimed at taking stock of current research trends, bringing them into a theoretical exchange and identifying crucial trends in borderlands dynamics.

The conference programme organized this exchange in ten panels. This short review cannot do justice to the programme or the many excellent contributions, but can only mention some of the themes emerging from the panels.

The first panel, dedicated to “Comparative Perspectives on African Cross-Border Trade”, was conceived as both an empiric and a theoretical introduction into the theme. It took up the topic of informality/ formality and suggested a new conceptualization of the relation between ‘informal’ traders and the state. Especially Kate Meagher’s presentation on different types of relations between the state and ‘informal’ networks served as a background for the entire conference, while Anne Lindley’s talk on Somalian money transfer companies took up the too rarely mentioned topic of cross-border currency movements.

The second panel on ‘smuggling’ was closely related to the first and provided a wide range of often surprising empirical data on smuggling and the grey areas between official and unofficial cross-border trade. It took up some of the theoretical themes of the first panel and deepened the discussions on the role of informal traders and their relation to politics and the state. Together, the first two panels set the theme and provided a theoretical framework with which many of the following presentations engaged.

Panel three was a preparatory workshop for the next annual conference of ABORNE, which will take place in Lisbon in September 2011 on the topic of migration in African borderlands. A group of 8 scholars working on migration discussed panel topics and organizational details on basis of a draft call for paper, which will was edited and circulated in November 2010. The fourth panel, parallel to the third, provided a comparative perspective on a very specific topic: on disabled traders between DRC and the Republic of Congo. Based on ethnographic research, four papers looked into different aspects of this doubly marginal, but very successful group of traders on Beach Ngobila. The panel not only brought an often neglected topic to the fore, but provided very relevant insights into the interplay of marginality and success in cross-border trade.

Panel five looked at the social and spatial consequences of cross-border trade in towns. Paul Nugent and Wolfgang Zeller provided a conceptualization of different border towns, while Gregor Dobler’s presentation looked into the reasons both for border town’s attractiveness for traders and their perceived ungovernability.

Panels six to eight all analysed the role trade plays in cross-border cooperation and integration. The presentations in this panel were often very close to the practical policy levels, but all engaged with theoretical issues of integration, as well. Most presentations looked at the different levels of cross-border integration, which often conflict with each other – the ‘official’ level of state cooperation and the ‘real’ economic integration pushed forward by economic actors. It became clear that both are intrinsically linked and that policy measures which do not take this link seriously will fail to change cross-border dynamics in a meaningful way.

This also came to the fore in panel ten on peace on trade's role in peace and conflict in borderlands. Cross-border trade often draws on conflict and can play a direct role in perpetuating conflicts which increase the chances of individual actors to profit from trade; it can also further conflict by providing its resources (weapons, cash or trade goods). However, the presentations also made it clear once more, that order and forms of informal peaceful cooperation can emerge even from illegal trade, and state intervention can sometimes disrupt emerging networks, which can further peaceful regional integration and development.

Panel nine provided historical perspectives on cross-border trade in Africa, its development and its link to political authority. It made clear that trade has always been a driving factor of state intervention and state formation, and that the definition and demarcation of boundaries was very often linked to trade interests.

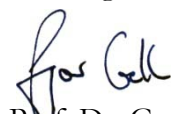
Some discussion threads wove through all the panels. One of them was the relation of informality and formality to political power and state building. Under what conditions are informal trade networks – which in many cases establish alternative, if less institutionalized systems of power – beneficial for societal integration, under what conditions are they detrimental to it? The conference could not answer this question in full, but in presentations like the ones by Meagher, Titeca, Dobler and Tandia, attempts at a typology which can in the future lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of informal networks and inform policy decisions have been made.

Another recurrent topic was regional integration from above and from below. It became very clear that attempts of cross-border cooperation from above often hurt themselves on existing structures from below, and vice versa, the two rarely being compatible as to their actors, their rules and the norms governing them. Here, a closer regard at possible interfaces between the two is needed to enhance the chances of successful regional integration.

Both themes are likely to be taken up in publications of conference contributions.

Overall, the conference was a great success. It integrated new participants (8 scholars joined ABORNE during the conference, of which 6 were Africans) into the ABORNE network and furthered the exchange and cooperation between the existing network members. To the degree that can be expected from a conference at all, its engaged discussions and brought new results and a more focused view of cross-border trade in Africa. One point in which improvement is possible, however, is the number of African participants. We budgeted for 19 participants from African countries and invited 20 presenters plus two representatives of the AUBP. Six of the presenters plus the two AUBP representatives had to cancel their participation, mostly in the last minute when no replacements could be found for them.

Freiburg, 15.12. 2010



Prof. Dr. Gregor Dobler

ABORNE Conference Basel 2010

Programme Overview

If not noted otherwise, all conference panels take place in Kollegienhaus on Petersplatz, first floor (rooms Regenz- and Fakultätszimmer and 114).

Wednesday 8	Thursday 9	Friday 10	Saturday 11	Sunday 12
[9-12 Management Meeting]	9.30-12 Panel 2: Smuggling and cross-border trade	9-11 Panel 5: Trade and Border Towns 1 11-11.30 Coffee Break 11.30-13 Panel 6: Trade and Regional Integration 1	9-13 Panel 11: War, Peace and Trade	9-16: Optional excursion to the border (on registration)
13 Coffee, informal welcome	12-13.30 Lunch	13-14 Lunch	13-14 Lunch break	
14 Opening 15-17 Panel 1: Comparative Perspectives on African Cross-Border-Trade 17.30 Book Launch	13.30-15.30 Panel 3: Preparatory Workshop Migration 13.30-15.30 Panel 4: Disabled Traders at 'Beach Ngobila' 16-18 Optional: Guided Tour 'Africa in Basel'	14.30-16 Panel 7: Trade and Border Towns 2 14.30-16 Panel 8: Trade and Regional Integration 2 16-16.30 Coffee Break 16.30-18.30 Panel 9: Trade and Regional Integration 3 16.30-18.30 Panel 10: Historical Perspectives	14.30-16 Closing Session	
19.30 Opening Dinner (Restaurant „Der Vierte König“)	Film screening	Get together/ Party		

Panel 1: Comparative Reflections on African Cross-Border Trade

Panel Chair: Kate Meagher, London

Wednesday, 8 September, 15-17h, Regenzimmer

Studies of African informal cross-border and transnational trade have tended to involve anthropological single-case studies or ideological debates about whether African cross-border trade is developmental or criminal. This panel moves beyond the assumption that African cross border trade involves a single economic logic, with a view to adopting a more comparative understanding of what makes cross border trade a positive or negative influence on governance and economic development in different national or ethno-regional contexts. Papers will range from the explicitly comparative to single case studies that reflect on the historical, political and institutional factors that account for the constructive or destructive tendencies of particular African cross-border trading networks.

