



# Beyond Crisis and Insecurity: Cultural Creativity, Popular Struggle, and Social Change in West Africa

*The 11<sup>th</sup> International Mande Studies Association Conference, 10-14 June 2020  
at Uppsala University, Sweden*

**Co-organized by:**

**Mande Studies Association (MANSA)**

[www.mandestudies.org](http://www.mandestudies.org)

and

**Forum for Africa Studies, Uppsala University**

[www.afrikastudier.uu.se](http://www.afrikastudier.uu.se)

**Submissions:**

Please submit all panel, roundtable, and paper abstracts no later than 29 December 2019.

Access to proposal submissions portal:

<https://mansaconference2020.home.blog/call-for-papers-and-panels/>

Decisions on acceptance will be made by first half of February 2020.

Participants wishing to be considered for financial aid must submit complete papers by 1 April 2020.

Priority will be given to Africa-based participants and doctoral students of any origin.

**Prerequisites and Fees for Conference Attendance:**

Presentation of accepted papers is contingent on payment of MANSA membership dues for 2020 and on payment of conference fees (information forthcoming) by 1 March 2020.

**Conference Web Site:**

Submit abstracts here: <https://mansaconference2020.home.blog/>

Questions and queries (except abstracts): [mansaconference2020@antro.uu.se](mailto:mansaconference2020@antro.uu.se)

**Conference Executive Committee:**

- *Prof. Sten Hagberg*, Director, Forum for Africa Studies, Uppsala University, President-elect of MANSA, and Chair of the Organizing Committee ([sten.hagberg@antro.uu.se](mailto:sten.hagberg@antro.uu.se))
- *Assoc. Prof. Joseph Hellweg*, Florida State University, President of MANSA ([jhellweg@fsu.edu](mailto:jhellweg@fsu.edu))
- *Prof. Rosa de Jorio*, University of North Florida, Editor-in-Chief, *Mande Studies* ([rdejorio@unf.edu](mailto:rdejorio@unf.edu))



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## CALL FOR PANELS & PAPERS

# ***Beyond Crisis and Insecurity:***

## ***Cultural Creativity, Popular Struggle, and Social Change in West Africa***

This conference will explore prospects for peace and reconciliation in a region too often burdened by conflict and instability. Over the last three decades, West Africa has undergone multiple crises and periods of insecurity: civil wars in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, and Sierra Leone, the population displacements that followed these wars, political turmoil in Guinea, political transformation in Burkina Faso, the Ebola epidemic in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the ongoing AIDS epidemic and other illness outbreaks, as well as climatic and environmental disasters. These events have reshaped society and culture, families and citizens, and the economy and State in dramatic, often violent and unexpected ways. In particular, the West African Sahel has become a hotspot for geopolitical realignments, resource extraction, migration, terrorist organizations, human and material trafficking, and criminal networks in ways that have impacted the region as a whole and on which global media attention has increasingly focused to the exclusion of other, more life-sustaining dynamics.

The current strategic and socio-political stakes of the region's instability have thus attracted both the humanitarian concerns of the international community as well as interest in the root causes of violence and instability. But in the resulting security-development nexus, states have shifted priorities in their national budgets toward security and defense efforts, profit-oriented development, and collaborations with international military initiatives, to the detriment of empowering national, regional, transnational, or grassroots communities to improve their present and future life possibilities. Meanwhile, military responses have intensified conflicts, further dislocating populations and exacerbating their reasons to emigrate, sometimes at great risk to their lives, while putting stress on the region's overseas diaspora communities as sources of financial support in troubled times.

Largely ignored in these scenarios, however, are the West Africans, related diaspora communities, and transnational allies who are taking action beyond the spotlight to stabilize the region. Women and sexual minorities are expanding socio-economic opportunities for themselves and their communities and organizing against discrimination and violence. Farmers are balancing cash crop and subsistence production in precarious environments. Artists, writers, and performers are creating alternative visions of the future. And educators, organic intellectuals, and students are interrogating the past and critically engaging the present to discern problems and identify viable solutions. Municipal and national activists are changing the dynamics of democracy, and overseas expatriate communities are taking active political roles back home. Religious organizations and ritual associations are also organizing within and across communities to defend local and national interests. Sustainable development has become as much the purview of local networks as international NGOs. Public health officials and environmental experts are discovering that local knowledge is as important in organizing responses to epidemics and ecological and energy-related challenges as is global expertise. These are just some of the multiple pursuits we hope to explore to help find new paradigms for critiquing and providing alternative narratives to the fatalistic and disempowering media, policy-related, and scholarly portrayals of political, economic, and social conditions in the region.

The 11<sup>th</sup> International Mande Studies Association Conference aims to produce new understandings of how West Africans have been asserting their ability to mobilize resources from all domains of their lives in order to strategize and struggle for new solutions to ongoing challenges. This conference aims to tell these stories for the purpose of discerning new paths in West Africa beyond crisis and insecurity. Our purpose is to stimulate scholarship that explores society and culture so as to highlight endeavors that build, construct, and affirm agency, peaceful coexistence, and social innovation.

