

<b>Institution: The University of Edinburgh</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 30 History</b>
<b>Title of case study: The African Union Border Programme and the Economic Community of West African States</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Research on African borderlands, conducted by Nugent at the University of Edinburgh since 1993, has impacted internationally on policy in this area across West African states between 2008 and 2013. It has assisted the shaping of regional integration and capacity-building by the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Firstly, it led to the formal adoption by the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) of the principle that grounded research is fundamental to the work of practitioners and policymakers tasked with easing the flow of people and goods across borders. Secondly, the research finding that borders have historically been made by border populations as well as by states has influenced the position adopted by the AUBP and ECOWAS that regional integration initiatives need to come from below as much as from above.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Professor Paul Nugent was appointed in 1989 to the University of Edinburgh where he has pursued extensive research on the history of African borderlands. His most important contribution has been a monograph (2003), which contests the predominant notion that the perpetuation of 'artificial' colonial borders has been driven purely by state interests. Instead he argues that borderlands have been active participants in the making of the borders that ostensibly divide them. This book built on an earlier edited collection with Professor A.I. Asiwaju (then of the University of Lagos) (1996). Since 2004, Nugent has been engaged in a project comparing boundaries and state-making in the Senegambia (Gambia, Senegal) and the trans-Volta (Ghana, Togo). This research, which was partly funded by the Nuffield Foundation (2003) and the British Academy (2004), is based on extensive archival and field research in the four countries concerned. The comparisons were conducted at two scales. At a macro-scale, the research examined how the distinct morphology of states was shaped through a dynamic interaction with the borderlands, and more particularly by the attempt to regulate the flow of people and goods. At a micro-level, the research compared how understandings of community were reshaped by the realities of the border and by migration. Through a comparison of cross-border festivals and renditions of local history, the research sought to make sense of the ways in which local communities endeavoured to transcend the rigidities associated with the borders, and the practical difficulties they encountered. This has led to a wider comparison of cross-border towns and cooperation initiatives in comparative international perspective.</p> <p>This research has led to a series of book chapters (eg. 2008a and b) and journal articles (2007). Throughout these linked research projects, the over-riding emphasis has been on the importance of everyday practice (trading, farming, marriage etc) as constitutive of borderland spaces and of the way state institutions function. The practical implication of the research is that well-meaning attempts at transcending colonial borders risk missing their target if they fail to take account of how populations have invested in borders. The implication is that 'regional integration from below' has to take account of how lives and livelihoods turn on borderland dynamics. In his most recent writing (2012), Nugent has compared cooperation and regional integration in North American, European and African borderlands.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p><u>Publications</u></p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

P. Nugent and A.I. Asiwaju eds. *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities* (London, Pinter, 1996); to be supplied on request.

P. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier: The Lie of the Borderlands Since 1914* (Ohio University Press, 2003); to be supplied on request.

P. Nugent, 'Cyclical history in the Gambia/Casamance borderlands: refuge, settlement and Islam from c.1880 to the present', *Journal of African History* 48.2 (2007), 221-243.  
DOI: [10.1017/S0021853707002769](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853707002769)

P. Nugent, 'Border anomalies: the role of local actors in shaping spaces along the Senegal-Gambia and Ghana-Togo borders', in A. Bellagamba and G. Klute eds, *Beside the State: Emergent Powers in Contemporary Africa* (Köln, Koeppe Verlag, 2008a), 121-138; to be supplied on request.

P. Nugent, 'Not so much boom towns as trickle towns: a comparison of two West African border towns, Kpetoe (Ghana) and Darsilami (the Gambia)', in Y. Akinyeye ed. *That They May Be One: African Boundaries and Regional Integration* (Ileko, African Regional Institute, 2008b), 84-105; to be supplied on request.

P. Nugent, 'Border towns and cities in comparative perspective: barriers, flows and governance', in T. Wilson and H. Donnan eds, *A Companion to Border Studies* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2012), 557-572; to be supplied on request.