Kate Meagher, London:

Informal Governance or Ungovernance?: A Comparative Analysis of African Cross-Border Trading Networks

This paper will explore the divergent dynamics of cross-border trading networks in Africa. With a view to moving beyond essentialist debates about whether African cross-border trade contributes to development or undermines it, I will undertake a comparative analysis of different trajectories of cross-border trading networks within a range of African countries. I will focus on different patterns of relations between cross-border trading networks and the state to develop a typology of the developmental and anti-developmental tendencies of cross-border trading networks, based on emerging theoretical literature on network governance and informal institutions. The paper will identify and analyse distinctive dynamics of network governance within African cross-border trade, involving 'synergy', 'making do', 'collusion' and 'ungovernance'. The various forms of network governance identified will be backed with empirical examples from cross-border trading networks emanating from various African countries.

Olumide Adimbola, Halle:

Benin-Nigeria secondhand clothing cross-border trade in historical perspective

Today, Benin Republic is the main supplier of secondhand clothing to Nigeria, a country in which the importation of secondhand clothing is banned. Igbo traders, who form a transnational trade network that spans the eastern part of the West African coast and that extends to Europe and North America, dominate the import and retail trade in the commodity in Benin Republic. This is a network that could be described - depending on the side from which one chooses to look at it - either as an agent of development or as a predator on the state's resources. The exercise here is to move beyond those arguments and to show the current configurations of the trade network as it has responded to a changing global political and economic landscape, and as it has been modified by the changes in the political economy of the West African countries that it spans.

Anne Lindley, London:

Between dirty money and development capital: Somali money transfer under global scrutiny

Money transfer infrastructures have come to play a prominent role in the Somali regions, connecting war-torn cities, refugee camps, and remote rural areas with the rest of the world. This paper sketches a history of the development of money transfer infrastructure since the civil war, exploring the nature of its role in social change, reflecting on the implications for development and political stability. It also outlines the nature of the relationship with Somali

political actors, foreign states, and international aid and policy actors, exploring various policy interventions, and the sector's response. While the Somali case is in some respects unique, there are in other respects important similarities with money transfer infrastructures and cross-border trade in other highly informalised African economies. In particular, attempts to define Somali money transfers as either dirty money or development capital demonstrate a more general ambivalence towards 'actually existing developments' in Africa. Unpacking this ambivalence is an important step towards developing more grounded policy approaches.

Paolo Gaibazzi, Milano:

Trading globally, divesting locally: the Soninke trading diaspora and the cross-border trade in the Upper Gambia river valley.

Gambia's Upper River Region has been an area of intense commercial circulation since pre-colonial times. After Britain and France had established state boundaries, borders became important sites for old and new commercial exchanges. Soninke traders, particularly those living along the southern Senegal-Gambia border, were key actors in short- and long-distance trade in this area, and quickly adapted to the new situation and even took advantage of commercial potentials developing across borders. By the 1950s such commercial networks had begun to expand and diversify, with Soninke men travelling further afield in order to find and create opportunities. A world wide trade (and labour) diaspora has therefore rapidly developed. In parallel, commercial activity across the Upper River borderland has intensified as a result of re-export trade policies adopted by the Gambia from the 1970s onwards, which also led to the formation of weekly markets in some Soninke and other Upper River border towns. The recent emergence of the major agricultural market in the region (Diao Be, Senegal) has further fuelled commercial flows between South-Eastern Senegal and South-Eastern Gambia. However, although many Soninke from this region have become prominent traders by going abroad or moving to the capital city, comparatively few have continued to control and (re)invest in the cross-border trade. This trade is mainly dominated by immigrants from neighbouring countries. This paper thus explores the processes that simultaneously link cross-border trade in specific borderlands to national and global commercial flows, and disconnect it (commercially) from the autochthones' own trading networks. While the political economic structure of the Gambia-Senegal cross-border trade constitutes an important factor in accounting for this apparent paradox, the paper also focuses on the spatial transformation of Soninke trade migration and the socio-cultural mechanisms that shape local people's ideas of, and participation in, commercial activity and mobility.

Panel 2: Smuggling and Cross-Border Trade

Panel Chair: Kristof Titeca

Thursday, 9 September, 9.30-12h, Regenzzimmer

Kristof Titeca, Antwerp:

The OPEC boys: a quantitative study of smuggling and illegal markets

The paper presents quantitative data on smuggling activities, which are the result of a 5 month day-to-day survey of the 'OPEC boys', a group of smugglers operating in the Ugandan-Congolese-Sudanese borderlands. These data are in turn embedded in long-term qualitative research. In doing so, it offers insights in the strategies of smugglers in bringing goods across borders, and in the operation of the (illegal) market of smuggled goods. Concretely, the paper shows how the smugglers are embedded in a set of personal relationships, which constitutes their most important asset: through the 'bricolage' of these personal relationships, they can reduce the amount of bribes, lower the risk of confiscation, lower the buying price and increase their overall profit. The unequal access to these relationships makes the smuggling market highly illiberal, in which security constitutes a 'double-edged sword' (Tilly 1990): middlemen are able to offer protection to street sellers, but they can also push them outside of the market. State actors are deeply engaged in this

smuggling economy: firstly, the paper gives some quantitative interpretation to the various forms of bribing involved in this trade, which constitute an informal form of taxation. Secondly, the paper shows how the sale of illegal fuel is a lucrative business for state actors in general, and soldiers in particular. Lastly, the paper shows how higher-level smugglers (middlemen) use various strategies to increase their market position, and limit the power of lower-level traders (street sellers).

Cynthia Howson, London: Women's cross-border smuggling in Senegal

This paper investigates the illicit networks that facilitate women's cross-border smuggling in Senegal. The dynamics of these networks in structuring accumulation strategies and facilitating corruption in the customs apparatus are far more complicated than the literature on corruption and governance would imply. Illicit opportunities are distinctly gendered, for a variety of reasons, including segmentation of the labor market, gendered access to associational and political networks as well as gender norms that criticize women's wealth and conflate accumulation with sexual impropriety. I find, for example, that while smuggling depends on contesting legal and social boundaries, some of the most successful traders (and transporters) find it important to fulfil ideal gender roles as closely as possible. Ironically, trading on poverty and feminine vulnerability is a strategy that only works for relatively affluent women. Despite a discourse of generosity and solidarity associated with these networks, I find that access to corrupt networks is mediated by class and gender in a way that favors social differentiation, especially insofar as it depends on geographic and socio-economic affinity with customs officers, state representatives and well-connected transporters.