**Please submit all panel, roundtable and paper proposals no later than 29 December 2019 following the information that will be available here:**

<https://mansaconference2020.home.blog/call-for-papers-and-panels/>

**Decisions will be made by first half of February 2020. Participants wishing to be considered for financial support must submit complete papers by 1 April 2020.**

**Priority will be given to Africa-based participants and doctoral students of any origin.**

**Disciplines and Languages of the Conference:** Empirical, descriptive, and theoretical studies from all disciplines are welcome, including those of practitioners in governmental and nongovernmental organizations. We invite contributions on ***cultural creativity, popular struggle, and social change in West Africa*** from a variety of perspectives in the social sciences and humanities, including but not limited to anthropology, archaeology, art history, development studies, ethnomusicology, gender studies, geography, history, literary studies, peace studies, political science, public health, religious studies, sociolinguistics, linguistics, and sociology. The languages of the conference are English and French.

**Presentation Rules:** Individuals may only present one paper or serve once as a roundtable presenter but may also organize and chair a panel or roundtable or serve as discussant on another panel as well. Each presenter will have between fifteen and twenty minutes maximum to present. Please be mindful of other presenters' time as you plan your presentations.

**Panel Submissions:** Each panel should conform to one of three formats: (1) four presenters and one discussant, (2) four presenters, no discussant, and extra time for discussion, or (3) five presenters and no discussant. No presentation or discussion shall exceed twenty minutes. The panel organizer may chair the panel and serve one other role on the panel, either as presenter or discussant. Each regular session will last for two hours.

Panel proposals should provide the name, organizational affiliation and email address of the organizer/chair, an abstract of 750 words maximum about the panel topic, and abstracts of each of the four or five presentations (500 words each). Each of these presentation abstracts should give the name, organizational affiliation, and email address of the presenter(s). If a discussant is included, that person's name, organizational affiliation, and email address must also be provided.

**Individual Paper Submissions:** Individuals proposing papers on conference themes must submit a 500-word abstract along with their name, organizational affiliation, and email address.

**Roundtables:** Discussions of key conference-related sub-topics, recently published books, current events, etc. are encouraged in roundtable format. Submissions should provide the name, organizational affiliation, and email address of the organizer/chair, an abstract of 750 words maximum about the topic, and abstracts of each of the four or five contributions (500 words each). Abstract should include the name, organizational affiliation, and email address of the presenter(s).

**Suggestions for Structuring Proposals:** For ***panels and roundtables***, indicate the chosen theme the panel will develop and its relevance to current research, social action, and/or policymaking. Then summarize the subtopics developed in each paper, indicating possible links, similarities, and contrasts among them. Conclude with a statement of the panel's overall contribution to Mande and/or African Studies. For ***individual or co-authored papers***, state the authors' argument(s) clearly. Then provide an overview of the evidence and methods used to support the paper's argument. Include commentary on the significance of the paper's findings to the broader themes of the conference and/or the fields of Mande and/or African Studies. Please cite any academic or other references pertinent to your paper or panel, and include these references in a list following the proposal (not part of the word count).

## Financial Assistance & Conference Fees

Limited funding will be available for Africa-based scholars and for doctoral students of all origins. Funding will be allocated by a review committee based on the quality of the *full paper, to be submitted by 1 April 2020*.

Information about conference fees will be forthcoming: <https://mansaconference2020.home.blog>

## The Mande Studies Association (MANSA)

<http://mandestudies.org/>

The Mande Studies Association (MANSA) is an independent society open to all individuals with an academic or professional interest in the Mande region of West Africa, its adjacent populations, and various diasporas originating and/or living particularly, but not only, in the countries of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and those countries adjacent to them. Needless to say, the region's diasporas have also achieved a global reach. Our organization is international and multidisciplinary, with members around the world and across the academic-intellectual spectrum. MANSA sponsors panels at the African Studies Association's annual conference in the USA in November-December of each year. And since 1999, MANSA has proudly published its academic journal, *Mande Studies* (currently with Indiana University Press). To date, MANSA has organized ten triennial conferences in Africa and Europe following the first conference on Manding Studies in London in 1972, which eventually led to MANSA's founding on 1 November 1986 at the African Studies Association annual meeting in Madison, Wisconsin (USA). Since then, international conferences have occurred in Bamako, Mali (1993); Leiden, the Netherlands (1995); Serrekunda, the Gambia (1998); Leiden, the Netherlands (2002); Conakry and Kankan, Guinea (2005); Lisbon, Portugal (2008); Bamako, Mali (2011); Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso (2014); and Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire (2017). In 2020, MANSA's Eleventh Triennial Conference will occur in Uppsala, Sweden, 10-14 June 2020.

## The Forum for Africa Studies at Uppsala University

<http://www.afrikastudier.uu.se/en/>

The Forum for Africa Studies is a centre with a broad mandate to cover Africa research and higher education initiatives. The Forum for Africa Studies aims to support research and higher education on Africa at Uppsala University and to facilitate contacts and the exchange of research information within as well as outside of the university. A particular concern is to engage with universities and research institutes in Africa. The Forum organizes lectures, seminars, roundtables, film screenings, workshops, and undergraduate courses in African Studies. It hosts around 40 public events per year. The Forum for Africa Studies leads research application processes and research processes, facilitating knowledge exchange and collaborations across researchers and students, disciplines and perspectives, Swedish and African actors and institutions. Currently, the Forum for Africa Studies hosts large research projects and institutional collaborations in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The Forum's long-term engagement in West Africa involves collaborative research in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