#### Grants

Nuffield Foundation, 2003, (PI: P. Nugent), £9,160, Divided Border Communities of West Africa: A Comparison of the Senegal/Gambia and Ghana-Togo Borderlands.

British Academy, small research grant, 2004, (PI: P. Nugent), £4,990, 'Livelihoods and Identities in West African Boundary Communities: A Comparison of Ghana-Togo and Senegal-Gambian Borderlands.

European Science Foundation, 2009, (co-application including P. Nugent), €540,000, Network funding for African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE), based at Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.

#### **4. Details of the impact**

In 2002, the African Union (AU) replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU) with a mandate to pursue continental unity. In 2007, the AU set up the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) on the premise that international borders were likely to become sites of conflict (especially over resources such as oil and water) as well as obstacles to integration unless they were treated as a governance priority. The AUBP was tasked with developing the modalities for properly demarcating all of Africa's borders and for developing strategies for promoting cross-border cooperation in association with member states and the Regional Economic Communities. Prof. A.I. Asiwaju (University of Lagos), with whom Nugent had previously collaborated, was appointed to the AUBP steering committee, and recommended Nugent as an external expert on the basis of his expertise. In March 2007, Nugent was invited to participate in an Experts Meeting in Bamako, and to a subsequent meeting in Djibouti in December. At these meetings, Nugent drew on his research findings to underline the importance of going beyond a top-down approach to cross-border co-operation and of factoring in local initiatives and perspectives. He also highlighted the knowledge deficit that exists with respect to border regions. Both of these insights have now been built into the objectives of AUBP.

i) *Making the connection between research and practice*

In preparation for the second conference of African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues, which took place in Addis Ababa 22-25 March 2010, Nugent was invited with Asiwaju to write the document that dealt with capacity-building for the AUBP (see 5.1). It foregrounded the importance of bringing together research and policy, and insisted on the importance of identifying centres of excellence for borderlands research in Africa and beyond. This document, entitled 'Human Resources Development for the AUBP' was presented by Nugent at the meeting of governmental representatives and invited experts the day before the full Ministerial meeting, and was adopted as one of the official documents of the African Union (5.2). The document also specified a road-map for 2010-12 and hence formed part of the operating plan for capacity-building within the AUBP. Its importance lay partly in tying together the boundary demarcation and cross-border co-operation dimensions. However, it also foregrounded the importance of treating borders research as something other than an optional extra. In April 2011, Nugent was invited to participate in the mid-term review of AUBP. At this meeting on 3-5 April, identifying centres of excellence for borderlands research in Africa was underlined as a priority for the coming years. Nugent subsequently assisted GIZ (the German Development Agency) in beginning to map existing centres of borderlands research in Africa and was asked to help in identifying a number of centres of excellence which it might support - all with a view to assisting the work of AUBP (5.8). The importance of grounded research for meaningful policy inventions has, therefore, been fully internalized by AUBP and Nugent has played a significant role in making this happen.

At the same time, Nugent has been engaged in building the networks necessary for this interaction to occur. In 2007, Nugent initiated the formation of the African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE), which held its first meeting in Edinburgh and quickly secured network funding from the European Science Foundation. It is chaired by Nugent and is run from the Centre of African Studies at the University of Edinburgh (which is also directed by Nugent). Although ABORNE was primarily envisaged as a network of academic researchers, it welcomed practitioners and expressed its intention to engage with the policy community. Subsequently in 2010 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Nugent and the head of Peace and Security Division of the AU, which outlines specific areas in which ABORNE can assist the AU in building its own capacity (e.g. in relation to building a database of maps and treaties), raising awareness of border issues and helping to build a responsive research community in Africa (5.3).

ii) *Informing policy on 'regional integration from below'*

'Regional integration from below' is a concept that has developed since the 1990s, but its practical implications were never fleshed out to any great extent. The research (see 2) has led to outcomes in three areas. Firstly, it has contributed to the practical debate about sequencing. The 'Human Resources Development' document (produced by Nugent and Asiwaju) (5.2) highlighted the importance of balancing a focus on short-term initiatives, where results can be quickly obtained, with addressing the need for long-term structural transformations in the way borderlands are managed. Secondly, the research has helped to inform the debate about the importance of supporting the local efforts of border communities and it has been used to emphasise the point that the erasure of borders might actually be considered detrimental to the interests of certain border populations, without compensatory mechanisms in place. As a result, in Article 16 of the declaration approved by African Ministers (5.4), they endorsed the importance of supporting local initiatives. Examples of local initiatives subsequently supported by the AUBP have been documented in a short film (5.5).