Anusa Daimon, University of Zimbabwe:

Human and Goods Smuggling through Fluid African Borderlands and the State's Response: The Case of the Zimbabwean and South African Border

This paper explores the smuggling of humans and goods that thrives along the Zimbabwean and South African border. It investigates how cross-border traders ingeniously exploit the fluid and porous borderland to conduct illicit trade across the crocodile-infested Limpopo River and security fences demarcating the two states. It argues that despite stringent border policing mechanisms, this illicit trade is continuing as many Zimbabweans risk their lives crossing illegally. Such risky behaviour is due to Zimbabwe's general state decay; peoples' inability to afford the expensive Zimbabwean passports; the need to evade customs and to smuggle drugs and minerals. These fluid borderlands are also havens for pseudo-professional smugglers whose complex syndicates organise this illegal transfer of people and goods. They assist Zimbabweans to swim across the dangerous river and escort them along covert routes to and from South Africa. In response, the two states have tightened their border security by joining forces and heavily militarizing their border patrols. As a result many illegal cross-borderers are being arrested and temporarily put in holding camps before deportation. Despite this, smuggling still continues as both the smugglers and the smuggled try to negotiate and carve their own space to survive.

Ndu Njoku, Imo State University:

Business as Commonsense: Reflections on the Dynamics of the 'Professionalization' of Informal Cross-border Business along the Lagos - Cotonou Route

This paper dwells on the activities of members of the 'Cross-border Vehicle Dealers' Association', who operate along the Lagos-Cotonou border route. The association is, first and foremost, an embodiment of social relations based on solidarity, which functions simultaneously as an economic association, a pressure group and a social good. Its everyday life gives a glimpse of common-sense strategies of informal cross-border business operators in post-colonial Africa. Economic survival struggles, quasi-political actions, and local social engagements are expressions of strategies emerging around the interests of these informal workers. The association is an important meeting point for smugglers, and a platform to professionalize, politick, and plan ahead. To a certain extent, it assumes the function of a

“rite of passage”, where a “consciousness of belonging to a trade union” is constructed. Through, the association, members negotiate their position in society, modulate their relationships with authorities, and take influence in the public sphere. Yet, the history of the association shows the ambivalent position between informality and formality, and the members’ readiness for violent acts in self/group defence or protection, as well as a sense of civic duty. Finally and interestingly, members of the association see themselves not on the margins of the economy/society, but at its centre, taking possession of symbols of power and success.

Thomas Hüsken, Bayreuth:

The Culture of Smuggling in the Borderland of Egypt and Libya

The borderland of Egypt and Libya is a productive zone in which significant political and economic processes are at stake. Thus the image of a periphery without connection to national and global developments is inappropriate. The Aulad Ali are a trans-national tribal society that dominates the borderland between Egypt and Libya and that is directly and actively involved in national and global processes. My paper will focus on the economical productivity of the border situation and its cultural dimension. The most important economic pledge in the hands of the Aulad Ali is the almost unlimited toleration of trans-border trade and smuggling as a substitution for comprehensive economic policies by the Libyan and Egyptian authorities. The flow of legal and illegal commodities from Libya to Egypt are widely organized, controlled and legally regulated by Aulad Ali Bedouin.

The practical smuggling is usually conducted by the young men of an association at the age between 20-40 years whereas the elder are coordinators in the background. The young men establish a subculture of smugglers that is recognizable by a certain habit and a distinctive performative practice. Bravery, readiness to assume risk, and a certain romanticism of illegality belong to this subculture as well as the demonstration of wealth by expensive clothes, several mobile phones of the latest fashion and the possession of big American four by four vehicles. Yet, another very interesting cultural aspect is represented by short movies or video clips made by the smugglers the video device of their mobile phones. The central issue of these movies (which are sometimes accompanied by Bedouin music) is the act of smuggling and the illegal crossing of borders. The video clips are exchanged (via Bluetooth) and circulated among the smugglers. The more spectacular and illegal the content the more desirable gets the clip. Here the appropriation of a new technology seems to initiate an iconographical discourse that reaches beyond the management or the organization of smuggling networks by the mobile phone. It also stands for a specific “culture of smuggling” that my paper intends to explore.

Panel 3: Preparatory Workshop for the 2011 ABORNE Conference on Migration

Workshop Chair: Cristina Rodrigues, Lisbon

Thursday, 9 September, 13.30-15.30, Regenzzimmer

Panel 4: Disabled traders at ‘Beach Ngobila’: Issues of Identity and State, Technology, Disability Social Networks, and Gender

Panel Chair: Patrick Devlieger, Leuven

Thursday, 9 September, 13.30-15.30, Room 114

In this panel we discuss a niche in trading by disabled traders across the Congo River between Kinshasa (D.R. Congo) and Brazzaville (Republic of Congo). The panel starts by exploring the crossing of different kinds of ‘boundaries: conceptual boundaries of the body, identity, and state as well as spatial boundaries of the state, then move to specific movement technology involved in the trade, namely the specifically produced tricycle, then consider a particular social network, namely that of the trade by deaf people, and the representations of gender involved in cross-border trading. The papers are based on ethnographic research at Beach Ngobila, the borderland

on the D.R. Congo side, and the film 'Chefs Mères', documenting the cross-border trade by women from Brazzaville.

Clara Devlieger, Leuven :

De-marginalization and the creation of a niche in trading by disabled traders at 'Beach Ngobila'

This paper addresses the creation of a trading-niche by disabled traders at the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Congo (RC) and the way that this niche reverses their marginalized position in Congolese society. At 'Beach Ngobila', the crossing point on the River Congo between DRC and RC, disabled traders are granted discounts by the state, privileges of assistance, and discounts from the transport companies, thus giving way to the creation of a niche at Beach Ngobila. In doing so, they thus reverse a typical phenomenon of borderlands, that marginal people are found in marginal places. Like in other places of African cross-border trade, disabled traders at 'Beach Ngobila' thus turn the border into a (business) centre instead of a periphery and turn themselves into productive participants in society instead of marginalized outsiders. Doing so, they cross different kinds of 'boundaries': spatial boundaries of the state as well as conceptual boundaries of the body and of identity.

