

Re: Concluding Workshop for Nordic Africa Institute's Documentation Project

Abstract of the proposed paper

The Southern African liberation struggles from the Scandinavian perspective: new possibilities for research

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In social sciences and historical studies the liberation struggles in southern Africa have mainly been investigated either in the context of international politics or in the context of the local liberation organizations. However, in Scandinavia the southern African liberation struggles have also been approached by analyzing the linkages between the Nordic politicians, NGOs, FBOs, etc. and the liberation movements and commitment to support the liberation movements. The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) coordinated in the 1990s and early 2000s a research program that focused on examining the Nordic support to and connections with the national liberation movements in southern Africa. As a result of this program four country level case studies were published (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden).

The Nordic Documentation Project on the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa coordinated by the NAI since 2003 has been a continuation to the previous research program. The data collected by the documentation project in the different Nordic countries (archival records, memoirs, interviews, photos, etc.) widen and deepen our understanding of the commitment and attitudes in the Nordic countries towards the southern African liberation movements.

The objective of the proposed paper is to present and assess the relevance of the collected data to be utilized in historical studies and social science research. The relevance of the data is assessed from three perspectives:

- 1) What kind possibilities are there to compare the solidarity work initiated in the Nordic NGOs, FBOs, trade and student unions, etc. to support the liberation movements?
- 2) How did the Nordic politicians and diplomats support the liberation movements in the national and international arenas?
- 3) How did relations between the liberation movements and their supporters in the Nordic countries develop during the liberation struggles?

In assessing the relevance of the data attention will be paid on the comparability of the data between the different Nordic countries. In addition constraints related to the utilisation of the data (e.g. language of the documents and availability of the data) are also discussed.

The overall objective of the paper is to identify relevant research ideas that could be structured further to research projects in collaboration with different partners.