The research has also been drawn on to distil some of the lessons of European integration for African policymakers at a time when the European Union, the AU and the RECs are seeking to work together more closely. In 2012 Nugent was contacted by the head of Cross-Border Cooperation at ECOWAS, who expressed a wish to send a delegation to learn more about the European experience of cross-border cooperation (5.9). In Edinburgh (May 2012) Nugent convened the first ever meeting between ECOWAS, the European Commission and the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) which has been at the forefront of promoting cross-border cooperation from below in Europe (5.10 and 5.11). A joint statement was drafted by

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Nugent on behalf of the participants which was subsequently posted on the AEBR website (5.6). The ECOWAS head of Cross-Border Cooperation described this as a 'very fruitful meeting, the results of which will be vigorously pursued by the ECOWAS Commission' (5.9). In addition, Nugent set up a meeting between the ECOWAS delegation and the Republic of Ireland-Northern Ireland North-South Joint Ministerial Council which was equally successful. In Oct 2012 Nugent was invited to speak at the European Union Open Day, alongside the heads of AUBP and AEBR, on the subject of what Africa can learn from the experience of cross-border cooperation in Europe (5.7).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**Documents

5.1 Letter of invitation from AU, 12 January 2010, inviting Paul Nugent to draft Memorandum on Capacity-Building [available as pdf copy upon request].

5.2 'Human Resources Development for the AUBP' [AUBP/EXP-MIN/5 (II)], available at: <http://www.issafrica.org/siteimages/HR.pdf> or <http://tinyurl.com/o8as6cq>

5.3 AUBP-ABORNE Memorandum of Understanding signed by Paul Nugent (ABORNE) and El-Ghassim Wane (Head of Peace and Security at the AU), available at: <http://www.aborne.org/fileadmin/PDFs/MoU%20final%20scan.pdf> or <http://tinyurl.com/ohc48rc>

5.4 'Declaration of the African Union Border Programme and the Modalities for the Pursuit and Acceleration of its Implementation' [AUBP/EXP-MIN/7(II)], available at: <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/aubp-dec-e.pdf> or <http://tinyurl.com/os9h5f6>

5.5 *African Borders: From Barriers to Bridges*, short film on the work of the AUBP (including examples of support for local initiatives): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqD3Qgd0\\_LQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqD3Qgd0_LQ)

5.6 Joint statement after Edinburgh meeting, May 2012, reported on AEBR website: [http://www.aebr.eu/en/news/news\\_detail.php?news\\_id=143](http://www.aebr.eu/en/news/news_detail.php?news_id=143) or <http://tinyurl.com/oq83at4>

5.7 European Open Days 2012 *Proceedings*: [http://www.interreg4c.eu/news\\_Open\\_Days\\_2012\\_Proceedings.html](http://www.interreg4c.eu/news_Open_Days_2012_Proceedings.html) or <http://tinyurl.com/p3cyzqt>  
For event in October 2012, see p. 100.

People

5.8 Co-ordinator of GIZ support to African Union Border Programme (AUBP): to corroborate Nugent's work with GIZ.

5.9 Head of Division, Cross-Border Cooperation, ECOWAS Commission: to corroborate collaboration with ECOWAS to develop policy on cross-border co-operation.

5.10 President of Association of European Border Regions (AEBR): to corroborate collaboration with AEBR to share and disseminate ideas about cross-border co-operation.

5.11 International Relations Officer, DG-REGIO, European Commission: to corroborate collaboration with European Commission to share and disseminate ideas about cross-border co-operation.