Patrick Devlieger, Leuven

On Being Romans: Multiple connections in staging cross-border trade at Beach Ngobila

The designation of 'Roman' is used to point to anyone involved in the cross-border trade at Beach Ngobila, with reference to the harshness of life, the spectacle of the city of Kinshasa, and similarities to what happened in the hey days of the Roman empire. In this paper, I explore how cross-border trade is staged at Beach Ngobila, focusing on the acting networks in which disabled people are connected. First, I concentrate on UPHAD, the self-help organization of physically disabled people, who stages a visible state in an invisible state. Then, I focus on the connections between physically disabled people and their tricycles, involving design and production, parking, loading, lining up, embarking on the boat. Last, I concentrate on various types of relations that disabled traders experience with able-bodied people: those in the market, disabled people's assistants, and with customs and immigration officers. I conclude by arguing that staging cross-border trade reflects better the reality of presentation and comes before contemplating it as being needed to be denounced or accepting it in terms of the picturesque.

Katrien Timmerman, Leuven

Cross-border trade by deaf people in the context of Kinshasa's deaf-scapes.

In this paper I situate the borderland of Beach Ngobila in the context of other spaces that deaf people frequent across the city of Kinshasa, such as cafés, taxis, and schools. In particular, I argue that in each of these spaces deaf identity is negotiated through (non-)communication, the spectacle of deafness, and the possibility of erupting into physical violence. Focusing on interrelations in the borderland of Beach Ngobila, I argue that deaf people among are often in a bind: on the one hand being involved in the trade comes with advantages and the knowledge that disabled traders are among the well-off compared to disabled people who are not trading. On the other hand, deaf people are exploited as they are being used by able-bodied traders in an effort to minimize taxation. I conclude by considering how deaf networks exist alongside of networks of physically disabled people and of blind people as a means of making communication possible, sharing experiences, and avoiding violence.

Jori De Coster, Leuven :

Pulled Towards the Border: Power and Gender at the Interstices of Society

Based on a 2009 documentary of Claudia Haidara-Yoka entitled 'Mères-Chefs' this paper describes a very specific dynamic concerning urban Congolese women. These women who are often very dependent on their husbands and enjoy few freedoms, are negotiating power

and are changing their social role within family space by inscribing themselves at the interstices of society between DR Congo and DRC Congo. Being places 'in-between' borderlands produce social and cultural hybrids and transformations. The paper discusses how especially women entrepreneurs with disabilities are pulled towards and even dominant within the cross-border trade between Brazzaville and Beach Ngobila, the official border crossing point at Kinshasa. We will describe how at the interstices of society local politics of a global economy in negotiation with gender brings about transformations within society itself.

Panel 5: Trade and Border Towns 1

Panel Chair: Paul Nugent, Edinburgh

Friday, 10 September, 9-10.30, Regenzzimmer

Paul Nugent/ Wolfgang Zeller, Edinburgh:

African Border Towns: Nodes of transnational exchange and sites of dynamism

The speakers will present the core elements of a research proposal currently under review by the European Research Council (ERC). Whether the project will be funded or not, the conceptual underpinnings and choice of case studies will be useful to engage both academic and policy-oriented conference participants and add momentum to this emerging field within the ABORNE research agenda.

The proposal is for a 5-year comparative research project on African Border Towns/cities, abbreviated as "AFBOTO". It places great emphasis on the examination of economic activity through extended field-work in borderland settings. It aims at generating the first significant body of comparative data on border towns in Africa, thereby providing a platform upon which to construct robust conclusions about a spatial re-ordering of the continent. It draws on and intends to strengthen the proposition made by numerous ABORNE members that, while border zones may lie at the geographical margins, they are of fundamental importance within emerging regional economic systems, and often hold the key to peace and security.

While there is a growing realization that borderlands are central to the political economy of contemporary Africa, its border towns/cities are greatly under-researched. From the policy angle, their potential to play a positive role in African integration is an article of faith rather than relying on any very concrete evidence from the field. AFBOTO will generate detailed qualitative data on 18 border towns located in 15 different African countries within three sub-regions where regional integration is firmly on the political agenda. The project will explore the dual functioning of border towns as nodes within regional commercial complexes and as sites where the agendas of state- and non-state actors meet - or simply collide. The central hypothesis is that attempts to promote fast-flowing conduits for trade, by combining new transport infrastructure with novel modes of border regulation, are likely to impart a particular significance to border towns - not just as nodes, but also as sites of demographic, economic and political significance. The project will chart the trajectories of new and fast-growing 'boom towns' as well as other more established towns, some of which are likely to experience growth during the lifetime of the project. Moreover, AFBOTO will compare three of Africa's capitals as border cities (Kinshasa, Brazzaville and Lomé), thereby providing a rather different angle on the debate about African urbanism.

Gregor Dobler, Basel:

Are economy-driven border towns resistant to policy interventions? Some theoretical remarks from the literature

Border towns, especially those in an environment of huge economic chances and rapid change, are often seen as chaotic, unpredictable and impossible to govern from above. Emerging bi-national local orders often incorporate state bureaucracy in a system that defies intervention by co-opting potential regulators. A number of theoretical approaches to this problem have been developed, from neopatrimonialism to game theory. Most of them privilege order and relative stability of the political system, but see it as immunizing against

political intervention from above. Others stress the ad-hoc nature and the negotiability of power and the rapid changes made possible by it. The explorative paper tries to take a step back from these debates and to look at real-life possibilities of policy interventions in rapidly changing border towns; these thoughts will in turn be used to criticize some of the theories of state-society interaction mentioned above.

Karen Büscher, Edinburgh:

The urban impact of transborder trade: commercial ‘transborder’ elites and urban governance in the Eastern Congolese borderland.

Since the early 1990’s one observes a remarkable urban transformation in the Eastern Congolese borderland. Characterised by a rapid growth and an informal, almost semi-autonomous development, urban centres in Eastern Congo are evolving from small, dormant towns into dynamic political and economic regional poles. In a context of more than fifteen years of state decline and violent conflict, their border position facilitated the connection of these centres to extensive and flourishing transborder trading networks. Transborder commercial mobility is of crucial importance in these urban ‘booming’ processes. It not only generated new opportunities but also strongly influenced the general urban political and socio-economic profile. This paper takes as a starting point the case of Goma, a city on the Congolese-Rwandan border. During the war, Goma was disconnected from the central administration in Kinshasa thus enforcing its autonomous development and outward orientation. Analysing processes of urban transformation in Goma, this paper focuses on the impact of, mainly informal, transborder trade and the role of border traders in local urban governance. In a context of a weak state and general informalisation, complex patterns of urban governance emerged where local state authorities compete with multiple non-state actors over urban regulation and decision making. New commercial urban elites gain an increasing voice in these governance networks. The role of these influential economic ‘transborder’ actors in urban political and socio-economic management is further elaborated.

Panel 6: Trade and Regional Integration 1

Panel Chair: Olivier Walther, Luxembourg

Friday, 10 September, 11-13, Regenzzimmer

Olukoya Ogen, Oshogbo:

‘We are Traders and not Smugglers’: Reappraising the Socio-economic Dynamics of Cross-border Trade along the Bakassi Borderland

Cross-border trade is of fundamental importance to the socio-economic well being of the Bakassi Peninsula as well as the adjoining inland territories of Cameroon and Nigeria. This paper, therefore, treats the Bakassi Peninsula as an important sphere of cross border trade and examines how trade and traditional economic networks have resisted regulation by national and international mechanisms. The paper further examines how the contrasting economic policies of Nigeria and Cameroon have been promoting smuggling activities and illicit cross border trade along the Bakassi border zone.

Ironically, while cross border trade and economic interdependence have been furthering peaceful intergroup relations between Nigerian and Cameroonian settlers in and around the Peninsula; resource disputes, issues of taxation, smuggling and illicit trade are also at the fore-front of the historic disputes and violent skirmishes between Cameroon and Nigeria.

The study reveals that in spite of the implementation of the 2006 Green Tree Accord, the long-standing trade dynamics in the Peninsula have remained largely unchanged, and that the tenacity of the Bakassi population is rooted in socio-economic imperatives to which their historic practices of mobility within the Peninsula are well adapted.

Wilma Nchito, Lusaka:

Examining the impact of trade agreements on the local trade dynamics of the cross border trade in Zambia

Zambia, a landlocked country has experienced cross border trade at varying intensities from time immemorial. Having eight neighbours presents Zambia with enormous opportunities for cross border trade, whilst being a peaceful state is an added advantage. The geo-political landscape however at times presents barriers where no physical barrier exists. In the recent past regional groupings such as COMESA (Common Market for East and Southern Africa) have been formed and are trying to remove or reduce some of the barriers. Although regional agreements have been signed one finds that at a local level there is limited support for such trade. Traders continue to face problems related to transport, exchange rates, banking, stiff competition and trading space despite these agreements having been signed. This is an indication that this sector which provides employment and livelihoods in a nation where about 70 percent are in the informal sector faces many hurdles on the ground. Although transactions at borders have been simplified this does not mean everything is plain sailing for the traders thereafter. This paper considers the main aims of the COMESA free trade area agreement and examines whether these have changed the way traders carry out their business at a local level.

Terhemba Nom Ambe-Uva, Lagos:

Cross-Border Cooperation Between Niger and Nigeria: Opportunities and Challenges for the Maradi Micro-Region in West Africa

Within Africa, renewed interest is being shown in sub-regional integration and West Africa is no exception. Micro-regions act as a microcosm and an entry point to the study of regionalism in Africa. This paper presents the case of a “micro-region” developing within the broader Benin-Niger-Nigeria border-zone. The study illustrates that cross-border cooperation is the driver and engine of regional integration, a kind of regional cooperation transcending the micro-region itself with a variety of integrative trends. The distinctive characteristic of the Maradi-Katsina-Kano micro-region is the promotion of regional trade beyond the borders of Niger and Nigeria. It contends that formal borders either essentially does not exist in the Westphalian sense, being ignored by actors such as local populations and traders, or strategically used by representatives of the state to extract resources and rents. The dynamism of this “micro-initiative” tends to cement peaceful relationships, develop social and economic interdependencies, and make up a base for “regional civil society”. Even though there is an increasing awareness by politicians and institutional leaders that micro-regional processes should be encouraged and included in the regional integration process, there is still a long way to go before the top-down and state-led macro-regional policies are synchronised with such micro-regional dynamics.

Manuela Zips-Mairitsch and Werner Zips, Vienna:

Trading Tourists Cross Border: Exclusive Mobility in Southern African Transfrontier Areas

This paper will focus on the trade/development imperative behind the first bilateral peace parks agreement between Botswana and South Africa. Opened to the public in the year 2000 the first officially declared Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park brought down the fence between the South African and Botswana protection areas of the South-Western Kalahari and therefore transcended the existing borders to an extent. The joint conservation management and planning agreements produced winners on all possible sides from the political elite to other stakeholders in natural resource management and eco-tourism. Reviewed on the basis of the two dimensions of ecological sustainability and improvement of bilateral international relations, this achievement is indeed remarkable. However, the presentation will touch upon several more ambivalent aspects of this relatively new form of trans-borderlands governance that the conference call wants to stimulate. This includes questions of exclusion and inclusion translated into definitions of licit/illicit trade in tourism, the appearance of new local actors organized in NGOs who claim to represent people(s) with territorial roots dating back to pre-colonial and pre-borderlands times and the ambivalent national aims to promote peace without proper consultation of the local indigenous peoples. We will focus on the

divergent approaches of both states towards indigenous development, legal protection and resource management.

Our key question challenges the lack of local and/or indigenous involvement in the increased trade options in tourism. Critics interpret the peace parks initiative as a more benevolent, but perhaps no less harmful policy of indigenous expropriation, access restriction and pretexts for internal displacement. In their view there is little difference between earlier forms of land and resource nationalization in the name of conservation and this new form of development 'trans-nationalization' in the interest of two or more states. Both conservancy regimes tend to dispossess and disenfranchise local communities from lands and resources by restricting access and thereby creating exclusive trans-border mobility for tourists. This particular cross-border trade in tourism therefore appears to benefit mostly national interest, which may prove to miss a great chance of local (economical) empowerment.

Panel 7: Trade and Border Towns 2

Panel Chair: Paul Nugent, Edinburgh

Friday, 10 September, 14.30-16, Room 114

Cristina Udelsmann Rodrigues, Lisbon:

Same borderline, different ways of crossing it: Angola-Namibia border towns

Angola-Namibia border crossing has changed throughout the last decades. This paper, based on information collected in Angola, seeks discussing the recomposition of social and economic dynamics in Angola-Namibia border regions and the conditions that affect settlement and urban growth. At main crossing points, different social and economic dynamics emerged, especially after the end of civil war in 2002. The paper focuses in three main circulation routes (the Iona, Ondjiva, and Kuando-Kubango) in three different geographic, social, and economic contexts. The analysis is centred in the factors that contributed to the existing development of border towns at these areas: the role of war, demographics, traditional trading routes, road networks and public/private investment. These new conditions shape the way new and old populated areas emerge and grow, as in Africa this phenomenon is widely associated to the tertiary sector activities and to strategies based on high mobility. At the same time, it introduces into the discussion the analysis of current trends and their implications to border towns' social and economic developments.

Adam Mahamat, Maroua University:

Activities on Ngueli Bridge: A Specific Case of A Cross-Border Trade Between Cameroon and Chad

The Ngueli bridge is a focal point of trade between Cameroon and Chad. It links two main cities: Kousseri, headquarter of the Logone et Chari Division (Cameroon), and N'djamena, the capital city of the Republic of Chad, a landlocked country neighbouring Cameroon. After a brief history of the bridge, the study intends to examine the scope of the activities provoked by an intensive mobility of persons, animals and goods. The study is mainly based on archival documents, oral testimonies and practical observations. The bridge was chiefly built to control identity at the border, and to better manage the circulation of different types of legal economic and commercial activities. Nowadays, it doesn't only involve Cameroon and Chad; Nigeria is also part of the cross-border trade, for thousands of cows coming from the hinterland of Chad cross the bridge to reach its northern region. Chadian traders also provide commodities such as sheets and blankets for the Cameroonian markets. From Cameroon, the exchange products are mainly based on sugar, oil, banana, salt. The analysis emphasizes the role of ancient handicapped soldiers of Chad. They are allowed to make trade, without paying customs duties. They use this privilege to make more business with the Cameroonian dealers.

Panel 8: Trade and Regional Integration 2

Panel Chair: Olivier Walther, Luxembourg

Friday, 10 September, 14.30-16, Regenzzimmer

Olivier Walther, Luxembourg:

Traders, Agricultural Entrepreneurs and the Development of Cross-Border Regions in West Africa

This paper examines the economic and spatial logics of traders and farmers located between Niger, Benin and Nigeria, with a view to identifying possible complementarities and their implications for regional integration in West Africa. It shows that the development of cross-border regions is highly dependent on the combination of two divergent spatial logics, i.e., the circulation developed by traders and the production developed by agricultural investors. Even though cross-border traders and farmers pursue divergent strategies, the paper suggests that the activities of both are centred on urban border markets. Consequently, investment in border market facilities could promote both trading and productive activities simultaneously in a number of countries, underscoring the potential benefit of focusing development on functional economic areas rather than on nation-states, and addressing concerns that border trade may undermine productive development.

Amy Niang, Edinburgh:

Regional integration, the informal way

The weekly market of Diaobé is a place of convergence for sellers and buyers from the 12 provinces of Senegal, attracting nationals from neighbouring countries, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leon, Mali and Burkina Faso. The district of Diaobé itself, located in the southern province of Kolda in Senegal, 60km from the border with Guinea Bissau, is the largest international market-town in West Africa.

At the same time that they trade, negotiate and exchange agricultural products, people renegotiate the terms of regional integration in creative albeit informal ways. In the absence of formal channels of regulation of local centres of exchange, markets such as Diaobé constitute a form of popular regional integration. The example of Diaobé in fact points to a form of de facto freedom of movement of people and goods that operates outside the institutional and legal frameworks of existing treaties and conventions. This paper examines the role of cross-border markets in West Africa in the ways they complete and sometimes challenge the institutional modes of integration. The example of Diaobé will allow to explore the socio-cultural dynamics, issues of access to land, etc, raised by this informal integration.

Jean-Louis Sanka, Bordeaux:

Cross-border markets and regionalization in Africa: the case of Diaobé (Senegal) and São Domingos (Guinea-Bissau)

This paper will examine two cross-border markets: Diaobé in Senegal and Sao Domingos in Guinea-Bissau. Firstly, we will analyze the role of these markets in the integration of their neighbouring regions in the Senegambian economic space. This approach will also allow us to address the problems of commercial and social networks formation in these areas. Secondly, we will examine the interconnections between informal integration promoted by the dynamics of different commercial and social networks and the official policies of cooperation issued by the Senegalese and Guinean States. Finally, we will discuss how the combination of social and economic strategies and the states' cooperation policies for specific regions affect the development of strategic economic regions in African countries and to a broader extent the implementation of regionalization in Africa.

Panel 9: Trade and Regional Integration 3

Panel Chair: Olivier Walther, Luxembourg

Friday, 10 September, 16.30-18.30, Regenzzimmer

Peter Wafula Wekesa, Nairobi:

Magendo, Economic Ingenuity and the Paradoxes of Inter-State relations on the Kenya-Uganda border, 1966-1980.

The evolution and transformation of the Kenya-Uganda border into what it is today presents researchers with interesting analytical paradoxes. By the time the two east African countries attain independence from a single colonial power, Britain, in the early 1960's through the early 1980's a series of negotiated local, inter-state and regional initiatives had come to converge in defining its nature, shape and meaning. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the dialectics of the state-society relations within the economic prism in the context of the Kenya-Uganda border. Situating the analysis in the post-independent period, the paper examines the economic challenges and paradoxes confronting the two newly independent states in regard to the legitimacy of the border that divides a similar cultural area occupied by the Babukusu and the Bagisu peoples. As a fluid cultural zone informed by strong historical ties, the Babukusu-Bagisu borderland area has not only been a site of intense inter-state relations but also an arena of possibilities for the local communities. Taking the case of Magendo (Kiswahili word for smuggling) we test Nugent's (2002) argument that borders are shaped as much by the everyday activities of ordinary people in ways that sometimes undergird but at other times may bypass the formal structures of the states. By the 1980s, Magendo had led to the emergence vibrant towns and markets including the famous Chepkube Soko ya Magendo (Chepkube the smuggler's market) which is presently only retold in the local literary texts and popular music among other forms. Although Magendo was due to cross-border interactions that had their own distinctive features, it also offered avenues for economic survival that combine elements of inter-state and trans-national regionalism. The overall aim of the paper thus is to assess the inter-state economic and political dynamics informing border policy and community relations in the light of a strong cultural movement towards informal economic regionalism in Kenya and Uganda and the East African region in general.

Adam Mahamat, Maroua:

Activities on Ngueli Bridge: A Specific Case of A Cross-Border Trade Between Cameroon and Chad

The Ngueli bridge is a focal point of trade between Cameroon and Chad. It links two main cities: Kousseri, headquarter of the Logone et Chari Division (Cameroon), and N'djamena, the capital city of the Republic of Chad, a landlocked country neighbouring Cameroon. After a brief history of the bridge, the study intends to examine the scope of the activities provoked by an intensive mobility of persons, animals and goods. The study is mainly based on archival documents, oral testimonies and practical observations.

The bridge was chiefly built to control identity at the border, and to better manage the circulation of different types of legal economic and commercial activities. Nowadays, it doesn't only involve Cameroon and Chad; Nigeria is also part of the cross-border trade, for thousands of cows coming from the hinterland of Chad cross the bridge to reach its northern region. Chadian traders also provide commodities such as sheets and blankets for the Cameroonian markets. From Cameroon, the exchange products are mainly based on sugar, oil, banana, salt.

The analysis emphasizes the role of ancient handicapped soldiers of Chad. They are allowed to make trade, without paying customs duties. They use this privilege to make more business with the Cameroonian dealers.

Michael Bonchuk, Calabar:

Cross-Border Trade: An Analysis of Trade and Market Integration along the Nigeria-Cameroon Borderlands

The focus of this paper is on unrecorded trade as opposed to the recorded in the cross River, (Nigeria) segment of the borders with Western Cameroon. Empirical data derived from the borderland indicate that the development of border markets, twin towns and their

transformation is traceable to the trading activities across borders. These border areas have become the convergence of internationality and locality. Along and astride the borders, the Nigeria currency (Naira) and Cameroonian franc are openly exchanged unofficially to purchase manufactured goods, pharmaceuticals, food stuff in the presence of security agents and government officials who have become participants in the trade across-borders. The twin towns and border markets have become sanctuaries for social miscreants, criminal elements, human traffickers, including those involved in the 'sins business'. An assessment of cross-border trade and market integration reveal that inhabitants of the border areas have become economically, socially and politically integrated in spite of the conflict over the Bakassi Peninsula. It is argued that from empirical analysis bilateral agreements between Nigeria and Cameroon have made negligible positive impact on the process of trade and market integration. While the process of trade liberalization should be intensified as a means of fast tracking the tempo of formal trade expansion between the two, recognition should be given to the unrecorded trade and market integration processes. It is concluded that the two governments should lay emphasis on the provision of basic infrastructures and security which cross-border trade, investment and market integration can be based. The micro-integration formalities taking place along and astride the Nigeria-Cameroon borderlands are wide spread phenomenon, characteristic of African borders. These micro-integration formalities are based on the realities of African history and could be galvanized and utilized for wider economic and market integration in the continent.

Panel 10: Historical Perspectives on Cross-Border Trade

Panel Chair: Jan-Bart Gewald, Leiden

Friday, 10 September, 14.30-16, Room 114

Andrea Lobo, Brasilia University:

Beginnings: the special conditions of creolization in Cape Verde

Abstract: This paper deals with the conditions that favored the emergence of a Creole society in the Islands of Cape Verde in the fifteenth century. Focusing on the first stages of the process of creolization, I argue that creolization in Cape Verde was made possible by a) the lack of strong asymmetries (economic, political, military) between the parties involved in this intersocietal encounter; b) remarkable similarities between the cultural syntaxes that organize the political cultures of Portuguese and African societies; and c) the fact that the African groups that participated in the Cape Verdean process of creolization had gone through a primary creolization before the Portuguese arrival in the Upper Guinea Coast. This had the effect of producing polities with porous boundaries, which make easy the movement of people, goods, values and institutions between them.

Yasin Mohammed Ruffo, Addis Abeba:

Gambella Cross-border Trade between Ethiopia and the Sudan (1904-1935)

The British occupied the Sudan in 1898. At initial stage, the genesis of Gambella trading post was conceived as an effective means of drawing western Ethiopia into the economic orbit of British ruled Sudan. The legal basic of the Gambella trading post emanated from Article IV of the treaty that was signed by Emperor Menilek and the British minister, Harrington, in May 1902, delimiting the boundary between Ethiopia and the Sudan. Emperor Menilek consented to lease to the British an Enclave in the area of Itang for the establishment of a commercial post. The Itang enclave itself was short lived. It was too far away from the Ethiopia plateau. This was the main factor behind the transfer of the post from Itang to Gambella. This paper attempts to discuss the significance of the Gambella border trade for societies living on border areas. The paper also deals with internal and external trade items of the area. It also describes the internal and external merchants. The paper attempts to bring to light the historical importance of the border trade between Ethiopian and the Sudan from 1904-1935.

Jan-Bart Gewald, Leiden

From Macdonald to Madona: Trade and Labour Migrancy on the Luapula Border, Northern Rhodesia Katanga 1904 – 1914

In 1904 the African Lakes Company established a trading station in the very heart of central Africa at the Mumbo Tuta falls on the Luapula river, which formed the boundary between Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and the Belgian Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo). A mining company agent, Macdonald, was dispatched to the Mumbo Tuta falls and ordered to recruit labourers from Northern Rhodesia for the copper mines of what would become the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga in the Katanga province of Congo. Between 1904 and 1914 Macdonald recruited thousands upon thousands of labourers for the Katangese mines, and in so doing gave his name to the settlement that developed around the Mumbo Tuta falls. Recruits passing through Madona, as the settlement came to be known, signed on for set contracts and their deferred pay could then be cashed in at the trading stores that were established at the border crossing. In 1905 alone no less than £5,000 was earned by under a thousand labourers recruited by Macdonald at Madona.

Panel 11: War, Peace and Trade

Panel Chair: Wafula Okumu, Johannesburg

Saturday, 11 September, 9-13, Regenzzimmer

Wafula Okumu, Johannesburg

Rebels Across Borders: Case Studies of LRA, FDLR and OLF

Since rebels became a regular phenomenon in African politics they have been keenly studied to find out why and how they are permanent fixtures of the political landscape. Although most studies have focused on how factors such as state weaknesses, bad governance, grievances and greed have contributed to the rebel phenomenon in Africa, very few studies have paid attention to how borders are also rebels' best friend. In most, if not all, of African armed conflicts waged between government forces and rebels groups, the exchanges have mostly taken place in the borderlands. There are a number of reasons why borderlands have attracted rebel groups. Among these are remoteness from the centres of power and lack of governance in the frontiers, the permeability or lack of boundaries, and the presence of natural wealth. Besides analysing how rebels use borderlands, this paper also tries to answer questions such as: why are African borderlands attractive to rebels? What are the regional implications of rebel activities in the borderlands? Although the paper will mainly focus on how borderlands are rebels' best friends, it will also use the case studies of the LRA, the FDLR and the OLF to highlight the prices that borderlanders pay as a result of their exposure to rebel activities.

Aboubakr Tandia, Dakar

Cross-Border trade and Cross-border Cooperation on the militarized borders of Western Senegambia: A comparative approach of the Borderlands of Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea Bissau

In the borderlands of Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, militarization has emerged out of the regional war complex formed by the Casamance conflict and political instability in Guinea Bissau. This has encouraged trans-local institutions and peoples to promote cross-border trade as a politics of cooperation and or for community peace as well as a means for individual, livelihood, and community survival. However a counter-dynamic there is the development of a flourishing contraband economy, mainly wartime smuggling, which challenges this general and optimistic trend of cross-border trade politics in the region. What is more, war economy from impoverished Casamance insurgents and other forms of transboundary criminality has started mingling with drug-trafficking and smuggling of other invaluable goods. The control of peanut farming and cashew nuts has become a major stake for the politics of war and the survival of armed groups. In approaching those ambivalent

dynamics of transboundary trade in western Senegambia, this study confronts case studies on individual border trade situations. Based on fieldwork and site-visits in the scattered transboundary weekly markets called *loumo*, it specifically focuses on the conditions under which cross-border trade reinforces and furthers peaceful cooperation while at the same time being challenged by a militarized and (post)conflict environment. Its main finding is that the stakes of contraband economy for militarized groups and their institutional accomplices reduces cross-border trade to rank as a relieving enterprise where it is promoted as a vigor lever for cross-border cooperation, peace and integration.

Laurence Ammour, Bordeaux:

Transnational Criminal Flows and Networks in the Sahel Region

An assessment of the security issues in the Sahel region through the prism of criminal flows shows that the trans-Saharan areas, far from being enclosed and compartmentalized territories, overlap and intersect along a periphery that is larger than the Sahel itself, extending from the Atlantic to Sudan, and from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Guinea. It is a land where the advancing desert pushes back frontiers and where unmonitored areas provide sanctuaries for all manner of illicit practices. Illicit trafficking is the criminal component of conflicts, of which it is both a driver and a product. Therefore crime is a geopolitical factor in its own right that undermines territorial borders because, like terrorism, it is able to survive and prosper without a territorial base. Since the end of the bipolar era, criminal networks have displayed three characteristics: - On the African continent they have become a powerful integrational factor onto globalization. In that sense they are part of the international relations at large, as « illicit international relations ».

- They are able to act in different areas at once and to switch from one type of organization to another – local, regional or international – as required.

- They continually draw new maps of different areas, whose boundaries are not superimposed on national borders because they are the result of flexible groups and networks that are constantly being redefined.

The sectorization of crime enables the networks to perpetuate themselves, to reinforce the networking of territories where there is no rule of law, and to adapt to each new obstacle as it arises. At the same time it increases the various types of threats, making them more dangerous to states and institutions, as well as more complex and more difficult for crime fighting authorities and organizations to deal with. Given the magnitude of these interconnected criminal networks and their tight solidarity, there would be no point in trying to split them up into single components: the phenomenon of organized crime can only be understood if viewed as a whole, since organized criminal activities and opportunistic trafficking are mutually supportive and driven by interdependent dynamics. However, for the purposes of analysis, the different types of criminal activity will be studied separately, in order to give a clearer picture of their specific characteristics: drugs, light weapons, human beings, and terrorism.

Jairo Munive, Copenhagen University:

Soldiering, Manpower and Immobility in Liberia.

The connection between conflict, cross border mobility and extraction of resources has been a durable feature of conflict in West Africa. However, the aim of this contribution is to denaturalize and reverse the connection. The emphasis is not on how resources per se might cause conflict or contribute to stabilize countries emerging out of war. Instead the paper aims to analyze the organization of violence around them. I analyze specifically the question of labour and the post-war immobility of young ex-combatants who fought for Charles Taylor. The empirical case stems from Ganta a booming commercial town at the crossroads between Liberia, Guinea and Ivory Coast.

Hussain Mahmoud, Nairobi:

Conflicts and Cattle Commerce on the Kenya/Ethiopia borderlands

This paper explores the impacts of conflicts on cross-border cattle trade on the Kenya/Ethiopia borderlands. Conflicts on the border areas, in all forms, are devastating

constraints to cross-border livestock traders and other market actors. The examination of the relations between policies governing Kenya's remote pastoral areas and border political volatility on the one hand and livestock trading sector's vulnerability to risks on the other is critical in gaining insights into these links. These dynamics are strongly connected to wider regional political and economic processes. While causes of conflicts and resolution mechanisms have been the focus of numerous studies in the Horn of Africa, a systematic exploration of the effects of conflicts on livestock trading and traders and its broad implications in the region has been lacking.

Nelson Alusala, Johannesburg:

Informal cross-border trade and illicit arms in East Africa, the case of Uganda-Rwanda border

Historically, border disputes have been common in East Africa. For instance in 1979, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin invaded Tanzania claiming that Ugandan territory extended deep inside Tanzania up to Kagera River, while in 1974, he claimed that in the colonial era the Ugandan territory extended up to Naivasha in Kenya. On political and security issues, the Migingo Island controversy between Kenya and Uganda raised questions on how much committed the current leadership in the East African region was on regional integration. The article evaluates the security challenges that typical international borders in East Africa portend. In an attempt to illustrate the porosity and the ease with which criminals could take advantage of the situation, the author identifies, from a field research undertaken in the South western region of Uganda, the ease with which small arms can be smuggled across the borders under the guise of informal cross-border trade which largely derives its basis in the customs and historical linkages in the region.

Border towns in East Africa (like in many other African countries) are considered zones of risk and quick money-making ventures/deals, and this comes with other criminal activities, not least smuggling of small arms. While informal cross-border trade between border communities appears to be in a natural harmony with spirit of the EAC, there are all possibilities that without sufficient border monitoring capacity by all the Community members, such a move would lead to increased criminality including arms trafficking, drug smuggling, movement of terrorists as well as a conduit for contraband goods. These arguments are discussed at length in the article. The article further argues that while the danger is not alarmingly high, there is a high potential that with the opening up of the EAC to free movement of goods and persons, there is a high likelihood that criminals may exploit this freedom unless proper mechanisms are instituted to curtail the practice, in order not to jeopardise the noble mission of the EAC.

Vincent Hiribarren, Manchester:

Cross-border Trade and Statehood in Borno (Nigeria)

From June to August 2010, I will undertake a fieldtrip on the northern boundaries of Nigeria. I will precisely study two different segments of the Niger-Nigeria and Cameroon-Nigeria boundaries. My paper will examine from a very recent viewpoint the evolution of cross-border trade in Borno, on the western shores of Lake Chad.

Indeed, nineteenth century Borno used to be a centre of trans-Saharan trade which was reconfigured in the 1890s and 1900s by the creation of the British, French and German boundaries. How did the pre-existing flows of trade quantitatively and qualitatively change during and after the colonial era? This paper will assess the importance of trade in this marginalised borderland. Moreover, the recent conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria in this area tends to prove that the State still plays an important role in this borderland. Consequently, it is hoped that this paper will analyse the correlation between trade and the administrative and military presence of the State in a borderland.